



Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2

South Carolina Application #5880SC-1



A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	41	41	
(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)

(i) The state's education reform agenda is difficult to understand and appears to be a series of projects instead of a comprehensive and coherent plan. There is a discussion about the demographic and education-related challenges faced in South Carolina, followed by root cause explanations of what needs to be done. The plan talks about increasing the pace of change but does not appear to be a bold, ambitious effort to transform education in the state. The five-point statewide foundation is confusing as to the intent- goals, strategies or plans to move forward. Connecting all of this information to the four reform agenda components of RttT was difficult to assess. (ii) The number of LEAs that have committed to the SC plan is impressive, as almost all of the LEAs have signed on to the effort. However, particularly disturbing is the apparent 'pick and choose' aspect of various LEAs agreeing to some reform ideas but reserving the right to pull out for a variety of reasons. This does not reflect a strong commitment to transformation and the points awarded in this section reflect that concern. A total of 30 points is awarded. (iii) The application provides a table with the various achievement levels, graduation rate increases, and subgroup achievement gap decreases. The discussion of how difficult it is to project improvement on NAEP reflects a philosophy that does not call for transformation, but rather to make minimal improvements and hope for the best. This discussion is inadequate and eight points are awarded.

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

The question asked of the State Panel around LEA commitment elicited a response that indicated there were some LEAs that are facing financial challenges and may pull out, but as of right now those LEAs were in the group committed to the reform. This does not meet the requirement of the criteria for (A)(1)(ii)- "strongly committed to the state's plan and to effective implementation of reform in the four education areas as evidenced by MOUs or other binding agreements." A more realistic approach would have been to include only those LEAs deeply committed to the reform plan.

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	16	16	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	12	12	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	4	4	

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

(i) The capacity to implement is based on a focus on the state agency through a state-wide advisory team and "high caliber professionals" within the agency. A state-wide director will align tasks and assignments,

with many of the duties and responsibilities falling within the current leadership of the agency. Delivery of technical assistance will be through regional organizations and a 7As approach will be employed. Collaborative agreements with stakeholders will also be developed. The approach seems very top down driven and lacks creativity and a way of thinking anew to solve the state's vexing education issues. Twelve points are awarded. (ii) The application describes letters of support from principal and teacher's organizations and various other education-related groups. It does not mention any clear support from legislative leaders, charter school supporters or business, community or other leaders. This lack of information is cause for serious concern about the viability of implementation without broad support. Four points are awarded. The budget for this application appears appropriate for the application, and there are good measures in place regarding budget controls, accountability and management.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	15	18	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	3	3	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	12	15	

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

(i) The application points to a series of national awards and high rankings in some areas as a way to demonstrate progress. In the areas of data systems, teacher quality and standards/assessments, there is progress cited. Little mention, if any, is made regarding progress on leader quality. In addition, the information cited in the area of turning around struggling schools is inadequate. A total of 3 points is awarded. (ii) Student achievement is flat in the area of NAEP, both for improvement trends and reducing achievement gaps. State assessments show a different picture, with the exception of high school exams, which show a flat level of performance over time. Graduation rates have improved. Twelve points are awarded.

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)

A review of the further information provided in the Panel meeting provided additional evidence to support raising the score three points regarding student outcomes.

Total	125	72	75	
--------------	------------	-----------	-----------	--

B. Standards and Assessments

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

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

(i) South Carolina is part of the 48-state Common Core Standards project. (ii) South Carolina provides a formal process for adopting standards with key timelines and activities, including steps already taken. All of this is to lead to adoption in July, 2010.

(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	10	10	
--	-----------	-----------	-----------	--

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

South Carolina states unequivocally that it is committed to developing high quality assessments aligned with internationally benchmarked standards and cites participation in SMARTER, MOSAIC, Assessment

Consortium and Balanced Assessment Consortia (MOUs in Appendix). The number of states is also provided.

(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	20	20	
(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
The state provides a detailed plan with activities, timelines and people responsible. It is well thought through, clearly outlines dates and is appropriate to meet the requirements of this section. Full points are awarded.				
Total	70	70	70	

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	24	20	
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
South Carolina reports meeting 12 of 12 data system elements required by America COMPETES. Therefore, the full amount of points is awarded. However, for elements 5, 8, and 12, the description provided uses terminology like "will add validation data", "will generate a statewide unique educator identifier", and "are currently piloting a course alignment project". It is difficult to ascertain full compliance.				
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)				
Unmet elements are 4 and 11- postsecondary education. After discussing with other panel members it is much clearer that these elements have not been met, and no information was provided in the Panel meeting to justify giving additional support for these two elements.				
(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	5	5	
(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
The state is very proud of its longitudinal data system and planning- SLICE 2013, and provides extensive information on strategies, timelines and responsibilities in its plan. Full points are awarded.				
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	11	11	
(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
(i) The plan for acquisition, adoption and use of instructional improvement systems appears to be missing a key element of the requirements of (C)(3)- namely, the collaboration with LEAs. This plan, including statewide software application Testview, appears to be totally top-down from the state level. There is little, if any, evidence that LEAs are collaborating on this strategy and plan. Five points are awarded. (ii)The plan as outlined appears to be adequate, with timelines, goals/objectives, etc., properly presented. Once again the key concern is the top-down, Agency-driven approach with little discussion of collaboration. Six points are awarded.				
Total	47	40	36	

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
-----------	--------	--------	------

(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	13	13	
--	----	----	----	--

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

(i) South Carolina does not have an alternative route for non-educators to become principals. It does have alternative routes for teachers and superintendents. Five points are awarded. (ii) South Carolina has a variety of alternative certification programs in use for teachers, including PACE and ABCTE, with over 1100 teacher candidates in the pipeline. There is one alternative program for superintendents and none for principals. Five points are awarded. (iii) A Supply and Demand Survey is conducted annually, with those results used to determine areas of greatest need. However, there is no process in place (as explained in the application) other than looking at survey results. Three points are awarded.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	34	34	
--	----	----	----	--

(i) Measuring student growth	5	3	3	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	8	8	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	5	5	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	18	18	

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

(i) South Carolina does not have a statewide system for measuring student growth and describes a variety of initiatives that are currently underway. The application then talks about proposing an ambitious, multi-year plan in this regard, but there is little in the narrative section to explain what is proposed. Three points are awarded. (ii) South Carolina has outlined a plan with activities, timelines and persons responsible, but appears to stretch implementation to the end of the grant period (for example, "By the end of the grant period, South Carolina will involve teachers and key stakeholders in amending..."). The point is why does it take until the end of the grant, after all funds are expended, to implement the requirements. Eight points are awarded. (iii) Once again the focus of the plan is what will happen by the end of the grant period. Five points are awarded. (iv.) The state proposes to provide induction support for beginning teachers and principals. There is no mention of coaching services after the induction period. The state application explains various statutory issues related to tenure and insists that tenure will be related to performance. The explanation is inadequate and does not lay out a clear plan. Eighteen points are awarded.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	20	20	
--	----	----	----	--

(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	12	12	
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	8	8	

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

(i) The application begins with a tutorial on the definition of high-poverty schools and then discusses the concept of salary incentives for teacher excellence that provide incentives to teach in high-poverty schools. A number of creative ideas are explained, including housing support and programs re: isolation. The plan is very credible and thorough. The impact of these incentives with principals is not as extensive as the discussion for teachers. Twelve points are awarded. (ii) Additional information about various incentives and ideas is presented. Once again the list of strategies is impressive and the plan is quite credible, although the efforts appear to be far more focused on teachers than principals. Eight points are awarded.

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	9	9
---	----	---	---

(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(i) Current efforts in South Carolina require educator preparation programs to analyze existing data for their graduates and to use the data accordingly. This evidence meets the requirements of (D)(4)(i). Seven points are awarded. (ii) The requirements re: expansion are not addressed other than a generic statement of commitment. Two points are awarded.

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	14	13	
--	----	----	----	---

(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(i)- The state has provided a plan that appears to be effective and appropriate to support teachers and principals. South Carolina builds on a rich history of working with LEAs, and many existing resources and tools, including its data reporting capabilities, help to give real time information to help teachers and principals adjust instruction accordingly. From infrastructure support to TAP to the Center for Creative Leadership, the state appears committed to helping educators grow as professionals. (ii)- Evaluation is mentioned in the plan related to effectiveness of professional development, but little mention is made of evaluating other tools and resources. Four points are awarded.

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

The response to the S2MART Center around capacity was not an answer that elicited confidence- due to the high unemployment rate there are lots of people to choose from to staff these Centers. The answer did not provide a level of depth and understanding about the quality needed in staff to carry out the tremendous capacity needs of the S2MART Centers.

Total	138	90	89	
--------------	-----	----	----	--

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

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

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

The state has clear statutory authority not only to intervene in low achieving schools but also to reconstitute schools as well. The documentation is clear.

(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	29	29	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	24	24	

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

(i) A clear cut methodology is used to determine the lowest 5% persistently low performing schools. The methodology is based on performance and involves a variety of statistical methods. The approach is satisfactory to meet the requirements of (E)(2)(i). (ii) Implementation of one of the four models and other approaches is outlined in detail. The creation of Turnaround Specialists is also seen as a positive step. A series of charts detailed the various takeover efforts of the state, as well as efforts to turn around individual

schools. The presentation is extremely difficult to decipher, but based on the reports South Carolina's history of turning around persistently low performing schools is not positive. A total of 24 points are awarded.

Total	50	39	39	
-------	----	----	----	--

F. General

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	10	10	

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

South Carolina's percentage of total revenues increased from 37.25% to 38.92%, and including higher education, increased from 47.8% to 48.92%. The state's policies do take into account ability to pay and equity issues- a specific portion of funds are provided on the basis of need. In addition, school construction bonds are guaranteed to at least 60% of districts having the lowest capital financing resources.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	26	26	
---	----	----	----	--

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(i) Charter schools are not capped in any way in South Carolina, nor are enrollments restricted by law. In fact, the state has one of the most flexible, open and transparent charter school provisions in the nation. Full points are awarded. (ii) The application process and peer review process provides for a strong system of approval, monitoring, accountability and reauthorization. From application approval to regular reviews to a strong record of closing schools, the process appears to be very strong. Full points are awarded. (iii) While difficult to completely understand the application's description of the various funding sources, it appears as if South Carolina does provide equitable funding vs. traditional schools. Six points are awarded. (iv) Little or no funding is provided for facilities. No points are awarded. (v) A variety of information, not all completely clear, is provided in the application around innovative, autonomous schools. Because of a lack of clarity, four points are awarded.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	1	1	
---	---	---	---	--

(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

In terms of unique conditions, laws or regulations, most of what the application highlights are programs and practices found as 'givens' in most states and could hardly be labeled special or unique-- kindergarten, standards and assessments, NBPTS and wellness efforts. The Virtual School Program is an example of an innovative effort, and this is the only one mentioned that fits the category requested in (F) (3). One point is awarded.

Total	55	37	37	
-------	----	----	----	--

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	15	15	

Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The state appears to have a strong commitment and history regarding STEM and proposes a series of goals and steps to significantly ratchet up the preparation of technicians due to projected job opportunities in the future. STEM appears to be a competitive preference priority in South Carolina.

Total	15	15	15
-------	----	----	----

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		No	Yes	

Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

South Carolina appears to be especially strong in the standards/assessments and teacher quality areas, but is lacking in the reform areas of leader quality and turning around persistently low performing schools. In addition, the state's historical trend on NAEP is relatively flat and little subgroup achievement gap reduction is noted on NAEP as well. Especially concerning is the apparent lack of LEA commitment and the ability of LEAs to pick and choose what to participate in and reserving the right to back out for a variety of reasons. This simply does not bode well for major reform. RtT is about a race to the top, not to the middle, and as such is a transformational effort around four reform agendas. Without a strong commitment from LEAs, success is highly unlikely. Finally, there was little discussion of the level of commitment and role of state leaders in supporting and leading this reform. For example, there is a signature of the Governor's representative, but no discussion of the Governor's role in leading and supporting the reform agenda. Strong leadership from state leaders is absolutely critical, and this appears to be a 'project' run solely by the Department of Education. South Carolina holds great promise with a number of the components of reform in place. With more time spent building strong commitment at all levels, and with a clear approach to turning around low performing schools, future opportunities to participate will result in a much stronger application.

Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)

The outstanding presentation and discussion with the South Carolina Panel provided the necessary information to warrant changing the absolute priority criterion from 'no' to 'yes'. Further information provided on student achievement data was one factor, but the overall discussion around the reform areas was convincing as to the application meeting the requirements for a 'yes' checkmark.

The South Carolina plan holds great promise for the future, yet the concern about LEA commitment is central to the overall implementation efforts, and the reality that some may drop out for financial reasons is perplexing- if there is a chance that an LEA might drop out, this cannot be considered strong support and thus is a cause for concern. Without clear LEA commitment, the best plan is highly unlikely to be successful.

The history of education reform in South Carolina is indeed rich, and the state application "builds on momentum of what we've done- faster, deeper and broader". This is quite appropriate, but given clear issues about the need for strong student improvement, there may be a need to incorporate even bolder reform strategies in the future.

Total		0	0
Grand Total	500	363	361



Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2

South Carolina Application #5880SC2



A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	53	53	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	3	3	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	40	40	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	10	10	
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</p> <p>The application provides a coherent vision of a reform agenda, with useful historical trend data and description of a five-point foundation for change. The degree to which the vision indeed accomplishes the goal of consolidating and focusing initiatives remains unclear, given the array of initiatives. The logic model lays out desired outcomes per set of activities linked to general goals, but an underlying unifying logic is not presented. The plan provides evidence of strong commitment by participating LEAs, both in percentage of Leas signing on completely, including among high-poverty schools. No teacher unions are represented in the state, and therefore no signatures beyond superintendent and school board president were required. Evidence for LEA support beyond administration and school board, however, is not provided. While several Leas provided caveats to their signed MOUs, with copies provided in the application, it is not clear if this indicates any diminished commitment (or insistence on local autonomy) or the seriousness with which the MOU and accompanying SOW were taken. Revisions to the MOU provide additional details without diminishing the strength of the agreement. Considerable information is provided to support the achievement, gap reduction, graduation and college enrollment targets, as well as to indicate general programmatic strategy. Targets appear reasonable, ambitious, particularly given prior trend lines, and yet within achievable range. Translation into statewide impact appears to rely heavily upon statewide training and technical assistance, and through various programs described here, leveraging regional hubs for delivery. The means by which broad LEA participation might translate into self-sustaining improvement cycles described in the vision remains unclear.</p> <p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)</p> <p>Some concern remains regarding the diverse spread of initiatives, given the plan's acknowledgement of focus as a prior challenge at policy/practice levels. Consolidation of coaching appears a promising example of a more integrated direction, as well as the learning it represents from prior work in math/science. Level of LEA commitment, given strong funding issues, remains of some concern.</p>				
(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	22	15	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	15	10	[REDACTED]
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	7	5	[REDACTED]
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</p>				

The plan describes several key elements of its capacity to implement, from administrative/grant management experience to regional centers to a state-level advisory team; combined these promise an efficient operation of the plan. Considerable information is provided regarding the state team and organizational structure; it appears that current structures will be leveraged well toward the plan's implementation. The state-level advisory team, with a broad array of stakeholders, does not appear to have representation from any teacher organizations, certainly critical, as stated, to the plan's success. The twin levers of the DATTA and TTA, intended to create a state-level community of practice, will be challenged to nurture such change agency at local/regional levels in order to assure growth in local capacity. Whether capacity can be built out at local levels remains less clear, much of this dependent upon the operations of the regional SMART Centers in combination with state-level policy and tools (e.g., evaluation and reporting systems). The lessons learned from the centers' prior existence in math/science reform seem unclear, though evidence is provided of the success of prior iCoaching work. The relation of RECs and new SMARTs warrants further clarification. The plan describes local cross-agency teams that will provide a "seamless system" of support; the nature of these teams, and whether or not they are envisioned as formal and/or required structures with assigned authority or accountability is unclear. The role of other local structures, such as the School Improvement Councils is also unclear, as is how the plan addresses one of the three over-arching themes identified by the Riley Institute study a few years ago, "Schools as Community Centers." Of the three major themes, this is the only one not evident in the description of the plan so far in the proposal, though the relation of the plan to this broad survey of interests/needs is unclear. Considerable budget detail is provided, and appears generally aligned to the plan. Some further explanation of alignment and strategy would strengthen the proposal; e.g., the significant budget support to E2 initiatives warrants further details regarding both strategy and design, as a large portion is set on a per student funding basis. Information regarding the repurposing, reallocating or coordinating of state funds is not provided. A fairly broad range of stakeholder support is evident in the letters provided, as is the information regarding the stakeholder engagement used in the plan's development process. The mix of letters may not be indicative of ground-level support, but teaching and corporate interests seem less represented than, e.g., higher education. Choice of language within the larger teacher association's support letter, along with issues expressed during proposal development meetings regarding teacher working conditions, raises some concern about the level of support from teachers, key stakeholders in any implementation.

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

While evidence is provided of some strong stakeholder support from various sectors, evidence regarding the degree of teacher, parent and local community buy-in remains unclear. Low teacher participation in professional associations provides some limit to the strength of support letters as evidence, as does the acknowledgement of working conditions concerns and the lack of clarity regarding parent/community role in reform plans.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	22	20	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5	5	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	17	15	

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

The plan provides evidence of the state's progress in each of the four reform areas. Though from a low baseline, the state provides evidence of gains in student achievement, reduction of achievement gaps, and increased graduation rates. A large portion of some gains occurred early in 2002-08 (e.g., 98% of 4th grade PACT math improvement in year one). PACT scores across 2002-2008, while fairly flat with some modest increases, also show declining AfrAm/White gaps in all but 4th grade math. Income-based gaps appear to follow a similar pattern. HS exit exams also net out flat, with some decline in AfrAm/White gaps. The comparability issues owing to the implementation of a new testing system in 2009 (PASS) are unclear; further information required to assess. Data is not provided to substantiate all claims regarding NAEP improvement rates, though a page is provided from the Ed Trust report finding significant gains in 8th grade math for African-Americans and gap closing between high- and low-poverty students in the same subject,

2000-2007. Further data needed to substantiate claims of state assessment improvement since 1999, or to detail trend lines regarding graduation rate improvement.

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)

While Palmetto school improvement provides promising evidence, generally flat performance since the early 2000's raises questions as to whether or not the proposed plans are sufficient to move performance. Shift from policy/standards work toward more direct instructional supports offers promise, as does lessons learned from some pilot activity.

Total	125	97	88	
--------------	------------	-----------	-----------	--

B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards	40	38	38	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	18	18	
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20	20	

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

The state participates in a consortium with 48 other states, and has taken initial steps to align state standards to draft Common Core standards. The plan provides a detailed adoption process with timeline, anticipating state adoption prior to August, 2010.

(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	10	10	
--	-----------	-----------	-----------	--

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

The state participates in four consortia developing assessments -- SMARTER, MOSAIC, Balanced Assessment consortium, and the Florida-led Assessment Consortium -- with 24, 27, 36 and 17 states respectively participating.

(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	16	16	
--	-----------	-----------	-----------	--

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

The state outlines a reasonable plan for transition, including key components of a transition management structure, dissemination vehicle, support materials development, etc. Prior/existing structures and programs will be leveraged to implement the plan (e.g., SSS, ILR, etc.), and prior experience with iCoach will be tapped. Use of the clusters pilot appears to offer efficiencies and the possibility of professional learning exchange at a level among schools sharing similar challenges, though the exact nature of the supports are not clear (though the process is outlined). Attention to the change in assessments is evident (e.g., use of bridge forms), and in assigned PD development. The use of SMART Centers promises an integration of the assessment transition with other components of the plan, though further evidence of this integration is warranted. How the various assessments, many new or recent, will integrate as well as how assessment transition integrates at the school level with other proposed reforms remains unclear. For assessments, e.g., the relation of different forms of formative/interim/summative to assessments of instructional practice (e.g., Guskey, "time on task" gauges, etc.) raises the question of the alignment between student-based assessments and assessments of professional practice. For the overall plan, balancing the need to manage the rollout of particular components (new standards and assessments) with the need to build local capacity

to manage/implement a variety of new tools/resources/norms, with varied timelines likely, warrants further discussion.

Total	70	64	64	
--------------	-----------	-----------	-----------	--

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	20	20	
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) The state's current SLDS, SLICE 2012, meets 10 of the 12 data systems elements required by the America COMPETES Act.				
(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	5	5	
(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) The state's plan addresses the need to provide accessible data to inform and engage key stakeholders. The plan provides considerable detail breaking down to strategy/activity level the state's ambitious goals for SLICE 2013, including performance measures and timelines for implementation. The planned establishment of the DGC should assure broad collaborative governance needs and inter-agency coordination, critical to the SLDS's success in establishing accessible and usable data.				
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	15	15	
(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) The state proposes both continued technical development and expanded access to emerging data systems, through such interfaces as Testview, integrating with existing state databases and systems. Access to researchers will be provided. Integration with data sources beyond statewide K-12 assessment offers promise of greater impact upon instruction, as do planned professional development services. Multiple formats of support, including real-time online supports, will be provided. How data beyond test scores will inform instructional improvement, and/or how local capacity to use data for instruction will be gauged/monitored is not clear.				
(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2) The technical ability to connect datasets across school/non-school factors, so as to inform operational integration, would appear promising.				
Total	47	40	40	

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	17	17	
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) The state provides alternative routes to certification for teachers, principals and superintendents; IHE's remain central, though teacher certification may be accomplished through an exam-based process, combined with teaching experience. While new teachers are assigned a mentor, the nature of the mentoring/coaching provided is unclear. Degree of program selectivity is unclear. The plan describes each				

route, including legal authority, participation and completion numbers, and key components. A proposed expansion of the PACE program would target alternative route teachers for high-needs schools, and a proposed alternative route for non-educators to become principals has been proposed as well. Annual survey data is used to identify teacher and administrator shortages/needs across the state through the state's Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention and Advancement (CERRA).

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

The rationale for not including elementary teachers in alternative certification in the same way as middle and high school teachers appears to reflect sound experience from prior work, and the ability to implement a nuanced policy approach.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	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)

The state does not at present have a system for measuring student growth for individual students, though it is doing pilot work in TAP and SC9+ schools. It is developing such a value-added model, including a model that takes into account non-academic student/contextual factors for greater accuracy. The state will also develop project-based learning and assessments, so that the model will eventually tap both currently standardized test data and rubric-based standardized data from the PBLAs. The plan describes the currently detailed annual process of teacher and principal evaluation, including its multiple forms of evidence and multiple evaluators. The state intends to incorporate a value-added model based on current/soon-to-be-developed standardized test data (building off its TAP pilots) and to incorporate scores from the PBLA's, once developed. In addition, a school-level value-added factor will be included for teachers, as well as other possible indicators affecting teacher effectiveness beyond the control of the teacher (e.g., student work habits, after school involvement, etc.). The approach appears ambitious and yet an attempt to address the clear limitations of single score growth as an effectiveness indicator; addressing these while continuing to address challenges of the current system (see Anderson report) will require considerable attention to design in an already-extended process. Planned development of principal evaluations reflects a similar approach. The limited community input warrants further consideration. Current evaluations appear to inform several layers of decision making, from development to compensation/promotion/retention to certification (three tiers of contractual level) and removal. Proposed development will enhance this capacity, with an ambitious but achievable timeline to 100% LEA implementation by 2014. Developmental and training delays, given the multiple components proposed, would appear the most significant challenge.

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

Inclusion of observational, student achievement and work samples in teacher effectiveness evaluation, along with the initial analysis of correlation between observations and student achievement, provides promising evidence regarding their commitment to evaluation of teacher performance. Adoption of the vertically aligned PASS appears to provide a more robust base for the value-added model.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	18	18	
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	10	10	

(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	8	8	
<p>(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</p> <p>The plan provides a number of means by which the state intends to ensure equitable distribution in terms of school poverty levels and for hard-to-staff subjects. A number of efforts to address the supply of teachers, both for high-needs settings and in high-need subjects(alternative routes, teacher loans, virtual training, international, etc.), exist and/or are planned, as are efforts to provide access to expertise in new ways (e.g., virtual, adjunct program). While overall "highly qualified" teacher data is provided by poverty level, no further breakdown of distribution is provided, limiting the ability to match data to intervention design. The 2008 Task Force cited and provided in the appendix provides four foci (not three per narrative), though the current plan appears to have focused on a subset. Considerable attention to compensation, some training, and quality of life conditions (such as housing, online support) is evident. Attention to what the Task Force identifies as "an incessant cry" regarding working conditions does not appear to be addressed in the plan, nor is it clear how the plan addresses the sense of isolation/outsider status that appears to hinder recruitment and retention, particularly in high-poverty settings. While the online network appears an appropriate and helpful recent support, as are the housing initiatives, there appears to be a significant unaddressed need regarding the educator's relationship with the local community. The need to "recast" the teaching profession, a Task Force focus omitted in the narrative, would also appear warranted.</p>				
(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	12	12	
<p>(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</p> <p>The state plans to improve the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs, using links to student achievement and growth data, to publicly report such program data, and to use this data to drive program growth. The plan will build off current ADEPT/PADEPP systems, once modified, and then build off the pilot Project HEAT. Attention to build collaborative structures with university programs preparing teachers and administrators is evident, as is provision for those institutions to propose innovations. Further information is warranted regarding how (structures, processes beyond reporting) future data sources will lead to program revisions/closures.</p>				
(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	12	12	
<p>(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</p> <p>The plan outlines both an overarching conceptual framework for teacher/principal support (via CAPPs), facilitated in some way by ADEPT support specialists housed in eight regional SMART Centers. The regional distribution is consistent with prior aspects of the plan, and with the goal of moving professional development resources closer to those served. How the support specialists will be able to broker resources per se, beyond facilitating the CAPP process, is not clear. Further information is needed regarding the actual means, processes and structures by which support effectiveness is measured, evaluated and improved; presumably this will be beyond single program evaluations, and rather will be linked to the CAPPs by which these supports are framed in the proposal. How to reconcile the considerable range of existing and planned support programs to the stated principles of "contextual needs" and "continuous stakeholder involvement from concept through feedback" is also not clear from an operational perspective.</p> <p>(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)</p> <p>Coordination and integration within S²MART Centers appears in its initial stages, and further evidence of cross-project/function operation would strengthen the plan.</p>				
Total	138	117	117	

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	10	10	10	
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) The state has the authority to intervene directly in both schools and LEA's that are not making "expected progress." Interventions range from continued assistance to replacing management to reconstitution.				
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	35	30	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	30	25	
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) The state proposes a reasonable basis upon which to identify PLAS, though use of multiple years of data would enhance targeting further. The proposed attention to Tier 2 schools supports the overall plan goals well. The state outlines a multi-pronged approach, framed by prior work in turnaround efforts and supplemented per local needs, in order to address PLAS effectively. The plan provides evidence of a balanced approach to address local context and conditions in the selection and implementation of a turnaround model. Further consideration may be warranted, based on "lessons learned," of the timing of model selection and community engagement; i.e., whether or not community engagement should inform model selection as a means of local buy-in. Per the useful "lessons learned" provided, the state's approach would be well-advised to sustain comprehensive turnaround efforts (including stable school leadership and no magic-bullet strategies), enhance local community engagement, support the need for collection and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative (formative and summative) data regarding implementation, and structure long-term staff development (the outlines of which are potentially provided in the proposed plan). The state's longest turnaround experience, the district takeover approach, along with the Palmetto Priority Schools Initiative, indicate complex and deeply rooted challenges must be addressed even to accomplish the modest gains posted. Several turnaround efforts have not been in place sufficiently long to yield significant data concerning state capacity. Facilitated professional learning networks at various levels (school leadership, teachers of related areas, etc.) appear to have contributed to gains where they've occurred, and their enhancement is appropriately included in the proposed plan.				
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2) The candid acknowledgement of the challenges, along with the impact to date of "clustered" approaches on AYP performance, appears promising. Insufficient evidence is provided regarding the means by which local community, including but beyond parents, will participate and/or be brought into school improvement efforts. The intent to enhance financial incentives to those in low-performing schools provides a complement to their existing non-financial supports.				
Total	50	45	40	

F. General

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	7	7	
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				

The application indicates the state's increases in education spending, in both absolute and percentage terms, from FY08 to the original FY09 appropriations. However, the additional information provided in the appendix indicates that FY09-10 K-12 spending is down 14% from FY08-09, a drop of over \$410 million. Higher education spending dropped 23% during the same period, in part owing to a drop of 50% in lottery revenue. Whether or not these declines represent a drop in percentage terms is not known from the data provided. It is not clear the degree to which state policies lead to equitable funding. State formula funding to LEAs takes into account taxpaying ability of the district, with an average of 70% of LEA fund from statewide sources, in support of a "foundation program" that would be "substantially equal" to all. LEA's direct funds within districts, and there is no requirement to allocate according to poverty level. Some state funding is directed toward low-performing schools. No quantitative data is provided to indicate funding patterns by LEA or school poverty profile or needs level.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	34	34	
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>The state has no legal limits to charter school enrollment, or caps on the number of charter schools. The state has in place legal and administrative systems for approving, monitoring, holding accountable, reauthorizing and closing charter schools. Data regarding applications, approvals, denials, reasons for denials and closure are provided. Further information regarding the denial reason of "adversely affects" students in the district is warranted. LEA-approved charter schools receive equitable funding, relative to other schools in their district; charters authorized through the statewide public charter school district appears to have per student funding more likely at variance with local district levels, though the data provided is not clear. Recent legislation, pre-filed for the current session but status unknown, seeks to address this funding challenge. Charters experience comparable facilities support and requirements from the state, as little support is offered any school. The pre-filed legislation referred to above includes a provision for possible loan support for charter facilities. LEA's are allowed to operate other innovative public schools, and to seek waivers for any requirement deemed a restriction on innovation, but complete autonomy is not possible. Other school models operating in the state include alternative schools, middle/early college schools, national resource schools, and Montessori schools.</p>				
(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	5	5	
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>The state demonstrates other conditions and actions supporting educational reform, including expanded funding for full-day kindergarten to at-risk four-year-olds, funding school nurses in all elementary schools, encouraging National Board Certification through financial incentives, and other measures.</p>				
Total	55	46	46	

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	15	15	
Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>The state's plan provides a clear emphasis on improving STEM education in the state, developing components to increase teacher supply, improve teacher skills, and enhance the student pipeline. Intent to integrate STEM support through the principal components of the overall plan is evident.</p>				
Total	15	15	15	

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)				
<p>The application comprehensively and coherently addresses all of the four education reform areas specified in the ARRA as well as the State Success Factors Criteria. Sub-section comments provide further analysis. The state outlines a significant set of initiatives, integrated around its INSPIRED strategy, leveraging a number of prior initiatives and existing structures. The ability to affect practice at the classroom and building level remains the core challenge, including assessment and support of professional practice needs that build beyond student achievement data. Attention to the breadth of data required, to the need to affect local capacity and professional learning communities, to stakeholder engagement start to finish, to the inclusion of project-based assessment, to enhanced regional distribution of professional support, to the lessons of prior turnaround strategies and to the need for careful project management is particularly evident. Further analysis of contextual data regarding teacher isolation, working conditions, professional practice and student achievement patterns appears warranted. In an effort to expand and/or highlight prior feedback, it should be noted that further evidence regarding the following would strengthen the plan: 1) The development/collection/analysis of qualitative/quantitative data on professional and community variables to complement the student assessment data described; further evidence warranted to gauge implementation, sustainability, formation of local capacity, shifts in professional norms, etc., including, e.g., gauges of collective efficacy, instructional practice, community engagement, parental support, working conditions, changes in use of daily time, daily professional routines, understanding of plan vision, school climate, etc.; 2) The impact of the total plan on school-level decision-making practices and demands, particularly the impact on school-level leadership practice; the plan has components to which it is committed (many seem well-warranted per evidence presented) and on set timelines; how this plan drives support rollout while also stimulating the demand-side pull from practitioners remains unclear; the plan must balance local flexibility in adapting to local context and support for this balancing warrants further clarification; 3) An opportunity exists in the continued development of longitudinal student data systems to link to non-school data, providing the greater "360-degree" view of the child, and the promise of more integrated analysis of drivers to educational performance, and thus the promise of more efficient and effective use of funds and interventions across agencies, public and private, supporting this development; 4) Data regarding local community support and civic capacity remains limited, and yet are critical factors in successful reform efforts; 5) Data regarding the drivers of inequitable teacher and principal distribution in the state; 6) Explicit strategies in how the gap between tool development/dissemination and tool use will be bridged, given the frequent experience of this gap in prior reform efforts; 7) With a public commentary period built into the rollout of the new Common Core standards, fallback strategies should be considered, should public comments/engagement demonstrate further work needed to coalesce sufficient support; and 8) Further supporting evidence of sustainability, e.g., how standing state funds would be reallocated to sustain an enhanced continuous improvement cycle, how existing funding sources would support ongoing collaborative support structures and intensive assistance, and how existing funding would support the upkeep of new standards, assessments, enhanced technologies, etc.</p>				
Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)				
<p>The presentation provided additional clarification of important aspects of the plan, and the team's understanding and candor provided solid evidence of team capacity.</p>				
Total		0	0	
Grand Total	500	424	410	



Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2

South Carolina Application #5660sc-3



A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	64	62	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	46	45	43	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	14	14	

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

(A)(1)(i) South Carolina has articulated a well thought-out and comprehensive seamless connection among standards, curriculum, professional development, instruction, assessment, analysis, and adjustment which provides strong evidence that South Carolina intends to commit resources to ensure that the connected goals are met. They have chosen to use a model that is based on continuous improvement and laid out an ambitious, but attainable path for achieving their goals. (A)(1)(ii) South Carolina accepted MOUs from 85 of its 88 school districts for a participation rate of 95.45%. Also notable is that the number represents 96.64% of all students and 96.1% of students in poverty. Additionally, each agreed to the 14 tasks outlined for them in their MOU. All of these tasks are directly related to the goals of RTTT. The required evidence was provided to fully meet the requirements of this section. (A)(1)(iii) South Carolina has sufficiently addressed each component listed in this section, noting successes, gaps, and solutions for the gaps. Of note is South Carolina's requirement for an Individual Graduation Plan for each student. This plan is revisited at least once a year. To increase the breadth of information available for evaluating college success, South Carolina will integrate its P-12 data into a P-20 system.

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

(A)(1)(ii) Some districts reserved the right to opt out of participation in RTTT. Even though the school district participation rate is quite high, minor concerns remain about the commitment of all districts in this RTTT.

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	28	28	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	20	20	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	8	8	

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

(A)(2)(i) South Carolina demonstrates the capacity to implement its RTTT proposal and to sustain it once funding has ceased. South Carolina will use its teacher and principal evaluation systems and is well into implementing its statewide longitudinal data system with its Student Information System. Other initiatives that will enable South Carolina to fully execute its RTTT initiatives are: a statewide advisory committee comprised of representatives from the important state offices and organizations and a Project Director who will be hired within SCDE to manage the RTTT Initiative. LEAs will be supported with pertinent training and regional S2MART Centers to provide technical assistance and curriculum support. (A)(2)(ii) South Carolina

has relatively broad support to assist in the successful implementation of RTTT. An innovative component for eliciting stakeholder input for South Carolina's initiative is that the Hewlett Foundation has funded a study in South Carolina to ascertain what stakeholders want for public education. Attached letters of support provide evidence of generally broad support for the proposed or in-progress plans for South Carolina's RTTT initiatives; however more support from teachers' organizations in the state would have strengthened the application. The budget clearly articulates priorities and appears comprehensive and closely tied to South Carolina's RTTT application.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	27	27
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5	5
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	22	22

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

(A)(3)(i) South Carolina has made consistent progress in each of its reform areas. In addition to a relatively new initiative to support school choice for South Carolina that was implemented in 2007, the state has had long-term sustained successes in maintaining some of the nation's highest academic standards and rigorous assessments based on those assessments, has instituted Individual Graduation Plans and other initiatives that have linked together to form a cohesive P-20 approach to education. South Carolina's long-term focus on teacher quality has earned the state long-standing accolades in this arena, in addition to the state's long-term financial support for teachers attaining National Board Certification. For more than four years South Carolina has had a longitudinal data system, which has provided the state with a means for analyzing pertinent data and acting upon that information to improve student performance, and provide needed information for the state's Palmetto Priority Schools project. (A)(3)(ii) South Carolina has a commendable track record in improving student outcomes overall and by subgroup. Evidence is cited throughout this section regarding South Carolina's improvements on NAEP, closing the gap on mathematics and reading tests, on-time graduation rates and the other pieces of evidence cited in this section.

Total	125	119	117
--------------	------------	------------	------------

B. Standards and Assessments

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

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

(B)(1)(i) South Carolina is participating with the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors' Association common core standards initiative. Additionally, in November 2009, a formal alignment study between the draft college and career standards and South Carolina's ELA and Mathematics standards, which will form the basis of South Carolina's college and career readiness standards, was begun. (B)(1)(ii) South Carolina has sufficiently described its progress toward adopting a common set of standards.

(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	10	10
--	-----------	-----------	-----------

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

(B)(2) South Carolina is currently working with four assessment consortia: SMARTER, which is comprised of 24 states; MOSAIC, comprised of 27 states; the Balanced Assessment Consortium, with 36 members; and Assessment Consortia, which has 17 members. The consortia with whom South Carolina is currently partnering represent the majority of states.

(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	20	20	
--	----	----	----	--

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

(B)(3) South Carolina presents a well thought-out and cohesive plan for transitioning to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments. Some highlights are: • Internationally benchmarked standards will drive instruction and accountability • An implementation plan based on prior experience in this arena will be completed by January 2011 • A representative transition team will be created • A communication plan will be created under the leadership of the SCDE, with participation from the appropriate South Carolina groups/organizations • Curriculum resources will be developed or reviewed for alignment • Pertinent training materials will be developed • Summative and formative assessments aligned with international standards will be developed/adopted

Total	70	70	70	
--------------	----	----	----	--

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	20	20	

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

(c)(1) South Carolina's State Longitudinal Data System meets 10 of 12 data elements required by America COMPETES. Element 4, which addresses the linking of P-12 and postsecondary data, is not currently being met, but plans are in place to link these databases by 2013. Element 11, which addresses the extent to which students transition successfully from secondary to postsecondary education and whether they enroll in remedial coursework.

(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	5	5	
--	---	---	---	--

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(C)(2) Once functional, South Carolina's SLICE system will provide a wealth of pertinent information for key stakeholders. Data for school personnel, researchers, parents, students and the public will be available and online training for all audiences will be provided.

(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	17	17	
---	----	----	----	--

(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(C)(3) South Carolina schools currently use common portals and tools; however, local testing data and student mastery status are not available at the state level. One of South Carolina's goals is to implement a unique educator ID system so that student data can be linked to teacher data. South Carolina will support the implementation of LEARN, a CCSSO and state collaborative set up to link curriculum, standards, assessments, lesson plans, and resource management. Extensive training is planned for users of various components of the data system. Additionally, expurgated data will be made available to researchers.

Total	47	42	42	
--------------	----	----	----	--

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	17	18	

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

(D)(1) South Carolina has embraced alternative certification as one of the routes to certification. Providers may be entities other than institutions of higher education. Additionally, the state also has an alternative route for teachers to become principals and professionals outside the education field to become superintendents. More specific information about these programs to provide assurances that qualified candidates were being selected for participation in these programs would have strengthened this section. Additionally, with RTTT funding, South Carolina will develop a program for non-educators to become principals. Each fall South Carolina conducts a supply and demand survey to ascertain the number of vacant positions so that recruitment efforts can be targeted appropriately.

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

(D)(1) As clarified during the presentation, South Carolina has a well-developed system for alternative certification, that is managed by the state. Over the past three years, this program has added 1100 teachers per year to the state's teaching pool. This program focuses on shortage areas of middle, high school, and special education.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	57	57	
(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	28	28	

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

(D)(2)(i) At this time South Carolina does not have a statewide system for measuring student growth; however, many of the schools, i.e. those 43 schools participating in the state's Teacher Advancement Program (TAP), are piloting a value-added model to measure academic gains at the student, classroom, and school levels. Thus, South Carolina plans to use a value-added model statewide and will add other variables to the system over time. Initially, the state plans to base student performance on standardized tests, but over time South Carolina plans to develop Project-Based Learning Assessments for all grades and subject areas to provide a comprehensive view of academic gains. (D)(2)(ii) In 2004 South Carolina developed its system, known as ADEPT, for evaluating educators. This multi-faceted, well-researched, and piloted system is being used with both teachers and principals and it will be expanded and refined during the RTTT grant period and sustainable after the grant period has ended. (D)(2)(iii) South Carolina's ADEPT requires annual evaluation with feedback. Student growth is being added to that process. (D)(2)(iv) A noteworthy component of both ADEPT and PADEPP is that all beginning teachers and principals receive induction support and mentoring. Salary incentives are part of South Carolina's plan, teacher effectiveness, retention, full certification, and removal, if necessary.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	22	22	
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	12	12	

(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	10	10	
--	----	----	----	--

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

(D)(3)(i) South Carolina is in the process of developing a new salary schedule that rewards teacher performance and student outcomes. One component of this new process will encourage South Carolina teachers to work in high-poverty and/or high-minority schools, since a differentiated salary schedule will reward financially those teachers who work in hard-to-staff schools. More details about this proposed system would have enhanced the application. (D)(3)(ii) To help address the staffing of hard-to-staff and specialty areas, South Carolina's Board of Education has approved the creation of an Adjunct Teaching Certificate to allow school districts to hire part-time teachers, supplementing them, not replacing teachers, with the benefit of exposing students to individuals who actually work in the areas in which the students are taking courses. This is a practical solution for an ever-growing issue, not only in South Carolina. Another laudable initiative is South Carolina's International Visiting Teachers Program. Many of these teachers are now serving in the state's most economically challenged districts. Other worthy initiatives, such as expanding the work of the Committee to Increase the Math and Science Teaching Force, Project CREATE—a distance-learning option for teacher preparation—that will provide cost-free coursework for individuals seeking special education certification, expansion of the PACE Alternative Certification Program, and developing an alternative certification program for principals.

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	11	11	
--	----	----	----	--

(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(D)(4) South Carolina's ADEPT program links student performance to teacher effectiveness and to in-state educator preparation programs. Results are disaggregated by teacher and provided to the educator preparation program in which the teacher was enrolled. South Carolina will meet fully the implementation timelines of 2013-2014. More information was needed to ensure that appropriate corrective actions would be taken to support less successful educator preparation programs.

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	19	19	
---	----	----	----	--

(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(D)(5) To meet this goal South Carolina utilizes a concept which they have named Communities Advancing Professional Practices (CAPP), whose purpose is to work as an organized group to further learning and best practices in support of student learning, as delineated in (D)(5)(i). An array of other initiatives, listed on pp. 134-136 fully support the focus of (D)(5).

Total	138	126	127	
--------------	------------	------------	------------	--

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

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

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

(E)(1) The State has statutory authority to take over and assume management of a low-performing school as a worst case scenario. Other, less stringent, measures would precede this take-over. Measures that would be instituted prior to a take-over are listed on page 165 of the South Carolina proposal.

(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	40	40
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	35	35

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

(E)(2)(i) South Carolina has a clear and reasonable definition for identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools. (E)(2)(ii) The Office of Palmetto Priority Schools will be established and work under the INSPIRED Project Director to ensure full commitment and coordinated plans for turning around these lowest-achieving schools, using one or more of the four school intervention models specified. Appropriate and well-described evidence is presented.

Total	50	50	50
--------------	----	----	----

F. General

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	9	9	

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

(F)(1)(i) South Carolina's total percentage of revenues available to support public education increased from 37.25% in FY 2008 to 38.92 in FY 2009, for a gain of 1.67%. (F)(1)(ii) Under state legislation funding is directed to districts based on need. Additionally, the State owns, maintains, and fuels a large fleet of school busses, thus, relieving school districts of that expense. State funds are distributed according to directions from the local school board. There is no state law that specifically requires an LEA to allocate state funding among its schools according to poverty level. Local officials make that decision.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	34	34
---	----	----	----

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(F)(2)(i) South Carolina legislation does not specify a cap on the number of charter schools, nor does it limit the types of charter schools that can be created. As of January 2010, the state had 37 charter schools. (ii) Even though there is great support among state leaders and the public, the State is selective in the number of schools receiving charters. In the past 5 years, 50 applications were submitted for new charter schools, but only 27 were authorized to open. Additionally, unsuccessful charter schools are closed, 17 having been closed within the last 10 years. (iii) Concern exists about the level of funding of charter schools and the lack of ability to raise local revenue to augment base student cost continues to be a concern. A bill has recently been filed in the state legislature to make significant changes in the charter school act and to increase funding. (iv) The state provides little assistance to any schools or districts for facilities for charter schools. (v) The State provides a mechanism for schools to receive flexibility from many state regulations, much like charter schools. This flexibility is also available for lower performing schools.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	5	5
---	---	---	---

(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(F)(3) Some of the initiatives that signal reform are: state funding of full-day kindergarten, a focus on the development of Individual Graduation Plans to help ensure that graduates are ready for college and careers, a legislatively created, independent charter school district, state funded incentives for teachers to become certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, state funding for school nurses and the establishment of nutrition standards and requirements for physical education, funding for

virtual schools, significant improvements in teacher quality, rigorous content standards, gains on state and national tests, evidence of closing the achievement gap, and a public school choice initiative.

Total	55	48	48	
-------	----	----	----	--

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	15	15	

Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Through its reform agenda, STEM is most prominent, whether in rigorous standards, new assessments, teacher preparation, teacher certification, or funding, it is evident that STEM is an extremely important priority in South Carolina.

Total	15	15	15	
-------	----	----	----	--

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)

South Carolina has demonstrated in its application a comprehensive plan for enhancing current reforms and the need to expand its solid approach to implementing these reforms so that they will be sustainable once the period of the grant is over. This plan thoughtfully and comprehensively addresses all of the four education reform areas delineated in the ARRA and demonstrates clearly that the State and LEAs will be prepared to implement a systemic approach to education reform. The state is committed to building sustainable capacity to hold the state's educators and students accountable to very high academic standards and measure those standards with solid, psychometrically sound assessments, continue to enhance and expand its longitudinal database to provide accessible and accurate data to improve instruction, expand the pool of highly-qualified teachers and leaders in a sound and equitable manner provide ongoing support to the state's educators, turn around its low performing schools and infuse the STEM agenda throughout its cohesive reform agenda.

Total		0	0	
-------	--	---	---	--

Grand Total	500	470	469	
--------------------	-----	-----	-----	--



Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2

South Carolina Application #5880SC-4



A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	63	63	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	4	4	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	44	44	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	15	15	

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

(i.) The proposal articulates a single, clear goal for the state's P-20 education system: student success, as evidenced by achievement, graduation, post-secondary attainment, and career attainment. This unifying goal anchors the four RTTT program "pillars" and creates a uniform student focus for the proposed approach. The reform agenda is one of "sustainable transformation" brought about through a five point plan: (1) continuous improvement of instruction; (2) data analysis and use; (3) regional support systems; (4) a consistent program delivery framework; and (5) stakeholder involvement, investment, and support. This five-point plan is intended to be the enabling mechanism to attain a very long list of reforms related to the four RTTT pillars. While the five points of the plan are coherent and logical, it is not completely clear how they fully enable the attainment of the reforms. (ii.) The participating LEAs comprise 95.45% of South Carolina's school districts, 98.64% of public school students, and 98.1% of students in poverty. This is an impressive effort to successfully engage the vast majority of the districts and schools in the state. SC built upon the model LEA participating MOU provided by USED, and in fact strengthened it with additional commitments, such as requiring specific LEA staff to participate, intra-district choice plans, pilot program participation, and adoption of an at-risk student intervention system. Overall, 95% of participating LEAs agreed to implement all reforms; the only exceptions were those participating LEAs that did not have "struggling schools" for the turnaround effort [(E)(2)]. For those LEAs, they agreed to all other reforms. SC does not have teachers unions; therefore, the only signatures required were those of the Superintendent and Board Chair. All required signatures were provided for participating LEAs. iii. The strong LEA participation and the composition of the student populations within those LEAs clearly indicate that the SC plan has the potential to translate into broad statewide impact. In all, 84 of 88 districts and 1164 of 1189 public schools are committed to the plan. This represents over 98% of all SC public school students, and over 98% of student in poverty (based on FRL data).

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	26	26	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	17	17	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	9	9	

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

i. The proposal indicates that the state is leveraging a documented track record of education capacity-building over the past decade. Several existing statewide systems (e.g., statewide teacher and principal evaluation systems, regional deliver systems, longitudinal data system) will serve as the foundation for more

intensive capacity building through the course of the grant period. A state-level team includes key policy makers, research entities, and higher education representation. The SEA has assigned experienced and capable staff at high levels to manage and implement the plan. A dedicated Project Director will be hired and report directly to the State Superintendent. Several SEA departments/divisions will be repurposed to implement the RTTT activities. Eight regional service centers, called S2MART Centers, will take the lead in working with districts to implement their RTTT plans, providing technical assistance, training, and support, evaluating progress, conducting pilot studies, and sharing effective programs and practices. The burden on the S2MART Centers is very large; this may be a potential weakness. The SEA itself has sufficient infrastructure and experienced staff to effectively and efficiently manage grant operations and processes. The SC proposal demonstrates that it is coordinating a variety of fund sources with RTTT, including ESEA Title I and Title II funds and State Fiscal Stabilization Funds (SFSF), and is combining RTTT plans with those it is implementing for state laws, such as those governing educator evaluation, school and district accountability, and data infrastructure. ii. The state has garnered a broad range of stakeholder support as evidenced by very specific letters of support included in the appendices of the application. Rather than using form letters, most stakeholders detail their own stake in the RTTT initiative and how they will help the state to achieve the proposal goals and objectives. Supporters include the state business, educational administrator, school board, and teacher organizations, as well as institutions of higher education, legislators, and congresspersons. There were no letters included from parent organizations.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	20	23	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5	5	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	15	18	

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

i. The proposal references national studies that recognize SC academic standards as among the nation's best. Its assessment program was the first in the nation approved for ESEA, and the proposal cites external reviews praising the state's proficiency standards for being among the nation's most rigorous. State law documentation provided in the proposal also augments the standards and assessment system with an education/economic development mandate that requires individual graduation plans and connects K-12 education with higher education and training. These initiatives indicate progress consistent with RTTT intent. The proposal also references external reviews that rank SC as being among the best in the nation for improving teacher quality, identifying and retaining effective teachers, dismissing ineffective teachers, and supporting National Board Certification for teachers. The state has the nation's highest participation in the Teacher Advancement Program (Milken Family Foundation). However, more internal (SEA or other state government) analysis/data regarding these areas would have been useful in determining more specifically how "teacher quality" has improved and the indicators used to make that determination. It is not clear whether the referenced teacher quality rankings include measures of teacher effectiveness. The proposal provided evidence that the state supported a uniform student information system before federal incentives were available, and was an early recipient of federal funds to advance its longitudinal data system. It has an established educational data warehouse with public access by researchers and stakeholders. It is piloting a data system for at-risk student interventions that could potentially serve as a model for other states. Prior to the announcement of RTTT, the state established the Palmetto Priority Schools project (2007) to target resources and expertise to persistently struggling schools. Forty-one schools participate with average poverty level of 94%. The project was expanded in 2009 to include turnaround pilot programs. This initiative appears to be fully compatible with the intent of RTTT. ii. Evidence Table (A)(3)(ii) with test data and graduation rate summaries as referenced in the text appears to be missing. From the proposal narrative and Appendix A1-H, it appears that NAEP mathematics has improved significantly at the 8th grade level. State test scores in math have risen in grades 3-8. Reading improvement is not evident from these measures. High school graduation rates have increased over the past 15 years by twenty percentage points. The proposal references independent researchers who indicate that SC minority and low-income achievement gaps have decreased "in recent years." More specific data regarding the time frame and actual achievement gap reductions (e.g., subgroups, subjects, grade levels) should have been included.

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)

About 1/2 of the Palmetto Priority Schools managed to reach AYP targets in one year from the inception of the program. This demonstrates an understanding of effective practices, implemented within a collaborative professional effort, that improve student outcomes and can serve as a basis for future RTTT school improvement efforts.

Total	125	109	112	
-------	-----	-----	-----	--

B. Standards and Assessments

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

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

i. SC is participating in the CCSSO/NGA Common Core state standards initiative. The consortium consists of 48 states, the District of Columbia, and two territories, a significant number of participants. These standards will be internationally benchmarked and will build toward high school graduation and college and career readiness. This participation constitutes full compliance with this RTTT criterion. ii. The proposal includes a detailed timeline of the legal standards adoption process as it is scheduled to occur in SC. The process began in July of 2009 and will be completed in July of 2010, meeting the application deadline of August 2, 2010. This adoption timeline constitutes full compliance with this RTTT criterion.

(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	10	10	
--	----	----	----	--

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

(i.) SC is participating in the SMARTER assessment consortium, which will develop a high-quality, summative, on-line, and adaptive assessment system aligned to the Common Core Standards. SC is also participating in the MOSAIC assessment consortium with 27 other states, which will develop formative and benchmark assessments aligned to the Common Core Standards. It is also participating in the "umbrella" Balanced Assessments consortium that encompasses both SMARTER and MOSAIC. (ii.) The SMARTER consortium consists of 24 members, the MOSAIC consortium consists of 27 members, and the combined Balanced Assessment consortium consists of 36 members. This represents more than half the states in the country.

(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	18	18	
--	----	----	----	--

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

SC proposes to use its previous experience in the statewide rollout of standards, a change management model which includes stakeholder involvement, timeline, communication mechanisms, resources, training, technical assistance and dedicated personnel. The state has an existing Standards Support System established in 2008. This is coordinated through the S2MART Centers using instructional coaches. The state's standards transition team will include representative educators, business and community leaders, and post-secondary education faculty and staff. The SEA's Office of Standards and support and Office of Career & Technology Education will create a broad-based communications plan. Support and technical assistance will include lesson plans, curriculum resources, formative and benchmark assessments, and professional development for educators. The SEA will utilize the state's Instructional Leader Roundtable

(curriculum/instruction assistant superintendents in LEAs) to assure that school personnel can access the available support. The transition plan also calls for enhancing the technology capacity of the LEAs in order to accommodate the new on-line assessments. Although the work plan references a range of work to be done by a variety of S2MART staff, higher education faculty, and SEA staff, it is not entirely clear from the proposal exactly who will select, organize, and coordinate the delivery of the professional development opportunities and resources. Overall, the transition support system appears to build logically upon previous state efforts described in the proposal, utilizes existing infrastructures and relationships, and appears to offer a comprehensive approach to managing the transition to new standards.

Total	70	68	68	
-------	----	----	----	--

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	20	20	

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

SC meets 10 of the 12 America COMPETES Act elements for a comprehensive longitudinal data system. The unmet elements are #4 (communication of data systems across K-12 and higher education) and #11 (successful transitions to post-secondary education).

(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	5	5	
---------------------------------------	---	---	---	--

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The SEA plans to develop and implement user interfaces and report formats to make data accessible to stakeholders. Educators will have access to student level data, including longitudinal data) in real time to inform instruction and intervention decisions. Researchers and policymakers will have access to de-identified student data. A parent and student interface will allow secure access to an individual's records, including individual graduation plans. A public interface will allow access to aggregated data reports for schools, LEAs, programs, and institutions.

(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	15	17	
--	----	----	----	--

(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

i. Of the SC public schools, 66% already use a common data software application. The state is currently distributing this software to the remaining schools. The SEA will implement a statewide version that will allow access to local testing data and allow comparisons within and across districts. A statewide curriculum management system will enable collection and analysis of location assessment results, and will identify standards presenting the most difficulty for student mastery. The SEA will then develop statewide strategies for school curriculum and learning interventions. The system, as described, appears to meet the RTTT criterion for providing educators with information necessary to improve instruction. ii. The proposal explains how the SEA will provide ongoing training on data access and analysis for the purposes of guiding instruction, differentiating instruction, and identifying at-risk students. The provision of this training generally meets the RTTT criterion for providing relevant professional development in the use of data to improve instruction. However, lacking was a sufficient explanation of how the LEAs will participate in taking leadership and responsibility for this initiative. In other words, the plan is very top-down. The SEA will implement a program evaluation system, with evaluation data available to educators and researchers, to study program effects on student achievement; these will include the professional development programs being offered through the S2MART Centers, and will link with teachers' professional development records. Student, school, and program data will also be available to district leaders, policy makers, and researchers. The completed system will allow educators, researchers, and policymakers the ability to analyze student

achievement, improvement, educator effectiveness, program effectiveness, and the impact of education reforms and meets the RTTT criterion.

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

The instructional data system has the potential to be a very effective tool for instructional improvement. It focuses initially at the individual student level, but also builds to the classroom, school, district, and state levels.

Total	47	40	42
-------	----	----	----

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	12	12	

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

i. SC law allows authorizes the SEA to issue alternative certification through its Program of Alternative Certification for Educators (PACE) [School Code 59-26-30(A)(8)]. The SEA is the sole authorized provider. SC also allows certification through the testing conducted by the American Board for the Certification of Teaching Excellence (ABCTE) for mathematics, science, and English. ii. Alternative routes are pursued through the PACE program, currently in operation. Individuals holding a bachelor's degree or higher can teach while completing an accelerated certification program. Selection criteria are described only in generalities (e.g., work experience, test scores), and the level of selectivity is not clear. Course work is limited compared to the traditional route. Completers receive the regular state certification. About 10% of new district hires are currently PACE participants. They do receive mentoring in their first year, but this is not fully described so its effectiveness is not clear. The proposal describes retention rates approaching 75% for these teachers, but does not provide comparison data for teachers who pursued traditional certification routes. SC also allows certification through the testing conducted by the American Board for the Certification of Teaching Excellence (ABCTE) for mathematics, science, and English. No coursework is required. About 50 teachers have become certified through this method statewide. These teachers are assigned a mentor in their first year, but the effectiveness of this mentoring is not described. Selection criteria are generally described as employment, degree, and test scores, but the level of selectivity is not clear. The state also has alternative routes to certification for principals, allowing certified educators to serve as principals while completing an approved program at an IHE. Selectivity appears rather low, based on district request and a valid teaching certificate. Since participants complete an approved program of study, coursework requirements appear to be the same as regular route. Completers receive the state's regular principal certification. No mentoring is mentioned. About 30 teachers have been certified as principals through this route. An alternative certification program for superintendents was approved by the legislature in 2004; to date, only two individuals have pursued this certification. iii. SC conducts a supply-and-demand survey annually to identify, monitor, and evaluate areas of educator shortage. It is not clear from the proposal how these data are currently used. Inferences are made in the proposal to studying trends and targeting recruitment efforts, but no descriptions of those studies or efforts are presented. Overall, the alternative routes described in this section meet three of the five RTTT definition components: providers other than IHEs, limiting the amount of coursework (for teacher alternative routes only), and awarding the same level of certification as regular routes. As described in the proposal, the alternative routes do not meet the definition components for selectivity and supervised, school-based experiences, or information regarding these components was not provided. Although a supply-and-demand survey is conducted, the uses of the data are not adequately described.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	55	57
--	----	----	----

(i) Measuring student growth	5	3	5	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems ¹	5	14	14	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	10	10	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	28	28	

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

i. Establishing clear approaches to measuring student growth will be problematic for SC (and probably for the other states as well). The proposal describes several of its attempts at establishing value-added measures using formative measures (e.g., unit work samples by students); summative measures (e.g., comparing multiple years of state test data for subjects tested annually); and other educational variables (e.g., attendance, disciplinary actions). However, it is not totally clear how measures will be established for students in subjects/grades that are currently untested, or how the transition to assessments based on the new Common Core standards will be managed. The proposal does recognize this difficulty and makes a strong commitment to actively tackle these challenges in the context of RTTT. A promising concept is the proposed Project-Based Learning and Assessments that will include all grade levels and subject areas. Scoring rubrics for these assessments have the potential to eventually produce student growth data. This may be another example of a concept that could be a model for other states. ii. The proposal documents the state's development of robust evaluation systems for teachers and principals, which it is working to continuously upgrade. The state will expand its current system to include value-added components related to student growth on standardized assessments and its developing Project-Based Learning and Assessments. The proposal provides a sample conceptual framework showing how these evaluation pieces can be merged. A stakeholder work committee that includes teachers and principals will be employed to determine teacher effectiveness ratings and the fairness of the system. The system will utilize multiple rating categories to be determined by the work committee. These features, as described, meet the RTTT criterion for developing rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluations systems that include student growth measures. iii. Both the teacher and principal evaluation systems will be conducted annually, and will provide feedback on effectiveness, including strengths and weaknesses based on student growth data and other indicators. These features meet the RTTT criterion for annual evaluations that include constructive feedback. iv. Evaluation data will feed into educators' induction, mentoring, and professional development plans as documented in an on-line system. SC employs a statewide salary schedule. The new system will include salary incentives for teacher effectiveness. When the system is fully implemented, it will inform advancement from initial to full certification, and decisions regarding retention and promotion. SC does not grant tenure, but does have a tiered contract system in which teachers move from annual contract status to continuing contract statuses. Evaluation data will be used in making these decisions. Evaluation data will be used by the employing district in making decisions to remove ineffective teachers and principals. These features, as described, appear to fully meet the RTTT criterion for using evaluations to inform key decisions. Performance targets are ambitious (100% of participating LEAs by the end of the grant period using evaluation data for all the RTTT purposes); however, given the almost universal participation of LEAs, the existing experience with a robust evaluation system, and the control the state has over salaries, incentives, and systems, this does seem achievable.

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

The presentation clarified elements of the proposal regarding how alternate assessments and growth measures will be used to include subjects and grades that are not tested by the state annual examinations, and will thus allow participation of all teachers and principals in the new evaluation system.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	14	14	
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	7	7	

(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	7	7
--	----	---	---

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

i. Current state data show that SC has an inequitable distribution of "highly qualified" teachers (ESEA definition) when comparing high- and low-poverty schools. The proposal outlines many current and proposed efforts to increase the availability of highly qualified teachers through (a) boosting the knowledge and skills of current teachers and (b) increasing the availability of certified teachers for struggling schools. However, these efforts focus on teacher qualifications, NOT teacher effectiveness. The state also proposes to expand its Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) teacher involvement in struggling schools. It is not clear from the proposal how these efforts will "ensure" equitable distribution of effective teachers. The proposed performance indicators project that by the end of Year 1, 85% of teachers in high poverty schools will be highly effective, according to the RTTT definition. Not only is this a very high number, but also the teacher effectiveness rating system will not be fully on-line in Year 1 to make these determinations. The goal of 100% by the end of the grant period for all indicators does not seem realistic/achievable. ii. The proposal documents progress made to date in increasing the number of special education teachers, a perennial shortage area. Special emphasis is also being given to increase the availability of mathematics and science teachers. Plans include incentives, intensified recruitment, and professional development. This section also concentrates on teacher qualifications, not necessarily teacher effectiveness.

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	13	13
--	----	----	----

(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

i. The proposal describes how SC will build on an existing pilot effort to link student performance back to teacher preparation programs. The proposal describes plans to expand this effort to all preparation programs with graduates in Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) schools (which have student growth measurement systems in place) while awaiting the completion of the statewide evaluation system. When that system comes fully on line, educator preparation effectiveness reporting for all programs (30 total) will begin. This staged approach seems reasonable and practical, and does not over-promise results that cannot be delivered. ii. SC will use its authority to accredit preparation programs to modify its accreditation criteria, incorporating the revised reporting which will include the student performance data. The proposal does not specifically describe expansion plans for successful programs.

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	15	15
---	----	----	----

(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

i. SC proposes to utilize the S2MART Centers to house "support specialists" (one per Center, 8 Centers total) to offer instructional support based on data from the teacher and principal evaluation systems. Supports will include fostering professional practice communities within and across schools, obtaining resources to underwrite the work of these groups in schools, sharing program impact data, align the work of the groups with members' professional development plans, and developing mentoring/coaching skills among participants. While the activities are reasonable, it is hard to understand how one staff member in each Center, serving many and varied LEAs and schools, can possibly deliver the range of services described. The SEA also provides a variety of supports, including the Standards Support System, a state-level mentoring and induction system, on-line professional development opportunities, on-line professional growth plans, etc. ii. The proposed program evaluation system, potentially a national model, will measure, evaluate, and provide data and information to continuously improve the support system.

Total	138	109	111
--------------	------------	------------	------------

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

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

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

The state Board of Education and Superintendent have the authority to intervene in the lowest-achieving schools by replacing the school's principal and/or assuming management of the school. While not clearly described in the narrative, evidence provided indicates that the state does have the authority to take over management of LEAs.

(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	28	32	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	23	27	

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

i. SC has a credible methodology to identify persistently low-achieving schools (the lowest 5%), including persistently low-achieving high schools. ii. The SEA office managing the current school turnaround program (Palmetto Priority Schools) will move under the direction of the RTTT project director and will expand to directly support schools implementing the four RTTT intervention models. SEA staff will work with S2MART Center personnel to monitor implementation and provide support. Based on the proposal descriptions, the assumption seems to be that training school personnel will cause schools to turn around. This may not be an adequate theory of change. Many of the types of "technical assistance" described appear to be more professional development (training and information) than actual technical assistance. Evidence provided shows that the state does have a track record of school improvement under state intervention. Its six-year experiment in managing a troubled school district yielded important lessons: school takeovers are not a magic solution for improvement. The current Palmetto Priority Schools Initiative (16 schools in 2007, 25 schools added in 2009) has been in operation for two full school years and has shown mixed but encouraging results. The newly launched Turnaround Schools Project (4 schools) has not had time to show results.

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

The collaborative effort demonstrated to date in the Palmetto Priority Schools initiative, which resulted in half the participating schools meeting AYP targets, indicates that the state has a realistic, workable, and potentially very effective process for turning around persistently low-performing schools.

Total	50	38	42	
--------------	----	----	----	--

F. General

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	7	7	

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

i. The state INCREASED its percentage of revenues devoted to school funding from FY 2008 to FY2009, from 37.25% to 38.92%. This fully meets the RTTT criterion. ii. The state has a funding formula that takes into account each district's ability to raise funds locally. However, the school code mandates only "minimum education programs" be offered, and that they be "substantially equal/reasonably comparable" to those offered to students in other districts. It is not clear who decides what is considered substantially equal or

reasonably comparable, and how this affects high-need LEAs and high-poverty schools within LEAs. Also, the State Superintendent has recently launched a campaign to revise the way schools are funded, so there is an implication that the current funding formula is not adequate and/or fair. Overall, the information provided is insufficient to determine that the state's policies lead to equitable funding.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	24	24	
---	----	----	----	--

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

i. The state has no caps on charter school establishment or enrollment. A total of 37 charter schools are currently operating and 12 new charter schools have been authorized for 2010. By August 2010, charters will represent 4% of the state's public schools. The state also has created a statewide charter school district to provide another avenue for opening charter schools. The "no cap" status fully meets the RTTT criterion.

ii. The state has received 50 charter school applications in the past 5 years and has approved 27 charters in that time period. The proposal references state criteria for approval, including sufficient enrollment (an indicator of community support), fiscal soundness, and academic performance. In the past 10 years, 17 charter schools have been closed due to low enrollments, unstable finances, inadequate academic performance, improper governance, and failure to comply with state law. State law requires that charter applications include plans to ensure that charter school enrollment is similar to the racial composition of the LEA. Other demographics, such as low income percentage, are not referenced. The combination of evidence provided in the proposal indicates that SC ensures successful conditions for high-performing charter schools, meeting the RTTT criterion in this regard.

iii. Charter schools receive an equitable share of LEA funding based on enrollment. Shares of categorical funds are determined by eligible student population characteristics. The amount of LEA per-pupil funding averaged \$5800 per student in FY2009, equal to regular public school funding. Since charter school funding is equitable with regular school funding, this meets the RTTT criterion.

iv. SC does not provide dedicated funding to charter schools for facilities, unless there are state revenue surpluses, thus does not meet the RTTT criterion in this regard.

v. While the state allows flexibility for regular public schools in relation to some school code requirements, this does not constitute the operation of "innovative, autonomous public schools," and thus does not meet the RTTT criterion.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	5	5	
---	---	---	---	--

(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Other significant reforms are described in the application that are relevant to/compatible with the RTTT priorities, including: universal full-day kindergarten, the Education and Economic Development Act linking high school coursework with workforce readiness and creating Individual Graduation Plans, a statewide public charter school district, incentives for teachers to earn National Board certification, and the SC Virtual School program. The proposal also references an externally-validated track record of strong reforms in the areas of standards and assessments and teacher quality.

Total	55	36	36	
--------------	----	----	----	--

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	15	15	

Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

SC proposes to build on progress and infrastructure attained during 10 years of National Science Foundation funding under the State Systemic Initiative program in the 1990's through 2002. The S2MART Centers that are so central to the RTTT proposal were an outgrowth of the NSF funding and remained in

operation in a sustainable manner after funding ended. They are now being redesigned to accomplish the goals of RTTT, but will continue to form the regional deliver system for the STEM component. The STEM proposal encompasses curriculum support, reading in the content areas, improvements in school laboratories, and a special focus on middle school science teacher professional development. The proposed work will be coordinated with other initiatives, including the state's Education and Economic Development Act college/career preparation initiative. Appropriate references to the proposed STEM work were incorporated into the body of the proposal, including in all four of the RTTT "pillars."

Total	15	15	15	
-------	----	----	----	--

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)

The SC application makes a strong case that it is taking a comprehensive approach to reform and intends to meet the full extent of the RTTT requirements. Throughout the application, the state success factors have provided a basis for expansion and refinement of reforms through the implementation of RTTT. The state has done an adequate job of addressing the four "pillars" of RTTT in its application. The extremely high percentage of participating districts and the strength of the MOUs governing their participation indicate strong potential for grassroots support and statewide impact. The application also includes several proposals, that, if implemented successfully, could provide national models for reform.

Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)

The proposal components that could potentially be national models include:

- the data system for at-risk student interventions currently being piloted;
- the proposed program evaluation system that will link program interventions such as professional development to student achievement;
- the alternative Project-Based Learning and Assessments, along with scoring rubrics, that will produce student growth measures for subjects and grades untested by the state annual tests; and
- the Implementation Fidelity Rubrics developed for RTTT.

The state presentation reinforced the level of understanding evident among RTTT leadership regarding the complexity and interrelatedness of the proposed reforms described in the proposal.

Total		0	0	
Grand Total	500	415	426	



Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2

South Carolina Application #5880sc-5



A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	61	61	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	41	41	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	15	15	

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

The State has prepared a compelling case for building on significant existing capacity that includes a broad range of participation and support. The systemic and dynamic processes already in place provide for the basis of a comprehensive plan that is both aggressive and realistic. The strategies and agendas for reform provide for on-going and adaptive statewide impact. Benchmarks have been established based on clear criteria and statistical analyses that ensure appropriate and fair goals. 95% of the districts representing 99% of the population and 98% of students in poverty have demonstrated commitment through comprehensive and binding MOUs. This strong commitment is reflected not only by signed commitments by superintendents and boards, but by thoughtful and detailed responses to the MOU which lays out very specific requirements unique to existing state efforts and infrastructure as well as future innovations and processes. Missing, however, are clear commitments from teacher groups that might further demonstrate the extent to which leadership supports the proposed reform agenda. The State Department of Education has organized reform approaches with a clear understanding that LEA buy-in and participation is crucial to state-wide comprehensive and sustainable change. Systemic change at P-20 levels is represented by launching new or expanding upon current programs that target increasing student achievement at all levels, building on existing initiatives and processes in place to tailor school experiences with academic and career aspirations. Evidence and history exist to support the claim that systems and leadership are in place to assess and adapt statewide policies and targets that are rigorous and realistic.

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

Some concern was raised during the interview process that LEAs can opt out of participation. Another concern is that teacher and principal letters may not reflect the entire population of teaching professionals in the state. While the overall commitment is still in evidence, these areas may potentially impact full implementation and sustainability.

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	27	27	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	20	20	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	7	7	

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

There is documented evidence of existing initiatives that provide a solid basis for statewide efforts. With this existing capacity and strong LEA and community commitments, accelerating reform efforts with RTTT funds

will synergize multiple systems of reform that will be sustainable and serve as models for other states. Administrative structures to oversee and implement, and successful experiences with large grants also speak to the capacity for the State to efficiently and appropriately administer and direct RTTT funds. Regional learning centers are already in place and provide key services to local LEAs. Their participation and role in the implementation of reform efforts will be expanded under the RTTT plan. Their comprehensive plan is also cost-effective, averaging \$428 per student over the four year period of funding. By building on existing infrastructure and creating expert knowledge systems while fostering community buy-in and engagement, the planned reforms will be sustainable and adaptive as changes are implemented. It is commendable that the Riley Institute at Furman University was funded to conduct a study identifying what stakeholders wanted for public education and that a wide group of stakeholders including superintendents, teachers, parents, business leaders, students, school board members, and principals were included in the surveys and focus groups. That the State's plan included this information is noteworthy, however, buy-in to the plan is still necessary.

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

Still of concern is comprehensive buy-in at all levels.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	18	20	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5	5	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	13	15	

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

Already in place is a five-point plan to accelerate state reform efforts. The plan includes strategies for equitable school funding, accountability, public school choice, accelerating innovation, and elevating and reinvigorating the teaching profession. Some progress has been made over the past several years in each of the four reform areas with wide stakeholder participation. Not clearly in evidence, however, is previous success in increasing student achievement on NAEP and decreasing subgroup achievement gaps. Data analyses indicate a deliberate, informed, and realistic approach to setting expectations and goals for improvement although these goals may not be aggressive enough. While past trends suggest modest improvement in closing achievement gaps among subgroups is reasonable, continually engaging similar analyses is recommended so future performance can be synergized and what appear to be modest gains can be accelerated.

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)

There was initial improvement in NAEP scores that have remained fairly stable since 2003. There is a clear strategy, however, to "drill down" to the classroom level by utilizing comprehensive data systems to provide better information about strategies and curricula that work with particular profiles of students. There has also been some progress in reducing achievement gaps and increasing graduation rates. It is clear that the state has embraced the philosophy that changes in curriculum and policy must reach the classroom teacher at the individual student-level. Support structures and facilitative strategies are being developed and are part of the comprehensive plan.

Total	125	106	108	
--------------	------------	------------	------------	--

B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards	40	40	40	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20	20	

(ii) Adopting standards	20	20	20	
-------------------------	----	----	----	--

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

The State actively participates in the Council of Chief State School Officers and National Governors Association initiatives for common core state standards. Evidence exists that review of state standards in ELA and mathematics has begun and comparisons are being made with draft college and career readiness standards. Participation in the Common Core Consortium entails collaborative deliberations with 48 other states and the District of Columbia. A timeline indicates a clear plan for continued consideration of revising state standards and adopting Common Core standards by August, 2010. Within the plan is evidence of the legal processes in place for adopting standards that is based on an official agreement between the State Board of Education (SBE) and the Education Oversight Committee (EOC).

(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	10	10	
--	----	----	----	--

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

The State is an active participant with 24 other states in the SMARTER consortium, with 27 states in the MOSAIC consortium, and 36 states in the Balanced Assessment consortium. The Summative Multi-State Assessment Resources for Teachers and Educational Researchers (SMARTER) consortium is working to develop a summative, online adaptive assessment system aligned to the Common Core Standards. The Multiple Options (for) Student Assessment (and) Instruction Consortium (MOSAIC) assessment initiative is developing an assessment system of formative and benchmark assessments that are aligned with the Common Core Standards in reading and mathematics for grades 3 through 8 and high school. The Consortium for Developing Balanced Assessments of the Common Core Standards (Balanced Assessments consortium) proposes to serve as an umbrella for the MOSAIC and SMARTER consortia. These three consortia provide a balanced and comprehensive approach to developing and implementing high-quality assessments.

(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	20	20	
--	----	----	----	--

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

The State has clearly defined goals and metrics for developing high-quality formative and summative assessments and adapting existing assessments to the Common Core standards as they are adopted. These plans have been developed with change project management strategies in mind that include the involvement of key stakeholders, communication of timelines, identification of responsible personnel, and training. The ICoach SC model will be used to assist teachers in focusing on reform strategies and data use. Improvement Clusters will provide additional learning support to students and teachers, facilitating the adoption, implementation and change processes. Instructional Leaders Roundtable, comprised of LEA assistant superintendents, will be utilized to support implementation efforts and facilitate communications. Through consortia participation, the State is committed to participate in Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) to support international comparisons.

Total	70	70	70	
--------------	----	----	----	--

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	20	20	

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

The State meets 10 of 12 data system elements required by the America COMPETES Act. Plans are in place for the State Longitudinal Information Center for Education (SLICE 2013) to link K-12 with Higher Education (Element 4 – Not met at this time) that will generate data that provide information regarding the extent to which students transition successfully from secondary to postsecondary education (Element 11 – not met at this time).

(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	5	5	
--	---	---	---	--

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

SLICE 2013 is a comprehensive, statewide, longitudinal data system that will link K-12 and Higher Education. Development and oversight of the data system will include all stakeholders. Participation and data sharing with other states is planned and mechanisms are being put in place to facilitate interstate communications. Although components of SLICE 2013 are still under development, screen shots of planned portals indicate much planning has already occurred. The plan is clearly presented and specific goals and objectives have been articulated including providing for collaborative governance by key stakeholders (schools, districts, state agencies, parents, students, and community leaders) through the Data Governance Committee (DGC) and expanding the educational data warehouse to include new data sources such as P-20, commerce, employment/workforce, childcare, law enforcement, corrections, ACT/SAT student level data, the Armed Forces, dropout, summer survey data, data from the SCDE's Division of Educator Quality and Leadership (DEQL), and Testview. The details of the plan are indications that the State has a high-quality plan that will accommodate and use longitudinal data and inform and engage appropriate stakeholders.

(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	18	18	
---	----	----	----	--

(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Approximately 2/3rds of the LEAs already use a common software application as part of their local instructional improvement system that provides ready feedback to teachers on student understandings and skills. A statewide portal system is in place; this system will be expanded as the Common Core Curriculum is adopted. The data system has access and security controls so future development efforts can focus on mechanisms to support data interpretation and formative feedback for a variety of stakeholders to include students, teachers, parents, researchers, and policymakers. Development goals and performance measures have been articulated and are presented in a reasonable timeline for implementation. Training will be developed using multiple modalities including video, audio, and text formats and will be available online. Face-to-face training will be available through the S2MART Center resources which will expand their services and operations to meet local needs and outreach.

Total	47	43	43	
--------------	----	----	----	--

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	16	18	

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

The State has statutes and regulations that support alternative routes for non-educators to become teachers and an alternative route for current educators to become principals. Alternative certification occurs through an approved program at a regionally accredited institution of higher education. The State does not currently have an alternative route for non-educators to become principals. A system is in place to monitor, evaluate and identify areas of teacher and principal shortages but it is not clear how, once shortage areas are identified, teachers and/or principals are prepared to fill these areas of shortage. The proposed

enhancement of the existing Program of Alternative Certification for Educators program will allow for recruitment, training, and placement of highly qualified candidates in the federally defined high-need LEAs.

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

The State has a clear plan for alternatively preparing teachers and principals. The tiered approach to alternative certification is utilized for teachers and planned for principals. Managing and coordinating the alternative programs through the State is both a strength and a potential weakness. While there is the potential for uniformity and consistency of expectations and support, there is also the potential for lack of supervision and on-going support at the local level. Strategies and mechanisms for supporting alternatively certified personnel need to be developed and managed at the local levels to ensure adequate supports are in place.

Teacher and principal shortage areas have been identified and processes for monitoring, evaluating, and identifying areas of teacher and principal shortage are in place. The deliberate decision to exclude alternative certification for elementary teachers is appreciated and shows a focus on and appreciation for the special needs of young children as they develop early literacy and numeracy skills. The use of teacher-villages for supporting and recruiting teachers and principals to areas where there is high turn-over and need is innovative and driven by a theory of building professional learning communities that is commendable.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	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)

The State does not currently have a statewide system for measuring student growth. However, systems are in place and plans have been articulated to develop a comprehensive system that will include value-added measures and project-based learning assessments. The innovative use of project-based learning assessments will provide an important dimension to the value added approach to tracking student growth. A similar multi-dimensional approach to assessing teacher effectiveness will provide meaningful data beyond the statistical results of traditional value added models. The current ADEPT model will be adapted to accommodate assessment of teacher effectiveness in virtual/cyber school environments as well as value-added statistical results of standardized tests. Principal evaluation systems have been in place and are based on the ISLLC standards. Teacher and principal evaluations will be performed on an annual basis. Timelines and strategies for conducting annual evaluations are presented. Also delineated were plans for expanding and developing teacher/principal induction programs, identifying, incentivizing, and compensating teachers/principals for working in high challenge schools, and removal of ineffective teachers/principals. Key elements of a system of evaluation to inform decisions regarding teacher/principal development, compensation, tenure, and removal are in evidence in the plan. The relationships among student growth, teacher and principal evaluations, and the use of evaluations to inform decisions are clearly articulated and convincingly accounted for in the State plan.

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

The nested system of assessments, supports, and reforms shows an understanding and recognition of the complexities involved in supporting major reform efforts. System components are not treated in isolation and it was clearly communicated that feedback mechanisms were central to the on-going adaptability and usefulness of these systems.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	17	17
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	10	10
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	7	7

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

Initial steps have already occurred to reconsider teacher compensation, improve teacher working conditions and improve community infrastructure and support for teachers and principals. Also in place with evidence of effectiveness is the School Leadership Executive Institute to provide support for principals from chronically low-performing schools. The State has performed analyses that support the need to redefine compensation to encourage highly qualified teachers to teach in the highest challenge schools. A definition of and ranking system for identifying high-poverty and low-poverty schools are in place. While current analyses of equitable distribution of teachers are based on HQT status and data does not exist to provide baselines for distribution of highly effective teachers based on student performance, plans are underway to develop and implement a value added model to provide information about teacher effectiveness. A turnaround program based on UVA's model is planned to train and support school leaders to turnaround low-performing schools. Plans are in place to provide for hard-to-staff subjects that include opportunities for induction teachers to reside in Teacher Villages. The State also has a U-TEACH replication grant to increase the pipeline for STEM disciplines. Alternative certification incentives and supports seem to be targeted for staffing in low-performing schools. This strategy may, however, be contrary to the goal of increasing teacher effectiveness in those schools. Data does not exist on the effectiveness of these programs to prepare highly effective teachers.

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

It was acknowledged that rural areas and high challenge schools have difficulties with teacher and leadership turnover. Strategies are in place and were expanded on in the presentation to recruit and support teachers and principals to these areas.

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	10	12	
---	-----------	-----------	-----------	---

(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The system in place to provide information to teacher and principal preparation programs concerning effectiveness of candidates does not offer information about student growth nor published comparison data of effective preparation programs. Plans are in place, however, to move to a system and to amend accreditation guidelines that will include assessments of program effectiveness based on candidate effectiveness. While the plans are not in place, there is evidence that the State has seriously considered the different aspects of adopting a value-added system and has clearly articulated those plans and realistic yet ambitious goals for putting such a system in place by SY 2014. These plans include strategies for amending accreditation guidelines for educator preparation programs to incorporate revised reporting and for revoking accreditation of programs that have not improved based on feedback. It is not clear in these plans, however, that there are provisions for expanding preparation and credentialing options in the state beyond IHEs.

(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)

The State has made progress in implementing a value-added model that encompasses authentic assessments and student growth.

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	20	20
--	-----------	-----------	-----------

(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

As teacher and principal effectiveness assessments based on student growth are developed and adopted, the infrastructure is in place to provide effective, data-informed professional development across the state. According to the proposal, the Office of Standards and Support has a history of developing and providing targeted professional development and coaching based on the needs of a district. This system plan provides for the continuous improvement cycle of teacher and principal effectiveness by developing and designing supports that are based on contextual needs and circumstances, are dynamic and adaptive, engage all educators and administrators, and provide for sharing effective practices.

Total	138	121	125	
--------------	------------	------------	------------	--

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Int
(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	10	10	10	

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

The State has the authority to intervene directly in the state's persistently lowest-achieving schools. Authority to reconstitute schools has recently been granted. Appropriate and applicable state laws and statutes were cited in the application. After appropriate hearings and data gathering, the State may require additional technical assistance, declare a state of emergency and replace the principal, or assume the management of the school. Recent provisions allow the State Superintendent to reconstitute schools that consistently does not meet established benchmarks. The aggressive policies suggest the State has taken seriously its role in addressing persistently low performing schools in need of turnaround.

(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	40	40	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	35	35	

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

The State has a high-quality plan to turn around the lowest-achieving schools. Mechanisms are in place and are being used to identify the persistently lowest achieving schools. Support systems are in place with plans to expand services to assist LEAs in need of additional resources and development. Options for intervention include turnaround, restart, closure, and transformation. Models and initiatives to support turnaround efforts include data systems and analyses, extended learning time programs, distributed leadership strategies, and leadership academies. Low performing schools will be required to implement a reform plan with support, training, and technical assistance provided by the Department of Education, its partners, or competitively selected vendors. The State has a history of working with turnaround schools and districts; their plan to extend existing strategies is well presented and documented. The plan is based on research-based strategies for creating High-Performing, High Poverty Schools that include developing conditions for readiness to learn (safety, discipline & engagement, action against adversity, close student-adult relationships), readiness to teach (shared responsibility for achievement, personalization of instruction, professional teaching culture) and readiness to act (resource authority, resource ingenuity, agility in the face of turbulence).

Total	50	50	50	
--------------	-----------	-----------	-----------	--

F. General

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	7	7	

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

The percentage of total revenues used to support education has outpaced the total revenues available. It is clear from the application that the State has made a commitment to education by making funding a priority. It is not clear, however, whether differences across districts exist due to differential local funding, potentially exacerbating already-existing poverty situations. Other than Title I monies, it does not appear that the State has mechanisms for providing additional support for high-poverty LEAs. Therefore, it is not clear that the State's policies lead to equitable funding between high-need LEAs and other LEAs, and within LEAs, between high-poverty schools and other schools.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	27	27	
---	----	----	----	--

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Charter laws do not cap the number of charters that can operate in the state nor limit the types of charters created. By SY 2011, up to 4% of the schools may be charters. The State has a history of and mechanisms for approving, monitoring, reauthorizing, and closing charter schools. Charter schools receive the same per pupil state funding but are not eligible for local tax base funding. Additional funding is provided by the State to meet this gap although funding amounts vary. Similarly, the State does not provide assistance for facilities for charters. Thus, there are currently no state-wide policies or practices that provide assistance to charters for facilities which weakens the ability of the State to ensure successful conditions for high-performing charters. The State also does not have provisions for autonomous schools, per se, but does provide mechanisms for increased autonomy from district regulations and constraints.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	5	5	
---	---	---	---	--

(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The State has in place several support systems including clear accountability standards and student Individual Graduation Plans that provide career guidance. Part of the Education and Economic Development Act of 2005 provides for increasing the number of guidance counselors and career development specialists to create favorable conditions for increasing graduation rates and preparing students for post-secondary educational opportunities and careers. Also passed in 2005 was the Student Health and Fitness Act that promotes physical activity and funds school nurses in elementary schools. The State also has in place innovative virtual schools. There is evidence in the application that the State has conditions that are favorable to educational reform and innovation.

Total	55	39	39	
--------------	----	----	----	--

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	15	15	

Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The state has clear strategies and plans for increasing the number of teachers in STEM content areas, strengthening the skills of teachers in STEM, and enlarging the STEM teacher pipeline. Active participation in a pre-engineering initiative suggests plans for expanding and creating a challenging and rigorous STEM curriculum.

Total	15	15	15	
-------	----	----	----	--

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)

The State has important laws, systems and structures in place to expand reform efforts. Key stakeholders at all levels have been involved and have clearly defined roles to play in future reforms. Reform plans have been comprehensively and coherently articulated with supporting data, evidence, and prior initiatives to instill confidence that reform plans and achievement targets will be implemented and met. Plans for implementing the comprehensive system of reforms addressing all levels of the educational system are impressive and timelines suggest each step in the implementation process has been well thought-out. The State plan may be a model for other states to follow.

Total		0	0	
-------	--	---	---	--

Grand Total	500	444	450	
-------------	-----	-----	-----	--