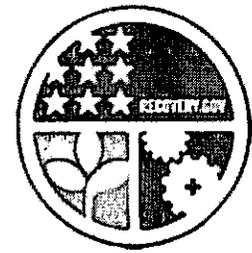




# Race to the Top

## Technical Review Form - Tier 1

### Minnesota Application #3720MN



#### A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1
<b>(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>55</b>
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	35
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	15
<p><b>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b>            All four areas of educational reform that make up Rtt are addressed coherently and comprehensively. A clear set of goals related to working statewide are articulated. These goals are ambitious with very high expectations in many sectors --all seem achievable. The LEA commitment to the Rtt plan is impressive with 80% of LEAs signing on, representing 87% of all schools. The MOU with the districts directly commits them to participating in all aspects of the plan--an mutual "opt-out" clause in the MOU could be problematic in sustaining participation through the grant period. However, small number of professional associations in LEAs with collective bargaining units signed the MOU—12% of LEAs--this low participation can be problematic in statewide implementation and impact. There is substantial evidence provided in letters of support from a wide array of public and private partners in the state. This support is identifiable and to some degree beyond just indicating general support for the initiative. The reform timeline is aggressive and is congruent with previous reform activities in this state.</p>		
<b>(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>20</b>
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	10
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	10
<p><b>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b>            The proposal provides limited descriptions of the management and implementation plan that would allow a clear understanding of what goals are to be achieved and how they will be achieved in line with budgeted resources. Rtt will reside in the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE). This is a clear leadership responsibility in an office that oversees all state education programs—a distinct positive for integration of all state programs with Rtt. The effort will be guided by specially constructed Rtt Advisory Board representing P-20 stakeholders. Other full time leadership officers are identified with the Director reporting to the Commissioner. Metrics will be developed to assess specific progress and in 2012 and an independent "3rd party" will be commissioned to assess that progress.—this is a positive effort to secure independent assessment of progress. It is not possible to determine budget allocations as they are tied to specific goals and objectives. In a positive attempt to integrate other state reform initiatives with Rtt, other state units/activities, such as the state compensation system, already addressing areas of reform will provide their resources to the Rtt effort. No specifics with how this will align with Rtt are provided. Support from a broad array of stake holders is evident in the appendix, particularly for private sector partners, other non-K/12 education sectors (higher education and early childhood).</p>		

<b>(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>15</b>
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	10
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The state has a clear record of legislative education policy reform in all areas specified related to Rtt. It has addressed the establishment of high standards, student assessments and data systems development/implementation. This is an impressive policy accomplishment and sets the stage for further reform efforts. The student data appendix presented in the proposal was difficult to assess because it was just difficult to read—graphs did not display well. The state does assert enhancement in student progress on NAEP and state testing for all students and for NCLB related subgroups—it was difficult to confirm this with the data presented in the proposal. There is little evidence of achievement gap reduction with regard to these subgroups. In particular, the graduation rates for the state have only increased by 2% although greater increases for Black, Hispanics and American Indians were reported—it is not clear if these are significant gap reductions.</p>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>90</b>

## B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1
<b>(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The state is participating in the "Common Core" standards development effort with a large number of states and will adopt the standards by August 2, 2010.</p>		
<b>(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The state is working with TIMSS and PISA colleagues to develop world class assessments aligned with international standards. In addition it is a member of two state consortia (SMARTER and MOSIAC) to develop high level assessments that can be adapted to particular state, regional or local circumstances to assess student growth and guide instruction. It is also participating in the American Diploma Project in an effort to use student assessment in maximizing time to high school completion. These efforts greatly enhance the state plans under Rtt to develop and utilize more reliable and valid student assessments in support of reform.</p>		
<b>(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The state describes in its application a solid history in articulating standards and related assessment systems and moving those to implementation at LEAs and schools through targeted professional development. Some of these same efforts will be the base for transitioning LEAs and schools to the use of new standards and assessments. Of special note is the effort to address professional development in STEM and ELL education—areas of targeted need identified by the state. The implementation plan and related professional development support goals that are clear, significant to the reform effort and achievable.</p>		

Total	70	70
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### C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1
<b>(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>18</b>
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: The state now has a data system that includes 9 of the 12 elements of the COMPETES Act. These 9 reform prerequisites are well articulated and aligned with the specific elements of the Act.		
<b>(C)(2) Accessing and using State data</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>
(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: The state has developed a comprehensive system that allows access of data broadly to parents, teachers, principals and the general public. In addition, an Educator Portal allows educators access to more analytical information that may guide instruction. New portals, specifically designed for student and parent use are planned—these would provide data in more friendly forms to these stakeholders. This is a well designed effort to make available education data in the state to all, at least electronically. It is not clear how this data can be accessed by those populations that may not be able or comfortable accessing electronic information or may need access in a different language.		
<b>(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>15</b>
(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: A specific plan is described that will provide comprehensive educator access to the data. The state has developed and will expand a particular system identified as the Minnesota Model for Data Driven Decisions (M2D2). The system provides a variety of ways in which LEAs, schools and teachers can utilize student performance assessments. In addition, there will be specific and designated efforts in the Rtt office to provide support for training on data access and use by educators. By sequentially delivering this support to LEAs, the success of the support is more plausible. It is important to note the LEAs have agreed to participate in Regional Centers where support can be tailored to specific needs. Access to the data by a newly formed research consortia will enhance data access to researchers and evaluators. It is not clear how this research will directly inform evaluation and continuous improvement or the Rtt implementation.		
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>37</b>

### D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1
<b>(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>10</b>
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: Alternative pathways for teachers and leaders are authorized by state law. Only two are presently approved and less than 100 teacher candidates are in these programs—no principal candidates at the moment. The programs are still tied to university credentialing mechanism and do not stand alone. These alternatives are not leading to production of many of the states educators. With regard to the assessment of teacher shortages/needs, a biannual survey of state shortages re teachers is conducted and 5-year projection of shortages is developed. Some LEAs have implemented efforts to address these identified shortages, but no state plan is described in the application.		
<b>(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>56</b>

(i) Measuring student growth	5	5
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	15
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	10
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	26
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: <p>The plan for improving teacher and principal effectiveness is well articulated, highly ambitious, with a timetable that identifies the over implementation schedule. Although ambitious, if all the pieces fall into place, it is achievable with positive, solid impacts to the states education reform efforts. Evaluation of educators is anchored by a robust and accessible student data system that provides data on student growth. The existing state Q-Comp system that presently is used to evaluate a large number of educators in the state level will serve as the basis for a state tool to be used for evaluation. Yearly evaluations with that tool will be implemented in 2011. The system incorporates a 50% weighting for student growth. By 2012, a new effort involving key stakeholders including teachers and principals will allow LEAs to develop their own evaluation systems utilizing the same elements as the state's tool. This is a positive attempt to address local circumstances related to educator evaluation. The state makes clear in its plan the positive aspect of providing initial and ongoing technical support for the implementation of the yearly evaluations. The state makes it clear that these plans will be utilized for various purposes including compensation, promotion, retention, full certification and removal. A "Peer Assistance Review" process will be in place to identify, support and if necessary, dismiss educators identified as "ineffective."</p>		
<b>(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>12</b>
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	7
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	5
(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: <p>The state will utilize, by 2013, the educator evaluation system to identify equal distribution of effective educators, particularly within LEAs. An effort will be made to distribute and implement "best practices" throughout the state to address the presence of "ineffective" educators. They will provide specific support in the form of targeted grants to participating LEAs to move in this direction. The state does not articulate a state-wide plan for address any inequities, but they will be drawing on successes by LEAs to do so. The plan calls for will some incentives and special targeted grant programs to LEAs and schools to grow effective educators. Overall, this plan has important components included but lacks specificity.</p>		
<b>(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>10</b>
(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: <p>It is a great advantage for the state to already have policy and data capabilities to link and report on the effectiveness of educator preparation programs and student achievement. The state Rtt plan calls for making those linkages to the state's existent educator preparation programs. This will give the state a new and potentially useful understanding of preparation effectiveness. The state plans to augment the educator preparation program requirements by requiring preparation programs to submit evidence of their candidates' effectiveness in various areas including student performance. The state will also support the extension of the Busch Program of teacher recruitment that is presently working with a large number of teacher preparation programs to recruit better entering candidates. There is no indication in the plan related to assisting programs that may be identified as "ineffective."</p>		
<b>(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>14</b>
(D)(5) Reviewer Comments:		

The state will utilize the public data system to identify needed areas of educator support and enlist entities such as the Minnesota Principal Academy and the NTC to provide targeted professional development. Of significance, the Rtt plan calls for the development of site-based data coaches, roughly distributed on a ratio of one to thirty-five teachers to assist local teachers in better use of student data for instructional modifications. The state indicates that it will monitor the effectiveness of such a set of supports. It remains unclear how all these elements of evaluation will be directly linked for purposes of continuous improvement.

<b>Total</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>102</b>
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### E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>
<b>(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: Present policy allows the intervention to turnaround the lowest achieving schools.		
<b>(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	35
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: The present and augmented versions of the state data system can precisely identify the lowest performing schools. The state Rtt plan calls for the creation and implementation of an "Office of Turnaround Schools." This office will have the authority, resources and independence to enlist strategies incorporating the "turnaround" model. The plan calls for very specific analysis of turnaround for all subgroups. This attempt to focus resources and authority with persistent low performing schools seems to augment present efforts and to buffer political influence in moving these schools towards higher student performance. Working with other Rtt efforts and state reform policies and practices, this new office can be an important element in helping students in the lowest achieving schools.		
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>

### F. General

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>
<b>(F)(1) Making education funding a priority</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: State revenues related to education increased by 1% from 2008 to 2009. State allocations of funds to support education take into account higher resource needs for poverty, ELL and related student indicators of educational risk.		
<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: There are no limits placed on the number of charter schools in the state--152 charters presently exist. State laws exist articulating clearly the development, implementation and evaluation of charter schools and funding for charters is the same as for non-charters. There are various state resources available to charters for capital and related infrastructure development. The state has a policy mechanism		

available for LEAs to develop and implement "innovative and alternative" schools within the jurisdiction of the LEA.

**(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions**

**5**

**5**

**(F)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

The state has taken both legislative and executive reform actions leading to policies and practices related to education reform, including a robust accessible student data system, accountability processes, charter school development and initial efforts to link educator effectiveness to student outcomes. Reform activities at the early childhood level and K/12 education reform links to higher education are a plus. Overall, the platform for education reform is quite extensive and bodes well for the success of the proposed Rtt augmentation.

**Total**

**55**

**55**

**Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM**

**Available**

**Tier 1**

**Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM**

**15**

**15**

**Competitive Reviewer Comments:**

The state makes a very clear effort to prioritize *STEM efforts in all its proposed activities* including addressing high standards, new assessments, and augmented professional development and augmenting sources for STEM educator preparation. By doing so in all participating LEAs, it will address opportunities for underrepresented groups in STEM opportunities.

**Total**

**15**

**15**

**Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform**

**Available**

**Tier 1**

**Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform**

**Yes**

**Absolute Reviewer Comments:**

These proposed Rtt efforts build directly on the state's very well articulated plan for reform, building on several years leadership in education reform nationally. The goals, processes and overall implementation strategies are sound and achievable.

**Total**

**0**

**Grand Total**

**500**

**419**



# Race to the Top

## Technical Review Form - Tier 1



Minnesota Application #3720

### A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1
<b>(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>40</b>
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	3
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	30
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	7
<p><b>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The State uses various data points to illustrate a multi-year track record improving education outcomes. The plan, however, does not move past past success to a comprehensive and coherent reform agenda going forward – unless, the State's plan is to continue down its current path. The plan includes clear metrics for strengthening the State's teacher and principal pipeline and developing its current teachers and principals. The plan does not include a coherent approach for using data to drive improvement and turning around low performing schools. The State's decision requiring participation among LEAs in "almost all of the elements" may severely affect its ability to pursue an ambitious reform agenda that increases student achievement state-wide. For example, less than half of the districts signed on to "ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers" and less than 15% signed on to "turning around low-performing schools." Given the State's commitment and RttT goal of transforming poorly performing schools, the lack of support may hinder the state's ability to drive reform in communities that need it most. The State's standard MOU allows the LEA to cancel "at anytime, with or without cause, upon thirty day's written notice." This essentially constitutes a non-binding agreement. The plan received signatures from every participating Superintendent and a significant number of School Board Presidents i.e., 84%. This reflects broad agreement and support among key stakeholders for the State's RttT strategy. Also, the state received a significant number of support letters from their congressional delegation, highlighting political support and agreement for its RttT goals. Of note, a little more than 1 out of every 10 eligible Teacher's Union signed on; this may reflect the practical and political challenges the State will face implementing its plan. The participating LEAs represent practically all students in the state, regardless of race, income, and proficiency levels. This is significant and ensures the proposed plan, if successful, has statewide impact and reach. The State's evidence for demonstrating what their goals would look like without an RttT award is the 2007 Governor's Education Council Report. The evidence is slightly inadequate as the report does not include information, for example, NAEP student achievement data. The narrative also does not articulate a clear strategy of how the state will increase student achievement state-wide, decrease achievement gaps, increase graduation rates, and college enrollment and proficiency. The datasheet on the State's "Power Indicators" are ambitious and unsupported, hence it is difficult to ascertain, for example, if the district has a viable and realistic strategy for achieving 100% college enrollment and 100% high school graduation.</p>		
<b>(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>22</b>
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	13

(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	9
(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: <p>The State plans to install a 6-person team with the Director reporting directly to the Commissioner. The plan demonstrates strong leadership considering the Director reports to the most senior person within MDE. The State's plan leverages its track record of successful implementation providing LEAs with appropriate levels of support. This strategy demonstrates the State's thoughtful approach to ensuring fidelity implementation. Given the State's participation in SISEP, it is well-suited to 1) identify best practices and 2) provide the resources and capacity to scale them up. The State's plan also demonstrates a clear ability to provide effective and efficient operations and processes for implementing RttT grant. The proposed budget, however, does not clearly support the state's narrative. The narrative lacks specific budgetary details necessary to effectively evaluate the State's plan to accomplish and meet its targets. In addition to the lack of clarity for how the funds will be used, what the State does provide does not address how initiatives will be sustained after the grant period. While the State acknowledges some cost (e.g., teacher training) will decrease significantly as the grant ends, the State does not clearly articulate the programs that will not decrease nor how they will be supported after one-time funding opportunities have been expended. Based on the State's illustration of the "broad group of 40+ P-20 educators" that helped develop the plan's aspirations, diverse letters of support, and LEAs signatures, the plan illustrates the political and human capital necessary to drive effective reforms after the grant period has ended. The State also illustrates how their teachers and principals as well as a broader base of stakeholders were included in the plans development. This is an important inclusion, since a significant amount of state or local unions did not sign on to the plan.</p>		
<b>(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>24</b>
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	19
(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: <p>The State outlines clear efforts over the past several years in each of the four education reform areas. The State, however, does not describe how its ARRA and other Federal and State funding have contributed to those efforts. The quality of the State's NAEP data is poor. This is not a reference to performance; instead, the graphs range between hard to impossible to read. Further, the State does not include as requested annual NAEP and ESEA results dating back to 2003. Minnesota has successfully and consistently increased students' performance above the national average on NAEP exams in math and reading and seen improvement on their state exams. The State has also made steady, albeit modest, gains increasing high school graduation. While the State has successfully increase gains across the board, it has not been able to close the achievement gap among subgroups.</p>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>86</b>

## B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1
<b>(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>38</b>
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20
(ii) Adopting standards	20	18
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: <p>The State's participation in the Common Core State Standards and the American Diploma Project is evidence it is working toward jointly developing and adopting a common set of K-12 standards that are supported by evidence that they are internationally benchmarked and build toward college and career</p>		

readiness by the time of high school graduation. According to the State's plan, the Common Core State Standards Initiative is supported by practically every state (48 states, 2 territories, and the District of Columbia). The State's plan includes a scenario for adopting the Common Core Standards in Math and English "no later than May 2010." In order to meet this adoption date the State will pursue an "expedited timeframe," it is unclear, however, if the proposed process has precedent or the extent to which the State has the buy-in and political capital to achieve the goal. The State also includes a plan for rolling out the standards, once adopted, that is consistent with its RttT strategy.

<b>(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:          The State is participating in three consortia to tackle development of high-quality formative and summative assessments. The State by clearly outlining its interest in each consortium reduces the risk of duplicative and/or fragmented efforts. The plan describes the SMARTER and MOSAIC as their lead summative and formative partners. Both initiatives have a 50% state participation rate.</p>		
<b>(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>19</b>
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:          The State describes a thoughtful plan for transitioning to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments that is informed by their previous experiences implementing standards. The plan is driven by a robust professional development strategy, although the State does not include investing a significant amount of professional development hours. For example, educators will receive "a full day of professional development." This decision to limit the number of professional development hours may impact a teacher's - and, by extension, a school's - ability to create content that is aligned with the new state standards. The State is committed to significantly resourcing and providing appropriate levels of support to educators in low-performing schools as well as educators in the STEM field or serving ELL students. Further, the State's development of computer based interim assessments and the goal of every "participating LEA" participating in the assessment system by year 2 gives the State a tool to monitor results and make necessary course corrections, if necessary. The State's plan to create a curricula framework, but limit its use to LEAs that respond to an RFP (opting-in) may mean resources and supports do not go to the neediest districts. Further, the plan does not clearly describe how professional development efforts are connected to an educator's performance measures.</p>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>66</b>

### C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>
<b>(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>18</b>
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:          The state has 9 of the 12 elements required by the America COMPETES Act.</p>		
<b>(C)(2) Accessing and using State data</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:          The State is a 2006 IES LDS Grant recipient and currently has a publically accessible LDS. The State's application includes a high-quality plan to ensure that data from the State's statewide longitudinal data system is more robust and useful to educators as well as accessible to parents, communities, and researchers. These goals have been embedded in their performance measures, which increases the likelihood they are implemented. The plan does not specifically address accessibility for students. The State also includes a framework for data-driven decision making with</p>		

different groups, such as policy-level, classroom-level, and student-level. However, the plan does not distinguish how each outcome and process relates to each group.

<b>(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>15</b>
<p>(C)(3) Reviewer Comments:          The state has a high-quality plan for insuring their LDS drives instructional improvement by transforming their data system into an Early Indicator Response System. Making data actionable and timely should allow the state and LEAs to focus interventions and keep students on track. The State's plan for supporting participating LEAs and schools that are using its instructional improvement system relies in part on "5 additional days of professional development" over 4 years. This strategy has high potential to be an ineffective use of time and resources due to the scarcity of days and possible infrequency of days.</p>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>37</b>

#### D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>
<b>(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>10</b>
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:          The state does not permit providers who operate independently of IHEs. The State has established and explained legal provisions that meet 4 of the 5 elements allowing alternative routes to certification for teachers and principals. While the State allows alternative routes to certification for principals, it does not currently offer such a program(s). The State highlights two alternative routes programs, TFA and TCTF, yet these programs have a small footprint and are not being implemented statewide. In addition to the programs' small size, it is unclear how many teachers have "successfully completed each program." Further, the narrative does not include programs offering alternative routes to certification for principals. The State submits a report, Teacher Supply and Demand Survey, once every two years to the state legislature. While the report seems to provide insight on shortages across the state, the State's solution focuses on the Twin Cities metro area. The report does not include a process for monitoring, evaluating, and identifying areas of principal shortage and for preparing principals to fill these areas of shortage.</p>		
<b>(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>44</b>
(i) Measuring student growth	5	5
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	10
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	8
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	21
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:          The State has established a clear approach to measuring student growth and using the measures in evaluations. The State acknowledges its current deficiencies in its teacher and principal evaluation plan. The State's proposed tiered licensure structure is a promising method towards their goals of implementing/improving its evaluation model. Also, the state's evaluation program for principals is admittedly weak – evaluation is not tied to student achievement-- and the proposed Comprehensive School Leadership Redesign effort is a step in the right direction as it includes clear metrics for educator involvement and clear outcomes for the group's efforts. The proposal outlines a plan either in place or to be instituted that evaluates teachers and principals who are not tenured at least three times a year. While this addresses new teachers and principals, currently tenured principals seemed to be exempt for a substantive evaluation process as well as principals who do not desire to move up from a</p>		

provisional license. The State's goal to require participating LEAs to use Q Comp is an effective tactic for ensuring evaluations are tied to student growth. The state's decision to make mandatory participation in Q Comp by participating LEAs is impressive and the elements address many of the ideals outlined in the rubric. The comprehensive model includes providing professional development to teachers as well as instituting a pay for performance model. The State has the potential to become a national model for getting pay for performance right. Also, allowing LEAs to customize their Q Comp program or adopt the state's as should increase the chance of full participation among LEAs, especially those with limited capacity. The challenge, however, with LEAs developing their own model is the State does not clearly articulate the minimum standards of quality an LEA must meet. LEAs could conceivably create a model that is less rigorous than the State's model. Further, the state's PAR is smartly created to drive out ineffective teachers and provide development opportunities for teachers, although the State does not show the program has been used to terminate ineffective teachers. The ability to combine data with teacher/principal evaluation to ensure evaluations are consistent across the board is forward thinking and may go a long way to allay concerns among unions.

<b>(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>13</b>
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	10
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	3
<p>(D)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The state's goal for insuring equitable distribution seems to be "addition by subtraction" – adding more effective teachers, but not aggressively removing ineffective teachers. The state's goal seems achievable, although not ambitious. Also, the State does not clearly explain if their definition of "high minority" and "high poverty" is consistent with their Teacher Equity Plan. Further the state's plan for increasing equity can be summed up as – get more LEAs to use Q Comp. Their strategy does not reflect their performance measures. In other words, if the state plans to dramatically increase the number of LEAs using Q Comp then the goal for reducing ineffective teachers should be more ambitious. Also, it seems the state lacks appropriate data to effectively construct a high quality plan. The State would like to provide opportunities for teachers in non-high need subjects to get licensed in high-need subjects, yet it does not explain how this will happen. The concept of increasing flexibility, providing non-financial incentives, expanding programs are compelling concepts that lack specificity in the narrative.</p>		
<b>(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>4</b>
<p>(D)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The state's plan for linking student achievement and student growth is vague. While the State plans to "update [its] enterprise data mode to capture information associated with students, teachers, principals, schools and preparation programs," the plan does not describe how this will happen, give a firm implementation date, or list resources for the project. Further, the plan does not describe how the data will be made publically available. The State's strategy for improving teacher and principal preparation programs is rooted in improving current models not expanding preparation and credentialing options. Consequently, the State does not include a comprehensive high-quality plan for producing effective teachers and principals. Of note, the state's plan to strengthen its teacher preparation and those of feeder states is ambitious, yet unsupported. For example, the State says colleges of education goals are "guaranteeing that they will produce effective teachers." This "guarantee" strategy is poorly articulated and thought out.</p>		
<b>(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>15</b>
<p>(D)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The State outlines an adequate plan to use data to drive improvement and support among principals and teachers. The State's plan to use aggregated statewide data may not provide sufficient information to help the state measure and evaluate data towards continuous improvement in student achievement.</p>		

Total	138	86
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### E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1
<b>(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs</b>	10	0
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:            The State asserts it does not have legal barriers preventing it from intervening in persistently low-achieving schools, hence the State concludes it has the legal authority to do so. The State seems to conflate the absence of barriers with the presence of authority. Further, the State to date has not directly intervened in persistently low-performing schools or LEAs, so it is difficult to know if the authority exists, since the State has yet to use said authority.</p>		
<b>(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools</b>	40	30
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	25
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:            The State has developed a clear rubric for identifying its lowest performing schools 34. The plan also highlights a misalignment, whereas the state's lowest performing schools are mostly in rural districts yet its turnaround models have focused on urban centers. Further, the State has historically focused on high schools and is now expanding to turnaround low-performing elementary schools. While the state successfully explains a robust plan for turning around schools, their track record has been mixed. The gap between the future plan and past actions reduces confidence in the State's ability to carry out its plan. In addition, the State's plan to develop an Office of Turnaround Schools that operates independent of the SEA is a novel concept that raises serious questions. The chief issues are the lack of accountability articulated within the plan regarding how OTS is evaluated and held accountable. Also, the State does not describe the State's long-term capacity to maintain the program.</p>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>30</b>

### F. General

	Available	Tier 1
<b>(F)(1) Making education funding a priority</b>	10	7
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:            Funding levels in FY'09 are consistent with the previous year. In addition, the state has also included additional supporting evidence establishing policies that lead to equitable funding.</p>		
<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	40	40
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:            The state does not have a charter cap. The state's charter law has been nationally recognized and is considered "1st in the nation," by charter school interest groups. The state also provides a slightly higher than average per pupil funding compared to traditional schools and flexible facilities funding.</p>		
<b>(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions</b>	5	5
<p>(F)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

The State describes a 30+ year history of driving significant reforms in the state.

<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>52</b>
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**Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM**

	Available	Tier 1
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Competitive Reviewer Comments:</b> The State successfully integrates STEM strategies throughout its proposal. The State's application addresses the need to (i) offer a rigorous course of study in mathematics, the sciences, technology, and engineering by 1) revising its K-12 Math and Science Standard and 2) providing teachers with the STEM curricular frameworks (if RtT plan is funded); (ii) cooperate with STEM-capable community partners to prepare and assist teachers in integrating STEM content by implementing an engineering curriculum in conjunction with the PLTW program; and (iii) prepare more students for advanced study and careers in the sciences, technology, engineering, and mathematics by 1) running public awareness campaigns targeted at students and 2) hosting STEM forums and summits.		
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>

**Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform**

	Available	Tier 1
<b>Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform</b>		<b>Yes</b>
<b>Absolute Reviewer Comments:</b> The State's application coherently address the four education reform areas specified in the ARRA as well as the State Success Factors Criteria and its participating LEAs are taking a systemic approach to education reform.		
<b>Total</b>		<b>0</b>

<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>372</b>
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# Race to the Top

## Technical Review Form - Tier 1

### Minnesota Application #3720 MN 1



#### A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1
<b>(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>41</b>
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	4
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	30
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	7

**(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

Articulating Comprehensive, Coherent Reform Agenda. Minnesota's response to this criterion is provided as an executive summary of the over all application. The state has set forth a comprehensive reform agenda which is consistent with the intent of the ARRA/RttT assurance areas. The key features of this reform agenda recognize the state's track record of strong achievements while at the same acknowledging where improvements are needed. Key features of the Minnesota reform agenda are enhanced educator effectiveness and improved student achievement. The state proposes to allocate the largest portions of the RttT resources to three priority areas: • Development of a system of interim assessments • Peer assistance and review related to the teacher and principal evaluation systems • Induction support for new teachers • Data driven professional development. Securing LEA Commitment. Minnesota has submitted evidence responsive to all elements of this criterion. LEAs are committed to participating in the state's reform agenda as evidenced by the following: • Eighty percent of the LEAs (415 out of 522) have signed on to the RttT application • Sixty two percent of charter authorizers (72 out of 116) have endorsed the application • Endorsement signatures were received from 100% of the superintendents and 84% of the local school board chairs from all participating LEAs • Just 12% of LEAs have included signatures of support from union leaders. Union leaders from the state's 2 large urban centers have endorsed the RttT application and their respective associations account for 20% of the teachers throughout the state. All 415 participating LEAs are committed to fully implementing 3 of the Assurance Areas with partial support for selected criterion under Assurance Area D Great Teachers Great Leaders as represented in the Appendix to the MOU. The Minnesota MOU is substantially identical to the model included in the RttT application packet and the terms and conditions stated therein. Those criterion not fully endorsed pertain to competitive grant opportunities or plans to address shortage areas. According to the application, all criterion areas required mandatory participation to the extent the identified area was applicable to the LEA situation. This explanation does not adequately address the low level of endorsements received for two of the Assurance Areas: • Great Teachers and Great Leaders (Ensuring Equitable Distribution of Educators in High Poverty/High Minority (HPHM) schools (only 48% of participating LEAs) • Turning Around the Lowest Achieving Schools (only 14% of participating LEAs). Translating LEA Participation into Statewide Impact. LEAs committed to participating in the state's reform agenda range in size and demographics. Their collective populations incorporate 80% of the local school buildings throughout the state and 94 % of the state's school children. Ninety three per cent of the state's low income students are enrolled in these LEAs. This large constituency along with other stakeholders will ensure that RttT grant funds will leverage broad statewide impact. Minnesota also has a robust charter school system comprised of over 400 schools educating approximately 137,000 students (5.2% of the state's total number of public school enrollment). The state's RttT application specifically requires participating LEAs to ensure that

charter schools have the same opportunity as other schools to participate in the RttT grant and receive a commensurate share of any funds and services provided by the grant. Improvement goals are referenced in the application narrative as broad generalizations across many categories of expected achievement. Further details are provided in Appendix (A) (1) –Exhibit E, The Governor's Educational Council and Goals. Extracted from the Council's report are the following achievement goals: • The high school graduation rate will increase to 93% by 2014. • Students overall will reach 100% proficiency in reading and math based on state assessments by 2014. The application narrative does not explicitly communicate a set of ambitious yet achievable goals overall and for subgroups, as specifically required in the notice • Increasing student achievement in (at a minimum) reading/English-language arts and mathematics, as reported by the NAEP. • Decreasing achievement gaps between subgroups in reading/English-language arts and mathematics, as reported by the NAEP and the assessments required under the ESEA. • Increasing college enrollment and increasing the number of students who complete at least a year's worth of college credit that is applicable to a degree within two years of enrollment in an institution of higher education. The following evidence required by (A)(1)(i) is missing: • Tables and graphs that show the State's goals, overall and by subgroup, requested in the criterion, together with the supporting narrative • Description of what the goals would look like were the State not to receive an award under this program.

<b>(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>20</b>
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	15
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	5

**(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

Ensuring the Capacity to Implement. The application provides detailed information responsive to the criteria in this section related to leadership and the formation of teams to lead and track implementation, as well as constructive and intervention support for LEAs and use of grant funds. The director overseeing the RttT team will report directly the Commissioner of Education and be responsible for leading, monitoring and reporting LEA and state progress to key stakeholders and a RttT advisory council. Developing a strong culture of collaboration and support is a key strand throughout each assurance area and strategy. LEAs have played a critical role in the design of the RttT application. Well over 80% for the RttT's budget will flow directly to programs for students and LEAs. The state has engaged a broad group of stakeholders since the inception of its application. Embedded throughout the application are mechanisms for ongoing communication and engagement through various public vetting processes, advisory councils and collaborative endeavors. The budget provides adequate expenditure details with cost breakouts aligned to each project budget category. The application does not adequately address criterion (A)(2) (i) c and e. Additional information is needed on how the state will manage effective and efficient processes for fiscal oversight and reporting. The application does not address fully the issue of sustainability across all assurance areas. Not all strategies will have decreasing costs and several of the areas cited as requiring one time investments will likely have recurring costs over item for improvement and upgrade. The Office of Turnaround Schools which will operate as an independent entity is budgeted at \$6.5 million over the 4 year period. The application does not address how this office will continue to operate over the long term. Using Broad Stakeholder Support. The application indicates a large number of diverse individuals and organizations were involved including teachers, students, families, business representatives, higher education and community leaders. Minnesota's extensive communication strategy related to Race to the Top included 2 meetings with 3 large-group stakeholder meetings, 13 regional meetings to gain input on the potential plan, and extensive meetings with individual education stakeholders. In December the state undertook a set of webinars and 28 regional meetings showcasing the plan and its details to ensure LEAs (both management and labor) were well informed. Prior to these conversations, each LEA was provided with a description of expected commitments related to the RttT strategy. The fact that only 12% of local union leaders (36 out of 299 applicable) in the participating LEAs endorsed the state's application raises a concern about barriers that may need to be addressed by the state and at the local level. While Minnesota has engaged in outreach to many

individual teachers and has provided some reasons for lack of support the low level of union endorsement is a concern. The application does not address how the state will move forward assertively to generate union buy in. In order for Florida to ensure effective implementation of all plan criteria teachers, along with their associations, are deemed essential especially in carrying out the RttT vision for Great Teachers and Great Leaders.

<b>(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>17</b>
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	12
<p><b>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b>  <b>Making Progress in Each Reform Area.</b> Minnesota has a number of key policies and programs in place that create a strong context and foundation for moving forward with the RttT assurance areas. The state has been recognized nationally for its efforts to design and implement a comprehensive, locally developed and implemented professional development and evaluation system that uses multi-rater, multi-measure evaluations (including student achievement data) and offers job-embedded professional development as well as incentives such as teacher leader opportunities and performance pay to encourage educators to earn effective teaching ratings. The state has made significant progress on the elements of the America COMPETES Act and currently has in place a student growth model for math and reading. The state has also been at the forefront with its efforts to create a strong network of charter schools in rural and urban communities and serving diverse student populations. In the area of intervention, the state has worked collaboratively with 11 schools in the Twin Cities to improve student achievement in the lowest performing schools. The state has also been active in facilitating the development of professional development support for LEAs and schools. Minnesota students have consistently exceeded the national averages on NAEP overall and for sub groups, however achievement gaps remain problematic. <b>Improving Student Outcomes.</b> The application indicates that since 2003 the reading and ELA achievement gap has narrowed for several subgroups and from 2003-2008, four year graduation rates statewide improved 2 percentage points. Minnesota has provided in the Appendix data on the percent of students scoring proficient on the state assessments for grades 3-8 and grade 11 in reading and math from 2006-2009. This data indicates a 4% increase in mathematics and a .5% increase in reading. Information is not included for the 2003-2006 timeframe. Grade 4 NAEP Reading: students' mean score increased from 223 in 2003 to 225 in 2007. Grade 4 NAEP Mathematics: students' mean score increased from 242 in 2003 to 249 in 2009. Grade 8 NAEP Reading: students' average scale score remained flat at 268 between 2003 and 2007. Grade 8 NAEP Mathematics: students' mean score increased from 291 in 2003 to 294 in 2009. The application does not respond fully to the requirements set forth for additional evidence in the notice for this criterion: • NAEP and ESEA results since at least 2003 for students over all and subgroups • Increasing student achievement in reading/ELA and mathematics • Decreasing achievement gaps between subgroups in reading/ELA and mathematics States were asked to include in the Appendix all data requested in the criterion for each year the NAEP and state assessment were administered. In the narrative, states were asked to provide the analysis of this data and any tables or graphs that best supported the narrative.</p>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>78</b>

## B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1
<b>(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20

(ii) Adopting standards	20	20
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Participating in a consortium developing high quality standards. Minnesota's application includes adequate documentation that it meets the specified criterion under this section. • The state has executed a MOU demonstrating its commitment to jointly develop and adopt a common set of core standards. • Forty eight states and 3 territories have joined the Common Core Standards Initiative sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governor's Association. • A copy of the MOU, a list of participating states and territories and a copy of draft standards dated September 2009 are included in the application appendices. • The Common Core Standards will be internationally benchmarked. To ensure that the standards prepare students to be globally competitive, the development team used a number of sources. In addition, the development team looked to the Adopting standards. The application fully meets this criterion. Description of a plan for Minnesota's adoption of Common Core Standards consistent with the RttT required time frame and the state's statutory requirement and rule making authority has been provided. As required by statute, in April 2010, the State Education Commissioner will submit the draft standards for review by educators, community leaders and higher education representatives. Upon conclusion of the public engagement meetings, state department of education staff and the technical writing team for Minnesota's augmented Common Core Standards will finalize any further technical changes. In spring 2010, the state department of education will finalize revisions to standards as necessary based on input gathered through the public engagement process and present finalized K-12 standards for mathematics and language arts to the public and legislature. The state will present the new standards, the Common Core State Standards in Mathematics and English language Arts with Minnesota augmentation, to the 2010 legislature for adoption. Through the legislative process, the state anticipates that Minnesota's new Common Core State standards will be adopted at the state level no later than the end of Minnesota's legislative session in May 2010.</p>		
<b>(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Minnesota's application includes documentation pertaining to the specified criterion under this section. The state has joined 3 consortia to forward its large scale assessment program for students and stakeholders. For its summative assessment work, Minnesota has joined as a lead state in the Summative Multi-state Assessment Resources for Teachers and Educational Researches (SMARTER) consortium. It is anticipated that 24 states will participate in SMARTER. The second consortium, MOSAIC, will support the state's efforts in the areas of formative assessment and professional development begun in this application. As of January 2010, twenty five states had submitted signed MOUs to participate in the Multiple Options for Student Assessment and Instruction Consortium (MOSAIC). Expanding on the work developed under the American Diploma Project, a third agreement represents a partnership with 26 other states to pursue the development and implementation of summative assessments which are aligned with the Common Core Standards under the organizational sponsor ACHIEVE. Additionally, the state will participate in two international assessments through the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) exams. MN has executed pertinent MOUs with each sponsor entity demonstrating its commitment to jointly develop a battery of common high quality summative and formative assessments that align with the Common Core Standards. A copy of the MOUs along with a list of participating states is included in the application appendices. High quality assessment development is an intense and expensive enterprise with the potential for high stake consequences. Minnesota's experience in developing assessments and creating innovative approaches will provide a solid foundation for launching this upcoming next phase of assessment development with cross state collaboration. Given the multiple consortia that the state is involved in, the application does not adequately address the commonalities and distinctions in purpose, costs, participants, products, services and intended outcomes between SMARTER and ACHIEVE.</p>		

<b>(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:  Building on the state's past track record in implementing standards based reform, the application describes a number of major initiatives and activities that will be undertaken both at the state and local levels to move the state's adopted content standards and aligned assessments into implementation across the state. Specific initiatives to be launched using RttT resources include: • a statewide rollout plan to adopt and align core standards with MN documents • implementation of curricular frameworks in course instruction • tiered professional development programs to improve learning for all students and prepare teachers for successful instruction across Minnesota's schools; administration of interim assessments throughout the school year to benchmark student success • a review of the state's current English Language Proficiency Standards to ensure they offer the depth and breadth to support alignment with common core standards. The State will also issue grants to support programming to increase the number of high-poverty and minority students enrolled in rigorous and advanced coursework. Overall the application presents a comprehensive plan complete with performance measures intended to communicate anticipated impact. Attention should be given to procedures for collecting data related to the performance measures and a specific evaluation of this component so that data can be used for continuous improvement as needed. The application contains a very general roll out schedule. A more detailed plan is needed consistent with the instructions provided in the notice "at a minimum, the goals, activities, timelines and responsible parties".</p>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>66</b>

### C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1
<b>(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>18</b>
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:  Minnesota's statewide longitudinal data system (SLDS) currently includes 9 of the 12 elements required by the America COMPETES Act, and will fully incorporate the remaining three by the end of 2010.</p>		
<b>(C)(2) Accessing and using State data</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:  Minnesota currently provides public access to much of its LDS data through the department of education's website. Teachers and administrators are able to secure access to individual and subgroup student and staff data through the Educator's Portal. Utilizing RttT funds, several enhancements are planned. Educator Portal Enhancements will include making the system more intuitive and user-friendly, making more custom data analytics in program-specific tabs, district, school and student dashboards and practical tools for teachers and principals, such as online survey tools. Additionally, the state plans to create new portals for Turn Around Schools, parents, communities and researchers along with a specific STEM analytical data dash board. An annual Report of Key Statewide LDS Metrics: MDE will be published describing the "state of education" in Minnesota, to inform policymakers of the successes and challenges for students, teachers and principals during the year. Clear performance goals and benchmarks have been defined for this criterion which target 85-100% use of the data resources by the end of the RttT grant period. The application narrative does not indicate responsibility for the tasks described</p>		
<b>(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>15</b>
<p>(C)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

Minnesota plans to drive continuous improvement in the understanding and use of data by adding new instructional improvement systems and support services. Key activities planned for each of these areas include:

- A web based dashboard that will give early warnings when students are veering off track
- Interim assessments that will provide timely formative assessment information to teachers
- Digital delivery of research-based teacher instructional strategies linked to state standards
- A platform for web-based delivery of instructional content and intervention strategies
- Web-based surveys of enacted curriculum
- On line professional development resources

In the area of supports, participating LEAs will receive funding for 5 additional days of professional development on data-driven decision making. Additionally, LEAs will be given stipends for a data coach at each school. The overall elements of the state's plans in this area seem responsive to clearly identified state needs and are well organized. The application does not adequately address the requirements to include goals, activities, timeline and responsible parties. Establishment of performance measures for this area would enhance effectiveness and impact. As part of enhancements planned for the longitudinal data system, A P-20 Research Portal will be created. The state department will provide authorized researchers access to anonymous student, teacher and principal information in compatible formats. The available data will offer options for analysis in system performance, achievement gaps along with program and intervention. The state does not provide an action plan whereby researchers will be encouraged and supported to use the data in the production of valuable research studies or evaluation of critical RtT activities. More explicit information is needed describing how the state will interface with the various researchers, the process by which important research topics will be identified, and how products produced by the researchers will be vetted, communicated and used for continuous improvement.

<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>37</b>
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#### D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1
<b>(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>12</b>
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Minnesota statutes authorize high quality alternative routes to certification for both principals and teachers. Overall these programs for teachers and principals meet the requirements of having 4-5 elements listed in the definitions of alternative routes to certification. The application indicates no programs have applied to be authorized for alternative principal preparation. Descriptions of only 2 alternative teacher preparation programs are provided. These programs are designated by Minnesota Rule as "experimental" and operate under the sponsorship of Hamline University. It is not clear that Minnesota statutes or rules allow for providers operating independently of higher education. Minnesota Rule is currently silent in terms of measuring success of these programs as opposed to other programs. In October 2009, the state launched a revision process for MN Rule 8700.7600, which governs both institutional (unit) approval and program approval for each individual licensure program. By September 2010, the state expects to have a redesigned program approval process for all teacher preparation programs. The application does not address the number of teachers and principals who have successfully completed each alternative program during FY 2008-09. The application is also absent data on the total number of teachers and principals certified in FY 2008-09. The state department of education provides a bi-annual Teacher Demand and Supply survey to the legislature which includes analysis on the patterns of shortages by subject areas and region and tracks district progress in hiring teachers and principals in shortage areas. The report also includes a 5 year projection of teacher demand for each district. The application does not address the process it uses for identifying, evaluating and monitoring principal shortages. According to the application, there are currently no principal shortages.</p>		
<b>(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>39</b>
(i) Measuring student growth	5	4

(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	9
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	8
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	18

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Measuring Student Growth. The Minnesota Growth Model was developed jointly with state policy makers and the Minnesota state department of education with input from experts in local districts to capture and assess student, teacher and school performance. The model measures student growth based on the percentage of students who meet state proficiency and growth targets on annual, summative standardized reading and math tests, using data going back to the 2006-2007 school year. Results are for schools overall, by grade, by subgroup, and grade & subgroup. Each school's results are posted on the state department of education's website as part of its report card. The growth model is limited to grades 3-8 in reading and mathematics and does not include alternative measures for non tested grades and subjects. As part of the Q Comp evaluation system there is a component which will address non core subjects. The student outcome components of non-core subject teachers will require the input of experts in specific subject areas to recommend the appropriate evaluation components. Assurances will be needed as part of the core requirements to ensure high standards indicators of teacher competency and student performance across LEAs.

Developing Evaluation Systems. For the last 5 years, Minnesota has had in place a teacher system of professional development, teacher evaluation and performance based compensation evaluation entitled Q Comp that is voluntary. All participating LEAs will be encouraged to begin taking part in the Q Comp. The program has garnered national commendation for its holistic approach to assessing educator performance. Currently, local district administrators and teachers along with traditional and charter schools serving over 30% of the state's students have volunteered to participate in Q-Comp. The state has proposed several initiatives to expand the impact and to increase rigor in the system's components. A model evaluation rubric will be designed by August 2010 and new requirements have been added for program implementation. Another program enhancement will involve establishment of a 3-tiered licensure structure. The application includes a detailed description of the Q Comp process. The system as described will draw on multiple data sources including student growth data. While Q Comp is based in legislation and requires certain core elements that must be met by all districts, there is also flexibility for customization in each district and charter school. The application does not define the distinctions between core requirements and customized options, e.g., the establishment of school-wide and individual student achievement goals. This issue is judged to be of high importance in establishing validity, credibility and confidence in the evaluation system across LEAs.

Conducting Annual Evaluations. The participating LEAs will be required to develop and submit a proposal for adopting enhanced Q Comp evaluation guidelines by July 2012. LEAs can opt to use either the state's recommended evaluation rubric or one of its own design, provided it meets the Q Comp requirement and RttT specifications. The application does not adequately address how student growth will be factored in as significant factor of the Q Comp process nor how effectiveness will be differentiated using the various measures that are included in the system. Clarity is needed on how alternative measures for non-tested grades and subjects will be included, e.g. classroom or individual measures of student achievement. Additional information should be provided indicating whether there will be an absolute or specific achievement growth target to ensure standardization across all districts linked to specific levels of effectiveness.

Using Evaluations to Inform Key Decisions. The application provides a comprehensive description of how Q Comp evaluation addresses all components of criterion (D)(2) (iv)( a through d) including professional development, compensation incentives, licensure and removal of ineffective educators. The application does not provide data on how the use of PAR's to date has resulted in the exiting of poor performers. The state acknowledges that guidelines and procedures for principal preparation, licensure and professional development are not satisfactory. The state has committed to a Comprehensive School Leadership Redesign effort beginning in 2010 and projected to become operational in 2011. There will be a 3 tiered licensing structure. Moving through each of the licensure tiers will be contingent upon demonstration of effective performance on multiple measures including improvements to teacher effectiveness and school wide student growth. Current tenured principals will

be given a continuing license. The application does not address how principals with continuing licensing but not aspiring to advance to master certification will be motivated, encouraged or required to undergo an evaluation linked to student achievement. It is expected that the plan as it undergoes development for principal evaluation will meet all specific aspects of this RttT criterion. Similar issues raised for the teacher evaluation system must also be addressed as work on the principal evaluation proceeds. The application does not describe a specific action plan for development, approval, oversight or implementation of the system.

<b>(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>6</b>
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	4
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	2

**(D)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

Ensuring Equitable Distribution in High Poverty and Minority Schools. The basic premise underlying this criterion is that participating LEAs will have designed and implemented in collaboration with local districts during the course of the RTT grant a recurring educator evaluation process which includes a valid and reliable student growth measure tying student achievement to educator effectiveness. Currently Minnesota does not have a statewide method for identifying highly effective teachers linked to student performance as required by RttT. The state anticipates that by the spring of 2013 and after the next round of contract negotiations, the information pertaining to the distribution of highly effective teachers and principals will be available. This will provide the data needed to establish a baseline and to target annual rates of improvement. The state's strategy to address this criterion utilizing RttT funds will be to offer a series of competitive grant opportunities to LEAs focused on:

- Collaborations between LEAs and unions to develop flexible HR policies and practices that give greater flexibility for finding, placing and retaining effective teachers in high need schools
- Financial and non-financial incentives to attract and retain teachers and principals
- Initiate and expand successful programs

The budget is absent any narrative justification as required. Resources for (D)(3) i and ii are combined in the same project budget without distinction between the strategies. It is unclear how the \$4 million budgeted will be utilized by LEAs during 2010-2011 to 2012-2013 given that the baseline data needed to launch the grant programs will not be available until spring of the 3rd year. Change and success in this criterion will significantly impact the projected improvement targets in other plan components, e.g. A1 and C3. The application narrative under this criterion describes the target population the state will address as "high minority" schools. Notes in the Performance Measures (D)(3)i provide information on "high and low poverty schools". The application does not provide clear definitions or procedures for selecting targeted schools. The first improvement targets under this criterion are projected for 2013-2014 during the last year of the RttT grant period. Performance improvement at that time has been projected to increase by 25% in the number of effective educators assigned to high minority/high poverty schools.

Ensuring Equitable distribution in Hard to Staff Subjects and Specialty Areas. The application does not adequately respond to this criterion. Responses for subsections (D)(3) i and ii are combined. Data important to this subsection is provided in the Appendix labeled as (D)(1) Exhibit F. It provides important teacher supply and demand data in critical shortage areas which should serve as the basis for action planning for new strategies. Data related to supply and demand is referenced in the narrative under (D)(1) but not discussed here. The Teacher Supply and Demand Survey identifies subject shortages where teachers are needed and by order of greatest need. Under D1, the application also describes current operating programs that address teacher shortages. Two strategies proposed by the state to address this criterion utilizing RttT funds include: a financial incentive program and dual licensure flexibility in high need subjects. The financial incentive program option will be open to participating LEAs to indicate interest in applying or choose to apply for grant funding during RTTT implementation period after baseline data is established. The amount budgeted for (D)(3) i and ii, "Equitable Distribution" grants to LEAs is \$7 million. Separately in 2010, the state has committed to explore with the Board of Teaching on greater licensure flexibility to enable highly effective teachers in one subject to qualify for additional licensures in high need areas. The budget does not address resource allocation for the second strategy. The two strategies presented are not closely aligned with data and are not sufficiently developed, e.g. goals, activities, time lines, responsible staff, annual

performance measures. Based on the performance goals listed there will be no improvement in this area until 2013-2014. Performance improvement at that time has been targeted at an increase of only 20% in the 5 subjects referenced.

<b>(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>5</b>
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(D)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Four new initiatives will be implemented in this area. The state's Educator and Researchers Portal will be updated to capture information associated with preparation programs and teacher effectiveness. The state is committed to issuing an annual report using data supplied by preparation programs having at least 20 graduates. The data will include graduates by subject, level and program pathway. It is not clear whether the report will contain data on principals. Two of the initiatives focus on the improvement of programs that are successfully producing effective teachers. One of the key features of the Bush Foundation initiative will be to link universities with their district partners to formally link student performance and their teachers back to their preparation programs. In fall 2010, as part of the state's effort to redesign the process for approval and monitoring of preparation programs, data will begin to be collected on candidate competency across multiple levels including test score data. Establishing in collaboration with LEAs an agreement on the specific measures related to student achievement/student growth that will be linked and reported will help to establish credibility to the information reported. The application does not adequately address: 1) expansion of preparation and credentialing options and programs with successful track records, 2) student performance definitions to ensure comparability of data collected across all initiatives, 3) a plan for publicly reporting data linking student achievement and student growth to in-state teacher and principal preparation programs. More aggressive performance measures and timelines for when the public will be able to access information for all teacher and principal preparation program throughout the state should be considered.

<b>(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>15</b>
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(D)(5) Reviewer Comments:

Minnesota's plan to address this criterion includes 4 major strategies: a new teacher induction program, data coach placement in every school with accompanying support and training, and professional development targeted on using data to improve instruction. Coaching is also a key feature of the turnaround strategy and the Q Comp teacher evaluation system under the component Career Pathways/Advance Options for Teachers. The application does not address common planning time and collaboration time for teachers and principals. Evaluation will be addressed annually through an external contractor. Additionally, data will be collected on the teacher and principal support such as the Principals' Academy, and expanded induction programs in high poverty schools through the state's longitudinal data system. The state purports it will use this data to better understand what professional development supports have the greatest impact. The overall plan for evaluation needs improvement. The application does not assign responsibility for the data collection related to this task nor indicate how impact is to be concretely defined for the purpose of interpretation and communication. The application also does not indicate the intended audience for the information reported nor how a strong process of continuous improvement will be tied to the data collection leading to improved effectiveness of the supports in order to improve student achievement.

<b>Total</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>77</b>
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### E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1
<b>(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The commissioner has explicit authority to terminate a charter contract if the charter school has a history of failure to meet pupil performance requirements contained in the contract. According to state

policy and in accordance with NCLB, the Commissioner of Education of the Minnesota Department of Education is required: 1) to work with low performing and struggling schools to improve student and teacher performance, and 2) at an LEA's request, to assist the district and the school to develop a student achievement improvement plan for schools that do not meet federal requirements. Minnesota law further requires the Commissioner to "assist school sites and districts identified as not meeting federal requirements and that integrate student achievement measures into the continuous plan." The application indicates there are no legal barriers that prevent the State Department of Education from intervening in the state's lowest-achieving schools and districts. Further clarification is needed to address the state's interpretation of "work with, assist and intervene" in order to ensure compliance with this criterion. The application should address more explicitly its authority for direct intervention and provide both definitions and examples of how and when such interventions have occurred and the results of the intervention in regular public schools (not just charters).

<b>(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>30</b>
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	25

**(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

Identifying the persistently lowest achieving schools. Minnesota has developed a comprehensive methodology to identify persistently low-performing schools, as defined by RttT. The methodology uses the state's NCLB assessment data as well as the state's growth model. Through this methodology, Minnesota has identified 34 persistently lowest-achieving schools. The application describes the approach used for each of 4 subgroups identified by the RTTT requirement. The methodology was developed by the Minnesota Department of Education in collaboration with Minneapolis and St. Paul district leadership and research teams to ensure the analytic rigor of the methodology. The procedure is judged to satisfactorily address the requirements of this criterion.

Turning around the persistently lowest achieving schools. The state history in working with turnaround schools since 2004-2005 has focused largely on 10-11 schools in the twin cities areas of St. Paul and Minneapolis. There is a discrepancy in the exact number of schools in turnaround status. One school has been closed. Results on schools making AYP in reading and math for the 2007-08 and 2008-09 are as follows: • 1 school made AYP • 5 schools did not make AYP • 1 school made AYP in reading for 2001-08 but not for 2008-09.. The school did not make AYP in math for 2 consecutive years • 2 schools--results data not reported. 2008-2009 was the first year that the merger/transformation model was implemented. Four different models formed the basis of the turnaround strategy: • Teacher Advancement Program • Marzano Consultant Program • Pair low performing and high performing schools • Change in governance structure. The turnaround strategy applied at Dayton's Buff Elementary school was not described yet this was the only school implementing a turnaround model that has made AYP progress every year under NCLB. The application does not address lessons learned as a result of implementing the various turnaround models. The application describes 6 major initiatives that represent Minnesota's approach to improving student performance at the lowest achieving schools: • Creating an external Office of Turnaround Schools • Redefine the governing structure for the lowest achieving schools • Allow increased operational flexibility to support turnarounds • Support effective leaders focused on instruction • Develop and support turnaround staff • Support students for success in turnarounds. To address this assurance criterion, the state through the Office of Turnaround (OTAS) will implement the intervention models for each identified persistently lowest-achieving school as defined and prescribed by RttT. The application describes an extensive array of supports and services that will be provided directly to educators as well as outreach to families and the community. The application does not include a detailed plan complete with goals, activities, time lines and responsible parties. Performance measures are described only minimally. The distinction between what will be provided by OTAS versus the state department of education is unclear. The application does not sufficiently justify the creation of an independent entity to oversee the interventions outlined in RttT outside of the state department of education. There will be an advisory structure created to oversee the OTAS operations. The application does not explicitly address any formal governance arrangements such as, accountability for results, oversight of personnel and

long term sustainability of the OTAS operations. Building internal state capacity to assume long term responsibility for assisting the persistently lowest performing school will require a long term commitment and therefore should not be delegated.

<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>33</b>
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## F. General

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>
<b>(F)(1) Making education funding a priority</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>

**(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

From 2008-2009, Minnesota's expenditures for education as a percentage of the overall state budget increased by 1 percent. The state's fund balance analysis, as of July 17, 2009, indicated that expenditures for K-12 and higher education increased from 49.3 percent to 50.3 percent of total state general fund expenditures between FY 2008 and FY 2009. State policies are in place and have been effective in promoting equitable funding between high-need LEAs and other LEAs, and between high-poverty schools and low-poverty schools within LEAs. The state's compensatory education funding formula provides targeted funding to schools and school districts with high concentrations of poverty. Sites where the number of students eligible for free lunches plus one-half of the number of students eligible for reduced-priced lunches equals or exceeds 80 percent of the school's enrollment receive compensatory revenue equal to 60 percent of the general education formula allowance (\$3,074 in FY 2010) for each free or reduced-priced lunch eligible student and 1/2 of that amount for each reduced-price lunch eligible student. For FY 2010, the state total compensatory revenue is \$331.8 million, or 5.9 percent of all general education revenue from state aids and property taxes, a much larger commitment by the state than the federal Title I funding of approximately \$221m. To further ensure that high-poverty schools receive the intended extra funding, Minnesota law requires a school district to allocate at least 95 percent of the compensatory revenue to the school building housing the students whose poverty qualifies the district for the funding. Additionally, Minnesota uses free or reduced-price lunch counts as the poverty measure for purposes of allocating Title I funds within LEAs and also to allocate state compensatory aid to LEAs and high-poverty sites. Minnesota also provides Limited English Proficiency (LEP) aid to school districts and charter schools as well as extended time revenue for students requiring additional time outside of the regular school day or year for remedial work.

**(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools**

**40**      **40**

**(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

Authority and Limitations. Minnesota has supported charter schools for nearly 2 decades. It was one of the first states in the nation to legislatively authorize flexibility and autonomy for charter schools to operate. Minnesota law does not limit the number of charter schools allowed to operate in the state and state statute ensures charter schools operate independently as autonomous public schools by providing charters with authority to function as an autonomous school district (LEA). 152 charter schools currently serve over 35,000 K-12 students, almost 4.5 percent of Minnesota's public school students. The growth of students enrolled in charter schools has more than tripled over the last seven years. Charter schools are open to all and an admissions lottery system is employed if more applications are received than slots available. In the past five years, 131 charter school applications have been made and 66 of those applications were approved. Documentation included in (F)(2) (D) Exhibit D indicates that since 2003, nineteen schools have closed (including schools that were not authorized to operate). The state has received national recognition for its efforts to create a strong network of charter schools in rural and urban communities and serving diverse student populations. Over 53 percent of charter school students qualify for free or reduced-priced lunch. Over 20 percent have limited English proficiency and almost 50 percent are students of color. Many of the state's charter schools were specifically established to better serve the unique needs of diverse student

populations. One of the key strategies proposed in the RttT application is offering financial incentives in the form of start-up funds to charter school authorizers dedicated to the replication and expansion of schools with proven track records in making achievement gains with high need student populations. Recent legislative enactments have strengthened accountability requirements for charter schools while still maintaining the basic tenets of autonomy. Charter schools are established through a performance contract with an approved authorizer. School boards, education districts, qualifying charitable organizations, colleges and universities may apply to the Commissioner of Education for approval as an authorizer. Over 50 organizations currently authorize charter schools in Minnesota. Specific procedures set forth in state law provide detailed guidance regarding how charter authorizers approve, monitor, hold accountable, reauthorize and close schools. Additionally, expectations are set forth in applicable laws, rules and charter contracts pertaining to pupil performance as a key factor in determining charter school reauthorization or renewal as well as ensuring that charter school student enrollments are similar to local district populations. While the application references throughout this criterion that improved pupil learning and student achievement, measuring student outcomes and accountability for results..... are among purposes of charter schools, the information provided does not address specifically or procedurally the extent to which there is a requirement for student achievement to be a significant factor in authorization or renewal. Further, clarification is needed to understand how through the contracting, authorizing and renewal process student performance criteria are established at a high level consistent with traditional public school student achievement targets.

**Funding.** Minnesota charter schools are considered Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and are fiscally independent and operate autonomously of school districts. They receive direct payment of state and federal aids that flow through the state department of education. Since 2001, total state aid entitlements to charter schools have increased significantly to more than \$275m in fiscal year 2008. Under Minnesota statutes a charter school receives other state aids and grants as if it were a district, including: General Education Revenue, Special Education Revenue at full funding, Transportation Revenue, Building Lease Aid, Start-up Aid , Facilities Funding and Other Aid, Grants, and Revenue along with Federal Aid. The application does not adequately address the funding of special education students in charter schools. Clarification is needed on whether charter school special education students receive full funding and the responsibility of the district for this funding category.

**Charter Facilities.** State funding for charter school facilities includes school building lease aid, as well as operating capital revenue, a component of the general education revenue program. School districts must reserve operating capital revenue for facilities, equipment or technology purposes, while charter schools have the flexibility to use operating capital revenue for any school purpose. Since charter school building lease expenditures and aid are recorded in the general fund, while school district facilities are funded primarily with debt service, charter school general fund expenditures are inflated compared with school district general fund expenditures (see Appendix (F)(2) - Exhibit E Table 4).

**Other innovative, autonomous public schools.** The 2009 Legislature passed into law a new statute that authorizes and governs district-created site governed schools. This new legislation enables LEAs to operate innovative, autonomous public schools other than charter schools. It specifically permits school boards to approve site-governed schools based on proposals from licensed professionals and parents. It outlines the roles and responsibilities of site-governed schools; addresses revenue for site-governed schools; exempts site-governed schools from most state laws, similar to the charter school exemptions; requires boards and site-school governance to establish performance standards and achievement targets; and allows a board to terminate the site-school agreement for cause. Minnesota will use the public site governed model to implement a portion of the Intervention/Turnaround model described in Assurance E. The application does not provide information on the numbers or types of schools that have been started under the new statute focused on district-created site governed schools.

**(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions**

**5**

**5**

**(F)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

Noted below are reform initiatives that respond to this criterion: • The Minnesota Legislature passed laws in 1969 and the 1970s that equalized access to quality educational services in providing state funds for transportation, non-religious textbooks, counselors, health services and special education

services to nonpublic schools and students. • In 1988, legislation was enacted that allows students to attend a public school of choice rather than being restricted by attending a public school based solely on geography or school district boundaries. Subsequent legislation provided post-secondary options for high school students. This law allows high school students to earn college credit, and requires the resident school district to reimburse higher education institutions for the cost of the program. • In the 1990s, the Minnesota Legislature passed the first charter school law in the nation and established education tax credits and deductions for low-income families. • Included in the state's fiscal policies is the requirement of a two percent set aside out of its general fund education aid (approximately \$97 million per year) for teacher professional development activities. The application does not include specific impact data resulting from these reform innovations, i.e., increased student achievement or graduation rates, narrowed achievement gaps or other important outcomes.

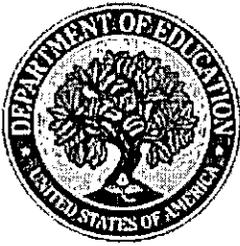
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>53</b>
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### Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Competitive Reviewer Comments:</b> Emphasis on STEM utilizing RttT resources is included in significant ways throughout the state's proposal: • RttT funds will provide teachers with STEM curricular frameworks. • Minnesota will increase the number of under-represented minority and high-poverty students who enrolled in rigorous courses that put them on track for STEM career success through multiple rigorous programs including AP, CLEP, IB College and career ready academic programming to support STEM • Five career and technical education (CTE) programs of study, including the Health Careers, will be eligible for grants to ramp up rigorous programming for students in these 5 CTE areas. • Incentive grants to districts to be able to recruit quality licensed math and science teachers to their high needs schools. • STEM professional development and curricular supports will all be developed through RttT funding • Creation of STEM data dashboard to provide the public a window on state progress at bridging the STEM equity gap. STEM instruction, student performance, and student access to quality programs are supported in all RttT assurance areas and by prior STEM program initiatives that are firmly established through existing partnerships and the use of funding from state, federal and private sources.		
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>

### Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

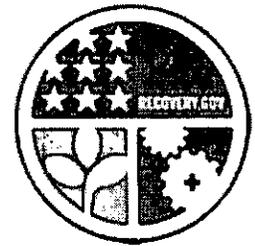
	Available	Tier 1
<b>Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform</b>		<b>Yes</b>
<b>Absolute Reviewer Comments:</b> Minnesota addresses all four education areas specified in the ARRA as well as the State Success Factors Criteria. The state has set forth a comprehensive reform agenda consistent with the RttT vision and goals. The Minnesota application includes specific student achievement targets, focuses on reducing achievement gaps and projects an increase in the per cent of career and college ready high school graduates. The budget presents an overall and project level fiscal plan for allocating RttT resources.		
<b>Total</b>		<b>0</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>359</b>



# Race to the Top

## Technical Review Form - Tier 1

### Minnesota Application #3720MN10



#### A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1
<b>(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>45</b>
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	30
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	10
<p><b>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>A1 (i) The state's K-12 reform agenda is based on the following theory of action applied to all participating LEAs including charter schools: Rigorous standards and assessments, strong systems of evaluation and professional development for teachers and administrators, continual use of data to analyze and solve problems of student learning, and direct intervention for failing schools will lead to classroom instruction for every student that elevates and sustains their academic achievement. Because this theory of action runs through each component of the application, including the work plan, timelines and performance measures, full points were awarded for this sub-criterion. A1 (ii) Full points were not awarded for this sub-criterion because a significant number of teachers and union officials did not sign the Memorandum of Agreement. Strengths of this portion of the application include: (a) The state's Memorandum of Agreement established clear expectations from the outset for participating LEAs. The state used the standard MOU provided by the U.S. Department of Education to specify the terms and conditions for districts and charter schools to participate. (b) A preliminary work plan was attached to the MOU that outlined the scope of the work, anticipated timelines, and mandatory requirements for participating LEAs. A summary of the work plan listing the Department of Education's responsibilities and those of the LEAs was also attached. A weakness of this portion of the application is the following: (c) While there is a strong commitment to the terms, conditions, and scope of the work among LEA leaders with position power such as superintendents (100 percent sign-off) and presidents of school boards (80 percent sign-off), there is extremely low commitment from local union leaders (12 percent of LEA unions representing 20 percent of teachers). In addition the state's teachers union did not submit a letter of support for the application as a whole. This indicates the need for the state and participating LEAs to continue to work with the statewide union and its local branches to build support for the education reforms proposed. As contracts are negotiated in districts across the state in the upcoming months and years, some key reform work could get derailed without higher levels of teacher support. A1 (iii) The state's plan, if successful, has a high enough participation rate to make a large-scale impact on persistent problems of student achievement the state has already identified. The state's effort under Race to the Top will affect 80 percent of the schools, 89 percent of K-12 students in the state, 93 percent of students living in poverty, and the state's largest urban and rural districts. However, the state's goals overall and for subgroups were not included in the narrative and the evidence except for the state's College-and Career-Ready System Indicators and Benchmarks. The state will need to keep a laser-like focus on achievement goals for each sub-group of students, accelerate timelines, make annual targets more ambitious, and increase the amount and types of professional development available to and engaged in by teachers and principals. Some, but not full, points were awarded for this sub-criterion.</p>		

<b>(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>17</b>
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	12
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	5
<p><b>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>A2 (i) The leadership plan and structures to support it at the state and local levels, as outlined in the sub-criterion A2 (i) for (a), (b), and (c), are adequate. Advisory councils, if they function as intended, will provide added public accountability and will increase the participation of key stakeholders. The budget and budget narrative (d) and the plan for sustainability (e) would be strengthened by more detail about the "all funds" approach that will be used by the state. As a result, some, but not full points were awarded for building statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain the reform plan. (a) The state's plan includes leadership and support from the Department of Education in the form of a Race to the Top Office staffed by a director who reports to the Commission of Education and six full time staff. Half the staff will focus on implementing and leading the reforms proposed in the state's plan. The other half will emphasize operations including monitoring, compliance, analysis, and reporting. Another proposed new structure is an Office of Turnaround Schools (OTAS) to work directly with LEAs. Both offices will have advisory councils which will include lawmakers, superintendents, teachers, principals, parents and business leaders. The OTAS advisory council will also include union officials and experts with a track record for making achievement gains with subgroups. The advisory councils will help the Department of Education oversee and administer the activities of the new offices. Other Department of Education positions include staff for the expansion of the Q Comp evaluation system, staff to expand, operate, and manage the longitudinal data system, and staff to plan and coordinate professional development with LEAs including statewide conferences. (b) The state will support participating LEAs through grants, conferences, professional development, on-line resources, increasingly fine-tuned data, and stipends and training for data coaches, school-based mentor teachers, teacher evaluation teams, curriculum directors, principals, teachers, trainers for curriculum, Peer Assistance and Review teams, local administrators of the Q Comp system and district OTAS liaisons. Terms of the grants to the LEAs remain to be worked out, but some preliminary requirements and stipulations could be included here. (c) The state will support effective and efficient operations and processes through grant administration and oversight from the Race to the Top Office, OTAS, and its own statewide financial management system. (d) Budget: It is difficult to tell from the budget and budget narrative how the state will leverage other state funds, including state and federal grant programs, entitlements, stabilization funds, private grants, and in kind donations with Race to the Top funds to support reform strategies. Leveraging funds is a strategy in the application for criterion A2 and a key means of sustainability in the future. The budget narrative should reflect the other funding streams that will be used in the total plan. (e) The state pledges to continue funding from a variety of sources for reform efforts that are validated as successful. More detail would be useful to gauge how realistic the plan for sustainability is. A2 (ii) (a) No letters of support were submitted from the statewide teachers union. The state's elementary and secondary principals association wrote letters of support. (b) The state submitted 51 letters of support for the Race to the Top application including letters from the Governor, the Commissioner of Education, state and federal legislators, institutions of higher education, the state school board association, the state superintendents association, the Board of Education, community rights activists, community organizations, businesses, parent groups, and foundations. As a result of missing a major portion of a key stakeholder group – teachers – full points were not awarded.</p>		
<b>(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>15</b>
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	10

**(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

A3 (i) The state has used funds to pursue reform efforts similar to those of Race to the Top. As a result, full points were awarded. The state has used federal funds from School Improvement Grants, Title I, Title II Part A, American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds, education technology grants, state fiscal stabilization funds, a two percent set aside in state funds for professional development, state funding for Q Comp, and various private foundation grants to pay for the development and use of a growth model for calculating the performance of students in reading and mathematics, a longitudinal data system, and other state educational reforms. State funds pay for assessments for students for college readiness at grades 8 and 10 and for the administration of Advanced Placement examinations and fees. One urban district has closed failing schools and targeted others for turnaround intervention. Another urban district in the state has used elements of the transformation model for a few schools. A3 (ii) The state's track record for raising achievement levels and closing gaps in student performance is weak to-date. As a result, few points were awarded for making significant progress in raising achievement levels and closing the gap. (a) Mathematics performance on state standards-based tests showed a small but steady increase over four years from 2006-2009, but the state did not meet its AYP targets under the No Child Left Behind Act. Reading scores showed a slight average gain over four years, but again the state did not meet its AYP targets. A pattern of decreasing proficiency from elementary grades to middle and high school grades still exists for both reading and mathematics performance. NAEP testing, which draws a representative sample of students from the state, showed higher performance than that of other states, but only a small increase in math for grades 4 and 8 and no increases in reading at grades 4 and 8. (b) Although the state claims to have made "above average" progress in narrowing the achievement gap and there was a slight but steady increase in proficiency for sub-groups, wide gaps still exist. For example, the achievement of African-American students in all subject areas listed – mathematics, science, and reading – was less than half of that of White and Asian-American students. In addition the gap widened between sub-groups from elementary to middle and high school grades. (c) Graduation rates over a five year period showed slight increases overall (2 percent) and a higher percentage of African-American, Hispanic, and American Indian students graduating from high school, but these gains were not strong enough to close the achievement gap which still remains. The graduation rate of African-American, Hispanic, and American Indian students is one-half the graduation rate of White students and well below that of Asian American students.

<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>77</b>
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**B. Standards and Assessments**

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>
<b>(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20

**(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

B1 (i) The Commissioner of Education signed a Memorandum of Agreement in May 2009 to participate in an initiative sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices to develop a common core of state standards in English language arts and mathematics. This indicates the state's commitment to working collaboratively with other states on a common core of state standards. The validation process of the sponsoring organizations, as outlined, indicates that international benchmarks were used. Achieve, ACT, and the College Board determined that the standards prepared graduating high school students to be college and career ready. A majority of states (48), as well as two territories and the District of Columbia participated in the standards consortium. As a result, the application earned a "High" rating and was awarded full points for this sub-criterion. B1 (ii) The Commissioner of Education's strategy to present

the Common Core Standards for the state for English language arts and mathematics to the legislature as part of the revision process required by state statute involves broad collaboration within a tight timeframe with a number of explicitly defined in-state groups, including American Indians whose contributions must be included. In spite of this, the state seems likely to meet its presentation deadline (May 2010) and its adoption deadline (August 2010). All of it must happen before the May 2010 goal for presentation. As a result, full points were awarded for the "adopting standards" sub-criterion.

**(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments**

**10**

**10**

**(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

B2 The state's participation in a number of multi-state consortia for the development of common summative assessments aligned with the Common Core of State Standards in English language arts and Mathematics – Achieve and SMARTER as well as MOSAIC\* for common formative assessments and instructional practices – demonstrates a commitment to ongoing improvement in the quality of the state's assessments. The proposed use of embedded PISA and TIMSS items in state tests and the expansion of testing in science and other content areas beyond paper-and-pencil formats is another indicator that the state wants to upgrade its work of measuring students' progress to standards. Especially noteworthy is the state's efforts to design standards-based assessments for English Language Learners and learners with special needs so that all students in the state have the opportunity to learn to standards. \*Among the three consortia, counting each state separately, the state is working with a majority of states in the United States on common assessments. Achieve involves 27 of 50 states; SMARTER has 23 member states; and MOSAIC includes 25 states.

**(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments**

**20**

**10**

**(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

B3 The presentation of the enhanced standards to the state legislature in an expedited timeframe that leads to adoption in May 2010 is ambitious, but possible. The timeframe for the rollout and introduction of the standards and assessments to stakeholders in the state is realistic. Aligning curriculum frameworks in English language arts, mathematics, and science with benchmarks, integrating STEM subjects throughout the curriculum, and bringing standards for English Language Proficiency, special needs learners, and early childhood students into line with the common core of state standards are all commendable transition initiatives. The professional development needs of teachers and principals, however, are greatly underestimated. For example, the amount of professional development proposed – one day for all teachers in three critical areas – 1) vertical alignment; 2) digital supports for the curriculum; and 3) analysis of summative and interim assessments – is insufficient to insure teachers have the knowledge, skills, and competence they need in these areas to support their teaching to rigorous standards. Another example is the analysis of data from assessments of student learning. It is unclear how the one-day training will be followed up at the school level and/or how much prior knowledge teachers have of how to do this critical work effectively. In other parts of the application, the state proposes grant funding for a data coach for every 35 teachers who will receive an annual stipend, but will remain as a classroom teacher. This is not a realistic model because some of the duties of the data coach involve classroom observation and over-the-shoulder work with teacher teams that will be difficult to accomplish with a full-time teaching schedule. In another part of the application, the state proposes that LEAs establish weekly or biweekly planning time for teachers for job-embedded professional development. Time might be carved out monthly for teachers to learn how to use data in at least four ways: 1) to identify and intervene in a timely way with struggling learners; 2) to align instructional materials and teaching practices with standards and the proposed curriculum frameworks; 3) to determine their own professional development needs in content areas in which students continue to struggle; and 4) to identify instructional practices that are working for students. Similarly, the 1-2 day workshop for administrators for all K-12 subject areas is insufficient to prepare them for the work of evaluating classroom teaching performance in these subjects. As a result the application did not receive full points for this criterion.

**Total**

**70**

**60**

### C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1
<b>(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>18</b>
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:            C1 The state used a grant from the Institute of Educational Sciences to develop a statewide longitudinal data system for all students and is currently seeking a grant from the 2009 Longitudinal Data System Recovery Act Program to add features and platforms to the system. Based on self-report data, the state has in place nine of the twelve elements outlined in the America COMPETES Act. Elements to be completed include the following: a teacher identifier system matched to students taught; student-level transcript information; and information regarding successful student transitions to postsecondary education. Two points per America COMPETES Act element were awarded for a total of 18 points.</p>		
<b>(C)(2) Accessing and using State data</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:            C2 The state's plan is well-thought out. It includes using focus groups for recommendations for enhancements to the current system to insure engagement by key stakeholders. The enhancements will include elements outlined in the America COMPETES Act that are missing from the present system, supplements to the Educator Portal, the design of portals for parents, researchers, and the community, dashboards for reports for Kindergarten readiness, progress in math and science based on the STEM initiative, College and Career Readiness, and websites for turnaround schools. Efforts to make the site more user-friendly for teachers and principals are also planned. Performance Measures appropriately track use of the system, but may not be ambitious enough. For example, since principals will need to access information for the Q Comp evaluation system before 2013-2014, a participation rate of 90% in 2012-2013 is not consistent with the state's plan. As a result, full points were not awarded.</p>		
<b>(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>12</b>
<p>(C)(3) Reviewer Comments:            C3 One of the components of this portion of the application gets high marks. The state has made impressive moves to increase the number and types of instructional improvement systems available to teachers, principals, and other administrators. However, the state needs to do more than make available a proposed research portal giving approved researchers access to a data warehouse to conduct studies of the effects and outcomes of the reform plan. To strengthen accountability, a more aggressive approach is needed to insure that each component of the reform plan is evaluated. Also, the use of a data coach for every 35 teachers who will receive an annual stipend but will remain as a classroom teacher is not a realistic model for the sophisticated level and frequency of data use needed by principals and teachers. Some of the duties of the data coach will be difficult to accomplish with a full-time teaching schedule. This model should be further explained and/or revised. As a result, full points were not awarded for this criterion.</p>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>34</b>

### D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1
<b>(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>8</b>
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

D1 (i) The state Board of Teaching has rules for the authorization of alternative preparation programs for licensing for both teachers and principals and is currently considering a recommendation to revise them so more alternative preparation programs can be authorized. Currently, however, by state statute, all alternative preparation programs for teachers and principals must involve institutions of higher education in the design and delivery of these programs. The state's two programs for alternative teacher preparation – Teach for America and Twin Cities Fellows – are sponsored by Hamline University. As a result, since no providers other than institutions of higher education are allowed under state law to run alternative programs, no points were awarded for this sub-criterion. D1 (ii) Currently, the two programs for alternative teacher preparation are in the state's two largest urban districts. Both programs include four out of the five elements defined by the Race to the Top application. No data was provided on program completion, placement, or longevity of alternately-licensed teachers. No comparable alternative licensing programs for administrators have been authorized. Because specific information was not provided regarding alternative licensing programs for principals, three out of seven points were awarded for this sub-criterion. D1 (iii) Every two years, the Commissioner of Education reports to the state legislature's education committee on the patterns and shortages of teachers by subject area and by regions in the state, projections over a 5 year period in each district, and progress in hiring. The Commissioner's survey collects information directly from districts, including all charter schools, as well as from the state's Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. Data is then analyzed by Department of Education staff. Because there is an identification process in place, five out of seven points were awarded. Full points would have been awarded if the preparation process for teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage was more clearly outlined.

<b>(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>41</b>
(i) Measuring student growth	5	5
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	10
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	5
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	21

**(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

D2 (i) Because the state uses a growth model for measuring student progress (growth and attainment) in reading and mathematics from grades 3 – 8 for reporting at the school, district, and state levels, all LEAs in the state have a consistent approach to measuring student growth over time. Because the metric used is derived from a comparison of each student's scaled scores from one year to the next, student progress is measured individually. D2 (ii) The state's Q Comp system, currently in use in 39 districts and 32 charter schools in the state, provides a strong foundation on which to build a more rigorous and consistent evaluation system. The state's plan for developing performance evaluation rubrics for teachers and principals to gauge their levels of effectiveness and a framework for evaluation that includes data on student achievement as a significant measure of effectiveness will include teachers and principals. The timeframe for completion – the end of 2010 – is achievable. Given this strong foundational work, the clarity of the plan, and the plausible timeline, the Performance Measures – annual targets – for this phase of the work are too low and inconsistent with the state's goal of speeding up the adoption of Q Comp by LEAs participating in the Race to the Top. The state should be able to meet these goals by the end of 2011. As a result, full points were not awarded for this sub-criterion. D2 (iii) For principals: The state currently provides data on student growth and attainment by school to principals. It is unclear from the application whether tenured principals receive annual performance evaluations from superintendents and whether data on student achievement can be included in their performance reviews. For teachers: State law requires teachers in their first three years to be evaluated three times per year. One component of the Q Comp system requires the evaluation/observation of teachers three times per year. The application does not explicitly state that these evaluations will be linked to student achievement data. If they will be linked to student achievement data, the application should state what interim achievement data will be used for evaluations during the school year. Not enough evidence is provided to award full points for this sub-

criterion. D2 (iv) The state's Board of Teaching is expected to authorize a tiered system for licensure requiring evidence of student and school achievement for teachers and principals to progress from tier to tier. The state's plan, through the enhanced Q Comp system, is commendable because it builds on these licensure changes by promoting, compensating, and rewarding with professional advancement only principals and teachers in the top tier who have demonstrated success in elevating student achievement. The state's plan also reinforces the central message that student achievement is the most important educational priority of the state. The evaluation system's components for developing principals and teachers with coaches, mentors, and targeted professional development and supporting struggling teachers and principals by expanding programs like PAR and TAP meshes with state laws for termination and non-renewal. This should help promote consistency across participating LEAs. The Department of Education's already existing supports for Q Comp – a School Improvement Division, a statewide advisory committee, and a network of Q Comp users – will be augmented by the availability of student growth data by teacher which is expected to go live on the state's longitudinal data system in 2011. Given this level of scaffolding and clarity of purpose about the scope of the work to be done, the annual targets set in the Performance Measures are not ambitious enough. Some aspects of the plan can be speeded up by at least a year to 2012 for 100% accomplishment. These include developing, retaining, compensating, and promoting principals and teachers and removing ineffective teachers and principals. Because of this, full points were not awarded for this sub-criterion.

<b>(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>5</b>
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	3
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	2

**(D)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

D3 (i) (ii) This part of the application is weak because baseline data and evidence have not been provided, the annual targets are set for three years into the future, and criteria for local grants are not stated. The state's plan is contingent on the scaling up of the Q Comp system, enhanced by the requirements of Race to the Top, to its 353 participating LEAs. Only then, according to the application's narrative, will comparable data be available to properly determine individual teacher and principal effectiveness because current performance evaluations are inconsistent across districts and data on student growth and attainment linked to individual teachers are not yet available. The state's plan is to use Race to the Top funds for grants to individual LEAs over a several year period beginning in 2010 to come up with local solutions, such as more flexible Human Resources policies and incentives that promote teacher leadership. Given the importance of this element of school reform, a more ambitious and aggressive approach is needed. As a result, low points were awarded for this criterion.

<b>(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>7</b>
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**(D)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

D4 The state's partnership with the Bush Foundation and the 11 teacher preparation programs the foundation is supporting is commendable. The application does not state whether the Board of Teaching and the college, university, and alternative certification programs will use the same definition of student achievement and student growth for the purposes of identifying effective teachers and their preparation programs. It is important to have agreed-upon achievement and growth targets to insure uniformity in this measurement. There is no rationale provided for limiting the reporting data on teacher and principal preparation programs to those that have at least 20 graduates. If there is a legitimate reason for excluding this data or if there are constraints within the longitudinal data system, it should be clearly stated in the application. Although the Performance Measures for this criterion are tied in with the scale up of the Q Comp system, the annual targets should be at a higher percent than 60% for teacher preparation programs and 25% for principal preparation programs by the end of 2013. One reason is that school level performance data – a key measure of principal effectiveness – is already available. Another reason is that there are a very small number of principal preparation programs in place (only 11) and no alternative licensure programs. Also, no plan was included in the application for

how the information about teacher preparation programs would be made publically available. For the above reasons, the application received some, but not full, points on this criterion.

<b>(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>
<p>(D)(5) Reviewer Comments:  D5 Since excellent classroom instruction is at the heart of the state's theory of action, the support for excellent instruction – strong, focused professional development – is a key component of this application. State-supported professional development as outlined in this application consists of a statewide Principals Academy for all participating LEA principals, teacher induction for all new teachers for a one year period (longer for teachers in high poverty schools), school-based data coaches, additional professional development for teachers and principals in turnaround schools, training in the content of STEM subjects, and time at the school level for professional learning communities, collaboration around instruction, and the roll-out of new standards and assessments. While this is an impressive list, it needs supplementation and coordination at the school level to effectively change and improve teaching practice. For example, the teacher induction plan calls for a master teacher to spend one hour per week mentoring a new teacher. This seems insufficient given the range of knowledge and skills a new teacher needs to be effective. Also, two days of training for the mentor/master teacher may not be enough preparation for the new role he/she will assume. Similarly, the state's plan for the Principals Academy to deliver the National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) training program in cohorts organized by region relies on a train the trainer model. The state's track record with this model for principal training is not strong. Although forty-eight principals were ready in June 2007 to be facilitators after a year of training, baseline data for the Performance Indicator shows that only 10% of the state's principals are currently trained. Other, more robust supports may be needed for the scale up proposed by the state. As a result, full points were not awarded for this criterion.</p>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>71</b>

### E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>
<b>(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:  E1 By state statute and under the federal No Child Left Behind Act, the Commissioner of Education is required to assist school sites and districts not meeting federal expectations for student academic achievement. This gives the Commissioner of Education general authority to intervene in low performing schools and districts. As a result, the application is awarded full points for this criterion.</p>		
<b>(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>35</b>
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	30
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:  E2 (i) The state does have a system for identifying its persistently lowest achieving schools based on NCLB assessment data and the state's growth model. Elementary and secondary schools with the lowest average scores in reading and mathematics over a 3 year period and the lowest percentage of students "on track" to achieve reading and mathematics proficiency are designated as persistently low achieving. Because the state has a system, it earned the maximum number of points on this criterion.  E2 (ii) A key component of the state's plan for turning around its lowest achieving schools - a proposed Office of Turn Around Schools (OTAS) directly accountable to the Commissioner of Education – has strength as a statewide model. Staffed by educators with expertise in turnaround strategies, connected to a university with research capacity, and having links to schools directly and through district liaisons, the OTAS is structured to provide a significant amount of oversight and monitoring as well as know-</p>		

how and support for schools. A further strength of the state's plan is the inclusion of elements that have track records of success, such as, increased professional development for teachers to build their content knowledge, pedagogy, and strategies for reaching struggling learners, expanded learning time for students through a longer school day, specialized leadership training for principals, more frequent supervision of principals and teachers, close tracking of student performance through interim assessments, and opportunities for parent involvement. In the two largest urban districts in the state, the following intervention models outlined in Race to the Top have been used: Turnarounds = 3 School Closures = 1 Transformations = 7 (These transformation models contained a few, but not all, of the elements required by Race to the Top for a transformation model.) All of the above interventions were in urban elementary schools. Of the thirty-five schools that have been currently identified by the state as persistently low performing, the majority are urban secondary schools. Because of this, the state's plan to use the results and lessons learned from the past may not be fully applicable to the challenges of the work ahead. Most, but not full points were awarded.

<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>45</b>
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**F. General**

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>
<b>(F)(1) Making education funding a priority</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>

**(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

F1 (i) According to evidence provided by the applicant, expenditures for K-12 and Higher Education in FY2009 increased by 1 percent from those of FY2008. F1(ii) State policies require the distribution of an average of \$481 more per student in state and local general educational funding for LEAs with 20 percent or more students eligible for the free or reduced-price lunch program. State law requires each district to allocate at least 95 percent of compensatory revenue to school(s) housing the students whose poverty qualifies the district for the additional funding. Also, Title I funds and state compensatory aid are targeted to schools and districts with high concentrations of poverty.

<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>34</b>
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**(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

F2 (i) Currently there is no cap on the expansion of charter schools in the state. One hundred and fifty-two (152) charter schools operate in the state serving 31,728 of its public school students. This represents about 4 percent of the total number of public school students in the state. Types of charter schools range from elementary, middle, and high school grades to K-12 configurations and include three virtual high schools. Each charter school has its own status as an LEA. One potentially limiting factor is a provision in the charter school law that allows a district's school board to disapprove the location of a charter school within its district by written resolution. However, the Commissioner of Education is empowered to waive this provision of the statute. Since it is unclear from the application whether this provision has prevented or limited the start up of any charter schools in the state, high, but not full points are awarded for this sub-criterion. F2 (ii) The state's charter school law was recently revised specifically to close some loopholes in the original statute. The new law significantly increases the accountability required of charter school authorizers who are now under the direct oversight of the Commissioner of Education who must review their performance fully and formally every five years. Although charter school authorizers have control over approving, reauthorizing, and/or closing charter schools, the Commissioner of Education now has the power to take corrective action if an authorizer's performance is unsatisfactory. Of the 131 charter school applications received over the past five years, only 47% were approved. Nineteen schools have been closed in the past five years primarily for financial reasons. Full points were awarded for this sub-criterion. F2 (iii) Based on the evidence provided in the application from FY2008 which included budget formulas and allocations, charter schools receive more state and federal aid per pupil than public school districts. This is part of the

state's plan to compensate for charter schools' inability to levy local property taxes. In addition, charter schools receive full not partial funding from the district(s) from which they draw students for providing services for students with disabilities enrolled in their schools. Because the applicant did not include more recent comparison data on charter school funding from FY2009, full points were not awarded for this sub-criterion. F2 (iv) The state provides 90% lease assistance to cover the cost of facilities for charter schools. This coverage frees up operating revenue for charter schools to use for other school programs and initiatives. Full points were awarded for this sub-criterion. F2 (v) A new part of the state's 2009 revised statute authorizes LEAs to operate within-district autonomous public schools with features similar to those of charter schools. The law allows these schools to have exemptions from many state and district laws and regulations. Teachers and administrators maintain their district and union affiliations, but can waive some negotiated rights. Since the law is new, the state has no track record for implementation. As a result, some but not full points were awarded for this sub-criterion.

**(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions**

5

5

**(F)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

F3 The state has a history of taking a leadership role in promoting new ideas for educational reform, translating them into initiatives, and undergirding them with policies, legislation, and support from elected officials, especially its governors, to bring them to scale. The state's entrepreneurial approach to securing funding from private and public sources and using an all-funds approach to budgeting are assets for the work ahead.

**Total**

55

49

**Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM**

	Available	Tier 1
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM</b>	15	15
<b>Competitive Reviewer Comments:</b> Although professional development planned for teachers to develop their content knowledge in STEM disciplines needs to be deepened and increased, particularly since the state's plan is to integrate these disciplines into the common core of standards for mathematics at all grade levels, the state has clearly made proficiency in STEM subjects for all students a priority. Evidence is presented throughout the application. The Longitudinal Data System (Criterion C) will include a STEM data dashboard and digital resources for 24/7 teacher professional development in mathematics and science. STEM grants will be awarded to the lowest achieving schools in need of turnaround (Criterion E) and will be included in the professional development targeted to teachers and principals of these schools. A Math and Science Academy with 9 regional offices throughout the state has already trained 1200 secondary teachers in 4 years and will expand enrollment to include elementary teachers (Criterion D). The common core of state standards in mathematics at all grade levels will be aligned with STEM (Criterion B). The state has collected baseline data for students currently graduating with degrees in STEM disciplines from 2-year and 4-year colleges to begin performance measurement. Statewide public awareness campaigns, forums, and summits that drew 10,000 parents and students, and outreach to the business and university communities have built support for the STEM initiative. As a result, the application is awarded full points for the Emphasis on STEM Competitive Preference Priority.		
<b>Total</b>	15	15

**Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform**

	Available	Tier 1
<b>Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform</b>		Yes

**Absolute Reviewer Comments:**

The state's plan includes innovative ideas for education reform that are aligned with those outlined in Race to the Top's four reform areas. Commendable components of the plan include the Q Comp system, Math and Science Academies for teachers, a model of data reporting and analysis that uses growth and attainment as measures of student achievement, extending the STEM disciplines to all grades for all students, an identification system for low-performing schools, and statewide and district structures for assisting them. Some areas of concern include a low percentage of support from local teachers unions for the reform plan, the need for more ambitious timeframes for implementation, loopholes in current charter school laws that weaken accountability, lack of alternative certification programs for teachers and principals that operate independently of institutions of higher education, and the need for a more robust professional development plan to strengthen classroom instruction.

**Total**

**0**

**Grand Total**

**500**

**351**



# Race to the Top

## Technical Review Form - Tier 1

### Minnesota Application #3720MN-4



#### A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1
<b>(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>32</b>
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	15
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	12

**(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

(A)(1)(i): MN describes itself as ready to take full advantage of RTTT funding to build on its strong track record and to accelerate the transformation of its system. It is one of the few states that had already created the legal environment necessary to support the assurances before RTTT was conceived. It rests its worthiness on four points: • They are doing well: Its current, high academic performance including 1) a strong track record on national and international tests; 2) graduation and proficiency rates among the top in the nation; and 3) recognized STEM expertise. • They know they need to do better: Focused work on closing its persistent achievement gap is well underway. MN is keeping attention on STEM and has instituted legislation requiring Algebra I for all in grade 8 and Algebra II for all for graduation. • They know how to get better: MN has quietly been a leader in education reform for twenty years. It was the first state to support dual credit, the first to pass a charter school law, and it continues to lead in other innovative practices. • They can be trusted to get results: With its IQ Comp Program MN is the only state with a system to support, evaluate, and compensate its teachers (notably absent are principals) already in place. Thirty percent of MN's students are in states that already use IQ Comp Evaluation, meaning of teacher evaluation, professional development and career pathways is already linked to student outcomes. MN has particularly specific goals in some instances, stating that over the next five years: • 10,000 effective teachers, as MN describes as defined by one or more years of student growth per year, will be prepared through revamped teacher preparation programs. • 9506 new teachers will enter the profession through a robust induction model, • 47,704 teachers will succeed with an integrated model of support, evaluation and licensure. • 4,467 teachers will have received intensive support. • 1,930 principals will take part in an intensive nationally-recognized development exercise. • 782,000 students will benefit from regular interim assessment and their teachers will benefit from the skills and tools to make the most of the data • 35 of our most struggling schools will be turned around. • Teachers, principals, administrators, parents, and community members will have data at their fingertips they can use to understand what's working and why. MN offers a strong and compelling proposal that describes a State long committed to education and the "moral imperative that every student has the right to graduate with the potential to pursue a post-secondary education and to be ready for the workforce." RTTT funds will provide MN the means to accelerate, deepen, and build on work, programs, and initiatives begun in the last decade. In MN's case, no changes in direction or adjustments to policy are required. RTTT funds would be jet fuel to the work underway and starter fluid for other projects that would help it achieve its goals. It earns high points because it describes its reform agenda, its outcomes, and a reasonably clear path between the two. It does not receive full points because there are places that lack clarity or that need to be more fully developed. (A)(1)(ii): MN worked hard to be transparent and collaborate with its teachers, principals, and stakeholders through regional meetings and webinars during the crafting of its RTTT

proposal. Still, it could not obtain the signatures that signal all of the necessary partners are "strongly committed to the State's plans." While 80% of LEAs signed MOUs and are counted as "participating," MN did not require signatures from all three entities (superintendent, school board, and union) in order to include it. Most school board presidents and school superintendents (or their respective equivalent) signed, but MN has signatures from only 12% of the unions representing 20% of MN's students. Additionally there is a clause in the MOU that allows LEAs to disengage from the RTTT work with 30 day's notice. If this were the end of the story, MN would earn very low points. Extra consideration and value is given to the fact that Minneapolis and St. Paul have all three signatures, showing full support as participating LEAs. It is critical that these two districts are active participants given their involvement in the planned work around struggling schools and equitable distribution of teachers. While it is important that all districts are active participants and partners, these two districts, simply because of their size and the number and types of students, are central to much of MN's work. To its credit, MN explains mitigating circumstances related to open contracts and bargaining timelines. The proposal also states that district leaders believe LEAs will have the necessary teachers' union support to do the work when the time comes. For all of these reasons, MN is awarded points at the low end of the medium range for (ii). (A)(1)(iii): MN's states that its RTTT grant will effect the "LEAs that support 93 percent of the state's students, 93 percent of our Free or Reduced Lunch student, 93 percent of our below proficient students, and 96 percent of our minority students." This qualifies as broad statewide impact. More evidence of statewide impact is MN's progress in closing the achievement gaps among subgroups as shown by increased achievement on assessments and in graduation rates. For example, overall MN graduation rates were up 2% to 72.8 % between 2003 and 2008. Within subgroups however, the increases were 7.1 percentage points for Hispanics; 6.4 percentage points for black, non-Hispanic origin; 5.6 percentage points for American Indian/Alaska Native; and 4.3 percentage points for students with limited English proficiency. However, MN's overall increases in achievement and graduation rates are not particularly impressive and seem to depend on the achievement gains of specific subgroups. It appears MN is closing its achievement gaps by holding the top steady while the bottom catches up. There is little evidence that majority students are better off today than they were a decade ago. MN earns almost full points because it is serving its subgroups well as described in (iii).

<b>(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>21</b>
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	17
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	4

**(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

(A)(2)(i): Almost full points are awarded here. A more detailed budget, particularly related to program sustainability might be the revision that will make the difference. As the following summary shows, MN's proposal: (a) describes its leadership and leadership teams, which have ample capacity; (b) outlines the responsibilities of every group with responsibilities toward the RTTT goals; (c) includes a team and a process for tracking both fiscal and student achievement related to RTTT; (d) ensured its budget for RTTT is aligned and further enhanced its funds with additional grants from its business community; and (e) will use the process it already has to identify and maintain successful initiatives. More specifically: MDE (Minnesota Department of Education) contributions include: 1) Continuing to involve a broad range of stakeholders through an advisory board and formal communication channels with LEAs. 2) Implementing with integrity and ongoing monitoring. 3) Developing a culture of collaboration and support. 4) Capturing and sharing the most effective practices used by LEAs to spread widely those that work and discontinue those that do not. 5) Maximize effectiveness and sustainability by aligning programs with ongoing state and federal monies. 6) Providing specific support through: o Office of Turnaround Schools (and other offices and agencies listed elsewhere), o Increased MDE staff, o Additional MDE management to implement the Longitudinal Data System and to create and maintain additional reports, and o MDE staff to create professional development content and oversee implementation of PD programs related to RTTT assurances B through F. RTTT team contributions: This team, newly created, will have a director who reports to the Commissioner of Education. The team will be divided between staff that LEADS implementation of programming

(working with LEAs) and staff that TRACKS the implementation along key metrics to monitor individual and overall RTTT effectiveness. Additionally the RTTT Team will hold annual conventions and will secure an outside evaluator midway through the grant period. LEA Contributions include the following: 1) Control over 80 percent of the RTTT budget will flow to LEAs, which MN believes makes sense given the record of successful local implementation. 2) Attend RTTT conferences. 3) Provide trainers and professional development to all participating teachers to improve instruction and implement "renewed" state standards. 4) Provide trained teacher evaluation teams with inter-rater reliability. 5) Develop/provide the capacity to implement full spectrum peer assistance and review programs. 6) Provide trained coaches and mentors to implement induction. 7) Provide 3 to 5 years of ongoing mentoring from those institutions of higher education participating the Bush Foundation work for their graduates. RTTT Advisory Council has the responsibility to: 1) Oversee implementation. 2) Represent the P-20 community with key individuals. 3) Engage the larger community beyond educators. RTTT funds will be used to build a culture of collaboration and support by employing training and staff development that: 1) Empowers teachers to understand and take more ownership of the effectiveness of the practice through access to job-embedded weekly professional learning communities, observation and evaluations that indicate instructional strengths and areas for improvement and reward teachers through leadership opportunities. 2) Create formal systems that reinforce and support career development in the teaching profession through programs such as comprehensive induction support and peer assistance and review for teachers struggling to perform. 3) Provide tailored professional development 4) Increase principal accountability for student outcomes and provide training to support principals with multi-measure, formal evaluations and professional development for teachers. MDE describes, in enough detail, the process it will use to manage and provide oversight to RTTT funds. It also describes a series of short- and long-term funding sources that support the RTTT agenda now and in the future. MN lists the specifics of these in its proposal. It is hard to tell how much of its effort is RTTT supported and how much funding is coming from other sources, which goes back to the lack of budget specificity mentioned earlier. Because MN was philosophically committed to an RTTT agenda before RTTT, it doesn't seem as important as it might if a state were suddenly shifting dollars from existing programs to support RTTT work, meaning those dollars would move away after the grant ends. MN began this work a decade ago and will continue it, with or without RTTT funds. RTTT allows MN to expand its work, identify what is working best, and to concentrate resources and efforts on those most promising practices. (A)(2)(ii): Low-medium points are given here. Although MN explains why the majority of teachers' unions have not signed MOUs, the fact remains that they have not done so. Whole-hearted, enthusiastic participation is required to make the kind of shifts MN is attempting. Teachers need to be supportive. It is comforting that St. Paul and Minneapolis teachers have agreed to participate, particularly since these two districts are important to the success of the proposal. It is important that administrators are supportive. And it is important that the community at large, including the philanthropic community as evidenced by the grants it has provided to support this work, is interested and participating. MN earns points for garnering the support of the school board, community, administrative and for the teacher support in selected participating districts.

<b>(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>24</b>
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	19

**(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

(A)(3)(i): MN is unusual in that it had 1) an established culture of high expectations related to education and 2) it had created a legal environment friendly to the assurances before RTTT was put in place. Full points are awarded because MN can point to progress it has made in every assurance area as described below. (A)(3)(ii): MN has focused on student outcomes overall and by subgroup for more than a decade. It is one of America's highest achieving states as shown by: 1) A record of steady growth, reflected on national and/or international tests that show growth overall and in subgroups; 2) A graduation rate that has risen slightly to 72.8%, with most of the gains coming from minority subgroups; 3) Proficiency rates among the top in the nation; and 4) A focus on math and science

grounded in rigorous standards, Beginning in 2003, MN lists multiple projects and initiatives for each of the assurances that are responsible for the growth it has made. Two systems, built to make data useful to MN educators, that deserve special mention are: • MP-20 College and Work Ready, and •IQ Comp, which is MN's system of teacher evaluation and compensation that uses student data as one measure. Also of particular interest is MN's approach to struggling schools. Beginning in 2007, MNDOE implemented a plan to refresh or restart the bottom 25% of Minneapolis' city schools. St. Paul is using other programs and having great success according to the examples cited in the proposal. Also to MN's credit, it has begun closing charter schools that have poor academic or fiscal performance. MN earns high, but not full points related to (ii) because it does not show how its use of data drove its increases in student achievement. And, while there are increases, the increases are fairly modest.

<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>77</b>
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**B. Standards and Assessments**

	Available	Tier 1
<b>(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:                      (B)(1)(i): MN earns full points because it is participating in the Common Core Initiative. It has a process in place that meets its legislative requirements and that is expected to lead to the Common Core being adopted in May 2010. MN is taking care of the legal requirements: There are additional, specific legislative requirements that MN will adhere to by making technical adjustments and modifications to the standards (i.e., standards must be grade-by-grade, must include contributions of MN American Indian, etc.). B)(1)(ii): MN earns full points because it is implementing a full menu of supports to facilitate implementation of the standards. Some highlights of the MDE plan include: 1) Funding to local LEAs to develop local curricula, increase instructional effectiveness, and help unpack the standards at the local level; 2) An RFP that gives preference to STEM embedded content, to develop content frameworks; 3) One day of specialized, vertically aligned, web-based or supported, professional development for every teacher that is related to the standards, based on the needs of students; 4) Ten days of training to educators in turnaround schools that covers more intensive strategies related to teaching standards and high-needs students; and 5) Training for LEA administrators; and 6) Support for a variety of programs designed to get more minority students into STEM courses and on the STEM track.</p>		
<b>(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:                      (B)(2) MN has joined 3 consortia to forward its assessment work. MN is leading the SMARTER consortium for its summative assessment work. It has joined the Formative Assessment Consortium. It will also continue as part of the American Diploma Project. All of this work is in addition to participating in TIMSS and PISA as a mini-nation. It earns full points because (i) it is working jointly toward high-quality assessments with (ii) a significant number of states. The number of states currently participating in SMARTER alone qualifies MN as involved with a "significant" number of states.</p>		
<b>(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:                      B)(3): Full points are awarded. MN has the experience, the capacity, and a plan to accomplish this work. MN has a history of successfully implementing standards as shown by how well its students do on national and international assessments. The work plan it proposes is one developed by a state that</p>		

knows how to do deep standards work. For example, it doesn't talk about aligning the standards to its existing curriculum, assessments, and training. It starts with the Common Core standards and then describes what will happen in order for all elements of the MN system to align to new standards. MN's timeline balances the urgency with the amount of work and begins scheduling major activities in June 2010. The work plan is a collaborative effort that depends on regional and local districts. It is a statewide rollout that includes: 1) Developing curricular frameworks to "unpack" the standards; 2) Developing and implementing on-line, statewide interim assessments aligned to the standards, and 3) Revising both its English learner and its early childhood standards to bring them into alignment with the Common Core. MN set specific performance measures for many components of its proposal. Examples of these measurable outcomes include: • 100% of teachers in turnaround schools will complete the training for "Turnaround Schools," and •75% of teachers statewide will access digital and web-based instructional and professional development tools 3 or more times per year. This is a state that is clear about what it wants and what success looks like.

<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>70</b>
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**C. Data Systems to Support Instruction**

	Available	Tier 1
<b>(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>18</b>

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(C)(1): MN currently meets 9 of the 12 America COMPETES elements and will be in complete compliance by the end of 2010. MN earns almost full points, missing a few points because MN will come into complete compliance in December, after the date identified in the RTTT RFP. The months between August and December will not have a long-term effect on MN's ultimate success in raising student achievement, but the RTTT criteria is quite specific. MN is a state that values data and using data as information to improve learning as shown by its progress in this area before RTTT existed. In brief, MN's status/progress/plans related to component are: 1) Private, unique student identifiers: MN does this for every student via its SERVS system. (2 pts.) 2) Student-level enrollment, demographic, program information: MN began this in 1998. (2 pts.) 3) Student-level information about when students enter, exit, transfer, and complete programs P-16: This is in place for school aid programs. MDE and Office of Higher Education recently established data sharing agreements for the state's P-20 data warehouse. (2 pts.) 4) Ability to communicate with institutions of higher education: It is legal and has been started. (2 pts.) 5) State data audit system: The SERVS system has this capacity. (2 pts.) 6) Yearly test records: This has been available since 2006. (2 pts.) 7) Information on students not tested: SERVS generates reports, based on enrollment during testing periods, by subgroup on each report card. (2 pts.) 8) Teacher identifier system matched to students: Teachers have identifying numbers that are scheduled to be attached to courses and students by the end of 2010. (0 pts – this misses the required time frame) 9) Student-level transcript information: High school is complete and middle and elementary schools are in progress. Full transcript information should be available by the end of 2010. (0 pts – this misses the required time frame) 10) Student-level college readiness: ACT scores are collected and now MDE has a data sharing agreement to collect AP and CLEP scores. (2 pts.) 11) Student transitions to postsecondary education: This component is incomplete, but will be available from the new P-20 Warehouse beginning in 2010 – 2011. ((0 pts – this misses the required time frame) 12) Other information to address adequate preparation for post secondary: The state collects key indicators of college readiness (e.g., Dual Credit, EPAS) and will add early indicators (e.g., attendance, number of failing grades). (2 pts.)

<b>(C)(2) Accessing and using State data</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(C)(2): Full points are given. Comments in (C)(1) and (C)(2) provide an overview of MN's plan to update the functionality of its data system.

<b>(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>
<p>(C)(3) Reviewer Comments:                  ((C)(3): MN has a strong data system in place and already makes much of its data available to its stakeholders. (C)(3)(i): MN earns full points for (i). It plans to improve its system so that it functions as a local instructional improvement system. MN plans to 1) enhance its current system to make it more user friendly and to improve the functionality to provide more data; 2) create new portals for parents, turnaround schools, and researchers; 3) develop a STEM dashboard to help determine how well schools and districts are doing at preparing students to be STEM ready; and 4) publish key indicators. MN has set very specific targets for each of these activities. One worth highlighting that 85% of the portal users will be "satisfied with accessibility, format, and type(s) of data available of P-20' Research Portal. (C)(3)(ii): MN earns full points for (ii). Particularly germane to "using data to improve instruction," and "supporting participating LEAs" are the instruction support systems MN plans to build and implement including: 1) MEIRS (Minnesota Early Warning System), a web-based dashboard that would capture both achievement and non-achievement data P-20; 2) A RFP for an interim assessment system; 3) A FRP for digital delivery of professional development on research-based instructional strategies; and 4) State-developed, web-delivered; professional development on topics like interpreting data. MN will provide concrete support to LEAs in the form of coaches and 5 days of paid professional development time over the life of the grant. (C)(3)(iii): MN has committed to making its P-20 system available to researchers. It is not clear how directive MN will be about making sure that the research and its results are useful to MN. Nor is it clear that MN will or should have research considerations in mind during the design phase, even though the argument can be made that these characteristics are implied in the rubric. Nonetheless, with its history of attending to data, it seems reasonable to assume MN will be smart about these aspects, too, and full points related to (iii) are awarded. Overall, MN's plan to ensure that data is used to improve instruction is feasible and seems likely to result in a teaching force with the skills and time to use data well.</p>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>41</b>

**D. Great Teachers and Leaders**

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>
<b>(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>8</b>
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:                  (D)(1)(i): MN not only allows, it has two operational alternative certification pathways for teachers. It submits a bi-annual Teacher Supply and Demand Report, complete with 5-year projections, to the legislature identifying patterns and locations of shortages. Since both of the alternate programs operate in conjunction with IHEs, less than full points are awarded. (5 pts.) (D)(1)(ii): MN allows alternative certification for principals, but there are no functioning programs. MN states there is not a shortage of principals, but the source of this information is not clear. (3 pts. awarded) (D)(1)(iii) It is not clear that there is a well-developed process for evaluating and monitoring these alternative programs in place, so no points are awarded for that category.</p>		
<b>(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>42</b>
(i) Measuring student growth	5	5
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	10
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	6
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	21
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

(D)(2)(i): MN has had the capacity to measure individual student growth, with unique identifiers, for some time and so earns full points. (D)(2)(ii): As mentioned in (A)(1), MN implemented Q Comp—a system of professional development, teacher evaluation, and performance-based compensation—in 2005. Currently LEAs serving 30% of students participate in this system. Q Comp has two requirements especially germane to RTTT: • 60% of the performance bonus is related to a mix of student and teacher performance, and • Traditional salary schedules are replaced with performance-based increases. Current funding for Q Comp is \$169 per pupil of state aid and up to \$91 of district money. A 2008 external review found “a significant and positive correlation between the number of years a school has been implementing Q Comp and student achievement.” MN will enhance Q Comp by: 1) Convening a representative and expert group to develop a teacher- and principal-led “recommended” state rubric for teacher and principal evaluation so that LEAs have a best-practice model; 2) Ensuring more consistent, supportive and rigorous teacher and principal evaluation by enhancing Q Comp requirements; 3) Ensuring all participating LEAs are on Q Comp and fully participating by 2012; 4) Strengthening and targeting professional development supports for tenured teachers and principals; 5) Redesigning principal preparation and licensure and professional development linked to multiple measures against licensure standards; 6) Expanding peer assistance and review to provide additional support and development opportunities; and 7) Promoting transparency by reporting aggregated evaluation results and enforcing proper data collection. This is a very strong plan built on a history of good work. One missing element is the connection of the principal evaluation to student achievement. A representative and knowledgeable panel is being convened to design the principal evaluation rubric, but it is not clear that student results will necessarily be an element in the final product. The second missing element is all of the LEAs that are not participating. Although MN sets a goal of having 100% of participating LEAs using Q Comp by 2012, that effects less than 1/3 of the state’s students. Medium points are earned for (ii) due to the missing elements. (D)(2)(iii): Teachers must be evaluated at least 3 times per year, but it is not clear that all principals will ever move into an evaluation system that includes annual evaluations. Although page 125 references 100% of the principals having annual evaluations by 2013, there seem to be some principals outside the system, protected by tenure. This is simply not as clear as it should be regarding principals and MN earns 5 of the 5 possible points for teachers, but only 1 of the 5 possible points for principals. (D)(2)(iv): MN has a good start and a feasible plan to put the necessary technological structures in place. It has the necessary building blocks in terms of human capacity and a collaborative and productive approach to getting the work done, especially in regard to teachers. Problematic for principals are 1) that tenured principals are, basically, exempt from the new system and 2) all MN has at this time is a process to develop a system. MN earns all of the points for this criteria associated with teachers (14 total) because of its full treatment of both (a) and (b) and half of the points associated with principals because it has a plan to address (a) and (b) for principals (7 total). Although not all of the components are completely defined, this is addressed in other parts of the proposal evaluation.

<b>(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>10</b>
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	7
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	3

**(D)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

(D)(3)(i): MN’s system does not well define effective teachers and principals and, in fact, considers 97% of its teachers to be highly qualified. As described in other sections {including (D)(2)} efforts are underway to improve this situation. MN is well aware that there is significant variation in student progress toward grade level standards and that this is an important consideration of a teacher’s effectiveness. In addition to other efforts to identify and increase teacher and principal effectiveness, MN is 1) seeking proposals, generated locally, that would provide more flexibility such as early hiring timetables for target position; and 2) encouraging LEAs to bring in or expand programs that help them select and place highly effective teachers in high-needs areas. MN earns some points in (i) for encouraging LEA effort. More points could have been earned if 1) MN defined “effectiveness” in the same way as does the RTTT RFP and 2) more actively engaged in activities like providing models for LEAs, collaborating with LEAs, and placing more focus on distribution of principals. (D)(3)(ii): MN does

not appear to offer additional strategies to staff specialty subjects and so for the reasons already given, it earns low points.

<b>(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>6</b>
<p>(D)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>D)(4)(i): MN has already begun a process to transform teacher preparation through a partnership of 14 teacher preparation programs and the Bush Foundation, which has committed over \$40 million dollars to the effort. There are four initiatives associated with this work: 1) Linking teacher and principal effectiveness back to the program that prepared them; 2) redesigning teacher and principal preparation requirements; 3) revamping recruiting, preparing, placing, and supporting teachers; and 4) reporting aggregated preparation-program completion information. MN addresses (D)(4)(i) and earns high points for this element. Earlier sections have made it clear that alternative routes are acceptable in MN, they exist for teachers, but they do not exist for principals. Although MN has also made clear there is no shortage of principals, that doesn't mean alternative routes wouldn't open new channels of talent. More points could have been earned with more specificity about HOW the work related to (i) is to be accomplished. (6 of 7 pts.) (D)(4)(ii): MN does not earn the points associated with (ii). As laudable and important as MN's work to "transform" its preparation program is, it does not match the criteria of "expanding preparation programs."</p>		
<b>(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>15</b>
<p>(D)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(D)(5)(i): MN has a series of interconnected initiatives that completely address this element, but it falls short on how each of those initiatives will be measured, evaluated, and continuously improved. It earns high, but not full points. The approach is comprehensive, but checking on the effectiveness and making midcourse adjustments is lacking. In brief, MN intends to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build a cadre of Data Coaches using teachers in LEAs (1 Coach to 35 teachers). It will provide training and a stipend for these coaches.</li> <li>• Develop and support a comprehensive new teacher induction system based on the "Minnesota Educator Induction Guidelines" and provide LEAs with the financial support so LEAs can provide Mentors (Master teachers) to new teachers.</li> <li>• Redesign its Principal Academy, in conjunction with the redesign of principal preparation, led by the University of Minnesota College Readiness Consortium. To this end, MN will provide the means for the Consortium to add 5 to 10 facilitators for the next few years.</li> </ul> <p>3. Fund participating LEAs for 5 days of professional development, the first year dedicated to the new standards.</p>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>81</b>

**E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools**

	Available	Tier 1
<b>(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(E)(1) MN's statutes allow, but do not require the state to intervene in failing schools and LEAs (unless the failing school integrates student achievement data measures into its continuous improvement plan.) The state has the authority to terminate a failing charter school. Additionally, MN has the capacity to identify struggling schools. Taken together, these three facts earn MN full points.</p>		
<b>(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>25</b>
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	20
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

(E)(2)(i): MN allows but does not require the state to intervene in failing schools unless the school integrate student achievement data measures into its continuous improvement plan. The state does have the authority to terminate a failing charter school. Additionally, MN has the capacity to identify struggling schools. Taken together, these three statements earn MN full points on these criteria. (E)(2)(ii): This is fairly new territory for MN. Using the RTTT definitions MN has defined the 34 persistently lowest achieving schools in the state. Eleven of the schools are in the Twin Cities or out lying area, but the rest of the schools are scattered around the state. All of the schools have high percentages of free or reduced lunch, the majority of the students are a minority population, and 20 % of the students across the schools are English learners. To turn around these schools, MN will create a state-level office of Turnaround Schools, with an oversight board, which will play an active role in supporting struggling schools. For example, it will be involved in principal selection, site-level hiring, staff development, and outside partners. It will also evaluate turnaround programs as soon as they are up and running to judge effectiveness and make adjustments. To increase the likelihood of success, more operational flexibility will be granted for the staffing and scheduling of teachers in those schools. More support for the leadership and for the teachers who work in those schools is needed and will be provided by MDE. And, additional supports for the students in those schools will be mandated. Even as MDE focuses more attention on failing schools, it will establish a new governance structure that ensures LEAs also better attend to the turnaround schools. While the MN plan technically meets RTTT guidelines, it does not earn full points. The major components one looks for related to turnaround schools are described, but unlike other areas in this proposal, MN does not seem to have deep and extensive experience. This is absolutely the toughest, most intractable challenge we have in education and MN's proposal seems somewhat broad-stroke and naïve. One illustration that exposes the difference in depth of knowledge can be seen by comparing the outcomes for "data and data systems" to the outcomes for "turnaround schools." Compare the (C)(2) outcome of "Percentage of students with at least one parent having single-sign-on login to the Parent Portal," to (E)(2)(iii)'s "Mandate additional instructional support for all students..." The first outcome is very specific and indicates something happened. This outcome reflects MN extensive experience with data and data systems. The second outcome is very broad and indicates activities MDE hopes will lead to what it wants to happen.

Total	50	35
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**F. General**

	Available	Tier 1
<b>(F)(1) Making education funding a priority</b>	10	10
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (F)(1)(i) MN earns full points by meeting RTTT guidelines on making education funding a priority. The percentage of the budget dedicated to education increased by 1%, from 49.3% to 50.3%. (F)(1)(ii) LEAs defined as "high-poverty" received an average of \$481 per student more in state and local dollars than did districts with low numbers of high poverty students.		
<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	40	40
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (F)(2)(i) In MN there are no limits to the number of charter schools that can exist. (F)(2)(ii) MN has the ability, which it sometimes exercises, to close charter schools. It is in the process of developing a system to hold charter schools more accountable. This started before RTTT. (F)(2)(iii) MN's proposal says that its charter schools' per pupil revenues from all sources were 101% of the average school district revenue. Charter schools receive \$9,768, compared to which state LEAs receive \$7,718. Funding for the two entities is similar, but not identical. The state works to make it equitable. Briefly, charter schools receive only the state aid portion of voter-approved money, while the resident school district retains the local property tax portion. This shortfall to the charter schools is offset by full special		

education funding, which typically costs local LEAs \$706 per student. Although it is complicated, MN does meet the intent of RTTT requirements, which is that charter and innovative schools are funded comparably to local schools. MN earns full points because it meets all three requirements of (F)(2).

<b>(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (F)(3) Without relisting all of the efforts, initiatives, and programs MN has implemented in the last decade and listed in its proposal, it is fair to say that MN is a state that puts sustained energy and thought into its education system that go beyond RTTT.		
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>55</b>

**Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM**

	Available	Tier 1
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>
Competitive Reviewer Comments: If one were to write a headline for the MN proposal it would be "Using STEM to light the way through a P-20 education." MN believes that the key to closing the gap is STEM for all and addresses STEM throughout its proposal.		
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>

**Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform**

	Available	Tier 1
<b>Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform</b>		<b>Yes</b>
Absolute Reviewer Comments: MN meets priority one by addressing all four of the assurance areas using a coherent approach.		
<b>Total</b>		<b>0</b>

<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>374</b>
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