



Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 1

West Virginia Application #6840WV



A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	56
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	3
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	45
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	8
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(i) Applicant articulates a comprehensive reform agenda, but its strategy to turn around failing schools is rather narrowly focused. For example, applicant does not have a charter school law. Further, applicant's commitment to aggressive changes in the approach to teacher compensation, which will be focused on rewarding teachers who are effective at raising student achievement, is not clear. (ii) Impressively, all districts in the state have signed on to the plan. Applicant used the standard MOU, which has terms and conditions that reflect strong commitment by the participating LEAs to the State's plans. (iii) Because applicant has the commitment of all the districts in the state and the support of various stakeholders, it is possible for the plan, even with its shortcomings, to be implemented across the state. However, it is necessary to have strong leadership at all levels of implementation to successfully translate LEA participation into statewide impact. The applicant has not sufficiently addressed the potential obstacles to successful implementation at the LEA level.</p>		
(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	18
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	13
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	5
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(i) Leadership at highest levels appears very strong and involved in national leadership on education reform; at the team and implementation level, the capacity to implement and the plans to build the requisite capacity are less clear. Here and throughout the application, applicant does not make a compelling case that it fully can identify what the magnitude of the deficiencies in the education system is and what ambitious, yet achievable targets are appropriate for the state. This lack of clarity around target setting undermines confidence about the ability to implement the plan. Further, the applicant has not made clear that it can financially sustain the proposed work after projects are started. (ii) Applicant has made an effort to involve many of the important interest groups across the state, including IHE's and the business community in the application and provides letters of support as evidence that it has broad stakeholder support. Other stakeholders who will participate in the plan include Major universities, the Southern Regional Educational Board (SREB), the Appalachian Regional Comprehensive Center (ARC), and the Appalachian Regional Educational Laboratory. Although the applicant references support of the state teacher organizations, the content of the letters from these groups does not indicate strong commitment to a reform agenda. The letter from the state's NEA chapter, which is to be representative of the local affiliates since there is not collective bargaining,</p>		

promises a commitment to work in committees, but is hardly an endorsement of an aggressive reform agenda.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	12
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	2
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	10
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: To a moderate extent, the state has demonstrated its ability to make progress over the past several years in each of the four education reform areas. Particularly strong progress has been made in standards and assessments and data systems, but less strong advances have occurred in improving teacher effectiveness and in turning around the persistently lowest performing schools across the state. Although there have been improvements in most subjects and by most subgroups, applicant fails to demonstrate that its activities over the past several years have led to dramatic increases in student achievement. Without comparisons to national trends in student achievement, it is not possible to determine the magnitude of the reported gains, as there is not context for interpreting the scores. Although the applicant states that the performance of West Virginia's students, as measured by NAEP, was "by and large not distinguishable from national averages," the applicant does not provide evidence that this is in fact true. In the appendix, applicant actually offers evidence that student performance in the state is really quite low in national comparisons.</p>		
Total	125	86

B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1
(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards	40	38
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20
(ii) Adopting standards	20	18
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: To a large extent the state has demonstrated its commitment to adopting a common set of high-quality standards. Applicant is one of 48 states committed to the common core initiative and provides evidence by showing that the Governor and Chief State School Officer have signed an MOU. In addition, applicant has identified the legal process to be taken and date by which it anticipates bringing the revisions of state policy to the State Board. The evidence that applicant has met most of the criteria listed in the notice also includes the fact that the applicant has laid out legal process for adopting standards once they are finalized and a timeline for doing so at the state level. That said, the steps to be taken are not entirely clear, nor has the applicant identified possible obstacles to adoption at the state level and how those potential hurdles would be overcome.</p>		
(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	10
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: To a large extent, the state has demonstrated its commitment to improving the quality of its assessments, evidenced by its participation in a consortium of states that is working toward jointly developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments aligned with the consortium's common set of K-12 standards. As evidence, applicant shows that the state has signed the MOU to participate in the Balanced Assessment Consortium to develop and ultimately adopt "summative and formative assessments through the upcoming U.S. Department of Education common core assessment grants. These balanced assessments will align with the K-12 Common Core Standards</p>		

(Appendix B-7)." Applicant indicates in the appendix that this consortium includes a majority of the states in the country (pending two signatures). Applicant also states: "The West Virginia Department of Education will collaborate with other BAC states to develop a balanced system of both formative and summative assessments and apply for a Common Core Assessment Grant" and lists the principles that will guide the assessment development process. Applicant indicates that the WV Executive Director for Assessment will serve as the liaison to facilitate the establishment of the BAC.

(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	13
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Applicant provides evidence that West Virginia's current standards and assessments have been judged to be among the best nationally. However, applicant's plan to support a statewide transition to and implementation of internationally benchmarked K-12 standards that build toward college and career readiness by the time of high school graduation, and high-quality assessments (as defined in this notice) tied to these standards does not fully clarify how the statement of commitment to high-quality standards will result in improved instruction at the classroom level. Applicant states that it will roll out professional development but does not explain what exactly is lacking in the current workforce. For example, while the applicant does state that it will increase the content and content specific-pedagogical skills of certain math teachers, it is not clear that applicant has identified the level of deficiencies of these math teachers that must be remediated or developed.

Total	70	61
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C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Applicant reports having 10 of the 12 elements of the America COMPETES Act. Applicant does state that it intends to address the missing two elements by Year 2 of the grant period.

(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	3
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Although not the case now, applicant claims that it will address the need to link benchmark and formative data to the longitudinal data system and that it will give schools and instructional leaders access to the data. This is a valuable initiative, but applicant has not clarified the steps of the plan to do so. Applicant submitted information about its reputed data system but also confesses to low academic performance. Having the data system but failing to use it to its fullest potential may have contributed to shallow improvements in academic achievement. As such, the intent to give stakeholders access to data without a clear plan on how to do so is unlikely to bring about the desired results.

(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	7
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(C)(3) Reviewer Comments:

(i) In its effort to increase the use of local instructional improvement systems, applicant points to its Teach 21 and Electronic Strategic Plan systems. Although these systems appear helpful for organizing thinking around instructional improvement and planning, they do not appear to be sufficiently targeted at the classroom level. Applicant intends to address this need but fails to clarify steps to do so. (3/6) (ii) The description of the plans for developing Learn 21 and the early warning systems are compelling, but the action plan lacks sufficient description of how all these projects will be accomplished and integrated into daily life at the school level. (3/6) (iii) Applicant gives insufficient evidence regarding the researchers with whom they are working currently or intend to work in this section. In fact, applicant

says it needs to develop procedures to share data with researchers, which seems to contradict the statement that this sharing is already occurring. Having a world-class data system but not sharing the information with researchers could undermine the ability to learn from all that the applicant has been trying to do to improve educational outcomes. The rationale for limiting access that processing requests is difficult is particularly discouraging. (1/6)

Total	47	30
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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:

(i) Applicant has a law that specifies how the state board is to approve alternative routes for teachers. There are seven teacher alternative certification programs in the state, and all are affiliated with state IHEs. Unfortunately, it appears that alternative route candidates must take an excessive amount of coursework through an IHE (18 hours). The applicant states that the programs are selective but does not provide evidence to support this claim. Alternative program graduates receive the same level of certification as traditional graduates. Thus, there appear to be 2 of the 5 elements listed in the definition of alternative routes to certification, but there are not any routes that operate independently of IHEs. Applicant does not have legal barriers to having alternative certification programs for principals, but there is not a strong program in place in the state at present. (2/7) (ii) Applicant provides evidence that alternative certification programs are now in use and reports the number certified by program (81). Applicant does not report the total number of new teachers, so it is not possible to discern if 81 is a large number for this state. (3/7) (iii) Applicant has an excellent annual process for monitoring shortage area; however, its previous plans have relied too heavily on traditional routes to fill these shortages. Applicant does not appear fully committed to incorporating genuine alternate routes at this time. (3/7)

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	30
(i) Measuring student growth	5	5
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	9
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	6
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	10

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(i) Applicant describes a plan to develop a multiple-measure student growth model in collaboration with other states and also to develop a workable system focused on student growth. Applicant provides an action plan to accomplish this task. (ii) Applicant states that it plans to revise the teacher and principal performance assessment system using the new multiple measure system. Applicant does describe the intent to consider the use of school level student performance measures in principal evaluation. Applicant is aware of the political obstacles to adoption of rigorous evaluation systems and is attempting to build consensus, but there is not compelling evidence that there is a strong commitment to a focus on using individual student level data to assess performance at the classroom level. (iii) Currently, West Virginia does not conduct annual evaluations for teachers who have five or more years of satisfactory performance evaluations, but applicant states that it will investigate changes to this policy with a broad stakeholder group and bring recommendations to the legislature. (iv) Applicant describes its current practices and claims that it already uses evaluations to develop teachers and in the award of tenure. Regarding alternative compensation, applicant describes too gradual of a process for attempting to roll out alternative compensation models. The process, as described, does not appear

particularly ambitious nor does it describe an aggressive commitment to making meaningful changes that tie effectiveness in raising student achievement to increases in educator pay.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	17
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	10
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	7
<p>(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: (i) Applicant has a plan to revise state code so that county boards of education will have the authority to implement salary incentives for highly effective teachers to teach students in schools deemed high poverty and/or high minority. Currently state law allows counties and districts to alter principal pay such that incentives could be offered to incent principals to lead high-poverty and/or high-minority schools. Applicant intends to develop pilot programs to incentivize districts to try pilot programs. There is some concern that these incentive programs will not be sufficient to meet needs in rural communities. (ii) Applicant appears to understand causes of critical shortage areas in the state. To increase the number and percentage of effective teachers teaching in hard-to-staff subjects, applicant describes a plan for introducing pilot programs that include differential pay and alternate routes. For both Romanettes, the applicant's plans refer to the WVDE staff as the party responsible, but applicant does not describe the qualifications of the staff to develop and implement the plans.</p>		
(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	5
<p>(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: Applicant states that it will track the performance of teachers and principals by credentialing program but does not offer a sufficiently detailed description of what performance data will be used. Applicant states that IHEs in the state are in conversations with WVDE regarding this, but applicant does not provide evidence that strong progress is being made. Further, applicant simply states that it will provide incentives to preparation institutions to revise their programs. Again, description of such incentive programs is insufficiently detailed, and no evidence is provided as to progress. This portion of the application is a particularly undeveloped.</p>		
(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	13
<p>(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: Applicant describes several support programs for developing the state's educators. However, applicant fails to provide sufficient evidence that it can currently quantify the magnitude of the deficiency areas in its workforce. As such, it is difficult to know what specific development programs the applicant's teachers really need. However, applicant's description of its intent to develop and implement the Learn 21 formative assessment system is compelling. Again, the party responsible for developing and implementing these many interventions is WVDE, yet applicant does not provide evidence that this body has the capacity or is focused on hiring new personnel with the requisite skills.</p>		
Total	138	73

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1
(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	10	10
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: State can intervene directly in both schools and LEAs.</p>		
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	18

(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	3
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	15
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: The applicant has a somewhat strong plan to identify persistently lowest-achieving schools, but this approach is perhaps not strong enough. Applicant reports that SEA has already intervened in failing districts and provides evidence that it currently manages four of these districts after taking over the district and removing the superintendent. Applicant is making a positive step to hold districts accountable; however, it is not clear that applicant has been aggressive enough given the state's low academic achievement. To applicant's credit, applicant reports that it "has requested that the state legislature modify the state code in 2010 to enable the West Virginia Department of Education to intervene more quickly and more directly in schools than is possible through current policy and to include an additional condition that would cause a school to receive a low-performing accreditation status—that the school's results on the most recent statewide assessment in reading and mathematics place the school in the bottom 5 percent of performance at their programmatic level." Applicant argues that school closure and turnaround models are not viable options at the high school level, given the rural nature of the state. Without a charter law, it is difficult to know if restart could be viable. Therefore, applicant is focused on the transformation model. It is encouraging that applicant recognizes it needs to build capacity at the state level and has a plan to get support. On the other hand, the state has not set ambitious targets for turning around a sufficient number of chronically failing schools.		
Total	50	28

F. General

	Available	Tier 1
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	8
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (i) West Virginia appears to make education funding a priority; total dollars increased and account for a considerable amount of the state budget, 56 percent. The criterion specifies that the applicant is to receive a lower score if the percentage dropped, which it did by approximately 1 percent from 08 to 09. This percentage is substantially unchanged, however. (3/5) (ii) Applicant is relatively equitable in spending across the state. According to documentation submitted, applicant's coefficient of variation and restricted range were excellent, but its wealth neutrality index was average. Applicant is to be praised for providing evidence of the outcomes of its funding equity system.(5/5)		
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	4
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: Applicant reports that the state does not have a charter law and does not provide evidence that it intends to push aggressively for this solution. Thus, it has received 0/32 for Romanettes i-iv, as those aspects of the rubric speak directly to charter school laws and policies. (v) Applicant does have school innovation zones, as of summer 2009, and 19 schools or school consortia have been awarded innovation zone status. Not all autonomous schools policies actually result in schools' having significant control over essential functions at the school level as defined in this notice, and applicant does not make it sufficiently clear that the state's version of innovation zones in fact result in authentic school-based autonomy. Indeed, the evidence provided in the application does not make a compelling case that this law is resulting in schools that have strong autonomy over essential local school functions, such as: defining their instructional models and associated curriculum; selecting and replacing staff; and controlling their budgets.		
(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	2

(F)(3) Reviewer Comments:

To a moderate extent the state, in addition to information provided under other State Reform Conditions Criteria, has created, through law, regulation, or policy, other conditions favorable to education reform or innovation that have contributed to some increases in student achievement or graduation rates, narrowed achievement gaps, or resulted in other important outcomes. One example of the state's progress is its strong commitment to early childhood education. Applicant provides evidence that it has become one of the leaders nationally in offering four-year-old pre-K. Although the state cannot boast of many initiatives that have led to dramatic student achievement gains, the state receives credit for having this particularly strong pre-K program, as this initiative shows that West Virginia is committed to providing all students with opportunities at any early age.

Total	55	14
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Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	0
Competitive Reviewer Comments: Applicant has mentioned its intent to promote STEM through various professional development programs and partnerships. Further, the budget does clarify how the applicant intends to spend large amounts of potential grant funds to promote STEM. The plan to design and implement a STEM program as a statewide priority is not as well described throughout the application, but it does appear that applicant is making a concerted effort to focus on STEM, as outlined in the grant criteria. Unfortunately, the applicant does not fully address how its plan will prepare more students for advanced study and careers in the sciences, technology, engineering, and mathematics, including by addressing the needs of underrepresented groups and of women and girls in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.		
Total	15	0

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes
Absolute Reviewer Comments: To a sufficient extent to meet this priority, the state's application has comprehensively and coherently addressed all of the four education reform areas specified in the ARRA as well as the State Success Factors Criteria in order to demonstrate that the state and its participating LEAs are taking a systemic approach to education reform. The state has also demonstrated in its application sufficient LEA participation and commitment to successfully implement and achieve the goals in its plans, and it has adequately described how it, in collaboration with its participating LEAs, will use Race to the Top and other funds to increase student achievement, decrease the achievement gaps across student subgroups, and increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers.		
Total		0

Grand Total	500	292
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Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 1

West Virginia Application #6840WV-1



A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	44
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	3
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	32
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	9
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(i) There is some natural progression from what has been built in the past, and this progress provides a promising start. The content standards and assessments are in place to support the planned new initiatives. The plan relies on professional development in rural settings as a key policy lever, but more discussion of turnaround strategies is needed. College access, persistence, and completion not mentioned as part of 21st Century delivery models (other than part of Common Core Standards). State has committed funds from ARRA to complete data system starting from a strong existing state data base. There is no mention or emphasis on turnaround schools, charters, finance system, and their inclusion here would help provide breadth to the application. (ii) All LEA's signed up on every criteria, but teacher organizations are left "non applicable". There is no data presented to know how many and which local teacher organizations support RTT. The only hint is that NEA and AFT state level letters "indicate that their support is representative of the local affiliates that they represent." It is not possible from the AFT and NEA letters to discern what this means in terms of commitment and specific local actions they will agree to implement. The support section for local implementation does not reveal how much teacher support there is for all the professional development (PD) plans and delivery vehicles. AFT and NEA have been "active participants" in the scope of work, but unclear what this entails. Other than teachers, broad support is demonstrated and promising, but teachers are the crucial delivery point for this entire plan. (iii) Plan is specific except for sufficient evidence of teacher buy in. Statewide impact must take place in classrooms so more specific and intense teacher support of the application needs to be included. Local teacher organizations should provide evidence such as letter of commitment to specific initiatives proposed in B2, B3 and all of section D. Plan utilizes effectively many outside agencies to help a small state. NAEP but not state test scores presented, so comparison between progress on the two assessments is needed.</p>		
(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	21
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	15
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	6
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(i) State level commitment and list of statewide officials for ensuring capacity is broad and sufficient. Budget categories and personnel are adequate to fund plan. But the role of local educators in reviewing the application is not developed sufficiently. The application needs to specify what "active participation" means for representation of W.VA. teachers and principals. More information would strengthen the proposal concerning who was involved from teachers and administrators in formulating</p>		

the application, and how adequate representation of principals and teachers was determined to insure widespread implementation. Budget provides sufficient detail and linkage to plan, and provides feasible spending plan to accomplish objectives in application. (ii) Involvement of principals and teachers in the plan is unclear as indicated in A2(i). Broad stakeholder support is not demonstrated by information in this section for teachers and administrators.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	19
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	4
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	15
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (i) Very impressive use of consortium and outside organizations to make progress on reform areas except school turnaround and charters. Analysis of problem and approach is linked very well to state rural context. State policy has been a major factor in progress to date. (ii) Only NAEP student growth progress is presented with no clear comparison with state tests. NAEP progress analysis is average but overall score is very low on NAEP. State test analysis needs to be expanded. No data on college readiness, persistence, completion, so this needs to be addressed.</p>		
Total	125	84

B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1
(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards	40	40
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (i) Meets all necessary requirements for participation in a consortium to develop standards. Part of large scale interstate consortium of 48 states to create new common standards. (ii) Meets all necessary requirements, including clear plan for adoption by July 2010.</p>		
(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	10
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: Impressive and wide ranging use of assessment consortiums, technical assistance providers, and standards to develop an enhanced assessment. Balanced Assessment consortium contains 26 states. Good evidence of using international benchmarks for developing high quality assessments, and in more assessment details provided in the appendix that are useful for judging progress. Narrative is convincing that they are on the right track.</p>		
(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	15
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: Comprehensive and multi-pronged plan that covers the key issues. Professional development (PD) plan is specific and realistic. STEM is woven effectively through this plan. Not sure what Balanced Assessment Consortium will accomplish from information presented. Heavy reliance on RESA's for PD delivery, but nothing presented on their past effectiveness to complete the role planned in this proposal. Plan needs more specific information on how RESAs will be modified to carry out their new role.</p>		

Total	70	65
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C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	20
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: 10 of 12 elements completed. The lack of data on postsecondary education reflects general weakness in plan for this sector, and lack of specific proposals in this application concerning college readiness and success.		
(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	3
(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: Plan is too brief and lacks detail that is convincing that state goals can be accomplished. Benchmark and formative data "exists," but need details on its content, validity, teacher use, and linkage to new standards in B1. Indicators of success need to be presented. Theory of action concerning reliance on formative assessment is developed well. The linkage to college readiness needs further development.		
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	12
(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: Plan addresses well all components and criteria needed for (i) and (ii). Presents information for i and ii through a feasible and detailed plan. Plan has realistic time line. Budget is specified adequately for (i) and (ii) to implement all activities. State has started on this plan with non ARRA funds, and plan provides sufficient initiatives and coherent design to accomplish i,ii. Plan for professional development is particularly well done. On (iii) capacity to share data with researchers is inadequate, and can provide data to only a "few higher education institutions." Not much current base of data upon which to help build new systems they propose, so cannot predict ultimate outcome.		
Total	47	35

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: (i) Legal code allows alternative routes that do not use IHE, but all current preparation programs rely on an IHE. (ii) All current alternative preparation routes use IHE's, so non IHE routes need to be created and specified. Plan is unclear about specific strategies concerning how to add non IHEs for different teachers' pathways. A new non IHE route is described adequately for principals. (iii) Appendix has adequate analysis of educator shortages, but no plan on how to fill the shortages.		
(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	49
(i) Measuring student growth	5	5
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	13
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	9
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	22

(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	10	10
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: Has full state authority to intervene. Laws are presented in sufficient detail in plan and the appendix to provide legal basis for intervention.		
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	15
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	3
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	12
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: i Appendix E1 includes a formula for identifying schools that do not make AYP under NCLB. There are persistently low achieving schools that do make AYP. No other identification data presented, so need to add list of state priorities for choosing districts for local intervention. Proposal needs to clarify whether state has intervened in all districts/schools not making AYP. ii There is no charter law so no restart option. State law for closure rarely used. State will rely primarily on transformation with a very detailed and comprehensive approach for transformation presented. But there is not enough information on how effective transformation has been in the past. There are no prior contracts with external providers. Justification for this should be added to the proposal. Overall, not enough breadth or depth of intervention strategies proposed. There will probably be local contexts where more drastic intervention than transformation will be needed. Plan builds up SDE capacity to help LEA's with turnaround. This suggests that state has not been very aggressive on turn around in the past. Need more information on amount and impact of past state intervention, and how effective it was.		
Total	50	25

F. General

	Available	Tier 1
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	8
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: Evidence presented to demonstrate state policies meet all finance specifications required for state revenues and equalization. Amount of total state funding increased in 2009, but percentage dropped slightly (.7%) in terms of total state funding used to support public education. West Va. has detailed and effective finance formulas to accomplish equalized funding among its LEAs.		
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	4
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: There is no charter school law. The innovation zones do not emulate charter conditions according to evidence presented. Innovation zones provide LEA flexibility and university help, but are not conceptually similar to charters which provide autonomous governing boards and parent choice of schools. Application needs more detail on why local flexibility will result in large scale local change. Current autonomous schools have not used the state budget flexibility.		
(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	3
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: The wellness policy is helpful to children. Universal pre-school is prevalent and being phased in. College readiness policy relies on a few policies (e.g., dual enrollment, early college), but is not comprehensive, deep, or coherent for college persistence and completion. College readiness and college success need more depth and breadth.		

Total	55	15
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Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	0
Competitive Reviewer Comments: Some mentions of STEM initiatives that exist or are planned are presented throughout document, but not brought together in this section. Overall, unclear focus for STEM and lacks evidence of comprehensiveness and coherence. Not clear on how the proposal will increase significantly STEM teachers, high level courses, and advanced study.		
Total	15	0

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes
Absolute Reviewer Comments: West Virginia addresses all four education reform areas, but not all of them in an equal and convincing fashion. The application has some major strengths, (for example, finance equity, curriculum, data, and professional development), but some areas of weakness (for example, charters, school turnaround, teacher commitment to the plan). It is unclear whether RTT can be sustained after it ends through state funding. Commitment of local teacher organizations is unclear. However, the proposal has some existing base of reform, and addresses all four reform areas with specific plans.		
Total		0

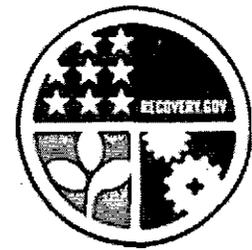
Grand Total	500	322
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Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 1

West Virginia Application #6840WV-2



A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	39
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	4
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	30
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	5
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(1) WV presents its reform agenda from 2005 through the 2010-2015 RTTT timeline. Its previous efforts to establish statewide understanding and support provide the framework upon which the state intends to build the RTTT work. The state demonstrates the alignment of the four RTTT areas into the initiatives previously undertaken to create support for school improvement, urgency for change, raising expectations, and providing professional development resources. The reform history and RTTT plans are consistent throughout the application. The state, however, does not provide for charter schools. (ii) All 55 LEAs have committed to participate in the RTTT program including all the components except Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools (36 LEAs). WV did not explain why 19 LEAs participation is "not applicable." In the absence of a full explanation of what not applicable means, this calls into question the full participation rate. In addition, given the current achievement of WV students, the non-participation of over half the LEAs in Turning Around Low-Performing Schools is difficult to understand and weakens the commitment of the state. As for the MOU, the commitment of teachers and principals is secured at the state level because of the restrictions on collective bargaining in the state. One concern with the MOU is that it does allow LEAs to pursue "specific local priorities" with variations on key themes. While some local variation is to be anticipated, it is difficult to know how much variation will be allowed and the impact it may have on meeting the goals of RTTT regardless of the state's cohesion and shared understanding. Without a complete explanation on the degree of variation, it is difficult to ensure that these programs will be of high quality and consistent with the RTTT goals. (iii) It is difficult to determine how the LEA action will translate into state wide impact given the planned variation and the anomalous participation numbers. Additionally, WV's statement regarding the impact of no RTTT funds was more in terms of how quickly these activities would be undertaken as opposed to how well. While time is an important component of RTTT, more information on the quality of the state's reform plan is important to know.</p>		
(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	15
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	10
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	5
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(i) Much of WV's approach hinges on team building and professional development. The state articulates its activities to date in this area and believes that the professional communities and relationships it has built will be important to the implementation of RTTT. The leadership at the state level, including the governor, chief, state legislature, higher education officials, are all part of the teams</p>		

and networks that will help implement RTTT. One part of that effort is the Classroom Assessment Network which the state will use to build more teams and networks. Since these teams and networks will be an important part of the RTTT effort, their effectiveness in terms of the number of schools and teachers that had participated to date and the degree to which this effort needs to be scaled up to meet the state plan is lacking. One additional concern is the statement that 38 LEAs had participated - the state does not address why all the LEAs are not part of these efforts. Much of the WV's plan appears to be anchored in sustaining its strong coalitions - however, little evidence was presented to support the strength or the effectiveness of the current coalitions. WV's process for administering the RTTT grant, including fiscal oversight, appropriate accounting processes, and fund disbursement, is not addressed in the application. The state's budget indicates that they will hire one person to oversee RTTT, a number of staff for specific areas, and also rely on consultant contracts with outside experts for many of the activities. While not adding SEA staff may improve the sustainability after federal funding, the state may not have enough internal capacity to manage this large project. (ii) The application includes 23 letters of support - two from teacher organizations, 21 from diverse organizations, including universities, foundations, and businesses. The strength of the endorsements vary as do the descriptions of the organizations/individuals in WV education reform. Some of the letters focus on STEM activities while others are too general to draw conclusions about the organization's commitment to work with the state.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	7
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	2
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	5
(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (i) The applicant describes a number of compelling initiatives it has undertaken but does not provide any data - qualitative or quantitative - to measure the progress. Without objective measures, these efforts remain potential rather than actual effective change strategies. (ii) Student achievement in WV, as measured by NAEP is stagnant with the exception of 4th grade mathematics. The number of students in the proficient range tops out at 28% for reading and mathematics. Since this is at the 4th grade level it may indicate some progress in the lower grades. The subgroup differences are marked. A greater concern is the discrepancy between the NAEP proficiency scores and those on the current state test. The data on the state test, which is not broken down by grade, indicates an 80% proficiency rate. The subgroups on the state test indicate a disparity in performance.		
Total	125	61

B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1
(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards	40	40
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (i) WV is participating in the Common Core of State Standards Initiative with approximately 48 other states. (ii) The adoption process is in statute and will be completed by the deadline.		
(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	10
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (i and ii) WV is committed to the Balanced Assessment Consortium which includes 26 states.		

(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	15
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: WV has developed a plan for the transition to the Common Core Standards and Balanced Assessments starting with a broad-based alignment process through on-going professional development for teachers. The alignment process will use master teachers which is a good process but it does not provide information on how much time these teachers will need to commit to this process. The 2 year alignment process does seem overly long given the 2012-13 implementation date. It would have been useful to know if the State had done some preliminary work to determine the distance between its current standards and the proposed Common Core document. The state proposes a solid support system grounded in recent evaluations of professional development. The plan covers all the appropriate areas from 50 hours of in-depth professional development per teacher to increasing content knowledge in math and science, learning communities, as well as enhanced curriculum materials. The transition to high-quality assessments may require additional effort than that currently planned by the State. For example, the state is planning to administer a revised assessment system (WESTEST 2) this year to provide growth measures, use "multiple measures in Years 2-3," then use the consortium developed assessments in year 3, and finally have a state summative assessment tool in 2014-15. Given the need to measure progress during the implementation of RTTT, the variety of measures may create false positive (or negative) student growth.</p>		
Total	70	65

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	20
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: WV has completed 10 of the 12 elements of the America Competes Act.</p>		
(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	3
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: WV has some distance to go before its State data system is usable and useful in the ways envisioned by RTTT. Its improvement plan includes outside funding to expand the system and provides for the inclusion of appropriate data points including early childhood and postsecondary. The critical issue, however, will be the longitudinal achievement data that will come from different instruments. WV did not adequately describe how they will reconcile these data.</p>		
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	10
<p>(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (i) The state application proposes a number of potentially useful strategies to assist LEAs in improving their use of data including modifying existing systems and adding a new early warning system. The application, however, does not provide evaluative data on the use and usefulness of the current systems. Without those data the potential for improving their use is an unknown. As for the early warning system for students, teachers, and schools, the amount of data needed for this type of system to be effective does not appear to currently exist, nor does the applicant address how these data will be collected. (4) (ii) The state does propose an adequate support system as well as professional development for its LEAs and schools. (6) (iii) WV does not allow for adequate access by researchers. (0)</p>		
Total	47	33

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:</p> <p>(i) The state has the authority to allow alternate routes for teacher certification including programs outside IHEs. The statute provides specific requirements for the alternate route candidates and the schools and districts that hire such candidates. The state is currently revising the principal certification process but does not appear to have a program in place. (2) (ii) In 2008-09, WV had 7 operating alternate certification programs - 4 at universities, 3 as collaborations between universities and regional service agencies. There are no independent, non-IHE alternate certification programs. Based on the striking difference in the number of graduates at the collaborative program (69) and those at the universities (12), more information on these programs specifically the employability of these graduates is needed to judge their use and usefulness. (4) (iii) WV annually reports on teacher and principal shortages. The application indicates that the RTTT grant (statewide longitudinal data system) will be used to monitor and then address these shortages. The evaluation component is missing. (4)</p>		
(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	35
(i) Measuring student growth	5	5
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	10
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	5
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	15
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(i) The applicant provides a 4 year plan to develop, pilot, and implement a student growth model that will be used to measure teacher and principal effectiveness. (ii) The plan to develop the evaluation system is dependent on the growth model work, the implementation of the Common Core Standards and the new assessment system. WV has provided a very aggressive timeline with substantial input from teacher and principal groups with assistance from technical experts. One area of concern is the pilot project with schools in 27 districts in year 1 and expansion to 28 in year 2. Since this is key to the successful implementation (i.e. Board approval) in year 4, additional information on how these schools will be selected, the student population, diversity, and other factors needed to be included in the application. (iii) The state has proposed a major change from current practice to annual evaluations. While they have included proposed Board language to implement the process, the state needs a more aggressive plan to implement such a system. (iv) The application references current state statute and board policy that provide the authority for coaching, induction support, and professional support to its teachers and principals; formal tenure and licencing procedures; and removing ineffective tenured and non tenured teachers and principals. The state intends to put further work in this area because of its uneven implementation. They intend to use a progressive scale up process but do not provide sufficient analyses of the current situation to fully judge the effectiveness of this approach. WV is clear that they have not attempted alternate compensation systems in the past but intend to use the RTTT grant funds to explore these systems. It appears as if there are some legal restrictions to such systems that WV will need to be exempted from. The state intends to have five districts test a "menu of models." This area of the application appears weak and does not seem to have been thoroughly explored.</p>		
(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	10
(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	5

<p>(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: (i) WV does not provide data (beyond a 10% vacancy rate statewide) on the equitable distribution of teachers and principals nor an analysis of current actions beyond the need to be more focused and intentional. The state acknowledges teacher shortages in math, science, special education, and world languages and discusses changes that it has made to state code over the years to allow retirees to come back into the school system, provide alternative certification, and adding additional certification area. Given the need to fill teacher and principal shortages and the acknowledged distribution problems, the state's plan to ensure more equitable distribution does not appear to be very ambitious. (ii) For the critical shortage areas the state was more definitive stating that they would use differential pay along with the steps outlined to improve equitable distribution.</p>		
(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	5
<p>(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: WV states that "most" of the educators are prepared within the state. This should provide an opportunity to track the effectiveness of and make changes within the preparation programs. The state is currently renegotiating one important data point and will add other support mechanisms, e.g. Teacher E-portfolio to support its efforts. WV intends to provide incentives to the IHE's to align their programs with new teacher and leader standards without specifying any incentives beyond technical assistance. As the main employers of the graduates the need to provide incentives may indicate the need for greater oversight. The application did not address the expansion of preparation and credentialing options.</p>		
(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	19
<p>(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: WV does have an admirable teacher and principal support program that combines in-school, regional, and statewide support systems. While the state does not currently have data on these programs beyond session evaluations, its plan to gather, evaluate, and use the systems developed for RTTT will be used for program improvement.</p>		
Total	138	79

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1
(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	10	10
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: WV has the authority to intervene directly in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs. The SEA is currently requesting policy changes to move more quickly and directly into low-performing schools and to add the results on the statewide assessment as another qualifier to the low-performing designation.</p>		
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	13
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	8
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (i) WV has identified the lowest-achieving schools in the bottom 5% statewide including Title I schools (23 schools) and non Title I (24 schools). (ii) Only the transformation option is available in WV. There is no charter school law. The state claims that school closure and turnaround interventions are not options for a rural state. WV needs to provide demographic data on the targeted schools to support its</p>		

claims that the other options are not viable. It is unclear in the application if WV intends to implement the transformation model as envisioned by RTTT.		
Total	50	23

F. General

	Available	Tier 1
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	9
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (i) Funding was substantially unchanged from FY 2008 to FY 2009. The total dollar amount rose slightly but the total percentage fell by 7%. (4) (ii) WV has impressive policies and practices to support equitable funding at the LEA level. (5)		
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	5
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (i), (ii), (iii), (iv) WV has no charter school law. (0) (v) WV has innovation zones that they believe are comparable to the flexibility and innovations allowed in charter schools in other states. However, all the flexibility elements typically available to charter schools are not available in the innovation zones. (5)		
(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	2
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: WV has three additional reform programs: student wellness, universal pre-K, and high school college/career readiness standards. Other than universal pre-K it is difficult to determine the state's rationale for these programs. No outcomes are provided in the application for these activities.		
Total	55	16

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	0
Competitive Reviewer Comments: WV does not provide provide a thorough rationale or plan for its STEM initiative.		
Total	15	0

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes
Absolute Reviewer Comments: WV has made a laudable commitment to teacher support and development that should help improve student achievement. There are, however, other aspects of the reform agenda that need additional thought before the state has a high quality plan to design and implement an RTTT program. While no points were taken off during the review of this application, it should be noted that the extensive use of appendices made it cumbersome as a reviewer to understand WV's reform approach.		

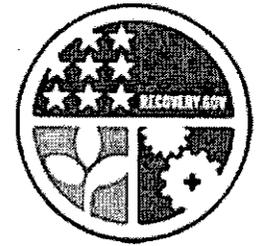
Total		0
Grand Total	500	277



Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 1

West Virginia Application #6840WV-3



A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	48
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	3
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	35
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	10

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

West Virginia has been working towards transforming its educational system into one that mirrors the best in educational innovation, research, and reform. West Virginia has developed Content Standards and assessments and has used ARRA funding to enhance the state's data system. West Virginia did not present how they will fully address and implement reform in all areas in ARRA. There was no clear indication of how they will intervene and address low performing schools that will result in turning around low performing schools. In addition, West Virginia has not developed any initiatives to address the operation of charter schools and to expand options for innovative and autonomous public schools. West Virginia's reform agenda revolves around four "interlocking goals" and the work of the past four years, guided by national and international experts, which has four foundational areas. West Virginia presents a comprehensive plan which includes a constellation of programs, organizational structures, components and pilots. However, all sections of the application are not clearly outlined and responded to in a coherent systematic way and required searching through the entire application and appendix to sort its content. West Virginia indicates that every LEA has agreed to participate. Regional meetings were held with superintendents and community representatives. An example of the Memorandum of Understanding was submitted. The signature from an authorized LEA representative was not located in the Appendix. Other signatures in support include university faculty, agencies associations however there is not a clear declaration of support. West Virginia indicates that all districts have indicated a commitment to implementing transformational change and that the responsibility for this change is shared across the system however each LEAs local interest will be allowed to guide this reform and there is no framework on how the state will bring local interest into the implementation of the state plan. Scope of work is presented in Appendix A1 exhibit 1 and not in Section A1 of application which is limited to an explanation stating that LEAs are committed to plan and with 100% LEA participation. West Virginia's plan calls for LEAs to select and pilot key themes that will serve to guide how the State will proceed as they attempt to move forward with state wide implementation. However there is no clear pathway as to how West Virginia will be able to implement reform at the local level and receive full support from teachers that results in teacher buy-in was not clearly stated in the letters of support. West Virginia LEAs have indicate a commitment to developing effective school and district professional learning communities as a means to implement the reform efforts in ways that will sustain change at the school and classroom level. All elements of State Reform Plans indicate that 100% of participating LEAs which represents 694 schools of a total of 704 schools, K-12 students representing 51.91 % of students in poverty are committed to West Virginia's plan however it is not clear how plan will be implemented if local priority will be the determining factor.

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	21
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	16
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	5
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>West Virginia Department of Education's leadership meets regularly with district superintendents and offer other professional growth opportunities for district and school leaders to support the development of a professional learning community. There is a strong sense of collaboration and communication among school districts. West Virginia has a systems structure to support implementation and sustainability, and partnerships which add and complement expertise and capacity. The West Virginia Department of Education will restructure how it operates to ensure that there is a connected internal system of support for struggling schools that aligns and leverages disparate funding sources. West Virginia plans to ensure that technical and professional support to districts and schools is efficient, coordinated, and targeted. West Virginia is already involved in national, state and local initiatives with a strong commitment to educational reform efforts. The West Virginia Department of Education will work with districts to create structures and processes that they can rely on for sustainability. West Virginia has collaborative teams with support staff such as coordinators, facilitators, liaisons, regional and district leaders. These teams were intentionally formed with stakeholders of different groups across the system to enable professional growth and the ability to bring the process back to their respective region, district, and school. Reference to effective and efficient operations including reporting, monitoring accountability was not explicitly detailed within Section A2. A review of Appendix A5 provides a general summary of key actions however it does not indicate how West Virginia will continue their reform agenda after the period of funding has ended. West Virginia has gained strong support from the community, governor, and relevant stakeholders however it is not clear how teachers are supporting the plan. West Virginia understands that positive partnerships, networks, and relationships are critical to any successful reform agenda but did not demonstrate that they gained teacher buy-in and have their endorsement for the reform agenda.</p>		
(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	7
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	2
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	5
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>"West Virginia has been focusing turnaround efforts not so much on individual schools as much as on such critical matters as adding appropriate content and rigor to the curricula, upgrading teacher skills across the board, maximizing the use of technology, assuring adequate funding to all schools and service agencies, etc." Resources have been targeted to drive improvements in student achievement, increase the graduation rates, close the achievement gaps, and preparing students for college and careers. While the percent of students in the proficient and above proficient has increased, various subgroups continue to lag behind. West Virginia raised the level of student expectation to a more rigorous competitive national and international level in the area of assessment. West Virginia refers to a redirection and restructuring that occurred in the past however did not specifically outline what actions were taken. Apart from providing student achievement data, details as to connections between data and the actions taken to address student achievement were not presented under this criteria and how they directly address struggling schools. West Virginia's outlined many programs they have initiated that represent goals and allocated resources reflected in some of the areas of ARRA and Title I, however details were not provided within this section.</p>		
Total	125	76

B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1
(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards	40	40
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: West Virginia is participating in a consortium of 47 states and has a signed Memorandum of Understanding. The standards are internationally benchmarked, research and evidenced based, aligned with college and work expectations, and inclusive of rigorous content and higher-order thinking skills. West Virginia will establish standards, assess the performance of students against the standards, hold schools and districts accountable, and help schools and districts build their capacity to implement the standards. West Virginia provided a copy of the West Virginia Code that gives the State Board the authority to establish and implement standards. West Virginia projects in plan that the finalized K-12 Common Core Standards will be adopted by August 2, 2010. West Virginia has mapped out timelines for adoption of standards, revision of state policies and placement for public comment all to be completed and submitted for State Board approval by July 2010.</p>		
(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	10
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: West Virginia is participating in a consortium of states with 26 states having a signed Memorandum of Understanding at the time of this application. West Virginia commits to the development of summative and formative assessments and will aligned the same with the K-12 Common Core Standards. West Virginia will work towards the development of a balanced system of high-quality assessments</p>		
(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	15
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: West Virginia seeks to continue with the state's systemic restructuring of public education which began with changing standards, assessments, instructional resources, technology integration, and professional development with the ultimate goal of becoming an exemplary P-20 education system that equips all students for college and career success in a global society. West Virginia has developed a plan with goals that will lead to a statewide implementation of internationally benchmarked K-12 Common Core Standards, an aligned balanced assessment system, professional development, a comprehensive system of horizontal and vertical supports for educators, and research based instructional resources. West Virginia will work collaboratively with master teachers and higher education faculty to create postsecondary options for all students including those with high-need with the aim of improving the level of college/career readiness for high school students. Throughout this section there was no clear indication of how West Virginia Department of Education will involve and work in collaboration with its LEAs. LEAs are mentioned as the recipient of the department of education efforts.</p>		
Total	70	65

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	20
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

West Virginia statewide longitudinal data system includes 10 completed elements of the 12 elements of the America COMPLETES Act. Pending work includes information regarding the successful transition of students from secondary school to postsecondary education options, including whether students enroll in remedial coursework and analyzing other information to address alignment and preparation programs for success in postsecondary education.

(C)(2) Accessing and using State data

5

3

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Currently West Virginia has an internal data system for basic school operations and recognizes the need to build upon the existing system the capabilities for accessibility for all stakeholders both internal and external when making decisions and planning for continuous improvement that translates into lasting changes in the classroom. West Virginia is working toward expanding the state's longitudinal data system and has a plan with allocated funds, goals, activities, timelines and person(s) responsible however it does not indicate how they will ensure the use of data for the purposes stated or how the use of data will lead to college readiness. While stakeholders will have access to the data system, there was no clear process established as how this will be accomplished and this was only going to be addressed "as possible".

(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction

18

9

(C)(3) Reviewer Comments:

West Virginia recognizes that the existing local instructional improvement systems are not as effective as needed to improve student achievement, and that there is a need to create systems that connect data to actions and provide mechanisms for all stakeholders to receive rapid feedback which will enable them to evaluate the effectiveness of the actions taken. To accomplish this, West Virginia has a plan with goals, activities, timelines and person(s) responsible however there are no details provided to clearly establish how they will accomplish their goals and how it will be used with LEAs. West Virginia will focus on modifying the existing system, expanding the data system to include an instructional improvement data system, provide professional development and develop processes to make data available to all relevant stakeholders including researchers however there was no evidence of evaluative data to be used. West Virginia's new instructional improvement data system will seek to meet the needs of students, educators and other stakeholders including parents. It will integrate instructional data with student-level data. West Virginia will provide teachers and leaders support to enhance their professional effectiveness and provide for their learning needs. West Virginia will support districts and schools by providing Classroom Assessment Network teams that will work to link actions to continuous improvement plans to impact instructional practices and student achievement. West Virginia refers to initiatives that will be implemented to connect data to actions however there is no clear indication on how they will collaborate with LEAs or how they will address the needs of educating their diverse learning needs of the various subgroups of students.

Total

47

32

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:

West Virginia's State Code provides authority to the State Board to approve alternative routes to professional certification provided by various types of qualified providers and grants same level of certification as awarded through the traditional preparation programs however it is limited to institutions of higher education. West Virginia's alternative routes to certification for teachers include 4 of the 5 elements and appear to currently offer 7 alternative programs all in partnership with a university available to teachers and no established programs for principals. The process to establish alternative

routes to certification for principals is pending. There is an Alternative Certification Plan that addresses revision to code, areas of shortage, "scale-up" programs for STEM and alternative routes to certification programs for leaders in high-minority and/or high-poverty schools. West Virginia analyzes data on certification and shortages annually. The capability to use data and report on shortages will be a part of the development of the comprehensive statewide longitudinal data system. While offering alternative routes to certification for teachers, West Virginia does not currently have this program option for principals.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	29
(i) Measuring student growth	5	3
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	7
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	7
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	12
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>West Virginia acknowledges that teachers and principals are two of the most important factors for improving student achievement and will focus their attention on the improvement of teacher and principal effectiveness by establishing a performance assessment process. This will be a key part of the continuous improvement process in which educators engage in self-reflection and dialogue with colleagues and administrators and use information about the growth of their students for their own professional growth. To achieve this, West Virginia has a plan with goals, activities, timelines and person(s) responsible and will use outside experts to develop a multiple-measure student growth model that links teachers and students and gives teachers the opportunity to understand instructional practices and the relationship to student performance. However there is no clear explanation on how experts will address this area and how it will be rolled out to LEAs. West Virginia will involve teachers and principals in the development of the model by offering them the opportunity to pilot the process and involve other key players as they roll-out their plans. Since these pilots can be implemented later on in the process, it is not clear how implementation will actually occur. West Virginia will use the revised teacher and leader standards as the basis for reform of the current system of teacher and leader performance assessment. Since this is an area establish by State Code, the proposed revisions to code, alternative compensation models, and plan for reforming the current system will be presented to the appropriate entities for the necessary approvals however it is not clear how this will enable West Virginia to move to a statewide system and implementation at each LEA. West Virginia State Code establishes the requirement for the evaluation of teachers and principals and establishes timelines and frequency for evaluating performance that includes providing opportunity for improvement, providing support and professional development and providing teachers and principal feedback on their professional growth. However West Virginia's plan for improving the teacher and principal performance appraisal and for linking it to student achievement was not fully addressed.</p>		
(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	12
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	7
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	5
(D)(3) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>West Virginia has developed a 4 year strategic plan that include pilots and 14 incentive programs to provide districts a cadre of resources that will aim to prevent inequity, ensure an equitable distribution of teachers and principals in high-need schools along with addressing shortage areas. Beyond the initial pilots, West Virginia did not fully describe the way they will deploy and use resources to ensure equitable distribution, there was no established baseline data and targets to indicate how they will address equitable distribution and there was no differentiation between teachers and principals.</p>		
(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	8

(D)(4) Reviewer Comments:

West Virginia has addressed the improvement of teacher and principal effectiveness as an integral part of the continuous instructional improvement plan and the enhancement of the statewide longitudinal data system. West Virginia will focus on improving teacher and principal effectiveness programs by analyzing and monitoring credentialing programs, working to align preparation programs with teacher and leader standards, and continue to develop and implement a self-assessment tool to be used in pre-service/fieldwork and as a pre-performance appraisal. West Virginia is participating in a 6 state consortium on teacher quality presently developing a research-based survey tool that will be available to guide placement of prospective teachers. However West Virginia did not specify the elements to be considered for improving performance and did not specify what performance data they will use to measure the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs. While West Virginia can link data to teachers in the K-12 system, they are not able to link data to institutions of higher education.

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

20

15

(D)(5) Reviewer Comments:

West Virginia has been focused on promoting professional learning communities to bring teachers together into a learning community that promotes collaboration and builds capacity to embrace and engage reform. West Virginia provides ongoing support to teachers and principals through the use of job-embedded professional development, coaching, induction, and training. West Virginia seeks to build a system of vertical –across districts/schools and horizontal-within districts/schools for teachers to better understand and use data, use new standards, use effective instructional practices, and create school environments supportive of data-informed decisions. West Virginia will continue to use a series of regional and district levels support such as facilitators and liaisons to provide technical support to schools and districts as they create effective, high-functioning professional learning communities focused on student learning. Training for school leaders will include use and implementation of the new systems, use of student-level data to inform instructional decisions, use of teacher-level data for effective teacher development, and use of data to address inequitable distribution. Evaluation of reforms will be ongoing in order to continuously improve the effectiveness of supports provided for the improvement of student achievement. There is no clear indication on how West Virginia will collaborate with LEAs in addition to providing supports.

Total

138

72

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1
(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	10	10
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: West Virginia has legal authority to intervene directly in both low achieving schools and districts. Schools determined to be low-performing are addressed and sanctions imposed. West Virginia has the authority to take the necessary actions inclusive of taking over the district and removing the superintendent.		
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	17
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	12
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: West Virginia has an established process by which persistently low-performing schools are identified and addressed that is limited to the AYP process. West Virginia expectations and measures used to		

identify low-performing schools is too generalized and focuses around the AYP of a school. West Virginia anticipates that the most commonly selected intervention will be the transformation model and will meet the requirement of LEAs not having more than 9 persistently lowest-achieving schools. It is not clear how the plan and structure presented will conform to the components of the transformation model and how LEAs will ultimately implement a model. West Virginia plans to develop a list of external supporting partners from which LEAs can select. These partners will provide technical assistance and support to the school and the district to help both organizations build their capacity for continuous instructional improvement. However West Virginia did not fully indicate how LEAs will be required to addresses and implement a reform model.

Total	50	27
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F. General

	Available	Tier 1
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	7
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: The total revenues available to West Virginia used to support elementary, secondary, and public higher education remained substantially unchanged in 2009 as compared with 2008. West Virginia state policies provide for equitable funding between high-need LEAs and other LEAs as well as between high-poverty schools within LEAs and other schools.</p>		
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	4
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: West Virginia has no charter school law. West Virginia has a bill authorizing school innovative zones, enabling LEAs to operate with waivers however it is not clear if LEAs can operate innovative, autonomous public schools.</p>		
(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	2
<p>(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: West Virginia has a set of policies and legislation to ensure students are healthy and well and offers PK programs in all school districts however there is no evidence on how this has resulted in improved student achievement.</p>		
Total	55	13

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	0
<p>Competitive Reviewer Comments: West Virginia is working in various nationally recognized programs, partnerships with higher education and consortiums with an emphasis on all STEM areas however they did not address the needs of underrepresented groups and/or women and girls in the STEM areas.</p>		
Total	15	0

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

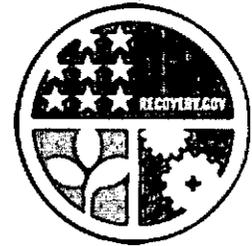
	Available	Tier 1
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes
<p>Absolute Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>West Virginia Department of Education with the governor, the board, all LEAs and a coalition of critical stakeholders outline strategies to address raising student performance, increasing graduation rates, closing the achievement gaps, and ensuring that all students are college and career ready. West Virginia's work in these areas has been ongoing with numerous initiatives and programs already under way. West Virginia's reform efforts are commensurate with the 4 areas of reform of ARRA. Their reform agenda has led them to be part of many nationwide consortiums and to work in partnership with relevant stakeholders such as higher education, industry, associations and community and government leaders. Plans and strategies exist to address nationally benchmarked common standards and assessments, STEM areas, effective teachers and principals along with intervening in struggling schools, and the enhancement and development of an informational longitudinal data system intended to support a data-driven improvement program. West Virginia affirms that all LEAs are involved and collaboratively participating in all reform efforts.</p>		
Total		0
Grand Total	500	285



Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 1

West Virginia Application #6840wv-4



A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	35
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	3
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	25
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	7
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>i. The state's plan addresses all four of the education reform areas. The plan as presented in the narratives is not well integrated, cohesive, or easy to understand. The paths the state describes to achieving its goals are not routinely described in clear terms. The goals to be achieved are not routinely clear, ambitious, and/or achievable. [3/5] ii. All fifty-five of the superintendents and their school board presidents have signed the MOU. The state used the model MOU provided in the application. The language in the narrative does not demonstrate strong commitment. The narrative recites that the superintendents are agreeing to "general projects and activities" and that "local priorities" will govern." Similar language indicates that the nature of the commitment made will permit LEAs "to pilot variations on key themes" and that the commitment is not to "one-size-fits-all program[s]" and not to the "mandating of statewide implementation." This language and other provisions within the plan make such initiatives as evaluation systems incorporating student growth optional at the LEA level and subject to a vote at the school level. [25/35] iii. Some LEAs are exempted from the portion of the plan devoted to the turnaround of persistently low achieving schools. The leader of the state teachers' association writes a letter of support that includes a less than strong commitment and incorporates language that makes explicit several significant reservations. Overall, the commitment that is presented is equivocal and not strong. This in turn significantly reduces that chances that the reforms planned will have statewide impact. [7/15]</p>		
(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	15
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	11
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	4
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>i. Plan to ensure capacity to implement proposed plans [11/20 points] a. Leadership: The governor, a leading legislator, and the top leaders among statewide educators are engaged in educational reform at the national level. The same office holders or equally high placed colleagues and a range of other significant stakeholders have been working together for several years to create and integrate education and economic policy at the state level. Thus, the top leadership in the state is already involved, knowledgeable, and committed to education reform. [4/4] b. Plan to support LEAs: The state has a multiple-year plan to facilitate the creation of PLC's in LEAs and schools using regionally based support teams. The plan is competent to enable teachers to carry out the classroom teaching and assessment tasks practices associated with a traditional PLC. Because PLC s are not designed or typically used for other purposes, there is a concern for using them as planned to be the "architecture</p>		

through which [RTT] reform will reach the classroom.” Outside consultants and experts will be hired to deliver “the right training, tools, resources, and just-time-expertise” at the LEA and school levels. This lack of specificity regarding what, when, and how the consultants will support the LEAs is a second concern. [2/4]. c. There is nothing specific in the narrative that addresses the provision of effective and efficient operations and processes for implementation of the RTT grant. General language to the effect that highly qualified staff will provide oversight and be accountable is repeated several places in sections of the narrative tied to the four reform areas and to some of the activities for which a budget has been prepared. [1/4]. d. The budget narratives do not expand in any meaningful beyond the application narrative on how funds will be used. There is general language regarding the state’s intent to coordinate and/or reallocate other federal, state, and local funds. [2/4]. e. The state plans to rely on the coalitions and teamwork described in “a” and the growth in professional capacity through PLCs to sustain its RTT reforms after the grant money has been used. The narrative does not contain any more specific discussion regarding funding sources, etc. [2/4]. A 2 ii: Using broad stakeholder support [4/10]. a. The president of the state’s American Federation of Teachers’ letter of support affirms a commitment to “incorporating the voices of teachers in setting the goals and objectives” for reform. The president of the state’s National Education Association affiliate writes a letter of “general support.” The president writes, “The nature of our approval has nothing to do with the discussion we have had regarding the application, but with the lack of specifics in the proposal.” These kinds of commitments are not the kinds of support that will lead to better implementation of the state’s plans. Accordingly, low points are awarded here. [1/5]. b. Stakeholders who do write of their support include leaders in higher education, non-profits who work in the education policy field, potential contractors for services under the plan. There is a letter of support from a statewide education foundation. There are not letters of support from leaders of the state legislature. There are not letters from citizen’s advocacy groups. Because there is not charter school law, there are not letters of support from charter school leaders. Thus, the full spectrum of stakeholder leadership as contemplated in the application is not represented. [3/5]

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	9
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	2
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	7

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:
 A 3 i: The state indicates that it has been focused on “foundational initiatives” that improve state wide education conditions and infrastructure. The state has tapped various funding resources to do this work. All the initiatives are indeed likely to have some beneficial impact on the overall conditions under which teachers teach and students learn. None of them, however, are directly tied to any of the four education reform areas specified in the application. [2/5]. A 3 ii: In tables in the state’s narrative, NAEP proficiency data on reading and math is reported for Grade 4 and 8 state students for 2005 through 2009. The application specified from 2003 forward. The “all” student category improved in proficiency on each test for the years reported. The majority of subgroups also increased in the percentage of students scoring “proficient” between 2005 and 2009. Exceptions were female and black sub groups once in the three years, and students with disabilities twice in the three years. The data provided in the Appendix (A-8, Table 2) show that the state’s students scored below the national average in each of the NAEP Grade 4 and 8, math and reading tests during the years reported. The average score of the state’s students increased in Grade 4 math and declined in the three others, Grade 8 math, Grade 4 and 8 reading. The percentage of the students scoring at or above proficient showed the same pattern, improving in Grade 4 math and dropping in the other three. Between 2003 and 2009 among the state’s students, gaps in average scores on the various NAEP tests among the reported sub groups (students with disabilities, free/reduced lunch eligible and black) decreased in seven instances and increased in five. (Table 3) Average scores among five of six sub groups increased in math. Average scores for each sub group declined on each reading test. In state tests (WESTEST), averages scores for all students and each sub group increased. Gaps among all the sub groups and “all” students decreased. There is no data regarding graduation rates for the years specified in the application. There is no

discussion about the connection between the data presented and the actions that have contributed to the reported results. [7/25]		
Total	125	59

B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1
(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards	40	40
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: B 1 i: participating in consortium developing high quality standards The state belongs to the Common Core State Standards Initiative. The state is collaborating with a majority the other states to develop K-12 standards. They will meet all RTT criteria. [20/20] B 1 ii: The state is committed to adopting these standards by August 2, 2010. [20/20]</p>		
(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	10
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: The state is collaborating with a consortium of states to improve the quality of its assessments. The consortium includes a significant number of states (26) as defined. [10/10]</p>		
(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	15
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: B 3: Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high quality assessments-20 The state organizes its proposal around four goals. Supporting the transition, developing a balanced assessment system, improving rates of college readiness, and building systems of support The state presents a detailed and logically-sequenced plan for the dissemination and the implementation of the Common Core standards. These include adoption, re-writing of statewide curricula, creation of and materials for on-line use. The plan for supporting professional development, especially as it pertains to math and science, is equally detailed and includes a grade level by grade level explication of the kinds of content and curriculum materials that will be disseminated. Delivery of professional development is more generally described, e.g. "formats" will include "academies," "forums," "symposiums," and the standards will "arrive in classrooms" through professional learning communities. The plan for implementing the complementary assessments is succinct and clear. The state will use three different sets of assessments finally using their preferred set from the Balanced Assessment Consortium in 2014-15. The plan for improving rates of college readiness is spare and relies on two initiatives: aligning high school exit standards with college entrance by having students take college admission assessments such as the SAT and expanding the state's Virtual School by adding more remedial and credit recovery resources, offering AP courses through the school, and piloting the use of the school by students at risk of dropping out. The plan to support site-based educators is to institutionalize traditional professional learning communities for each core discipline at each LEA and school. Using traditional PLCs to devise strategies to teach the common standards and assess their mastery is appropriate because it is consistent with the role for which they were originally designed. Given the number of PLC's that will be needed for PLC's to become the vehicle for classroom implementation, whether this will get done in a timely and thorough way is somewhat problematic. [15/20]</p>		
Total	70	65

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	20
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: The state currently has a system that includes 10 elements of the America COMPETES system. [20/24]		
(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	2
(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: The plan will help the state to make progress toward stakeholder use of appropriate data for the purposes stated in the applications. The plan does not, however, "ensure" the use of this data for the purposes stated, and it does not articulate how the planned activities will lead to increased college readiness of the state's high school graduates or the continuous improvement of curriculum, instruction, and policy. [2/5]		
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	12
(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: i. The state intends to enhance two existing ISS's and to expand its longitudinal data system. The primary purpose of the enhancements is to provide school based educators with more timely data with which they can make instructional and other student-learning related decisions. The state will expand its data system to include information regarding an individual educator's evaluations, professional development, and students' performance including formative data. [6/6] ii. The state will use existing personnel to train SEA, regional, district, and school level staff how to use the enhanced ISS's and the longitudinal data system. The same teams will train and foster the use of data by school site PLC's. As noted there is a concern that there is insufficient successful experience among the state and regional staff members to do the training expected of them and insufficient capacity and time below those levels to enable the the PLCs to become effective users of the systems. [4/6] iii. The state's plan is designed to limit access to researchers associated with the state's IHE and contractual partners. The rationale is that it is "too difficult to process numerous data requests from researchers" is not in keeping with the intent of the application to make information available for a wide range of evaluations. [2/6]		
Total	47	34

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	7
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: i. The state has statutory authority to allow alternative routes to teacher certification. It is unclear from the evidence provided which if any of the elements required are present in the teacher programs. The state also has authority for alternative certification of principals. According to the narrative, the latter pathway is "not well defined." It is unclear to what extent the latter pathway contains any of the defining elements. There was no data provided regarding the numbers of alternatively certified individual vs. those traditionally certified. [1/7] ii. Six of the teacher programs are in use. Apparently, the principal's pathway is not in use. [3/7] iii. The state currently uses one annual report to identify areas of teacher shortage by field, first-class permits, and out-of-field authorizations both by county and by field. Principal shortages are also documented. Reasons for continued vacancies are documented. The state reports on the percentage of courses not taught taught by a highly qualified teacher by each school and by LEA. This is sufficient to enable the state to identify the shortages to be addressed		

under this grant. The evidence does not show that there is an adequate system for preparing teachers and principals to fill the shortages identified. [3/7]

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	39
(i) Measuring student growth	5	3
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	15
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	5
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	16

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

i. The state describes its approach to measuring student growth in Table 1 of the narrative. The approach is clear--an interim measure will be developed in the first year of the grant and piloted in the subsequent years. Whether any LEA will choose to pilot the interim measure is not clear. Moreover, neither the state nor any LEA is obligated to adopt the "final" measure. In this regard, it is significant that the state leader of the teachers' association commitment was conditional and equivocal. [3/5] ii. The state's plan (outlined in Table 2) describes a cautious, logical, and methodical approach to the creation of evaluation systems for teachers and principals. The systems will be designed to differentiate among those being evaluated with student growth a significant factor. The state will use a task force to develop each system—one for the teachers' system and another for that of the principal. The membership in each will be broad based and include significant numbers of representatives from among teachers and principals. The proceedings for each task force will be open and, therefore, transparent. The state says it will engage a number of well informed and highly regarded experts and consultants who by reputation will contribute to the systems' being rigorous. In short the plan is of high quality. [15/15] iii. The state currently does not require all teachers to be evaluated annually. Although the state indicates it will introduce such legislation, the outcome is not certain. The letter from the NEA leader suggests opposition to such legislation. In addition, the narrative points out that the LEAs reserve the right to opt in or out of specific initiatives and that they are not agreeing to statewide implementation of initiatives. All this mitigates against this reform having statewide impact. [5/10] iv. Using evaluations to inform key decisions: a. By code and state board of education policy, the state provides for induction support including internships. There are also requirements that teachers and principals engage in substantive professional development. Requirements for professional development will expand under this plan. The previously expressed concern above about the state's capacity to implement its professional development plan applies here. [4/7] b. The state outlines a cautious approach to the delicate issue of pay incentives based on student growth/performance. As noted, it is not clear when and how wide spread implementation of the systems will be. [4/7] c. The state has proposed legislation to make annual evaluations law. If passed, they annual evaluations will be a necessary part of granting tenure and full certification. As noted, passage is not certain, the support of the teachers' association is equivocal, and use of the systems is optional. [4/7] d. Should the planned evaluation systems be implemented, they will become a necessary part of the decision to remove teachers and principals whether they are tenured or not. The same concerns that the support of the teachers' association is equivocal, and use of the systems is optional apply to this aspect of the plan. [4/7]

(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:

High quality reform plan in place for ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals (a) in high poverty/minority schools and (b) in hard to staff subject and specialty areas: The state blends its plans for "i." and "ii." Therefore the subsections are commented upon and scored as one. The state's strategies to address inequities in high needs schools and areas of shortage are

essentially the same: Seek authorizing legislation and funding to pilot differential pay, create and/or expand alternative certification programs, provide support to candidates for national certifications, eliminate barriers to those seeking to serve high needs students or become certified in shortage areas, encourage LEAs to pilot and/or develop "equity plans," analyze data for causes and solutions. The state does not indicate any reason or experience to indicate that these strategies will work. This reduces the quality of the plan. The state does not have base line data on which to base performance measures. The annual targets do not separate teachers and principals and do not separate high needs schools from subject shortage areas. This growth estimates show a similar lack of discrimination. There are no rationales given. Each of these detracts from the credibility of the targets and the time line. They add additional emphasis to the concerns in the previous paragraph. [8/25]

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	6
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(D)(4) Reviewer Comments:
 i. As part of activities already described in the state's plan, it will develop the capability to establish teacher/principal effectiveness in terms of student growth and link this to the programs where the teacher/principal has prepared. It is also developing the capability to determine how many and what percentage of certification candidates complete each of the in-state programs as well as where certificated candidate are placed. It is not clear how widely the state intends to disseminate this information. The state does not have a definition for high poverty or high minority schools. The state currently has no base line data on these matters. It does not plan to have any until Year 4 of the grant. The state has a sound plan to develop these capabilities. The data regarding program completion and placement appears to exist now. The state will begin using an interim measure of student growth in the first year of the grant. Combined these facts suggest that preliminary information regarding these matters could be shared with the sponsoring institutions earlier than Year 4 and that there is no compelling reason not to publish the success and placement data immediately. Therefore, the plan is not of the highest quality and the goals not sufficiently ambitious. [3/7] ii. The expansion of programs that successfully produce effective teachers/principals is impeded by the state's approach described in "i." [3/7]

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	18
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(D)(5) Reviewer Comments:
 i. In Appendix, D-19, the state outlines a four year sequence of professional development focused on implementation of the new, standards and growth based evaluations systems and the initiation of school level PLC's. The plan on its face is systematic and sequential. The tasks each cohort of LEA trainees will be trained in are clear. As noted, there is a concern that the regional 'CAN's" do not have the time and other resources to accomplish their herculean assignment—the orchestration of the mastery of two highly complex initiatives each of which profoundly changes the way each teacher and principal conducts her/his work day and his work life. This does not mean that the effort will be a failure. The most likely outcome is that the initiatives will be imperfectly institutionalized and that there will be substantial variation among LEAs, schools, and individuals. The changes being attempted are, however, the kind of cultural changes that are consistent with the spirit of Race to the Top. For that reason, the plan must be regarded as suitably ambitious, achievable as described immediately above, and of high, if not the highest, quality. [8/10] ii. The plan as it is outlined in Appendix 19 provides competently for evaluation and revision of the annual implementation plans. [10/10]

Total	138	78
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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	10

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The state has statutory authority to intervene in schools and LEAs under the circumstances described. [10/10]		
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	21
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	3
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	18
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>i. The state plans to identify a total of 51 schools that meet the Title I or the non-Title I criteria for being a persistently low achieving school. These schools will be the focus of the plan described below for the life of the RTT grant. The criteria applied are that of not making AYP. This is not a sophisticated or rigorous standard. The discrepancy between student performance on NAEP tests and on state tests strongly suggests differences in the standards between the two systems and underlines the concern that reliance on just the AYP measure prevents this plan from being scored as one of high quality. Moreover, given the level of achievement of the state's students on NAEP, it is not credible that the state has only 51 persistently low achieving schools. [3/5] ii. Each turnaround site is to develop its own plan for improvement. Although the state identified several successful strategies from its experience with turning schools around, none of them are required to be implemented. The state indicates that three of the four RTT models are not applicable to its schools. The state indicates that the only RTT model which is applicable to its schools is the "transformation" model. The state's version, however, does not appear to meet all of the definitional criteria that appear in the RTT application. Most of the activities that the state anticipates the turnaround schools will implement are not designed to affect students directly. The standards for high quality schools which are to guide the turn round's are silent on the issues of student achievement and student growth. The performance measures provided by the state are process oriented. They show 23 schools are to be engaged in turnaround in the baseline year, 27 more in the first year of the grant, and the same engaged in the turnaround process for the succeeding three years. There are no results-oriented targets, and there is no rationale offered for this. Overall, the plan is not of high quality and the targets are not ambitious. 18/35</p>		
Total	50	31

F. General

	Available	Tier 1
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	8
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>i. The percentage of total revenues was substantially unchanged from FY 2008 to FY 2009. The percentage of revenue declined by about 1% while the total amount of dollars available increased. [3/5] ii. The state ranks very high nationally in providing equal funding among LEAs. In the narrative, the state says that it exercises its powers to assure equitable funding among schools within each LEA [5/5]</p>		
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	8
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>i., ii., iii, iv.: The state has no charter schools, and it has no charter school laws. [0/8 for each romanette] v. The state passed a law in June 2009 enabling LEAs to operate schools meeting these criteria. Forty five (45) schools applied for authorization, and 19 schools have been authorized. [8/8]</p>		
(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	3
<p>(F)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

The state notes that it is pursuing strategies to increase student wellness, enhance early childhood education, and to develop standards for college/career readiness. A consensus of experienced and competent educators would agree that each contributes to conditions favorable to the desired outcomes of successful reform including those listed in the scoring rubric. [3/5]

Total	55	19
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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 state's plan contains initiatives that could result in more rigorous courses of study in STEM courses. Properly implemented, the state's plan is likely to result in an increase in the integration of STEM content across the grades and disciplines. The state is making substantial efforts to assist teachers to become teachers in STEM classes and to provide more effective and relevant instruction in them. The state is making efforts to prepare more students for advanced study and careers in the STEM fields. Properly and thoroughly implemented, these initiatives are likely to reach underrepresented groups with its efforts. [15]

Total	15	15
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Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

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

Absolute Reviewer Comments:

The standard to be met here is one of adequacy. In that regard the state's plan does address the four areas of reform. Components of the plan are strong, others as described in some detail are not as strong. The state has been working in the face of substantial challenges created by the demographics of its population and its geography to the put the expected state success factors in place. The the LEAs and key stakeholders have participated and or been made aware of the requirements of the application and have indicated general agreement. Were the planned reforms in the four areas to be implemented in a timely manner and involving sufficient LEAs so as to reach substantial numbers of high needs and under represented students, they would have have a substantial positive effect on the state's students, families, and educators.

Total		0
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Grand Total	500	301
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