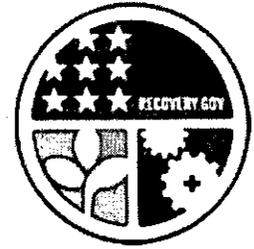




Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 1

South Dakota Application #600SD-1



A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	16
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	2
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	10
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	4
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>A major focus of South Dakota's reform plan is the establishment of a residential, grades 9-14 STEM and health academy – The American Indian Institute for Innovation (AIII). It is designed to serve as an exemplar for how to "close the gap on student achievement through transdisciplinary, project-based, STEM teaching and learning...Practices and learning emanating from this academy will spread across the state through the scope of work that has been agreed upon by participating LEAs." The proposed academy specifically targets the significant achievement gap amongst the state's largest group of underperforming students, Native Americans. The overall proposed plan, however, involving both the AIII and the 14 participating LEAs, does not comprehensively and coherently encompasses all four required priority areas for a reform agenda. These 14 LEAs consist of 106 schools (14% of the state's 750 schools), and 34,756 students (29% of state's total.) The LEAs also include 13,682 students in poverty, which represent almost a third of students in poverty in the state. For the participating 14 LEAs, all have agreed to participate in all aspects of the proposed reform plan, with the exception of use of evaluations to inform professional development and inform compensation (12 of 14, or 85.7%). Signatures were obtained for all 14 superintendents (100%), but only a little over half the presidents of local school boards (57%), and only 14% of the local teachers union leaders (2 out of 14.) A letter of agreement from the Great Plains Tribal Chairman's Association was provided in the appendix. The proposal did not provide a detailed scope of work plan nor set of specific tasks or activities expected of participating LEA teachers and administrators. The proposal sets out some target test goals for Dakota STEP tests and NAEP goals for all grades, and for grade 4th and 8th. With the proposal's primary focus on the AIII which is a 9-14 STEM academy, it is not abundantly clear the type of active working relationships it will have with K-8 schools, and thus may have a somewhat constrained statewide impact upon elementary and middle schools. Its involvement of only 9% of the state's LEAs, and 14% of the state's schools will also significantly hinder its statewide impact. Given the AIII's focus on Native Americans, the proposal would have also been stronger if it had supplied more statewide demographic on the numbers and percentages of South Dakota public school students who are Native American, and greater articulation of how "lessons learned" from the AIII would also have clear, educational ramifications for other minority groups in the state.</p>		
(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	8
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	5
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	3
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

The project will be led by Mr. Stacy Phelps, working in partnership with the PAST Foundation of Columbus, Ohio, the State Department of Education, and South Dakota's higher education institutions and partners from the private sector. Other stakeholders include the National Indian Association, the Northern Plains Tribal Chairman's Association (for which 9 of the 16 tribes reside in South Dakota), and Teach For America. Mr. Phelps has good expertise and background in STEM and South Dakota schools, and is from the Sisseton Wahpeton Dakota Oyate tribe. At the same time, the project will clearly need to demonstrate how the success of the AllI initiative, and this state-wide reform effort will not be primarily based on the strengths of one key leader. No information (names, titles, backgrounds) is provided regarding key staff from the SEA or LEAs who will be involved in the proposed state-wide reform effort. The only staff information provided is for an outside group with whom the AllI has partnered in the past. Similarly, no letters were provided by individuals representing the South Dakota State Department of Education, nor from any schools, school districts or LEAs. There is little information provided regarding the personnel or processes for handling grants management or fiscal monitoring of the project. Dissemination of the AllI work into participating LEAs appears to be largely occurring through teacher teams, with no named personnel provided. A major focus of this work will be through the creation of teacher teams trained in the All model (attending 4-6 week professional development programs in AllI), and participating LEAS must agree to hire these teams and place them in looping assignments (grades 7/8 or 9/10) in the same building, as well as send a majority of their teachers and principals to AllI PD experiences. However, as noted above, only 14% of the local teachers union leaders signed MOU's in the application.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	8
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	3
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	5
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: In response to the demands inherent in the federal No Child Left Behind legislation, South Dakota State Department of Education initiated a variety of programming to address student achievement. The proposal lists these initiatives, including the Teacher Incentive Fund Grant, Data Enhancement (through eMetric database); Reading First; Math Counts and Gear-Up programs (focusing on STEM); 1:1 Laptop Computer Initiative for high school students; the establishment of intermediate educational service agencies; and amending in 2006 mandatory school attendance law to 18 years of age, going into effect in July 2008. Thus, it has exercised some efforts to address several of the four education reform areas. There has been fairly minimal improvement in demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps. They report a slight increase in NAEP mathematics scores for 4th and 8th graders from 2003 – 2009. There are minimal changes in reading scores for these grades, from 2003 – 2007 (no 2009 scores are provided.) Regarding the Dakota STEP Statewide Assessments, there was a significant increase between 2003 and 2004 mathematics testing, with the advent of NCLB requirements, with some increases, for some populations, in subsequent years. There was a similar pattern regarding STEP testing in Reading, although a decline in scores in 2009, which is attributed to a changing in reading standards, with little notification or training of reading teachers in the new standards. There is some decrease in achievement gaps between all and Black and Hispanic students between 2003 and 2009, but minimal change with Native Americans, the student population targeted in the state's reform proposal. Graduation rates have also been in on the decline, partially due to changing dropout definitions which have become more rigorous. For the Native American populations targeted in the proposal, graduation rates have declined from 84% in 2003, to 66% in 2009. The applicant does not explicitly connect student outcomes to particular actions that have contributed to it. The proposal does not articulate how they envision they will comprehensively address raising achievement levels for all students, and for multiple subgroups of students.</p>		
Total	125	32

B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1
(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards	40	25
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20
(ii) Adopting standards	20	5
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: South Dakota has joined the consortium with the Council of Chief State School officers, part of the 48 states and 2 territories working on the common core standards. The main process for adopting the standards is two-fold: 1) integration of standards with the state's web-based curriculum mapping protocol, for use by classroom teachers; and 2) creation of rigorous, project-based STEM and health curriculum by the AllI STEM Academy that is informed by the CCSSO standards initiative. The only date somewhat related to adoption is a discussion of this new AllI curriculum to be piloted during 2010, and later "moved out" to participating LEAs for Beta testing. No firm timeline for use of standards more broadly for LEAs around the state is offered in the proposal.</p>		
(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	0
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: The applicant does not provide sufficient evidence that the State has demonstrated its commitment to improving the quality of its assessments, by participating in a consortium of States that are specifically targeting work on assessments.</p>		
(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	5
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: The proposal typically centers its focus on the development of the AllI Academy, based on work of Stacy Phelps, and the South Dakota GEAR UP program for young American Indians and the Native American Honors Program. While the results from this rigorous, six-week residential program focusing on a STEM curriculum for young American Indians appear impressive, the translation of these programmatic successes into a year-round residential, Grades 9 – 14 STEM and health academy will be challenging, and is not sufficiently addressed in the application. Part of the "diffusion process" of the impact of the AllI spreading to participating LEAS also seems to hinge on an infusion of new teachers largely through Teach for America, rather than working closely with existing teachers in the LEAs. Focus on the SDDOE often appears ancillary in the proposal. Work of the SDDOE and its regional Educational Service Agencies will occur thorough a STEM team that will attend professional development conducted by the AllI Academy. Work of the STEM team seems to be occurring largely in parallel to the work of the AllI Academy. There is no comprehensive plan offered regarding how the participating LEAs, much less other LEAs in the state, will be supported in their transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments.</p>		
Total	70	30

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	14
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: South Dakota plans to use a Commercial Off-The Shelf data warehouse product to serve as the core of the Longitudinal Data System, although doesn't specify specific application. South Dakota indicates</p>		

that it has achieved 8 of the 12 America COMPETES elements. It does not yet have: a) an automated system which communicates with Higher Education; b) a teacher identifier system that can match teachers to students; c) information on students' transition to post-secondary schools (now only has that information for enter one of the six public 4-year institutions directly after graduation); nor d) information that can help align and prepare for success in postsecondary education (High School to College transition report is useful for tracking first-year performance data, but much of P-12 data is not transmitted to public institutions in the state.) One of the 8 elements that they claimed to have completed, concerning student-level transcript information, does not appear to have been truly completed, since transcripts still exist in static form (pdfs) and are not able to be actively linked to other student data.

(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	5
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: The application clearly reflects the need and value of longitudinal data systems (LDS), and offers five compelling real-world scenarios in which LDS would have been extremely valuable. They propose to initiate a Data Quality Campaign, engaging representatives from each school district, from both technical and higher education institutions and a data quality coach in each of the six Educational service agencies (ESA). Their plan outlines a timeline and task to fulfill the seven outcomes of the SD EDS.</p>		
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	5
<p>(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: As noted above, much of the educational impact of the proposed reform plan hinges on the degree that it will leverage hoped-for successes from the model AIII Academy, into participating LEAs and involved LEAs. A good part of the first year of the project focuses on the AIII and is "dedicated to the initial research and development of the necessary curriculum and aligned assessments that will drive the transdisciplinary, project-based STEM and health programs of study." With the AIII being much of the hub of activity, it is not always clear how much, and how quickly, things will "radiate out" from the AIII, to influence and affect the various LEAs across the state. Specific details about the types of data that teachers would use in the system to improve instruction was quite sparse. In general, the proposal does not make a clear, strong and detailed case of how participating LEAs will increase the acquisition, adopt and use of local instructional improvement systems or be supported in their use. The proposal states that data that is generated will be made available to the public. They mainly describe how research findings will be made available, as opposed to enabling researchers to work with the data for their own educational research.</p>		
Total	47	24

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	8
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: While the state has statutory authority for alternative certification, South Dakota currently has relatively few alternative routes for certification (e.g., Praxis II, Teach for America, the Technical Education Alternative Certification.) The alternative certification process is administered by the Department of Education, and is limited to content areas at approved education program level, with no elementary education programs available in the alternative certification process. In 2008, only 26 teachers and no principals were certified using alternative methods. Methods for monitoring areas of teacher and principal shortage consist of fairly standard forms of reporting. The proposal also outlines a number of strategies to prepare and recruit teachers (including Native American teachers) to teach in rural and isolated districts, and other high-needs schools. The proposal describes these strategies primarily as a</p>		

long list of discrete - rather than highly coordinated - efforts, such as scholarships and tuition reduction, on-line delivery of teacher education programs, teacher incentive grants, mentoring for new teachers, and utilization of Teach for America. The proposal offers information on a number of different initiatives to address such areas as teacher preparation, recruitment and retention of experienced teachers, development of specialized knowledge, and improving working conditions of hard-to-staff schools. There was generally very little discussion about providing high quality pathways and support for principals.

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

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The AIII proposes to develop an assessment instrument that will measure student growth in applied knowledge and Problem Based Learning, drawing from work of Uri Treisan. Assessment work from the AIII is regarded by the applicant as complimenting the State's utilizing of the Dakota STEP test and biennial NAEP assessment. State law does not have requirements for teacher nor principal evaluation nor a common evaluation tool/instrument, with legislation taken forward in the January/February 2010 session. The proposal includes a timeline, milestones, and general processes necessary to put in place a teacher and principal evaluation systems by Summer 2011, assisted by services provided by an outside contractor. While the proposal includes general features of the development process, it was difficult to discern with much specificity core concepts and fundamentals that would constitute student growth and learning, teacher effectiveness, and principal effectiveness. The proposal does not include sufficient information to assure how the plan will reach its ambitious goals and institutional targets for measures affecting professional development, compensation, retention, tenure or removal.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	8
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	5
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	3

(D)(3) Reviewer Comments:

South Dakota has a relatively small minority population (15.7% of total public school enrollment); thus, a high minority school is determined as one with an enrollment of 25% or higher. The proposal outlines four important factors that negatively impact the distribution of highly qualified teachers in South Dakota: a) sparsity and isolation; b) low income; 3) minorities primarily on Indian reservations, and d) the need to be highly qualified in multiple subjects. Of the 15.7% minority student population, 11.3% are Native American living in low income school districts. South Dakota also has a number of Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) and Tribal schools not under the SD DOE's authority. Efforts in this proposal plan to collaborate with those schools. Strategies to address this inequitable distributions of effective teachers include: use of computer and satellite technology for distance learning courses; a new Virtual mentoring, work of the ESAs and teacher incentive grants. A primary strategy will be through the work of a new State STEM team, who will work closely AIII, to "infuse STEM standards and curriculum based on the All transdisciplinary, project-based model, infused with American Indian Education Act standards, in LEAs across the state." In the work description for AIII, it appears that there is a single lead team, and a single lead teacher, which places a high degree of project success on a small number of individuals. As noted above, much of the educational impact of the proposed reform plan hinges on the degree that it will leverage hoped-for successes from the model AIII academy, into participating LEAs and involved LEAs. As with its plans for professional development, the proposal does not include sufficient information to assure how the plan will likely reach its ambitious goals and targets for ensuring highly effective teachers and principals in high needs schools, or in hard to staff

subjects and specialty areas. There was generally very little discussion on efforts directed towards principals.

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	4
<p>(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: The proposal offers a fairly general vision, objectives and process for linking student achievement and student growth data to students' teacher and principals, without much specificity regarding actual implementation. To expand preparation and credentialing options to produce effective teachers, the proposed initiative plans to make heavy use of such programs as Teach For America. It also cites other grant and foundation initiatives such as with the Bush Foundation's work with the University of South Dakota (hoping to recruit 200 students/year), and the South Dakota Partnership for Teacher Quality (preparing 75 teachers over five years). These partnerships are against a backdrop of 11 teacher credentialing programs and 7 principal credentialing programs in the State, and 532 principals and 9003 teachers in the state. Thus, the proposed efforts do not currently provide a comprehensive outreach and projected penetration and impact for producing effective teachers nor principals throughout the state.</p>		
(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	6
<p>(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: As noted above, the project seems to be organized into two parallel streams of activity – in the "macrocosm" at the State level, through work of the SD DOE and its STEM team to promote work of the CCSSO common standards, and in the "microcosm", in the work of the AIII. In general, the work of the AIII is much more well-defined in the proposal than the work of the SD DOE, and confidence in the scalability of the work plan requires a much stronger coherent integration of proposed activity. While the general goals of the professional development are presented, much more detail is needed in the proposal regarding its implementation, and the respective roles of various organizations, teams, and types of individual, and how the proposed plan would actually lead to providing effective job-embedded, data-informed support to teachers and principals in all participating LEAs. As in other aspects of the proposal, scant attention was paid to principals.</p>		
Total	138	40

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1
(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	10	0
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: The application does not explicitly declare whether the State has the legal, statutory or regulatory authority to intervene directly in the State's persistently lowest-achieving schools and in LEAs that are in improvement or correction action status.</p>		
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	7
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	3
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	4
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: The applicant described work-in-progress to identify Title I schools in improvement (Tier I) and Title I eligible high schools (Tier II) considered persistently lowest-achieving schools. They intend to have the state define and list identified schools for each tier by February 2010. Plans for turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools were quite general. It appears that LEAS applying for School Improvement funds will indicate which of the four models it will use for each of its Tier I and II schools.</p>		

The proposal did not offer information on how they would receive support, advice, and counsel from the State DOE or others regarding which reform models might be most appropriate, given the school's circumstances and history. Regarding past history in school intervention models, it primarily states that 3 schools were restructured so that it was divided into 2 schools, each with its own principal, resembling a restart model.

Total	50	7
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F. General

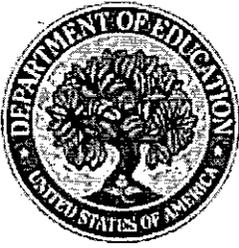
	Available	Tier 1
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	0
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: The table provided in the proposal was difficult to decipher, with no prose provided that explicitly declared whether or not the percentage of total revenues available to the state used to support K-12 and higher education for FY 2009 was greater than or equal to those comparable figures used in FY 2008. The proposal also simply states that the state's policies lead to equitable funding between high-need LEAS and other LEAS, with no explanation or supporting information.</p>		
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	0
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: South Dakota does not have a law or state that specifically charters schools. Legislation is being proposed in this current session to put charter schools into being. While the proposal describes schools that fall outside the South Dakota public school system (those run by the BIS/BIE Indian reservations), and school districts that have applied for waivers, there was insufficient evidence as to whether these "waiver schools" would qualify as "innovative autonomous public schools", as defined in the Notice.</p>		
(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	0
<p>(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: The proposal mainly posits the vision of the AllI, without providing sufficient evidence for the state's actual demonstration of other significant reform conditions.</p>		
Total	55	0

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	15
<p>Competitive Reviewer Comments: As noted above, a major focus of South Dakota's reform plan is the establishment of a residential, grades 9-14 STEM and health academy. It is designed to serve as an exemplar for how to "close the gap on student achievement through transdisciplinary, project-based, STEM teaching and learning." The proposal also describes work of a STEM team from the SD DOE to work with PreK-20 Education system.</p>		
Total	15	15

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		No
<p>Absolute Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>A major focus of South Dakota's reform plan is the establishment of a residential, grades 9-14 STEM and health academy - The American Indian Institute for Innovation (AIII). It is designed to serve as an exemplar for how to "close the gap on student achievement through transdisciplinary, project-based, STEM teaching and learning." While the proposal also describes work of the SD DOE, focus on the SDDOE often appears ancillary in the proposal, and not well-coordinated or integrated with the AIII. Despite the merits of the vision and purpose of the AIII, the proposal does not comprehensively nor coherently address all of the four education reform areas specified in the ARRA to demonstrate that the State and its participating LEAs are taking a systemic, state-wide approach to education reform. The proposal generally lacked substantive, detailed information, timelines and tasks pertaining to four education reform areas, necessary for a well-developed, effective reform effort.</p>		
Total		0
Grand Total	500	148



Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 1

South Dakota Application #6000SD-2



A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	10
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	1
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	6
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	3
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>South Dakota has presented a powerful and compelling narrative about the extent to which Native Americans within the state are not succeeding in school, as well as the tragic consequences for their social, emotional and physical health. The idea of focusing reform efforts on the culturally-based American Indian Institute for Innovation program (combined with an emphasis on STEM-related education) is well thought-out, as it builds off one of the few success stories available. The AIII program is designed to improve achievement among Native Americans, to reduce the achievement gap, to improve high school graduation rates and to improve college readiness and success. Unfortunately, it serves one particular population and does not translate to a comprehensive reform agenda that will address all four areas of AARA statewide. In addition, while there is mention of participating in the NGA/CCSSO consortium, of creating a longitudinal data system, of changes to evaluation for principals and teachers, and to creating a charter school law, these other important elements are given a much smaller emphasis in terms of capacity building, planning and funding. With respect to all of the elements of reform, except implementation of the AIII model, there is not a high quality plan presented. The AIII implementation time-line (presented as an appendix to Section F(1) and not in Section A(1)) is detailed and covers all elements from communication to recruitment, professional development, partnerships, and evaluation. In addition, there is no understanding provided about the achievement of non-Native American students in South Dakota. While it is noteworthy, and critical, to focus on the underserved Native American population, there may be other students for whom there are achievement gaps, there may be other areas of low achievement, etc. and these are not targeted in the reform and improvement plan. Unfortunately, South Dakota secured the commitment and participation of only 9% of LEAs. The scope of work does not require participating LEAs to agree to use evaluation to inform compensation, promotion, retention, or tenure. Even with this relatively weak commitment requirement, the state was only able to procure 9% of LEAs. This indicates a strong likelihood that state-wide impact of an important element of the "Great Teachers and Leaders" program will not be reached. A further weakness of the effort to secure LEA commitment that will lead to state-wide impact is the fact that the 9% of LEAs that are participating represent only 30% of the students in poverty. It would be helpful to know what percentage of these students and LEAs encompass the LEAs serving all or primarily Native Americans. In addition, even for those LEAs which are participating, only slightly over half received the support in terms of signature from the president of the local school board and less than 15% received the support and signature of the local teachers union. This is likely too small a percentage to lead to statewide impact.</p>		
(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	10

(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	5
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	5
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The State's plan seems to rest on the extraordinary vision and leadership of one man. While his vision and leadership are undoubtedly critical to its success, it is unlikely that he alone can implement the plan. There is a plan to require teachers and principals in participating LEAs to participate in professional development to be prepared to integrate the teaching required in the STEM Health academy, but no detail as to who will provide the support, what skills they have, how they will be supported, etc. The budget and budget narrative provide some of the missing detail to explain how the All program will be realized. They provide evidence of a process, including support from the PAST Foundation for program design, providing professional development, and ethnographic research. However, there are no budgets or budget narrative to support any of the other pieces of the work, including adoption and implementation of standards, assessments, evaluation, etc. The state has succeeded in obtaining support from the Native American community, which is obviously critical to success. In addition, South Dakota has procured a wide variety of strong support from federal political leaders, business, science and health partners. Of particular note is the specificity provided in several of the support letters - indicating true understanding of the RtT application and a commitment to partner with South Dakota in its efforts. There is not evidence of strong support from education associations or from state legislative leaders. With only 9% of LEAs and 15% of teachers unions committed, it is not clear that the Native American support will be enough to overcome the difficulty posed by this relatively small commitment on the part of LEAs and teachers.</p>		
(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	9
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	1
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	8
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>There is little indication that South Dakota used ARRA funding to pursue reforms in any of the ARRA areas. However, the application does highlight programs and initiatives targeting each of the reforms, including school improvement (largely through professional development), data enhancement, reading, math and technology, high school graduation rates and drop-out prevention. Some positive results are indicated in each of these areas, and a connection can be seen between the initiatives and student achievement. That being said, it is difficult to make good sense of what has happened in student achievement and graduation rates in South Dakota. In general, results on NAEP indicate improvements, followed by decreases and leveling off. Results on Dakota STEP are similar, albeit without the decrease before the leveling off. If the explanation for the steep drop in reading proficiency is correct, and it is attributable to a change in standards without professional development for the teachers, it is both problematic and hopeful. Problematic because it indicates a lack of a real plan and effort toward implementation of the standards. And hopeful because presumably the state learned from this experience and will not do this again. It is evident that all subgroups shared in the general increases in student achievement demonstrated by the NAEP and Dakota Step Statewide Assessment ("STEP") data. Similarly, the achievement gap has been reduced for all subgroups, but notably the decrease is by far smaller for Native Americans than for all other groups. One place where South Dakota has not been able to show real improvement is in the high school graduation rate.</p>		
Total	125	29

B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1
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(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards	40	23
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20
(ii) Adopting standards	20	3
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: South Dakota is participating in the CCSSO Common Core consortium, which includes a majority of states. The MOU as well as a list of participating states are provided as evidence. While the plan demonstrates South Dakota's commitment to adopting a common set of K-12 standards, the plan is to adopt the standards in up to three years, not by August 2010. South Dakota also provided evidence of the context in which they are working toward adopting common standards, and how they will work in tandem with the Indian Education standards as well as the curriculum that is derived from the AllI. The application states that adoption of the standards will proceed according to the South Dakota Department of Education process of review and adoption of standards, which has been in use in the process of creating and adopting state standards. While there is some description of how this will work and a delineation of who is involved in South Dakota's efforts to develop state standards, there is little detail provided about the elements of the plan or how it will function with respect to the Common Core standards.</p>		
(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	0
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: The MOU by which South Dakota committed to participating in the CCSSO/NGA Common Core standards development is provided as evidence of South Dakota's commitment to developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments aligned with the consortium's common set of K-12 standards. While this may be South Dakota's intent, it should be noted that the MOU does not commit signatories to engage in the development of assessments. The MOU merely indicates an intent that the standards can support the development of assessments that are aligned with them and that phase two of the work of the consortium will be to create common assessments aligned with the standards. While the state may be involved in an effort to develop assessments aligned to the Common Core standards, they did not provide evidence of this involvement.</p>		
(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	5
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: The state provides a plan with a time-line, responsible parties, and activities for implementation of the AllI program, including the integration of the new STEM curriculum. The application states that the integration of the Common Core standards into the classrooms will be a complementary process. While the application explains that the state will have key personnel at the Educational Services Agencies participate in training at AllI, and that those personnel will then be poised to bring this work to LEAs throughout the state, this portion of the plan lacks specificity. There is little evidence presented concerning the transition to the Common Core standards; as in many places throughout the application, the focus on the STEM curriculum and standards is far more detailed than for the state-wide K-12 effort. In Section C(3), the state provides evidence that the assessments to be developed through the AllI work will, in fact, be high quality.</p>		
Total	70	28

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	14
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

South Dakota presents evidence of a significant amount of work toward implementing a state-wide longitudinal data system. While the application states that eight of the 12 America COMPETES elements are already in place and there are plans for the creation or implementation of the remaining four elements, the description of element # 9 suggests that it is not yet fully implemented. South Dakota has submitted an application for a grant for SLDS funds to support this process.

(C)(2) Accessing and using State data

5

5

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

South Dakota presents a high quality, ambitious plan to ensure that the data from the state's longitudinal data system will be accessible to, and used to inform and engage key stakeholders and to ensure that the data support decision makers in continuous improvements. Because the application describes several very specific needs for and use of the data that will be generated, they have been able to provide a very detailed plan, including responsible parties, time-lines, goals and activities.

(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction

18

8

(C)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The state provides evidence of a plan to increase the acquisition, adoption and use of the local instructional improvement systems created through the AIII program. There is a time-line, a designation of responsible parties, as well as goals and activities for using the data to support teachers, principals and administrators (within the AIII program and in participating LEAs) with the information and resources they need to inform and improve their instructional practices and effectiveness. However, much of the plan is general; it is lacking specifics regarding what activities and processes will be used to demonstrate that, when implemented, the plan will in fact meet the definition of a local Instructional Improvement System. The application provides a plan to support participating LEAs and schools using the AIII instructional improvement system in providing effective professional development. Parties are designated, standards for professional development are specified, and continuous efforts to better understand and use the data are all comprehended within the plan. The state's plan for access to and use of the data is a little less specific when speaking to how it will make the data available and accessible to researchers. The application states that all data generated as a result of the statewide longitudinal data system will be made available to the public, as it becomes available, through the LDS and/or AIII STEM Network. In addition, the application describes how it expects the information to be used, but it does not otherwise provide information about how the state will ensure availability and access to the data. The instructional improvement system appears to be limited to data generated from the STEM curriculum and AIII standards, thus limiting the potential for providing the information and resources needed to inform and improve the instructional practices, decision making and overall effectiveness of teachers, principals and administrators.

Total

47

27

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	14

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The application provides excerpts from state statutes as evidence that the state has authority to allow (and the obligation to create) alternative routes to certification for both teachers and administrators. The narrative in this section is not clear and does not provide a thorough understanding of the landscape of alternative certification routes that currently exist in the state. However, the statutes indicate that the routes allow for providers in addition to IHEs. In addition, the routes must be selective, provide supervised school-based experiences and ongoing support, significantly limit the amount of coursework and award the same level of certification as is awarded by traditional programs - thus meeting the definition of alternative routes to certification. The application also describes several state-

approved routes to alternative certification that are in use and how many educators have successfully completed the programs, including Teach for America and Career and Technical Alternative Certification. While alternative certification programs exist for principals, thus far no principals are yet certified through an alternative route. The state has a multi-pronged process for the collection of data that allows it to monitor and identify areas of teacher shortage. In response to teacher shortages and highly qualified teacher shortages, particularly in isolated, poor, rural communities, South Dakota has been aggressive in creating and obtaining supports for programs to prepare teachers and to prepare them for teaching in these communities. Programs include those that focus on incentives to become teachers, incentives to teach in high poverty schools, incentives to improve qualifications, incentives to prepare Native Americans to teach, improvement of working conditions, etc. Although there are a few programs that target principals, there is no evidence presented that the shortage information is collected for principals and the emphasis in providing educators to fill the vacancies is overwhelmingly on teachers.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	20
(i) Measuring student growth	5	2
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	5
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	5
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	8

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The plan described in the application focuses on the new assessment that will be designed to measure student growth in applied learning and will be used to track student growth for students in the AIII program and in participating LEAs. Although other assessments of growth will continue to be as measured in Dakota STEP and the NAEP assessment, the newly developed assessments will also be built to measure students' growth in mastery of state standards. However, aside from explaining that the first step in the process will be the development of baseline data, and that course corrections will emanate from further collection of data, there is no real plan presented for how the state will ensure that the LEAs use the assessment to measure student growth. South Dakota currently does not have requirements for teacher evaluation or principal evaluation. As a result, the Department of Education has embarked upon a path toward the creation and use of rigorous, transparent and fair evaluation systems for both teachers and principals that differentiate effectiveness using multiple rating categories that take into account data on student growth and are designed and developed with teacher and principal input. The plans for the creation of these evaluation systems include participation by both teachers and principals. There is evidence that legislation to require such evaluation will be taken forward in this next session. Then there are plans evidenced by the ETS documents, which set forth roles and responsibilities as well as the processes, goals and activities that will lead to the creation, piloting and use of such evaluation systems. While it is clear that student growth will be one of factors taken into account in the evaluation, it is not clear that it will be a "significant" factor. The milestone and timelines set forth in the application appear overly ambitious and are inconsistent with the ETS documents. As a result, it is unclear what the process and time-lines are for the creation of the instruments. Given that the state has yet to create its growth model, there is real uncertainty as to how likely it is that it will be in place to be part of the new evaluations. In addition, while there is evidence of a high quality plan to develop the evaluations, given that the legislation has not yet been passed, there is uncertainty rather than a high quality plan to ensure that the work is put into place in the LEAs. The plans for the evaluation systems include specifications that both teachers and principals will be evaluated annually, and that an important part of the system is providing constructive feedback for improvement, which feedback includes data on student growth. Importantly, the plan also recognizes and provides for training for those who will deliver the feedback. However, the plan provides very little detail in terms of activities, time-lines, and coordination around how the evaluators will be trained. The plans for development and implementation of the principal and teacher evaluation systems include time-lines which refer to training related to using the evaluation to address performance and to support

decisions regarding development, compensation, promotion, retention and removal. In addition, the plan requires each LEA to submit data indicating how the evaluation systems are used for all of the above-cited purposes. Therefore, there is indirect evidence of the fact that the evaluation systems will be used to inform key decisions. The plan does not include details or information regarding the process, time-line, implementation, etc.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	7
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	5
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	2

(D)(3) Reviewer Comments:

As required, South Dakota provides a definition of a high-minority school. The state has several initiatives aimed at bringing highly effective teachers to high-minority schools and at providing professional development to teachers at low performing schools (many of which are high-minority) to improve their effectiveness. Elements of this plan include incentives, recruitment strategies and professional development. While a critical component of the plan is the design and theory of change built around the AIII and its relationship with participating LEAs, other components are single initiatives designed to improve effectiveness and recruit highly effective teachers to the high poverty and hard-to-staff schools serving primarily South Dakota's Native American students. The application describes each of these initiatives, but with a few exceptions, does not provide enough information or data to support a plan being based on their track records or the state's review of their success. While all of the components are essential, the application does not integrate them into a plan with time-lines and responsible parties linked to specific goals and activities. Because the state does not currently collect the data that would provide a baseline for measuring the percentage of teachers in high-poverty and/or high-minority schools, it is impossible to know whether the goals for the next three years are realistic. The description of the problem of attracting highly effective teachers to these schools suggests that the current percentage is quite low; as a result, the targets look like they may be overly-ambitious. The plan to increase the number and percentage of effective teachers teaching hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas is at the heart of the AIII program, which provides training, newly developed content and significant professional development to teachers and administrators in high minority schools. In addition, although not discussed in this section, the state's plan to partner with Teach for America to bring teachers prepared to teach STEM and other specialty areas also targets the increase in effective teachers in these areas. This section, however, is not limited to the high need schools, and there does not appear to be a part of the plan that is linked more generally to providing effective teachers in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas throughout the state of South Dakota. As is the case above, because the state does not currently collect the data that would provide a baseline for measuring the percentage of effective teachers teaching hard-to-staff and other specialty areas, it is impossible to know whether the goals for the next three years are achievable.

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	4
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(D)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The application provides evidence that there is a plan to create a data system that will link teachers trained in in-state university programs to the performance of the students they teach. The application provides goals for the same being true for principals trained in the in-state universities, but there is no narrative discussion or evidence of a plan for this component. The application speaks to a plan of public reporting of data that links students with unique teachers, but does not suggest that there will be public reporting of data that links teacher performance with the university at which they received their teacher preparation. Other discussions about the longitudinal data system in the application suggest that these missing pieces (links to principals and public reporting back to the universities) may in fact be included, but they are not presented or described here. The application provides evidence of expanded programming with Teach for America, a Bush Foundation grant designed to produce and support effective teachers, and the South Dakota Partnership for Teacher Quality - also aimed at developing and retaining highly qualified teachers in high need LEAs. While there is some detail

provided, there is not a high quality plan with goals, activities, time-lines, etc. There is no plan for expanding preparation and/or credentialing programs for principals.

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	12
<p>(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: South Dakota has a plan to provide data-informed professional development to teachers and principals throughout the state and, in particular, to meet the needs of high-needs students. The narrative explains how the plan works on two levels, delineating the path from the state house to the regional Educational Service Agencies to the LEAs and to the schools, as well as from the AIII to individual teachers and back to the ESAs. The latter plan, moving the work from the AIII to schools, is much more well developed than the plan generated from the state and out to the ESAs. The description of the types of professional development to be provided include ongoing support, mentoring and summer institutes designed to support teachers and administrators to understand and work from newly-available data and to begin to use transdisciplinary project-based teaching. There is a strong intention to collect, analyze and use the data to make corrections and better respond to teacher need, but the presentation is more aspirational than concrete, and there is no evidence presented to demonstrate how the state will assure that there is in fact continuous improvement of the supports in order to improve student achievement.</p>		
Total	138	57

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1
(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	10	0
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: While the statutes provided make clear that the state has an accountability structure in which schools are accountable to the state for making adequate yearly progress and for creating and implementing school improvement plans upon failure to make AYP for three years, there does not appear to be authority to intervene directly in the persistently lowest achieving schools or districts.</p>		
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	7
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	3
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	4
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: The state has a plan, with specific time-line and designation of responsible parties, to identify the persistently lowest achieving schools. Although the narrative indicates that the state has already begun the process of finalizing the definition and identifying the schools, there is no evidence presented as to whether the state is otherwise following the time-line or expects to be able to do so. There is very little to suggest that the state has a plan to support its LEAs in turning around these schools by implementing one of the four school intervention models. Most of the work to turn around failing schools is done at the district level, with some support by the state department of education. While the narrative indicates that the state will use its administrative funds to support, guide and evaluate LEA efforts, this does not translate to a plan to support LEAs to use the models to turn around their persistently lowest achieving schools. There is no description of a process to be used or of expertise to be accessed in implementing the turnaround models. The state astutely learned from its experience with three schools that have been restructured already that merely opening new schools is not enough to assure success, but there is nothing reflected in the plan that describes how that lesson will be responded to in moving forward.</p>		
Total	50	7

F. General

	Available	Tier 1
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	0
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: The application does not provide evidence of the percentage of total revenues that was used to support elementary, secondary and higher education in FY 2008 or FY 2009. Only the total dollars are provided. While it appears that there may have been an increase in total dollars from FY 2008, even that is not clear as there are two amounts listed for FY 2009, one of which is larger than 2008 and one of which is smaller. The funding formula does not appear to have any distinctions based on poverty status of the students; thus, the state's policies do not seem to lead to equitable funding between high-need LEAs and other LEAs. Nor is there any evidence presented to suggest that policies lead to equitable funding within LEAs, between high-poverty schools and other schools.</p>		
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	0
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: The state does not have a law authorizing charter schools. Legislation authorizing charter schools has been proposed by the South Dakota Department of Education. The state allows school districts to apply for waivers from compliance with state administrative rules for a period of four years, but there is no evidence that the resulting waivers would result in innovative, autonomous public schools as defined in the notice. It may be that the AIII is an innovative autonomous school, as defined in RTTT, but there is no evidence presented as to whether it meets the definition.</p>		
(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	0
<p>(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: The state makes an impassioned, well-reasoned and convincing plea for understanding of how and why they have created the AIII and how it will support the Native Americans who have not benefitted from the types of reform that have come before and some of which are targeted by this application. As described, the AIII is both innovative and based on a solid record of success. It is not, however, in addition to what has already been presented in the application.</p>		
Total	55	0

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	15
<p>Competitive Reviewer Comments: The application presents a comprehensive, high quality plan to address the need to offer a rigorous course of study in mathematics, health sciences, technology and engineering; to cooperate with industry experts, museums, universities, etc. to prepare and assist teachers in integrating STEM content across grades and discipline, and in offering applied learning opportunities for students; and to prepare more students for advanced study and career in the sciences, technology, engineering and mathematics, including by addressing the needs of underrepresented groups. The work begins with a state-wide STEM team, involves many partners, is connected to the regional Educational Services Agencies, to LEAs and to individual administrators and teachers. This work will provide state-wide expertise and training, and will make use of the expertise and data coming from the well-planned AIII for STEM and Health. The AIII will provide teachers with expertise, enable the provision of professional development and provide powerful STEM learning opportunities for the students in the residential</p>		

school, as well as those in participating LEAs. In addition, research and evaluation built around STEM will ensure both continuous improvement and dissemination of lessons learned around practices that should lead to the success of a population that until now has been served very poorly by our education system.

Total	15	15
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Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

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

Absolute Reviewer Comments:

Although South Dakota's application is compelling and provides what appears to be not only much-needed but very likely successful path toward vastly improving the education of Native Americans throughout the state - to improve their student achievement, decrease the achievement gaps between the Native Americans and other groups, and increase the rate at which they graduate from high school prepared for college and careers - it is not targeted toward providing those same improvements to all students, state-wide. Even if the plan were targeted to these improvements state-wide, the extremely low level of LEA commitment will likely doom the effort. It is notable that South Dakota is willing to make the kinds of reforms that run counter to a very strong belief in individualization and context specific strategies -- particularly because it appears the willingness is in response to the opportunity to put significant resources toward the most under-served and at-risk population. Unfortunately, the same commitment to all students throughout the state and to all pieces of the application is not demonstrated.

Total		0
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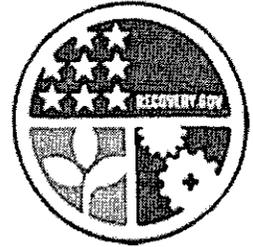
Grand Total	500	163
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Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 1

South Dakota Application #6000SD-3



A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	9
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	1
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	5
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	3

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

South Dakota is proposing to use the majority of its Race to the Top funds to establish a year-round residential Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM)-based program for American Indians. The school—the American Indian Institute for Innovation (AIII)—would support students from the beginning of high school through their first two years of college. The program is based largely on the GEAR-UP model. While the State reported that this model has been successful in preparing American Indian students for postsecondary education, the evaluation provided in the Appendix provides less compelling results. The evaluation did not employ rigorous research methods; therefore, it is not possible to attribute outcomes directly to the GEAR-UP program. Also, the program was not mature enough to meet several long-term targets. The State has secured the participation of 14 school districts which is 9 percent of total districts. It is not clear how these districts were selected. It could not be determined if all of South Dakota's districts were eligible to participate in the Race to the Top process or if these are the districts most likely to enroll the majority of students in the AIII Academy. It is unclear what benefits these 14 districts would receive from the grant should it be awarded. With the exception of using educator evaluations to inform professional development, compensation, promotion, and retention, 100% of LEAs committed to implementing the Race to the Top reforms. Yet, the State does not provide any guidance on how the 50% of funds suballocated to LEAs would be spent or how it will fiscally audit these funds. It is not clear if LEAs may spend their funds as they wish so long as they address one of the Race to the Top reform areas, or if they are committing their funds only to support the AIII Academy. Should the funds flow directly to the districts to implement the various Race to the Top reforms, it would reach only 29% of the State's students and less than one-third of those who live in poverty. Furthermore, 45% of school board presidents and 86% percent of local teacher union leaders did not sign the Memos of Understanding (MOUs) committing their support the initiative; it appears that the State does not have widespread stakeholder support for Race to the Top. American Indians are by far the largest subgroup in terms of race/ethnicity in South Dakota and the State has made a compelling argument on how it and the nation have consistently failed these children and youth which is evidenced in poor academic achievement as well as low graduation and college attendance rates. However, criteria (A)(1)(i) and (A)(1)(iii) are asking states to present a "comprehensive and coherent reform agenda" that "will translate into broad statewide impact, allowing the State to reach its ambitious yet achievable goals." While the State is commended for attempting to improve educational supports and academic achievement for its most needy students, it is leaving out other important subgroups that have not been able to achieve to their fullest potential. Special education and students with limited English proficiency, for example, are performing at levels on the state assessments below those of Native Americans. The State may be missing a critical opportunity to leverage this one-time infusion of Federal funds to raise academic standards, improve instructional

strategies, invest in human capital, and build educational infrastructures that would support long-term gains for all of South Dakota's students including those most in need. The State does not provide enrollment projections for the school, so it is not possible to determine the scope of this project or, if successful, what contribution the AIII Academy would have in improving achievement for American Indian students statewide and in reducing achievement gaps between American Indian and White students.

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	1
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	0
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	1

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The State did not provide sufficient evidence on how the reforms described in its plan would be implemented or by whom. While the governor and superintendent signed the Race to the Top application, neither made supporting statements for the initiative in the narrative. It is not clear where the grant would be housed (i.e., the governor's office or SEA), which raises serious questions about which agency will marshal, coordinate, and monitor resources across state agencies. The application did not provide an organizational chart or clearly define the roles and responsibilities of proposed staff. The State is requesting almost \$74 million in Race to the Top funds, yet it offers no evidence on how the grant activities would be monitored or what financial controls are in place to ensure the funds are expended as planned and on allowable activities. The application indicates that the AIII will be administered by Mr. Stacy Phelps who currently serves as the CEO of the AIII, suggesting that the State is planning to distribute and manage the entire Race to the Top allocation through an independent organization with little State oversight. The applicant did not demonstrate AIII's experience in managing funds of this magnitude or how it would be held fiscally accountable to the public. The budget did not provide adequate evidence on how the State would spend its requested Race to the Top funds. The State provided a master budget for all expenditures but did not provide line item-breakouts for the Race to the Top funds. The application only provided supporting documentation for the subcontract with the PAST Foundation which accounts for only 3 percent of the proposed expenditures for the State's 50% portion of the grant. The State has indicated that it intends to spend over \$33 million in capital renovations but does not provide information the percentage (if any) of Race to the Top funds that would support this initiative. LEAs signed MOUs committing to the Race to the Top elements. It is not clear if the source of the Tribal and school support funds that appear to be supporting the capital improvements are private funds, or funds from the participating districts. With the exception of using educator evaluations to inform professional development, compensation, promotion, and retention, 100% of LEAs are committed to implementing the Race to the Top reform areas. Yet, the State does not provide any guidance on how the 50% of funds to LEAs would be spent or how it will fiscally audit these funds. It is not clear if LEAs may spend their funds as they wish so long as they address one of the Race to the Top reform areas, or if they are committing their funds to support the American Indian Institute for Innovation (AIII). The application only requires participating districts to hire teams trained in the AIII model and to send a majority of their teachers and principals to a summer training at AIII. Quite simply, the budget does not provide enough detail to make a determination as to whether the proposed costs are reasonable or allowable. The budget provides fifth-year expenditures (one year post-grant); however it is not clear how the initiative would be sustained long-term. The State is focusing most of its efforts on building a residential school for Native American students, but does not provide a plan for its long-term operation such as obtaining State commitment for taking over the funding for the school at the end of the grant or seeking private or foundation support. While the State provided letters of support from its Congressional delegation, the National Indian Education Association, the Board of Regents, higher education institutions, and business and health organizations, it did not submit letters of support from the State's teacher, administrator, or school boards associations. This suggests that the application did not receive input or support from critical stakeholders.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	8
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	2
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	6
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: While South Dakota students perform higher on NAEP than students nationally, average scale scores have stalled in grade 4 reading and mathematics and in grade 8 reading. Only grade 8 mathematics scores have experienced increases from 2003 to 2009. NAEP results show continued gaps between student subgroups which have not narrowed at significant rates. Math scores for all students have also stalled on the State assessments. Reading scores declined between 2008 and 2009; 84 percent of students scored at the proficient or advanced levels in 2008 compared to 75 percent in 2009. Achievement rates declined for all subgroups during this period. The State attributes the decline to the implementation of new reading standards with little or no notification or training of reading teachers on the standards. The State has not made significant progress for closing the gap between Native American (its largest racial/ethnic group) and White students. In 2003 there was a 32 percentage point gap between these students groups compared to a 31 percentage point gap reported in 2009. The gap in reading was 26 percentage points in 2003 compared to 25 percentage points in 2009. While the State has made some progress in closing the gaps between Hispanic and Black students compared to White students, significant gaps still exist. Graduation rates for all students have not improved significantly over the past five years, and have declined since 2003. Gaps persist between White students and Black, Hispanic, and Native American students. While 92 percent of White students graduated from high school in 2009, only 66 percent of Native American students did so. The State cautioned the reader interpreting graduation rates as some of the fluctuation in rates over time could be attributed to changes in how it has defined and calculated these rates. The State described several State and Federal programs such as its Teacher Incentive Fund and Reading First grants that have helped address the needs of its lowest performing students. Given that little progress has been made in closing the gaps between student subgroups, it is not clear how these initiatives directly affected student performance. The State did not address how it used its ARRA funds to support reform efforts.</p>		
Total	125	18

B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1
(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards	40	20
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20
(ii) Adopting standards	20	0
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: South Dakota provided evidence that it is participating in CCSSO-NGA's Common Core Standards Consortium to develop common standards in mathematics and English-language arts that are internationally benchmarked and build toward college and career readiness. Fifty-one states and territories—a clear majority of states—are participating in the initiative. The application does not address the legal or regulatory steps the State is taking to adopt the standards by August 2, 2010.</p>		
(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	0
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: It appears that the MOU provided to address this section is for the State participation in the Common Core Standards Consortium and not a consortium dedicated to developing high-quality assessments.</p>		

No points were awarded for this section since the State did not provide adequate evidence that it was participating in a consortium that was specifically addressing assessments.

(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	5
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

While the State was awarded full points for Section (B)(1) because it has an MOU in place demonstrating its participation in the Common Core Standards Consortium, it is important to note that the State does not intend to use Race to the Top funds to roll-out the standards to participating LEAs or classroom teachers. Rather, the application details a plan to develop a culturally-appropriate STEM and health curriculum. The application does not present a clear connection between the Common Core Standards and how the culturally-appropriate STEM curriculum will fit into the standards framework. The application also states that assessments of and for learning will be developed but it does not indicate who will be developing these assessments, the types of assessments to be developed (formative and/or summative), or the relationship between these assessments and State assessments. The project does provide for a plan to have personnel from the Education Service Agencies attend a train the trainer program conducted by the AIII Academy on its curriculum, but it is unclear as to whether this curriculum developed can be replicated in the larger education community.

Total	70	25
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C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	14

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

South Dakota has implemented 7 of the 12 America COMPETES elements. Although the State indicated that it has implemented element #9, it does not appear from the narrative that it is fully functional at this time.

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

While the State is moving forward with building its state longitudinal data system, it still has a way to go to complete it. The State currently does not have a link in place to match students and teachers which is critical for calculating the student growth measures required to implement most of the Race to the Top human capital reforms in Section D. It appears that completion of the longitudinal data base is contingent on the State securing Federal funds not related to the Race to the Top grant. It is not clear what the timing is for these funds or what South Dakota's chances are in securing them. The application does not provide an alternative plan to fund the system if it does not secure this grant. The State has provided a timeline for completing the longitudinal data system that does not seem reasonable. The State plans to issue seven RFPs to undertake the development of the remaining elements, but it is unclear how these procurements will be coordinated to develop a cohesive system in a timely manner. For example, the State is issuing two RFPs to create the unique student and teacher identifiers. The State will issue the RFPs by March 2010 and vendors will have three months to respond. The actual work will be on a very short timeline. The vendor will have only two months to install the student ID system and one month for the staff ID system. Given how far behind the State is on developing its student/teacher links and building a data warehouse, it is highly unlikely it will meet the schedule laid out in the application.

(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	3
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(C)(3) Reviewer Comments:

As discussed above, the State is at a serious disadvantage in implementing many of the data-related reforms required under Race to the Top, especially the linkage between the student and teacher databases that will be needed to calculate student growth. Without a growth measure, it is not clear how the AIII would have the robust data it needs to truly identify the needs of students and to allow teachers to differentiate instruction to meet the diverse learning styles of its students. The application states that the AIII will collect data from formative, benchmarked, summative, and large scale assessments but does not identify the specific assessments. The application does not describe any technology that might be used to give teachers access to real-time, user friendly data to help them monitor student progress on an on-going basis. While the application states that data from the AIII will be reported to the public, it does not describe the processes researchers would use to request and access restricted use files or how it would protect the confidentiality of student and teacher records. Because the application did not contain information on the projected student enrollment for the AIII Academy, it is not clear if there would be large enough number of students to conduct statistically significant research on this population.

Total	47	18
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D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	8
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: The application provided evidence that the State has the authority to establish limited alternative pathways to certification for teachers and administrators. Alternative routes can only be authorized for shortage areas. The State provided evidence that it currently has two routes in place: Teach for America and the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Alternative route. Both routes are IHE-based. The CTE route is not selective, allowing persons without a bachelor's degree to participate in the program. It is not clear if CTE participants have a "test-out" option in lieu of coursework. While these routes are in place, they are not widely used. Of the 3,399 teachers certified in 2008, only 26 (less than 1%) were alternatively prepared. None of the 265 principals certified in 2008 were alternatively prepared. <i>The State produces a number of staffing reports to determine shortage areas. Data can be disaggregated by a number of variables including subject area and school poverty. The State did not identify its shortage areas in its application. It did, however, provide an inventory of programs aimed at addressing educator shortages such as the Teach for America program, the Teacher Incentive Fund grant, the Dakota Corps Scholarship program, and a virtual mentoring program. Without information on the State shortage areas, it is not possible to determine how successful these programs have been in addressing educator shortages.</i>		
(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	7
(i) Measuring student growth	5	1
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	3
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	2
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	1
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: Criterion (D)(2)(i) specifically addresses the State's approach to measuring student growth. As discussed above, the State is at a disadvantage in meeting this requirement because it is lacking the IT infrastructure to measure student growth and it has set an unrealistic deadline in meeting this goal. Therefore, it is highly doubtful that the AIII Academy will have access to a student growth measure in the near future. The State currently does not require a common teacher or principal evaluation system, although there is a bill pending before the legislature to initiate a process. While the application		

provides a timeline for implementing these evaluations, it is dependent on passage of the bill which is not a certainty. If passed, the State would be in the beginning stages of negotiating the timing, frequency, and measures for the evaluation system. The scores for (D)(2) reflect the doubt that the State will have effectiveness measures in place and the uncertainty of the legislative actions to mandate educator evaluation systems within the grant period. The application states that the AIII will develop an assessment instrument to measure growth in applied knowledge but does not provide a roadmap on how it will accomplish this task, nor how it will develop a model of projected growth without a comparison school. While the proposal indicates a desire to use the evaluations to develop, compensate, promote, retain, grant tenure to, and remove educators over the life of the grant, it is not clear how it will meet its goal without the evaluation systems in place.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	7
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	5
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	2

(D)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The State documented that it has an inequitable distribution of teachers serving Native American, special education, and rural students. The State has undertaken several initiatives to address these inequities, although it did not provide numeric targets for recruiting and retaining teachers in hard-to-staff schools. The Race to the Top grant will be used to recruit and retain teachers to staff the AIII Academy. The AIII will also provide professional development to teachers from participating LEAs and place them "as cohort groups in high poverty and high minority schools" and "given 2-year looping assignments". The application does not provide statistics on the number of teachers who will be trained in the participating districts. Furthermore, the Race to the Top notice clearly states that the State should focus on increasing the number and percentage of effective (as defined in the notice) teachers in high poverty and high minority school as well as in hard to staff subjects. Given that the State does not have the measure of effectiveness in place to meet the Race to the Top definition, it is not clear how the grant will support a greater distribution of effective teachers in high-need schools.

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

The application did not provide evidence that the State has made sufficient progress in developing the linked identifiers between its elementary/secondary and postsecondary databases needed to link student achievement and growth data to the student's teachers and principals, and to link the information back to the programs that prepared the educators. The State has indicated that it plans to expand its teacher preparation programs to support the production of effective teachers. The application states that it will expand the Teach for America program "at levels never seen before" but does not indicate how many TFA candidates will be recruited. A new partnership between the Bush Foundation and the University will recruit 200 new students per year to prepare teachers using 21st century models, and the South Dakota Partnership for Teacher Quality that will prepare 75 teachers to serve in 49 high-needs schools over a 5-year period. However, the application did not provide targets of how many effective teachers were needed across the State.

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	3
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(D)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The application states that that the Race to the Top funds would support professional development across the State and within the AIII Academy. The application does not provide a concrete plan of action on how it will ensure that classroom teachers across the State or within participating LEAs will receive job-embedded, data-driven and on-going professional development. Furthermore it cannot be determined from the budget how much Race to the Top funding would be used to support professional development. The plan focuses on SEA, Educational Service Agencies (ESA), and AIII staff researching promising professional development practices and building their own capacity, but falls short on how it will provide effective supports to classroom teachers. The application indicates that the

All team will develop a professional development protocol that could be adopted statewide. It is not clear if the SDE is supporting this model for statewide use or if it is expecting the AIII to deliver training across the State through the ESAs. The application does not sufficiently address how the applicant will evaluate its delivery of professional development supports on an ongoing basis to ensure that they are employing the most effective interventions to improve student achievement.

Total	138	30
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E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1
(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	10	0
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: The application provided several pages of legal citations governing the SEA's oversight authority for schools and LEAs. In reviewing these citations, it does not appear that the State has the authority to directly intervene in the State's persistently lowest-achievement schools or in LEAs that are in improvement or corrective action status. ARSD 24:42:04 does address the consequences for school districts who fail to make annual yearly progress. For those districts in Level 3 (4 years of not making AYP) the SDE will establish a monitoring plan with the district, but this does not appear to constitute direct intervention.</p>		
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	5
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	1
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	4
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: While the State has begun to develop a process for identifying its persistently lowest-achieving schools, it may not have completed the process. The timeline provided in the application indicated that the final definition was to be in place by January 2010, after the Race to the Top application was submitted. The application did not discuss the State's plan for supporting LEAs in turning around persistently low-performing schools by implementing the intervention models describe in the Race to the Top application. Furthermore, it does not appear that the State intends to use Race to the Top funds to support turnaround efforts, nor did it describe State resources devoted to these interventions.</p>		
Total	50	5

F. General

	Available	Tier 1
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	0
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: While the State provided information on total expenditures for public education for FY08 and FY09, it did not provide the total State budget. Therefore, it is not possible to determine the directional change in the percentage of total revenues available to the State to support elementary, secondary and public higher education from FY08 to FY09. The State did not provide information on its funding formula or if it contained adjustments that would lead to equitable funding between high-need LEAs and other LEAs or between high poverty schools and other schools.</p>		
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	0

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: The State does not have a law that allows for the authorization or operation of charter schools. The State did not provide evidence that it operated any additional innovative, autonomous public schools.		
(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	0
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: In this Section, the applicant provided an overview of how the American education system has failed Native American students and how the AllI Academy could improve conditions for the Native American community. However, the applicant did not discuss other State reform conditions that could help it accomplish its goals in improving educational access, services, and achievement for the State's Native American population.		
Total	55	0

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	15
Competitive Reviewer Comments: The State is proposing to use the majority of its Race to the Top funds to establish a year-round residential Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) based program for American Indian students in South Dakota. The school—the American Indian Institute for Innovation (AllI)—would support students from the beginning of high school through their first two years of college. This demonstrates the State's commitment to improving student achievement in the STEM-related fields and to increase the college attendance and completion rates in math and science for Native Americans.		
Total	15	15

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		No
Absolute Reviewer Comments: American Indians are by far the largest subgroup in terms of race/ethnicity in South Dakota and the State has made a compelling argument on how it and the nation have consistently failed these children and youth in terms of education, health and social supports. The application provided indisputable evidence that Native American students have the lowest achievement rates of any racial/ethnic subgroup as well as low graduation and college attendance rates. The State is proposing to use over \$73 million in Race to the Top funds to build and develop a year-round residential Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) based program for American Indian students in South Dakota. The school—the American Indian Institute for Innovation (AllI)—would support students from the beginning of high school through their first two years of college. While the State articulated its vision for an innovative program to improve educational experiences and academic achievement for the State's highest-need students, it did not provide a framework for implementing systemic and comprehensive statewide reforms across the four Race to the Top areas. The application did not enjoy widespread support from LEAs or stakeholders. Only 9 percent of the State's LEAs agreed to participate in the Race to the Top competition. The Race to the Top reforms would reach less than one-third of the State's students living in poverty. Most of the funds would support the students enrolled in the AllI Academy; however, the applicant did not provide enrollment projections for the Academy.		

Furthermore, 45% of school board presidents and 86% percent of local teacher union leaders did not sign the MOUs committing their support of initiative and letters of support were not provided for critical stakeholders such as organizations representing teachers, administrators, and school boards. The application did not provide a management plan or organizational structure for accomplishing the State's plan or the fiscal oversight of grant funds. The applicant did not provide enough budget detail to determine if it is an accurate reflection of the work proposed.

Total		0
Grand Total	500	111



Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 1

South Dakota Application #6000SD-4



A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	12
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	1
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	10
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	1
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: The state's reform agenda does not clearly articulate its goals or address the key reform areas described in the notice, but rather focuses on the implementation of a single STEM model and the implementation of the 17 year old third-party AIII (American Indian Institute for Innovation) program that may be effective but does not explicitly address the education reform agenda established by Race to the Top. There is lukewarm support for the application among participating LEAs as evidenced by only 57% of school board and 14% of teachers' unions signatures, and the participating LEAs represent only 14% of the state's schools and 29% of the state's students, so the program is unlikely to translate into broad statewide impact. The description of how the state plans to achieve the Race to the Top goals is long, but there is no convincing evidence that plan can make the goals achievable.</p>		
(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	6
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	3
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	3
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: The state has designated a leader for the implementation of the STEM model and several other participating organizations, and the personnel budget appears to allocate funds for a ten member team, but there are insufficient resources and capacity to implement a comprehensive reform plan that goes beyond the implementation of AIII and STEM. The application does not sufficiently address grant oversight and administration, or how other funding streams may be redirected or aligned with its Race to the Top goals. The application includes letters of support from the state's largest private employer, a major IHE, and the Native American Education Association, but not from the state's education association, teachers and principals, or other potentially supporting organizations. While there is a plan to obtain private sector support there is insufficient evidence that broad support is likely to be obtained.</p>		
(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	8
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	1
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	7
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

The state has implemented several reform programs over the past several years, but other than the Teacher Incentive Fund and the eMetric system (missing the date of implementation for each) the reforms are not clearly aligned with the Race to the Top agenda. The state historically demonstrated some progress on the STEP assessments, but not materially since 2005. Moreover the sharp drop in 2009 reading/language arts performance is troubling either in itself, or because the explanation of the change in standards without appropriate communication and training demonstrates the state's general lack of capability to implement new standards and reforms. The state demonstrated reduction in the achievement gap in math of certain subgroups, but not in the Native American subgroup. The state has made some improvement in NAEP math performance but the narrative does not address NAEP subgroup performance (and there is some indication in the appendix that the NAEP Native American achievement gap widened as the majority performance improved). The state does not appear to use the high school graduation rate definition provided in the application, and its inconsistent trend -- despite the 2009 increase -- does not inspire confidence in the consistency of its measurement.

Total	125	26
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B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1
(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards	40	25
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20
(ii) Adopting standards	20	5
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: The state meets the criteria, although its level of commitment is not entirely clear in the references to "infusing" the Common Core Standards -- the state's language suggests the common standards will supplement the existing state standards rather than become the foundation. The timing of adoption is not clear other than to the extent it is specified by the Common Core Standards, and there is no mention of supporting or enabling legislation and no indication that the implementation of the standards will be well-planned.		
(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	0
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: The state does not appear to be a member of a consortium of states (which includes a significant number of states) that is working toward developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments.		
(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	5
(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: The application does not include a plan to implement the Common Core Standards, but rather it addresses the (separate) implementation of project-based learning standards for the All Academy.		
Total	70	30

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	14
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:		

No credit for elements 4, 8, 9, 11 and 12. The state indicates it meets element 9 of the America COMPETES Act, but there is insufficient evidence that the capability is implemented in practice.

(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	1
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: The state explains why LDS is useful, but not how it plans to make the data accessible and have it support decision-makers. There is no discussion of the technology challenges around linking the data, and the reliance on an off-the-shelf solution understates the complexity of an LDS implementation.</p>		
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	4
<p>(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: The state's plan does not address many of the requirements of the criterion, which calls for the state to have a plan that collaborates with the participating LEAs. Its plan to "beta test" the data generated by the AllI Academy with the participating LEAs may not result in successful implementation; moreover if the AllI only serves grades 9-14 it is not clear how the state will promote the use of local instructional improvement systems in the earlier grades. And the data to be made public may only be related to the AllI grades. Since there does not appear to be a target enrollment for AllI, it is not clear that the number of students in any grade will be sufficiently large to allow researchers to "access the learnings" (sic) from the data as they emerge. Statements like "it will be necessary for...those trained in the interpretation of such data to share the implicatons with the local LEAs" imply a low level of commitment to achieving broad statewide impact from the LDS. In general, the state's level of commitment to fully implementing an LDS successfully is suspect.</p>		
Total	47	19

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	10
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: The state does have a few pathways for alternative certification, but they are barely utilized and apparently not yet utilized at all for principals. The state does have some well-designed programs and grants (e.g., Dakota Corps Scholarship and INCENTIVESplus) and has reduced the number of non-HQT teachers in its high needs schools. Several elements of the "2010E" initiative are still only hypothetical. The process for tracking areas of shortage is weak and passive (e.g., searchable online database), and the process for preparation of teachers and principals is not innovative.</p>		
(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	13
(i) Measuring student growth	5	2
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	4
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	2
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	5
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: The state has no existing evaluation instruments or protocols, and simply plans to form a committee and find an outsourced solution. There is no explicit plan to collaborate with the participating LEAs. The state's approach is oversimplified, does not address potential implementation problems, and insufficiently emphasizes student achievement growth. The state presents only a vague notion of the key evaluation criteria -- it "anticipates" that student achievement data will be included, but does not clearly commit to it. It is not clear the evaluations will be performed annually. The web page progress</p>		

reporting plan is only minimally ambitious. The linkage of the evaluation system to compensation, promotion, certification and removal is insufficiently developed in the proposal -- e.g., "Principals who fail to meet a minimum requirement would not be compensated."

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	6
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	4
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	2
(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: The state's plan -- outside the existing grants and programs -- does not adequately address the equitable distribution of teachers and barely even mentions principals.		
(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	4
(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: The state proposes to meet the criteria but doesn't say how it will do so, who is accountable, or how the information will be publicly reported. The state plans to expand its Teach For America program but does not address how it will use student achievement data systematically to expand programs that successfully develop highly effective principals and teachers.		
(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	6
(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: The state's proposal clearly addresses support for teachers and principals in designing instruction to meet the needs of high-need students. But its "sustained professional development protocol" only minimally addresses data-driven instructional strategies, differentiated instruction, and removing barriers to implementation for improving student learning outcomes generally. It is not clear how supports will be provided to LEAs to address student achievement in all tested grades and subjects as required in the notice. The state's proposal includes the intent to evaluate and revise the support protocols, but without a rigorous model of continuous improvement.		
Total	138	39

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1
(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	10	0
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: The state does not appear to have the authority to implement the intervention models, but rather its authority is limited to auditing, recommending, and monitoring.		
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	5
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	2
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	3
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: The state's plan to identify the lowest-achieving schools is not adequately articulated in the application, but rather deferred to the School Improvement Grant application. The plan to support LEAs in turning around these schools by implementing the intervention models is weak and reflects a low level of commitment to successful turnaround -- the state simply "welcomes the opportunity for increased interventions". Simply providing support, guidance, oversight and evaluation is not a high quality plan. The state does not provide any targets for implementation of the intervention models.		

Total	50	5
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F. General

	Available	Tier 1
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	1
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: The state did not provide information on total state appropriations. It appears that total education funding (before Education Stabilization Funds) decreased. No evidence that the state's policies lead to equitable funding is provided for criterion (ii).		
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	1
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: The state has not passed a charter school law at the time of application. There is only one example provided of an LEA that operates an innovative school, but there is insufficient evidence it meets the definition of an innovative, autonomous public school as defined in the notice.		
(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	0
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: The state's response does not address the criterion.		
Total	55	2

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	15
Competitive Reviewer Comments: The state's proposal for an All Academy for STEM, and to create a statewide STEM team, meets the criterion. The proposal would likely increase the rigor of STEM education through curriculum development and enhancement, engage private sector and community partners in the program and obtain their support, and increase the number of students (including underrepresented students) that are prepared for future study and careers in STEM.		
Total	15	15

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		No
Absolute Reviewer Comments: The state's proposal does not meet the absolute priority. The proposal is not comprehensive -- the strongest commitment to reform is evidenced by its participation in the Common Core Standards consortium, but there is significantly less commitment to reform in all of the other areas. The state proposes a very low level of commitment to improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance, to turning around the lowest-achieving schools, and in general to creating conditions conducive to education reform. The proposal tries to fuse the implementation of the reform criteria with		

the STEM model and the American Indian curriculum, but the result is a confusing plan with a low probability of statewide success. It appears from the proposed budget that the funding requested is not clearly aligned with the Race to the Top Goals -- approximately \$66 million of the proposed \$74 million total budget request would flow to AIII, of which \$33 million would be spent on dorm renovations, classroom renovations, and physical plant renovations. And it is not clear what is the organizational status of AIII (e.g., is it a non-profit organization and does it have 501(c)(3) status). The proposal is not well-written and contains a lot of extraneous narrative.

Total		0
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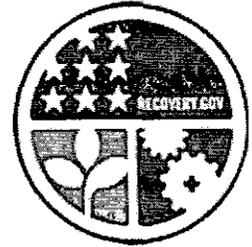
Grand Total	500	136
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Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 1

South Dakota Application #6000sD-5



A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	10
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	0
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	6
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	4
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This application does not provide a reform agenda for improving student outcomes statewide across all grades and students. Instead, it is an application in large part to support the building and funding of a residential school 9-14 - the American Indian Institute of Innovation (AIII) focused on STEM and health oriented curriculum coupled with American Indian culturally based education (CBE). The idea grows out of a 17-year experience with a six-week residential summer American Indian Honors Program, and will be developed with the assistance initially of the PAST Foundation - an anthropological organization. The proposal starts with a moving account of the plight of American Indians in South Dakota and the nation and explains why a different educational approach is needed for this group of students. After the school is built, children recruited, and the curriculum is developed, the plan is to infuse the teacher training method beyond the school walls through a teacher professional development protocol. Very little detail is provided of how the school would work, the proposal provides no evidence that families would be willing to send their children to a boarding school, or how many students would be served. Nor does it provide any details of how the 13-14 component would work and be paid for. (ii) Just 14 of 153 (9%) LEA's signed an MOU. The MOU itself asks for a commitment to implement only AIII STEM/CBE instruction through some professional development and hiring and deploying teachers trained in the AIII method. For example, they are asked to participate in the internationally benchmarked assessments to measure student growth for AIII STEM projects based learning, not to measure student growth for other grades or subjects. Evaluations are to conform with SD State Fiscal Stabilization Funding requirements. Even with regard to turning around the lowest-achieving schools, the MOU calls only for schools to employ teaching teams trained by AIII in STEM project-based instruction for two-year looping assignments. The commitment, in short, is to AIII methods, not to a statewide reform effort for South Dakota schools. (iii) There is no discussion of translating LEA participation into statewide impact. The state would like to disseminate the expected success of this new school through written materials and presentations nationally. Their expectation that their professional development protocol will push reform across the state is optimistic. And the reform is just around this particular curriculum - not learning reform for all children in all schools in the state. Unfortunately, no information is provided as to what proportion of Native American children in South Dakota would be served by the school (it is grades 9-14), nor by the 14 LEAs. Nor is there any discussion of how the state could/should be intervening at lower grades. Finally, there are no goals provided for student growth overall or by subgroup. A copy of their GearUp grant evaluation does contain some goals, but these are not part of the RtT proposal itself.</p>		
(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	8

(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	3
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	5
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(a) The focus of the proposal is on the AIII school, not a statewide education reform. A state STEM team is mentioned later in the proposal, but will little explanation of its responsibilities. The director designate of the school will provide enthusiastic leadership, but has not had experience establishing and running a school. (b) There does appear to be enthusiasm for the idea, and 14 LEAs have agreed to participate in adopting the curriculum and learning strategies for this grade 9-14 approach. No evidence is provided regarding supporting the LEAs in successfully implementing the curriculum and other aspects of the plan. Nor is information provided about accountability and intervention. (c) No information is given about grant administration and oversight, budget reporting and monitoring, performance measure tracking and reporting, and fund disbursement. (d) No budget narrative is given. (e) And no information is provided about how AIII will be continued after grant funding ends. (ii) Support from teachers and principals is not demonstrated, and just two of the 14 local teachers' union leaders signed on. There is great interest in AIII from senators, and a congressional representative, American Indian organizations and health organizations and other businesses.</p>		
(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	6
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	1
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	5
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal does not address item (i), although a list of programs is provided. With regard to (ii), NAEP data are provided, showing the extremely poor performance of S.D. Native American students (11%-20% reaching proficiency depending on grade and subject), compared to 35%-41% for all S.D. students. Only very minor changes have been accomplished. From 2003-2007, reading scores for S.D. on NAEP are flat, while mathematics scores increased very modestly over the period. Some progress was seen using state testing data between 2003 and 2004, which is ascribed in the proposal to NCLB requirements, and have now leveled off. Limited English Proficient students do about half as well as Native American students on these state tests. Gaps do not appear to be closing. The proposal dismisses any other gaps than the one for Native Americans because "this application is targeting is directed [sic] at Native American students, an ethnic subgroup." Finally, the high school graduate gap between Native American and other students is growing.</p>		
Total	125	24

B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1
(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards	40	20
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20
(ii) Adopting standards	20	0
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>South Dakota has joined with the other 48 states and two territories in the CCSSO common core standards. When established, these standards will be reviewed by a state committee, which it appears could take up to the three years allowed under the agreement. No specific date for adoption is given. The proposal says that the common core standards will be infused into the state's existing standards</p>		

through this review process. The curriculum that will be developed during the first year of the AllI STEM Academy will be aligned to the CCSSO internationally benchmarked standards.

(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	0
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: The proposal refers to its MOU for common standards with CCSSO. The proposal states that "assessment work will result." No evidence was provided that South Dakota has joined an assessment consortium. The state will be pursuing its own internationally benchmarked assessments of project-based learning that aligns with the AllI Academy for the 14 participating LEAs.</p>		
(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	5
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: The focus of the application is on the AllI Academy and its development of what is called a rigorous, internationally benchmarked body of work in transdisciplinary, project-based STEM and health curriculum. There is no plan for supporting a statewide transition to implementing enhanced standards and high-quality assessments. No explanation is given as to how the CCSSO core standards will be integrated into S.D.'s classrooms, although it is expected that that will happen. The focus of the discussion in this section, instead, is the establishment of a state-level STEM team that will make recommendations to all state LEAs regarding implementing the AllI curriculum, which is for grades 9 through 14.</p>		
Total	70	25

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	14
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: The state has begun to put in place what it calls the 'foundational' components of a longitudinal data system. At the moment, components are in transactional systems. The current data system does not allow student data to be connected with teacher data (no teacher ID - one of the missing elements.) The state intends to purchase an off-the-shelf data warehouse product to serve as the core of the LDS. There appear to be no legal barriers to linking students to teachers. The proposal indicates that the state currently has in its systems 8 of the required data elements - although transcripts, for example, are in 'static' form and output as pdf files. This latter item does not meet the requirement of an eighth element and no points were therefore awarded for it.</p>		
(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	3
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: S.D. intends to use funds from its SLDS grant, if approved, to hire additional FTE to manage data and provide support to LEAs in submitting and extracting needed data. With a small state, it is likely that these resources, coupled with other state agency staff and the six educational service agencies (who have been charged with conducting data retreats) can accomplish this task. The proposal describes some policy-relevant questions that could be addressed with data from a longitudinal data base, but it does not discuss who would do this work or what sort of staff would be needed to undertake such analyses. The proposal then provides an extremely ambitious time frame for implementing all phases of a longitudinal data system (much to be done over the next six to nine months). This is highly unlikely to be doable.</p>		
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	3

(C)(3) Reviewer Comments:

No plan is provided of general assessment dissemination. The state's discussion here relates to using the AIII curriculum (which is grades 9-14). There is an expectation that this specialized curriculum will be assessed. There is no discussion of how regular teachers in classrooms across the state will have access to data for their own students in all grades and relevant content areas, nor how they will be helped to use information to improve instruction. Instructional learning systems as defined in the Notice are not addressed.

Total	47	20
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D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	7
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: The discussion of alternative routes to certification is confusing. Teach for America is highlighted. A second 'program' - the Career and Technical Education Alternative Certification is also described. No explanation is given for which organizations can provide approved certification training. It would have been helpful to have the laws interpreted. It does not appear that non IHE's can provide certification routes. With regard to tracking shortages and preparing to fill the gaps, the annual vacancy reports can provide some useful information. No information is given, however, on whether and how the state works with its teacher producers to modify the pipeline. It would have been helpful if the extensive information that is provided on efforts to improve teacher recruitment and retention could have been related more directly to this item.</p>		
(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	11
(i) Measuring student growth	5	1
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	4
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	2
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	4

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal does not address each criterion separately, so it is very difficult to follow how the state plans to improve teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance. The discussion that is provided is difficult to connect to each criterion. Measurement of student growth appears to be focussed on developing a new assessment through AIII of transdisciplinary, project-based STEM and health knowledge. All districts do have access to state testing data that can allow the measurement of student growth, although doing this is not addressed. (ii) South Dakota currently does not require evaluations. The proposal to develop an evaluation instrument on a very fast schedule (approval expected by the Board in June 2010) is highly ambitious, and not likely to build buy-in from the users. It will be provided as an option to districts. A goal of full implementation among the 14 LEAs is by 2014. The state intends to have LEAs provide in their data reporting a description of their evaluation instruments. There is no plan or commitment to having data that will allow for identifying ineffective and highly effective teachers and principals as defined for RttT. The performance measures indicate that the 14 participating LEAs have agreed to have qualifying evaluation systems for teachers in place within three years, and most agree to use them to inform key decisions. However, the MOUs refer to the South Dakota approach, not the approach expected under RttT. (iii) In the MOU, the LEAs agree to annual evaluations although an annual target for implementation is not provided. Nor is there evidence that the evaluation process will include timely and constructive feedback on student growth. (iv) South Dakota will not be able to identify ineffective and highly effective teachers and principals as specified

under RttT. The 14 LEAs did agree to use the S.D. evaluation to inform key decisions - and the annual targets specify that most (of the 14) will be doing so by 2014. But with such small participation, this appears to be a slow beginning that may not spread statewide within the near future.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	5
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	2
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	3
<p>(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: The proposal deals only with the AIII residential academy and thus grades 9-14. No plan is provided regarding equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals in high-poverty or high-minority schools generally in the state. The theory of action appears to be that the AIII academy will produce teachers who will be hired within the 14 participating LEAs, and thus will contribute to learning improvement. With low LEA participation across the state, any efforts here will not begin to examine or address teacher and principal distribution for all students. Furthermore, South Dakota is not actually planning to develop a system whereby teachers can be identified as effective or ineffective using the student growth definitions of RrrT. The proposal does focus on science and mathematics, but only within the context of the AIII academy (grades 9-14).</p>		
(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	2
<p>(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: Again, the proposal does not address each criterion separately, so it is difficult to pick through the narrative to link it to the criteria. The narrative does describe some activities aimed at program improvement, but does not explain how data from the yet-to-be developed longitudinal data system will by 2011 be producing results that can link graduates from programs to the performance of their students, or what process is, or will be, in place to work with IHEs to make this happen. AIII will use Teach For America for recruitment. Expanding successful practices to preparation programs is not addressed.</p>		
(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	3
<p>(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: There is no evidence that South Dakota, with its participating LEAs, has a plan to provide effective, data-informed professional development outside of the sphere of the curriculum and assessments to be developed at the AIII Academy, which serves grades 9-14. The proposal simply is not embedded in a comprehensive vision for supporting teachers and principals at all grades and (eventually) in all schools. Here the proposal describes the SD Department of Education STEM team that will be created to infuse the work of the CCSSO Common Standards initiative and American Indian Education Act standards into the curriculum across the state. This will be done through a "sustained professional development protocol that reaches to every classroom in the state." The state will rely on its regional Educational Service Agencies (ESA) to develop a method to move the initiative in to the schools. Not only is no explanation provided as to what process will be used to accomplish this, but the details of what will be disseminated actually refer to the AIII method. Here the proposal jumps around between the AIII and a more statewide perspective, noting that the ESAs have experience providing data retreats for LEA staff on how to use data from NCLB and Dakota STEP testing. But this is not tied to the proposal.</p>		
Total	138	28

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1
(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	10	0

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: It was not possible to tell from the eight pages of laws whether the state has intervention power or not.		
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	6
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	3
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	3
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (i) The response in this section begins by describing a process that will take place to identify persistently lowest-achieving schools that will be completed by February 8, 2010 for ESEA. No evidence was provided that this timeline was followed. (ii) Upon identification, the state will enquire as to the approach that is being taken to turn schools around. It therefore appears that the state provides no support to its LEAs for this activity. However, later in the section, data are provided for Level 4 and Level 5 schools that are implementing restructuring plans. The state goes on to say it has been successful in keeping schools off the list for consecutive years, but does not describe how this was done. But the application also says the SEA has little experience in this area, and indeed is learning from the districts, not providing support. The examples of restart models at the end of the section are not restart models using the RttT definition. The schools were simply divided into two schools with no other accompanying changes - which the state itself reports was an important lesson learned. In a box that was difficult to notice after the box for performance measures, the state explains that it will begin its effort to turn around its struggling schools after it has gathered information from schools in support of the goal of its School Improvement Grant. The goals for that grant for the years 2010-2014 will be developed by S.D. DOE personnel working together with LEAs across the state and other stakeholders. No targets are provided for implementation.		
Total	50	6

F. General

	Available	Tier 1
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	0
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: The application does not state whether the state provided more or less funding and the data provided are not clear. For example, a star says 'prior enacted' which is not explained. It appears that without stabilization funding, funds went down. The statement that follows, that the state's policies lead to equitable funding, is unsubstantiated.		
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	3
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: The state has proposed charter legislation, but has no current law or statute. South Dakota does allow LEAs to operate innovate public schools but it is not clear whether they are autonomous or not. For example, schools can apply for waivers from administrative rules, and AllI is an example of a public innovative school. The proposal did not provide information as to whether AllI was embedded in an LEA or not.		
(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	0
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments:		

While the idea of the AllI is intriguing, it is troubling that this one approach is presented as South Dakota's singular solution to the learning needs of all its children, and the improvement of all of its teachers, as called for in the Race to the Top.

Total	55	3
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Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	15
Competitive Reviewer Comments: The AllI Academy, as a demonstration school, would focus on a 9-14 STEM and health curriculum. The plan to implement the AllI Academy and its teacher professional development could provide a model for addressing the learning needs of American Indian high school students in South Dakota and in other states.		
Total	15	15

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		No
Absolute Reviewer Comments: South Dakota's application focussed almost exclusively on requesting support for building a residential grade 9-14 school for Native American students - it did not address all four education reform areas and the State Success Factors criteria as explained throughout this review. If the innovative school had been embedded in a wider vision for the state, with wider support from LEAs, and wider concern for non AllI children and children in lower grades, there may have been some opportunity for a more positive review.		
Total		0

Grand Total	500	121
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