



Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 1

Wisconsin Application #6960WI-1



A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	62
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	42
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	15
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This section provides a clear and credible path to achieve the goals for the plan and creates ambitious targets for raising the percentage of students who are proficient in mathematics and reading and seeks to narrow achievement gaps among student groups while improving student readiness for postsecondary education. Of particular importance is the sustainability of the programs once RTTT funding is gone by using short term funds to continue with the reform efforts. In this way, the state has made a commitment to continuing the program. Program management in developing and implementing the planned projects is especially strong. The linking of the budget to the personnel and activities is a major strength and provides a credible means of implementing the program. Additional strengths of this application lies in presenting charts which outline the goals, provide a timeline for implementation and person responsible. This provides a comprehensive approach to the plan which is clear. The application provides a historical perspective allowing the reader to see how all parts of the plan interact to meet the goals of the program. (ii) This section illustrates strong statewide support for the plan. A particular strength lies in identifying school districts that are particularly needy in areas of academic improvement and student graduation rates and channeling funds to them. The application has a detailed table by LEAs that meets the information required in the criterion established for this section. Adding a second non-competitive grant program to the plan is an added bonus toward improving education in state LEAs for specific reform projects. The addition of other monies through other competitive grant programs run by the state is another means of extending the reforms beyond the scope-of-work-descriptions that are part of the MOU. The only questionable piece in this is the extremely small number of union leaders that have signed on. Given the potential impact that the plan has upon teachers union contracts, this is understandable since aspects of the plan will affect existing contracts. (iii) The fact that a high percentage of districts have signed on to the plan will translate into a statewide impact. This is a strong statement of support affecting nearly all students in the state. Substantial evidence is provided in this section toward the need for increasing student achievement, decreasing achievement gaps, increasing high school graduation rates and increasing student enrollment in college as well as submitting specific goals in the plan to reduce the disparity in these areas. This complements A (1) (i) and points to other needs in both dealing effectively with subgroups and high poverty, high minority urban school districts.</p>		
(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	30
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	20
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	10

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(i) Wisconsin will set up an Office of Education Innovation and Improvement to carry out the plan which reports directly to the State Superintendent. This Office provides strong leadership and support for insuring that the goals of the plan are carried out with respect to supporting participating LEAs. In creating this Office, they will have what appears to be a smooth and efficient means of overseeing the grant responsibilities by specialists within the office that are charged with carrying out a variety of activities. The implementation plan will allow work to begin immediately upon announcement of the grant and shows much promise of meeting the plan design by year four of the grant. Another strong element of the plan is the budget which directly links activities to a line item. Since the state has many grant programs in place supporting similar plan goals, they will repurpose or extend these programs with assistance from RTTT funds. This ensures that the activities will not cease when the RTTT funds lapse. This is an added strength to the plan to continue reform efforts past RTTT funding. (ii) The state has gathered together a strong group of stakeholders representing education, business organizations, community groups and the legislative leadership. These represent key organizations in the state and their involvement in the plan early on is and continues to be important to the success of the plan. Especially important is the involvement of STEM organizations since this is an important component that is embedded throughout the plan.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps

30 23

(i) Making progress in each reform area

5 5

(ii) Improving student outcomes

25 18

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

(i) There is evidence of the use of ARRA funds as well as other state and federal funds to pursue reforms such as building data systems to measure student growth and providing information to principals and teachers on how to improve instruction, adopting new standards and assessments, recruiting and retaining effective teachers and turning around low performing schools. This is an effective use of these funds and more importantly reflects positive and proactive steps by the state and LEAs that have contributed to some important changes in instruction and have focused on high need areas throughout the state. Many of these changes were a result of laws and policies that took place within the last decade. (ii) Subgroups continue to fall far behind white and Asian students in the state. It should be noted that there are some improvements in mathematics and reading among subgroups although the changes are slight. Math coaches working directly with classroom teachers have been linked to improvement in this subject area, but this section needs information to support the modest changes through activities that have led to improving NAEP or WKCE scores. Graduation rates have been improving since 2000, but evidence supporting this change which has been substantial for some subgroups, is not provided. Information is not available on exclusion rates and should be provided.

Total

125 115

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

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(i) Evidence is provided in both the narrative and Appendix to show the state's commitment to the CCSSO Common Core of Standards Initiative. Draft standards are provided that are internationally

benchmarked and build toward college and career readiness. The MOU that is signed is in concert with a majority of states. (ii) The state has a legal process for the adoption of standards in English language arts and mathematics by July 2010. Standards review began in May 2007 and has been continuing up to the present. Exact implementation of the standards are not spelled out in this section but are referenced as part of the duties of the Office of Innovation and Improvement described earlier.

(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	10
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: The applicant is part of a consortium (MOSIAC) of 26 states that will develop high-quality assessments. In addition, they are signatories to a number of other consortia. MOSIAC activities will be aligned with the K-12 Common Core Standards.</p>		
(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	20
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: The state presents a credible plan that moves the state to both enhanced standards and high-quality assessments. It is organizationally strong, with realistic, goals, activities, and timelines and identifies organizational responsibility throughout. This approach provides a means of developing capacity that will extend beyond the grant period.</p>		
Total	70	68

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	12
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: There are six elements of the America COMPETES Act supported by the Wisconsin Longitudinal Data System. Documentation is provided for each of these elements. The narrative supplies a descriptive passage for each of those completed.</p>		
(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	5
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: The plan provides a means of providing access in the future to key stakeholders who will use the data to support decision making and in areas such as policy, instruction, operations, management, resource allocation and overall effectiveness. The plan expands several ongoing assessment pieces currently in operation which strengthens this area of the plan and allows the timeline for implementation to be reduced. Coupled with the Value-Added Research Center and other research tools, this will increase the ability to access and use data to improve instruction.</p>		
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	18
<p>(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: The training that is provided in use of data to LEAs is designed to be principal and teacher-friendly. This will assist the LEAs in the use of the data as they address the needs of their schools. The state plan is very strong in this area and in providing professional development and on-line support for individual schools and teachers so effective use can be made of the data. Researchers and other organizations have been included in the access to data. This is an excellent section which provides straight forward goals and responsibilities that will insure implementation by year 3 of the grant.</p>		
Total	47	35

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	21
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application provides documentation for legislation providing alternative routes to certification for both principals and teachers that lead to a full educator license. Eleven current paths are provided—9 for teaching licenses and 2 for administrative licenses. A mixture of non-profit agencies, public and private colleges/universities and for-profit organizations are identified. A bachelor's degree is needed for candidacy. Candidates are provided with supervised, school-based experiences and ongoing support. They may test out of courses. As required by this section, the narrative focuses on critical shortages which the program will address and uses an annual Supply and Demand Report to identify/monitor these areas. It goes further in meeting a need to create diversity in teachers, place high quality teachers in urban schools and rural shortages. Data is provided regarding the total number of principals and teachers that completed each program from 2004 to 2009. The narrative together with information in the Appendix is very strong.</p>		
(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	27
(i) Measuring student growth	5	2
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	10
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	5
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	10
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(i) A plan is provided which builds on the longitudinal data system currently in use. Student growth will be measured for each student, classroom, school and district. A clear plan and approach to measuring student growth needs to be presented. (ii) Legislation is provided for the evaluation of principals and teachers. It includes multiple rating categories. Criteria are established for evaluations by school boards who must include multiple rating categories. This criterion is defined in state legislation. Data regarding evaluation systems in use in each district is not collected and hence not provided. This needs to be strengthened by providing a clearer plan for the development of an evaluation system that uses student growth as a significant factor for the evaluation of teachers and principals. The plan needs to indicate teacher and principal involvement in development of the evaluation plan. The state plan will implement four strategies to build a model evaluation system for both teachers and principals who are pre-service and currently employed. As part of this, student growth will be a significant factor. (iii) Evaluations are performed during the first year of employment and every third year thereafter. The narrative states that the state "recognizes" that evaluations every year will provide more timely feedback and encourage the development of effective educators. However, recognizing is not implementing. The plan does not clearly indicate whether this will occur. (iv) The plan describes current induction support through mentoring, orientation, professional development and support seminars. Monetary compensation is not required but encouraged in districts in need of improvement to close the achievement gap between subgroups. There is a strong emphasis on developing a capacity within the plan to increase the effectiveness of teachers and principals through eight strategies that are listed as being in place in year one and includes an outline for implementation of a model evaluation program. As with other sections of the grant, these strategies include a timeline and persons responsible. How the plan will deal with compensating, promoting and retaining teachers and principals is not clear nor is information regarding the granting of tenure and/or full certification or removing ineffective principals and teachers.</p>		
(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	18

(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	8
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	10
<p>(D)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(i) A program is in place to provide incentives to teachers who teach in high minority and high poverty schools. The narrative describes the state's definition of high minority and high poverty schools. Teachers identified as not highly effective or effective are reported annually to the state. Especially targeted are those districts/schools that are under performing and high minority and poverty. The inclusion of STEM and other activities to provide effective teachers in these schools is a strength of this section. The framework for urban teacher training is clear as to the measures that will be taken. A plan to ensure equitable distribution of teachers and principals to high-poverty or high-minority schools needs to be developed. (ii) The narrative makes a point to (1) identify critical areas of shortages annually and (2) has made special education a priority. Math and science are described as other areas in need of highly effective teachers. They have used grants and post-secondary education as the primary means to meet their goals for increasing highly effective teachers in schools that are high minority and high poverty.</p>		
(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	6
<p>(D)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(i) The plan provides an online licensing system to collect, aggregate and report publicly on the teaching force and link this information to the in-state programs where teachers were prepared for credentialing. The plan includes a preservice teacher performance assessment tool. No access is currently provided for this. This information must be linked to student performance, teacher and principal effectiveness and the institutions that prepared these teachers. (ii) Using the University of Wisconsin's System's Institute for Urban Education, the plan expands placement of teachers in urban centers. Recruitment funding is requested to support programs to reach out to secondary and post-secondary students in urban schools to enter the teaching profession. This section needs to provide more information regarding the preparation and credentialing options. In linking the teachers and principals to IHE that prepared them for these roles, the statement should focus on identifying those institutions and providing support for those that have been most effective in producing highly-qualified teachers and principals.</p>		
(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	10
<p>(D)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(i) Wisconsin has in place a number of measures for the induction of new teachers and to support district-focused school improvement. They will build on this to create a comprehensive data-informed professional development program through a number of requirements and strategies. This is a strong statement of support for improving upon the current practices that are in effect. (ii) The plan needs to be expanded in this area. Information could be added to go beyond a mention of the strategies which is too general in scope to be evaluated.</p>		
Total	138	82

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1
(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	10	5
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Legislation is provided to intervene directly in persistently lowest achieving districts but not schools. This legislation sets limits on what the State Superintendent can actually do by State Law. However,</p>		

they do specify one of seven actions that could lead to turning around a school. A comprehensive plan for working with schools is found in the Appendix. New legislation is currently pending.

(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	30
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	25
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (2) (i) Lowest-achieving schools are identified in this section. All schools were in the Milwaukee School District. They identify Title I and non-Title I schools as being low-performing in addition to this. The plan incorporates many aspects of the existing system to expand monitoring and technical assistance. This is an effective plan. (2) (ii) The plan includes a comprehensive support system for LEAs as evidenced in their work in Milwaukee and other requirements related to schools not making AYP for three years. Much of this section focuses on the need for social reforms in districts that have high crime and poverty. The WINS program based on Harlem's Children's Zone is an example of this. School closures have resulted from their intervention. The main strategy seems to be replacing school management and extending learning time. There is extensive information in the Appendix relating to the work in MPSs. The plan seems to be to address 60 low performing schools by SY 2013. While the goal does seem credible given the history of past efforts, this section needs to identify one or more of the turnaround modles required by this section.</p>		
Total	50	35

F. General

	Available	Tier 1
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	5
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (i) State revenues to support education declined. (ii) There are a number of formulas in place to assure equitable funding to school districts. Since the district is responsible for funding individual schools, the funding of individual high poverty schools cannot be determined. The response must address how state policies led to equitable funding within LEAs , between high-poverty schools and other schools.</p>		
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	21
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (i) Initially, the number of charter schools was capped at 20 schools by state law. This cap has now been removed. This section provides information regarding the number and type of charter schools currently operating. Information is not provided regarding the percentage that these schools represent of the total number of schools in the state. (ii) Information is offered as to the process of approval by a district, the operation and closure of schools. This section would benefit from seeing state law or guidelines for this. (iii) From the narrative, it does appear that the money from state aid for schools follows the child and may be equitable. Federal and state funds are provided to these schools as with any other state public school. Since districts determine the specific level of funding, it would be helpful to see the guidelines distributing funds to charters in a district. This answer provides insufficient information to determine if funding is actually equitable. (iv) The state does not provide facilities funding for charter schools or traditional public schools. (v) The law in this state allows local school districts the flexibility to create and operate innovative and autonomous public schools and education programs. It would be helpful to know how many there are, what type of school and any other useful information that would provide a clearer picture of this.</p>		
(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	5

(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: There is ample evidence in this section and throughout the application of the state's commitment to creating conditions favorable to education reform or innovation.		
Total	55	31

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	15
Competitive Reviewer Comments: The state has embedded STEM priorities throughout the application. It has indicated that it will support four STEM academies statewide and obtained letters of support from STEM organizations in the state. The plan for increasing this activity through RTTT funding is credible and shows promise of substantially increasing the opportunities available in the STEM fields. Inclusion of Project Lead the Way in its schools is another credible way of providing a means of enhancing and expanding knowledge in these fields.		
Total	15	15

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes
Absolute Reviewer Comments: The application supports all of the prescribed RTTT areas.		
Total		0
Grand Total	500	381



Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 1

Wisconsin Application #6960WI-2



A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	52
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	35
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	12
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: A1i - The application has articulated a comprehensive plan that addresses the four education areas and is consistent with the specific reforms plans proposed throughout the application. A1ii - The MOU and Scope-of-Work descriptions require participating LEAs to implement all portions of the State's RTTT plan and reflect their strong commitment to the goals. The percentage of signatures from LEA superintendents and board presidents is high; however the percentage of signatures of union leaders is low which raises concerns about the implementation of a number of the teacher accountability requirements. The application indicated that union leaders were involved in the development of the plan and generally expressed support, and a signed letter of support from the Wisconsin association affiliated with the NEA is included. A1iii - The percentage of LEAs participating is very high (97.5%), representing 97.9% of all students and 97.4% of students in poverty so the likelihood of the RTTT plan implementation translating into broad statewide impact is high. The plan includes goals for each of the four required areas and the goals seem achievable, but not necessarily ambitious. The contrast between what the goals would look like were the State not to receive a RTTT award and if it were, is not clearly articulated.</p>		
(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	26
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	16
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: A2i - The plan has clearly described the State's efforts to-date in each of the 4 key areas which are substantial. The integration of new RTTT personnel and programs with existing structures and programs is a strength of the application and supports the sustainability of the efforts when funding ends. The application describes how existing funding and RTTT funds would be aligned to support the reform goals and instructional improvement (aligning data systems with growth reports was cited as an example). The SEA support for the implementation of ongoing professional development for non-induction teachers and principals is not clearly described. Additional detail regarding the OEII support for Turnaround efforts also would have strengthened the plan. A2ii - The application includes strong letters of support from a broad group of stakeholders including the Wisconsin association affiliated with the NEA.</p>		
(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	18

(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	13
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: A3i – The application describes progress that has been made to date in each of the four reform areas, particularly in the area of standards and assessments, and includes information regarding how other state and federal funding was used to implement those reforms. A3ii – The targets for improvement in student achievement and closing the gap are achievable. The application describes the increase in student achievement over the last several years but is limited in describing the actions that have contributed to this increase; only the increases in mathematics achievement in MPS are described as being the result of specific interventions. ELA increases in achievement are minimal. The graduation rate information is confusing and while improvement in # of students graduating increases, the graduation rate does not change. The application includes a list of reform strategies that have been implemented by districts, but does not specifically connect these to student achievement gains. Additional detail connecting specific programs or efforts and gains in student achievement would have been helpful.</p>		
Total	125	96

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: B1i - Wisconsin is participating in the Common Core Standards Initiative consortium (which includes 48 States) that is developing and disseminating standards in ELA and mathematics (as defined by the notice). The MOU and list of participating states is included as an appendix in the application. B1ii - Wisconsin is committed and prepared to adopt the CCS when approved, as early as July 2010.</p>		
(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	10
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: Wisconsin is participating in the MOSAIC consortium (which includes 26 States) that is developing and disseminating formative, diagnostic, and benchmark assessments to assess student progress on the Common Core Standards throughout the year. The MOU and list of participating states is included as an appendix in the application. The state is also participating in the SMARTER consortium (which includes less than a majority of participating states) for developing assessments.</p>		
(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	20
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: The application has clearly outlined a realistic plan for 'rolling out' the new standards and assessments throughout the state, with tables and timelines indicating the specific goals, activities, persons responsible and timelines for implementation. A strength of the plan is that it utilizes existing structures and relationships with other entities such as CESAs, institutions of higher education and economic workforce development groups. Performance measures were included.</p>		
Total	70	70

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	12
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: Wisconsin's Longitudinal Data System includes six America Competes elements.		
(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	5
(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: Wisconsin currently has a system that allows parents, teachers and administrators to access State student achievement data. The application articulates additional functionality that is currently being added to the system to provide access for parents, teachers, administrators and researchers to longitudinal and value-added data that is connected to other data such as attendance and discipline. They are collaborating with a variety of existing partners to accomplish this.		
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	16
(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: The application describes a detailed plan for ensuring access to the data needed to improve instruction through the longitudinal data systems. It also clearly describes the plan for professional development needed to ensure that the educators are able to access and understand achievement data and translate that into instructional modifications, including tables that outline the goals, activities, timelines and individuals or organizations responsible. Again, it builds on existing efforts and structures to (previous training and relationships with CESAs) ensure the development of statewide capacity in data usage. However, the application only describes VARC as an example; additional information about how data would be shared with or made accessible to other research groups would have strengthened the application.		
Total	47	33

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	19
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: The legal, statutory and regulatory provisions that allow alternative routes to certification are clearly presented and can operate independently of IHEs. The guidelines for all route program approval are clearly described, thorough, and included criteria for addressing high needs areas. The application clearly indicated the alternative routes to certification that have been in use and the number of teachers certified by each for the last several years. The application describes the process for monitoring, evaluating and identifying teacher and principal shortages that is currently in use and is connected to their Title II reporting and appears to adequately report shortages and high need areas. It relies on district survey data and could be improved by a more automated system. The process for preparing teachers and principals to fill these areas of shortage is not as clearly articulated.		
(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	21
(i) Measuring student growth	5	5
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	7
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	5

(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	4
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>D2i - Wisconsin currently has a system for measuring student growth for each individual student and currently has efforts underway to make that system more robust by including benchmark assessment data throughout the year. D2ii - Legislation has been passed (2009) to permit standardized exams to be used to evaluate teachers, however, the description of how student achievement data and increases (as defined by the notice) to develop and implement an evaluation system for teachers and principals that would meet the standards of this program is not as clear. A variety of components have already been developed as part of previous state efforts. However, the specific activities with timelines and responsible individuals are not clearly outlined. D2iii - The state plan will require that the Participating LEAs conduct annual evaluations of teacher and principals that utilize components already developed and that meet the definition of the notice. However, Participating LEAs have considerable latitude in defining the components of the evaluation systems. The plan for determining whether or not the LEA system meets the criteria, and what to do if it doesn't is not clearly articulated. D2iv - The state plan does articulate how the annual evaluations could be used to inform decisions regarding professional development and support for teachers and principals. However, the only programs mentioned are for initial educators; none are described for veteran educators. The plan does not describe how evaluations will be used to compensate, promote or retain teachers or principals. The plan does not address how teacher and principal evaluations will be used to grant tenure or full certification. The plan does not address how evaluations will be used to remove ineffective teachers and principals.</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:</p> <p>D3i - The plan uses the notice definition of high poverty, high minority schools and describes multiple efforts (including incentives, recruitment strategies, compensation, and professional development) to ensure highly qualified teachers and principals at highest need schools, but not necessarily highly effective ones (as defined by the notice). The plan indicates that the SEA will require Participating LEAs to develop a plan to ensure the equitable distribution of highly effective teachers, but does not describe support or criteria for the development of these plans. The targets for closing the gaps in equitable distribution of highly effective teachers and principals in high poverty, high minority schools seem modest. D3ii - The plan sets targets for increasing the number and percentage of highly qualified teachers in hard-to-staff subjects and priority areas. It describes several strategies to achieve the targets but the distinction between qualified and effective teachers is not clear.</p>		
(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	4
<p>(D)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>D4i - The plan describes linking teacher and principal credentialing data to passing scores on content knowledge exams and other related licensure data but not to student achievement and growth. D4ii - The plan describes expanding a program (The Urban Teacher World) that has been successful in recruiting prospective teachers interested in teaching in urban school settings, but does not link the program to effective teachers based on student achievement data. Also, no programs are described for principal preparation.</p>		
(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	5
<p>(D)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>D5i - The plan describes primarily professional development as part of induction programs and does not include as much information about ongoing, effective, data informed professional development and coaching. The plan does outline high-level strategies for this work but does not provide the detailed information about activities, timelines, and responsible parties. D5ii - The plan only articulates the</p>		

development of a plan to gather data to assess the effectiveness of the professional development plan, not a detailed implementation plan. Overall, because the system for linking student achievement to personnel decisions was not clearly described, that deficiency affected all components of this criteria.

Total	138	59
-------	-----	----

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1
(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	10	5
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: As described, the state has the legal, statutory and regulatory authority to intervene directly in the state's persistently lowest-achieving districts but not in individual schools. It also describes pending legislation that would expand this authority.		
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	29
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	24
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: E2i- the state has clearly identified the persistently lowest-achieving schools. E2ii - The plan has identified the possible intervention models (that are in compliance with the definitions of the notice) for turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools and indicated which ones were appropriate for individual schools. There is a plan with goals, activities, timeline and responsible parties, but there is a strong reliance on outside parties with expertise in turnaround efforts, without detailed information about what the implementation plans would be. The description of the WINS program effort is ambitious, but if implemented could have an impact on student achievement. Evidence of state implementation of turnaround measures is documented and performance measures are included in the plan; however it is unclear who will support (will the state contract with outside consultants?) and how (the implementation plan?) for the 55 additional turnaround schools that are projected will need intervention from EOY 2010 - EOY 2013.		
Total	50	34

F. General

	Available	Tier 1
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	4
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: F1i - The revenue available from the State to support public education for FY 2009 was less than FY2008, but not by much. F1ii - The State policies as described in the plan lead to equitable funding as defined in this notice at the state level, but is not assured at the school level.		
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	33
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: F2i - The State has charter school laws that do not prohibit or effectively inhibit charter school development or charter school enrollment. F2ii - The State plan has described the laws and regulations regarding how charter school authorizers approve, monitor and close schools, including assuring a racial balance that is similar to the district in which the charter resides. Student		

achievement progress is a factor in closing a school, but the definition of student achievement does not appear to be the same as in the notice. The state has closed ineffective charter schools in the last few years. F2iii – The State plan describes that Wisconsin statutes do not provide any facilities funding for charter schools; however, the state provides that funding to the district and there is no assurance that the district provides that same level of funding to the school. F2iv – In that the State does not provide any facilities funding for any schools, it is equitable for both charter and traditional schools. F2 v The State plan as described allows wide latitude for LEAs to operate innovative and autonomous schools other than charter schools.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	4
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: The application describes several other innovative state initiatives to reform education including funding four-year-old kindergarten, investments in effective teachers that focuses on student achievement as opposed to longevity and continuing education, the Wisconsin Urban Schools Leadership Project, and establishment of the Wisconsin Covenant Scholars. While reforms listed imply that increased student achievement resulted, no direct links to increased student achievement are included.		
Total	55	41

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	15
Competitive Reviewer Comments: The different types of initiatives described in the plan to address STEM priorities are comprehensive and include increased science and math graduation requirements, professional development for teachers and expanded collaboration with IHEs. Project Lead the Way addresses the needs of underrepresented groups.		
Total	15	15

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes
Absolute Reviewer Comments: The application comprehensively and coherently addresses all four reform areas. The goals, activities, parties responsible and timelines are built on existing state efforts and are clearly articulated. In areas that current capacity does not exist (connecting teacher/principal evaluations to student achievement), appropriate action has been taken to enable the state to meet this requirement in the future.		
Total		0

Grand Total	500	348
--------------------	------------	------------



Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 1

Wisconsin Application #6960WI3



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	4
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	30
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	10

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Wisconsin brings impressive focus to its goals for RTTT, as is indicated by the proposal's opening title, "Accelerating Change: A reform agenda to address Wisconsin's achievement and graduate rate gaps." With the aim of systemically rectifying these gaps, Wisconsin presents a "comprehensive and coherent reform agenda, and clearly articulates its goals for implementing reforms in the four education areas described in the ARRA and improving student outcomes statewide" [(A)(1)(i)]. Wisconsin conveys succinctly in this first section that it has a strong foundation in each of the RTTT reform areas, but requires the requested funding to advance and interconnect work across areas. The proposal lists a five-part reform strategy needed to raise overall achievement and reduce achievement gaps. Largely a rephrasing of the RTTT goals, the reform strategy extends into establishing systemic ways to intervene with students who need greatest help, especially in the state's urban centers. Specifically, Wisconsin will establish WINS (Wisconsin Initiative for Neighborhoods and Schools that work for Children), a four-year demonstration project modeled on the Harlem Children's Zone (NYC). In sum, Wisconsin's reform agenda is aggressive and specific—pushing far reaching change, but in a delimited geographic area. Wisconsin has secured impressive LEA commitment [(A)(1)(ii)]. Nearly 100 percent of all LEAs in the state (431 out of 442) signed the MOU, representing 98 percent of schools (2,224), 98 percent of students (852,251) and 97 percent of students in poverty (287,239). All superintendents signed an MOU, while 87 percent of school board presidents also signed. However, Wisconsin fared poorly in securing signatures from local teacher union leaders: only 12 percent signed (48 out of 414). The state contends that there is greater union support than this result indicates, stating that many union leaders were reluctant to sign an MOU that may later pose conflicts with collective bargaining agreements. Nevertheless, Wisconsin faces a conundrum—it certainly has generated strong statewide LEA support among administrators and board members, but it has not satisfactorily engaged teachers leaders. As the state knows, the challenge of weak teacher union support will surface regularly, especially when RTTT reforms that are related to achievement-based performance reviews and other high-stakes personnel policies and decisions come to the fore. Despite the teacher union engagement problem, Wisconsin's reform agenda and strategy are quite creative in terms of "translating LEA participation into statewide impact" [(A)(1)(iii)]. RTTT in Wisconsin would reflect and respond to the extensive diversity in the state's LEAs and communities. The state's smallest district is on an island and serves 78 students, while Milwaukee, the largest district, serves 85,400 students. Just over half the state's districts serve fewer than 1,000 students. Ensuring statewide impact across such varied locales is a challenge. In a creative response, Wisconsin has designed a multi-layer RTTT system. The first and widest layer will provide a minimum of \$60 per student to all Participating LEAs, as long as they have signed the state's rigorous MOU establishing a "floor" for what is required to achieve progress in each of the four reform areas and ultimately to increase student achievement and narrow

performance gaps. The second layer will target the state's six largest and most diverse districts, which also have the greatest achievement challenges (i.e., Beloit, Green Bay, Kenosha, Madison, Milwaukee and Racine). In addition to having to meet the "floor" level of requirements, these five LEAs have agreed to implement aggressive, research-based intervention strategies. For instance, they will be required to develop systemic solutions at the early childhood level (age 4) and late middle school/high school transition. These districts will receive an additional \$166 per student (beyond the \$60 minimum). The third layer will focus solely on Milwaukee through the above mentioned WINS initiative. The state decided to target Milwaukee because it has the largest array of academic, social and economic challenges of any LEA in the state, and under ESEA requirements is a "District Identified for Improvement—Level 4." In an intriguing move, Wisconsin has designed another element to advance statewide impact. All LEAs other than the six large districts targeted in layers two and three are eligible to pursue additional RTTT funding through the Wisconsin Achieves Competition Grant. The state is seeking \$19 million as part of its RTTT proposal that it would award to LEAs based on rigorous review process requiring focus on the four main RTTT reform priorities. For those LEAs slated to receive a minimum of \$60 per pupil, but with more far reaching aspirations and plans, the grant program will be a boost and help to broaden statewide impact of RTTT reforms. Lastly, Wisconsin has set seven aggressive targets and benchmarks to drive change over four years. The first two goals aspire to have Wisconsin among the top 10 states on NAEP in terms of average growth rate in student achievement and gap reduction. The next two goals take aim at increasing rates of growth by 1.5 standard deviations on the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination (WKCE). The final three goals respectively push for a 50 percent dropout reduction, doubling of the rate of growth in high school graduation for students of color, and accelerating postsecondary enrollment by 40 percent. Reflecting the enormity of the challenge, Wisconsin reveals in accompanying charts and tables in the proposal that in several cases, even after four years of effort, there still will be wide achievement gaps and an increase in dropout totals (i.e., a projected growth in the student population, with a projected constant graduation rate, will increase the number of graduates, but also the dropout numbers).

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	18
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	14
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	4

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Wisconsin scores in the medium range for its plan to "build strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up and sustain proposed plans" [(A)(2)(i)]. While the plan has good oversight structures and concepts, the details for how it will work are not well presented. Wisconsin's proposal focuses strongly on building the capacity and quality of work in the LEAs and schools. This section makes clear that new state level entities, councils and committees will be organized to advance work in LEAs. In a good move to concentrate attention on RTTT, the Office of Education Innovation and Improvement (OEII) will directly report to the State Superintendent to oversee all aspects of the reform initiative. Linking OEII to the LEAs will be the state's existing regional Cooperative Educational Service Agencies, which will be bolstered with project consultants dedicated to RTTT. The proposal presents four-year implementation plans for OEII. While instructive as to the state's commitment to accountability, the plans at this point are a less-than refined statement on what work will be accomplished and when. The proposal also does not make clear, beyond a brief statement, the background and expertise of the OEII staff, especially in terms of their expected experience with comprehensive school reform at the LEA and school levels. Wisconsin stresses that the MOU will require all Participating LEAs to drive their current work on the four RTTT priorities to an even deeper level. The proposal highlights how the state will support progress in each of the four reform areas and STEM. The statements on support hit all the key points listed in the RTTT application as possible work areas, but they are not definitive on how Wisconsin will offer assistance to the LEAs. For example, in the "data" section, the proposal states that, "the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (WDPI) will work in collaboration with and/or contract with educational institutions, the regional Cooperative

Education Service Agencies, professional organizations, and non-profit organizations to develop and provide professional development modules, tools, and training in data literacy, student growth and value-added data reports in order to improve classroom instructions as well as drive regional expertise in data usage." No other information is provided in this section on the support available to LEAs on data systems and usage. The concepts are good—using a broad array of experts and external agencies, as well as focusing on professional development to make certain that improvements occur at the classroom level. However, the statement does not indicate with any certainty how these concepts will be advanced. Wisconsin proposes a good move to incorporate external auditors into the RTTT process. Modeled on the state's highly regarded monitoring of other ARRA resources, the WDPI will contract with an independent firm to externally measure and report on at least annually the state and LEAs progress on RTTT goals and objectives. Wisconsin intends to bring in external agencies to work with the WDPI and LEAs in the 90 day window they will have, if RTTT funds are awarded, to prepare Final Work Plans. The state recognizes that this will be a high stakes timeframe for the future success of RTTT—it is the point when the state will specify work plans, measures and schedule. Wisconsin's budget presentation is solid. Most impressive is the delineation of how the total state award would be divided between statewide work and the LEAs, with special care to show the shares for the unique layers of the Wisconsin plan (i.e., the six urban districts, the competitive grants program, and the "floor" funding for all LEAs). The summary neatly breaks out the statewide share (27 percent of the total) into the four major reform priorities, STEM and the portion required for administration (i.e., support for OEII and independent auditors). The state makes clear that it is aligning current reforms with RTTT and will make sure that Federal and state support is arranged accordingly. Unfortunately, the state provides only cursory explanation of how it will sustain RTTT's work, even though "sustainability and scale" are listed as two overarching goals. Without providing details or examples, the state says that it will use RTTT funds to leverage "national partnerships and expertise." Most important, the proposal promises that the State Superintendent "is committed to including support in his 2013-14 biennial state budgets for highly effective Race to the Top interventions that reasonably cannot be sustained through the reallocation of local resources." Wisconsin is to be applauded for this promise, but it provides no evidence of the likelihood that the State Superintendent will have the resources to act on this promise in several years. The goal of having local resources allocated is spot on, but again there is no explanation of how difficult budget decisions at the local level would be facilitated by RTTT. Regarding the criteria "using broad stakeholder support" [(A)(2)(ii)], Wisconsin provides strong evidence that it has reached out actively and extensively to encourage ownership of RTTT among a wide-array of sectors, institutions and individuals (i.e., businesses, higher education, community agencies, and non profits). The most active work, rightly so, was with the state's LEAs. The state's Collaborative Council met regularly to review the emerging RTTT proposal. The Council is a long-standing group of key education groups, including the AFT-Wisconsin, school administrators association, Cooperative Educational Service Agencies, University of Wisconsin system, supervision and curriculum association, independent college and university association, school boards, school business officials, and administrators of special services. The state attended various education association meetings. Most relevant to the major focus on Milwaukee in the RTTT process, the city's Innovation and Improvement Advisory Council was convened by the Governor, State Superintendent and Milwaukee Mayor to provide input in several areas to the RTTT proposal. If funded, the state will establish the Wisconsin RTTT Implementation Advisory Council, which will bring a wide array of stakeholders together to provide input on program evaluation and act as a "critical friend." While impressive in the array of input and involvement, the stakeholder process as explained in the proposal does not indicate how the various councils and committees will leverage in systematic and sustained ways the vast resources (intellectual, financial, organizational and political) of all those reportedly aligned with RTTT in Wisconsin. "stain proposed plans" [(A)(2)(i)]. While the plan has good oversight structures and concepts, the details for how it will work are not well presented. Wisconsin's proposal focuses strongly on building the capacity and quality of work in the LEAs and schools. This section makes clear that new state level entities, councils and committees will be organized to advance work in LEAs. In a good move to concentrate attention on RTTT, the Office of Education Innovation and Improvement (OEII) will directly report to the State Superintendent to oversee all aspects of the reform initiative. Linking OEII to the LEAs will be the state's existing regional Cooperative Educational Service Agencies, which will be bolstered with project consultants dedicated to RTTT. The proposal presents four-year

implementation plans for OEII, including a timeline. While instructive as to the state's commitment to accountability, the plans at this point are a general work list and a less-than refined statement on when work will be accomplished. Wisconsin stresses that the MOU will require all Participating LEAs to drive their current work on the four RTTT priorities to an even deeper level. The proposal highlights how the state will support progress in each of the four reform areas and STEM. The statements on support hit all the key points listed in the RTTT application as possible work areas, but they are not definitive on how Wisconsin will offer assistance to the LEAs. For example, in the "data" section, the proposal states that, "the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (WDPI) will work in collaboration with and/or contract with educational institutions, the regional Cooperative Education Service Agencies, professional organizations, and non-profit organizations to develop and provide professional development modules, tools, and training in data literacy, student growth and value-added data reports in order to improve classroom instructions as well as drive regional expertise in data usage." No other information is provided in this section on the support available to LEAs on data systems and usage. The concepts are good—using a broad array of experts and external agencies, as well as focusing on professional development to make certain that improvements occur at the classroom level. However, the statement does not indicate with any certainty how these concepts will be advanced. Wisconsin proposes a good move to incorporate external auditors into the RTTT process. Modeled on the state's highly regarded monitoring of other ARRA resources, the WDPI will contract with an independent firm to externally measure and report on at least annually the state and LEAs progress on RTTT goals and objectives. Wisconsin intends to bring in external agencies to work with the WDPI and LEAs in the 90 day window they will have, if RTTT funds are awarded, to prepare Final Work Plans. The state recognizes that this will be a high stakes timeframe for the future success of RTTT, as it is the point when the state will specify work plans, measures and schedule. Wisconsin's budget presentation is solid. Most impressive is the delineation of how the total state award would be divided between statewide work and the LEAs, with special care to show the shares for the unique layers of the Wisconsin plan (i.e., the six urban districts, the competitive grants program, and the "floor" funding for all LEAs). The summary neatly breaks out the statewide share (27 percent of the total) into the four major reform priorities, STEM and the portion required for administration (i.e., support for OEII and independent auditors). The state makes clear that it is aligning current reforms with RTTT and will make sure that Federal and state support is arranged accordingly. Unfortunately, the state provides only cursory explanation of how it will sustain RTTT's work, even though "sustainability and scale" are listed as two overarching goals. Without providing details or examples, the state says that it will use RTTT funds to leverage "national partnerships and expertise." Most important, the proposal promises that the State Superintendent "is committed to including support in his 2013-14 biennial state budgets for highly effective Race to the Top interventions that reasonably cannot be sustained through the reallocation of local resources." Wisconsin is to be applauded for this promise, but it provides no evidence of the likelihood that the State Superintendent will have the resources to act on this promise in several years. The goal of having local resources allocated is spot on, but again there is no explanation of how difficult budget decisions at the local level would be facilitated by RTTT. Regarding the criteria "using broad stakeholder support" [(A)(2)(ii)], Wisconsin provides strong evidence that it has reached out actively and extensively to encourage ownership of RTTT among a wide-array of sectors, institutions and individuals (i.e., businesses, higher education, community agencies, and non profits). The most active work, rightly so, was with the state's LEAs. The state's Collaborative Council met regularly to review the emerging RTTT proposal. The Council is a long-standing group of key education groups, including the AFT-Wisconsin, school administrators association, Cooperative Educational Service Agencies, University of Wisconsin system, supervision and curriculum association, independent college and university association, school boards, school business officials, and administrators of special services. The state attended various education association meetings. Most relevant to the major focus on Milwaukee in the RTTT process, the city's Innovation and Improvement Advisory Council was convened by the Governor, State Superintendent and Milwaukee Mayor to provide input in several areas to the RTTT proposal. If funded, the state will establish the Wisconsin RTTT Implementation Advisory Council, which will bring a wide array of stakeholders together to provide input on program evaluation and act as a "critical friend." While impressive in the array of input and involvement, the stakeholder process as explained in the proposal does not indicate how the various councils and committees will leverage in systematic and sustained ways the vast

resources (intellectual, financial, organizational and political) of all those reportedly aligned with RTTT in Wisconsin.		
(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	21
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	16
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>As conveyed in the proposal, Wisconsin is working comprehensively to “demonstrate significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps” in student learning [(A)(3)]. By using a combination of Federal and state resources, Wisconsin has made significant progress in each of RTTT’s four reform areas [(A)(3)(i)]. An early leader on standards, Wisconsin worked with the American Diploma Project and teams of state experts, leading to the creation of an internationally-benchmarked overarching framework that will link the results of the Common Core Standards initiative to curriculum development, lesson planning, and instructional delivery. The state also is overhauling its assessment system—through joint input from business and PK-16 leaders—so that it includes formative, benchmark and summative assessments. In this way, Wisconsin shows it has a keen sense of the best way to have assessments inform classroom teachers, hold schools accountable and report back to parents and the wider community. Wisconsin has been expanding its data system over the past five years, with the most notable changes improving how data is collected and displayed so that it facilitates instructional decision making. Teachers and principals have been attended to systematically through the creation of a tiered licensing system that focuses on pre-service preparation, mentorship and career-long professional development. Wisconsin has been smart in this endeavor to take advantage of its uncommonly strong university system. The state also won the support of the Wallace Foundation to bolster the instructional leadership of principals in the state’s five largest cities. School turnaround has been a statewide concern, evidenced by the creation of SSOC (Statewide System of Support) to provide technical assistance to Title I schools that have not met AYP requirements or have fallen short of other performance measures. The Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) has received the most attention since the system is in the third-year of Federally-mandated corrective action. A featured piece of the work, which would be expanded with RTTT funding, is “Response to Intervention,” a comprehensive program to improve school and student performance. From all evidence in the proposal, Wisconsin earns a mixed rating for “improving student outcomes” [(A)(3)(ii)]. On average, Wisconsin’s NAEP and WKCE results are quite strong. Indeed, Wisconsin students as a whole have scored above the national average on the mathematics and reading portions of NAEP since 2003. More than 74 percent of Wisconsin students scored proficient or advanced on WKCE in mathematics since 2006, and 81 percent of students scored the same on the reading portions over a similar time frame. In mathematics, the state has demonstrated good student growth, with gains occurring at nearly all levels. In reading, however, little overall growth is apparent from the data in the proposal. On both NAEP and WKCE reading scores remained flat or even fell slightly between 2003 and 2007. The toughest challenge for Wisconsin is achievement gaps between the state’s student sub-groups. Fortunately, while the overall extent of the gaps is significant (e.g., ranging from 16-30 percentage points in some cases between white students and other sub-groups), Wisconsin has been narrowing the divide. For instance, the Black-White achievement gap in mathematics on the WKCE narrowed by 5.5 percentage points over five years, with a similar narrowing on NAEP. To its credit, Wisconsin has flagged achievement gaps as its biggest educational failing and has substantially focused its RTTT initiative on improving equity in the achievement of all its student populations. The proposal is less expansive regarding ways to improve the high school graduation rate. The plans to bring attention to the issue through a “Graduation Summit” are not presented with any detail or indication of likely follow-on initiatives. Lastly, as required in the application criteria, Wisconsin does not convey how changes in student outcomes (i.e., academic achievement, gaps in achievement, high school graduation rates) are the result of particular actions or interventions.</p>		
Total	125	83

B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1
(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards	40	36
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20
(ii) Adopting standards	20	16
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Wisconsin scores highly on the criterion for "participating in consortium developing high quality standards" [(B)(1)(i)]. Wisconsin is one of the 48 states and three territories in the NGA/CCSSO initiative to develop common core standards. More than being a participant, however, Wisconsin already has been working to ensure that the resulting Common Core Standards advance the state's current standards. The state has given feedback to the NGA/CCSSO program based on experience of several years designing and implementing English and math standards. Wisconsin has developed a brilliant plan to review the Common Core Standards to make sure they will point students towards being college-ready and career-ready. First, drawing on the exceptional expertise in Wisconsin's post-secondary institutions, WDPI has convened faculty in relevant subjects to review the new standards relative to what is required to succeed in four-year programs. Second, WDPI will convene regional economic development and workforce groups to revise Wisconsin's Employability Skills competencies so that they align with the Core Standards. Most significant is that Wisconsin has prepared a process for validating the strength of the final Common Core Standards, and in a way that will build ownership for the standards among several sets of key constituents. The proposal makes clear that Wisconsin is prepared to adopt the resulting standards [(B)(1)(ii)]. The proposal succinctly focuses on the constitutional and statutory authority vested in the State Superintendent to adopt new standards and assessments. While the State Superintendent has the ultimate authority, Wisconsin knows well from experience that unilateral adoption will only lead to failure. As described earlier in the review, the state has been drawing a range of stakeholders into the review of draft standards and assessments such that the stage is set for wide-scale endorsement of the final results. Slightly less than a perfect score is awarded for this sub-criterion, however, because the proposal does not explain adequately how the state's work in 2007-2008 on standards design through the American Diploma Project and the Partnership for 21st Century Skills will translate into the adoption of the common core standards.</p>		
(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	10
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Wisconsin's forte throughout the proposal is with assessments. "Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments" [(B)(2)] has been a leadership arena for Wisconsin for many years. With the advent of RTTT and joint preparation work across states, Wisconsin's expertise has come to the fore. Wisconsin and Nebraska have taken the lead in forming Multiple Options for Student and Assessment Consortium (MOSAIC), a 26-state body focused on developing and sharing instructional support materials, common curriculum and shared benchmark assessments. Significant to the priorities of RTTT to foster multi-state collaboration and comparative assessment systems, MOSAIC intends to develop a comprehensive nationwide balanced assessment system, which will provide students, educators and parents with ongoing information about student progress on the Common Core Standards This goal will be advanced by MOSAIC partnering with two other multi-state associations, the Summative Multi-State Assessment Researchers for Teachers and Educational Researchers (SMARTER) and the Balanced Assessment Consortia. Critically important is the interconnection of these several consortia, ensuring that the final set of assessments Wisconsin adopts meet the RTTT definition for "high quality assessments." Wisconsin closes this section with a well organized and detailed implementation plan, followed by definite assignment of work responsibilities across the WDPI and yet to be identified external consultants and contractors.</p>		

(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	15
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: Wisconsin offers wide-ranging plans for “supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments” [(B)(3)]. Kudos to the state for seeing that the “heart of Wisconsin’s implementation of assessments...as well as the means for impacting student learning” is to “involve teachers in collegial examination of standards, curriculum, assessment and instruction.” Wisconsin recognizes that standards and assessments will mean little if they are not adopted in schools and classrooms. Reflecting its progressive history, the state aims to create “reflective practitioners,” who organize their teaching by asking, “What do I do next to make sure this student improves and learns?” Regional, multi-LEA, professional learning communities and lesson study groups have been raised up as the primary mechanism for achieving the big goals of advancing teacher knowledge and their use of the new standard and assessments. Nearly as important, however, are a powerful mix of related methods and tools for extending teacher capacity: creating a pool of instructional support materials; establishing higher education courses, workshops and summer institutes; and, developing online resources (analyzed below). Despite Wisconsin’s definite commitment to focusing implementation energy on the school and classroom level, the proposal does not describe how the professional learning communities, lesson study groups and other mechanisms will ensure that teachers and principals translate their learning into improved practices. As a result, the state scores well against this criterion, but at the lower end of the high range.</p>		
Total	70	61

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	12
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: Wisconsin reports that its longitudinal data system (LDS) has achieved six of the 12 elements of the America COMPETES Act [(C)(1)]. The score of “12” on this criterion reflects Wisconsin’s self-reported statement, documented by a well organized, evidence-based summary chart.</p>		
(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	5
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: Wisconsin presents an excellent framework for how stakeholders will be able to “access and use state data” [(C)(2)]. The state has set as its “gold standard” a LDS with student-level data. The framework demonstrates the state’s experience with data systems and the complexity of having robust systems serve multiple audiences. Wisconsin plans to implement an access model consisting of three levels, ranging from public access with published reports and analysis (Level 1); to authorized access for educators who have rights to individual student data (Level 2); to expert access for WDPI and researchers who have sophisticated skills in accessing and analyzing large data sets. Essential to Wisconsin’s data access is the University of Wisconsin’s Value-Added Research Center (VARC). A nationally known center with a record of work around the Midwest and Northeast, VARC will help Wisconsin provide value-added analysis for student achievement to the state’s summative assessment (i.e., WKCE). With VARC’s assistance, Wisconsin is taking the impressive step of providing stakeholders with at least two major tools to enable reporting and analysis on student growth. One of these, known as Blue Mountain, is reportedly a flexible, intuitive online tool to assist educators, parents and community at the LEA level in interpreting student performance in a graphical manner.</p>		
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	12
<p>(C)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

Wisconsin clearly recognizes that an improved LDS, complete with expanded datasets and new analysis tools, is not enough to spark educational change. Ultimately, LEAs and schools need to know how to “use data to improve instruction” [(C)(3)]. Wisconsin rightly argues that the array of efforts underway and proposed to improve the utility of its LDS will bolster local instruction improvement systems [(C)(3)(i)(ii)]. As part of MOSAIC, Wisconsin intends to produce an item bank, professional development modules and instructional improvement tools—all to be shared through hands-on training and workshops for educators. Most creative is Wisconsin’s plan to have MOSAIC include a platform for “individualized eLearning Portfolios,” through which student and teachers establish learning goals, review progress, and adjust instruction. The eLearning Portfolios would be presented such that there are clear links to the Common Core Standards and a student’s place in the curriculum. Beyond MOSAIC, Wisconsin has good plans to create expertise within its regional Cooperative Education Service Agencies by placing facilitators within each unit who will work with area LEA staff. Addressing somewhat the concern about how teachers will translate new assessment knowledge into practice, Wisconsin intends to institute a professional development model within districts of in-person workshops based on a “train-the-trainer method.” Echoing earlier points in the proposal, the state plans to have the Cooperative Education Service Agency facilitators and in-district professional development support the professional learning communities and lesson study groups. Unfortunately, Wisconsin does not adequately explain how these various professional development approaches will be managed and monitored so that they produce wide-scale data use by teachers. This shortfall is the primary reason Wisconsin scores at the medium level on this criterion. In contrast, Wisconsin presents an exceptionally well structured and detailed plan for how researchers will have access to the LSD and other data sources [(C)(3)(iii)]. The state is taking full advantage of the excellent research universities and centers across the state, and is wise to structure the relationship through a series of MOUs and even state law (i.e., 2009 Wisconsin Act 59). Lastly, the vital presence of VARC is clear in this arena, as it will bring cross-state learning and insights into Wisconsin’s reform efforts. Wisconsin appears poised to have student data and information inform a wide array of research and evaluation.

Total	47	29
-------	----	----

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	17
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Wisconsin evidences superb commitment in the proposal to “providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals” [(D)(1)]. Starting with a WDPI initiated effort in 1994, and codified in 2000, Wisconsin has unambiguous legal, statutory and regulatory provisions for regular and alternative routes to certification. As documented in the proposal, Wisconsin’s alternative certification programs meet each of the five elements of the RTTT definition, resulting in a high score on this sub-criterion [(D)(1)(i)]. In such an encouraging policy and legal environment, 11 alternative route programs (nine for teachers, two for administrators) are in operation, sponsored by nonprofit agencies, public and private higher education institutions, and for-profit organizations. Wisconsin intends to use the RTTT process to push for greater accountability and data-based measures of teacher and principal proficiency in the alternative pathways [(D)(1)(ii)]. Looking at the next sub-criterion, Wisconsin has a vigorous system for identifying and addressing teacher and principal shortage areas [(D)(1)(iii)]. An annual supply and demand report provides a profile of critical shortage areas for LEAs. This information is juxtaposed to data on the number of completers in each licensure area from the state’s 32 higher education institutions and 11 alternative route certification programs. Wisconsin has identified special education as its primary shortage area, followed by mathematics, science, technology education, World Languages and ESL. The evidence is strong that Wisconsin has a good process for understanding its educator labor market and how to target interventions.</p>		
(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	29

(i) Measuring student growth	5	5
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	10
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	7
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	7

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Despite Wisconsin's long-standing attention to human capital, the state receives mixed scores in "improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance" [(D)(2)]. Central to the state's RTTT proposal is ongoing work to develop a new student assessment system that will transform the statewide testing program to incorporate state, district and classroom assessments. In the process, Wisconsin will build onto its LDS the additional data points necessary to connect student growth results to teachers, principals, districts and educator programs [(D)(2)(i)]. Although state statutes require school boards to evaluate their personnel, WDPI does not have a good collective perspective on the teacher or principal evaluation systems being used across the state since all data and information on the evaluations is housed within each LEA. To Wisconsin's credit, it has set as a top priority developing and piloting a rigorous evaluation system for teachers and principals. For sure, the state will build on important leadership development and evaluation initiatives it has had underway the past six years with major funding from the Wallace Foundation [(D)(2)(ii)]. State law requires teacher and principal evaluations be conducted in an employee's first year and every third year thereafter. However, Wisconsin is dedicated to moving toward an annual evaluation of teachers and principals. Taking a bold stand with the RTTT process, it is requiring each Participating LEA "to develop and implement a rigorous, transparent and fair annual evaluation that differentiates effectiveness using multiple rating categories, takes into account data on student growth as a significant factor, and includes multiple observations or examples of actual classroom instruction. Despite this explicit statement, the proposal falls short on explaining how this major change will occur, especially with teacher union support for RTTT at the local level lacking [(D)(2)(iii)]. In the final area of this criterion [(D)(2)(iv)], Wisconsin only earns seven points out of the possible 28. The proposal is excellent in its summary of what is and what will be in terms of multi-faceted induction support, professional development, mentoring, and coaching. Regrettably, the proposal does not provide any guidance on how the state will ensure that the sub-criteria are addressed that relate to compensation, promotion and retention of teachers and principals; tenure or full certification awards; and, removal of ineffective tenured and untenured teachers and principals. Participating LEAs, according to Wisconsin's proposal, were not required to take specific action in these areas; instead, the state has crafted the competitive grants program to "reward districts that are willing to tackle these more contentious issues." Some may consider this a creative way to develop momentum when opposition from teacher unions is likely to be strong. Another interpretation is that Wisconsin has punted on these matters, offering no guarantees as to which of these pivotal issues will be addressed in the RTTT process. Thus, holding strictly to the RTTT criteria, the conclusion is that Wisconsin has not provided adequate plans for how it will use evaluations to inform decisions in several major aspects of personnel performance.

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

(D)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Wisconsin scores in the low range with its plans for "ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals" [(D)(3)(i)(ii)]. The state explains what it has done to date, but provides relatively little insight into what it will do with RTTT assistance. Wisconsin clearly is concerned with placing highly effective teachers and leaders in all schools, and especially high-poverty and high-minority schools. Similarly, the state wants to minimize the problem of placing highly qualified teachers in hard-to-staff subjects and schools. In each of these tough educator labor market scenarios, Wisconsin has an excellent record of a clear strategy, multiple approaches, good data systems and

monitoring, and ample national help. Regrettably, the proposal provides scant evidence about future strategies. A list of possible strategies is listed for each arena, but with inadequate explanation of implementation plans and partners.

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	2
---	-----------	----------

(D)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Wisconsin does not score well under the criteria "improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs" [(D)(4)]. Based on a strict interpretation of the criteria, Wisconsin does not provide evidence that it has met or will be able to meet the RTTT requirements. In terms of linking student achievement to educator preparation [(D)(4)(i)], Wisconsin summarizes a range of important work that is pushing for greater quality in its higher education programs. However, while performance based systems are described, the proposal does not say that these measures will be based on student achievement and student growth. The section on expanding preparation programs for effective teachers and principals [(D)(4)(ii)] is insufficient, touching only briefly on a compelling program worthy of expansion (i.e., Urban Teacher World). Given the state's remarkable set of higher education organizations and 11 alternative certification programs, this sparse discussion and planning is surprising.

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	7
--	-----------	----------

(D)(5) Reviewer Comments:

Wisconsin has emphasized throughout this proposal the critical importance of "providing effective support to teachers and principals" [(D)(5)]. Operating essentially as a summary of all that has been stated before in the proposal, this section reframes the mix of supports Wisconsin envisions for teachers and principals as the state advances standards, assessments, new robust data systems, school turnarounds, and a STEM initiative. Significantly, the list of new strategies highlight professional development approaches that are aligned with the new reforms: informational surveys about what is needed; coaching; mentoring; and, partnerships with higher education for institutes and workshops [(D)(5)(i)]. The list lacks strategic coherence, but that was apparent when the support elements are discussed elsewhere in the proposal as part of implementation plans for each major reform element. Wisconsin's proposed plans to "measure, evaluate and continuously improve the effectiveness of teacher and principal support" are not adequate [(D)(5)(ii)]. The state has had a good record of using various centers, universities and other resources to assess and evaluate the quality of support programs. However, sparse attention is given to this issue in the proposal, and the two new strategies are only briefly explained, providing little understanding for how they will work or how they will be part of a coherent strategy.

Total	138	61
--------------	------------	-----------

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1
(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	10	5

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Wisconsin partially meets the criterion for "intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs" [(E)(1)]. As described in the proposal, the State Superintendent does not have full authority to intervene at the LEA and school level. Currently, the State Superintendent can directly intervene in underperforming schools or school districts only to provide technical assistance; require a district receiving Federal funds to be monitored; or require a district missing AYP for three consecutive years to submit an improvement plan. More extensive interventions, as are suggested by the four school turnaround models defined in the RTTT process, would not be possible under current Wisconsin law. Additional statutory authority is now pending as companion Senate and Assembly bills in the state legislature, with the Governor and State Superintendent urging immediate action.

(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	31
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	26
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Wisconsin presents a creative and challenging set of plans relative to “turning around the lowest-achieving schools” [(E)(2)]. First, instead of working with multiple locations, Wisconsin focuses solely on its largest district. Second, it is stepping beyond the four RTTT school interventions to propose that funds go to a comprehensive overhaul of human, social and political capital in selected Milwaukee schools and adjoining neighborhoods. Wisconsin has instituted a careful method for “identifying its persistently lowest-achieving schools” [(E)(1)(i)]. According to the proposal, the identification process was implemented only for the purposes of the RTTT proposal. The result is that only five persistently low-performing schools have been identified; all are located in the Milwaukee Public School District. Wisconsin has taken a bold step to focus solely on these five schools, arguing that no other schools are in as severe shape academically. Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) is in corrective action under ESEA. Beginning in 2007, the WDPI has directed the district to implement specific corrective actions. As a result, the WDPI has an extensive monitoring and technical assistance system within MPS. In terms of the five low-performing schools, interventions will begin with Title I 1003 School Improvement funds. RTTT funding will be necessary to make improvement efforts more productive. The state proposes using RTTT funds to establish the position of Director of School and District Improvement and secure external experts to assist in the implementation of the reform models by providing technical assistance in areas such as charter school start up and operations, teacher evaluation and development, adolescent literacy, and principal leadership. In addition, RTTT funds would be used to support a research alliance of major academic and civic entities around the reform work in persistently low-performing schools. Lastly, Wisconsin’s most creative part of the proposal is the plan to create Wisconsin Initiative for Neighborhoods and Schools that Work for Children (WINS for Children). As noted earlier in the review, WINS would be modeled after the Harlem Children’s Zone Project and build on an infrastructure established by the Zilber Neighborhood Initiative (ZNI), which is already underway in two Milwaukee neighborhoods with a \$50 million philanthropic investment. WINS will promote academic achievement; foster social and emotional development of children from birth through 25; encourage parental engagement and effective parenting; increase student stability; support instructional leaders and neighborhood schools; and improve teaching and learning. WINS does not fit within the four school intervention models highlighted in the RTTT application and criteria. Aspects of each of those models may be a part of WINS, but not in the ways RTTT describes school intervention. Nevertheless, WINS is a highly compelling alternative: it has strong support from the Governor, State Superintendent, State Legislators, Mayor, Milwaukee educators, community leaders, and business and philanthropic leaders; it is based on a reportedly effective model in New York City; and it builds on similar work in Milwaukee. Most important, WINS rationale is spot on—school failure is often a complex combination of students’ academic, social and community realities, not only what is occurring within the walls and schedule of a school. Wisconsin would help RTTT expand the reach of its innovations beyond traditional school boundaries. All in all, the state scores in the high range for this sub-criterion, but loses some standing because of WINS’ modest ties to RTTT’s preferred interventions.</p>		
Total	50	36

F. General

	Available	Tier 1
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	5
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:		

Wisconsin's scored in the mid-range on the criterion to "make education funding a priority" [(F)(1)]. The share of Wisconsin's state budget going to K-12 education decreased slightly between FY 2008 and FY 2009. Although a small drop (35.9 percent to 34.3 percent), it still shifted education support in a negative direction [(F)(1)(i)]. Wisconsin has a strong record for highly equitable school funding, both between high-need LEAs and within LEAs between high poverty schools and other schools [(F)(1)(2)]. The proposal provides good evidence of how the state's school funding policies result in highly comparable per pupil funding rates across districts, but is silent on the required matter of within district equity.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	22
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>To quote the proposal, "Wisconsin has established a policy environment that fosters the proliferation of high-quality charter schools and innovative programs statewide" [(F)(2)]. Unfortunately, the state falls short in two important aspects charter school policy as defined by the RTTT process. Wisconsin's first charters were authorized in 1993. Since then state laws and regulations have evolved to the point where there is no limit concerning the number of charter schools or the number of students that charter schools may serve [(F)(2)(i)]. Wisconsin has a rigorous monitoring and review process, with academic performance the most imperative criterion. [(F)(2)(ii)]. Wisconsin provides charter schools and traditional public schools equitable funding in as much as LEAs are awarded the same levels of support for students whether or not they attend charter schools. However, the state gives LEAs final authority over the amount of funding provided to charter schools, which means in some LEAs charters are funded at lower levels than traditional schools [(F)(2)(iii)]. Turning to the final charter school sub-criterion [(F)(2)(iv)], Wisconsin receives zero points because it fails to have policies that provide charter schools financial or other assistance with facilities. Regarding innovative and autonomous public schools [(F)(2)(v)], school boards in Wisconsin have maximum flexibility to create and operate such schools. Unfortunately, the proposal does not provide any examples of innovative, autonomous schools or a discussion of plans to promote them.</p>		
(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	5
<p>(F)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Wisconsin provides a lively, historical discussion "demonstrating other significant reform conditions" [(F)(3)]. Reaching back nearly 150 years to feature its role as the birthplace of Kindergarten, the state emphasizes the priority it has long given to early childhood education and its significance to academic achievement. Related to its charter school record, Wisconsin notes its long history of open enrollment programs. Wisconsin also highlights its efforts on small class size through the Student Achievement Guarantee in Education (SAGE) program. Nearly 475 schools participate in the program this school year. Investments in high quality educators, such as those achieving National Board Certification, also are featured. Lastly, Wisconsin rightly makes the point that a good deal of state energy has gone in recent years to ensuring academic opportunities for students in the state's small, rural schools, which serve about 44 percent of the student population.</p>		
Total	55	32

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	15
<p>Competitive Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Wisconsin presents an exciting STEM initiative, underscoring its commitment to have excellence in science, technology, engineering and math as a central piece of its RTTT reforms. The plan opens with smart attention to the initiative's leadership by creating the State Superintendent's STEM Advisory</p>		

Council. This group will coordinate efforts around the state to secure relations between regional economic development partners and higher education, aligning STEM efforts with higher education and workforce needs, as well as promoting best practices within Wisconsin schools. The central feature of the STEM initiative will be four different STEM Academies across the state, each developed in collaboration with educational institutions, professional organizations and non-profit agencies. The Academies will provide a STEM focused learning center initially for high school juniors and seniors on-site and virtually. Faculty also will benefit through interactive technology in lesson study and professional learning communities. The STEM Academies will help to deliver standards and high quality instruction in the math and sciences, especially to schools lacking in qualified teachers. The STEM initiative will support pilot projects in Participating LEAs, lead an effort to increase credit requirements in math and science, and increase AP course participation by training high school faculty.

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

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

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

Absolute Reviewer Comments:

Yes, Wisconsin's RTTT proposal meets the "Absolute Priority – Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform." Wisconsin brings impressive focus to its goals for RTTT: zeroing in on achievement and graduate rate gaps. The state presents a comprehensive and coherent reform agenda and clearly articulates its goals for implementing RTTT's four priority reforms. The proposal lists a five-part reform strategy needed to raise overall achievement and reduce gaps. In a bold approach, Wisconsin extends its reform strategy beyond RTTT's parameters to propose WINS (Wisconsin Initiative for Neighborhoods and Schools that work for children), a four-year demonstration project modeled on the Harlem Children's Zone (NYC). Wisconsin's reform agenda is aggressive and specific. Not only will it advance work statewide on the far reaching RTTT reforms, it will connect that work to comprehensive interventions in the lives of the state's most troubled students. Rightly so, the state has adopted a theory of change that sees advances in achievement as dependent on a reform model that connects statewide policy and technical changes with school and neighborhood-specific interventions and capacity building.

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

Grand Total	500	317
--------------------	------------	------------



Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 1

Wisconsin Application #6960WI-4



A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	49
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	4
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	33
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	12
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(i) The applicant established five key elements as its reform strategy but did not explicitly link the elements to the stated six goals. This linkage is important as it should be clearly aligned to the RTTT goals. A clearly coherent roadmap for achieving its goals is articulated as outlined in the reform plans. It is unclear from the application that "criteria for approval" related to the LEAs' ability to propose initiatives under the Wisconsin Achieves Competitive Grant Program has been established. (ii) A strong statewide commitment to the applicant's RTTT plan is evidenced by the 97% of LEAs' commitment to participate. The requirement that all LEAs implement all portions of the State's plan, the opportunity for many LEAs to compete for additional funds under the Wisconsin Achieves Competition Grant, and the agreement of the six urban districts to implement specific intervention strategies, indicate the applicant's understanding of the implementation of rigorous reform and the necessary commitment to it. Although the application reflects signatures of commitment from the majority of superintendents and school board presidents, it is evident that few local teachers' union leaders signed the MOU. Successful outcomes, as defined by the application will be realized through authentic involvement, collaboration and agreements of all parties. (iii) Potential statewide impact is evidenced by the percentage of LEAs committed to the State's RTTT plans and the requirements of each LEA. The student achievement targets however, are not aligned to the applicant's stated goals.</p>		
(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	25
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	18
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	7
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(i) The applicant states that individuals hired to work in the OEII and Cooperative Educational Service Agency will have knowledge of the content of reform work, however it doesn't discuss any criteria related to "proven success" in implementing reforms. The candidacy for these positions is strengthened with not only having deep knowledge of reform but also a proven track record of success. The application refers to the Office of Education Innovation and Improvement as the office that will ensure effective implementation and provide oversight and support to LEAs, however the role of the Cooperative Education Service Agency is unclear as it relates to the relationship of the OEII and LEA. It is unclear as to what activities will be implemented to build capacity at the LEA and OEII levels. The application outlines an ambitious timeline for implementation of key initiatives and activities but it does not reflect the necessary capacity building strategies in key areas to ensure success of the initiatives. The OEII timeline for implementation of the plan's activities all begin in year one, first</p>		

quarter, however it is unclear as to whether consideration will be given to prioritizing or scaffolding activities to ensure capacity and success of implementation. While the State recognizes the need for local and regional capacity building work, delineating support for LEAs is necessary to ensure successful implementation of identifying best practices, assessing practice impact, eliminating unsuccessful or low impact practices, dissemination and replication of best practices statewide and accountability systems. The applicant exhibits a thorough understanding of the importance of effective and efficient operations and systems as evidenced by the use of external mechanisms as modeled after the State's effort with ORR and WDOA. The budget reflects appropriate allocations aligned to the proposed RTTT reform plan. The State's plan to allocate funding for highly effective RTTT interventions in the 2013-2015 budget reflects a commitment to sustainability of high levels of achievement and improvement. The plan reflects excellent demonstration of philanthropic community support as evidenced in the partnership to establish the Milwaukee Children's Zone. (ii) The State's principals through their organizations have expressed commitment to the State's reform agenda as evidenced by the number of letters of support from administration organizations, however the lack of significant support from the leadership of the teachers' unions presents a major barrier to reform. The application neglects to address the necessary steps that will be taken to engage the teachers' unions. Significant evidence of a comprehensive campaign to garner support and partnerships for the State's reform agenda was conducted statewide. As a result of these efforts a broad base of stakeholders are poised to assist the State in the implementation of the agenda. However, it is unclear from the application how the support will be coordinated and utilized in a strategic and coherent structure to ensure major impact and success of the implementation of the reform agenda.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	15
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	10
(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>(i) It is evident that the State has been engaged in ongoing reform work aligned to the four education reform areas, ie. Common Core Standards for ELA and Mathematics, State Assessment System- Next Generation Assessment Task Force, MOSAIC, intervention for lowest performing schools and competitive funding for local LEAs to advance its reforms. (ii) While the NAEP and WKCE data reflects overall improvement in math achievement, there is a significant disparity in gains among subgroups. The applicant documents a gap reduction in Reading and Math, however it is unclear as to what specific actions and strategies contributed to the gap reduction. The applicant links recent mathematics gains statewide to strategic "in class support" of coaches and focused professional development, however the process and tools to conclude this statement is unclear. The application states that increasing graduation rates is a priority however it is unclear, beyond the planned Graduation Summit, as to the previous actions taken to address this area, which can provide a foundation from which to begin the implementation of rigorous reforms. It is unclear from the application, the State's policies related to participation in NAEP by ELLs and SWD and the granting of accommodations.</p>		
Total	125	89

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)The State is participating in a consortium of States in working jointly on developing and adopting a common set of K12 standards. Forty-eight States are participating in the Common Core International Standards Initiative. (ii)Commitment to adopting a common set of K-12 standards by August, 2010 is evidenced by the State's schedule of July, 2010 as outlined in its legal process and timeframe.		
(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	3
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: The applicant is a participant in the Summative Multi-State Assessment Resources for Teachers and Educational Researchers and Balanced Assessment Consortia. There are nine States participating in SMARTER Consortium.		
(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	14
(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: The applicant refers to regional economic workforce development groups who will provide input into the Employability Skills Competencies, however, it is unclear if teachers are represented in this group. The applicant provided a thorough plan of action utilizing best practices for implementation and engaging key stakeholders. The timeline is ambitious but achievable given the expertise and structures planned. The applicant did not include a mechanism for a systematic assessment of the progress and a vehicle for course correction throughout the process. It is unclear whether a broad base communication plan or awareness component will be developed to educate parents and the community about the transition to rigorous, international standards.		
Total	70	57

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	12
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: The application reflected six elements.		
(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	5
(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: The State's plan reflects a commitment and understanding of the importance of the ability by stakeholders to access data, as evidenced by the design and implementation of the LDS student-level data warehouse. This access model has three distinct levels and characteristics, designed to provide stakeholders with valuable information that can be used to impact the improvement efforts. The growth model value-added analysis for student achievement can serve as a powerful tool to not only assess student growth but program effectiveness.		
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	14
(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: The instructional improvement system within MOSAIC has the potential for ensuring dramatic improvement in instruction as evidenced by the plan. It is important to consistently utilize the knowledge of school practitioners throughout the development and stages to ensure successful implementation. This component does not delineate systematic capacity building at the State and LEA levels so that stakeholders become proficient in using the system to inform practice. The application presents a comprehensive plan for providing high quality professional development in the use of data systems to improve instruction. It is unclear what mechanisms will be in place to assess pilot		

programs, capacity and quality programs to ensure high leverage, high impact and quality prior to full implementation. The applicant describes the work with VARC as an example of how data will be shared with researchers to inform practice, however this scope can be limiting in terms of the potential for a wide range of research available that can significantly impact the improvement efforts.

Total	47	31
-------	----	----

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	19
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: It is evident that the State monitors and identifies areas of teacher and principal shortages, however it is unclear how that data then translates to preparation of teachers and principals to fill the shortage areas.</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	6
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	14
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: (i)The applicant has determined an effective system for measuring student growth as evidenced by the development of the LDS. (ii)It is evident that based on previous initiatives related to evaluation systems for teachers and principals, the foundation exist from which to implement the four strategies. It is unclear from the application the explicit role which principals and teachers will be involved. It is unclear as to the extent key learnings from the previous initiatives will be integrated into the reform work. (iii)As the State will require participating LEAs to develop and implement a rigorous and transparent annual evaluation system and models have been provided for adoption, it is unclear as to what the levels of support and technical assistance will be given to the LEAs. Since the majority of teachers' unions did not endorse the RTTT reform agenda, a consideration to what levels of support and steps will be taken to assist LEAs as it relates to collective bargaining agreements. (iv)This section responds only partially to the criteria as it primarily discusses the coaching and mentoring component.It does not explicitly link the decision making to the coaching component. The plan for the coaching and mentoring initiatives are thoughtful and rigorous as it builds on current research and best practices. The applicant did not build in an ongoing monitoring mechanism to ensure quality control of the coaching and mentoring program. It is unclear from the plan, what actions or steps will be taken if an individual doesn't benefit from the coaching/mentoring programs.Based on the current data from previous initiatives, it was unclear as to the time commitment coaches and mentors would be expected to give to their assignments.</p>		
(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)Current State policies and participation in collaboratives such as NLNS, TFA, TNTP, have provided the applicant with necessary leverage and experiences to implement its three strategies to ensure equitable distribution of teachers and principals, however, the strategy to ensure the distribution of</p>		

experienced teachers to the high poverty/high minority schools is not discussed. The performance targets, based on the applicant's calculations are achievable, however an ongoing analysis of the data is necessary. (ii)The applicant builds on a foundation of initiatives that have focused on increasing the percentage of effective teachers to teach in hard to staff positions. This data can be useful in the development of the four strategies to ensure rigor and impact. It is unclear from the application that an assessment component is integrated into the process. Although areas of recruitment, compensation, professional development are discussed, the applicant does not provide information regarding strategies affecting human resources practices and procedures, which if not examined can be a barrier to reform.

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	7
<p>(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: While the plan is appropriate given the current partnership with CCSO and AACTE which will give LEAs and preparation programs valuable information regarding reforming programs to improve student achievement, it does not explicitly outline the plan for linking student achievement to current principal, teachers and preparation programs. In the absence of data outlining the effectiveness of stated programs, it is difficult to evaluate the applicant's plan for expanding preparation and credentialing options.</p>		
(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	12
<p>(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (i)The plan as outlined through its twelve strategies, illustrates a clear and thoughtful roadmap for providing data-informed professional development, and is significantly dependent on external partnerships. However the plan does not explicitly address the necessary capacity building processes that will result in creating professional learning communities where data informed professional development occurs when staff is focused on ie. using data to inform instructional decisions, effective instructional strategies, alignment of student needs to practices. The issue of time; for example, common planning time, frequency, job embedded opportunities, is a major consideration in establishing the structures for this work to occur. (ii)Although the strategies may be appropriate for gathering useful data to improve the effectiveness of those supports necessary to improve student achievement, they are focused on preservice teachers and initial educators. It was unclear from the plan the process of measuring the effectiveness of supports related to veteran teachers.</p>		
Total	138	90

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1
(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	10	5
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: The State has the legal authority to intervene directly in LEAs, however it does not have the authority to intervene in schools. There is currently pending legislation to address the State's authority in intervening in both LEAs and schools.</p>		
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	35
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	30
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (i) The State systematically identifies its lowest achieving schools. (ii)The plan to address the persistently lowest-achieving schools is ambitious as evidenced by the rigorous support,</p>		

monitoring, technical assistance and accountability systems and structures that will be in place. The continuous use of data regarding best practices related to the three proposed models will be critical in maximizing impact. The State has created a solid infrastructure to support the reform work of the three models and the implementation of WINS for Children. The use of external organizations and specialist in the design and program implementation of key areas is appropriate, however, consideration for alignment and coordination may be necessary to ensure an overall coherent intervention.

Total	50	40
--------------	-----------	-----------

F. General

	Available	Tier 1
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	5
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: Total revenues available to the State decreased in 2009. The State's policies lead to equitable funding between LEAs but not within an LEA.		
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	35
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: The State has a charter school law that does not prohibit increasing the number of high-performing charter schools. The State has laws and guidelines regarding the authorization of charter schools and the renewal and closure of charter schools. The State provides equitable funding to the LEAs, however provisions for equitable distribution within the LEA to charter schools is the decision of the individual LEA. The State does not provide funding for facilities as it relates to its charter schools. The State enables LEAs to operate autonomous public schools		
(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	5
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: The applicant provides sufficient evidence of State reform conditions and initiatives prior to the submission of the reform agenda application, such as expanding programs to 4K, class size initiative SAGE, Wisconsin Quality Education Initiative and the repeal of the Qualified Economic Offer Law. These efforts are directly linked to improving student achievement.		
Total	55	45

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	15
Competitive Reviewer Comments: The plan outlines a thorough plan for creating STEM academies, aligning resources to student needs based on data, staff capacity and recruitment of teachers to hard to fill positions. Partnerships providing expertise and ongoing support have been established.		
Total	15	15

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes
<p>Absolute Reviewer Comments: The State's application met this criteria as evidenced by the comprehensive goals and plan for each of the four education reform areas. The State's commitment to implement a systemic reform agenda as evident by the initiatives outlined and the broad base statewide support, has the potential for far-reaching impact and transformational improvement for the State's educational system.</p>		
Total		0
Grand Total	500	367



Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 1

Wisconsin Application #6960WI-5



A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	42
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	30
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	7

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

i. Wisconsin describes a multi-tiered approach to supporting its schools, with Milwaukee receiving the most intensive support, the six large urban districts receiving the next tier of support, and all other participating LEAs receiving support based on their participation in the Wisconsin Achieves competitive grant program. The overall plan that the state describes touches on all four of the main grant priorities. The application is quite candid in naming some of the challenges that Wisconsin faces – large gaps in student achievement and graduation rates among particular student subgroups. Given these large gaps, it is logical that the overall program description focuses the most intensive support on districts with the largest numbers of students in lower performing subgroups. The particular details of Wisconsin's plans will be discussed in the comments below. However, in general, the state describes a strategy that will address better data systems and use of data, improving educator quality, improving standards and assessments, and addressing the challenges of the lowest performing schools. ii. The memorandum of understanding (MOU) and exhibits one and two provided in the application's appendix are generally strong commitments by both the state and LEAs, but do not explicitly commit participating LEAs to certain aspects of the Race to the Top criteria. For example, there is nothing in Exhibit 1 about using evaluation data to inform compensation, promotion, retention or removal of ineffective educators. And, while the application states that recent changes to legislation may make some of these changes possible, none of the LEAs have committed to implementing any of the innovative systems that are now permitted under law. And, while the law requires use of evaluation data in decisions about removal and tenure, these are not addressed explicitly in the MOU or Exhibit 1. Given that there are new guidelines for evaluation for participating LEAs, making it clear that the regulations will apply to the special guidelines for participating LEAs would strengthen this MOU and Exhibit 1. The MOU/Exhibit 1 does not commit LEAs to making data available to researchers or the public. And, though the state may be able to address this independently, depending on the extent of local data that it chooses to collect, making this agreement a part of the MOU/Exhibit 1 would assure LEAs commitment to more transparent data systems. In addition, the state had a very significant challenge in getting local teacher union leaders to commit to the MOU. Just over 11% of district-level union leaders committed to the project. It appears that none of the union leaders in the state's largest districts, which are also those where the most dramatic changes are expected, have demonstrated their commitment to the plans as outlined in the MOU. While some aspects of the state plan can surely be implemented through regulation or other state-level action, other elements will require teacher support to be successful in schools and classrooms. Moreover, while the application states that state and local union leaders were included in the development of the plan and were "generally receptive to the State plan," there is no evidence provided of their general receptivity to the specific plans as described. Aside from the challenges described above, the state has agreement from superintendents

and school board leaders in the vast majority of LEAs. And, again, though exceptions are noted above, the MOU reflects the commitment of these actors to the majority of the Race to the Top criteria. iii. The LEAs that are committed to participation represent the vast majority of LEAs in the state and cover most of the schools, students, and students in poverty. Thus, the groundwork is laid for broad statewide impact at the level of Exhibit 1 in the MOU. More intense impact will be felt in those districts that compete for funding under the Wisconsin Achieves grant program or the six districts that are targeted for additional support. The goals that Wisconsin lays out in its proposal are extremely ambitious. It sets growth targets on NAEP based on the growth among highest growth states in the nation and plans to increase growth rates on its state assessment by 1.5 standard deviations (using the average standard deviation from the past five years). In some cases, these goals would result in cutting the achievement gaps in half. However, it will also mean that in four years some achievement gaps (e.g., the Black-White gap in 4th grade reading) will be more than 15% in those scoring proficient or advanced. This is a serious challenge for the state. The historical data that the state provides shows that demonstrating consistent growth for many student subgroups on NAEP has been impossible. Thus, the goal of consistent growth for all is certainly an ambitious one. And, given that the growth targets set are based on the historical performance of certain other states, they have to be considered achievable. We have less information in the application about the historical trends in achievement on the state test, but the increase of half a standard deviation in historical growth rates should also be considered ambitious and potentially achievable. Given that the state plans to focus the majority of its energy on the districts that have the greatest numbers of students in the lower performing subgroups, one hopes that the investment will yield these dramatic gains. In terms of graduation rates, Wisconsin aims to improve the overall graduation rate. Unfortunately, the state does not have the ability to calculate a rate in compliance with the definition in the application guidelines and will not have that ability until 2011. Without the ability to calculate a graduation rate, it will be difficult to assess the attainment of the goals. In addition, data collection and rate reporting appears to have changed several times in the recent past making the available historical data very difficult to interpret. However, the rate of improvement in graduation rates that the state proposes means that the absolute number of high school dropouts actually grows based on their predictions, so that next year they project 7,190 dropouts and four years later they project 8,215 dropouts. Thus, while the rate technically improves, the dropout condition will affect a greater number of students. For the three subgroups identified for improvement in graduation rate, the initial goal is based on a ten year average but this average includes changes in how the rate was calculated, making it of questionable utility in estimating a reasonable and ambitious target. In any case, as mentioned above, the state proposes to improve achievement on the state test by 1.5 standard deviations over the historical rate, which may not mean doubling the rate of improvement. Thus, doubling the rate of growth in graduation rates seems to not align with the achievement goals. There appears to be a gap in the internal logic of these goals. In terms of college enrollment, the state projects annual increases of 1.86%. This is significantly more than the annual projected increase in diplomas of 1.4%. Given that the percentage of graduates that enrolls in college is currently around 64%, increasing that rate at a rate somewhat higher than the increase in graduation rate seems feasible. However, there are discrepancies in the projected numbers of graduates between Tables 15 and 17, making it difficult to assess the validity of these calculations.

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	18
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	11
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	7

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:
 i. The application states that Wisconsin will create an Office of Education Innovation and Improvement (OEII) to oversee its reform plans. Having an office focused on this oversight and support is reasonable. However, it is unclear who will staff this office or their qualifications to support this effort. As a result, it is difficult to assess the capacity of this office to engage in the tasks described. The state MOU requires LEA participation in all aspects of the state reform plan and the state plans to support

LEAs in these efforts by developing model instruments and providing some professional development. Because the main focus of many of the state's efforts is on the lowest achieving schools and districts, much of the state support will be consumed here. Given this heavy focus, state-level support to other districts will be relatively limited. The state's use of and connection with regional educational service agencies provides some infrastructure to support implementation. However, there is little mention of how information will flow from the LEAs back up to the state so that practices that are found effective in some LEAs can be disseminated statewide. The state's plan to hire external evaluators to assess and publicize information about progress toward the goals outlined in the application is strong. Though the timeline may be overly ambitious – for example, designing a high quality and sufficiently specific request for proposals to fill this role within 72 hours would be extremely fast for a state agency – the general idea is supported by evidence. The cost for this external oversight is described specifically in the budget narrative. The largest share of the budget is meant to support the six high need districts. The state has identified a rate of \$166 per student to be spent to achieve its goals in these areas. However, the budget tables do not identify how this money is to be spent across the various expenditure areas (personnel, training, supplies, etc). Thus it is difficult to assess the feasibility of this amount or the ability of the state and districts to absorb these costs after the grant period has ended. In general, the application is quite vague about how many of its projects will be continued after grant funding ends. State support averaging over \$15 million per year will be difficult to replace. Though the application states that the state superintendent will include support for effective programs in his budgets after the grant, there is no specificity about how this will be accomplished. The OEII, for example, will play a key role in overseeing improvement efforts and is projected to cost over \$1 million per year. Ongoing training and mentoring for educators is projected to cost over \$2 million per year. If these programs are effective, these costs will likely continue if the state hopes to see improvements continue. Given that funds for education actually decreased over the past year, finding ways to support increased costs will be a significant challenge. ii. Wisconsin provides a large number of letters of support from a broad group of stakeholders endorsing the plans put forth in the Race to the Top application. There is very strong representation from business groups and American Indian tribes. There are also letters from organizations representing school administrators and school boards. Several letters from institutes of higher education suggest that there is support in that sector for the state plans. The one letter from the state teachers' union is quite tepid in its support of the overall plan, though it does point out some aspects that it endorses. This is the only letter that suggests that teachers are at all supportive of this plan. Because teachers will play such a key role in the implementation of these efforts, their support is essential. Also, lacking are letters of support from some of the six districts that will be targeted for more significant intervention. Though the mayor of Milwaukee offers his support, as do business organizations in Racine and Wisconsin, elected officials or community groups in the other targeted districts are not represented among the letters of support. Given that intervention in these districts will be the most transformative, it would be helpful to know if there are groups in these places that support the state plans.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	15
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	10

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

i. The narrative demonstrates Wisconsin's experience in working collaboratively to build standards and assessments. The state's experience with the American Diploma Project and the Multiple Opportunities for Student Assessment and Instruction Consortium (MOSAIC) are two examples of inter-state consortia aimed at improving practices. The state has begun efforts to improve data systems, piloting a system with the Madison public schools that begins to track student data. The state recently passed legislation that will allow it to use student performance data in educator evaluations and has been part of a foundation funded effort to enhance school leadership. The state also has some experience attempting to turnaround low performing schools, particularly in Milwaukee. Though this effort has not yielded the intended results, the evidence above shows that the state (and LEAs) has

pursued reforms in the four key education reform areas. ii. In terms of improving achievement, Wisconsin has made gains in math and almost no gains in reading, as measured by both the state test and NAEP. Interestingly, the state has also been more successful in closing achievement gaps in math. The application attributes this change in math to efforts in Milwaukee schools. This implies that there has been little growth in the rest of the state over the last five years. This is a troubling fact given the number of efforts that the state outlined earlier in their application. The narrative does not offer any lessons that the state is drawing from the data that shows relatively stagnant performance. In addition, the very large gaps between proficiency rates on the state test and on NAEP would indicate that either the exams are measuring very different content or the requirements for proficiency on the state test are at a much lower level than the NAEP. In terms of high school graduation rate, a previous section of the application stated that the rate had been calculated inconsistently over the past decade, thus making it difficult to draw conclusions from the available rates. Though this fact is not re-iterated here, it appears that there has been very limited growth for most student subgroups (Black students being the exception that show higher growth) and negative growth for white students (the majority of Wisconsin students). The state is planning a summit to discuss this issue with districts. Though again, the absence of any evidence of real improvement in the overall graduation rate is troubling given the number of initiatives that are described as being underway in the state.

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

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

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:
 i. Wisconsin provides evidence of its participation in the CCSSO/NGA consortium to develop common core standards. These standards are designed to be internationally competitive and build toward college and career readiness. Wisconsin has a plan to convene stakeholder in both higher education and business to ensure that the new standards will meet the needs of colleges, universities, and employers in the state. The consortium includes the vast majority of states in the US. ii. Wisconsin states that it is ready to adopt the common core standards by July 2010. Though the narrative describes how previous standards development efforts have involved a more inclusive and consultative process with a range of stakeholders, the application commits the state to adopting these standards without such a process. The letter of support from the governor would imply that he supports this timeline. However, full points were not awarded because the application criterion requests information about a plan to implement the standards in a well-planned way. And, while Wisconsin plans to work with LEAs to develop model curriculum based on the standards for different grade levels and subject areas over the course of the grant, the details of how this effort will be implemented are somewhat vague. It is a strength that these models will then be shared statewide with related professional development being offered by regional service agencies. This appears to be a feasible plan for the vast majority of participating LEAs who will not be recipients of intense state intervention.

(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	7
--	-----------	----------

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:
 Wisconsin is part of the MOSAIC group of 26 states, mentioned above, that seeks to build a formative and interim assessment system aligned to the common core standards. This is a recently formed consortium that is focused most heavily on creating item banks, classroom techniques, and interim measures that can be used to assess student understanding and growth over time. While the MOSAIC effort appears to be of high quality, it does not meet the definition of "high quality assessment" as

defined in the application. This definition relates to measuring student achievement in compliance with ESEA. The MOU related to MOSAIC gives states and districts latitude in implementing the assessments that would potentially prevent them from meeting ESEA requirements. In order to meet the demands of "high quality assessment" and "student achievement" as defined, Wisconsin has partnered with nine other states in the SMARTER consortium. These assessments are to be used for assessment of school and district progress as required under ESEA. For its summative assessments, Wisconsin has a plan for a "high quality assessment" but does not have a consortium that includes a "significant" number of states as defined in the application reviewer guidance; thus precluding the highest point category. The MOSAIC consortium, however, does include a majority of states and describes ambitious plans to develop assessments that may be instructionally useful.

(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	18
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: Wisconsin has a plan to introduce standards and assessments (mostly formative and interim assessments) to teachers through local teams at pilot sites. Working with local educator teams supported by regional service agencies, the state plans to have professional learning communities develop curricula, training materials, and assessment items that can be shared statewide. In addition, because this work is to be tied to the work of the MOSAIC project, the materials that Wisconsin develops can be shared with consortium partners and vice versa. This should give the state access to a great number of instructional resources. There is some evidence to suggest that this strategy will build both familiarity with the standards as well as increased levels of assessment expertise in that case. For this reason, Wisconsin's plan should be seen as an ambitious and achievable plan to help teachers transition to new standards and an assessment system that combines both formative and summative elements. The performance measures that the state provides show a regular roll out of this effort to reach increasing numbers of LEAs each year. Because not every LEA has to be involved in the pilot development of materials, but can instead learn from the experience of their peer LEAs, this is a reasonable expectation. There is very little discussion of the support that will be offered for the state's summative assessment system to be developed as part of the SMARTER consortium. This part of the plan appears to be less well-developed.</p>		
Total	70	63

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	12
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: Wisconsin currently has a data system that includes six of the 12 elements in the America COMPETES Act. Though the state has a plan to be able to document all 12 elements by 2011, the application criterion requires that points only be given for those elements of the longitudinal data system that are already in place at the time of application.</p>		
(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	5
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: Wisconsin has some experience making data available to the public and researchers and plans to enhance the quality and amount of data that can be used. In addition, partnership with the University of Wisconsin Value Added Research Center will allow the state to enhance the measures and comparisons that can be made available to educators statewide. Training done in partnership with regional assistance centers and LEAs as well as modules provided by the state will begin to build the ability of educators across the state to make use of the new systems in ways that will hopefully improve resource allocation and overall effectiveness.</p>		

(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	11
<p>(C)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>i. Wisconsin's application focuses heavily on the data that will be provided as part of the new assessments developed through MOSAIC. These assessments will be intended to mark student progress at the individual level. Teachers will then be able to assess students' progress using a computer interface. Training will be delivered through the regional educational service agencies across the state. Because the interim and benchmark assessments are meant to be used as an instructional tool (unlike summative assessments), there is some reason to believe that teachers may actually use the system to guide their instructional improvement. It is not clear whether all LEAs in the state will be required to use the MOSAIC assessments or whether this will be optional. If it is optional, the application does not make clear how LEAs will be encouraged to make use of this system to improve instruction. ii. The state plans to depend heavily on the regional service agencies to build LEA capacity to use the interim assessments and related data system. Because the application does not provide clear performance measures about the numbers of LEAs or schools that are to be involved in the use of the MOSAIC and GOALS system each year, it is difficult to assess the feasibility of its overall plan. Using the professional learning communities that are to be piloted to develop assessment content and expertise is reasonable, but technological facility with the reporting "dashboard" and the proper conclusions that can be drawn from the data will require outside expertise. This will presumably come from the web-based training modules that the state describes and the support of service agencies. Research would suggest that in order for the new systems to be used consistently, a local expert and supporter will be required. Such support is not explicitly provided for in the plans put forth. Similarly, it is not clear what role principals and administrators will play in either learning about the new system or potentially supporting their teachers in the use of the system. iii. The application discusses in some detail the state's plan to work with a research center to develop value added measures to assess the impacts of schools and districts. This is a worthwhile and commendable effort. The application also discussed a partnership with other educational institutions to create a useful P-16 data system that would allow those institutions to make more effective decisions. However, the application does not discuss the possibility of making more data available and accessible to other researchers. It also does not mention making use of the data systems to answer larger questions about the effectiveness of certain programs, or professional development offerings, or myriad other questions that may be helpful. The state does not appear to have a plan to make its data more accessible to researchers outside of the limited number of partners that it has already identified. No benchmarks, timelines, or responsibilities were outlined for making data available and accessible to researchers external to the educational institutions or VARC.</p>		
Total	47	28

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	18
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>i. It is clear that Wisconsin allows alternative route certification for both principals and teachers. Furthermore, it is clear that the alternate pathways require some of the criteria specified in the definition in the application – for example, they can provide the same level of certification. However, it is not clear in either the narrative or the appendix that these programs limit the coursework required. And, while the appendix provides some information about how alternative route certification programs are reviewed, it is not clear that programs are actually selective beyond requiring a bachelor's degree. This lack of clarity makes it impossible to provide points in the highest category for this criterion; instead, it scores in the middle. ii. There are a number of alternate route certification programs in operation for both teachers and administrators. The tables provided in the appendix provide evidence that many of these programs are preparing significant numbers of teachers for positions in the state's</p>		

schools. iii. The state collects data about the areas in which teachers are being prepared, the numbers of applications that districts receive for open positions, and the vacancies that remain. Using this data, the state has identified a primary shortage area as special education with a number of secondary shortage areas. This data is made public so that there is potential for the free market to fill high need niches. In addition, the state works with its alternative route providers to recruit and provide training specifically in those areas where the state has a high need.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	10
(i) Measuring student growth	5	1
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	4
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	3
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	2

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

i. While Wisconsin's application states its commitment to measuring student growth and appears to employ a strategy that will use both interim and summative assessments, there is very little detail about the frequency of such assessments, whether these assessments will be done in every subject and every grade, and whether there will be any other measures to assess student growth over time. While understanding that this system has not yet been built, there are some fundamental questions that must be answered if we are to assess the plans general feasibility. For example, current testing is only in some grades and only in math and reading in many states. This makes it impossible to measure annual growth for many students. Without more detail on the state's general plans for measuring growth, we cannot tell if Wisconsin has a strategy to address this challenge. ii. The application states that participating LEAs will have to adopt an evaluation system that follows the language required in the application. The state will create model evaluation systems with stakeholder input that districts can adopt or districts will be able to create or adopt their own provided they meet the same standards, as approved by the state. Given the very vague discussion of student growth that the application provides, it is difficult to assess how well the evaluations will be able to take this into account for all students and teachers. It is not at all clear what rating categories might result from the evaluation systems or whether the state will require common categories regardless of the system to be used. There is no detail provided on whether the state will assist LEAs in developing evaluation systems or whether LEAs that choose not to adopt the state model will be "on their own" to develop something else. And, while the narrative states that the systems will be transparent, there is no information provided about how they will be made so. iii. Though state law only requires evaluation every three years, the narrative states that all participating LEAs will be required to evaluate all teachers every year. It is not clear that LEAs have the capacity to conduct evaluations at this scale or how the state will support those that do not. There is no information provided about how such annual evaluations may be monitored or how the resulting data will be collected by the state. iv. Wisconsin mentions a number of professional development opportunities that it will require in participating LEAs – math and reading coaches, teacher and principal mentoring, and coaching institutes. However, student achievement data and educator evaluations are only mentioned in passing under strategy number eight. It does not appear that the evaluation data will play a significant role in the planning and decision making of many of the professional development efforts that the state has planned. This criterion intends to assess the extent to which there is a plan to push LEAs to use educator evaluations to inform a range of professional development efforts. Partly because the application is vague about the nature of these evaluations and partly because the connection between evaluation and professional development appears so tenuous in this application, very limited credit can be given for the first element (D2iv.a.) of this criterion. The application does not address at all the use of evaluation results to compensate, promote, or retain teachers and principals. There is no discussion of using evaluation results to make tenure or full certification decisions. There is no mention of how evaluation results might be used in removing ineffective teachers, nor what opportunities these teachers should be given to help them improve. Though there will be some competitive grant funds available for districts that

choose to address these issues, the state does not provide any guidelines, recommendations, or requirements in its application. And, while the state provides performance measures for many of these areas, it does not describe any real strategy for moving toward the stated targets. The credit give for this criterion is based on the fact that there is one small connection between using evaluation and an improvement strategy (number eight). However, overall there is minimal use described for evaluations.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	6
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	0
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	6

(D)(3) Reviewer Comments:

i. The definition of highly effective teachers in this application means a teacher whose students achieve high rates of growth. There is nothing in this narrative to suggest that Wisconsin has a plan for addressing the distribution of such teachers. This may be related to the general ambiguity about how the state plans to measure effective teachers. However, while the application describes a number of programs to address "highly qualified" teachers (a term defined by NCLB relating to certification), it mentions almost nothing about teachers who are highly effective (meaning they have a demonstrated impact on student achievement). Though it states that it will require LEAs to create a plan to deal with the distribution of effective teachers within LEAs, it neither gives any guidelines or information about how LEAs may go about this, nor does it provide a model of how the state is thinking about accomplishing this. While the application describes a number of strategies to recruit teachers in high need areas (both geographic areas and disciplinary areas), the state was given credit for having a plan to fill areas of shortage (D1iii). Because there is no evidence to suggest that these new candidates will be particularly effective under the Race to the Top definition, no credit can be given for this criterion. And while the application suggests that data about teacher supply and demand "may" be used to facilitate programs to lure effective teachers to high need schools, there is no evidence of a plan in place to make this happen. The data that the state provides in its measurement tables are created in the absence of effective teacher data. It assumes a rate of growth in the percentage of effective teachers in both high and low need schools that will result in a greater gap in four years than it estimates at present. This tremendous inequity in effective teachers makes it unlikely that the state will achieve the goals for student growth and closing the achievement gap that it articulates earlier in the application. ii. Wisconsin has a number of programs aimed at recruiting and developing teachers for hard to staff subjects. Teacher for America, Milwaukee Teaching Fellows, Urban Education Institute, New Leaders for New Schools, are all likely to continue to increase the supply of new teachers. Whether these teachers end up being "effective" based on the definition that the state outlines remains to be seen. Some of the professional development opportunities that the state plans to create may also help to increase the effectiveness of some teachers. The application also describes the Urban Teacher World program. While this program sounds promising, there is no evidence provided that the program, over its 13 years of existence, has yielded significant numbers of teachers in the areas where they are most needed.

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	0
---	-----------	----------

(D)(4) Reviewer Comments:

i. While Wisconsin describes several strategies to assess the readiness of pre-service teachers and to make public data about the individuals who complete licenses at all of the state accredited programs, there is no mention of connecting the student growth of teachers prepared at the various institutions to those institutions that prepared the teachers and principals. This criterion is meant to make it possible for the public to see which programs tend to create teachers and principals who yield the greatest gains in student achievement. There is nothing in the narrative to suggest that the necessary links will be created to make this information accessible. While the application states that the state is "hopeful" that it will be able to report such data by the end of the grant period, it does not outline any steps it is taking to make that happen. ii. Because the state has no plan for assessing which programs are more or less successful in producing effective teachers and principals, it has no plan for selective expanding

more successful programs. The only example that it offers in this section is the Urban Teacher World program, a teacher recruitment program for which the state does not provide any data at all. This illustrates decisions being made in the absence of any data that might be related to effectiveness.

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	8
<p>(D)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>i. Wisconsin has had a number of professional development and induction requirement in statute for a number of years. The state recognizes the highly variable quality of the programs that LEAs have provided. And, the absence of any significant growth in a number of standardized test areas would indicate that these efforts have not generally increased the effectiveness of teachers across the state. However, for participating LEAs, the state is seeking to promulgate coaching and mentoring guidelines, engage trained coaches in schools for at least one day a week, make greater use of regional educational service agencies, and focus decision making more heavily on data. These efforts have the potential to yield some improvement in the quality of professional development that is being offered to teachers. The plan is not sufficiently detailed in terms of the particular content or objectives that the state is pursuing in order to make an accurate assessment of its potential for success. However, based on the limited success of state level efforts in the past, and the incremental changes that are described, one would have to expect a relatively limited gain. ii. The state proposes to use its longitudinal data system to evaluate impacts of professional development plans. Unfortunately, it does not offer any detail of how it hopes to accomplish this, what outcomes it will look at, what changes may be made. The narrative then goes on to describe development of a tool for measuring pre-service teacher readiness. This tool will not help to modify ongoing job-embedded teacher professional development once those program graduates are on the job across the state.</p>		
Total	138	42

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1
(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	10	5
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The state superintendent has the authority to intervene in districts in a number of ways but has very limited authority to intervene in schools. Though there is legislation pending to increase the state's authority to intervene in both schools and districts, at this point the authority is still limited.</p>		
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	22
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	17
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>i. Wisconsin has chosen to focus only on its five lowest performing Title I schools. The performance of schools in this category is so low that they were found to be qualitatively different than the next group of schools that could have been included in this category (non-Title I schools). ii. Of the five schools that Wisconsin has identified, one will be closed, one will be re-started as a charter and the other three are described as having "many elements of the transformation model" but the application then goes on to say that new "reform strategies" will be introduced. It is not entirely clear what category these "reform strategies" may fall into. External consultants are to be hired to help decide this matter. The use of external consultants may be a concern about the state's ability to develop internal capacity to support struggling schools going forward. However, given the extremely low performance of these particular schools, it is likely that they will continue to get the attention of state leaders. However, the process for selecting the appropriate intervention model is not clear in this application.</p>		

Total	50	27
-------	----	----

F. General

	Available	Tier 1
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	3
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: i. The percent of the state budget devoted to education decreased between FY2008 and FY2009. As a result, no points can be given for this criterion. ii. Wisconsin has a number of programs to improve equity in educational spending and as a result ranks quite high nationally in terms of the equity of funding between high need LEAs and other LEAs. There is no information about equity of spending within LEAs.		
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	35
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: i. The state does not limit the number or percentage of charter schools or students. ii. Wisconsin has a standardized process and clear regulations outlining how charter schools are approved, monitored, and closed. Authorizers have closed schools for a variety of reasons, including poor student performance (according to anecdotal evidence provided in the application). Authorizers are directed to give preference to schools that service high need students and must describe how it will achieve an ethnic and racial balance reflective of its host district. iii. It is difficult to assess whether charter schools receive their share of education revenues. Because for the majority of charter schools the funding arrangements are negotiated with their host district, there is no comprehensive data about the percentage of funding that is getting to the charter schools. There is some evidence to suggest that the charter schools are being funded at a level commensurate with traditional public schools, but this is inconclusive. Regardless, the mechanism for funding charter schools suggests that they confront the same benefits and challenges, related to fiscal support, as traditional public schools in their districts. iv. The application narrative does not provide evidence of any more strict requirements on charter schools than it does on traditional schools, it also does not provide any additional funding for facilities for charter schools. The application does not describe any assistance that the state may provide in helping charters to access public facilities or raise money through bonds. As a result, points were awarded for not imposing any unique facility-related requirements on charter schools, but no points were awarded for supporting facilities funding for charter schools. v. Wisconsin law allows LEAs a great deal of latitude in operating its schools. The state has a waiver system that can exempt most schools from most educational requirements, with a few primary exceptions.		
(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	5
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: Wisconsin has made significant modifications in a number of regulations to make teacher compensation more flexible, encourage small class sizes, encourage college matriculation, and create more educational options in the state's lowest performing district. In combination, these efforts point to a philosophy of experimentation and flexibility. It is not clear that these efforts have resulted in specific gains for students, though the number of intervening variables can make this hard to determine.		
Total	55	43

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1
--	-----------	--------

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	15
Competitive Reviewer Comments: Wisconsin has outlined a number of STEM focused initiatives that it plans to pursue. These include a STEM advisory panel to consider how the content is being improved statewide, four STEM academies to serve as statewide models, competitive grants for STEM programs in LEAs, increasing math requirements in the high intervention districts, and conducting teacher training to improve course offerings in a number of STEM-related areas. Based on these efforts, one can see that the state is hoping to improve performance in STEM education.		
Total	15	15

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes
Absolute Reviewer Comments: While Wisconsin has some areas of real strength in its application, such as ambitious plans for an instructionally useful assessment system and encouraging the development of charter schools, it also suffers from some profound weaknesses. For example, the application is so limited in its discussion of educator evaluation, how those evaluations will be conducted, and the potential uses of the resulting data. And, while the application describes robust plans to intervene in Milwaukee, it provides relatively limited support to the other LEAs, many of which have relatively stagnant growth. So, while there is at least some attention paid to all four reform areas, the quality of these efforts varies tremendously.		
Total		0
Grand Total	500	293