



# Race to the Top

## Technical Review Form - Tier 2

### Rhode Island Application #5760RI-1



**A. State Success Factors**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>50</b>	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	30	35	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	10	10	
<b>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>(A)(1)i Since the passing of their education reform act in 1997, RI has used high standards and accountability to guide their work in improving student achievement. Included in this is: professional standards for teachers, ending lifetime certification, alternative routes to certification, teacher evaluation standards, criterion-based hiring, proficiency based graduation requirements, and a protocol for intervening in low achieving schools. They built a consortium among New England states to develop common standards and assessments. They have a theory of action based on putting high quality teachers and leaders in every school and supporting them with policies and resources. Their reform plans are driven by this theory. Their strategic plan was developed by the Board of Regents, superintendents and charter school leaders, both teachers unions, teachers, principals, parents, students and other stakeholders. The plan is based on their theory of action and is the foundation of their RTTT plan. Regardless of whether they receive funding, they say they are committed to this plan. Their plan is clear and comprehensive and with parts already underway, there is a credible path to achieving these goals. (A)(1)ii 45 LEAs (92%) have committed to the RTTT plan, which is a significant number. These LEAs represent 94% of all schools, and 97% of students in poverty. However, there is a disconnect in Exhibit 1 (preliminary scope of work) and the actual MOU, which is troublesome, as the scope of work is weaker and uses different language. Only 2 MOUs include the signatures of the union president. Providence is one and it serves 35% of the state's high poverty students. While the Commissioner of Education worked closely with union leadership in the development of the plan, the AFT overall would only endorse with concerns. The Commissioner plans to continue to work in close partnership with labor. (A)(1)iii With the 45 LEAs signed on, they have the state's 11 core urban districts – with the highest poverty and lowest achievement – on board. Each of these districts supports the RTTT initiatives. This is good news, however, the lack of union support could seriously dampen efforts in these districts. However, the lack of union support in all but 2 LEAs (though they are the largest districts) poses a serious threat for implementation in these districts.</p>				
<b>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)</b>				
<p>State officials clarified the extent of union cooperation and participation, including a philosophy of wanting to work with the union and bring them along. They highlighted work underway with the AFT to build evaluation systems, which they emphasized was how they want that process to work--with union support.</p>				
<b>(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	20	20	

(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	6	7	
<b>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>(A)(2)i The Governor and General Assembly have supported education reform and the new Commissioner of Education has been busy in her first 6 months on the job, creating the Strategic plan, and has reorganized the department to carry it out. The plan is that this new structure will work closely with LEAs and deliver support. They have a federal grant coordinator and grants officers to ensure that funded programs are operated in accordance with the grant. They also plan to implement "EdStat" to manage and track performance and accountability. The use of funds is aimed at designing and creating systems and developing capacity to lay the basic groundwork for the state and districts to continue the key reform work. They plan to leverage national and regional partners to jump-start the efforts in their RTTT plan. This sounds like a rational and well thought through plan, with leadership, support, leverage and a chance at sustainability. (A)(2)ii The RTTT plan was developed from the state's Transforming Education Strategic Plan, which itself was developed with significant stakeholder involvement and approved by the Board of Rents in January 2010. The unions and education associations have provided input in the plan, though offer wary support. The application does not include this letter, though it includes others.</p>				
<b>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)</b>				
As mentioned in A1ii, the state officials highlighted areas where the union had already been involved in some of the plans, including the evaluation plan.				
<b>(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>23</b>	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	4	4	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	17	19	
<b>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>(A)(3)i The state already has significant programs underway that address teacher preparation and teacher effectiveness, access to data, and developing standards and accelerating all schools (working to turn around low performing schools.) (A)(3)ii When considering NAEP scores in math, all subgroups improved and narrowed the achievement gap in both 4th and 8th grades between 2003-2008. The NAEP reading scores were not as positive, with either slight gains for some subgroups in 4th grade, and lower scores for most subgroups in 8th grade. RI also developed, with a consortium of other New England states, a common assessment program for grades 3-8, and 11. Using these scores, especially low scores in math, they have learned where and when students are losing ground and found weaknesses in the curriculum, which they are working to address. They have also instituted new policies to support students and increase graduation and have seen an increase from 70% in 2008 to 74% in 2009. They are working to improve curriculum, programs and pathways for students that will lead to higher education and employment. They highlight ways they are focusing on STEM including teacher training, biotech lab programs, a leadership council to focus on test data in STEM, and online networks through the department. They don't mention how the data has been used to hone strategies for consistently under performing subgroups.</p>				
<b>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)</b>				
State officials clarified ways they are using data to change the way they educate some under performing subgroups of students, including personal literacy plans for all students connected to real time data that will follow student growth and student progress, and have that work supported by professional development. With regard to ELL students, they are taking a sophisticated look at the age of entry of students and targeting strategies for elementary students that would be different for high schools students. They are also working with the ELL community, and learning from a succession tri-language charter school.				
<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>100</b>	

**B. Standards and Assessments**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards</b>	40	35	35	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	15	15	
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20	20	
<b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>(B)(1)i RI is a member of the Common Core Standards Initiative (directed by the Council of the Chief State School Officers and the NGA) along with 48 other states. These standards are driven by principles that include: internationally benchmarked, evidence and research based, and aligned with college and work expectations. They include as evidence a copy of the signed MOU, a copy of the draft standards. They do not provide a list of the states that have signed on with them. (B)(2)ii RI is on track to adopt these standards by June 2010. They include the legal process, the plan and a reasonable timeline to adoption.</p>				
<b>(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments</b>	10	10	10	
<b>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>RI has signed the Balanced Assessment Consortium MOU to develop balanced and comprehensive assessments of the Common Core standards. More than 35 states have signed on. They include a list of the states and the principles agreed to.</p>				
<b>(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments</b>	20	18	18	
<b>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>RI's strategy to implementing standards focuses on putting structures in place to ensure that the standards are taught every day to every student. They expect teachers to deliver high-quality, differentiated instruction aligned with standards and will support teachers and principals with tools to do this. These supports include: training all teachers and principals, and then targeting training based on LEA needs with intensive training going to highest needs LEAs. Resources developed for these LEAs will then be shared across the state. They'll provide interim and formative assessments, aligning with higher education. For high needs LEAs, they'll provide intensive work on leadership training, curriculum alignment, project based-learning, and focus on technology and engineering focus. This approach is thorough, and makes the most of getting resources to high needs LEAs and then more broadly across the state. They include performance measures that seem reasonable. The broad reliance on the University of Texas-Austin's Dana Center to be the main provider of professional development is a little troubling due to the fact that RI is just one of many states and districts they serve and they may not have the capacity to deliver all that RI is hoping they will.</p>				
<b>Total</b>	70	63	63	

**C. Data Systems to Support Instruction**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system</b>	24	12	12	
<b>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				

1. Unique student ID number – Yes 2. Student demographic, enrollment and program participation information – Yes 3. Student transition information P-16 – In process 4. Capacity to communication to higher ed data systems – In process 5. Audit system to ensure data quality – Yes 6. Yearly test records for assessment required under the ESEA – Yes 7. Information on students not tested by grade and subject – Yes 8. Teacher identifier to match teachers to students – Yes 9. Student level transcripts containing courses and grades – In process 10. Student scores on college readiness tests – In process 11. Transition data from secondary to higher ed – In process 12. Data on the alignment and adequacy of student preparation for post secondary education – In process Total= 6 completed, 6 in process

<b>(C)(2) Accessing and using State data</b>	5	5	5	
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**(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

While the state has in place key data collection and integration capacities, it conducted a study and found critical gaps in the type and quality of analyses that the state needs to evaluate educator effectiveness and preparation programs, and early warning indicators to predict student graduation and post graduate success. It also found that few people accessed the data to use it for policy and decision making purposes. Armed with this information, they are using SLDS grants to build out the system. To become more accessible they are building data dashboards for teachers, principals and district administrators, linking teacher data back to preparation programs, and will link student outcomes to teachers. This will be used as at least 51% of the teacher's evaluation. They include performance measures and a reasonable timeline.

<b>(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction</b>	18	17	17	
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**(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

(C)(3)i They have already built a basic data infrastructure and plan to link tools and instructional resources to the data dashboard so teachers can access particular strategies and interventions, based on lesson plans from highly effective teachers. There will also be formative assessments attached. Principals and administrators will also have access to individual, class and grade level performance for all their students and teachers. This plan builds off their data infrastructure but allows teachers and principals easy access to the right tools. (C)(3)ii The RI Department of Education will train teachers on dashboards, and will develop webinars and online training guides for all constituents (including parents, students and the general public.) Specific training for school leaders will focus on how to lead and guide on assessing and analyzing data in their schools. This seems like a sound plan and allows the principals and leadership teams a chance to translate new reforms in the best way for the teachers in their school. (C)(3)iii The state says it will make its instructional improvement data and SLDS data available to researchers on its website and through publications that will be disseminated to the research community. It also pledges to be open to rigorous review of its achievements and work in collaboration with researchers and others interested in the state's results. They highlight their partnership with a Research Collaborative (6 members that include RI KIDS COUNT, Brown University, and the Regional Lab, among others). This seems like a solid effort to initiate research, though they don't mention the level of data they will make available to researchers nor do they ensure timely access for data requests.

<b>Total</b>	47	34	34	
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**D. Great Teachers and Leaders**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals</b>	21	17	17	

**(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

(D)(1)i-legal alternatives 7 The state has legal provisions that allow alternative routes to certification for teachers and principals, that are offered by various types of providers, that are selective in accepting

candidates, offer school based experiences and awards the same level of certification that traditional programs offer. (D)(1)ii alternatives that are in use - 5 The alternative certification option for teachers is through the New Teacher Project, which is highly selective. It just started in 2009 with 19 teachers. Teach For America is starting in 2010. The Principal Residency Network trains principals with mentors and Internships and has been underway for 10 years. There is a plan underway to create the Academy of School Leadership to both train and certify new principals and assistant principals. Their plans for future alternative preparation programs are robust, but the record of what is already in use is not as strong. (D)(1) iii- a process for determining shortage, and preparing to fill that shortage - 5 The RI Department of Education tracks shortage through requests for emergency permits. They may want to collect other data from districts as the permit-request method may underestimate shortage areas if positions are left unfilled or filled with long-term substitute teachers. They don't mention at what level they monitor shortage, but they may want to go district by district, since the shortages may be disproportionate in some areas. They used their federal Teacher Quality Enhancement Grant funds to recruit the New Teacher Project to address teacher shortages. They are also hoping that Teach For America will fill ELL gaps. These are both good plans for infusing new teachers into shortage areas, but they will also need to rely on attracting more senior teachers to these areas or graduates from traditional preparation programs, since the need exceeds the numbers prepared by these alternative certification programs.

<b>(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>56</b>	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	4	4	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	15	15	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	10	10	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	27	27	

**(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

(D)(2)i Measuring student growth-5 RI Dept. of Education is developing a statewide model to measure value-added and growth for each student and has a plan for implementation in 3 years' time. These plans however are very lightly described. (D)(2)ii Developing evaluation systems 15 The state has developed teacher evaluation system standards, with input from unions and community forums. This system will provide the data that will serve as the basis for all state and local HR management decisions—certification, selection, tenure, professional development, support, placement, compensation, promotion and retention. Every decision made will be based on evidence of the teacher or principal's impact on student growth and academic achievement (at least 51% of evaluation) in addition to other measure of content knowledge, instructional quality and professional responsibility. All teachers will receive a rating from highly effective to ineffective. There is an assurance that no child will be taught by a teacher who has received an ineffective evaluation for two consecutive years. This is bold, it shows the seriousness of effort and it is an incredibly important foundation for RTTT plans to get traction. (D)(2)iii Conducting annual evaluations 10 The state is requiring annual evaluations that will include impact on student growth and once the value-added model is in place, will include reports on their impact on student growth and achievement. (D)(2)iv Using evaluations to inform key decisions 27 a) Developing teachers and principals 7 The state will hold LEAs accountable for using the evaluation system to develop and support teachers. The system will allow LEAs and principals to make much better-informed decisions about specific and appropriate types of professional development, year to year, and measure its effectiveness. The state will use the longitudinal database to track whether districts are using data in this regard. This is a cohesive plan, with decisions made at the local level and monitored at the state level. b) Compensating, promoting, retaining 6 The state plans to develop a model of performance-based compensation systems that districts can adopt by 2015. They'll start this with some pilot districts. Only teachers with effective or highly effective ratings will be considered by LEAs for promotions into leadership. These models of experimentation are a great step forward toward fair promotion and retaining good teachers. Getting districts to sign on will be the big question. c) Granting tenure or full certification 7 New teachers who complete an approved certification program and pass all state tests will get an Induction Certificate good for 3 years. If they don't receive an effective or better evaluation, they will not

get a certificate or be able to teach in RI. Existing teachers will transition to this system when their current certificates expire. This data will feed back to preparation institutions and will affect whether they are re-accredited. Regarding tenure, districts will remove all teachers who have not demonstrated effectiveness before reaching tenured status. These are bold plans to make tenured mean something. d) Removing ineffective teachers 7 Teachers who receive an ineffective rating on evaluations 2 years in a row will be terminated by the district. This is a bold and powerful declaration and one that could really change the school capacity.

<b>(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	15	15	
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	5	5	

**(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

(D)(3)i Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high minority schools 15 Beginning in July 2010, the state has eliminated seniority based hiring, requiring that all teacher assignments must further the goal of matching highly effective teachers with classrooms of students who have significant achievement gaps. In the meantime, the Commissioner's office has ordered hiring based solely on seniority to be eliminated in Providence and Central Falls, two high needs districts. The Orders are being challenged in court, but the state has taken the lead in pursuing mediated settlements to ensure that students are fully protected. Allowing principals to hire by mutual consent is a good first step. Taking the step at the state level is bold. In addition, the state plans to use its new evaluation system to monitor and drive action to improve equitable distribution of teachers. No child will have 2 ineffective teachers in a row. Ineffective teachers may not transfer into high poverty/high minority schools. They will build the capacity of principals (training through the New Teacher Project) to screen and hire effective applicants. They are building a Turnaround Teacher Corps and one for principals too. These promises to children are ambitious and the evidence that the state is ready to fight the unions can be found in their legal battles with Providence. (D)(3)ii Ensuring equitable distribution in hard to staff subjects and specialty areas 5 Through many of the measures above, the state will evaluate out ineffective math and science teachers, as well as special education and ELL. They will use the New Teacher Project and TFA to attract high quality candidates to these positions. The RI Department of Education will also build a screening platform for all LEAs. These are optimistic plans for infusing fresh teachers into hard to staff subjects, but filling hard to staff areas is tricky and they really only have one plan in mind—import teachers.

<b>(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	
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**(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

(D)(4)i -- Link student achievement to teachers and principals and then to their preparation programs 7 The new teacher evaluation system and the teacher certification database in the longitudinal data warehouse will enable the state to link data on each teacher's and principal's impact on student academic growth back to the in-state teacher or principal preparation program they attended. This will be used in the institution's 5-year renewal application process. Programs that have low performing graduates will need to improve their performance on a set timeline or lose their approval to operate ed prep programs. RI has already closed 2 programs (one was a principal prep program) in the last 5 years. RTTT funds will be used to create new education preparation report cards, keeping score on whether graduates are bringing about student growth, how quickly they earn certification (or not), and where they are teaching (with an eye toward high poverty/high minority LEAs and schools. Tracking teacher effectiveness back to teacher preparation programs makes a lot of sense and will put some pressure on programs to become more relevant. (D)(4)ii -- Expand successful programs 7 They have brought in two successful programs --TFA and the New Teachers Project (TNTP). TFA will start up in 2010, and TNTP will expand its cohort size by 30% next year. RTTT

funds will launch a new Academy of School Leadership, and the state is working with high quality charter school organizations to launch programs that will train teachers and principals to work in both charter schools and district schools. These plans are ambitious, targeted and will be evaluated for their results. The timeline shows that programs are underway now or in the next year.

<b>(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals</b>	20	18	18	
<b>(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>D5i – Provide effective, data informed PD - 8 The state plans broad, intensive professional development to teachers, principals and leadership teams focused on standards and implementing data driven instruction. Their view is that the principal is the strongest lever for improving the effectiveness of teachers, and professional development will be targeted at leaders and leadership teams to improve their effectiveness. Leadership teams will be trained in analyzing and using data. They also plan to offer new teacher induction to all new teachers across the state modeled on the New Teacher Center. They are creating the Academy of School Leadership to model best practices and build teams, with an eye especially for turnaround schools. The training will prepare people to take on the principal job in high poverty/ high minority schools. As the results come out of the teacher evaluation system, the Academy will develop new training and supports to address areas of weakness. This continuous improvement model is an important method for keeping training relevant. However the emphasis here is on new principals, not so much on current ones, of which there are many. D5ii – Measure, evaluate and improve PD efforts – 10 The state plans to vet vendors with a proven track record who will provide high quality training focused only on data, instruction and improving student achievement and LEAs can purchase training from these sources. By 2012, the state will be able to track professional development to teachers, linked to student achievement. They will define programs as effective if the elevate minimally effective teachers and principals to be effective, and effective ones to become highly effective. This plan for professional development is conservative, linked to their theory of action, and has checks in place to determine training quality.</p>				
<b>Total</b>	138	125	125	

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

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs</b>	10	10	10	
<b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>The state has legal authority to intervene in persistently low-achieving schools and LEAs and has acted on it in the past and is engaged in litigation in the courts in response to legal actions filed by the unions challenging the Commissioner's prescriptive requirements.</p>				
<b>(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools</b>	40	35	35	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	30	30	
<b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>The state has a methodology for identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools through school wide and subgroup performance in reading and math against the statewide averages, student growth percentiles. Five percent of the Title 1 schools in improvement is 5 schools, but since they had a tie, they are focusing on 6 schools. With RTTT funds they will add 6 more schools to this list for turnaround, totaling 21% of their schools in improvement. They plan a differentiated strategy for elementary, middle and high schools that</p>				

are consistently low performing. The state has a plan for supporting districts in turning around the lowest achieving schools: a protocol for intervention that gives the state the authority and obligation to intervene in cases where efforts made by LEAs are insufficient, investments in the pipeline of effective teachers and leaders (TNTP and Turnaround teachers and leaders), extra resources (training and people) aligned to best practices, evaluation of progress and recruiting high performing CMOs and EMOs. They also include a detailed list of past efforts at turning schools around, what happened and what they learned. The plans are coherent and clear. Their history of intervention and its mixed success has positively shaped the plans they propose for RTTT.

Total	50	45	45	
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**F. General**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(F)(1) Making education funding a priority</b>	10	4	4	

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

Though they list the funding allocated in 2008, and then for FY2010, they do not show evidence for whether the % available in 2009 to support education was greater than or equal to the percent available in 2008. They list numerous state policies and funding formulas that slant funds toward high need LEAs. They list policies that slant funds within LEAs toward high poverty schools, including that LEAs need to allocate resources equitably between high and low poverty schools to meet "Equity and Adequacy of Fiscal and Human Resources." They also note that given the high percentage of funding that goes to salaries and benefits, their efforts to ensure equitable distribution of highly effective teachers will result in more equitable allocation of funding. However the Board of Regents has no authority to direct funding within LEAs.

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

40	31	31	
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**(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

The state has a limit to 20 charters though it does not limit how many charters a single charter can operate. 20 charters is about 7% of the state's total of schools. There was a moratorium on charters for a few years, but that was lifted in 2009 and 2 new charters opened this year, 2 more have preliminary approval, and 2 more applications are under review. They have the freedom to choose their location and serve all students, allow for "mayoral academies" that operate with a great deal of freedom and are building capacity to attract teachers and leaders to charter schools and to attract high performing charter operators. In the past, the state may not have been as friendly to charter school creation, however, at 13 schools, they have not reached the cap, and they seem to be actively attracting high quality charter school applicants in the past year. The state has fairly strict guidelines in what constitutes a successful charter application. They have refused applicants whose plans were considered financially or programatically unsustainable. They require charters to enroll demographics similar to the district and half of the 20 charters are reserved for schools designed to serve at-risk students. Charters are held accountable to the state's accountability system, and are required to submit other annual reports about governance, finances, mission, and program performance. They have yet to close or not renew a charter, but have put in place a plan for rigorous protocol for charter revocation. Each charter is guaranteed 95% of the state and local funding a traditional public school district would receive for each student enrolled. (The other 5% goes to the district for administrative fees.) This is an equitable formula. The state provides financial support through reimbursement, up to 30% of school housing costs. In addition, mayoral academies can access city facilities including city owned unused school facilities. They do not mention any inclusion in education levies. Though they don't have a formal mechanism to grant individual schools within an LEA enhanced autonomy other than by creating a charter school, there is no prohibition against LEAs using their own authority to create innovative, autonomous public schools, and Providence has done this with Hope High School. Charter schools seem to be the most encouraged option beyond traditional public schools. The fact

that there is only one example of this other model makes it appear as though districts don't know about it or it's harder to do than it looks.

<b>(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	
<b>(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
Through a significant high school redesign effort driven by the Rhode Island Board of Regents, participating in the New England Secondary Schools Consortium that began focusing a great deal of attention on drop out rates and increased enrollment in higher education, data and survey initiatives, Rhode Island's leadership in bringing together states to work in partnership and to model innovative practices and standards for others to adopt--these and the other efforts already cited regarding efforts underway in the past year to strengthen evaluations and get effective teachers in the highest need classrooms show that the state has already put in place some additional important reform conditions.				
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	

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

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	
<b>Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
They are poised to adopt Engineering and Technology standards and plan to invest in training and resources: working to build STEM units throughout the curriculum, training teachers on how to teach these subjects differently and developing tailored professional development. The application has STEM initiatives embedded throughout supported by the theory of action of getting highly effective teachers in classrooms guided by skilled principals. It was an all or nothing option, and while there was enough there to award the points, there are some important missing elements including a lack of funding attached to STEM initiatives and little to no attention to reaching out to underrepresented students and girls.				
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	

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

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform</b>		<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	
<b>Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
Rhode Island has put in place significant efforts to address the 4 education reform areas, with impressive attempts to make bold progress. They have reached out and received commitment from the vast majority of their LEAs, they have joined the Common Core Standards effort, they have been raising student scores and graduation rates, they have rethought teacher and principal evaluation and placement, especially with regard to their high poverty/high minority schools, and they are working to bring in alternative teachers, principals and additional charter schools. The application has met the priority for comprehensively and coherently addressing each of the reform areas.				
<b>Total</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	

<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>414</b>	<b>422</b>	
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### Rhode Island Application #5760RI-2



**A. State Success Factors**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>57</b>	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	40	40	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	13	12	
<p><b>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b></p> <p>Applicant describes a significant comprehensive reform agenda that builds upon the 1997 Crowley Student Investment Initiative and supports the RTT reform agenda. Applicant has documented that 92% of the state's LEAs have signed MOUs in support of participation in the RTT proposal. This represents a significant statewide commitment. However, the local teacher union involvement is minimal and this could have some implications in implementation of the Applicant's reform agenda. It appears there is not internal consistency between the MOU and Exhibit 1 in the Appendix. Applicant has recently adopted the State Commissioner's RIDE Strategic Plan that clearly outlines the implementation of an education reform agenda and outlines the new and expanded roles and expectations for the RIDE and the LEAs.</p> <p><b>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)</b></p> <p>During the questioning part of the Applicant's presentation a greater understanding was gained on how the MOU was modified to gain teacher union support which might have implications in the implementation of the Applicant's reform agenda.</p>				
<b>(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>26</b>	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	18	18	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	8	8	
<p><b>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b></p> <p>Applicant has a bold plan and outlines progressive steps to implement the state's "theory of action". However, the implementation of restructuring efforts that will involve significant new staff placements and capacity building of existing staff must move beyond aspirations to reality. Applicant's RTT Plan has over 60 letters of endorsement from key state and local and has received supportive resolutions from both houses of the state legislature. The applicant's unique size and manageable scale is a distinct advantage for the proposed reform agenda.</p>				
<b>(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>27</b>	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5	5	

(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	22	22	
<b>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>Applicant's summary of progress in each of the four reform areas is documented. Applicant's student achievement data shows incremental student achievement gains in reading (9%) and math (7%) between 2005 and 2008. Applicant was one of the few states to show significant gains in NAEP Math achievement in grades 4 and 8. However, the incremental gains are not as evident within the student subgroups. Applicant's high school graduation increased from 70% to 74% during the past year.</p>				
<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>110</b>	

**B. Standards and Assessments**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards</b>	40	40	40	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20	20	
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20	20	
<b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>Applicant has joined the Common Core Standards Consortium (48 states) and is committed to the adoption of the standards by August, 2010. Note (B)(2) comments that demonstrate Applicant's previous leadership and commitment to Common Assessments that provide capacity for successful implementation of Common Standards and Balanced Assessments.</p>				
<b>(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments</b>	10	10	10	
<b>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>Applicant is involved with the New England Common Assessment (4 states). In addition, applicant's involvement with the New Standards Reference Exam, the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment Consortium and Achieve Consortium (27 states) is significant. Applicant has signed the Balanced Assessment Consortium (37 states) MOU and will provide a unique portfolio of experiences to this group.</p>				
<b>(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments</b>	20	19	19	
<b>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>Note (B)(2) comments. Applicant's partnership with The Dana Center (University of Texas) in their work with NECAP's assessment framework has created capacity for supporting this transition. Applicant's commitment to expand support to LEA's by providing "High-Quality" Interim Assessments and Formative Assessments will provide an excellent transition support system.</p>				
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>69</b>	

**C. Data Systems to Support Instruction**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init

<b>(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	
<b>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> Applicant has fully implemented 6 of the 12 America Completes Act indicators. The remaining 6 components will be in place by Sept., 2011 with many components scheduled to be in effect earlier in the year.				
<b>(C)(2) Accessing and using State data</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	
<b>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> Applicant has identified gaps in the infrastructure that inhibit effective analysis of tracking teacher effectiveness and provides an outline of a plan that will, when implemented, close the gaps.				
<b>(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	
<b>(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> Applicant's recent Strategic Plan has made effective data driven instructional management a priority. A unique, significant component of this system will be the the development of a comprehensive statewide longitudinal system for collecting data from the performance-based teacher and principal evaluations that will include student academic growth that will count for 51% of the evaluation metric. Applicant's strategy to invite vendors to provide "off the shelf" system might create some limitations for the instructional management platform.				
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>32</b>	

**D. Great Teachers and Leaders**

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>Init</b>
<b>(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	
<b>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> Applicant has established the legal authority to provide Alternative Routes to Certification Programs since 2008 and has established alternative certification pathways. Applicant has active cohort of Teach for America and has established a Principal Residency Network. However, the number of teacher/principals taking advantage of these pathways (26) seems small. Applicant has a focus on preparing professionals to serve struggling schools. Applicant intends to expand its efforts to scale up its alternative certification programs as a strategy to provide greater support to high-poverty and high-minority schools. However, the data collection strategy to identify areas of need is not comprehensive.				
<b>(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>53</b>	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	4	4	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	13	13	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	10	10	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	26	26	
<b>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				

Applicant recently adopted the Educator Evaluation System Standards that clearly outline direction for compliance by all LEAs by 2011. Applicant's expectations include an annual evaluation for all teachers and principals and four levels of competency: highly effective, effective, minimally effective, and ineffective. Most significantly, the Applicant's standards state that 51% of teachers' and principals' evaluation must be based on impact on student growth measures. The development of a value-added growth model is a bold initiative that gets to the heart of expectations for successful student learning. An extension of this model will be the development of a model for a performance-based compensation system. The strategies to gain teacher union support will be critical for successful implementation of this program.

<b>(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals</b>	25	21	22	
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	13	14	
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	8	8	
<b>(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> Applicant plans to use new educator evaluation system standards to monitor and drive action to improve equitable distribution of teachers. Applicant's Commissioner has eliminated staffing based solely on seniority. Applicant has Turnaround Leaders Programs and School Leadership Team Academy and Turnaround School program options that will directly impact the quality of staff in schools not experiencing success.				
<b>(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)</b> During the Applicant's presentation a greater appreciation of the power of the expectation that an educator cannot be retained by the district after two years of ineffective evaluations was gained.				
<b>(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs</b>	14	12	12	
<b>(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> Applicant has developed a bold and significant accountability measures and strategies that will measure the impact of programs through the integration of a new educator performance-based evaluation system and teacher certification database. However, the effectiveness of these accountability measures is dependent upon significant universal data from each LEA.				
<b>(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals</b>	20	18	18	
<b>(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> Applicant recognizes the dynamic impact of effective leadership and the relationship to teacher effectiveness. Applicant will further develop comprehensive support and monitoring programs for educators that will focus on standards and support for the implementation of informed data-driven instruction. Examples of such programs include: Academy for School Leadership, Turnaround Leader Program, School Leadership Team training, and New Teacher Induction Programs.				
<b>Total</b>	138	122	123	

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

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
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<b>(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs</b>	10	10	10	
<b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> Applicant has regulatory authority to intervene in schools and LEAs who fail to meet performance targets and has developed a method for identification of persistently lowest-achieving schools and protocols for interventions.				
<b>(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools</b>	40	35	35	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	30	30	
<b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> Applicant has developed a plan with five research-based elements for supporting LEAs in turning around the lowest-achieving schools. Applicant acknowledges the need for change that will entail thoughtful investments and capacity building to improve past efforts. This plan will include the option to broaden the use of external providers with proven "track records in other states."				
<b>Total</b>	50	45	45	

**F. General**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(F)(1) Making education funding a priority</b>	10	8	6	
<b>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> Applicant per pupil average of \$13,634 is 6th highest in US. However, the Applicant does not provide data for comparing funding for public education between 2008 and 2009. Applicant has equity funding formulas for distribution of public education funding between high-needs LEAs and other LEAs.				
<b>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)</b> When questioned during the presentation the Applicant was not able to show where documentation for comparing funding for public education between FY 2008 and FY 2009 was in the proposal.				
<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	40	34	34	
<b>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> Applicant has a deliberate strategy to grow the number of high-performing charters and other innovative schools. Applicant has a unique model legislation that establishes "Mayoral Academies) that promote local charter initiatives. Applicant's funding for charters is one of nation's fairest funding formulas. For example, options that support capital funding for facilities is available. In reality, it is possible for an excess of 10% of schools to become charters because despite constraints in state's school charter law, a single charter-holder can operate on multiple campuses.				
<b>(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions</b>	5	5	5	
<b>(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				

Applicant has a comprehensive set of policies designed to support reform efforts. Some of these efforts include the following: participation of state leadership in High School Redesign, Urban Education Task Force Research Collaborative, New England Secondary School Consortium, PK-16 Council.

<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>45</b>	
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**Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	

**Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

Applicant has elaborated on specific STEM strategies and initiatives throughout the proposal. Specific acknowledgement of emphasis of project-based learning training and the T and E in STEM indicate a vision for STEM education that goes beyond the traditional STEM career pathways. This is further reinforced by involving organizations such as High Tech High and the Gates Foundation as a possible charter options.

<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	
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**Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform</b>		<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	

**Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

I am in support of applicant's claim that they have "done the hard work of building the legal and policy frameworks for meaningful and sustainable improvement" for education reform in all 4 reform areas. The steps taken by the State Superintendent in her initial year that culminated in the adoption of her Strategic Plan go far beyond any status quo and reflect progressive leadership. An environment for successful school reform and accountability has been created that is waiting for new leaders to step forth.

<b>Total</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
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<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>441</b>	<b>439</b>	
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# Race to the Top

## Technical Review Form - Tier 2

### Rhode Island Application #5760RI-3



**A. State Success Factors**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>41</b>	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	3	3	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	30	30	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	8	8	

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

Section i- RI describes itself as a microcosm of the nation and sets forth a reform agenda that it believes can be replicated in other states. The state indicated that it is among the top ten urban concentrated states and ranks second in population density. All of the state's persistently low performing schools are located in the state's two most densely populated cities where 70% of the students are Hispanic, 75% are eligible for free or reduced price lunch, and more than 35% drop out of school. In this section of the application, the state provided information on its beliefs and foundational premises for the proposed plan. The narrative includes a discussion on the targeted academic goals and provides a list of initiatives under two primary focus areas; however, the state does not describe the details of its planned initiatives. As a result, it is difficult to determine if the four reform areas will be implemented or if the plan establishes a clear and credible path to achieving the stated goals. Section ii -- RI reports that it uses its small size to communicate frequently with superintendents and principals, and state staff used the frequent communications to identify needs to be addressed in the reform agenda. RI's reform plan, Transforming Education in Rhode Island (RI Strategic Plan) was developed with input from the Board of Regents, district and charter LEAs, teacher union organizations, principals, teachers, parents and students. RI intends to have statewide impact resulting from the planned reforms and offered all LEAs the opportunity to participate in the proposed plan. The application states that 45 LEAs (92%) committed to the plan and signed MOUs with the state. Eleven of the 45 LEAs represent the state's core urban district, a fact that the state said would be the tipping point needed for statewide improvement. Each participating LEA agreed to implement a detailed scope of work and levels of accountability specified by the state. Each MOU was signed by the LEA superintendent, chair of the school committee, and the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education. RI reports that the state has two teacher unions; however, the teacher union president only signed two of the 45 MOUs. The president of the statewide AFT endorsed the overall plan but endorsed the plan with concerns. The state reported that while the Commissioner met repeatedly with labor and attempted to address their concerns in the state plan, some labor leaders were unsatisfied with the requirements regarding educator accountability. This dissatisfaction and lack of signed endorsements raises the concern that the state may not be able to garner the cooperation it needs to implement all the commitments in the plan, and since the plan should be integrated and coherent, difficulties implementing one portion of the plan could adversely affect other planned initiatives. Section iii-RI reported that it has 45 LEAs, or 92% of the districts in the state participating in the reform agenda, ensuring statewide impact of the proposed activities. The state established goals for increasing student achievement in reading, math and science, reduce the achievement gap, reduce the high school drop out rate, and increase the college going rate. The RI application includes separate annual improvement goals in reading, math and science for elementary, middle and high school, and the state expects to make improvements in both the state and NAEP

assessments. RI also plans to reduce the achievement gap by 50% in most student subgroups and by 20% for ELL students since this subgroup demonstrates the largest achievement gap; however, the state acknowledges in the application that the reduction in the targeted subgroup gaps will not be possible without RttT funding. RI also plans to raise the high school graduation rate to 87% and calls this its most ambitious target, moving the current rate of below 60% to nearly 90%. The state also plans to move the college going rate from 54.7% to 80% and proposes to meet all its targeted goals by 2015. While the state's targeted goals are certainly ambitious, the concern arises as to whether the projected reforms are realistic and attainable in a five year timeframe, as even with funding, the trajectory and speed for achieving the targets may not be realistic, particularly for goals such as elementary science that would need to go from 50% to 85% proficiency, for middle school science that would need to go from 30% to 80% proficiency and for high school science that would need to go from 29% to 87% proficiency. The annual gains would need to be at least 7% per year and, with the exception of middle school science, the state's recent academic gains in all three subject areas are a more modest 3-5% gain per year. The number of points awarded in this section is due to the concern that while the state's goals are ambitious, they may not be attainable given the percentage of gain expected within the five year window. Additionally, this section of the application does not contain a discussion of the plan. As a result, it is difficult to determine if the planned initiatives are sufficient or the state has a clear and credible path to achieve the stated goals. Also, the fact that the teacher union signed only 2 of the 45 MOUs raises the concern that the state may not have the support it needs to implement the proposed plan.

<b>(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>23</b>	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	14	14	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	9	9	

**(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

Section i-In the application, the state indicated that the Governor, and RI General Assembly have invested in educational programs to enhance teaching and the Commissioner of Education, along with the Board of Regents plan to combine resources to implement the state's reform plan. To implement the reform plan, the state department will use a new organizational structure to deliver services to LEAs and schools. The new structure will include four divisions: accountability and quality assurance, educator effectiveness and instructional improvement, accelerating school performance, and fiscal integrity and efficiencies. Additionally, the state plans to hire 24 new grant funded positions to support the implementation of the reform projects, 14 of which will be maintained after the RttT project. The state also plans to establish a Commissioner's Executive Management Team that will meet weekly to oversee the plan and RttT initiatives. A federal grants officer will be dedicated to financial administration of the grant and will implement EdStat, an agency accountability and performance improvement model. The state acknowledges that the SEA and districts lack the resources to initiate the reform work, as a result, RI plans to use federal and state funds, and to leverage national and regional partners and providers to jump start the work and over the timeframe for the grant, the state proposes to build the capacity of the SEA and educators across the state, along with systemic capacity, to implement and continue the reform work. In the application the state acknowledges that RI faces tremendous pressures due to significant decreases in revenue, but even with this statewide condition, the education budget increased from 2008 to 2009. In this section of the application, the state demonstrates that it plans to ensure that it has the capacity required to implement its proposed plans providing strong leadership and dedicated teams to implement a reform plan. The state plans to support participating LEAs although in this section, the state does not describe the types of activities it intends to implement. The application narrative clearly demonstrates that the state intends to use a reorganizational structure, designate management teams and new positions to oversee the work. Additionally, the state plans to provide effective and efficient operations and processes for implementing the grant in such areas as grant administration and oversight, budget reporting and monitoring, performance measure tracking and reporting, and fund disbursement, to use the funds to accomplish the plan and meet the targets by coordinating from other Federal, State, and local sources, and to use state resources to continue the reforms. The number of points awarded in this section is due to the absence of a detailed plan describing the

activities proposed in the reform plan, and the need for additional information on how the external providers will build the capacity of state, district and school staff to do the work. Section II-The RI reform plan was drawn from the SEAs Transforming Education Strategic Plan and was approved by the Board of Regents in January 2010. The SEA continued the collaborative process used to develop the strategic plan when developing the RI RttT reform plan. The Commissioner met with superintendents and teacher unions to draft the plan. The resultant plan is supported by both houses of the RI legislature and the Governor, and the state reported that more than 60 local and state organizations and groups provided a letter of support. In this section of the application, the state demonstrated that it received support from a broad group of stakeholders including legislative leadership; charter school associations, and state and local leaders.

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

During the Tier 2 presentation, the state discussed the intent to use an external provider to conduct professional development and to train and certify a group of Intermediary Service Providers to continue the reform work around standards after the grant period has concluded. Additionally, the state indicated that it intends to implement individualized professional development plan; however, the state did not describe how the professional development will be used to build the capacity of teachers and principals to sustain the reform work.

<b>(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>22</b>	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5	5	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	17	17	

**(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

Section i-In the application, RI presented data and graphics to show how the state has distributed state and federal dollars across the four ARRA assurance areas. Altogether, the state reports that it has spent \$1 billion in to implement initiatives such as standards for approval of alternate certification programs, evaluation standards, a state web portal, mentoring/induction programs, CEIS data information system, NECAP tests, alternate assessment, formative assessments, math and literacy interventions, and after school and summer programs. In addition, the state discussed the implementation of STEM focused initiatives such as the RI Center for Excellence in STEM Education at Rhode Island College, biotechnology labs in 6 high schools, communication networks for STEM specialists, and Education Leadership Councils in STEM. In this section of the application, the state demonstrated that it has made progress over the past several years in initiatives around the four education reform areas, and used its federal and state funding to implement the reforms. Section ii-The state explained that its progress in reading and math is due in part to its foundational work on standards, assessments and regulations for secondary schools. The state partnered with the states of New Hampshire and Vermont to write grade level/span expectations for reading, writing, and math that provide teachers with explicit instructional targets. The three states then developed and implemented a New England Common Assessment Program to assess the GLE/GSEs. To address high school graduation rates, the Board of Regents adopted regulations for middle and high school reform and schools implemented individual learning plans, embedded literacy throughout the curriculum and developed a multiple measure assessment system. In the application, the state provided data to show the student achievement gains in reading/language arts and math on NAEP and ESEA since 2003, subgroup achievement on NECAP and increases in graduation rates. In this section of the application, RI demonstrated the achievements made in student outcomes overall and by student subgroup since 2003, and provided data to show the student achievement levels in reading/language arts and mathematics on the NAEP and on the assessments required under the ESEA, the achievement between subgroups in reading/language arts and mathematics on the NAEP and on the assessments required under the ESEA, and the state's high school graduation rates. The number of points awarded for this section is due to a concern that in spite of the gains demonstrated, the reported achievement levels and gaps are still at unacceptable levels. The reported gains made by the state thus far would need to be accelerated and will require a level of intervention and action that may not be realistically implemented in the timeframe established by this grant.

Total	125	86	86	
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**B. Standards and Assessments**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards</b>	40	37	37	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20	20	
(ii) Adopting standards	20	17	17	

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

Section i-RI reports that it is a member of the Common Core Standards Initiative and its 57 member coalition representing 48 states. In addition to the Common Core Standards coalition, the state is a member of the New England Common Assessment Program consortium with two other states, a member of the WIDA Consortium for designing and implementing ELL standards, and is a member of the 36 state Balanced and Comprehensive Assessment of Common Core Standards Consortium. In this section of the application, the state reported that it participates in a consortium of States that is working toward jointly developing and adopting a common set of internationally benchmarked K-12 standards. The Common Core Standards consortium includes a significant number of States. Section ii-. The state indicated that it plans to adopt the internationally benchmarked Common Core Standards in English Language arts and mathematics in August 2, 2010. While the state plans to adopt the Common Core Standards within the timeframe to receive high points, the number of points awarded for the remainder of this section is due to the fact that the state refers to a high quality plan and gives a list of post adoption activities such as developing cross-walks, conducting regional information sessions, and aligning and unpacking the standards, but does not include a description of the plan in the narrative. As a result, it is difficult to tell if the adoption of the standards will be implemented in a well-planned way. Additionally, given the extent of the work proposed and the length of time available, a concern arises as to whether the projected crosswalk will be used as a shorthand manual on the new standards and whether the state plans to monitor the implementation carefully to ensure that the crosswalk analysis is not simply applied to old, reformatted units and lessons in an effort to get the new standards implemented right away.

**(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

During the Tier 2 presentation, the state indicated that The Dana Center will provide professional development on the new standards; however, presenters did not describe the incremental steps that will be taken to implement and integrate the new standards into instruction or how the crosswalk and resulting analysis will be used to align the curriculum to the new standards.

<b>(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments</b>	10	10	10	
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**(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

RI is a member of a 35 state consortium to develop balanced assessments of the Common Core Standards. In addition to the Common Core assessment consortium, RI also is a member of the New England Common Assessment Program Consortium, a group of three states that are working on a common assessment for NECAP. In this section of the application, RI demonstrated that it is committed to improve the quality of its assessments, evidenced by its participation in a consortium of States that is working toward jointly developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments that are aligned with the consortium's common set of K-12 standards and that the consortium includes a significant number of states.

<b>(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments</b>	20	17	17	
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**(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

The RI plan is focused on ensuring that the standards are taught to every student, everyday in every classroom. The state is correct that it will take this level of intensity to attain its targeted achievement goals; whether the time between the adoption of standards and the implementation and alignment of the standards can be effectively compressed and the new standards effectively implemented in every classroom with every student is the question that will drive the reality of the plan. The state plans to build the capacity of teachers to do this work by giving them the tools to deliver high quality, differentiated, data-driven instruction that is aligned with the standards. Additionally, the state plans to develop principal and district administrator knowledge of the standards. The state also plans to customize the level of SEA support based on LEA needs, capacity and commitment to the reform initiatives. To do this work, the state plans to provide teachers and principals with detailed analysis of the standards, training, and resources. For LEAs that need more intensive training, to develop a scope and sequence and a curriculum that is aligned with the standards. Across the state, the SEA proposes to "begin changing the culture around standards and alignment, with the ultimate goal of impacting the day to day instruction." Again, the state is correct in understanding that the daily instruction and culture regarding standards and alignment will be essential to making the statewide reform., but whether the change will be effectively made in every classroom in time to achieve the targets is questionable. The state plans to operationalize the reform agenda implementing a set of initiatives designed to strengthen instruction. The proposed initiatives include publicizing the standards and detailed analysis on the SEA website, working with the Dana Center to conduct universal training on the standards for teachers and principals, implementing interim assessments and using the interim data to track student progress and provide needed instructional supports, training teachers in developing and using formative assessments, developing and aligning resources for selected LEAs, conducting a curriculum audit, using teams of teachers to do a curriculum alignment, and providing training on aligned project based learning. In this section of the plan, the state described its plan to support a statewide implementation of internationally benchmarked K-12 standards. In the plan, the state proposes to implement interim assessments; however, the plan does not give a detailed plan on implementing new aligned assessments. The number of points awarded in this section is due to the absence of descriptive or detailed plans on implementing new aligned assessments and because the question remains as to whether the state can realistically attain the statewide achievement targets and transition to new standards and assessments within the timeframe of this grant program.

<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>64</b>	
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**C. Data Systems to Support Instruction**

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>Init</b>
<b>(C)(1) Fully Implementing a statewide longitudinal data system</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	

**(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

RI reports that the state has fully implemented six of the 12 America COMPETES Act elements and is currently using a 2008 SLDS grant to implement the remaining 6 elements by September 2011. At the present time, RI has a unique statewide student identifier, student enrollment, demographic and program information, exit, transfer, dropout and completer information, communications with IHE data systems, a state data audit system, and annual student test records. In addition to the America COMPETES elements, RI reports that it has achieved 7 of the 10 National Data Quality Campaign indicators. In this section of the application, the state received 2 points for each of the 6 COMPETES elements that are currently in place.

<b>(C)(2) Accessing and using State data</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	
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**(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

RI indicated that the state's Strategic Plan gave priority to providing meaningful, accessible and useable data to stakeholders and decision makers and as a result, the SEA already has substantial data collection

and integration capabilities, as well as powerful analytic tools, already in its data system. However, a SEA led analysis of the state's data system revealed gaps in the current system that would prevent the state from tracking educator effectiveness, use data to inform decisions about teacher certification, monitor the quality of preparation and professional development programs, and use early warning indicators to predict graduation and post secondary success. Additionally, the state found that the complexity of the current analytic tools limited the number of consumers that actually used the system. The state reported that it applied for 2009 SLDS funds to use in addition to the 2008 funds to address the identified needs and expand the system further. In addition, in the current plan, the state proposes to build data dashboards, expand the data collection and reporting capabilities of the teacher certification database, collect data from the evaluations of educator effectiveness, and establish a statewide Data Governance Board to oversee how the SEA manages the education data system. In this section of the application, the state proposes to expand and refine the data from the state's current database and develop a statewide longitudinal data system that is accessible to and used by key stakeholders. The state conducted an analysis of the current data system and determined the areas that need to be improved or expanded for the current reform plan. The number of points awarded for this section is due to the concern that the reported difficulties with the current analytics limited the number of stakeholders that used the system and that the state needed another round of funding to correct the current system. This condition raises the question as to whether the state's data system can be corrected or whether it needs to be redesigned before additional data components proposed in this plan are added to the system.

<b>(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	
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**(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

RI plans to implement an instructional improvement system that will provide educators with a wide array of data, tools, and instructional resources. The state proposes to provide educators with customized data dashboards that will identify which students are struggling with a specific concept and assist the teacher to access lesson plans and formative assessments. The data dashboard will collect and retain all local assessment data, contain a bank of test items, generate, print, and tabulate tests, access and use all data collected on a student, and analyze a longitudinal pattern of student performance. Initially, the state will implement the instructional management platform and then issue an RFP to develop a customized RI system. Additionally, the state plans to provide hands-on professional development on data driven instruction and the use of the instructional management system. Trainers will be assigned to work with 10 school cohorts of teachers and principals who will receive training together and form a professional learning community. After the training workshops, the trainers will conduct on-site observations, provide coaching, feedback and support for the team. RI also plans to use the state website to make the instructional improvement and SLDS data available to researchers, and gave an example of its work with the RI Research Collaborative to develop a model for predicting post high school outcomes. In this section of the application, the State described its plan to implement a state level instructional improvement system and a customized instructional improvement system at the LEA, school and teacher level. Additionally, the state discussed how it plans to support participating LEAs and schools that are using instructional improvement systems by providing effective professional development to teachers, principals, and administrators on how to use these systems and the available data to support continuous instructional improvement. The state also plans to make the data from instructional improvement systems available and accessible to researchers. The number of points awarded for this section of the application is due to the fact that the state does not provide a detailed professional development and implementation plan for the instructional management system, particularly for the customized management system. As the data and data analysis is individualized at the teacher and student level, the unique points of data will create a myriad of analysis formats that will be extremely helpful to classroom teachers if they know how to interpret and use the various student/content profiles that could be generated. Additionally, the state does not explain how it will ensure that the analytics are user friendly and encourage, not discourage, stakeholder use.

**(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

During the Tier 2 presentation, the state discussed the intent to use an item bank of discarded assessment items for interim and formative assessments. This proposed practice underscores the need for the state to provide training to teachers and administrators on formative assessment and develop a statewide balanced

assessment system that would guide the development and use of a customized instructional improvement system.

Total	47	31	31	
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**D. Great Teachers and Leaders**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals</b>	21	18	18	

**(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

In the application, the state indicated that RI Code gives the Commissioner and Board of Regents authority over teacher certification. Using that authority, the Board of Regents adopted standards for alternate certification that may be used by IHEs and other organizations such as The New Teacher Project and Teach for America, to use five alternate routes to certify teachers, principals, other administrators, and support professionals. The RI alternate certification programs require candidates to meet rigorous admissions criteria, provide supervised, school-based experiences and on-going support such as mentoring and coaching, limit the amount of coursework required, and award the same level of certification as other teacher preparation programs. The state also plans to recruit new alternate certification programs. In one program, two in-state and several national charter schools plan to use the alternate certification route to select and train teachers. Additionally, the planned Academy of School Leadership will develop new principals and assistant principals without an IHE partner. RI monitors areas of teacher shortage by tracking requests from LEAs for emergency permits. The state's analysis of these requests revealed that the primary shortage areas are in special education and secondary science and math, and that the number of emergency permits issued has declined since 2006. RI does not issue emergency permits for principals since the state has an excess of certified principals, and the application does not describe a process for monitoring principal shortage. In this section of the application, the state demonstrated that it has Code provisions that allow alternative certification routes for teachers and principals, including routes that allow for providers other than institutions of higher education. Additionally, the state indicated that there are five alternative routes that are in use. The state uses the requests for emergency permits as a process for monitoring, evaluating, and identifying areas of teacher shortage. The number of points awarded for this section of the application is due to the fact that, while RI currently enjoys an excess number of available number of certified principals, it does not plan to implement a process for monitoring principal shortages. Not only is a process required by the conditions of the grant, it will become particularly important to have a principal monitoring process in place once the state begins to select and place effective principals. Additionally, the state does not describe how it uses the information on teacher shortage to prepare teachers to fill these identified shortage areas.

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

**(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

Section I-RI plans to work with The National Center for the Improvement of Education Assessments to develop a statewide model to measure value-added growth for each student. Under RttT funding, the state plans to develop additional growth measures for other grades and subjects. Section ii-In December 2009,

the RI Board of Regents adopted a new RI Educator Evaluation System Standards. The SEA met with teacher and principal unions, held community forums, solicited feedback through annual principal and teacher surveys, held public hearings, and solicited public feedback for three months. The state plans to use the newly adopted standards to provide data for state and local decisions regarding certification, selection, tenure, compensation, promotion, tenure, professional development, and support. The RI standards require every LEA to establish a compliant evaluation system. LEAs may adapt their current system to include student growth or adopt a state provided evaluation system. The SEA is in the process of developing a rubric that contains the requirements specified in the standards and will use the rubric to evaluate LEA educator evaluation systems. In addition to the rubric, the state will provide detailed guidance and observation tools. The RI evaluation standards base educator effectiveness primarily in evidence of student growth and academic achievement (51% based on objective assessment measures), differentiate educators into four levels of effectiveness, annually evaluate the effectiveness of all educators, ensure a transparent, fair evaluation process, and involve teachers and principals in the development process. In addition to publicizing teacher effectiveness data, the state plans to provide data to the LEA "each principal's impact on the aggregate calculation of the impact of the schools' teachers on student growth." The remaining percentage of the educator evaluations will be based on valid and accurate measures of the quality of instruction, demonstration of professional responsibilities, and content knowledge. LEAs participating in the RtT reform agenda will implement RI Model evaluation system and receive services from external evaluators on the teacher evaluation and build principal capacity to effectively evaluate teachers. The state will also select staff members for an Effective Educator Evaluation Team who will work side by side with principals during the first two years of implementation of the evaluation system and will conduct reviews across the districts to ensure reliability and consistency of reviews across the state. A full-time staff member will be hired and placed in struggling schools to provide support for the first year of implementation of the evaluation system. Section iii-The RI Evaluation System Standards require that all educators to be assessed annually and more frequently if appropriate. In order for LEAs to receive approval for their evaluation systems, each educator must receive feedback on his or her individual performance on all areas evaluated, including student growth data. Additionally, LEAs must collect, analyze and use data from educator evaluations to develop and implement professional development plans. Section iv-RI proposes to use the state's evaluation system for 5 purposes: provide individualized feedback to all educators, including detailed analysis of their performance; support continuous professional development; create incentives for highly effective educators; provide information to support meaningful renewal and tenure decisions; and improve performance of ineffective educators by providing intensive support. Each participating LEA that adopts the RI Model system is required to have processes and policies in place to at least use the evaluation data for these five purposes and establish goals to improve teacher and principal effectiveness. The SEA plans to monitor the extent to which LEAs are using evaluations for these purposes and will track data from the longitudinal database to determine the extent of implementation. This state plans to develop a model performance based compensation system and will fund 4 competitive grants to districts or collaboratives of districts that base compensation on teacher effectiveness. Educators who are consistently rated as effective or highly effective will be granted full certification and will be eligible for promotion into positions of increased leadership. The state plans to develop a new certification system and will prepare annual reports on the number of teachers who obtain or fail to obtain a first Professional Certificate upon expiration of the Induction Certificate. In this section of the application, the state provided verification of its intent to use an evaluation that informs decisions regarding developing teachers and principals, compensating, promoting, and retaining teachers and principals, including opportunities for highly effective teachers and principals to obtain additional compensation and be given additional responsibilities, granting tenure and/or full certification to teachers and principals, and removing ineffective tenured and untenured teachers and principals after they have had ample opportunities to improve, and ensuring that such decisions are made using rigorous standards and streamlined, transparent, and fair procedures.

<b>(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals</b>	25	23	23	
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	15	15	

(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	8	8	
<p><b>(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b></p> <p>Section i-New BEP regulations require that after July 1, 2010, teacher assignments in RI will not be based solely on seniority and must match highly effective educators with classrooms of students who have significant achievement gaps and LEAs must develop criterion based hiring and assignment procedures. The state proposes to require LEAs to collect and provide transparent data on educator effectiveness, ensure that no student will have two ineffective teachers in a row, prohibit the transfer of ineffective teachers into high poverty, high minority schools, build capacity to hire effective teachers by mutual consent, and build and use a Turnaround Teacher Corp. Section ii-The state reports that it plans to develop and expand partnerships with RITF/TNTP, TFA and The Turnaround Teacher Corps to recruit and prepare candidates to teach secondary math, secondary science, and special education - the areas of teacher shortage identified by the state; however, the state does not provide a detailed plan to monitor teacher shortages in the designated areas.</p>				
(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	14	14	
<p><b>(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b></p> <p>RI proposes to use the new educator evaluation system, teacher certification database, along with the longitudinal data system, to link data on teacher and principal impact and student academic growth back to the teacher and principal preparation programs. RI requires educator preparation programs to go through a rigorous re-approval process every five years. The state proposes to incorporate data on the approval renewal process into the state's data system and will require ineffective programs to improve or close. In the last 5 years, the state closed two preparation programs, including one that prepared principals. Data on the preparation programs will be disclosed through the SEA's website. The state proposes to develop an education program report card that provides information on student achievement and growth of program graduates, the rate at which graduates earn full Professional Certification, and the number of graduates in RI schools disaggregated by LEA and by high/low poverty and high/low minority schools. RI plans to recruit two preparation providers – RI Teaching Fellows/The New Teacher Project and Teach for America. and plans to launch the Academy of School Leadership to prepare aspiring principals to work in persistently low performing schools. Additionally, the state is working with charter school organizations to produce teachers and principals to work in charter and public schools, and plans to look for successful alternate certification providers who use other models, such as residency programs, to provide additional training programs. In this section of the application, the state demonstrated that it has a plan to link student achievement and student growth data to the students' teachers and principals, link this information to the programs where those teachers and principals were prepared for credentialing, and publicly report the data for each credentialing program. Additionally, the state plans to expand the preparation and credentialing options and programs that are successful at producing effective teachers and principals.</p>				
(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	16	16	
<p><b>(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b></p> <p>The state plans to provide professional development to teachers, principals and school leadership teams that is focused on implementing the new standards and data driven instruction. RI proposes to use the state's instructional management system to anchor professional development and provide tools, curriculum, and data sets that will support educators in implementing a standards based educational program. Additionally, the state plans to provide induction for novice teachers and develop teams of collaborative leaders to transform the culture of schools. RI plans to use grant funds to develop and implement an Academy of School Leadership that will develop current and aspiring principals, and through a Turnaround Leaders Program that will develop cohorts of principals and School Leadership Teams composed of instructional leaders within the LEA. The state plans to use grant funds to support the start up of the</p>				

Academy and, after 2014, expects the Academy to be independently sustainable. RI plans to build school leadership teams to that will work with staff to effectively use data to drive instruction and will require the leadership teams to provide on-site training and support for the first year. The state proposes to use a rigorous selection process to identify a pool of mentor teachers who demonstrate effectiveness in attaining student growth and content expertise. The state will select full-time mentors, provide mentor training, and require mentors to conduct observations and provide feedback and coaching. RI proposes to recruit and vet high quality professional development providers and to cease funding to professional development providers that do not raise educator effectiveness. The evaluation of professional development providers will also be used to track professional development needs in the state. Additionally, the state plans to collect, rank and disseminate data on the performance of LEAs and schools in developing teachers and improving student performance. While the state plans to evaluate professional development and analyze LEA and school performance and student growth data, the application does not describe how the state plans to evaluate specific programs, such as leadership team training, or how it plans to evaluate specific support strategies such as coaching and mentoring. In this section of the application, the state discussed its plan to provide data-informed professional development, coaching, and new teacher induction. The state also described its intent to gather, analyze, and use data to evaluate professional development programs and service providers who provide the training. The number of points awarded for this section of the application is due to the absence of a detailed plan to measure, evaluate, and continuously improve the effectiveness of direct supports such as coaching and mentoring, especially since these services will be critical to the state's ability to meet its designated student achievement targets.

**(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

During the Tier 2 presentation, the state indicated that it carefully selects the vendors that it uses; however, the state did not discuss the criteria that it uses to select and evaluate vendors. In addition, the state did not describe how it intends to measure, evaluate and continuously improve the support services that will be provided to teachers.

Total	138	129	129	
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**E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs</b>	10	10	10	

**(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

The state reports that it has the legal, statutory and regulatory authority to intervene directly in schools and LEAs that do not meet established performance targets for three consecutive years. The state has exercised its authority by using Commissioner Orders to remove barriers to improving student learning in low performing districts and the RI Board of Regents developed a series of regulations that clarify the Board's ability to implement prescriptive requirements to improve teaching and learning. At the present time, the state reports that it is engaged in litigation at the trial court, RI Supreme Court, and federal district court levels, filed by the state's teacher unions that challenges the Commissioner's requirements. In addition to the legal authority to intervene, the SEA and the Board of Regents have statutory authority to reconstitute schools and restructure school governance, budget and personnel. The SEA prepared and uses a protocol, Protocol for Interventions: Persistently Lowest-Achieving Schools that includes such things as the method for identifying persistently lowest-achieving schools and LEA duties and responsibilities. In this section of the application, the state demonstrated that it has the legal, statutory, and regulatory authority to intervene directly in the State's persistently lowest-achieving schools. However, a concern arises that the legal challenges to the Commissioner's requirements, especially since the challenges have risen to three levels of the court system, signal teacher dissatisfaction with the imposed requirements and depending on the final disposition of the cases, could erode the ability of the Commissioner to impose requirements and thereby block the reforms proposed in this grant application.

**(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

During the Tier 2 presentation, the state clarified that over the years, the relationship with the teacher's union has improved considerably and that the union in the largest school district is supportive of the reform plan. The information presented; however, did not alleviate the concern raised or change the number of points awarded for this section.

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

**(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

Section i-The state identified 5 criteria that are used to identify the persistently lowest achieving schools in the state. The criteria used to identify the schools include student growth, subgroup performance, number of years in need of improvement, and achievement levels in reading and math. The state publishes the identifying criteria in its handbook Protocol for Interventions: Persistently Lowest-Achieving Schools. The state has 2.8 schools in improvement that qualify for corrective action or restructuring, and since the state is required to target at least 5 schools and the ranking methodology yielded a tie, the state identified 6 schools that will receive intervention and decided to identify an additional 6 schools for a total of 12 schools to take on one of the intervention models. As a result, RI will be working with 21% of its schools in improvement, corrective action or restructuring. The targeted schools include 3 high schools, 3 middle schools, and 4 elementary schools. In addition to the work proposed by the SEA in previous portions of this application, the state plans to recruit high performing charter schools to expand this format as an option for turning around the identified schools. In this section of the application, the state demonstrated that it has identified the persistently lowest-achieving schools and expanded the number of schools that would be considered persistently lowest-achieving to receive services. Section ii-RI proposes a 5 element plan for improving the lowest performing schools in the state. These elements are designed to increase student achievement, close achievement gaps, institute high expectations for the results of the work, and require an unwavering commitment to students. The five elements of the plan include implementing LEA led school turnaround using a clear protocol for intervening, state investments to increase the pipeline of effective teachers and school leaders, investment in resources such as people, training and programs for identified schools, evaluating school improvement progress, and recruiting high performing charter management organizations. In the protocol for intervention, the state will notify LEAs of the schools that appear on the list and then the LEA must choose a reform option and develop a detailed school reform plan for each school on the list. The Commissioner will review the plans and only approve those that are sufficient to attain significant improvements in student outcomes. Elements of the plan will be implemented through such activities as establishing partnerships, purchasing and implementing training, organizing and implementing school level support, implementing the new evaluation and instructional management systems, purchasing services from an external vendor to conduct a diagnostic assessment of every school, recruiting and expanding charter schools, expanding the pool of CMO and EMO providers, and training a Turnaround Principals Corps. The state acknowledges in its narrative that the work will need to be comprehensive and intense in order to turn around the identified schools and meet the established student achievement and subgroup performance targets. In this section of the application, the state described a five part proposal to turn around the identified schools through an approved LEA designed intervention plan that features one of the four intervention models: turnaround, restart, closure, or transformation. The number of points awarded for this section of the application is due to the concern that while the state plans to implement training and support for the identified schools, the amount of work to be accomplished in attaining the achievement targets will require more time, on-going monitoring, and guidance than is proposed here.

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

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(F)(1) Making education funding a priority</b>	10	4	4	
<p><b>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b></p> <p>In the application, RI indicated that the state is the sixth highest funded system in the nation; however, the state does not provide data on the percent of state revenues allocated to education or data on the percentage of funding across fiscal years. The state has policies that provide equitable funding between high need and other LEAs, and has an enacted reform law that established standards and accountability for the education system and closed funding gaps among schools and districts. The state described the funding and distribution categories for the \$629.6 million appropriated for education for FY 2010 and explained the funding formula and 2009 approved guidelines for student need allocations based on a poverty concentration index. While the Board of Regents does not have direct authority to control the allocation of funds among schools within an LEA, it did approve a number of policies that require LEAs to equitably allocate the funds among the schools. In this section of the application, the state reported that RI makes education funding a priority as indicated by the state's high ranking as the sixth highest ranked state in school funding and the amount of dollars provided to elementary, secondary, and public higher education for FY 2010. Additionally, the state demonstrated that its policies lead to equitable funding between high-need LEAs and other LEAs and between high-poverty schools and other schools. The number of points awarded to this section is due to the lack of data on the percent of revenues allocated to education.</p>				
<p><b>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)</b></p> <p>During the Tier 2 presentation, the state indicated that education funding did not change between 2008-2009; however, information on the percentage of state revenues was not given and the location of the 2009 revenue data in the application was not clarified.</p>				
<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	40	30	30	
<p><b>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b></p> <p>RI reports that the Commissioner and Board of Regents have a deliberate strategy to increase the number of charter and other innovative schools throughout the state and developed model charter legislation to reflect the proposed strategy. Currently, RI has 13 charter schools in operation. State law and policy limit the number of state charter schools to 20; however, a single approved charter provide may operate multiple campuses, thereby permitting the growth and expansion of approved charter schools. The state reported that the RI legislature imposed a moratorium on charter schools and as a result, the state did not open any charter schools between 2005 and 2009. After the moratorium was lifted, two new charter schools opened in 2009-10, two others received preliminary approval, and two additional applications are under review. In addition to the number of charter schools, RI law limits charter enrollment to 4% of the state's school age population, and even though the state has room for growth at the present time, the state reports that this legal policy may eventually limit the expansion of high performing charter schools. State law permits charter schools to choose the location of the school and to serve all students. The law stipulates that charter schools will not be approved unless the student population includes high needs students. Additionally, RI law includes a unique charter type known as "mayoral academies" because the charter school board is chaired by a mayor or a group of mayors and is made up of representatives from each town served. Mayoral academics are granted the authority to establish their own policies regarding teacher retirement, compensation and tenure. All public charter schools may request waivers to state statute. Under the current RI charter laws, an application to establish a charter school is submitted to the Board of Regents and must be approved by the Commissioner or LEA school committee before submission to the Board of Regents for approval. Under the Board's Charter School Authorization Criteria, following preliminary approval, charter schools go through a multi-step process for approving the budget and operational plans. The state reported that approximately a third of the applications receiving approval are approved as charter schools. Since 1995, the state received 37 applications, approved 13, and gave preliminary approval to 2 applications.</p>				

During the same timeframe, 4 applications were withdrawn and 17 were rejected. RI charter school laws require the state to implement an on-going review system to monitor the performance of the approved schools and to implement an extensive reauthorization process at the end of the 5 year approval term. The Board of Regents may revoke a charter if the school fails to meet the educational objectives in its charter and the SEA created a Division of Accountability and Quality Assurance to provide support and oversight of charter schools. The Division is charged with implementing a new protocol for recommending the revocation of a school's charter. RI law guarantees that charter schools receive 95% of the state and local per pupil funding given to traditional public schools, and at the present time, the state is developing a new statewide student based funding formula. Charter schools receive funding for facilities through a reimbursement program that funds up to 30% of the housing costs. The state does not have a formal mechanism to grant autonomy for individual schools within an LEA; however the state does not prohibit LEAs from using their own authority to create innovative, autonomous public schools and to expand the instructional program to include e-learning opportunities, virtual learning networks, and virtual learning high schools. The points awarded to this section of the application are based on the approved point range given in the application and are consistent with applicants that provide charter schools with at least 90% of the funding provided to traditional schools and for the approved point range awarded for states that have a cap on the number of schools that can be approved as charter schools.

<b>(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions</b>	5	5	5	
<b>(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
RI reported that the state is implementing a high school redesign initiative that requires every high school in the state to offer every student the opportunity to achieve proficiency in six core academic areas and implement instructional support and personalization to every student. The state also formed the Rhode Island Research Collaborative to conduct research and policy analysis, and established a PK-16 Council to communicate and coordinate programs and education initiatives. Additionally, the state joined with three other states to form the New England Secondary Schools Consortium to work on strategies to increase graduation and college going rates and decrease dropout and college remedial course rates. The state conducts a School Accountability for Learning and Teaching survey, plans to implement a DataHub Initiative to link student data across all state agencies, joined a Open Indicators Consortium to improve access to data on communities and regions, increased the number of expanded learning initiatives, launched a Pre-K Demonstration program, and implemented a RI Coordinated School Health program. In this section of the application, the state demonstrated that it operates other reform initiatives and programs that state are designed to improve educational programs and to increase student and school performance.				
<b>Total</b>	55	39	39	

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

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM</b>	15	15	15	

**Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

Throughout the application, the state provided a list of STEM related initiatives for that particular section of the grant proposal. In the STEM descriptions, the state consistently applied the same theory of change used for the core reform agenda – that for students to achieve at high levels, schools must have effective teachers and leaders, and for the teachers and leaders to be effective, they need support and student centered policies and resources. RI plans to adopt internationally benchmarked standards in engineering and technology, provide direct training and resources on STEM education, expand its partnership with the Dana Center to conduct workshops on math and science standards and create aligned curriculum resources, and conduct professional development that includes project based learning and formative assessment training. The state also proposes to invest in training and implementation of an instructional

management system, increase teacher understanding and use of technology, and implement a Teacher Externship program to ensure that teachers are prepared to teach in the STEM fields. In this section of the application, the state discussed its plan to offer a rigorous course of study in mathematics, the sciences, technology, and engineering, prepare and to assist teachers in integrating STEM content across grades and disciplines, promote effective and relevant instruction, offer applied learning opportunities for students, and prepare more students for advanced study and careers in the sciences, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields.

<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	
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**Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform**

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>Init</b>
<b>Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform</b>		<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	

**Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

The state addressed the four ARRA education reform areas and the State Success Factors Criteria. The state demonstrated LEA commitment to the state's reform plan and described how it proposes to use Race to the Top and other funds to increase student achievement, decrease the achievement gaps across student subgroups, and increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers.

<b>Total</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
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<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>409</b>	<b>409</b>	
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# Race to the Top

## Technical Review Form - Tier 2

### Rhode Island Application #5760RI-4



#### A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it</b>	65	47	52	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	30	35	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	12	12	

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

(A)(1) i. The narrative and appended strategic plan satisfy the criteria (5/5) ii. Coverage of LEAs is broad and most students and students in poverty are covered. The MOU is a statement of intent committing to negotiation over a specified "scope of work" which covers the main elements of the R2T framework but it omits reference to teacher compensation- see appendix and exhibit 1.No LEA sought a variation in the MOU suggesting it was appropriately designed and that implementation will be comprehensive. Union commitment is patchy with signatures from only two district leaders. Notably the two districts concerned cover one third of the high need students. There are references in the plan to continuing dialog with labor but more buy in at this stage is desirable and its absence detracts from the plan particularly because the point of disagreement is educator accountability. (30/45) iii. The 2015 goals for closing the achievement gap as measured by NAEP scores, increasing graduation and college access are credible. But assuming a flat 10% annual growth for groups whose proficiency on, say Mathematics for example, is simplistic and probably unrealistic. Overall the goals are attainable and challenging and they are presented by sub group except in the case of college access. (12/15)

**(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

The State officials clarified the plan's elements dealing with union participation in design of reform strategies. The State has clear authority for dealing with ineffective teachers as an element for educator accountability. This moves the application into the high category (35/45)

<b>(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans</b>	30	24	26	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	18	18	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	6	8	

**(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

i. RI has sensible plans to support the LEAs with carefully identified expertise arranged in a new administrative structure that has clearly stated functions. The education agencies organizational structure is arranged so there are clear focal points for accountability and quality and student performance. There is a reasonable process for zeroing out inefficient practices in the small central agency and there is a strong mechanism for grant management with the proposed appointment of a senior manager to oversee R2T funds. More attention could have been paid to LEA performance monitoring. (18/20) ii. Stake holder consultation processes for teachers and principals and other critical players are documented and key

forums identified like the RTTT steering committee. It is not evident how much buy in has been obtained despite claims that it has been created. Selected quotations and the sample letters of support are not compelling. (6/10)

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

The officials clarified the active involvement of teacher union members in design of five pilots on the use of student growth to inform instructional choices. This suggests a broader involvement than previously assumed and moves the score into the high range (8/10)

<b>(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5	5	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	20	20	

**(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

i. RI has clearly documented its pursuit of the 4 main reform areas, with most weight going to school and district action. (5/5) ii. RI documents its track record on increasing student achievement and offers some insights into how this has been shaped by decisions, policies and resource allocations. Gaps persist especially for racial sub groups with little impact being made on Math achievement by Native Americans and Black students. On graduation rates there is no trend data probably because the data was not broken out by group until 2007/08. (20/25)

<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>103</b>	
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**B. Standards and Assessments**

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>Init</b>
<b>(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20	20	
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20	20	

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

i. RI is in Common Core Standards which claims a majority of states as members and has an internationally benchmarked approach to setting standards. (20/20) ii. RI's plan includes six logical steps to adopt common standards by June 2010 and disseminate them to the public and to LEAs and teacher training programs. (20/20)

<b>(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	
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**(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

RI is in the Balanced Assessments Consortium of the Common Core Standards project which has 36 state members & in Achieve which has 27 members. Both are addressing the delineation of assessments in a reliable and robust way. There are strong references to STEM standards in this section which are relevant to the competitive criteria below. (10/10)

<b>(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	
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**(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

RI's plan is well phased and well planned with specified key activities and expected outcomes. It has a strong communications component, universal training on standards and intensive support training for LEAs and leaders. It also directly addresses the importance of curriculum alignment. It sets ambitious goals for training coverage for subject teachers. The connection with post school graduation activities is noticeably weaker but there is a good initial step to study new exit standards for high school. (18/20)

Total	70	68	68	
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### C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system</b>	24	12	12	
<b>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> RI claims to have completed 6 of the 12 criteria and aims to complete the 5 more by either June or September 2011. No date is set for the 12th which is "in process". (12/24)				
<b>(C)(2) Accessing and using State data</b>	5	4	4	
<b>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> There is a plan that has the necessary steps and assigned tasks to make state school data more accessible to many key stakeholder groups and to underpin a culture of sustained improvement and support formative assessment. There is no explicit reference to researchers other than the New England Secondary School Consortium using or accessing data. A draft protocol for researcher use of State data would be an example of greater accessibility. (4/5)				
<b>(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction</b>	18	14	14	
<b>(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> i. RI has plans to acquire a statewide instructional management system and roll it out in three phases to have the whole state covered by 2013 (6/6) It has a professional development plan to support data driven instruction and to ensure that school personnel can use the data systems to good effect. It has assigned responsibility for training leaders appropriately. It is not clear that training is planned to help teachers acquire strong skills in using the new data systems. (5/6) ii. RI will make data available on its web site and through publications but this is a passive strategy - it does not seek to engage researchers in the important task of evaluating effectiveness of materials and strategies for, say, high poverty groups. (3/6) (14/18)				
Total	47	30	30	

### D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals</b>	21	17	17	
<b>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> i. The documentation is clear about the availability of alternative pathways for teacher preparation that are independent of higher education institutions and which meet the 5 features described in the notice. The law also covers principals. (7/7) ii. There are cohorts in progress of both teachers and principals although the numbers involved are small. (7/7) iii. RIDE monitors shortages by tracking requests for emergency permits.				

This is a passive mechanisms which does not pro- actively monitor or predict shortages. The existence of a surplus of principals does not obviate the need to monitor shortages in that class of personnel as shortages may still occur in difficult to staff areas. (3/7) (17/21)

<b>(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>54</b>	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	4	4	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	15	15	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	10	10	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	25	25	

**(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

i. RI has a plan with defined steps and timelines although it depends heavily on unidentified consultants and the small office of assessment and accountability. (4/5) ii. RI has a clear and well designed plan that meets these criteria and it has been prepared with community and teacher and principal involvement. Its design elements include multiple measures of educator effectiveness and the use of student growth in performance data.(15/15) iii. There is a very explicit and strong commitment to annual evaluations for all teachers and principals including measures of student growth which will be phased in a reasonable manner. There are clear timelines and deliverables and a sensible professional development support strategy. (10/10) iv. There is a full discussion of the uses of a teacher evaluation system and RI plans to cover the gamut. RI plans to use evaluation results to give performance feedback, guide professional development and bring objectivity to tenure and renewal decisions for examples. It is less definite about the use of this system in the area of compensation where RI has opted for four pilots two on whole school compensation and two on individual teacher effectiveness. The State goal is have some additional compensation distributed on the basis of performance by 2015. (25/28) 45/48

<b>(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	13	13	
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	3	3	

**(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

i. RI has a clear commitment in this area and has acted to improve distribution by the beginning of the 2013/14 school year- the first possible point given contract provisions. Its plan is based on leading research on the shortcomings of certification based distribution mechanisms. The State has established some strong principles to govern distribution of teachers that will help create equitable distributions. It is not always clear that principals are covered by the planned actions but the plan itself is robust. (13/15) ii. RI assumes that its general strategy for improving distribution plus some increases in TFA cohorts and its proposed "turn around teacher corps" will be sufficient to cover the hard to staff areas but offers no evidence to support the assumption. There is also no baseline data to inform the goal setting or to assess the realism of the goals. This suggests that the plan has not systematically addressed this area. (3/10)

<b>(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	
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**(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

i. RI has a good plan to link student performance data with individual teachers and principals by the mode or institution of educator training. It will also make data on program performance publicly available (7/7) ii. RI's

plan includes solid steps to scale up effective programs. Importantly it has also closed ineffective preparatory programs. It needs more realistic goals and notes that it will set these when base line data becomes available- without that the plan's quality suffers slightly (5/7). (12/14)

<b>(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals</b>	20	12	15	
<b>(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>i. RI's professional development strategy is and based on research evidence on the efficacy of using school principals and other school leaders as key actors in design and delivery of professional development. The plans cover a range of approaches - dealing with induction of teacher, mentoring people in new roles and the importance of professional collaboration. The creation of a Leadership Academy is valuable complement and while the assumption that it will be self financing in the future is unrealistic its immediate impact in the turn around schools area and low achieving schools makes it a good long term investment but does not maximize the benefits of job embedded training, mentoring and coaching. (8/10) ii. RI's plan is weaker in the area of evaluation of support services. It does have a reasonable strategy for monitoring providers and hopes to link professional development taken to teacher effectiveness and student performance. The methodological challenges in doing so are not addressed nor is the question of the State's capacity to do such work- unlikely given the size of the agency. It is also not a role that sits comfortably with the Leadership Academy. Overall this component is poor.(4/10) (12/20)</p>				
<b>(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)</b>				
<p>The RI officials clarified the plans components for assessing and improving professional support services for teachers and leaders and pointed to material in the submission that underscored the state's experience in this area. This moves the proposal to the top of the medium range (7/10)</p>				
<b>Total</b>	138	111	114	

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

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs</b>	10	10	10	
<b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>RI has a clearly articulated framework for intervening in low performing schools and LEAs and has supplemented that with a protocol of intervention.(10/10)</p>				
<b>(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools</b>	40	37	37	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	32	32	
<b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>i. RI has a plan and has applied it to identify the schools most in need. (5/5) ii. RI has a very good plan to work with LEAs to improve the targeted schools. Using an individual school reform planning process the plan aligns leadership, data on performance and gaps in achievement and training needs of staff and the creation of a cadre of more effective teachers at the school site as some elements of change and enhancement. RI has track record in working with schools in difficulty and has studied its experience of recent years in devising its plan which has benefited from this considered analysis (32/35)</p>				
<b>Total</b>	50	47	47	

**F. General**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(F)(1) Making education funding a priority</b>	10	3	3	
<b>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> It is not possible to see if the 2009 expenditure is greater than or equal to 2008 in % of total revenue from the information presented. There is some evidence in the appendices and elsewhere to suggest that funds are distributed with attention to need and poverty but the needs based allocations are for 15% of the total. (3/10)				
<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	40	27	27	
<b>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> i. There are numerical limits on the # of charters (20), although RI argues this does not effectively limit the # of schools, and on the total enrolment (4%) in charters. Combined and individually they are barriers to entry and form a "low cap". (2/8) ii. RI's policies are explicit about charter populations being similar to local populations and the need to consider student performance in renewing charters. It also has explicit provisions for revoking a schools charter for reasons of poor student academic achievement. (6/8) iii. The RI funding formula for charters is "equitable" save for the 5% allocated to the LEA which precludes the charter from choosing its "service provider".(8/8) iv. RI does not impose significant restrictions on capital or facilities funds for charters and it does allow charters access to certain pools of financing- they are not "substantial" but sufficient for compliance. (7/8) v. RI is fostering an e- learning high school and offers this and Providence's three autonomous high schools as evidence of an LEA operating an innovative or autonomous public school. This only partly offset the absence of formal mechanism to grant individual schools within an LEA enhanced autonomy. (4/8)				
<b>(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions</b>	5	5	5	
<b>(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> RI has shown a decade or more of commitment to education reform. In addition it documents nine actions that will foster a climate of reform in the state as this plan is implemented. It is also evident throughout the document that the Governor and the Commissioner are strong supporters of reform and have a clear vision for the State and a strong sense of why more needs to be done. (5/5)				
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>35</b>	

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

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM</b>	15	15	15	
<b>Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> RI's pursuit of STEM related activities is apparent at numerous points in the plan in a thoughtful manner- see C3 iii for example. These are supplemented by the material in the final pages of the narrative and by support of the State's Science and Technology Advisory Council. But there is nothing specified in the budget narrative for STEM not even to underpin the STEM element of the Great Teachers section. On the negative there is no clear sense of a plan that would, for example, address the needs of under represented groups and of women and girls in STEM fields.				

Total	15	15	15	
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**Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes	Yes	

**Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

On balance despite the absence of data on the financial commitment from the State, the barriers to charters and the ambiguity about linking compensation to student progress the State has shown local participation, stakeholder engagement, logical and thoughtful planning informed by research and local experience. It addresses all four domains and has demonstrated an understanding of the challenges school leaders face in reducing gaps in performance.

Total		0	0	
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Grand Total	500	402	412	
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# Race to the Top

## Technical Review Form - Tier 2

### Rhode Island Application #5760RI-5



**A. State Success Factors**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it</b>	65	47	53	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	30	35	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	12	13	

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

i. Rhode Island's plan touches on all of the ARRA goals. The state's strategic plan (provided in the application appendix) describes an ambitious set of goals around educator training, student standards and achievement, standards and assessments, effective data systems, and distributing state aid in effective ways. The accomplishments that the application cites over the past ten plus years – creating alternative certification pathways, increasing graduation requirements, clarifying teacher evaluation – have begun to lay the groundwork for further initiatives in the areas identified in this application. ii. The state has a high quality MOU that is relatively specific in identifying the roles and obligations of both LEAs and the state. However, the MOU and Exhibit 1 do not include all of the criteria to be addressed in the state's application. For example, the criteria listed on the application under D2 are not the same as those listed in the MOU/Exhibit 1 under D2. The MOU/Exhibit 1 does not identify any agreements about compensation, tenure or removal based on performance. However, the summary table indicates that there is 100% commitment among participating LEAs regarding these issues. This makes it difficult to know to what the participating LEAs have committed. The disconnect between the MOU/Exhibit 1 and the application criteria come in a frequently contentious area. Thus, the lack of alignment between the two forms raises questions about the strength of LEA commitment. In addition, there is relatively low commitment from LEAs to the state's plan for turning around chronically low performing schools (E2). Finally, very few of the union leaders in the LEAs have committed to supporting the state's application. Given that all of the participating LEAs have unionized teachers with elected union leaders, the lack of commitment among these individuals is of some concern because several of the initiatives that the state hopes to pursue could be impacted by collective bargaining agreements. It is encouraging that the union leader in the largest LEA (Providence) has signed the MOU, but one large district will not be sufficient for a statewide impact. iii. Overall, the state presents a high percentage of participating LEAs including those that serve the most traditionally at-risk students (those in poverty and English language learners) and those schools and districts that have struggled in the past. The participating LEAs include 97% of the state's students in poverty. This level of commitment from superintendents and school board leaders around the state is evidence of broad participation. In addition, the state's plan to intervene in about a fifth of the lowest performing schools will begin to address persistent achievement gaps. The state assessment and NAEP results are relatively similar (in terms of percent proficient) in Rhode Island and the state has set ambitious goals for improvement on both of these measures. The state has also set ambitious goals in reducing the achievement gap between student subgroups and the statewide average as well as in raising the graduation rate and increasing college entry and success. Unfortunately, we do not have an easy way to assess the historical accomplishments in the state. For college enrollment and retention, recent data is simply not available. This information would help us to estimate whether the goals stated in the application are realistic. However, the goals in the application

are somewhat higher than those originally stated in the strategic plan, thus indicating some additional benefit to be gained as a result of Race to the Top funds. Though ambitious, the goals are potentially achievable with particular attention to those schools and LEAs that have had the most difficulty demonstrating success in the past.

**(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

ii. State officials clarified that the agreements in Exhibit 1 and the MOU were crafted with some input from union leaders. The lack of clear agreement about tying compensation to student performance is reflective of the fact that this is a topic that will have to be negotiated by LEA leaders. The state does not have the ability at this point to mandate a direct connection between a yet-to-be-developed evaluation metric and local compensation agreements. The Tier 2 presentation emphasized the fact that the application narrative commits the state only to those initiatives for which there is currently legal authority. Thus, no agreement about compensation could be described.

iii. In addition, the fact that the Board of Regents has the power to create laws affecting schools is relevant to the ability of the state to have statewide impact. State leaders also discussed the nuanced way in which they have to deal with achievement gaps. Discussion of the specific nature of different types of achievement gaps is relevant to the state's ability effectively address achievement gaps.

<b>(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans</b>	30	19	22	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	13	15	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	6	7	

**(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

i. a) Because Rhode Island had developed a strategic plan that is very much inline with its Race to the Top application, the re-organization of the state department of education should be effective for supporting the initiatives proposed. The fact that the executive management team, including the Commissioner, will be taking responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of Race to the Top initiatives makes it reasonable to assume that the leadership for these programs will be the strongest the state has to offer. b) The state does not provide sufficient detail to describe how it would support LEAs and schools. The Division of Educator Effectiveness and Instructional Improvement is cited as the key support for LEAs, while the Division of Accountability and Quality Assurance is cited as supporting both struggling schools and LEAs. Clearer distinction between roles would help the reader to understand who will take the lead on various initiatives targeted at either LEAs or schools. While the LEAs will have eventual responsibility for assuring implementation at the school level, the state will need to be prepared to intervene in areas where that does not happen or is not successful. c) Rhode Island describes a comprehensive technology based program for both tracking grant spending as well as the progress on agreed upon benchmarks. The EdStat program that is to be introduced, should allow the state to simultaneously track grant expenditures and results. d) The state strategy is to use RTTT funds to initiate new systems, build capacity in existing systems, and develop tools that can be used over the long term. This will require the addition of staff at the state level (24 positions), many of which (10) will be terminated after the systems and tools are created. The state has already identified a system for funding 7 of the 14 positions that it hopes to keep after the grant period and hopes to identify funding for the other seven. Because the RTTT grants would fund new and in some cases experimental programs, if the state can effectively track the impacts of these programs, more stable funds (e.g., Title I, Title II) would be re-allocated to support those that are successful. e) While this is a compelling argument, building capacity is an ongoing effort. It is difficult to assess whether the remaining 14 new RIDE staff would be sufficient to continue the improvements that the state hopes to see (if in fact the state can find funds to sustain all 14 positions). There is very little discussion of how LEAs might consider re-allocating funds to support any of the new initiatives. While the state cannot control local budgets, there is no indication of how evidence of success might be shared with LEAs in order to encourage re-direction of funds to support more successful practices. ii. The application describes an application development process that included considerable discussion and consultation with stakeholders. And it is clear from the statements that there is significant political support for the proposed initiatives at the state level. The

application also provides a long list of other groups that have offered letters of support for the RTTT application. However, only a handful of letters are actually provided in the appendix. Included among the list of letters is the Rhode Island teachers union. However, earlier in the application we read that the statewide AFT endorsed the plan "with concerns." Without seeing copies of the letters of support, it is difficult to assess how committed various partners are to the support of this application. Also, the narrative does not describe how the support from the non-political organizations will be utilized to support implementation of this program. Though the list of supporters appears relatively comprehensive in nature, none of the state's larger colleges/universities were represented (aside from Brown), nor was any association of high school educators (though early childhood and middle level educators were represented). This is potentially problematic for an initiative that seeks to improve college readiness and retention.

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

- i. Tier 2 discussion clarified the role of the Intermediate Service Providers as a lasting element of the state's plan to support change going forward. The certification process for these providers that is to be developed in partnership with the Dana Center will improve the state's ability to scale-up and sustain changes that are begun as part of this effort.
- ii. State leaders re-iterated the support from the state affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers and the piloting of evaluation systems that is underway in the state. This is evidence of leadership support for collaborative engagement with the state in advancing improvement efforts.

<b>(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>22</b>	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5	5	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	17	17	

**(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

i. In response to this criterion, Rhode Island provides a long list of initiatives that it has pursued over the past several years. Some of these initiatives – the approval of evaluation standards, the development of a web-based longitudinal data system, the development of a common assessment – are very well aligned with the RTTT criteria. The timeframe for many of these accomplishments is not entirely clear in the application, but there is some indication that many of them are quite recent (for example, the approval of evaluation standards occurred only a few months ago). In combination, the accomplishments that the state points to provide evidence that the recent work done by RIDE and the BOR is well aligned with the goals of RTTT. ii. In general, it appears that students overall achievement is improving, though the state's achievement gains are a bit difficult to interpret. Gains in math and reading are similarly positive on the NECAP, with the achievement gaps between many subgroups shrinking over time. However, on the NAEP, the math gains are much better than reading, with little reduction in the achievement gap in either subject. No hypothesis is provided for what may cause this difference. However, it is evident that Rhode Island is attending to the results of its test scores. Rhode Island provides a good example of action being taken based on data. When high school math performance (on NECAP) was at an unacceptable level, the state contracted with a national expert to further investigate this finding. When it became clear that LEAs were not using curricula that were well aligned to standards, the state began an initiative to develop model curricula in partnership with LEAs. Similarly, the state has undertaken a number of initiatives to raise the graduation rate. The application has relatively little discussion of specific efforts undertaken in response to the achievement gap issue, though some efforts are described briefly in the table in this section. However, other achievement gaps persist – special education students and English language learners continue to perform at levels well below their peers. The application does not explicitly describe efforts in these areas that seek to address that issue. Finally, as mentioned above, the state has undertaken several initiatives to improve the graduation rate. In the narrative, the application describes a 4% improvement in graduation rate over one year (from 2008 to 2009). This is commendable growth. Unfortunately, the table that provides data about graduation rate provides a different rate for 2008 and does not provide any rate for 2009. This leaves the reader unsure of what to think about any improvement in graduation rate.

Total	125	88	97	
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**B. Standards and Assessments**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards</b>	40	39	39	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	19	19	
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20	20	

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

i. Rhode Island states that it is part of the CCSSO/NGA consortium developing common standards. (Unfortunately, the state does not provide evidence, such as a memorandum of understanding or other agreement, to show that it is fully committed to this process and its final product.) In spite of the lack of evidence, the state's commitment to common standards and assessments has a historical base in both the NECAP and NSRE as well as its participation in WIDA. The NGA consortium is working to develop standards at the highest level and Rhode Island has committed to using those standards for at least 85% of its state standards. This consortium is likely to produce high quality standards that will be adopted by a majority of states. ii. Rhode Island has demonstrated its ability to adopt and implement common standards. The application provides a timeline and process for adoption, citing the relevant state regulations. Based both on its experience and the methodical steps in the application, there is little reason to think that the state will not adopt the new standards by the August 2 deadline.

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

10 10 10

**(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

As with the standards discussed above, Rhode Island has experience adopting common assessments and is committed to adopting assessments that are aligned with the new common standards that will be developed by the state consortium being led by NGA and CCSSO. A letter from Achieve provides evidence that Rhode Island will participate in a consortium that will include a majority of states and will create assessments that meet the needs of a statewide accountability system and yield results that can be compared across states.

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

20 17 17

**(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

Rhode Island recognizes in its application that different LEAs will require differing levels of support to implement new standards and assessments. As a result, it describes a multi-staged approach in which the products from each stage will be made available to all LEAs but some LEAs will receive much greater support in developing and implementing those products. This is a reasonable approach because some LEAs are likely to implement standards with relatively little support while others will need considerable interaction with state leaders. The universal training sessions that the state proposes for all educators in all LEAs – to allow staff to begin a study process focused on the new standards – lack specificity. It is difficult to assess the likelihood that this initiative, run by the Dana Center, will result in an ongoing and increasing familiarity with the new standards. The state's commitment to generating interim assessments for all schools and LEAs is a meaningful way to help teachers and leaders to assess how well standards are being assimilated by students. However, the application also describes developing formative assessments. Current thinking views formative assessment as an ongoing process in which teachers need to engage, not a set of instruments. In the application, formative assessments are conflated with "strategies to help

students master certain concepts." The description seems to imply that the state will provide tools to schools. However, if the goal is to help teachers to learn new sets of strategies, the approach for helping teachers to do this is not clear. The state has a more targeted focus on developing aligned curricula. The process outlined by the Dana Center appears to have been successful with Providence and seems likely to yield curricula that will have buy-in in participating districts. Undertaking the development of materials across four subjects in all grade levels in a dozen districts is a massive undertaking but making the resulting material available to all districts should provide a strong foundation on which the state can build its improvement efforts. The separation of technology and engineering from the scope and sequence being generated for math and science does not have a clear rationale. Given the integral nature of technology and engineering to the other standards, this material is likely to be addressed in the science and math development process. Separating the development process is likely to result in these curricular materials getting less attention than the others developed through a much larger process. The focus on project-based learning in a small number of districts may result in the development of interesting curricular materials. However, this too could be integrated into the larger curriculum development process described above. The distinct nature of the curriculum, STEM, and PBL projects is likely to lead educators to viewing these efforts as separate rather than part of an integrated whole. This "siloed" approach to the education goals may limit the overall effectiveness. In this application, while the individual activities appear to be reasonable, the overall approach appears perilously close to a collection of silos.

Total	70	66	66	
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**C. Data Systems to Support Instruction**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	12	12	

**(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

The state provides evidence of 6 of the 12 elements of the America COMPETES law having been met.

(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	4	4	
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**(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

The state has outlined a process for improving its data accessibility and utility that includes several essential components – a more user friendly "dashboard" based on stakeholder need, a system that connects teacher effectiveness with teacher training and professional development data, and a system for training educators in the use of the data system. The state goal of training 7500 educators in the first year of training and 750 in the second year seems somewhat backward. Generally, piloting of training can be helpful in identifying areas in which the training can be strengthened and improved.

(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	13	15	
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**(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

i. The integration of standards, curriculum, assessments and local and state data in the data dashboards accessible to educators is a strength of the system. Less is said about how the state would encourage districts to use the system. However, having a development process that includes considerable input from participating LEAs (as described in the application) should help educators to see the potential utility of the system. However, more specificity about strategies to encourage LEA use once the system design has been finalized would be helpful. ii. To familiarize educators with the dashboard, the state proposes a set of web-based tools. However, no mention is made of specific skills that educators will be expected to master or any assessment of their mastery of those skills. Though the application describes a much more detailed plan for building capacity among school leadership teams, the culture change that they are expected to foster will be dependent upon a basic facility with the web-based data system. Research would suggest that

the basic facility in technology tools often impedes school use. The ongoing school based support for principals and leadership teams appears to address a number of key issues that research would suggest are often obstacles to program implementation and culture change; creating time in the schedule, providing a supportive team of colleagues, and direct contact with experts. In addition, the state should be commended for describing a system in which data is examined for its uses at both the teacher and school levels. The only oversight here is a consideration of district level use of data to guide decisions. iii. Rhode Island cites its work with the Research Collaborative and its commitment to joining the National Student Clearinghouse as evidence of its commitment to research. These are good examples of research partnerships. In addition, the discussion of the longitudinal data system earlier in this application includes data about teacher preparation and professional development, both of which will be useful to researchers in evaluating program effectiveness. However, the application does not mention the involvement of researchers in the development of its databases or how to record that data for most effective use.

**(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

ii. The emphasis on a common set of data for everyone to use will increase the likelihood of data use by school leaders. In addition, principals and teachers are to engage in six days of professional development, which will include training about the effective use of interim assessment data for instructional improvement.

Total	47	29	31	
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**D. Great Teachers and Leaders**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals</b>	21	18	18	

**(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

i. The state's alternative certification regulations meet all five of the criteria for alternative certification as described in the application. ii. The state has just begun to certify teachers using an alternate certification route and will soon expand this further through its own program and partnership with Teach for America. It is also expanding its alt cert for principals through the Academy for School Leadership. Given that the alt cert law was just passed in 2008, the state has demonstrated a commitment to using this new path to certification for both teachers and principals. iii. The state tracks shortages by the number of permits that are requested for out of field teaching. The state does not describe any efforts that are more proactive than this that might be helpful in identifying shortage areas. The partnerships that it describes in its application are designed to specifically target the areas in which shortages are the greatest. In the data system section, the state described its future ability to track preparation programs and connect them with student outcomes. This will allow it to assess whether strategies to address shortage areas produce teachers that are as effective as those produced through more traditional means.

<b>(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance</b>	58	47	51	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	1	3	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	12	14	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	10	10	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	24	24	

**(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

i. There is very little information about how Rhode Island is thinking about developing measures for student growth in the non-NECAP grades and subjects. It is also difficult to see how the plan for measuring student

growth connects with the state's stated intention to adopt new assessments over the next several years. The plan also does not connect with the state's intention of creating interim assessments, which have the possibility of allowing the state to measure student growth. ii. Rhode Island proposes a very ambitious evaluation system for all teachers in the state. This will require that there are statewide measures available for every teacher in every grade in all subjects. And all of this is to be accomplished prior to the 2011-2012 school year when student growth is to be counted in teacher evaluations (for 40% of a teacher's rating). Participating LEAs appear to be committed to collaborative development of such an evaluation system. While this will pose a significant challenge on its own, the state must also create measures of instructional quality, fulfillment of professional responsibility, and content knowledge. Even with external support, this is a massive undertaking at the state level. It is not entirely clear that the state will have the capacity to develop all of these measures within the timeframe described. iii. By state regulation, all educators must be evaluated annually using an evaluation system that meets with rigorous and highly prescriptive state guidelines. The requirements of the RI Standards meet or exceed the criteria required by Race to the Top. iv. The application appears to meet the criteria for an evaluation system (though it does not clearly state that compensation will be related to educator evaluation, it does refer to "other incentives"). In addition, the state has set extremely high standards and expectations for teachers, with 85% to be effective or highly effective by the end of the 2013-2014 school year. Connecting professional development information to teachers and student achievement information will allow LEAs to target professional development to teachers who need it. The state also describes a system in which LEAs will have to use evaluation data for promotion decisions. This commitment is further strengthened by the plan to only hire individuals into state leadership positions who have achieved ratings of effective or highly effective. The state describes extremely demanding requirements for initial certification, re-certification and teacher retention in its new Basic Education Plan. All of these decisions will be directly connected to the evaluation system, including the dismissal of any teacher who receives two consecutive ratings of "ineffective." All of these aspects of the state plan meet or exceed the criteria described in the application. However, with regard to compensation, the application says that the state will create models that LEAs "can adopt" by 2015. This is a much less strong requirement than other aspects of the evaluation system and would seem to indicate that the commitment to basing compensation on evaluation measures is not as strong as other commitments. Although the table of performance measures indicates that all LEAs will use evaluation systems to inform teacher compensation, this remains somewhat vague in the narrative. In addition, there is much less information here about principal evaluations and how these will be used to make decisions in the areas discussed above for principals.

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

- i. State leaders clarified that for non-tested grades and subjects, they plan to examine the feasibility of using existing assessment instruments and items for the purposes of measuring student growth. They will work with the National Center for the Improvement of Educational Accountability to accomplish this task. They are committed to using data that is rigorous, comparable across classrooms and aligned to state standards. Guided by these three principles, the state will have to develop measures. While the broad outlines of the state's plan are more compelling given the clarification, more detail would be needed for full points for this criterion.
- ii. In order to develop the teacher and principal evaluation systems, the state will work in the following areas: instructional quality, professional responsibility, content knowledge, and student achievement. The first three of these are areas in which the state has long-standing standards (student achievement is discussed elsewhere). As a result, evaluation instruments will not have to be developed from scratch, but will be based on existing standards and, where possible, on existing instruments. Thus, the enormity of the task is diminished somewhat through this explanation. The state will have to work with external experts and internal committees to create a plan for combining the various measures and instruments that they select.

<b>(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>18</b>	
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(I) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	9	12	
(II) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	6	6	

**(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

i. Rhode Island legislation that has been passed will ensure that placement of teachers is no longer based solely on seniority, but takes effectiveness ratings into account. Teacher ratings will be published for each school, with attention to high poverty and high minority schools. In addition, these schools will not be permitted to hire teachers who are rated as ineffective (though they may still hire "minimally effective" teachers). The steps that the application describes will begin to address the distribution of more and less effective teachers. However, the high turnover rates that are associated with high poverty and high minority schools could mean that many new teachers (who are not yet rated) will be hired at these schools. There is no discussion of any sanctions or rewards that schools or LEAs might receive for lower or higher levels of effective and highly effective teachers. While the publication of data related to this issue may help to motivate public pressure on schools or systems, the state does not detail steps that it would take in cases where the pool of ineffective or minimally effective teachers overwhelms the pool of more effective teachers. In addition, the application does not describe steps for dealing with the potentially inequitable distribution of effective principals. One hopes that the professional development that the state described in other sections of this application would help more teachers to become increasingly effective. However, the only new recruitment strategy that the state describes to lure effective or highly effective teachers to places where they are needed is the partnership with The New Teacher Project. This effort will be specifically focused on turnaround schools and seems like a strong start. However, as vacancies are created as a result of not granting tenure or dismissing teachers who do not meet the effective benchmark, the state will likely need more aggressive recruiting strategies to fill these vacancies with effective teachers. Because the state has not yet developed its guidelines for rating teachers, it is difficult to assess how realistic the performance measures are that the state proposes. However, to expect that in the first year in which a rating is available that 50% of principals in high poverty schools will be effective and only 20% of principals in low poverty schools will receive that same rating seems somewhat unrealistic. This difference is much more dramatic than the other differences in the first year of teacher and principal rating and makes one wonder why the state would hypothesize such significant differences at the start. This is significant and potentially problematic because future goals are premised on this first year. Indeed, the goal to have 75% of principals in high poverty, high minority schools be highly effective seems either extremely ambitious or that the rating system for principals may not be sufficiently stringent. ii. Rhode Island plans to increase the percentages of effective teachers by reducing the numbers of ineffective teachers through some of the mechanisms described above and increasing the numbers of effective teachers through recruitment and professional development. And, while the application describes some strategies for partnering with The New Teacher Project and encouraging the development of innovative charter schools, there is limited detail in how the state would tackle this challenge statewide. The numbers of teachers in high need high poverty schools is three times as large as the number of teachers in low poverty, low minority schools (even though the numbers of schools is essentially the same). Even if the percentages of ineffective teachers and needs are equal in both types of schools, the state has a significant challenge in assuring that hard-to-staff subjects are addressed in the high need schools. It is not entirely clear that the strategies that the state has described will be successful in meeting this challenge.

**(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

i. State leaders acknowledged the difficulty of planning for the equitable distribution of teachers before a statewide effectiveness measure has been developed. In addition, the commitment to assuring that no student has an ineffective teacher for two years in a row was more fully described as a strategy to ensure equitable distribution. Because schools and districts will be tasked with assigning students to effective teachers, the state in partnership with LEAs will have to make sure that this is logistically possible in every school.

<b>(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs</b>	14	11	11	
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**(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

i. The state has a plan to connect information about teacher preparation and teacher and student performance. This plan is supported by the description of the developing longitudinal data system that the state proposes and should yield information that would be useful in assessing the relative quality of teacher preparation programs. It is notable that the state plans to release information about teacher contributions to student growth, progress toward full certification and number of graduates in high poverty and high minority schools. These are all important pieces of information. It would also be helpful to connect information about the program graduates' overall performance ratings. While student achievement and growth are a part of this, the overall rating depends on additional pieces of information that would be useful for the public and educators to have a complete understanding of the quality of program graduates. ii. The state has demonstrated its willingness to close preparation programs that do not meet its standards and through the development of alternate route certification programs will encourage new programs to develop. By developing a clear rubric for describing quality of program graduates, the state will be able to identify and support those programs that appear to yield stronger graduates. However, the application repeatedly refers to partnering with charter schools to produce teachers and principals for both the charter schools and traditional public schools. While some charter operators may train their own educators, the application does not provide evidence to suggest that charter schools will develop staff in such numbers that they could fill both charter and traditional needs, is not entirely clear.

<b>(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals</b>	20	14	17	
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**(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

i. For principals (primarily) and school leaders, Rhode Island plans to create an Academy for School Leadership in partnership with an external organization or through hiring a set of external providers. It details the year-long training program in its application. This program is primarily aimed at new principals entering the profession. However, the bulk of the state's principals are likely to be on the job for many years to come. Thus, more emphasis on building the skills of current principals may be appropriate in response to the application criteria related to professional development being ongoing and job-embedded. And, while the state proposes to create data analysis teams at schools, the description of these efforts does not make clear the levels of ongoing support that participants will receive. The new program for teacher mentoring and induction modeled after the New Teacher Center appears to be a very comprehensive set of supports for first and second year teachers. It will be tremendously expensive to provide all new teachers with a full time mentor at a ratio of 15 to one. It is not clear how this cost could be sustained following the conclusion of this grant period. ii. The state will rely on data collected as part of its statewide data system to evaluate the effectiveness of supports as they relate to teacher performance and student achievement (as captured through teacher evaluations). This seems like a reasonable and rigorous way to evaluate the effectiveness of programs. The application also states that the state will identify providers "with a proven track record of improving educator effectiveness and student achievement." Unfortunately, there is little discussion of the providers who can demonstrate impacts on student achievement. The state needs to be prepared for a more extended period of evaluation and needs to think in more depth about how it will continuously improve the effectiveness of the programs that it offers. Yielding reliable data about the impact of a program generally takes multiple years. During this time, the program being offered has to remain relatively stable. Thus, the timeline that the state describes for introducing and evaluating programs may be unrealistically brief.

**(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

i. The state leaders clarified that the Academy for School Leadership will be open to teams of school and district leaders to improve expertise, and will not be limited to aspiring school leaders. Current school leaders will be able to improve their skills in particular areas. This academy will help to address the needs of current staff members and will complement the host of initiatives that the state describes for incoming teachers and principals. This will be one means of effective support. In addition, the clarification of the role

of the Intermediary Service Providers provides evidence that these individuals will help to support teachers and principals and their effectiveness.

Total	138	105	115	
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**E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs</b>	10	10	10	

**(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

Rhode Island has the legal authority to intervene directly in both schools and LEAs. The law allows the state to restructure any aspect of schools (including closing the school) and to pursue "enforcement actions" against LEAs if the LEA is not taking the steps necessary and required to improve the school.

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

**(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

i. The state has developed a relatively detailed system for identifying persistently low achieving schools. Their system (as described in the appendix) deals with both status and growth measures and provides strategies for identifying both elementary schools and high schools (in which testing is done less frequently). The state has decided to exceed the five schools that would be required by definition and target 12 schools for dramatic intervention. In part, this allows them to include elementary, middle, and high schools in order to ideally demonstrate success in turning around schools at all grade levels. ii. Rhode Island has a process to identify the lowest performing schools, familiarize LEA leaders with their options in creating school reform plans, and reviewing and approving those plans. Regulations state that the plans must include one of the four intervention models described in the application. The state describes a robust and resource intensive intervention in the 12 identified schools. The state support includes additional staff members, full-time, dedicated to school improvement and evaluation. This heavy support seems to be directly related to the state's previous experiences with turnaround efforts in which many of the lessons learned relate to the unexpectedly high levels of resources that were required. The plan will be heavily dependent on the school achievement specialists and evaluation specialists that the state is able to identify, hire and train. While the strong level of state involvement in these efforts is admirable given that it will likely help to keep resources and attention focused on these schools, the question of how whether this approach builds sufficient capacity with the LEAs to sustain these efforts is less readily answered.

Total	50	45	45	
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**F. General**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(F)(1) Making education funding a priority</b>	10	4	4	

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

i. The state does not provide any evidence in its application to illustrate the relative percentages of the state budget that were devoted to education in FY 2008 and FY 2009. As a result, it is impossible to provide any

points for this criterion. ii. The state has several policies that are intended to lead toward equitable funding and has recently passed legislation that is facilitating the establishment of new state funding guidelines intended to make the system more equitable. A quick review of the per-pupil funding data provided in the appendix, shows that the state has a relatively limited range, thus indicating relatively equal funding. The new legislation permits for greater equity addressing student need by connecting funding to individual students and school and district conditions, thus providing greater resources for those in need. The state's ability to intervene in LEAs in order to assure equity among schools is limited. However, in order to address this potential inequity, the state promises to make funding decisions at the most local level more transparent, thus allowing a variety of stakeholder to more easily monitor within LEA decisions.

<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	40	32	35	
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**(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

i. The state's current law limits the number of students that can be enrolled in charter schools. It also limits the number of charter school organizations to 20. And, while this does not necessarily limit the number of campuses, in practice it is likely to limit the number and diversity of school models that are in use. Though the mayoral academies provide room to limit the impact of these caps, they are not the same type of potentially community-based operations that charter schools can be. And, while some state leaders would apparently like to see caps lifted, at present charter school enrollment is limited to 4% of the student body.

ii. Rhode Island's charter school laws set clear standards for the authorization, monitoring, and reauthorization of charter schools. Student achievement plays a key role in this process, as goals are articulated at the time of application. The state regulations further stipulate that preference be given to high need students. The application supports the fact that this has been done by pointing out that a greater percentage of charter school students are eligible for free and reduced lunch than of the population statewide. Though stronger evidence should be provided to make a more compelling case, this fact does suggest that charters are not disproportionately serving privileged students. The state, as the only body that can authorize and monitor charter schools, has just adopted a more demanding policy for holding charter schools accountable and closing them when necessary. There is not evidence that the state has utilized this authority up to this point, but the promised transparency of both the goals and the intervention process should make it relatively easy to assess when regulations are being followed. The state has denied far more charter school applications than it has approved, based on both financial and programmatic reasons. This is evidence that the review criteria that the state imposes may set a relatively high standard for approval.

iii. Rhode Island passes along all federal funds and 95% of state and local funds to charter schools. This is a relatively high percentage.

iv. The state allows charter schools to raise bonds through the state corporation and reimburses charters for up to 30% of their building costs. There is no evidence that charters face requirements any more stringent than other public schools, aside from the fact that charters must prove that they have an adequate facility at the time of their application. Mayoral academies which operate like charters in certain respects enjoy certain advantages (direct access to city property) that may make facilities more affordable.

v. There are no apparent obstacles in the state for LEAs to create more innovative and autonomous schools (though certain aspects may be constrained by local collective bargaining agreements). The state points to its enhancement of distance learning opportunities as evidence of its commitment to educational innovation, allowing students to pursue education and credit in a variety of formats. However, the application does not describe formal mechanisms for granting or encouraging autonomy at the school or LEA level.

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

i. Clarification of the legislation related to mayoral academies illustrated the fact that a group of mayors can bring in outside charter operators to open schools within Rhode Island. As a result, through the initiative of the mayoral group the diversity of providers may be increased within the state.

<b>(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions</b>	5	5	5	
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**(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

The state's efforts in developing research capacity to aid in school and system improvement, its high school redesign efforts, and commitment to creating more useful data systems that go beyond the K-12 system are all further evidence that the state is seeking ways to create conditions for more informed education policy making and flexibility in educational opportunities for students.

<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>44</b>	
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**Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM**

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>Init</b>
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	

**Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

Throughout its application, Rhode Island has highlighted initiatives in STEM education as they relate to standards and assessments, developing teacher quality, and encouraging innovation. The application highlights a number of current and potential partnerships that will enhance STEM education in the state. And, while some of these opportunities could be more fully integrated with the other ongoing work that the state has proposed here, it is apparent that in addition to its focus on reading and mathematics, the state is considering ways to improve its STEM education more broadly. Points were awarded for this priority based on these strengths. However, the application has overlooked efforts to improve the representation of under-represented groups - including women and girls - in STEM programs and does not include budget allocations specifically targeted at STEM efforts.

<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	
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**Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform**

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>Init</b>
<b>Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform</b>		<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	

**Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

Rhode Island has clearly demonstrated that it has plans and regulations in place to address all four of the specified reform areas. The state has made significant progress in these areas over the past several years; developing a statewide database, building partnerships around standards and assessments, focusing professional development on some of its struggling schools and LEAs and increasing the possibilities for innovation in schools. The plans that it puts forward in this application build on this foundation. In addition, the state has marshalled significant LEA commitment (with the exceptions noted in earlier comments) in many areas, while using strong regulations adopted by the Board of Regents and the state to address areas where they feel more dramatic changes are needed.

<b>Total</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
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<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>413</b>	
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