

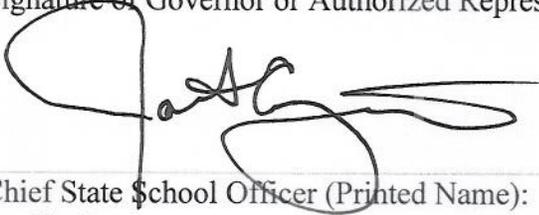
**Race to the Top**  
**Application for Initial Funding**  
CFDA Number: 84.395A



U.S. Department of Education  
Washington, D.C. 20202  
OMB Number: 1810-0697  
Expiration Date: 05/31/2010  
Paperwork Burden Statement

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1810-0697. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 681 hours per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate(s) or suggestions for improving this form, please write to: U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C. 20202-4537. If you have comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this form, write directly to: Race to the Top, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., S.W., Room 3E108, Washington, D.C. 20202-3118

**III. RACE TO THE TOP APPLICATION ASSURANCES  
(CFDA No. 84.395A)**

Legal Name of Applicant (Office of the Governor): <i>Office of the Governor State of New Jersey</i>	Applicant's Mailing Address: <i>P.O. Box 001 Trenton NJ 08625-0001</i>
Employer Identification Number: <i>216000928</i>	Organizational DUNS: <i>067373258</i>
State Race to the Top Contact Name: (Single point of contact for communication) <i>Justin Lambert</i>	Contact Position and Office: <i>Policy Advisor Governor's Office</i>
Contact Telephone: <i>609-777-2590</i>	Contact E-mail Address: <i>justin.lambert@gov.state.nj.us</i>
Required Applicant Signatures:	
To the best of my knowledge and belief, all of the information and data in this application are true and correct.	
I further certify that I have read the application, am fully committed to it, and will support its implementation:	
Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor (Printed Name): <i>Jon S. Corzine</i>	Telephone:
Signature of Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor: 	Date: <i>1/19/10</i>
Chief State School Officer (Printed Name): <i>Lucille Davy</i>	Telephone: <i>609-292-1722</i>
Signature of the Chief State School Officer: <i>Lucille E Davy</i>	Date: <i>1/19/10</i>
President of the State Board of Education (Printed Name): <i>Josephine Hernandez</i>	Telephone:
Signature of the President of the State Board of Education: 	Date: <i>1/19/10</i>

**State Attorney General Certification**

I certify that the State's description of, and statements and conclusions concerning, State law, statute, and regulation in its application are complete, accurate, and constitute a reasonable interpretation of State law, statute, and regulation.

*(See especially Eligibility Requirement (b), Selection Criteria (B)(1), (D)(1), (E)(1), (F)(2), (F)(3).)*

I certify that the State does not have any legal, statutory, or regulatory barriers at the State level to linking data on student achievement (as defined in this notice) or student growth (as defined in this notice) to teachers and principals for the purpose of teacher and principal evaluation.

State Attorney General or Authorized Representative (Printed Name):

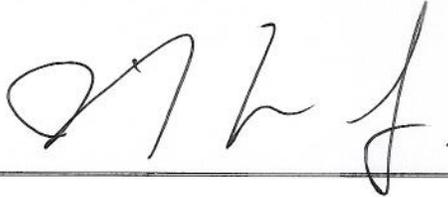
Telephone:

Ricardo Solano Jr.

609.777.1226

Signature of the State Attorney General or Authorized Representative:

Date:



## II. ACCOUNTABILITY, TRANSPARENCY, REPORTING AND OTHER ASSURANCES AND CERTIFICATIONS

### Accountability, Transparency and Reporting Assurances

The Governor or his/her authorized representative assures that the State will comply with all of the accountability, transparency, and reporting requirements that apply to the Race to the Top program, including the following:

- For each year of the program, the State will submit a report to the Secretary, at such time and in such manner as the Secretary may require, that describes:
  - the uses of funds within the State;
  - how the State distributed the funds it received;
  - the number of jobs that the Governor estimates were saved or created with the funds;
  - the State's progress in reducing inequities in the distribution of highly qualified teachers, implementing a State longitudinal data system, and developing and implementing valid and reliable assessments for limited English proficient students and students with disabilities; and
  - if applicable, a description of each modernization, renovation, or repair project approved in the State application and funded, including the amounts awarded and project costs (ARRA Division A, Section 14008)
- The State will cooperate with any U.S. Comptroller General evaluation of the uses of funds and the impact of funding on the progress made toward closing achievement gaps (ARRA Division A, Section 14009)
- If the State uses funds for any infrastructure investment, the State will certify that the investment received the full review and vetting required by law and that the chief executive accepts responsibility that the investment is an appropriate use of taxpayer funds. This certification will include a description of the investment, the estimated total cost, and the amount of covered funds to be used. The certification will be posted on the State's website and linked to [www.Recovery.gov](http://www.Recovery.gov). A State or local agency may not use funds under the ARRA for infrastructure investment funding unless this certification is made and posted. (ARRA Division A, Section 1511)
- The State will submit reports, within 10 days after the end of each calendar quarter, that contain the information required under section 1512(c) of the ARRA in accordance with any guidance issued by the Office of Management and Budget or the Department. (ARRA Division A, Section 1512(c))
- The State will cooperate with any appropriate Federal Inspector General's examination of records under the program. (ARRA Division A, Section 1515)

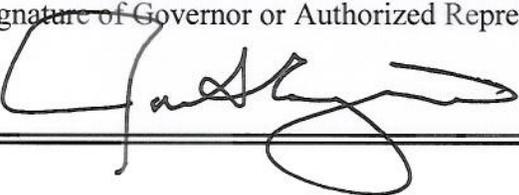
## **Other Assurances and Certifications**

The Governor or his/her authorized representative assures or certifies the following:

- The State will comply with all applicable assurances in OMB Standard Forms 424B (Assurances for Non-Construction Programs) and to the extent consistent with the State's application, OMB Standard Form 424D (Assurances for Construction Programs), including the assurances relating to the legal authority to apply for assistance; access to records; conflict of interest; merit systems; nondiscrimination; Hatch Act provisions; labor standards; flood hazards; historic preservation; protection of human subjects; animal welfare; lead-based paint; Single Audit Act; and the general agreement to comply with all applicable Federal laws, executive orders and regulations.
- With respect to the certification regarding lobbying in Department Form 80-0013, no Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the making or renewal of Federal grants under this program; the State will complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," when required (34 C.F.R. Part 82, Appendix B); and the State will require the full certification, as set forth in 34 C.F.R. Part 82, Appendix A, in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers.
- The State will comply with all of the operational and administrative provisions in Title XV and XIV of the ARRA, including Buy American Requirements (ARRA Division A, Section 1605), Wage Rate Requirements (section 1606), and any applicable environmental impact requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1970 (NEPA), as amended, (42 U.S.C. 4371 et seq.) (ARRA Division A, Section 1609). In using ARRA funds for infrastructure investment, recipients will comply with the requirement regarding Preferences for Quick Start Activities (ARRA Division A, Section 1602).
- Any local educational agency (LEA) receiving funding under this program will have on file with the State a set of assurances that meets the requirements of section 442 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1232e).
- Any LEA receiving funding under this program will have on file with the State (through either its Stabilization Fiscal Stabilization Fund application or another U.S. Department of Education Federal grant) a description of how the LEA will comply with the requirements of section 427 of GEPA (20 U.S.C. 1228a). The description must include information on the steps the LEA proposes to take to permit students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries to overcome barriers (including barriers based on gender, race, color, national origin, disability, and age) that impede access to, or participation in, the program.
- The State and other entities will comply with the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR), including the following provisions as applicable: 34 CFR Part 74–Administration of Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations; 34 CFR Part 75–Direct Grant Programs; 34 CFR Part 77– Definitions that Apply to Department Regulations; 34 CFR Part

80– Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments, including the procurement provisions; 34 CFR Part 81– General Education Provisions Act–Enforcement; 34 CFR Part 82– New Restrictions on Lobbying; 34 CFR Part 84–Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance); 34 CFR Part 85–Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement).

SIGNATURE BLOCK FOR CERTIFYING OFFICIAL

Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor (Printed Name):	
Jon S. Corzine	
Signature of Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor:	Date:
	1/19/10

### III. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

A State must meet the following requirements in order to be eligible to receive funds under this program.

#### **Eligibility Requirement (a)**

The State's applications for funding under Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund program must be approved by the Department prior to the State being awarded a Race to the Top grant.

*The Department will determine eligibility under this requirement before making a grant award.*

#### **Eligibility Requirement (b)**

At the time the State submits its application, there are no legal, statutory, or regulatory barriers at the State level to linking data on student achievement (as defined in this notice) or student growth (as defined in this notice) to teachers and principals for the purpose of teacher and principal evaluation.

*The certification of the Attorney General addresses this requirement. The applicant may provide explanatory information, if necessary. The Department will determine eligibility under this requirement.*

#### IV. SELECTION CRITERIA: PROGRESS AND PLANS IN THE FOUR EDUCATION REFORM AREAS

##### (A) State Success Factors (125 total points)

###### (A)(1) Articulating State’s education reform agenda and LEAs’ participation in it (65 points)

The extent to which—

(i) The State has set forth a comprehensive and coherent reform agenda that clearly articulates its goals for implementing reforms in the four education areas described in the ARRA and improving student outcomes statewide, establishes a clear and credible path to achieving these goals, and is consistent with the specific reform plans that the State has proposed throughout its application; (5 points)

(ii) The participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) are strongly committed to the State’s plans and to effective implementation of reform in the four education areas, as evidenced by Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) (as set forth in Appendix D)<sup>1</sup> or other binding agreements between the State and its participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) that include— (45 points)

(a) Terms and conditions that reflect strong commitment by the participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) to the State’s plans;

(b) Scope-of-work descriptions that require participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) to implement all or significant portions of the State’s Race to the Top plans; and

(c) Signatures from as many as possible of the LEA superintendent (or equivalent), the president of the local school board (or equivalent, if applicable), and the local teachers’ union leader (if applicable) (one signature of which must be from an authorized LEA representative) demonstrating the extent of leadership support within participating LEAs (as defined in this notice); and

(iii) The LEAs that are participating in the State’s Race to the Top plans (including considerations of the numbers and percentages of participating LEAs, schools, K-12 students, and students in poverty) will translate into broad statewide impact, allowing the State to reach its ambitious yet achievable goals, overall and by student subgroup, for—(15 points)

(a) Increasing student achievement in (at a minimum) reading/language arts and mathematics, as reported by the NAEP and the assessments required under the ESEA;

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix D for more on participating LEA MOUs and for a model MOU.

- (b) Decreasing achievement gaps between subgroups in reading/language arts and mathematics, as reported by the NAEP and the assessments required under the ESEA;
- (c) Increasing high school graduation rates (as defined in this notice); and
- (d) Increasing college enrollment (as defined in this notice) and increasing the number of students who complete at least a year's worth of college credit that is applicable to a degree within two years of enrollment in an institution of higher education.

*In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion, as well as projected goals as described in (A)(1)(iii). The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.*

Evidence for (A)(1)(ii):

- An example of the State's standard Participating LEA MOU, and description of variations used, if any.
- The completed summary table indicating which specific portions of the State's plan each LEA is committed to implementing, and relevant summary statistics (see Summary Table for (A)(1)(ii)(b), below).
- The completed summary table indicating which LEA leadership signatures have been obtained (see Summary Table for (A)(1)(ii)(c), below).

Evidence for (A)(1)(iii):

- The completed summary table indicating the numbers and percentages of participating LEAs, schools, K-12 students, and students in poverty (see Summary Table for (A)(1)(iii), below).
- Tables and graphs that show the State's goals, overall and by subgroup, requested in the criterion, together with the supporting narrative. In addition, describe what the goals would look like were the State not to receive an award under this program.

Evidence for (A)(1)(ii) and (A)(1)(iii):

- The completed detailed table, by LEA, that includes the information requested in the criterion (see Detailed Table for (A)(1), below).

*Recommended maximum response length: Ten pages (excluding tables)*



## **(i) STATE SUCCESS FACTORS**

In New Jersey, we are proud to be ranked among the top 5 NAEP performers in reading, writing, and mathematics. We are proud to have invested so successfully in admired and effective early childhood programs, high-quality charter schools, and high school redesign. We are proud to see the success of our efforts.

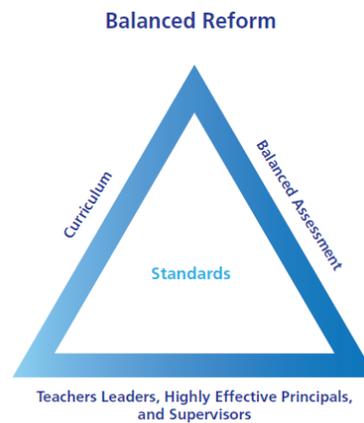
However, while we are making inroads to close the achievement gap, we also recognize that more work is needed to prepare all of our students for the demands of the global economy. The existing minority achievement gaps and the gaps for economically-disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students are unacceptable. There is an urgent need for these further reforms.

The landmark Abbot decisions over the last three decades in conjunction with the creation of the new school funding formula in 2008 solidified New Jersey’s commitment to equitable school resources and ensuring that all student sin the State have access to needed resources. Although this has been a significant step, we have not yet achieved outcomes commensurate with the State’s investments in education in all districts. Furthermore, we have not yet solved the problems of how to place great teachers and leaders in struggling schools and districts.

As New Jersey embarks on the Race to the Top, we recognize that more money for our schools and students in not the only answer, and in fact in some cases, it is not the answer. Bold reforms are necessary to fundamentally reshape key aspects of our education system, and NJ is prepared to take those bold steps. These will be essential for all students to gain the skills and opportunities they need to succeed in the global economy and for all students to benefit fully from the established commitment of resources the State has already invested. We recognize that this is a remarkable moment in the history of education and in the progress of educational technology, and we are cognizant of the urgency of creating a globally-competitive workforce. New Jersey's Race To The Top Team seeks to capitalize on this moment by replacing the old ways of doing business with new systems for instructional improvement, empowerment, and reform.

New Jersey’s Race to the Top program promises to develop a highly-competent education workforce and an educated citizenry through an integrated set of initiatives. These initiatives build on the state’s strong record of accomplishment and apply the latest research regarding revitalizing complex public service systems.

Our Balanced Reform model for how to achieve these objectives can be represented by a set of linked “action triangles” that represent the subsystems in a coherent program to improve educational opportunities and outcomes at scale.



These linked “action triangles” represent:

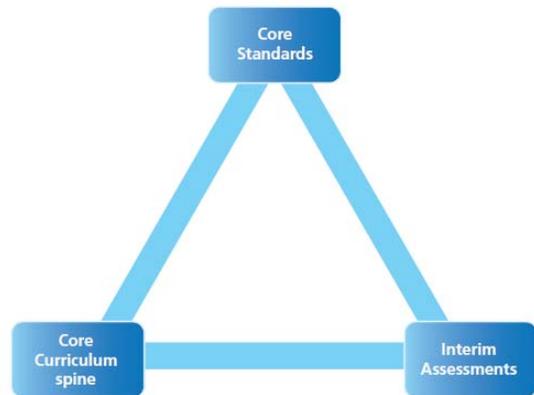
- A Standards and Curriculum System that will ground all of the state’s education efforts in a lean Twenty-First Century subject matter-based program of instruction.
- A Balanced Assessment System that adaptively uses a combination of end-of-instructional-unit interim assessments, high-quality annual summative assessments, and formative assessments that can guide the day-to-day work of teachers.
- A Data System that illuminates performance and achievement for all stakeholders, including teachers, parents, and children.
- An Instructional Improvement System that supports both teachers and leaders in instructional planning, professional growth, and continuous, collaborative improvement.
- A Career Pathways System that that attracts, rewards and expands the influence of the state’s best educators.
- A Turnaround System that will close ineffective schools and allow teams of highly-competent educators to build capacity to dramatically accelerate student progress.

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## The Standards and Curriculum System

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The emergence of fewer, clearer, and higher core standards, shared by states, presents a remarkable opportunity to rethink and rebuild education policy around a strong instructional program. These standards will be grounded in the core subject matters that American students need to learn, and will combine “Twenty-First Century” thinking and reasoning abilities with essential subject-matter knowledge.



New Jersey’s support for fewer, clearer, higher standards has been unwavering. We intend to comprehensively review the Common Core Standards. We will build a core “Curriculum and Assessment Spine” to realize top-quality standards instructionally. Instructional units will provide detailed models of quality instruction and a foundation for local elaboration to deliver high levels of teaching and learning to the full spectrum of students in this diverse and energetic state.

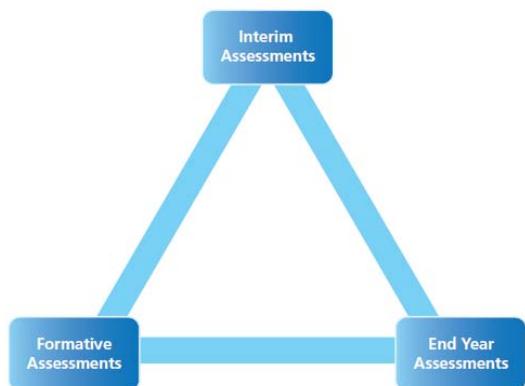
Attached to the instructional units will be an *interim assessment* that measures student success in learning the knowledge and skills of the unit. These assessments will contain open-ended performance tasks and tasks that measure specific knowledge and skills, and student work products that are produced during the course of study will also be included where appropriate. They will be designed for fidelity to the program of curriculum and instruction (i.e., focused on *instructional* and *content* validity) and they will serve both to model for educators the kind of academic work they should be expecting of students, and as part of New Jersey’s education-accountability system for school leaders and teachers.

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## The Balanced Assessment System

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New Jersey’s curriculum-based interim assessments will serve as an integral part of the state’s new Balanced Assessment System. The interim assessments will be graded in schools by members of the teaching staff, thus providing a form of continuous professional engagement focused on the work of students. Teachers’ scoring criteria will be verified, and corrected when necessary, by a state-managed audit system to externally score a random sample of student responses. Verified interim assessment scores will be incorporated into the accountability results for teachers and schools, along with updated forms of year-end assessments.



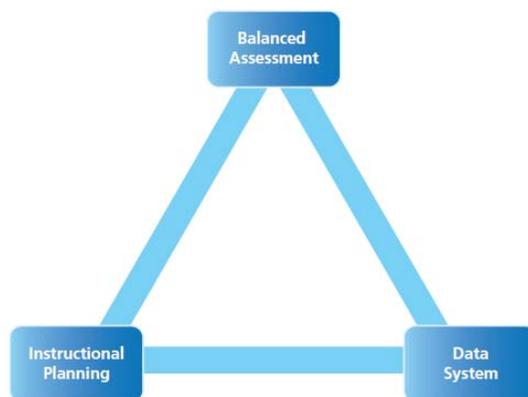
The third component of New Jersey’s planned Balanced Assessment system will be a state-of-the-art formative and diagnostic system designed for teachers to use in the course of teaching the curriculum. Our curriculum-embedded assessments reflect a carefully-designed sequence of tasks, based on learning progressions that have been taught in classrooms. Each local curricular unit will include assessments on facts and skills and the conceptual frameworks that connect them, coupled with supports for the collaborative use and analysis of formative data. Through this system, teachers will have instructional tools that are sophisticated, nuanced, and that can be employed to support adaptive instruction based on formative data.

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## The Web-Based Data System

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One of the key threads of our initiative emphasizes a clearer, better understanding of effectiveness at all levels of the system. Only by identifying effectiveness – for teachers, leaders, programs, practices, and environments – on a timescale that allows for meaningful decision-making and action, can we ensure that student achievement is at the center of our reform. We

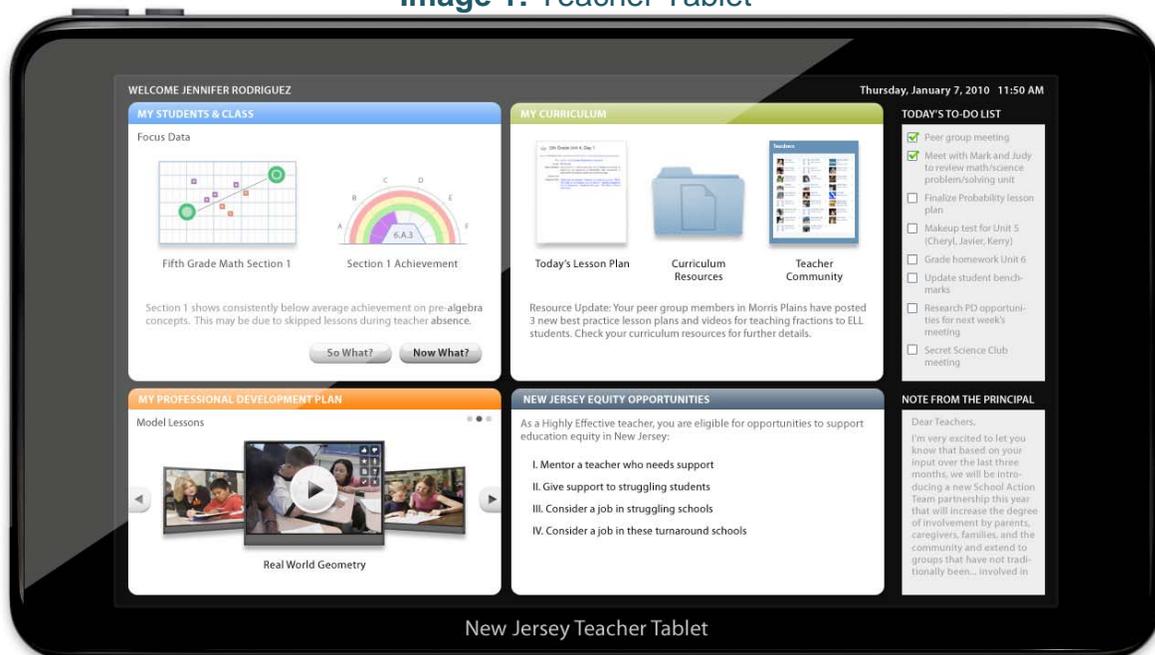


will make achievement data easily and readily available to all stakeholders – including parents, teachers, researchers, and students themselves.

We will significantly enhance our longitudinal data system to accomplish this goal. By incorporating new data sets on learning and program delivery, we will develop better context to monitor growth and improvement. We will provide clear, well-explained views of data to parents, to help engage school communities in their children’s learning. And we will provide a comprehensive foundation for professional evaluations and career planning.

We understand that data needs to be truly accessible in order to help us achieve our goals. Therefore, we will ensure the data’s broad use by deploying the current generation of tablet computers broadly to our teachers and leaders, to ensure easy access to data and real-time support for teaching and leadership in our schools. We will also undertake an ambitious program of training, professional development, and community outreach to achieve broad adoption of the data system and fully draw upon its potential to enhance effectiveness. Our vision involves making one seamless system out of the state’s longitudinal data system, an Instructional Improvement System, and this network of highly-usable teacher tablets that can put the data to work in the classroom, all the way down to supporting today’s lesson.

**Image 1: Teacher Tablet**



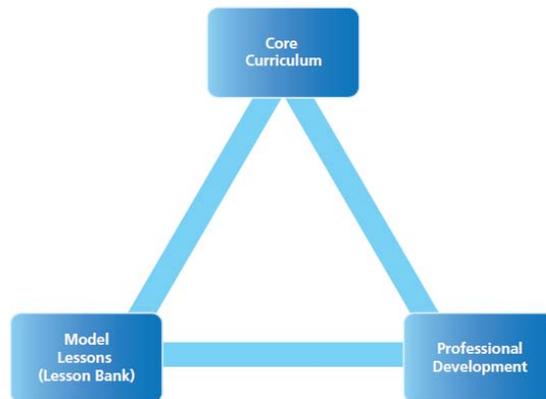
Teacher Tablet will provide immediate access to student performance data, curricular resources, professional development supports, and an online community of teachers and leaders.

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## The Instructional Improvement System

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Schools are incredibly complex and dynamic environments. Changing direction for a troubled child or underperforming teacher is not as simple as a “data-driven decision.” A holistic, contextual perspective is required, along with resources and tools to plan next steps and ensure successful implementation.



To support both the Curriculum and Assessment Spine and our plans for Great Teachers and Leaders, we will develop a comprehensive state-level Instructional Improvement System. It will include formative assessment and instructional content tools that facilitate day-to-day classroom planning and teaching. The exemplar lessons at the core of our plans will be surrounded by assessment, professional development, and model teaching resources to support and scaffold teachers at all levels.

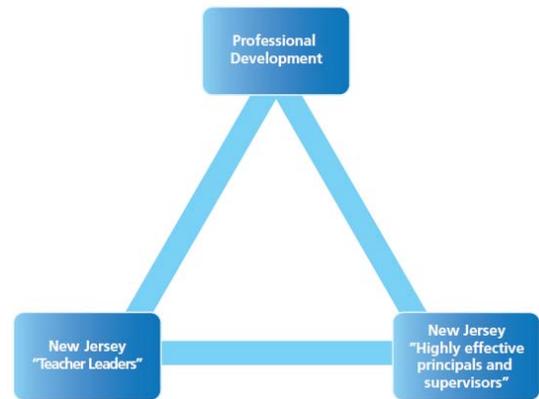
Principals and teacher leaders will be able to collect formal and informal observations and portfolios of student and teacher work to inform individualized and collective professional-development planning. Connections between these activities and data about individual and classroom achievement will create an important feedback loop, enabling teachers to amplify effective models and discard those that do not serve students well. A broad deployment of the tablet technology described above will put these tools at the fingertips of the educational workforce, saving time and improving quality.

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## The Career Pathways System

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We will also develop a shared evaluation framework -- a balanced, multi-dimensional system incorporating student progress on the interim tests and year-to-year growth on end-of-year tests, observations with new tools that measure the quality of content and classroom engagement, delivery and fidelity of high-quality professional development and use of formative systems, and local measures that recognize school and district differences. The design and implementation of the framework will be a collaborative process and one of continuous improvement.



Our most effective teachers, supervisors, and principals will lead schools towards improving instruction, changing classroom practice, and accelerating student achievement, helping to assure an equitable distribution of our most effective educators. Through a rigorous and transparent evaluation system, teachers who have demonstrated their ability to effectively teach the New Jersey core curriculum will have access to differential professional opportunities. Content-focused supervisors and teacher leaders will be trained to deliver high-quality professional development, provide instructional coaching, and build teams of professional educators to improve their practice.

A New Jersey “expert leaders” corps will be developed and populated by principals who have demonstrated exceptional ability to lead groups of teachers toward higher levels of achievement for their students. Our highly-effective principals will have the opportunity to serve as Turnaround Officers in our state’s persistently low-performing schools – ensuring that our neediest schools have access to our best educators and leaders. In recognition of their added responsibilities and time commitments, these expert school leaders and teachers will receive additional compensation—at levels designed to attract and retain the very best teachers in public service.

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## **The School Turnaround System**

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For the state’s persistently lowest-performing schools, all of the reform efforts will be intensified. New Jersey will offer the 29 persistently low-performing schools in the state a choice among the four turnaround models provided for in the RTTT application. For those selecting the Transformation or Turnaround model, New Jersey will require full participation in all aspects of the New Jersey reform program, will mandate measurable improvement targets, and will close schools that are not showing progress. These schools will be required to use the curriculum and assessment spine described in the proposal; they will work in grade-level or content teams to design appropriate classroom responses to the data they will learn to collect regularly. In addition, the state will train the principal and support him or her with a network of like schools and a turnaround expert who will monitor the progress of the school and coach each of the principals in the network. Finally, the low-achieving school will be given the most important resource of any organization – more time. The staff will have 20% more time than they do now. Teachers will have more time for their own work and training and 15% more time for direct work with students. With this level of support, we expect that the principal will lead the children in each of the low-performing schools to dramatic academic growth and a new vigorous organization will emerge, soon to be recognized by a school award to mark the beginning of a new era.

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## **(ii) STRONG COMMITMENT FROM LEAS**

New Jersey has adopted the MOU form provided by the U.S. Education Department, which uses clear and unambiguous language to define the responsibilities of both the state and the participating LEA. The state’s LEAs have also been given as much information about the New Jersey plan as possible, including a draft of the application in near final form, itemized lists of responsibilities of both the state and the LEA, and a copy of a presentation made by the Commissioner of Education and open to all LEA superintendents, board members and local union leaders. The commissioner also presented the NJDOE’s plan at a two-hour meeting on

January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2010 and two subsequent webinars on January 8<sup>th</sup> and January 11<sup>th</sup>. The commissioner and other senior DOE officials took questions at all three forums and have also responded to questions submitted via email. The state is therefore confident that the LEAs that have agreed to participate by submitting signed MOUs fully understand their obligations under the terms of the letter.

As of Saturday, January 16<sup>th</sup>, the NJDOE had received 378 signed MOUs from the state's 639 LEAs, or about 59% of the total. Of the 378 signed MOU's, 56 did not include Exhibit I, leaving a total of 322 LEAs having completed questionnaires; those LEAs will hereafter be referred to as "respondents". For each element of the reform plan, 98% and 69% of participating LEAs agreed to participate. Notably, 85% of participating LEAs agreed to participate in designing and implementing evaluation systems for school leaders and teachers. One-hundred-and-nineteen (119) or 37% of respondents agreed to all 16 conditions listed in Exhibit I. After excluding condition (E)(2), which only applies to a small number of LEAs, a total of 158 (49%) of the 322 respondents agreed to accept all of the remaining 15 conditions. More than 83% of respondents agreed to accept at least 12 of the 16 conditions, and 89% agreed to accept eight or more. The items in which the LEAs most commonly declined to participate were those described under (D)(2)(iv)(b)-(d), which require that the LEA use teacher evaluations to inform actions regarding teacher compensation, tenure, removal, promotion, and other professional decisions.

The itemized-participation responses are due to the fact that (D)(2)(iv) is considered the most controversial part of the reform plan. Most of New Jersey's teachers are represented by the NJEA, an affiliate of the National Education Association. Shortly after the NJDOE presented its Race to the Top plan, the NJEA took a public position against the NJDOE's plan, and raised concerns with its local union leaders. It appears these concerns led local union leaders to refrain from signing on the MOUs. As a result, 13% of the respondents declined to participate in the proposed teacher-evaluation process, and 94% of the MOUs lacked the signature of the local union president.

Nevertheless, 59% of the LEAs submitted MOUs. This demonstrates strong support for the plan by superintendents and local board-of-education members, many of whom risked conflicts by submitting an MOU without the signature of the local union leader. We have indications that additional union leaders may to support the principles of the plan. However, they need additional

time to work with the State association to work through concerns. New Jersey has had constructive conversations with the NJEA regarding the proposal but we have been unable to come to agreement on the concerns they have raised.

The NJDOE has constructed this plan – including the provisions on teacher-evaluation and teacher-compensation – to involve NJEA in the design and operation of the system. We believe that our past success in working together may help to bring NJEA leadership on board with this plan or aspects of it. This is possible because the plan represents a path to improved student learning, while promising to provide a significant increase in professional support for teachers and opportunities for supplementary income associated with teachers’ taking on more responsibilities and with teachers’ achieving student academic growth. Participating teachers will have access to the highest-quality lessons with embedded formative assessments to make their teaching time more productive for each student. They will also have ready access, on tablet computers, to a wealth of information on each student’s academic skills and progress. The grant will fund significant training in both the new curricula and the instructional-improvement systems used to access lessons and track progress. More advanced professional-development planning and additional coaching will be offered to help teachers improve their effectiveness in the classroom. Those teachers with particularly strong subject- matter and pedagogical expertise will have compensated opportunities to coach their peers. Finally, all participating teachers will be eligible for annual performance awards based on their school’s ability to effect meaningful student academic growth. We strongly believe that these benefits will give both teachers and students in participating LEAs a significant advantage over those in non-participating districts and states, and will encourage others to join the reform program.

**Summary Table for (A)(1)(ii)(b)**

<b>Elements of State Reform Plans</b>	<b>Number of LEAs Participating (#)</b>	<b>Percentage of Total Participating LEAs (%)*</b>
<b>B. Standards and Assessments</b>		
(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	306	95%
<b>C. Data Systems to Support Instruction</b>		
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction:		
(i) Use of local instructional-improvement systems	313	97%
(ii) Professional development on use of data	314	98%
(iii) Availability and accessibility of data to researchers	310	96%
<b>D. Great Teachers and Leaders</b>		
(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance:		
(i) Measure student growth	291	90%
(ii) Design and implement evaluation systems	274	85%
(iii) Conduct annual evaluations	279	87%
(iv)(a) Use evaluations to inform professional development	278	86%
(iv)(b) Use evaluations to inform compensation, promotion and retention	225	70%
(iv)(c) Use evaluations to inform tenure and/or full certification	257	80%
(iv)(d) Use evaluations to inform removal	251	78%
(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals:		
(i) High-poverty and/or high-minority schools	221	69%
(ii) Hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	248	77%
(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals:		
(i) Quality professional development	299	93%
(ii) Measure effectiveness of professional development	300	93%
<b>E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools</b>		
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	177**	55%**

\*Based on 322 LEAs that submitted Exhibit I – Preliminary Scope of Work.

\*\*74 respondents replied N/A, 62 entered No, and 9 left blank. We believe that most of the “No’s” and blanks should be interpreted as “N/A” since section (E) impacts very few LEAs. We will continue to verify elements of the reform plans in which the districts have chosen to engage.

(See Appendix I for full list and list of districts still being verified.)

**Summary Table for (A)(1)(ii)(c)**

<b>Signatures acquired from participating LEAs:</b>			
<b>Number of Participating LEAs with all applicable signatures</b>			
	<b>Number of Signatures Obtained (#)</b>	<b>Number of Signatures Applicable (#)</b>	<b>Percentage (%) (Obtained / Applicable)</b>
LEA Superintendent (or equivalent)	377	378	99.7%
President of Local School Board (or equivalent, if applicable)	372	378	98.4%
Local Teachers' Union Leader (if applicable)	21	365	5.8%

**Summary Table for (A)(1)(iii)**

	<b>Participating LEAs (#)</b>	<b>Statewide (#)</b>	<b>Percentage of Total Statewide (%) (Participating LEAs / Statewide)</b>
<b>LEAs</b>	378	639	59.2%
<b>Schools</b>	1,635	2,428	67.3%
<b>K-12 Students</b>	808,494	1,168,982	69.4%
<b>Students in poverty*</b>	282,186	362,142	77.9%

\*Students in poverty defined as those participating in free or reduced-price lunch programs.



**(iii) BROAD STATEWIDE IMPACT FROM PARTICIPATION**

With 378 of New Jersey’s 639 LEAs (representing over 69% of the 1.2 million students) volunteering to participate in New Jersey’s Race to the Top program, the reform effort will impact a diverse student population across our state. Participating LEAs include seven of the ten largest LEAs, over half of the smallest 200 LEAs, 67% of all schools, 57% of vocational-school students, and 46% of charter-school students. We are still receiving and tabulating interest from districts who were not able to meet the deadline.

A higher proportion of LEAs in high-poverty areas have agreed to participate than those in middle-class or wealthy districts. Whereas 69% of all students are in participating LEAs, the same LEAs comprise 78% of students receiving free or reduced-price lunches, which is our definition of poverty for the purposes of this application. Of the 158,194 students in LEAs with at least 75% in poverty, 129,350 students (82% of the total) are in participating LEAs.

Because large urban and high-poverty districts in New Jersey have higher ratios of ethnic and racial minorities, we believe that these groups are also substantially represented among the participating LEAs. Although New Jersey’s Race to the Top programs will benefit all of New Jersey’s public-school students, it is designed to allocate more resources to those in poorer and higher-minority areas. School leaders in these areas clearly see the advantages that RTTT can provide and have therefore signed up in greater numbers. With minorities and poor communities receiving a greater portion of resources, New Jersey’s RTTT reform plan will help close the large achievement gap that persists in the state. This should translate directly into higher achievement, as measured by our assessments, and higher graduation rates in poor and high-minority districts that actively participate in the program. It follows that with higher high school graduation rates, larger numbers of poor and minority students will also attend college and attain a year’s worth of college credits within two years of enrollment.

As detailed in section (A)(3) of this application, New Jersey has already made considerable progress in academic achievement and graduation rates in recent years, even as our standards have risen. Test scores in New Jersey are among the highest in the nation, and performance gaps

between whites and minorities, though still large, are declining. With continued severe fiscal challenges in state FY 2010, the NJDOE will have to advocate strongly to maintain the resources for education needed to comply with the Race to the Top promises. Without additional State Fiscal Stabilization Fund resources, state resources for education will be extremely constrained. With an aggressive reform plan in place, New Jersey should see NAEP scale score gaps drop below 20 points in 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading and below 30 points in 8<sup>th</sup> grade math. Average nominal scores will continue to rise about a point a year. Without funding, New Jersey will likely see gaps rise and average scores fall at about the same rate.

New Jersey's reform plan is designed to have a significant positive impact on public-education outcomes in both the near- and long-term. Our intensive turnaround program for struggling schools will drive near-term gains in high-school-graduation rates, but the measurable effect will be slightly dampened by requiring students to meet higher academic standards to receive a diploma. The long-term benefit will be in preparing more teenagers with the skills required for 21<sup>st</sup> Century jobs. Similarly, applying greater and more focused resources on effective early-childhood and primary-school education will drive up test scores in the short term and translate into higher graduation rates in five to ten years.

We also believe that our plan is sustainable. Race to the Top will enable New Jersey to create the systems and process to help us identify the state's most talented teachers and leaders, and the most effective teaching methods, and build on these resources and strengths. All teachers and leaders will receive the professional-development support they need to achieve excellence in their practice. The state's entire teaching profession will improve over time, as those with the greatest talent are recognized, and poor performers and those unwilling to step up to the challenge are removed from the ranks. As we measure the impact of curricula and other programs on student progress, we will reallocate time and money to those which are most effective, reinforcing the benefits of reform. Finally, participating LEAs that demonstrate success through RTTT reform will raise the competitive bar, forcing leaders in other LEAs to join the program, or risk losing constituent support.

**The detailed table for (A)(1) has been placed in Appendix I as Evidence. Please refer to the Appendix I Table of Contents and Bookmarks for confirmed and verification lists.**

**(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up and sustain proposed plans (30 points)**

The extent to which the State has a high-quality overall plan to—

(i) Ensure that it has the capacity required to implement its proposed plans by— (20 points)

- (a) Providing strong leadership and dedicated teams to implement the statewide education reform plans the State has proposed;
- (b) Supporting participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) in successfully implementing the education reform plans the State has proposed, through such activities as identifying promising practices, evaluating these practices' effectiveness, ceasing ineffective practices, widely disseminating and replicating the effective practices statewide, holding participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) accountable for progress and performance, and intervening where necessary;
- (c) Providing effective and efficient operations and processes for implementing its Race to the Top grant in such areas as grant administration and oversight, budget reporting and monitoring, performance measure tracking and reporting, and fund disbursement;
- (d) Using the funds for this grant, as described in the State's budget and accompanying budget narrative, to accomplish the State's plans and meet its targets, including where feasible, by coordinating, reallocating, or repurposing education funds from other Federal, State, and local sources so that they align with the State's Race to the Top goals; and
- (e) Using the fiscal, political, and human capital resources of the State to continue, after the period of funding has ended, those reforms funded under the grant for which there is evidence of success; and

(ii) Use support from a broad group of stakeholders to better implement its plans, as evidenced by the strength of the statements or actions of support from— (10 points)

- (a) The State's teachers and principals, which include the State's teachers' unions or statewide teacher associations; and
- (b) Other critical stakeholders, such as the State's legislative leadership; charter school authorizers and State charter school membership associations (if applicable); other State and local leaders (e.g., business, community, civil rights, and education association leaders); Tribal schools; parent, student, and community organizations (e.g., parent-teacher associations, nonprofit organizations, local education foundations, and community-based organizations); and institutions of higher education.

*In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. The State's response to (A)(2)(i)(d) will be addressed in the budget section (Section VIII of the application). Attachments, such as letters of support or commitment, should be summarized in the text box below and organized with a summary table in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.*

Evidence for (A)(2)(i)(d):

- The State's budget, as completed in Section VIII of the application. The narrative that accompanies and explains the budget and how it connects to the State's plan, as completed in Section VIII of the application.

Evidence for (A)(2)(ii):

- A summary in the narrative of the statements or actions and inclusion of key statements or actions in the Appendix.

*Recommended maximum response length: Five pages (excluding budget and budget narrative)*

## (i)(a) BUILDING STRONG STATEWIDE CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT, SCALE UP, AND SUSTAIN PROPOSED PLANS

As of the writing of this proposal, the Governor-elect, Chris Christie, had nominated Bret Shundler for Commissioner for the Department of Education. Due to the timing of the transition, Governor Corzine’s team invited Governor-elect Christie’s transition team, including Mr.

Shundler, to participate in the planning sessions for this proposal. Drafts of the proposal were shared with the transition team for feedback and questions. The career staff in the department will fully brief the new leadership on timelines, commitments to the scope of work, and the deliverables for the proposed work.

There are numerous well-established, strong cross-functional teams within the NJDOE that work across divisions on behalf of the children in New Jersey. These teams have been successful in implementing large, ambitious national reforms and have been

		Commissioner											
		Deputy Commissioner											
		"Division of Educational Standards and Programs"					Div of Early Childhood		Division of Student Services		Division of District and School Improvement		
Section	Description	Standards & 21st Century Skills	Math and Science Education	Language Arts Literacy	Professional Standards, Licensing & Higher Ed Collaboration	Career Tech ED	Charter Schools	Assessment	Office of Research and Evaluation	Program Planning and Accountability	Special Education	School and District Support	Office of Leadership Development
(B1)	Developing and adopting common standards	●	●	●									
(B2)	Developing and implementing high-quality assessments	●	●	●				●					
(B3)	Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	●	●	●			●	●				●	●
(C1)	fully implementing a statewide LDS								●				
(C2)	accessing and using state data	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
(C3)	using data to improve instruction	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
(D1)	providing high-quality pathways for teachers and principals				●								
(D2)	improving teacher and principal effectiveness based upon performance	●	●	●	●		●	●	●		●	●	●
(D3)	Ensuring equitable distribution of teachers and principals		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
(D4)	Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal prep programs		●	●	●				●	●		●	●
(D5)	Providing support to teachers and principals	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
(E1)	Interventions in lowest performing schools and LEAs		●	●			●		●	●	●	●	●
(E2)	Turning around low-achieving schools	●					●					●	●
(F2)	Ensuring Successful Conditions for Charter Schools	●	●	●			●	●					
(F3)	Demonstrating significant reform conditions		●				●		●			●	●
	STEM	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

awarded ARRA grants as well as nationally-competitive grants, including Teacher Quality and Enhancement Grants and a Math & Science Partnership Grant.

State-level teams proposed in this document are led by important offices within existing divisions, including: the Office of Math and Science, the Office of Academic Standards and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools, the Office of Language Arts Literacy, the Office of District and School Improvement, the Office of Professional Standards, Licensing and Higher Education Collaboration, the Office of Early Childhood Education, the Office of Educational Support Services, and the Office of Career and Technical Education. Organization charts for the NJDOE and for the proposed project team included in the Appendix II. The divisions and cross-functional teams have each participated in and supported development of this proposal. At the NJDOE, we have a great deal of experience with providing effective and efficient operations and processes for implementing large federal programs and grants.

Beyond internal collaboration, the NJDOE teams regularly engage the expertise of essential organizations that represent parents, teachers and administrators, and school boards, including: the New Jersey Education Association, the AFT, the Principals and Supervisors Association, the Association of School Administrators and the School Boards Association, and the Association for Supervisors of Curriculum Development. These organizations have pledged to work closely on many aspects of the work NJDOE is proposing.

The business organizations in the State also have an involved role, particularly the Business Coalition for Education Excellence, which is part of the Chamber of Commerce, and the New Jersey Business & Industry Association, which represents smaller businesses. This partnership will be critical to the community-engagement work proposed in Section E.

As you read our proposal, you will see numerous examples of winning reforms that we have accomplished in New Jersey, most of which have been led by cross-divisional teams that have done extraordinary work. We set forth potential teams below that will provide the leadership and capacity to carry out the work in this proposal in the graphic to the left.

.....

## **(b) Supporting Participating LEAs in Successfully Implementing Proposed Reforms**

.....

All of the teams described above will actively support participating LEAs in this reform effort. These dedicated teams have worked regularly to support LEAs to do their work effectively and to increase student achievement. Indeed, many of the tasks described will include representatives from the participating LEAs to ensure that the support offered to LEAs is relevant and offers immediate solutions. Some examples of issues that teams have addressed in the past that deal with LEA collaboration and support include the effective implementation of NCLB Advisory, and transforming secondary schools.

There are County Offices with instructional specialists who work regularly with the LEA instructional staff and, as a result, the curriculum staff from LEAs meet regularly within counties and come together to identify and share promising practices. There are also consortia of LEAs that come together in a similar manner for shared staff development opportunities, including the Morris Union Jointure Commission, the county Educational Services Commissions, and the South Jersey Educational Information and Resource Center. In addition, there are three Special Education Resource Centers to cover the three regions in the state and these identify promising practices and share effective work.

The work outlined in this proposal is ambitious, and the reform measures and oversight proposed will hold LEAs accountable for their participation. The NJDOE will work with LEAs to identify promising practices, determine methods to improve the effectiveness of programs, and widely disseminate results. Together, all these supports will work well to help participating LEAs to successfully implement the education-reform plans and to hold them accountable for progress.

.....

## **(c) Providing Effective and Efficient Operations for Implementing RTTT**

.....

A Financial Officer will be named to lead the budget-reporting and monitoring and fund disbursement for our Race to the Top grant, and will have a combination of people from finance and programs who will inform this work. A Project Officer will oversee the undertaking of the work proposed, the completion of deliverables, and the annual reporting and regular contact with the U.S. Department of Education. This Project Officer will become a member of senior staff and will regularly provide effective and efficient operations internally for administration and oversight and performance-measure tracking and reporting. The division graphic of the RTTT team is proposed in Appendix II.

This proposal encourages LEAs to look at their effective and ineffective programs and to discontinue ineffective programs. The NJDOE will conduct the same review as it relates to the scope of work within this document. Performance measures will be tracked and reported annually, through an update of programs and progress against performance measures submitted to the U.S. Department of Education.

.....

**(d) Coordinating, Repurposing, and/or Reallocating Other Funds to Support this Work**

.....

The NJDOE will consolidate a series of smaller grants that are being used to support educator development into the work outlined in section D. More than \$2 million in Title II funds allocated for staff development and Teacher Enhancement will be available to support portions of Section D. LEAs will be helped to reallocate Title I funds to support the effective programs identified and initiated under Section E. If NJDOE is successful in its State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) grant application, then that frame of work will lay the foundation for the work proposed in Section C.

.....

**(e) Using Fiscal, Political, and Human Capital to Sustain Success Beyond the Life of this Grant.**

.....

New Jersey has the capacity to use our fiscal, political, and human capital resources, after the period of funding under the grant, to continue RTTT work for which there is evidence of success. The work being done under the grant will lay the foundation for sustainable reform. It is our expectation that the districts will learn what works and will reallocate funds toward more efficient uses.

The development of the assessments, particularly formative and interim assessments, will have already been accomplished. We will need to commit continuous-improvement-cycle monies toward the upgrades to the assessments once they are completed, and will be able to do so under existing funding streams.

Extension of assessments to new LEAs will be offered at the district's expense. The NJDOE will keep the cost of the extension of services at the lowest level possible.

Common high-quality standards will have been rigorously reviewed for adoption, and the transition to new, internationally-benchmarked standards will have taken place. We will use existing funding streams to support any necessary consortia-participation costs.

The New Jersey "Curriculum and Assessment Spine" will have been developed and rolled out, and all participating districts will have offered intensive professional development.

Consequently, our teachers and leaders will be largely trained. Beyond the life of this grant, we will continue to work with higher-education institutions to train and expose new teachers to the methodology, and seek ways to expand the spine into more content areas. We will roll out with the Curriculum and Assessment Spine to more districts, using existing federal funds reallocated toward effective programs.

The comprehensive state data system will also have been completed, and it will be part of the NJDOE's regular operation.

The goal is to have a cadre of highly-skilled supervisors and greater expertise among the staff that will, over time, reduce the need for instructional coaches. The plan for developing a high-quality, rigorous, transparent and fair evaluation system for teachers and principals will have been completed and implemented. The system will help to ensure the equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals.

Importantly, the professional-development system builds from the beginning to grow capacity within LEAs so that they can continue professional development about standards, assessment and curriculum themselves and with the County Offices of the DOE. The social capital and human capital that will grow with face-to-face and online professional learning will certainly continue beyond the period of the grant's funding.

New Jersey has always invested time and resources to try to transform low-performing schools. While our proposed method for working with schools in need of improvement has not been applied this comprehensively before, the building of School Renewal Zones will grow social capital that is important, and the plan encompasses a scheme that requires results expeditiously. In addition, as a part of the school audit, we are requiring schools to identify unsuccessful programs and remove them. It is our intention that the removal of ineffective programs will free up valuable dollars to support the work that transforms learning for children. We also expect that our Network Turnaround Officers will be working themselves out of a job within their assignments. However, if this program is proven to be successful, we will seek ways to redirect funds from other sources to use these experts in other schools that are in need of intervention.

.....

**(ii) USE SUPPORT FROM A BROAD GROUP OF STAKEHOLDERS TO BETTER IMPLEMENT ITS PLANS, AS EVIDENCED BY THE STRENGTH OF THE STATEMENTS OR ACTIONS OF SUPPORT**

The New Jersey Dept of Education held conversations and meetings with stakeholders regarding Race to the Top over the fall of 2009. This included a large stakeholder meeting at the Governor's mansion in early October 2009. These meetings focused on discussing the Race to the Top with the stakeholders and hearing their ideas about the proposal; they were not focused on gaining their support for the Race to the Top. Once a decision was confirmed in early December that the State would in fact apply for the first round of the Race to the Top, continued discussions and meetings were held.

While the largest state union, NJEA, chose not to support this application, the AFT that represents Newark, our largest district in the state, and three other smaller school systems have expressed union support.

While the state does not yet have the written support of the union, it is clear we have the support of the school districts in New Jersey. The 378 participating LEAs represent almost 70% of New Jersey's teachers and principals, and the 26 charter schools are almost half of those in the state.

As New Jersey developed its application for Race to the Top, NJDOE met with the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association (NJPSA) to discuss various reform strategies and gather feedback that informed the design of New Jersey's reforms.

The Commissioner issued an open invitation to all LEAs to come to Trenton on January 5, 2010. Over 600 representatives from almost half of the districts travelled to the War Memorial in Trenton to hear Commissioner Davy present the New Jersey plan for RTTT. Subsequent webinars provided over 1,000 LEAs, union representatives, and school leaders with the opportunity to hear the broad goals and ask clarifying questions. As the time grew closer, a second stakeholder session was conducted at state offices for state-association heads to comment and ask clarifying questions. Stakeholder letters from the New Jersey School Boards Association, Rowan University, and the Hunterdon County Education Services Commission are available in Appendix I.

**(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps (30 points)**

The extent to which the State has demonstrated its ability to—

(i) Make progress over the past several years in each of the four education reform areas, and used its ARRA and other Federal and State funding to pursue such reforms; (5 points)

(ii) Improve student outcomes overall and by student subgroup since at least 2003, and explain the connections between the data and the actions that have contributed to — (25 points)

(a) Increasing student achievement in reading/language arts and mathematics, both on the NAEP and on the assessments required under the ESEA;

(b) Decreasing achievement gaps between subgroups in reading/language arts and mathematics, both on the NAEP and on the assessments required under the ESEA; and

(c) Increasing high school graduation rates.

*In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.*

Evidence for (A)(3)(ii):

- NAEP and ESEA results since at least 2003. Include in the Appendix all the data requested in the criterion as a resource for peer reviewers for each year in which a test was given or data was collected. Note that this data will be used for reference only and can be in raw format. In the narrative, provide the analysis of this data and any tables or graphs that best support the narrative.

*Recommended maximum response length: Six pages*

.....

**(i) MAKE PROGRESS OVER THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS IN EACH OF THE FOUR EDUCATION REFORM AREAS, AND USED ITS ARRA AND OTHER FEDERAL AND STATE FUNDING TO PURSUE SUCH REFORMS**

.....

**Standards & Assessment**

.....

New Jersey has remained committed to rigorous academic standards that prepare students for college or work in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. New Jersey has already raised, and redesigned, standards in 7 of 9 core content areas and has won national awards for its work. With the support of Title II funds under ESEA, New Jersey has created an innovative, systemic professional-development system that supports teachers in translating the new standards into classroom practice. We are equally committed to ensuring that our assessments are of the highest caliber. In a time when states are scaling back state assessment programs, New Jersey is building on its existing open-ended items on all state assessments and has pushed forward with the piloting of performance-based assessment as part of the state assessment in biology, as the only state to do so. New Jersey also recognizes the need for teachers to have daily formative-assessment tools to inform the adaptation of instruction based on student needs and performance. New Jersey has provided a state-funded service for LEAs to offer *Learnia*, an online formative- and interim-assessment platform. Finally, New Jersey has earned a national reputation for the quality of its state-funded preschool programs and has demonstrated that its high-quality preschool programs have a significant impact on New Jersey children through second grade (see Appendix II).

.....

**Data Systems**

.....

New Jersey recognizes the need for relevant, timely, and accurate data to shape and inform education policy, and also to provide teachers with the information they need to support student success. Through state funding, New Jersey has launched the NJ SMART data system providing new access and improved availability of state data in order to increase its use by the SEA, LEAs, and schools. New Jersey is also applying for a statewide longitudinal-data system grant from NCES to accelerate the NJ SMART development. With the support of ARRA funds, New Jersey’s LEAs have invested in new educational technology to transform their classrooms to reflect the 21<sup>st</sup> Century work environments.

.....

## **Teachers & Leaders**

.....

New Jersey is a nationally recognized leader in alternative teacher certification. The first state to offer an alternate route, New Jersey has continued to innovate and research new ways to open the pipeline so that skilled professionals can become classroom teachers. Through state funding and support from non-profits and grant-making foundations, New Jersey has piloted innovative programs to redesign STEM teacher preparation and has laid the foundation for building a network of professional-learning communities within and across schools. New Jersey invests heavily through state and federal funds to provide high-quality professional development to grow and support outstanding teachers.

.....

## **Struggling Schools**

.....

Through state funding and with the support of School Improvement Grants, New Jersey has developed a comprehensive system of supports and monitoring for schools and districts that have been identified for improvement under Title I of ESEA. The New Jersey Quality Single Accountability Continuum (QSAC) and the Collaborative Assessment and Planning for Achievement (CAPA) tools gather information across a range of school leadership, performance,

and operational indicators for use in designing improvement plans. New Jersey’s High School Graduation Campaign also demonstrates New Jersey’s willingness and success in working across organizations and state agencies to ensure that our students graduate from high school ready for college and work.

.....

## **(ii) INCREASING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IN READING/LANGUAGE ARTS AND MATHEMATICS**

.....

### **National Assessment of Educational Progress**

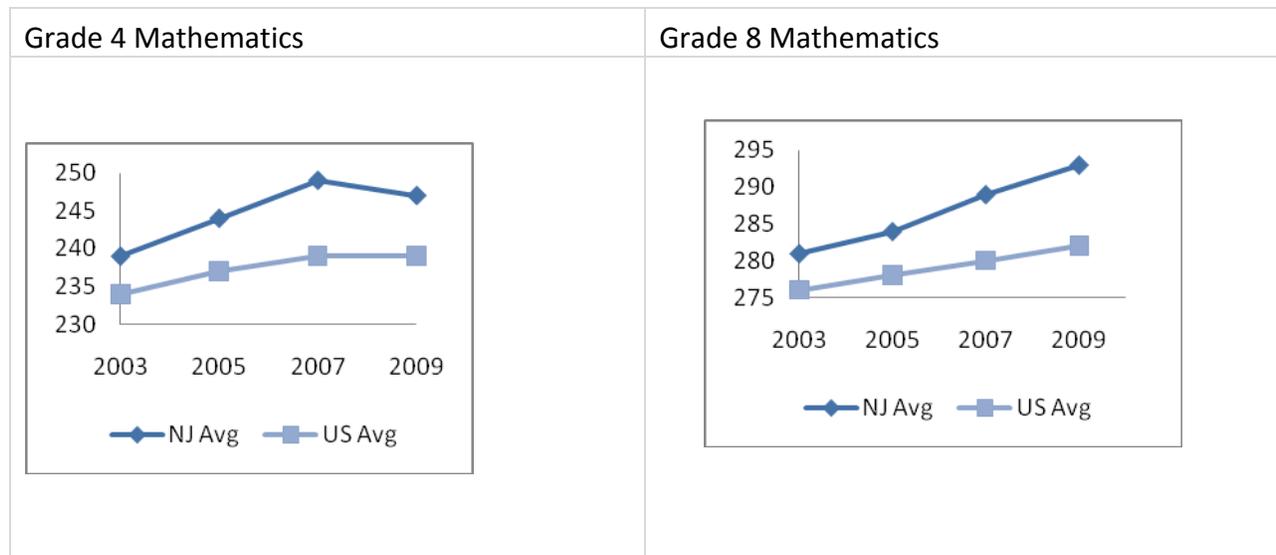
.....

#### **Mathematics results**

- New Jersey fourth-grade scores surpass the national average by eight points;
- Eighth-grade scores in New Jersey are eleven points higher than the national average

New Jersey eighth-graders on the 2009 NAEP (National Assessment for Educational Progress) mathematics test are among the best in the country, and have improved significantly since 2003. Only two states’ students scored better on the eighth-grade test. New Jersey fourth-graders continue to score higher on the NAEP math test than students in all but three other states. The average math score of fourth graders in New Jersey was 247, while the average score for public-school students across the nation was 239. The average scale score for New Jersey’s grade-eight students , 293, is twelve points higher that it was in 2003, and eleven points higher than the national average of 282. While there is still much more work to be done, the eighth-grade results, in particular, show that the investments New Jersey is making in education is paying off, and that the efforts of our educators are yielding positive results.

New Jersey students with disabilities showed particular improvement on the eighth-grade math test; the average score for those students increased from 251 in 2007, to 259 in 2009. The national average grade-eight math score for students with disabilities was 249 in 2009.



### Reading NAEP Results

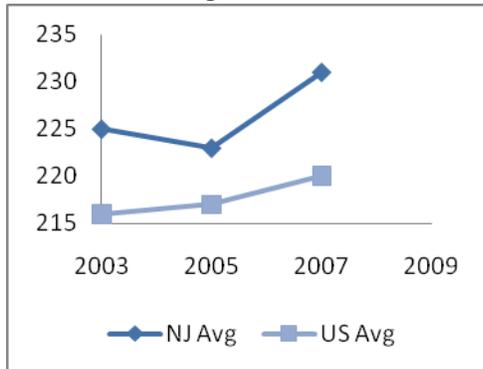
Fourth-graders in New Jersey are among the best readers in the nation.

The results of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) tests show New Jersey students trailing only one state in fourth-grade reading results, and tied with three other states.

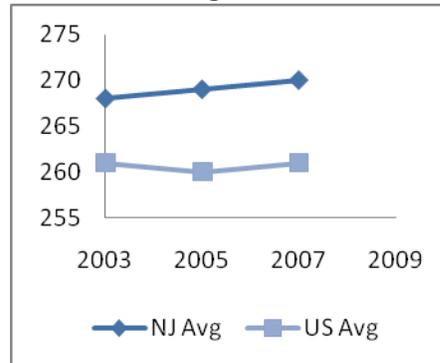
The jump in the statewide scale score from 223 in 2005, to 231 in 2007 is the second-highest increase in the nation. Fourth-graders' scores increased across the board in seven out of the eight major demographic groups tested. The 2007 NAEP results exemplify New Jersey's commitment to improving educational attainment in our elementary schools. New Jersey attributes our increases to sound preschool- and early-childhood-education programs. These programs are providing our youngest students with a solid foundation of basic fundamentals, and the efforts are achieving positive results.

With regard to scaled scores, the average scaled score in reading for grade 4 was 231 in New Jersey, compared to 220 in the nation. Also, the average score for male, female, black, white and Hispanic students, as well as students both eligible and not eligible for the National School Lunch Program has increased since 2005. In grade 8, the average scale score for New Jersey was 270, compared to 261 for the nation.

Grade 4 Reading



Grade 8 Reading



New Jersey students have a history of strong performances on the NAEP tests. In 2007, New Jersey eighth graders were the best writers in the nation for their grade level, and fourth graders trailed only one state in reading scores.

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## **New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJ ASK)**

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New Jersey has made several changes to its assessment system between 2003 and 2009 in order to raise both the academic standards expected of all students and the quality of the assessment instruments. The NCES report “Mapping State Proficiency onto NAEP Scales: 2005-2007” demonstrates the high caliber of New Jersey’s Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (ASK) with academic-achievement levels in grade 8, for both reading and mathematics, well above the basic cut point on the NAEP. However, these changes do impact the validity of comparisons across years for New Jersey assessment data.

In 2007-08, New Jersey redesigned its statewide assessment and raised performance standards for students in grades 5-8. The 2008 results of the redesigned NJ ASK 5-8 Language Arts Literacy (LAL) and mathematics cannot be compared with those of previous assessments due to

changes in test design. The redesigned NJ ASK 5-8 for LAL and mathematics differ significantly in terms of item type, passage length, and testing time. Additionally, New Jersey significantly raised performance expectations for students on the grade-3 and -4 assessments during the 2008-2009 school year. Complete data for all assessment years can be found in Appendix I.

The recently-released 2008-09 assessment results allow for comparisons between grades 5-8 between the 2007-08 and 2008-09 school years. As evidenced in the test results, New Jersey educators stand ready to meet raised expectations for students. In literacy, academic achievement increased significantly across grades 5-8, with greater increases in the percent proficient for black, Hispanic, and economically-disadvantaged students. In mathematics, the percent of all students scoring proficient or above increased in grades 5, 7, and 8, with accompanying increasing increases in the percent of black, Hispanic, and economically-disadvantaged students scoring proficient or higher. The percent of economically-disadvantaged students scoring proficient or higher increased from 44% in 2008 to 51% in 2009, and the percent of black students scoring proficient or above increased from 37.8% in 2008 to 44.5% in 2009. With the continuation of efforts to translate higher standards into classroom practice, extensive professional development for teachers, and supports for students, New Jersey fully expects this level of progress to continue.



## **DECREASING ACHIEVEMENT GAPS BETWEEN SUBGROUPS IN READING/LANGUAGE ARTS AND MATHEMATICS**



### **National Assessment of Educational Progress**

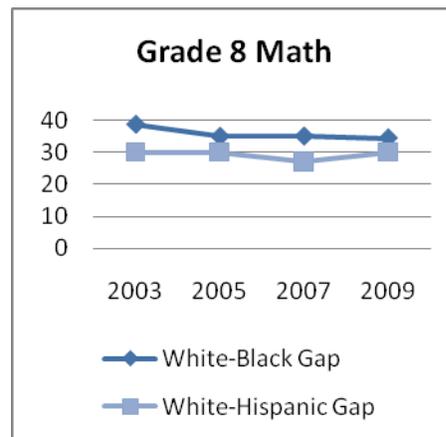
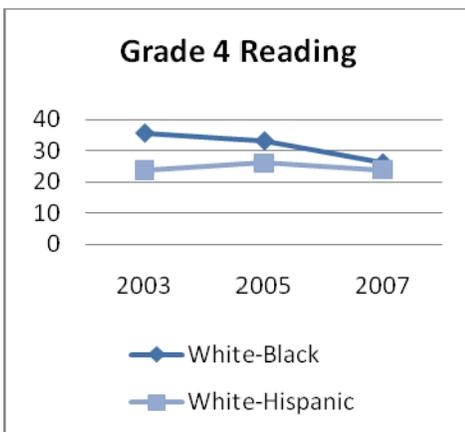


An achievement gap exists in New Jersey between our Hispanic and Black students and their White peers. As evidenced on the NAEP, this longstanding gap is closing over time, but New

Jersey intends to enact the bold and comprehensive reform effort laid out in this Race to the Top application to accelerate the elimination of the achievement gap in New Jersey.

We have proven our record with successes in grade-4 reading. From 2003 to 2007, the achievement gap between black and white students significantly decreased. Black students' scores increased by 12 points, and the gap between black and white students decreased by 10 points. This was the largest gap reduction in the nation, and New Jersey was one of only three states with a 10-point decrease.

In mathematics, the achievement gap between white and black students has decreased since 2003. The achievement gap between white and Hispanic students has narrowed slightly between 2003 and 2007. A recent education-trust report titled "Gauging the Gaps, A Deeper Look at Student Achievement" recognizes New Jersey as one of the top states in closing the achievement gap between low-income or minority students and their peers. The Education Trust's latest report confirms that New Jersey is closing the achievement gap while making gains among all groups of students. Likewise, New Jersey's low-income and minority students are outperforming their peers in other states. This analysis shows that New Jersey is a leader in closing the achievement gap among students, but our job is not done until all children are equipped with the skills and knowledge they need to compete in the 21<sup>st</sup> century global marketplace.



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## **New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJ ASK)**

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New Jersey's public schools are making notable progress in closing the achievement gap between African American, Latino and low-income students and their classmates. The center of Education Policy (CEP) released the report *State Test Score Trends Through 2007-08*, which indicates that between 2006 and 2008, the percentage of students proficient in math and reading has increased throughout New Jersey.

At the fourth-grade level, math proficiency for African American students increased from 63% to 68%. For Latino students, the proficiency rate rose from 72% to 76%, and for low-income students, math proficiency grew from 68 % to 72%. Scores for White students rose from 90% to 92%, while proficiency scores for Asian students improved from 94% to 95%, and for Native American students, results rose from 78% to 83%.

Moderate improvements were experienced in fourth-grade reading scores. From 2006-2008, the percentage of fourth-grade African American students reaching reading proficiency grew from 63% to 67%. Proficiency rates for Latino students increased from 67% to 73%, and low-income student figures rose from 63% to 69%. For White students, reading proficiency grew from 88% to 89%. Asian students' scores improved from 91% to 93%, while Native American student proficiency decreased slightly from 73% to 72%.

As evidenced by this data, New Jersey is on the right track, but much hard work remains for us to make sure that every child in New Jersey has an equal chance at a quality education and a bright future. Improving educational opportunities for all children throughout the state is a priority.

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## **INCREASING HIGH-SCHOOL GRADUATION RATES**

New Jersey recognizes the importance of reliable and timely data to inform high-school re-design. Through improvements to the data system, New Jersey will be able to report adjusted cohort graduation rates starting next school year. While we recognize the limitations of our

current leaver rate, even this basic metric reveals significant differences in the preparation of student groups for college and work:

Graduation Rates			
	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
White	95.0	95.2	95.6
African American	83.9	87.0	88.0
Asian	98.8	97.0	97.8
Hispanic	83.2	84.9	85.1
Students with Disabilities		77.7	78.3

The New Jersey High School Graduation Campaign approximated that 19,000 students did not graduate from New Jersey’s high schools in 2007, and the lost lifetime earnings for that class of dropouts is estimated at \$4.9 billion. Estimates show that only 63% of African American and 67% of Hispanic high school students will graduate in New Jersey. Further, the number of young people, ages 18-24, who are not in school and also are not working increased by 34% in New Jersey between 2002 and 2006. In response, New Jersey has launched a High School Redesign initiative to raise graduation recruitments and increase standards, in order to create a public education system that is seamlessly-aligned from pre-school to college, and that ensures that students gain the requisite academic knowledge for life and work in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

New Jersey also recognizes that a challenge like this requires great partnerships. Through the collaborative efforts of state agencies, community associations and the business community, New Jersey has launched the New Jersey High School Graduation Campaign. The recent report “Forging New Jersey’s Cradle to College & Workforce Pipeline for All Children – Year One, Preliminary Findings and Proposed Plan for Action” provides a framework of much of New Jersey’s Race to the Top application.



## **SECTION B**

### **Standards and Assessments (70 total points)**

## STATE REFORM CONDITIONS CRITERIA

### **(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards (40 points)**

The extent to which the State has demonstrated its commitment to adopting a common set of high-quality standards, evidenced by (as set forth in Appendix B)—

#### **(i) The State's participation in a consortium of States that— (20 points)**

- (a) Is working toward jointly developing and adopting a common set of K-12 standards (as defined in this notice) that are supported by evidence that they are internationally benchmarked and build toward college and career readiness by the time of high school graduation; and
- (b) Includes a significant number of States; and

#### **(ii) — (20 points)**

- (a) For Phase 1 applications, the State's high-quality plan demonstrating its commitment to and progress toward adopting a common set of K-12 standards (as defined in this notice) by August 2, 2010, or, at a minimum, by a later date in 2010 specified by the State, and to implementing the standards thereafter in a well-planned way; or
- (b) For Phase 2 applications, the State's adoption of a common set of K-12 standards (as defined in this notice) by August 2, 2010, or, at a minimum, by a later date in 2010 specified by the State in a high-quality plan toward which the State has made significant progress, and its commitment to implementing the standards thereafter in a well-planned way.<sup>1</sup>

*In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.*

Evidence for (B)(1)(i):

- A copy of the Memorandum of Agreement, executed by the State, showing that it is part of a standards consortium.
- A copy of the final standards or, if the standards are not yet final, a copy of the draft standards and anticipated date for completing the standards.
- Documentation that the standards are or will be internationally benchmarked and that, when well-implemented, will help to ensure that students are prepared for college and careers.
- The number of States participating in the standards consortium and the list of these States.

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<sup>1</sup> Phase 2 applicants addressing selection criterion (B)(1)(ii) may amend their June 1, 2010 application submission through August 2, 2010 by submitting evidence of adopting common standards after June 1, 2010.



## STATE STANDARDS CONSORTIUM

- Leader in developing academically-rigorous 21<sup>st</sup> Century Standards
- Active in the Common Core State Standards Initiative
- Clear pathways for stakeholder engagement to develop higher, clearer, and fewer academic standards



### (i) DEVELOPING AND ADOPTING COMMON STANDARDS

New Jersey has a comprehensive and deep commitment to the development of evidence-based standards, international benchmarking, and college- and career-readiness. The roots of this work are evidenced in the spectrum of state efforts from high-quality early-childhood programs to recent and ongoing efforts to transform secondary education and ensure the success of all students P-16 through the New Jersey High School Graduation Campaign. New Jersey was one of the first states to implement core-curriculum-content standards that specify uniform and challenging education expectations for all students in the state. The original set of standards was adopted in 1996. In 2008, the New Jersey Department of Education engaged in the third revision of these standards with goals that are congruent with the principles, rigor, and expectations of both the Race to the Top guidelines and the Common Core Standards Initiative. In June 2009, the New Jersey State Board adopted core-curriculum content standards in seven of nine areas. Although significant energy was committed to the review and development of revised language-arts literacy and mathematics standards, these areas were put on hold as the state signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with Common Core Standards Initiative -- a consortium of 48 states, including New Jersey (all participating states are listed in the Appendix I). The process and organizational infrastructure that resulted from the revision of the standards in the other content areas will be extremely valuable in the transition to the common standards in language-arts literacy and mathematics.



## **(ii) STANDARDS ADOPTION PLAN**

The State Board of Education has authority to adopt all standards for New Jersey under NJSA 18A:7F-46. Since the initial announcement of the Common Core Standards Initiative, members of the NJDOE have been working with state board members and educators in the field to build awareness and support for the Standards. New Jersey has developed a plan to recommend adoption by the state board in a way that incorporates the feedback received from all stakeholders throughout the adoption process.

**October 2009--** Upon release of the Common Core College and Career Expectations, the department issued a press release, posted the standards on its Website and opened a special email box to take comments from the public.

**December 16, 2009—**The State Board of Education reviewed all comments and affirmed their support of the Career and College Expectations.

**January 20, 2010—**The full plan for review of the grade-level standards will be set forth at the State Board of Education meeting.

Early **February 2010--**The Common Core Standards are scheduled to be made public, and NJDOE will again issue a press release and an invitation to comment either to the NJDOE website and/or directly to the Common Core mailbox. The invitation will go to stakeholders via an NJDOE-issued press release and the listserv. An invitation to comment, both to the NJDOE website and/or directly to the Common Core site, will go to educators via the NJDOE email listserv.

**February 17, 2010 –** The State Board will hold public hearings for testimony regarding the content of the Common Core Standards.

**Month of February 2010—**All workshops and meetings convened by the department will include a segment on the Core Curriculum Standards designed to increase awareness among educators, engage them in a review of the Common Core Standards in both Math and English Language Arts (ELA), and elicit feedback regarding the Common Core

Standards. These sessions will focus on understanding the implications of learning progressions, teaching to mastery, and deep understanding of content..

**Early March 2010**—All comments from NJ about the grade-level Common Core Standards in English Language Arts and Math will be forwarded to the developers of the standards.

**March 17, 2010** –The NJ State Board of Education will discuss the resolution to adopt the final version of the standards. The State Board will take public testimony regarding adoption of the standards.

**March/April 2010** – Public meetings will be scheduled to ensure full access for all stakeholders. Additionally, the NJDOE will offer webinars to present and discuss the Common Core Standards initiative. The New Jersey Parents and Teachers Association is one of the four State associations that received funding from the Gates Foundation to support the Common Core Standards. The department will work closely with the organization in the implementation of their initiatives.

Additional meetings will be held with two-year and four-year college and university faculty and admissions counselors regarding college-readiness and the impact of the Common Core Standards. Efforts will be made to ensure closer working relationships with colleges and high schools in preparing New Jersey students for postsecondary education and training through traditional or alternate routes.

**April 21, 2010** –A resolution to adopt the Common Core Mathematics and English Language Arts Standards will be presented to the State Board of Education.

If these core standards are adopted, NJDOE will look for ways to bring LEAs together to collaborate regarding possible implementation strategies including linking to curriculum and aligning with higher education.

The NJDOE will meet with professional-development providers and content-organization representatives to align the initiatives and develop support and dissemination strategies for the Common Core Standards, as well as the 2009 New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards. This meeting has already been scheduled by the New Jersey

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (NJASCD) and participants will include, but not be limited to: the NJ Principals and Supervisors Association (NJPSA); the NJ Education Association (NJEA); the NJ American Federation of Teachers (AFT), and Math and English Language Arts organizations and affiliates.

As is discussed elsewhere, we see the introduction of the teacher tablets and software systems as being fundamentally organized around the new standards, the curriculum spine, and the exemplar lessons we propose to develop – we believe they will be tools for making standards come to life in ways that were not possible with respect to previous generations of standards. We further believe that there will be great demand for our standards-support-systems in other states transitioning to the Common Core and would endeavor to make our resources available beyond New Jersey.

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

The extent to which the State has demonstrated its commitment to improving the quality of its assessments, evidenced by (as set forth in Appendix B) the State's participation in a consortium of States that—

- (i) Is working toward jointly developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments (as defined in this notice) aligned with the consortium's common set of K-12 standards (as defined in this notice); and
- (ii) Includes a significant number of States.

*In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.*

Evidence for (B)(2):

- A copy of the Memorandum of Agreement, executed by the State, showing that it is part of a consortium that intends to develop high-quality assessments (as defined in this notice) aligned with the consortium's common set of K-12 standards; or documentation that the State's consortium has applied, or intends to apply, for a grant through the separate Race to the Top Assessment Program (to be described in a subsequent notice); or other evidence of the State's plan to develop and adopt common, high-quality assessments (as defined in this notice).
- The number of States participating in the assessment consortium and the list of these States.

*Recommended maximum response length: One page*

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## **DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING COMMON, HIGH-QUALITY ASSESSMENTS**

- Deliberate, informed selection of most promising consortium
- Proven record of innovation in assessment systems

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### **(i) ASSESSMENT CONSORTIUM**

The NJDOE has signed MOAs with several consortia to engage in preliminary discussions, including the “Balanced Assessment Consortium,” led by Dr. Linda Darling Hammond and the lead states of Maine and West Virginia; Multiple Options for Student Assessment and Instruction Consortium (MOSAIC), led by Nebraska and Wisconsin; and the Assessment Consortium led by Florida. The MOUs for the consortia are included as Appendix I. Twenty-five states are members of MOSAIC, 36 are members of the Balanced Assessment Consortium, and 14 are members of the Florida consortium. We believe we have the experience to importantly contribute to these efforts and we know that we have much to gain from the collaborative-assessment efforts. Our work with the American Diploma Project is a good example of our experience in reviewing the scope of work from a consortium and aligning the consortium to our system. The work of the consortia is currently in development. As they continue their work, we expect to examine the results and choose the most promising organizations. Important considerations for selection of the consortia will be the number of states participating, and the quality of the proposed end instruments compared to our current assessment system. In selecting the most promising consortium, New Jersey will bring its extensive experience to bear in developing the assessments, including its experience with field testing and using internationally-benchmarked materials; its development of multiple-choice items that focus on application and critical thinking; its use of Language Arts inquiry-based items; and its use of performance exams in biology. New Jersey will also consider the advice of its Assessment Technical Advisory Committee under the leadership of Ron Hambleton

from the University of Massachusetts; the Committee’s members also include Suzanne Lane, from the University of Pittsburgh; Greg Camilli, from the University of Colorado; George Engelhard, from Emory University; Greg Cizek, from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; and Stephen Koffler, former vice president of ETS.

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## **Approach to Assessment**

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Ever since the adoption of its Core Curriculum Content Standards in 1996, New Jersey’s summative assessments have been designed to include significant constructed-response or performance components at all grade levels. These assessment designs reflected a conscious emphasis on critical thinking and higher-order problem-solving skills. New Jersey’s mathematics assessments contain both shorter and extended constructed-response items accounting for approximately 30% of the total possible points, in addition to selected-response content. In Language Arts Literacy (LAL), which covers both writing and reading at all grade levels, the proportion of constructed-response content typically ranges from 45% to 55% of the total points. These include two writing prompts at each grade level from 3 through 8, and at grade 11.

New Jersey’s commitment to larger-scale authentic performance assessments extends back to 2003, when the state initiated six years of funding for a statewide consortium, the New Jersey Performance Assessment Alliance (NJ PAA). The Alliance was charged with developing and modeling performance assessments across multiple grades and subjects and creating associated professional-development programs to promote the use of curriculum-embedded assessments throughout New Jersey. The NJ PAA trained hundreds of New Jersey teachers to develop, administer, score, and analyze results from performance assessments in language arts, mathematics, and science. Current plans call for New Jersey’s forthcoming End of Course Biology graduation tests to combine selected-response content with two 45-minute performance tasks. This model is being field-tested in 2010 and is expected to be operational in 2011.

New Jersey is committed to the premise that decisions on student performance standards and cut scores should be the result of deliberate educational policy, not merely the

consequence of psychometric processes. This commitment has been articulated explicitly in its contracts with testing vendors, and it has been expressed most recently in two standard settings for the elementary- and middle-school assessments. New, higher achievement standards in grades 5-8 language arts and math were adopted by the State Board in July 2008; higher, more challenging performance standards in grades 3 and 4 were adopted in July 2009. In raising the bar at six grade levels, New Jersey resists the pressures that were felt both here and in other states to maintain or lower existing standards in the face of the accountability challenges of NCLB. New Jersey expects to set 21<sup>st</sup>-Century performance standards for its next generation of high-school assessments as well, as part of the work under this grant. New Jersey's standards-based assessments are designed to meet the highest technical standards, thanks to the guidance of our TAC.

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## **American Diploma Project (ADP)**

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New Jersey was a founding member of the Achieve/ADP Algebra consortium in 2006 – indeed, we were the first participating state to sign the memorandum of agreement committing ourselves to this work. Among the ADP Algebra states, we have been the third-largest user of the Algebra II test and the largest user of the ADP Algebra I test. As a result of our involvement in the ADP consortium, we have developed collegial relationships with standards and assessment leaders in many other states, and have direct experience in working with consortia in the development of assessments.

Working with the ADP consortium, we have begun piloting computer-based delivery of summative assessments, first with Algebra II in 2008 and 2009, and with Algebra I slated for 2010.

## REFORM PLAN CRITERIA

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

The extent to which the State, in collaboration with its participating LEAs (as defined in this notice), has a high-quality plan for supporting a statewide transition to and implementation of internationally benchmarked K-12 standards that build toward college and career readiness by the time of high school graduation, and high-quality assessments (as defined in this notice) tied to these standards. State or LEA activities might, for example, include: developing a rollout plan for the standards together with all of their supporting components; in cooperation with the State's institutions of higher education, aligning high school exit criteria and college entrance requirements with the new standards and assessments; developing or acquiring, disseminating, and implementing high-quality instructional materials and assessments (including, for example, formative and interim assessments (both as defined in this notice)); developing or acquiring and delivering high-quality professional development to support the transition to new standards and assessments; and engaging in other strategies that translate the standards and information from assessments into classroom practice for all students, including high-need students (as defined in this notice).

The State shall provide its plan for this criterion in the text box below. The plan should include, at a minimum, the goals, activities, timelines, and responsible parties (see Reform Plan Criteria elements in Application Instructions or Section XII, Application Requirements (e), for further detail). Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers must be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Recommended maximum response length: Eight pages

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## SUPPORTING THE TRANSITION TO ENHANCED STANDARDS AND HIGH-QUALITY ASSESSMENTS

- Ensure instruction, not test prep, is at the heart of the system.
- Create a P-12 “Curriculum and Assessment Spine” -- an aligned framework of evidence-based instructional tools coupled with integrated assessment practice, and professional development.
- Employ flexible approaches to assessment, embedded within the curriculum, to provide teachers with instructionally-relevant information focused on critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills.
- Enhance instructional tools by embedding cognitive research on learning progressions with a clear pathway toward college- and career-readiness

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## BUILDING ON NEW JERSEY’S HISTORY OF SUCCESS

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### **Formative Assessment**

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New Jersey is already well along in deploying a high-quality, standards-based, system of formative assessment throughout the state. Under the New Jersey Code, we are required to use benchmark assessments. Beyond those requirements, New Jersey has an ongoing commitment to using formative assessment to inform instruction, which results in improved student outcomes. Several LEAs have chosen to implement and use a variety of benchmark assessments. New Jersey introduced web-based formative- and benchmark-assessment resources as a part of the statewide assessment system, starting in 2007-2008 with the *Learnia* program. *Learnia* is a vendor-based, multi-tiered online resource for locally-administered benchmark and formative assessments. It includes considerable

data-reporting and data-analysis features, as well as an item-authoring capacity that allows LEAs to create their own assessment content. *Learnia* is currently the benchmark assessment in widest use--approximately 200 New Jersey LEAs are making use of it in the 2009-10 school year. The *Learnia* program has emphasized an ongoing professional-development-and-training program as an essential complement to the web-based formative- and benchmark-assessment resources. The evidence to date shows promising results. A recent study by Pearson of the 22-26% of New Jersey students in grades 3-8 who participated in the *Learnia* formative-assessment program showed that in LEAs that fully implemented the system, students improved over the course of the school year, with the most dramatic results in grade 3. Further, preliminary results suggest that LEAs that fully implemented the formative-assessment system scored higher on the statewide assessment, NJ ASK, in comparison to other LEAs. Numerous in-person workshops, as well as webinars, have been conducted among LEA staff on the topics of assessment literacy, using formative-assessment results, and integrating assessment into the classroom. This will be a key component in the implementation and monitoring of student progress toward Common Core learning progressions. This program provides a statewide foundation of formative- and benchmark-assessment practice. Race to the Top presents an opportunity to deepen this practice and create innovation for aligning curriculum and assessment.

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## **STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics)**

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New Jersey's STEM initiative aims to create an aligned vision, from kindergarten through college and into the workplace, that supports the opportunity for all students to have a high-quality STEM education that better matches what real STEM looks like outside the traditional structure of schools. Through the Progressive Science and Mathematics Initiatives, STEM classrooms around the state will be supported in the integration of innovations and STEM practices that are aligned to new curriculum standards. An important component of past successful programs in New Jersey, including

the Progressive Science Initiative, is the use of educational technology, such as Smart boards, notebooks, and tablets. These technology tools make possible the creation of both in-school and interschool virtual professional-learning communities, and help transform classrooms to prepare all students for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. New Jersey will also build on the Progressive Math Initiative, to bridge the gap between K-12 and the college curriculum by designing an approach to make it clear and transparent to middle-school teachers and students what is expected in the college curriculum. New Jersey intends to join the strengths and resources of industry, higher education, informal learning environments, community organizations, and K-12 education to work together in a mutually-supportive structure so that our interests and actions have maximum impact on our statewide STEM system.

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## **Early-Childhood Education**

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New Jersey has earned a national reputation for the quality of its state-funded preschool programs (National Institute for Early Education Research, 2009). High-quality, fully-funded preschool education is offered to all three- and four-year-olds who reside in 35 of the poorest LEAs. The program is specifically designed to prepare young children to enter kindergarten with skills and abilities that match those of their more-advantaged peers. One hundred and eleven LEAs with low-income students receive only partial funding and have not yet fully implemented preschool programs that meet New Jersey’s high-quality standards. Because of limited funding, the majority of these preschool programs have been unable to implement an evidence-based, comprehensive preschool curriculum and assessment system, and have been unable to address the needs of dual-language learners and children with challenging behaviors and/or potential learning difficulties. Race to the Top will facilitate the implementation of the high-quality program components that have been found to be effective in New Jersey’s former Abbott LEAs. Existing research studies show that high-quality pre-school education has a significant impact on NJ children through second grade (see Appendix II). New Jersey will expand its investment in preschool within a broader education reform agenda that

seeks to improve learning outcomes from preschool through third grade, by revising and implementing both learning and program standards through third grade, and facilitating the appropriate use of assessment. New Jersey’s standards, exemplar lessons, and formative assessments for preschool to third grade will be linked to the K-12 curriculum, instructional, and assessment tools.

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## **Twenty-First Century Standards to Transform Classroom Practice**

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In recognition of the need to align students’ educational experiences with the demands of a rapidly-changing world economy and the urgent need to transform secondary education, a High School Redesign Committee was formed. The Committee is a public-private partnership that included members from the New Jersey School Boards Association, New Jersey Education Association, Business Coalition for Educational Excellence, New Jersey Chamber of Commerce, New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association, and New Jersey Commission of Higher Education. Their reform efforts resulted in the adoption of rigorous graduation requirements, supportive policies, and revised standards in 7 of 9 content areas. The revised standards in Visual and Performing Arts, Comprehensive Health and Physical Education, Science, Social Studies, World Languages, Technology, and 21st Century Life and Careers require a deeper understanding of academic content, at much higher levels, facilitated by the integration of 21st-century knowledge, skills, and themes; global perspectives; cross-content connections; and the systematic and transparent integration of technology.

Implementation of the standards is supported by a multi-year Action Plan developed by the department and key stakeholders that will result in the systemic implementation of the required knowledge and skills. The plan includes the release of an interactive website that includes standards, assessments, and support materials; and the implementation of a statewide systemic model for professional development. The New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards interactive website will enable educators in February 2010 to easily access the 2009 standards and will support curriculum development, curriculum

mapping, instructional planning, assessment, and professional-development opportunities. The Website search engine allows users to access the standards and cumulative progress-indicators by multiple means (e.g., grade level, content area, strand, key word search, essential questions, and enduring understandings). Users will be able to view, print, or download the standards and a host of accompanying resources on demand. Resources include Classroom Application Documents for all standards and strands that offer clear instructional guidance for teachers that is focused on what students should know and be able to do as a result of learning experiences, and related curriculum-embedded assessments that consist of open-ended student performances on challenging tasks that emphasize knowledge of core concepts within and across disciplines.

The Statewide Systemic Professional Development and Growth Initiative provides an organizing framework for Creating 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools, includes onsite and online learning opportunities, and offers the rich context for what we want to build. The focus is on the use of research-based instructional and assessment strategies that enable higher levels of student achievement in the content areas. Core learning sessions are offered at no cost to educators, along with fee-based sessions, throughout the three-year plan. Phase 1 (2009), Awareness and Familiarization, focused on engaging students as digital learners in 21<sup>st</sup>-century learning environments. Phase 2 (2010), Critical Transformations, is centered on understanding and using revised standards and online standards support materials; and on using multiple, flexible approaches for teaching, learning and assessment. The professional development offered through this plan provides the context for the rich discussions, collaboration, and knowledge-sharing that supports the work of onsite and virtual professional-learning communities.

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## **Performance Assessments**

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The New Jersey Department of Education has worked collaboratively and contracted with the New Jersey Performance Assessment Alliance (NJPA) to both develop performance assessment prompts for a performance assessment in biology, and train

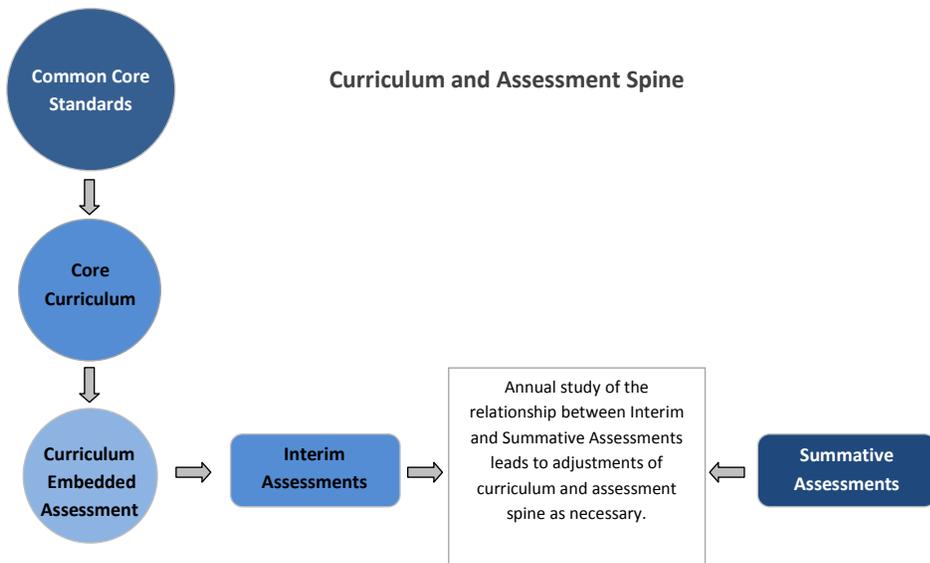
teachers from every high school in the state on the holistic scoring of the performance-assessment prompts. Last year's prompt, *Live and Let Live*, was a 90-minute prompt designed through the collaborative efforts of the NJPAA, the New Jersey Department of Education, and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. It was administered to over 95,000 students and scored by New Jersey teachers and supervisors. In our third year of this initiative, we certainly have a significant number of educators who have the skills to both design quality performance-assessment tasks and score them.

The biology performance assessment is one piece of our state's first end-of-course assessment system. There is a multiple-choice assessment that emphasizes critical thinking and application over memorization and definition in biology. This year, students will also be given two 45-minute performance-assessment tasks. The purpose of the performance assessment is to evaluate the students' ability to apply and analyze the content of biology to novel, real-life situations. Students are evaluated on a rubric that is included in their prompt, based on criteria such as the ability to use evidence in taking a position, the ability to explain a concept without misconceptions, etc. The scores from the multiple-choice questions and performance assessments will be combined into one biology-proficiency score.

The Department's commitment to performance assessment has influenced critical thinking and the application of knowledge in high-school science classrooms, for students at all academic levels, throughout the state. New Jersey's experience with performance assessment positions the state well to include similar types of testing in its interim and summative-assessment programs.

## A CURRICULUM SPINE AND ASSESSMENT SPINE

New Jersey’s contention is that student achievement will not rise sufficiently with just standards and assessment. A *curriculum spine* needs to be at the heart of the system, directly tied to the new standards. The current process to review and update the New Jersey Core Curriculum Standards will serve as the catalyst for the alignment of the curriculum, instruction, professional development, and assessment systems across the state that students experience from early childhood through high school. Building on the



work already underway in New Jersey to assist with all aspects of standards implementation, with Race to the Top funding New Jersey will work with local leaders and national

experts to create a Curriculum and Assessment Spine – an integrated set of formative-assessment tools, learning trajectories, and curricular exemplars. The spine will provide clear and consistent guidance to teachers about pedagogy and expectations for all children for college entrance or 21<sup>st</sup> Century work. We will surround the Curriculum and Assessment Spine with a comprehensive program of in-person and on-line professional development, leverage a unifying technology platform, and provide collaborative time for teachers and school leaders to review and plan instruction based on real-time student data and to collectively review student work.

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## **Vision: a Balanced Assessment System to Improve Teaching and Learning**

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A balanced assessment system includes a combination of assessment *for*, and assessment *of*, learning. These summative, interim, and curriculum-embedded formative assessments serve separate, but complementary purposes in the process of learning and teaching, and will be an integral part of every instructional program. All three approaches to assessment must and will be aligned – e.g., the interim assessments must both align with, and be correlated with the summative assessment, while at the same time reflecting the local enacted P-12 core-curriculum sequence. Evidence-based instructional tools and formative assessments will surround the core-curriculum sequence to provide teachers with the instructionally-relevant information that is necessary to adapt instruction based on students’ academic needs. We will closely monitor the alignment of the entire system by annually analyzing the capability of interim assessments to correlate with summative performance; inform pacing and intervention strategies, by evaluating the responsiveness of interim assessments to teacher and student use of instructional units; and make adjustments as necessary to exemplar curriculum materials and assessments. Evaluation and continuous improvement will be a critical component to ensure high-quality implementation of this innovative system.

The result is a balanced assessment system that promotes sound instructional practices while providing information on the effectiveness of educational programs. It will support classroom teachers with a technology toolset and assessment protocols for Interim Assessment and Curriculum-Embedded Assessment, to help teachers make excellent formative use of both types of assessment data. The tools and protocols will be closely linked with exemplar units of curriculum, including STEM subjects, and will be surrounded by face-to-face and online professional development.

## Interim Assessment

“Interim” assessments will serve as a critical link between assessment practices that are tied to the curriculum and summative assessments that are based on content standards. Our perspective is that these assessments work best when they are linked to instructional units – e.g., when they are evaluating whether a child is “at benchmark” on specific skills and content, closely following instruction. At the same time, these assessments will allow for classroom-, school-, and LEA-level aggregation, analysis, and reporting, in order to support instructional leadership and management.

A major purpose of interim assessments is to identify each student’s status on learning progressions with enough time to intervene with effective instructional strategies. To do this effectively, assessments must be standards-based measures that are tied to the progressions within the curriculum, and must provide timely feedback to teachers and students. We propose to design and administer interim assessments that will be linked to the four hardest-to-teach and important-to-master aspects of the grade-level core curriculum sequence. By focusing on the four hardest-to-teach aspects of the grade-level curriculum, we will ensure that teachers have the critical information they need to measure student mastery of academically-rigorous content and provide the tools teachers need to adapt their instruction so that it is most effective. These critical areas present the most challenging concepts to teach, with the biggest impact for students’ long-term understanding of complex material.

To identify the hardest-to-teach aspects of the grade-level curriculum, New Jersey will conduct a survey across a sample of teachers in each content area, with particular attention to the representation of the various LEA urban, rural, high-performing and low-performing contexts across the state. An expert panel will select the four areas for which New Jersey will develop interim assessments by exploring the latest research on learning progressions in all content areas, examining the depth of knowledge related to each teacher-identified area, and studying the summative-assessment results. Teachers and other curriculum experts will be involved with the design and development of the interim assessments to ensure that the standards, exemplar lessons, and interim assessments are well-aligned.

With Race to the Top funding, New Jersey will provide intensive, content-focused professional development to teachers across the state, delivered through county offices and onsite and online through a network of instructional coaches, to support teachers delivering this hard-to-teach content through the curriculum spine. At least four times per year, teachers will administer these interim assessments to identify students who are significantly behind their cohort in mastering key educational concepts and skills. Interim assessments will be composed of short-answer, fill-in-the-blank, and constructed-response items, scored by teams of teachers within the LEA. In collaboration with teachers and other curriculum experts, NJDOE will develop scoring rubrics that embody the standards assessed and will provide clear examples of good student work. In scoring these interim assessments, New Jersey will use a model in which teachers score the results locally. In order to collect data on the reliability and validity of scoring procedures, and adjust the scoring process as necessary, New Jersey will select a random sample of interim assessments to be scored a second time by independent raters, and will compare these results to the teacher's original score. The scoring of interim assessments will be completed within two weeks after their administration, to ensure that teachers will have the information necessary to intervene with students who are at risk of falling behind.

### **Curriculum-Embedded Assessments**

Our Curriculum-Embedded Assessments will reflect a carefully-designed sequence of tasks, based on learning progressions that have been tested in classrooms. Building on the existing lesson-study-and-development process in New Jersey, teachers and supervisors will work together to thread embedded assessment opportunities throughout the local curriculum. Each curricular unit in the assessment spine will include assessment of knowledge of facts and skills, and of the conceptual frameworks that connect them. Collected evidence will include monitoring questions and a series of performance-based tasks and extended-response items that are designed to inform the pedagogical routines in the classroom, such as student tasks that include extended analysis, research, and communication. With these tools, educators will be able to differentiate instruction based upon students' academic needs.

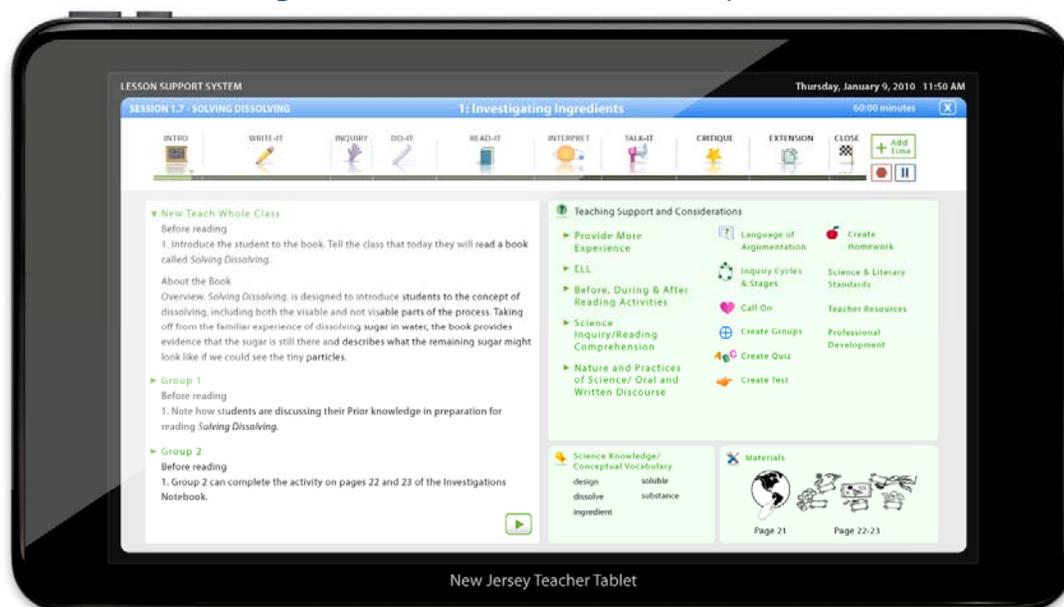
The curriculum-embedded performance tasks and constructed-response items will be delivered through a “classroom assessment engine” that allows teachers to create assessments tied to curriculum, with careful attention paid to the technical quality of such measures. New items will be developed by teachers to collect evidence that supports understanding of how students are thinking and progressing. These items will be validated by instructional coaches and LEA curriculum experts, and will include scoring rubrics to evaluate student work. Each item will be aligned to a specific content standard and instructional tool, to allow teachers to select multiple measures of the content assessed and to ensure that the formative assessments will occur during the natural course of instruction. These items will be available in English and Spanish, to support New Jersey’s significant Spanish-speaking ELL population, and accommodations will be available to adapt them for use with special-needs students.

Our assessment system will capture the items assessed; student work developed in response to the items; and teacher observations of the student work. The quality of student responses and teacher feedback can then be monitored by skilled instructional coaches and school leaders. Within each LEA, the central office will serve as a collection point for a cyclical review of student work, with the review intended to enable both monitoring and sharing of the results of lesson study. Teachers will use student work samples aligned with state content standards and will evaluate these artifacts using rubrics while working in their grade-level and content-level teams. This process supports the core work of the professional-learning community to focus on the relationship between instruction and student outcomes.

### **Effective Practice: Using Formative Data to Inform Instruction**

Certificated supervisors will support the collaborative use and analysis of student data. These interactions among teachers and supervisors will span across grade levels to include teachers in other grades, in order to build knowledge and sequential alignment. School leaders and individuals beyond the school may also be involved, so that they may learn from successful implementers in other schools, and in order to build equality of opportunity and inter-school coherence.

**Image 2: Teacher Tablet with Exemplar Lessons**



The Teacher Tablet will surround exemplar lessons with coaching, resources, assessments, and other professional supports.

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## **The Curriculum Spine: Curriculum and Instructional Tools to Transform Classroom Practice**

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To support adaptive instruction based on formative-assessment practices, teachers will need instructional tools that are sophisticated, nuanced, and adaptable. To meet this need, New Jersey will provide a set of exemplar units that are accessible in the tablets, and that illustrate specific research-based content and pedagogical routines and provide jumping-off points to generalize the approach and practices (exhibited in the illustration above and in Appendix II). These exemplar units will suggest teaching progressions and routines

that assure a focus on specific, relevant content and best practices for teaching and learning. Exemplar units will include suggested materials, tasks, and teaching routines, and will provide opportunities for extensions and guidance for teachers, as well as supports for gifted students, English-language learners, and students with disabilities. Curriculum experts, instructional coaches, school leaders, and teachers will also receive training and support to adapt existing curriculum and instructional resources to support these evidence-based strategies. For most LEAs, these units will provide a template to guide the revision of local curriculum and, in the case of chronically-low-performing schools, these units may provide an alternative curriculum. As a result, students will benefit because the best-available evidence about what works will guide teachers' decisions.

## **Content and Pedagogical Routines Embedded in Exemplar Lessons and Units**

Exemplar units and lessons will be developed by a contractor. These units and lessons will contain the pedagogical and content routines needed to produce customized instruction, and will be based on research findings that show that these aspects of instruction have large effects on student achievement, including:

- Connecting the lesson to important concepts or skills (standards), selecting appropriate tasks, re-accessing and reviewing prior knowledge, engaging students, making learning goals explicit, providing time for students to explore the content and apply it, and closing the lesson with a review and summary.
- Teaching students to perform academically-focused and rigorous tasks with a high cognitive demand, such as lessons asking them to generalize, analyze, make conjectures, offer alternative explanations, solve unfamiliar problems, or create new questions.
- Using adaptive-instruction routines that help teachers to modify instruction as necessary to address students' particular needs and difficulties, as identified through formative-assessment strategies that are rooted in coherent conceptions of students' progress and likely problems.

- Enhancing team or group learning, in part by paying particular attention to how class size, group composition and roles, seating arrangements, group stability, the number of groups, and other factors influence the effectiveness of this approach.
- Incorporating student-centered discussions that support open discourse and thus both help teachers understand their students' academic thinking, and give students opportunities to express their ideas in order to develop greater understanding of the subject matter.

First, exemplar units developed by a contractor and New Jersey teachers will be available in the areas of mathematics, science, and language arts literacy. Then, as resources expand, we will look to include additional content areas. Each unit will follow a thoughtfully-designed scope and sequence, reflecting the latest research on learning progressions across early learning and up through the high-school grades. Exemplar units are typically comprised of a series of lessons, depending on the subject matter and grade level. Lessons will be academically-rigorous, engaging and accessible to students. These exemplar units include clearly-linked formative assessment on content and disciplinary skills and practices, and the conceptual frameworks that connect them to support adaptive instruction. Importantly, the exemplar lessons apply the instructional practices shown above to increase student achievement in the specific content area. We will develop some exemplar unit plans, and incrementally build resources for teachers to draw upon.

All units will be designed to provide a coherent arc of lessons within each topic, to develop disciplinary thinking and practices, and to hone reasoning and inquiry skills. The units will be aligned across grade levels so that they build on each other to progressively deepen students' understanding of concepts. For example, middle-school units develop foundational concepts, skills, and routines that support students' later success with the high-school college-readiness units.

The exemplar units will follow a set scope and sequence that aligns with most curricula used in the LEAs. To embed the content and pedagogical routines modeled in the exemplar units in the LEA curriculum, we will convene workshops in which the participating LEAs will refine or adapt units that they now use to deliver this evidence-

based approach within their own curriculum. If LEAs choose to do so, the exemplar units may be used to supplement or supplant existing instructional materials, in order to improve or guide alignment with state content standards, or new Common Core standards.

### **Aligning Instructional Strategies to New State Content Standards**

To ensure that the exemplar units and lessons are closely aligned with the new Common Core Content Standards, we will undertake a review and make appropriate adjustments in the units, and, where necessary, develop new units in conjunction with New Jersey teachers and instructional coaches to fill any critical gaps. This alignment process will identify both the horizontal and vertical alignment of the exemplar units and lessons with respect to the state content standards. Units and lessons will be tied to specific standards, allowing teachers to select from a set of exemplar lessons that fit within the state's content standards framework.

This alignment process will also serve as a professional-development tool for teachers and LEA leaders to identify overlaps and gaps in the curricular units tied to the old and new standards. Further, the exemplar units and lessons will assist teachers in rapidly understanding how the change to academic-content standards, with respect to both the content and the skills taught, affects instruction within the classroom.

### **Process to Refine and Build an Exemplar Lesson Bank**

The bank of exemplar units will be seeded with a core set of aligned units. Teachers, instructional coaches, and LEA teams can adjust, edit, and improve elements of every lesson to meet their own ends. Teachers can submit these changes, or submit entirely new lessons, to a subject-area review committee for approval. Once approved, these new lessons would be made available to all users in the LEA or state. The state and LEA leaders in curriculum and instruction will govern the process of refining, adapting, developing, and approving new lessons. Over time, the bank of exemplar units and lessons will expand, as new and refined exemplar lessons are developed within the state by teachers, instructional coaches, and LEA curriculum specialists.

New Jersey will leverage its experience with the Progressive Math and Science Initiative, as described in the Appendix II, to convene a review committee composed of teachers and content-area experts to review exemplar units and suggest improvements. The content-area experts will lead this review to a consensus, and then implement the suggested changes. The unit will then be posted on the Instructional Improvement System (IIS) in order that it may be used by all the schools in the LEA, and in order to encourage further comments and improvements. A key value of this approach, in addition to creating these course materials, is that -- in the process of working as multi-grade teams developing and reviewing lessons -- the teachers are forced to confront differences in curricular approaches that detract from coherence between, and even within, courses. Terms, approaches and methods are discussed in the context of creating exemplar lessons that will be used by all.

As states adopt and implement the Common Core Standards, teachers and LEA leaders will also be able to leverage the open educational resources across states to develop, adapt, and refine exemplar lessons that are publicly-available in other states. In return, the activities within the state will contribute to this open resource as their exemplar lessons will be publicly available, allowing educators from other states to access, adapt, and redistribute the materials that have been reviewed by a team of instructional coaches, and by LEA and state curriculum specialists.



## **KEY ACTIVITIES**

We will use the New Jersey Core Curriculum Standards and potentially the Common Core Standards to develop, deploy, and continuously improve a broad array of approaches to assessment, embedded within standards-aligned curriculum, to provide instructionally-relevant information for teachers relating to how to adapt instruction based on student needs, employing a system known as the "Instructional Improvement System" (IIS), over the next 18 months. More specifically, we will develop the following statewide and classroom-level tools and continue to improve them as we make them classroom-ready:

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## Foundational Pieces

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- Create a web-based platform to support Interim and Curriculum-Embedded Assessments.
- Seed items to the system, contributed from instructional tools and curriculum-embedded assessments developed by outside experts.
- Support the integration of standards, curriculum, and assessment between early-childhood education and K-12 grades within the IIS.
- Begin to support online communities of practice and real-time knowledge-management based on student performance data through the IIS (outlined under Section C(3)).
- Build on formative-assessment pilots to design an instructionally-oriented approach to assessment including evidence-based classroom observation protocols, rubrics for assessing student work, and monitoring questions to check for student understanding.

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## Instructional Tools for Teachers

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- Distribute formative classroom-observation tools, rubrics for analyzing student work, and other resources to support the improvement of instructional practices.
- Provide a set of exemplar units and lessons, created by both New Jersey teachers and other experts, that will seed the development of a rich collection of evidence-based materials aligned to state curricular frameworks.
- Convene educators from LEAs across the state to review each lesson's alignment with existing or new state academic-content standards. This process will identify both the horizontal and vertical alignment of the exemplar units and lessons with the state content standards at the strand and benchmark level.

- Disseminate curriculum and instructional tools based on progressions of increasingly-sophisticated concepts and knowledge-applications for teachers to plan, adapt, and evaluate their own instruction based on student needs.
- Continue to scale and expand access to high-quality instructional tools in STEM subjects that assist teachers in modeling classroom practice based on real-world STEM experiences.

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## Professional Learning and Growth

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- Create a network of **instructional coaches** who together will train teachers on the content and pedagogical routines associated with model lessons.
- Lead a process of developing additional exemplar units in the state, engaging teachers, administrators, and school leaders.
- Develop and roll out a comprehensive professional-development system to support changes to instructional practice that are necessary to ensure that all students graduate ready for college and work.
- Support continuous improvement through teacher collaboration and lesson study.

Participating LEAs will make a significant commitment of time and collaborative learning space for teachers and their leadership. Specifically, they are being asked to:

- Partner with NJDOE and national experts to implement and continuously improve the curriculum-and-assessment spine.
- Support the development and review of new exemplar lessons and associated curriculum-embedded formative-assessment items by teachers.
- Convene educators from across the LEA to create or modify exemplar lessons aligned to the LEA’s own curriculum that embody high-quality pedagogy and challenging academic content.

- Adopt the state IIS and train teachers and principals on its use. If, instead, a local assessment system is used, integrate it with the IIS to ensure seamless access to formative data to inform instruction.
- Provide collaborative time for teachers and school leaders to review and plan instruction based on real-time student data and collectively review student work samples.
- Create a plan to increase student enrollment in higher-level STEM learning experiences.
- Expand existing high-quality early-learning programs in high-need areas for at-risk students where no programs are currently present.



## **TIMELINE**

New Jersey is proposing an ambitious timeline to design, develop, and implement a curriculum-and-assessment spine that adheres to New Jersey’s history of maintaining the highest-quality education. Exemplar lessons, coupled with formative assessments, will be aligned to New Jersey content standards and rolled out in 2011-12 for math, literacy, and in grades 8 and high school, also for science. The following year, Interim assessments will be available for all students in participating LEAs, and exemplar lessons in the remaining content areas will also be made available to teachers. Teachers will have access to the full range of the Curriculum and Assessment Spine in the 2012-13 school year.

2009–10 SY		
First School Semester (September–December)	Second School Semester (January–June)	Summer Session (June–September)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launch of NJ Standards Website</li> <li>• State Board of Education meets to review Common Core Standards (April)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Align &amp; identify gaps in exemplar lesson banks to NJ standards</li> <li>• Administer “Hardest to Teach” teacher survey &amp; convene expert committee</li> </ul>
2010–11 SY		
First School Semester (September–December)	Second School Semester (January–June)	Summer Session (June–September)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roll out STEM instructional tools</li> <li>• Interim assessment item development</li> <li>• Load exemplar lessons &amp; curriculum embedded assessments into IIS</li> <li>• Ongoing work to fill exemplar lesson alignment gaps by teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing work to fill exemplar lesson alignment gaps by teachers</li> <li>• Field test interim assessments in math, literacy, and science at selected grade levels</li> <li>• Launch “quiz engine” for curriculum-embedded formative assessments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review interim field test results &amp; preliminary standards setting</li> </ul>
2011–12 SY		
First School Semester (September–December)	Second School Semester (January–June)	Summer Session (June–September)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Math &amp; Literacy, grades 3-8, and high school Algebra I, Biology and Grade 11 English interim assessment roll out</li> <li>• Item development for remaining grade levels and content areas (science, social studies, etc)</li> <li>• Teachers review &amp; refine exemplar lessons</li> <li>• Ongoing support for PLCs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standards-setting on first semester interim assessments</li> <li>• Field test interim assessments for remaining grade levels and content areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audit of teacher scored interim assessments</li> <li>• Standards setting on 3-8 and high school interim assessments in math and literacy; middle school and high school science</li> </ul>
2012–13 SY		
First School Semester (September–December)	Second School Semester (January–June)	Summer Session (June–September)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full implementation of interim assessments across content areas and grade levels</li> <li>• Teachers develop &amp; refine exemplar lessons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full implementation of interim assessments across content areas and grade levels</li> <li>• Teachers develop &amp; refine exemplar lessons</li> </ul>	



## **SECTION C**

# **Data Systems to Support Instruction**

**(47 total points)**

## STATE REFORM CONDITIONS CRITERIA

**(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system** (24 points – 2 points per America COMPETES element)

The extent to which the State has a statewide longitudinal data system that includes all of the America COMPETES Act elements (as defined in this notice).

*In the text box below, the State shall describe which elements of the America COMPETES Act (as defined in this notice) are currently included in its statewide longitudinal data system.*

Evidence:

- Documentation for each of the America COMPETES Act elements (as defined in this notice) that is included in the State’s statewide longitudinal data system.

*Recommended maximum response length: Two pages*



### FULLY IMPLEMENTING A STATEWIDE LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEM

New Jersey’s statewide longitudinal data system – called NJ SMART – has fully implemented three of the America COMPETES elements. Information regarding New Jersey’s policies, data dictionaries, and handbooks are available online. New Jersey has also contracted with leading data experts from multiple vendors to audit the current systems and to do the systems design work to ensure it has a swift, efficient path to completing the rest of the COMPETES data elements – and to go well beyond. New Jersey is fully committed to having the national model for state data and instructional improvement systems by 2012 and offers herein a detailed plan for getting there.

The three fully-implemented America COMPETES data elements are:

**(1) The implementation of a statewide unique student-identification number**, known as the “SID.” New Jersey began its implementation of SIDs in 2007, and has since assigned over 1.6 million SIDs to all public pre-school through high-school students. Through the NJ SMART portal, LEAs have the ability to acquire new SIDs, view and download existing SIDs, correct errors in a SID record, resolve conflicts between SID records, update individual student data, and upload files. State policy requires that an

LEA assign a SID to every student and that all SID conflicts be resolved before each of two annual State data submissions, taking place on October 15 and on June 30.

Submission files are required to close with no more than 2% errors.

(2) **The collection of yearly assessment data for students in tested grades.** At the beginning of each assessment cycle, student-level information is provided to New Jersey's testing vendor. This includes information regarding testing accommodation (if appropriate), program participation, demographic information, and the student's unique SID. This process enables the test vendor to place labels on each booklet, which in turn allows the vendor to create electronic files of test results at the end of the assessment cycle. These data files are then uploaded into NJ SMART, where LEAs and schools can access the data via the NJ SMART analytics tool to conduct their own analyses.

(3) **Information regarding students not tested.** In addition to the information that is provided to the test vendors at the beginning of the assessment cycle, schools and LEAs also provide information via the test booklet regarding the reasons why a test booklet may not be fully completed. The label on the test booklet provides a space for school personnel to indicate, using established codes, the reason a student was not tested. (For example, a student may have had a medical emergency during the testing period.) This information is then included in the test vendor's electronic files, which are uploaded into NJ SMART.

New Jersey's longitudinal data system has also partially implemented the following America COMPETES Act elements:

(1) **Student-level enrollment, demographic, and program-participation information.** All enrollment and demographic information is currently uploaded by LEAs and included in NJ SMART. New Jersey also collects *most* program-participation information, with the exception of a few programs such as those involving migrant status or Title I participation.

(2) **Student-level information about entry, exit, transfers, etc.** New Jersey currently collects and analyzes entry, exit, transfer, and drop-out data for all P-12 students in the state. The State does not currently include the same data for college students.

(3) **Audit system for data quality, validity, and reliability.** New Jersey currently validates all student data on submission by LEAs, including a set of business rules and validation steps to ensure the integrity and cleanliness of the data. There is currently no data-audit process established that is not tied to a particular transaction.

(4) **A teacher-identification system.** New Jersey currently has a teacher identifier that is generated for all certificated staff. The identifier is tied to the individual's credential. However, New Jersey's systems do not yet link student and teacher information beyond the "snapshot" data collections that take place twice per year.

(5) **Student-level college-readiness scores.** New Jersey currently collects student-level data on SAT, ACT, and AP results. The data set is not presently linked into NJ SMART.

New Jersey's State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF) application, which was submitted on December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2009, includes a commitment to fully implement the nine un- or partially-implemented COMPETES elements, as well as SFSF indicators B2 (student growth) and B3 (teacher impact). The state intends to do so via the ARRA Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS) program. The State's SLDS application was submitted on December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009, and will also enable New Jersey to meet the criteria for the seven data-system capabilities: examining student progress over time; interoperability using standard structures, formats, and dictionaries; student-teacher data link; teacher link to certification and preparation programs; use of data for continuous improvement; quality and integrity of data in the system; and the ability to meet federal reporting requirements. Should New Jersey not receive an SLDS grant, the State is still committed to reallocating revenues to meet the SFSF commitment to fully implement the COMPETES elements.

## Reform Plan Criteria

### (C)(2) Accessing and using State data (5 points)

The extent to which the State has a high-quality plan to ensure that data from the State’s statewide longitudinal data system are accessible to, and used to inform and engage, as appropriate, key stakeholders (e.g., parents, students, teachers, principals, LEA leaders, community members, unions, researchers, and policymakers); and that the data support decision-makers in the continuous improvement of efforts in such areas as policy, instruction, operations, management, resource allocation, and overall effectiveness.<sup>1</sup>

*The State shall provide its detailed plan for this criterion in the text box below. The plan should include, at a minimum, the goals, activities, timelines, and responsible parties (see Application Instructions or Section XII, Application Requirements (e), for further detail). Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers must be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.*

*Recommended maximum response length: Two pages*



## ACCESSING AND USING STATWIDE DATA

NJ SMART currently provides statewide reporting on student performance. As part of New Jersey’s Race to the Top program, the state intends to:

- offer teachers from participating LEAs tablet computers to allow ready access to data in the classroom, both for *Aggregate Reporting* outlined in this section and for instructional support tools outlined in (C)(3);
- offer web reporting tools accessible by and tailored to teachers, administrators and parents;
- expand the data sets included in the system, to generate a much more comprehensive picture of student and school performance over time;

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<sup>1</sup> Successful applicants that receive Race to the Top grant awards will need to comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), including 34 CFR Part 99, as well as State and local requirements regarding privacy.

- implement monitoring systems to identify students in need of support early, while intervention can still change outcomes;
- provide sophisticated reporting that will allow all stakeholders to have context-sensitive access to student information; and
- create a foundation for instructional use of the data (as described in section C3).

New Jersey will do so in two phases of development work:

**Phase 1: Baseline SLDS.** Upon receipt of the SLDS grant (awards to be announced in May), New Jersey will incorporate the following additional functionality into NJ SMART. The work will be performed by a vendor under contract to the NJDOE and will be overseen by the NJ SMART Steering Committee, which consists of NJDOE Staff. The DOE will also establish a NJ SMART Stakeholder Council with participation from the LEAs, parents, teachers, and community leaders, to inform the public-facing components of the system. A data-governance framework will identify data stewards from the LEAs as owners of the various data sets. Data Stewards will be responsible for the quality, consistency, privacy, security, and other critical data issues, and will be consulted by both the Steering Committee and Council on data policies and by the project team on operational matters as appropriate. The enhanced system will be offered as a web application targeted to each user group: policymakers; school leaders and administrators; and teachers. (See Appendix II, SLDS Grant Application.) September 2011 is the target release date for these features.

- *A Student Growth Model*, similar to the Colorado growth model. Visualizations of the growth model data will allow educational stakeholders to see growth at the (anonymized) student, class, school, region, and LEA levels.
- *An Early Warning System* to alert schools and LEAs that a student is at risk of failing or dropping out. These alerts will be triggered based on established rules (e.g., alert when a student's attendance rate drops below a given threshold) and will be automatically sent to teachers, school leaders, and student support teams.

- *On-time Graduation Reporting*, to allow schools and LEAs to track their graduation cohorts. Such data will include, for example, courses taken and credits earned.
- *Post-Secondary Reporting* to allow schools and LEAs to follow students into either post-secondary institutions and/or the workforce, tracking their progress.
- *Discipline Reports*, which will allow schools and LEAs to access records of disciplinary incidents, actions taken, and services provided, so that these categories of information can be integrated into analyses of students' attendance and progress toward graduation.
- *Aggregate Reporting* that includes data for individual students, classes, and cohorts, aggregated with historical data for the student population in both pre-formatted and customizable formats. More sophisticated users will be able to access ad hoc reporting and analysis facilities.

In addition to these features, during this phase NJ SMART will be enhanced to ensure that it addresses all 12 of the elements required in the COMPETES Act.

**Phase 2: Parent-Focused Reporting.** A second phase of development will begin in March 2011 and is expected to be released by the end of March 2012. A web-based *Parent-Focused Reporting* application will encourage parental participation by offering a guided view of student performance and behavior (also with further detail, as described in Appendix II). Students' profiles, educational progress, and attendance data will be integrated with the *Personalized Planning Tools* discussed in section (C)(3) to empower parents to better manage their children's education.

**Professional Development.** We understand that a significant amount of work is required to upgrade New Jersey's data systems to track the information necessary to provide the full context for student learning, and present that information appropriately to all relevant stakeholders. We are confident that the development plan outlined above accomplishes these objectives. However, we realize that systems are only as valuable as the uses to which they are put. To that end, we will pair each of our development phases with an intensive professional-development program, including:

- Clear communication about the features to be included in each release, through materials distributed via the County Executive’s monthly roundtables, emails for distribution to teachers and school leaders, and notifications supplied on our website;
- Training sessions for teachers, school leaders, and administrators, to be conducted via the Educational Technology Training Centers across the state, as a mixture of in-person and web-based sessions;
- User-friendly system documentation that is distributed to end users; and
- Direct-to-parent communications, including public-service announcements and communication through other channels.

**(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction (18 points)**

The extent to which the State, in collaboration with its participating LEAs (as defined in this notice), has a high-quality plan to—

(i) Increase the acquisition, adoption, and use of local instructional improvement systems (as defined in this notice) that provide teachers, principals, and administrators with the information and resources they need to inform and improve their instructional practices, decision-making, and overall effectiveness;

(ii) Support participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) and schools that are using instructional improvement systems (as defined in this notice) in providing effective professional development to teachers, principals and administrators on how to use these systems and the resulting data to support continuous instructional improvement; and

(iii) Make the data from instructional improvement systems (as defined in this notice), together with statewide longitudinal data system data, available and accessible to researchers so that they have detailed information with which to evaluate the effectiveness of instructional materials, strategies, and approaches for educating different types of students (*e.g.*, students with disabilities, English language learners, students whose achievement is well below or above grade level).

*The State shall provide its detailed plan for this criterion in the text box below. The plan should include, at a minimum, the goals, activities, timelines, and responsible parties (see Reform Plan Criteria elements in Application Instructions or Section XII, Application Requirements (e), for further detail). Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers must be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note the location where the attachment can be found.*

*Recommended maximum response length: Five pages*



**(i) INSTRUCTIONAL IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM.**

New Jersey plans to provide a web-based Instructional Improvement System (IIS) to all participating LEAs. By doing so, we are able to leverage our SLDS investment, create an economy of scale, and ensure that we can sustainably provide the necessary support tools and resources for the other reform initiatives that New Jersey will be undertaking as part of this proposal.

Instructional Improvement spans many areas, including collaboration, knowledge management, formative assessment, actionable reporting, and targeted instruction. By

providing a seamless platform, presenting the tools in the classroom on the new generation of highly-usable tablet computers, and getting the right data to the right actors and stakeholders in the system in near-real-time, we are confident that we will be able to significantly improve the quality of teaching and learning in our State.

## Instructional Support Tools

The IIS will include components that help teachers use data to develop a rich picture of student ability and plan high-impact, standards-aligned instruction. The components will be tightly integrated via a unifying application on the teacher tablets:

**Image 3:** Academic Standards on the Teacher Tablet



Using breakthrough visualizations, the Teacher Tablet will help teachers use standards-aligned assessments to plan and deliver instruction.

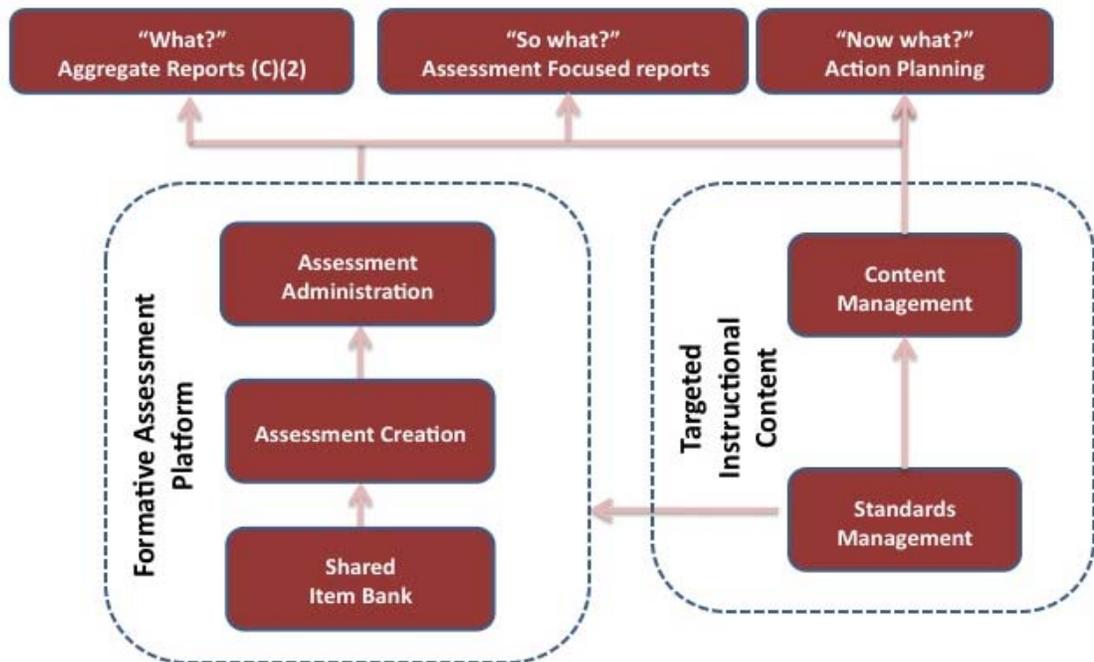
The components will include:

- A *Formative-Assessment Platform* that is aligned with the curriculum spine, to enable more frequent and focused evaluation of student performance and student needs. The platform will include a *Shared Item Bank* allowing collaborative sharing of items and assessments across the state, and an *Assessment Creation* tool that will allow for specific assessments to be created and shared. The platform will support both interim and curriculum-embedded assessments as described in section B, and will complement the current statewide high-stakes assessments, *Learnia* implementations, and other formative-assessment pilots.
- A *Targeted Instructional-Content System*, where classroom resources such as online video exemplar lessons, and performance tasks stored in a *Content Management* system will be aligned with the currently-implemented *New Jersey 21<sup>st</sup> Century Standards* system. The platform will support two types of content: (1) the “curriculum and assessment spine” content described in Section (B), which provides a structured foundation for classroom teaching and learning; and (2) educator-created assessments and lessons. By offering a juried promotion path for user-contributed assets, exemplars can be identified either at the LEA level or the state level. Educators will be able to navigate standards to locate lesson plans, assessments, and other instructional assets.
- *Assessment-Focused Reporting* will complement the *Aggregated Reports* outlined in section (C)(2) with a richer set of reports, including formative-assessment data from various sources. These reports will build up from the view of an individual student’s performance, rather than applying a school-level aggregate perspective. The focus of these reports is to help teachers understand “So what does this data mean?” and provide a direct path to action planning.
- A standards-aligned *Action-Planning Module* will help teachers to plan instruction based on individual, small-group, and whole-class student needs. Inputs to the Action-Planning process will include formative assessment data from the *Formative-Assessment Platform*, *Learnia*, and other formative-assessment systems used in the state. The system will provide a structured process for the review of assessment data by standard; the selection of specific types of

instruction and areas of instruction for individual students, small groups, and the whole class; and the capability to select instructional materials from the *Instructional Content System* to support instruction.

- *Self-service Upload Interfaces* for the LEAs will be enhanced and expanded – for example, including additional data sets and a mechanism for more frequent data-collection. Our objective is to provide a system to which an LEA could easily upload data on a weekly basis. The State will also pilot Schools Interoperability Framework (SIF) integration with several LEAs to determine whether the technology and taxonomy could reduce costs and increase the value of data integration between the LEAs and the state.

This diagram illustrates the integration of the action-planning, reporting, assessment, and standards components of the New Jersey IIS:



.....  
**Continuous Improvement Tools**  
.....

The IIS will also offer planning tools to allow teachers and leaders to manage individual-, grade-, building-, and LEA-level goals, monitor progress towards those goals, and plan improvement:

(a) As a part of the SLDS grant, a *School Performance Management System*, designed for school administrators, will extend the existing NJ SMART Portal to provide a dashboard for schools to track key performance indicators (KPIs) as defined by collaboratively-developed goals. The dashboards will allow administrators to identify and monitor the metrics that are relevant for the school to meet its objectives, and take action accordingly. The dashboard will link to the more robust aggregate-reporting tools that are outlined in section (C) (2) to allow for more detailed root-cause analysis of specific performance patterns.

(b) An *Observation Toolset* will allow the capture and tracking of data collected in both formative and formal classroom observations, which are described in more depth in Section D.

(c) The *Professional-Development Support* system will assist administrators, principals, instructional coaches, and professional development staff in working with educators to identify training needs based on the data captured by the IIS, along with data from the existing *New Jersey Educator Certification* database, and the results of the structured classroom observations and formal evaluations described in Section D. Administrators and teachers will be able to build individualized, targeted professional-development plans, and to monitor the implementation of those plans. The connection between the Professional-Development tool and the IIS will provide for a process of continuous development for educators, and for ongoing collaborative support for teachers throughout the process of instruction.

(d) The *Personalized Learning Plan* tools are already in the pilot phase at a number of schools throughout New Jersey, and will be offered as a Statewide service to students and parents (see <http://www.state.nj.us/education/ser/pslp/>), with integration of assessment and transcript data, as described above in Section (C)(2). Learning-plan

formats developed by the pilot LEAs comply with the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Standards for Students. They include interfaces to support personal, academic, and career development. The system will enable educators and mentors to collaboratively develop the learning plan with parents and students, ensuring appropriate privacy and security for all stakeholders.

(e) A *Climate-Survey Tool* will be implemented across the state, enabling surveys of stakeholders' – parents', students', teachers', etc. – perceptions to be readily taken on-line securely and anonymously, with the results being made available to researchers alongside data from the IIS and NJ SMART to enhance understanding of the effects of the reforms documented in this application.

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## **Work Plan and Project Oversight**

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The *Instructional Support Tools (IST)* system will be available to users by March 31st 2011, backed by professional development for all users as outlined below. The project to develop and implement the system will utilize accelerated procurement procedures to select a suitable vendor by June 30<sup>th</sup> 2010, with the option for the successful vendor to base its solution on existing assessment platforms. A New Jersey DOE IST Steering Committee -- including representatives from the offices for Standards, Assessment, IT, and District and School Improvement -- and will work closely with a New Jersey IST Educator Council committee with representatives from the LEAs, parents, and other stakeholders to oversee the project along the same lines as the NJ SMART Steering committees described in (C)(2).

Following the September 2011 release of the enhanced data elements and educator-focused reporting tools detailed in (C)(2), the *Continuous Improvement Tools (CITCIT)* system will be made available to users by March 31<sup>st</sup> 2012 in its fully-integrated form. A custom-development vendor, existing products, and/or an integrator will be selected through the procurement process by March 31<sup>st</sup> 2011, with appropriate criteria derived

from the *Personalized Learning Plan* tools pilot. A New Jersey DOE CDT steering committee will be established to guide the project along, including representatives from the offices for Standards, Assessment, IT, District and School Improvement, Vocational and Career in Technical Education, and Title 1 – and the steering committee will work closely with a New Jersey Continuous Development Educator Council with participation from the LEAs and other external stakeholders.

Participating LEAs have committed to ensure the adoption and use of the IIS among LEA educators and stakeholders, by permitting time for teachers to undertake training and by ensuring that they are encouraged to do so. The fidelity of training attendance will be monitored through the IIS, and this data will be offered to the LEA through the NJ SMART Portal.

The participating LEAs have also committed to integrating additional defined data elements from their local Student Information Systems using the enhanced upload and integration facilities, aligning local learning and content-management systems with the curriculum spine where applicable, and ensuring the upload of the results from locally-implemented formative assessments. LEAs will have the freedom to tailor the system to local needs at their own expense, for example, by integrating instructional-support tools with other web-based teacher-facing applications, or integrating personalized planning with their student-facing websites.



## **(ii) PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

In addition to the professional development outlined in (C)(2), professional development for (C)(3) will focus on system use, user adoption at all levels, and the integration of the system into daily practice.

Usage tracking will be available to monitor access to the system, use of the tools, the extent of user contributions and community participation, and fidelity to guide ongoing professional development. New Jersey recognizes that instructional change requires significant efforts beyond the initial implementation of the IIS. The training will promote

collaboration to enable educators to continue to develop their skills after implementation, building grade-level and content-level teams. In particular, educators in a data-informed school system will need new skills in five domains:

- Data interpretation and inference
- Data conversations
- Differentiated instruction
- Inquiry work and action research
- Online collaboration

As educators begin to access data, their appetite for more data and better data will increase. At the same time, they will ask, “Now what?” New Jersey’s professional-development program is designed to build critical data skills to answer that question. Specifically, professional development will focus on three domains:

1. The Cycle of Inquiry – Professional development will train educators to use the “Cycle of Inquiry” recently endorsed by the What Works Clearinghouse. In this process, educators analyze data to identify an area of weakness, develop and implement new strategies, assess, analyze the results, and begin the process anew.
2. Data Conversations – As educators interpret and understand the data they access, they often need to engage in low-stakes, non-judgmental conversations with students and parents in order to understand results, enlist support, and motivate change. Training will assist instructional leaders in how to have such conversations with staff members.
3. Data Analysis – In a data-driven culture, the abundance of data can quickly overwhelm educators, especially those without a mathematics background. New Jersey will help educators learn to ask good analytic questions and to use multiple data sources to draw appropriate inferences from the data they are accessing.

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### **(iii) DATA FOR RESEARCH**

A data mart, containing fully de-identified data, will be provided to researchers based on the extended NJ SMART data elements outlined in Appendix X. The data mart will be differentiated from NJ SMART alone by its incorporation of granular data from the Instructional Improvement System (IIS) to enable researchers to evaluate the effectiveness of instructional materials, strategies, and approaches for educating different types of students. For example, the data mart will contain granular data regarding:

- Groups of students receiving targeted instruction
- Fidelity of action-plan implementation
- Materials used as a part of instruction
- Assessments delivered, results, and student work
- Student biography and demographics
- Records of all professional development undertaken by educators

Only data from Participating LEAs will be extracted into the de-identified data mart. Each Participating LEA will be expected to sign a data-release agreement allowing de-identified data to be used for research and policy purposes.

## TIMELINE

2009–10 SY		
First School Semester (September–December)	Second School Semester (January–June)	Summer Session (June–September)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Issue RFP and select vendor for Instructional Support Tools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish NJ DOE Instructional Support Tools Steering Committee</li> <li>Select vendor for Instructional Support Tools</li> </ul>
2010–11 SY		
First School Semester (September–December)	Second School Semester (January–June)	Summer Session (June–September)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Release student growth model, on-time graduation, discipline, and sophisticated reporting</li> <li>Continue Instructional Support Tools development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Launch Instructional Support Tools (March)</li> <li>Establish NJ DOE Continuous Development Tools steering committee</li> <li>Issue RFP and select vendor for Continuous Development Tools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing development of Continuous Development tools</li> </ul>
2011–12 SY		
First School Semester (September–December)	Second School Semester (January–June)	Summer Session (June–September)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Release enhanced data elements and educator focused reporting</li> <li>Release parent-focused reporting, growth model reports, early warning alerts for students at risk of dropping out, on-time graduation reporting, links to post-secondary success, discipline reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuous Development Tools releases</li> <li>Ongoing professional development on reporting and analysis tools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing professional development on reporting &amp; analysis tools</li> </ul>
2012–13 SY		
First School Semester (September–December)	Second School Semester (January–June)	Summer Session (June–September)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Release enhanced data elements and educator focused reporting</li> <li>Release parent-focused reporting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing IIS Professional Development</li> </ul>	



## **SECTION D**

# **Great Teachers and Leaders** **(138 total points)**

## STATE REFORM CONDITIONS CRITERIA

### **(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals (21 points)**

The extent to which the State has—

- (i) Legal, statutory, or regulatory provisions that allow alternative routes to certification (as defined in this notice) for teachers and principals, particularly routes that allow for providers in addition to institutions of higher education;
- (ii) Alternative routes to certification (as defined in this notice) that are in use; and
- (iii) A process for monitoring, evaluating, and identifying areas of teacher and principal shortage and for preparing teachers and principals to fill these areas of shortage.

*In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.*

Evidence for (D)(1)(i), regarding alternative routes to certification for both teachers and principals:

- A description of the State's applicable laws, statutes, regulations, or other relevant legal documents, including information on the elements of the State's alternative routes (as described in the alternative route to certification definition in this notice).

Evidence for (D)(1)(ii), regarding alternative routes to certification for both teachers and principals:

- A list of the alternative certification programs operating in the State under the State's alternative routes to certification (as defined in this notice), and for each:
  - The elements of the program (as described in the alternative routes to certification definition in this notice).
  - The number of teachers and principals that successfully completed each program in the previous academic year.
  - The total number of teachers and principals certified statewide in the previous academic year.

*Recommended maximum response length: Two pages*

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## HIGH-QUALITY PATHWAYS FOR TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS

- New Jersey has a record of innovation and demonstrable success in preparing teachers through both traditional and alternate pathways.
- New Jersey was the first state in the country to provide an alternate route to teaching.
- Numerous institutions have praised New Jersey’s alternate-certification and accompanying alternate-preparation programs.

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### (i) (ii) ALTERNATE ROUTES TO CERTIFICATION: TEACHERS

New Jersey is credited with launching the alternate-routes-to-teacher-certification movement in the United States with the Provisional Teacher Program in 1985.<sup>1</sup> The state has a nationally-recognized alternate-route approach to teacher preparation, which provides opportunities for a wide spectrum of qualified candidates who have not completed a formal preparation program at an accredited college or university, but who wish to obtain the necessary training, to become NJ-certified teachers.

Approximately 33,500 teachers have been certified to teach through the state’s alternate-route program since its inception. Roughly one-third of New Jersey’s 100,000 teachers were certified via the alternate route. In 2008-2009, the state issued 10,506 standard instructional certificates; 2,778 (26%) of them were issued to teachers who had prepared

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<sup>1</sup>Feistritzer, *Education Week*, November 18, 2009.

through the alternate route. (See Appendix I for a graph of alternate-route complete statistics).

The state allows multiple alternate-route-provider configurations, including higher-education providers; providers affiliated with an institution of higher education, for example, Teach for America; or LEA providers. A list of alternative providers is supplied in Appendix I. The alternate route in New Jersey includes a process for individuals who already hold a bachelor's degree (or a higher degree) and a Certificate of Eligibility (CE) to become licensed teachers without having to complete a traditional teacher-training program. NJDOE issues a CE to incoming teachers who have provided evidence of appropriate academic preparation in a subject area and who have passed the corresponding Praxis II exam.

All newly-certified teachers begin as provisional teachers. During the first year, a provisional teacher must take a minimum of 200 hours of approved coursework in professional teacher-education supplemented by on-the-job mentoring, support, and evaluation, aimed at developing and documenting the teacher's instructional competency. Upon completing the provisional teaching year, a provisional teacher is recommended by the principal of his/her school for standard licensure.

A two-year evaluation study of the New Jersey Alternate Route was conducted, starting in 2005, as part of New Jersey's federal Teacher Quality Enhancement Grant (TQE). Based on the evaluation findings, New Jersey formed an Alternate Route Advisory Committee in 2008 to conduct a systemic review of the program and make recommendations for improvement. (A summary of findings from the evaluation study and the Advisory Committee's review is provided in Appendix II, (D)(1).) Concurrently, New Jersey instituted changes to its requirements for alternate-route certification in three areas: 1) initial requirements for securing a credential to teach (i.e., the Certificate of Eligibility); 2) additional hours of preparation required for teaching elementary language arts/literacy and elementary mathematics; and 3) preparation of career and technical educators. As of October 31, 2009, alternate-route teacher candidates applying for the

Certificates of Eligibility (CE) are required to complete 24 hours of formal instruction introducing them to the teaching profession, including 4 hours of observing a classroom; and alternate-route teachers possessing the Teacher of Elementary School in Kindergarten through Grade Five (K-5) teaching endorsement must complete an additional 90 hours of coursework within their first calendar year of employment, 45 hours in teaching language arts literacy, and 45 hours in teaching mathematics. In total, the length of the formal instruction of an alternate-route elementary-school teacher increased from 200 hours to 314 hours. Finally, beginning February 1, 2010, and continuing thereafter, holders of Career and Technical Education Certificates of Eligibility (CEs) must complete 200 hours of instruction at a regional training center.

#### Successful Aspects of New Jersey's Alternate Route:

1. can be provided by various types of qualified providers
2. accepts candidates based on rigorous selection criteria
3. offers supervised school-based experiences and ongoing support
4. significantly limits coursework required (or offers options through which candidates can “test out”)
5. upon completion of route, awards the same level of certification that traditional prep programs award

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## Legal Provisions

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A single regulatory framework applies to all alternate-route providers. Regulations governing the alternate route are found in *N.J.A.C. 6A:9-8* and *6A:9-11*; specific requirements for eligibility can be found in Appendix I (D)(1). All programs are required to align with the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers (*N.J.A.C. 6A:9-3.3*). An initial certificate of eligibility (CE) is given to those aspiring teachers who enter through

the alternate route. In contrast, teachers who enter through “traditional” approved higher-education programs receive a certificate of eligibility with advanced standing (CEAS). (See Appendix I(D)(1) for a summary of alternate-route requirements and providers.)

	<b>FY 2009</b>	<b>FY 2008</b>	<b>FY 2007</b>
<b>TRADITIONAL-ROUTE CERTIFICATES AWARDED</b>	7,728	10,981	10,234
<b>ALTERNATE-ROUTE CERTIFICATES AWARDED</b>	2,778	3,134	2,914
<b>TOTAL INSTRUCTIONAL CERTIFICATES AWARDED</b>	<b>10,506</b>	<b>14,115</b>	<b>13,148</b>

.....

**(i)(ii) ALTERNATE ROUTES TO CERTIFICATION:  
SCHOOL LEADERS<sup>2</sup>**

Since 2003, in addition to its non-traditional pathways for teacher education, New Jersey has offered a non-traditional preparation pathway for aspiring school administrators, principals, supervisors, and (since 2008) directors of school counseling services. The New Jersey Expedited Certification for Educational Leadership (NJ EXCEL) program, provided by the New Jersey Principal and Supervisors Association, Foundation for Educational Administration was cited as an exemplar program by the U.S. Department of Education in *Innovative Pathways to School Leadership* (ED, December 2004). The program was created in response to statewide survey results indicating a shortage of highly-qualified principal applicants in the state, particularly in districts with many low-performing schools, and to address the need for more diversity in the candidate pool.

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<sup>2</sup> “School leader” here refers to heads of schools, principals and/or supervisors.

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## Legal Provisions

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In May 2002, the New Jersey State Board of Education approved revisions to its regulations to authorize expedited certification pathways and approved programs leading to school-leader certification from providers other than institutions of higher education (see *N.J.A.C. 6A:9-12* for regulations governing the certification of administrators, and *N.J.A.C. 6A:9-13.7* for regulations governing the certification of directors of school counseling services). A formal application-and-selection process ensures that all candidates meet rigorous established criteria. Participants are required to hold a minimum of a master's degree before entering the program. Between 10 and 15% of principal candidates receive Certificates of Eligibility (CE) through the EXCEL program each year. In 2008, NJ EXCEL was awarded candidate status for national accreditation by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. For the past three years, the NJDOE has issued just under 1,200 principal Certificates of Eligibility (CE) a year -- with slightly more than 1,000 per year going to people who trained through the traditional higher-education programs. In 2008-2009, the NJDOE issued 372 standard principal certificates. The NJ EXCEL program design is aligned with the New Jersey Professional Standards for School Leaders (*N.J.A.C. 6A:9-3.4*) and the national Technology Standards for School Administrators.

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### **(iii) MONITORING, EVALUATING, AND IDENTIFYING AREAS OF TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL SHORTAGES**

New Jersey carefully monitors, on an annual basis, the database of certificated staff to determine shortage areas, review the number of vacancies by subject area, analyze the number of alternate-route-certified teachers within shortage areas, and identify places where there is an excess of qualified teachers. To identify areas of teacher and school-leader shortage, New Jersey analyzes policy changes that would increase the needs for teachers, such as the NJDOE's expansion of pre-schools, world languages, math,

science and technology initiatives. In 2000, recognizing that as many as one-third of New Jersey's teachers may retire in the next ten years, the NJDOE established a Teacher Recruitment Initiative in 2000 to improve both the quantity and quality of the state's teaching force. The scope of the programs includes partnerships with higher education both in state and out of state to enhance traditional placement-office programs, collaborations with other key higher-education administration and faculty, an active Troops to Teachers program, and promoting careers in teaching to middle- and high-school students. Several of these programs are described later in Section (D)(3).

New Jersey continues to work to improve the quality of the pathways through which teachers can become certified. Alternate-route programs are a key pipeline for high-need LEAs, and alternate-route options have been expanded since 2004, with the introduction of targeted alternate-route programs in high-needs subject areas such as Special Education, English as a Second Language, Bilingual Education, world languages, and most recently, in 2008, career and technical education. In addition, alternate-route pilot programs to increase the number of science and mathematics teachers are currently being implemented under N.J.A.C. 6A:9-18. (See Appendix II(D)(3) for more information about new pilot programs in math and science.)

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## **REQUIRED EVIDENCE**

Evidence for (D)(1)(ii), regarding alternative routes to certification for both teachers and principals, is described in Appendix I

## REFORM PLAN CRITERIA

### **(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance (58 points)**

The extent to which the State, in collaboration with its participating LEAs (as defined in this notice), has a high-quality plan and ambitious yet achievable annual targets to ensure that participating LEAs (as defined in this notice)—

(i) Establish clear approaches to measuring student growth (as defined in this notice) and measure it for each individual student; (5 points)

(ii) Design and implement rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation systems for teachers and principals that (a) differentiate effectiveness using multiple rating categories that take into account data on student growth (as defined in this notice) as a significant factor, and (b) are designed and developed with teacher and principal involvement; (15 points)

(iii) Conduct annual evaluations of teachers and principals that include timely and constructive feedback; as part of such evaluations, provide teachers and principals with data on student growth for their students, classes, and schools; (10 points) and

(iv) Use these evaluations, at a minimum, to inform decisions regarding— (28 points)

- (a) Developing teachers and principals, including by providing relevant coaching, induction support, and/or professional development;
- (b) Compensating, promoting, and retaining teachers and principals, including by providing opportunities for highly effective teachers and principals (both as defined in this notice) to obtain additional compensation and be given additional responsibilities;
- (c) Whether to grant tenure and/or full certification (where applicable) to teachers and principals using rigorous standards and streamlined, transparent, and fair procedures; and
- (d) Removing ineffective tenured and untenured teachers and principals after they have had ample opportunities to improve, and ensuring that such decisions are made using rigorous standards and streamlined, transparent, and fair procedures.

*The State shall provide its detailed plan for this criterion in the text box below. The plan should include, at a minimum, the goals, activities, timelines, and responsible parties (see Reform Plan Criteria elements in Application Instructions or Section XII, Application Requirements (e), for further detail). Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers must be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.*

*Recommended maximum response length: Ten pages*

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## IMPROVING TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL EFFECTIVENESS BASED ON PERFORMANCE

- New Jersey will collaborate with LEA leaders, higher education, and national experts to develop multiple measures of teacher and principal effectiveness.
- NJDOE will design a fair, balanced, and transparent system built on high-quality and validated measures for both teachers and school leaders and will use evaluations to meaningfully inform differential professional opportunities.
- A school-wide bonus system will be designed for school leaders and teachers in schools that exceed growth expectations.

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## EVALUATION-SYSTEM DESIGN

New Jersey has long believed that great teachers and leaders are the lifeblood of our educational system. We have strong professional standards for our teachers (the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers and School Leaders) and high-quality standards for professional development. We also have a rich history of collaboration with stakeholders in the educational endeavor, including working with the New Jersey Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers, the New Jersey School Boards Association, the New Jersey PTA, the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association, and others. A major initiative, *Creating 21st Century Schools: The Statewide Systemic Model for Continuous Professional Learning and Growth*, has been launched that provides a statewide platform for content-focused professional services for teacher teams.

We believe we have started the journey, but there is a long way to go. The Race to the Top program provides the opportunity for us to work collaboratively with partner organizations and with representative stakeholders from across the state to take bold steps to improve the quality of our teaching and leadership corps. By truly understanding student growth; developing fair, balanced, and transparent evaluations; having robust professional-learning programs; and using evaluations to meaningfully inform

professional decisions, we will be better able to assure the ongoing improvement of the overall quality of teaching in our state.

We intend to develop a fair, transparent evaluation system built on multiple high-quality and validated measures for both teachers and school leaders. We will create and convene a state-level advisory committee for the design, review, and ongoing revisions of the evaluation system (New Jersey Education Evaluation Committee, or NJEEC). The advisory committee will be appointed by the new administration and will include leadership from the state and LEAs, as well as representatives from other stakeholders, who together will assemble an evaluation process that will be aligned with incentives to reward solid instructional practice. We will engage a partner organization, such as the New Teacher Center or the New Teacher Project, to leverage experience with new evaluation systems.

The evaluation system will represent a “gold standard” framework. Acknowledging that conditions and needs vary among LEAs, the framework will include several areas for local flexibility: creation or enhancement of one of the multiple measures, determination of approach for non-tested subjects and grade, and selection of classroom work samples approved by the LEA that show student achievement. RTTT Participating LEAs will be required to adopt the evaluation framework. Such adoption will not require statutory changes. However, participating LEAs may need to renegotiate the local collective bargaining agreement for teachers and school leaders based on local circumstances. Should a participating LEA be unable to adopt the framework by the 2012-13 school year, it will be removed from the RTTT program in subsequent years.



## **(i) ESTABLISHING CLEAR MEASURES FOR STUDENT GROWTH**

Beginning this school year, New Jersey will have the necessary data to measure year-to-year individual student growth from grades 3-8. We will deliver student-level growth reports in Fall 2010. The data will be reported publicly, aggregated across grade spans.

New Jersey's growth model is based on the estimation of student growth percentiles for each student with two consecutive years of test results on the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJ ASK). The growth percentiles account for a student's initial achievement level and rate of growth across the full achievement distribution, which allows us to track student growth beyond proficiency. One particular advantage of this growth model is that it provides student-level results for every student that are easy for educators to interpret and use diagnostically to target instructional interventions for those students who are at risk of failing to reach proficiency. Another advantage is that results can be aggregated meaningfully for student subgroups, schools, and LEAs.

A statistical-analysis procedure known as "quantile regression" is used to calculate student percentile- growth scores (Betebenner, 2008). Quantile regression is used to predict the most likely test performance for each individual student based on the group of students who had the same level of performance in the prior year.

For non-tested grades and subjects (such as technology), the NJDOE will build upon work connected to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Standards described in Section B 3 to measure student learning across a wide range of grade levels and content areas through new interim assessments tied to gateway concepts in the standards. This wider set of instructional and assessment tools, coupled with local methods to attribute or measure student progress in non-tested grades and subjects, will allow for the generation of a richer set of information to be incorporated into the evaluation system for school leaders and teachers.

Finally, the NJEEC will recommend a set of interim assessment measures, to be administered every quarter throughout the year. This interim-assessment practice is already well-established in the State (NWEA and *Learnia* are two examples). New measures will be developed to follow the Curriculum and Assessment Spine, and will be designed to keep instruction aligned with curriculum and with the learning progressions established by the standards. “Growth” on the interim measures will be defined as “progress.”

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## **(ii) A CONSISTENT, TRANSPARENT EVALUATION AND OBSERVATION SYSTEM FOR SCHOOL LEADERS AND TEACHERS**

New Jersey will develop a state-level comprehensive School Leader and Teacher Evaluation Framework with multiple measures that support standards for professional practice, high quality-assessment practice, and systems of supports. To ensure alignment of the evaluation system with the reform agenda set forth by New Jersey, the new state-level evaluation program will align with the New Jersey Professional Standards for School Leaders and for Teachers (NJAC 6A:9-3).

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### **Supporting Regulations**

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New Jersey has established requirements for the evaluation of school leaders and teachers (referred to in the regulation as "teaching staff members") in N.J.A.C. 6A:32-4.4 and -4.5. The regulations lay out the requirements for the evaluation of tenured and non-tenured teachers and school leaders .

#### **For School Leaders**

Under current New Jersey regulations for both tenured and non-tenured school leaders, the academic progress of students is a component of the evaluation system. For tenured

school leaders, the regulations require that an annual summary conference between a supervisor and a tenured principal must include: a review of the performance of the educator, based upon the job description, which reflects instructional priorities; a review of the educator's progress towards the objectives of his or her individual professional development plan as determined at the previous annual conference; and a review of available indicators of student progress and growth towards program objectives (6A:32-4.4). The individual professional-development plan is designed to support professional growth, address areas in need of improvement, and reflect professional development that improves the learning of all students.

For non-tenured school leaders, the regulations call for at least three observations and must include an annual written evaluation of the staff member's total performance including: performance areas of strength; performance areas needing improvement; an individual professional-development plan developed by the supervisor and the staff member; a summary of indicators of student progress and growth; and a statement of how these indicators relate to the effectiveness of the overall program and the performance of the individual principal (6A:32-4.5).

### **For Teachers**

For tenured teachers, the regulations require that LEA boards of education adopt policies/procedures requiring the annual evaluation of tenured teachers and school leaders. These policies and procedures must be developed by the chief school administrator in conjunction with tenured teachers and school leaders.

As referenced above, NJ regulations address student growth as a measure of teacher performance for both tenured and untenured staff members. The regulations require that an annual summary conference between a supervisor and a tenured teacher must include: a review of the performance of the educator based upon the job description; a review of the educator's progress towards the objectives of his or her individual professional development plan as developed at the previous annual conference; review of available indicators of student progress and growth towards program objectives (NJAC 6A:32-4.4).

The regulations call for three evaluations and three observations of each non-tenured teacher and must include an annual written evaluation of the staff member’s total performance including: performance areas of strength; performance areas needing improvement; an individual professional-development plan developed by the supervisor and the staff member; a summary of indicators of student progress and growth; and a statement of how these indicators relate to the effectiveness of the overall program and the performance of the individual teacher (NJAC 6A:32-4.5).

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## **Evaluation-System Measures**

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The specific measures that will compose the school leader (including principal and supervisor) and teacher Evaluation Framework are described below. The weighting and further definition of the measures will be recommended by the NJEEC. Evaluation results will be used to assign a school leader or teacher to one of three categories (ineffective, effective, or highly effective) based on a range of performance criteria.

### **Student Academic Progress**

New Jersey’s plan includes multi-dimensional information on student progress from interim assessments, coupled with individual student growth as measured on the state summative assessments. The use of student growth measures as opposed to one-year proficiency rates is an important decision that allows schools to recognize raising the achievement of significantly under-performing students over the course of the school year. The use of interim assessments that assess higher-order thinking skills also ensures that multiple-choice exams do not serve as the sole measure of a student’s success.

For school leaders, the student-progress measures will account for 35% of the evaluation. For teachers, recognizing their significant contributions to classroom achievement, the student-progress measures will account for 40% of the evaluation.

### **Evidence-Based Classroom-Observation Protocols**

High-quality classroom instruction is the key component of both effective teaching and successful schools. Therefore, one of the key components of our plan is better formative and formal feedback given by school leaders to teachers on both teaching and learning. The provision of such feedback is a crucial interaction for the improvement of instructional practice. Specific evidence of the quality of these interactions – including both evidence of the fidelity of implementation of the observation protocols, and evidence of the quality of feedback provided – will be a component of a school leader’s evaluation. New Jersey will provide extensive professional development for school leaders in participating LEAs regarding the use of classroom observation protocols and linking feedback to the evidence collected through these observation tools. For teacher evaluations, the evidence collected from these content-specific and evidence-based classroom-observation protocols will be incorporated into the teacher’s evaluation system.

The NJEEC will either recommend or guide the development of valid, reliable, and evidence-based classroom-observation protocols to support the evaluation process. The NJEEC will review national efforts to research and design observation tools that correlate with effective teaching. New Jersey is closely monitoring the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation’s Measures of Effective Teaching research effort, and will incorporate the measures deemed valid by this unprecedented body of research. Among the measures for observation being researched are the Danielson model, and the Pianta “CLASS” model, among others. The research project also extends to tests of teacher knowledge and student perceptions. To further validate the observation tools, New Jersey will conduct pilot programs in participating LEAs in the first year of our grant to inform the selection of the appropriate protocol.

### **Quality of Professional Development**

For school leaders, the NJEEC will identify or develop protocols to evaluate the quality of professional support and professional-development planning provided to teachers. This review will encompass both the individual and collaborative forms of professional development in which teachers will engage.

The teacher-evaluation system will include measures of the fidelity by which teachers engage in high-quality professional development and adapt classroom practice in response to feedback from both formal and informal observation. Specific evidence may include the professional-development modules in which the teacher participated, coupled with demonstrated evidence of learning.

### **Management of Schools**

For school leaders, the state-level evaluation system will take into account the management and operational aspects of school leadership, with an evaluation protocol based on the New Jersey Professional Standards for School Leaders. School leaders will be evaluated by LEA leadership on the effective implementation of a systemic approach to organizational management that promotes a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment for all students.

### **Local Evidence-based Metrics**

LEAs will have the opportunity to add transparent, rigorous, and valid measures to the school-leader and teacher evaluation. However, in order to maintain the integrity of the state-level system, these measures may not exceed 15% of the overall weight.

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## **School-Leader and Teacher Evaluation-Framework Development Timeline**

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New Jersey and associated stakeholders will identify potential members, issue invitations, and convene the New Jersey Educational Evaluation Committee by Summer 2010. New Jersey is committed to a six-month effort in which the NJEEC will confer with experts, gather evidence, convene public meetings for input, evaluate new and existing observation and assessment instruments, and provide a draft of the system for public discussion. The committee will provide a draft-evaluation system that will then be piloted

in a set of participating LEAs before it is reviewed and brought to scale for all participating LEAs. A table outlining the specific action steps can be found at the conclusion of this section.

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## **Professional Development on Evaluation Frameworks**

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To implement the Principal and Teacher Evaluation Frameworks, the NJDOE will design and deploy training through county offices, based upon the evaluation data collected from the LEAs. Participating LEAs will be expected to commit principal and coach time to training on the implementation of the revised state-level evaluation system, as well as classroom-observation protocols. The NJDOE will also partner with institutions of higher education and alternative-certification programs to educate incoming principals and teachers about the multiple measures involved with the state-level evaluation system and about the resources being created to support teaching and learning in the classroom.

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## **Continuously Improving the Evaluation Frameworks**

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Because this system will represent a new approach to evaluation in the State of New Jersey, our intention is to move deliberately over the next year to ensure that the design is well-informed. We will create a process of continual review of the state design to ensure the validity of measures, capitalize on proven tools used in other states and by LEAs across the state, and disseminate promising practices. In order to ensure that this work is of the highest caliber, we will partner with an external organization to review and make recommendations to inform the evaluation frameworks, including the rollout of professional development on the system. We will actively engage with researchers who are working to develop fair and reliable measures of effective teaching.



### **(iii) ANNUAL EVALUATIONS**

The evaluation of all school personnel, except the Superintendent, is controlled by regulation and those provisions include the incorporation of student-performance data as a factor in personnel assessment (N.J.A.C. 6A:32-4.4, -4.5). The New Jersey Administrative Code requires an annual summative evaluation, coupled with a specific schedule for formal observations. Provisionally-certified and untenured teachers are observed at least three times per year, while tenured teachers have one observation per year. In addition to these formal observations, participating LEAs will encourage the use of formative observation so that teachers can adapt their practices, receive additional professional support, and improve their practices throughout the school year. School leaders and supervisors will provide timely and constructive feedback to teachers, along with recommendations for strategies to improve instructional practice that will be integrated into the teacher’s professional-development plan. Administrative coaches and LEA leadership teams will provide school leaders with the same tool-set to improve leadership and instructional practices within their schools. These formative measures will be accessible to teachers and school leaders through the IIS, along with data on student growth, and formative and interim assessments by classroom and school.

The NJDOE will be responsible for monitoring the evaluation process from the state level, and will ensure that participating LEAs implement the evaluations with fidelity. The NJDOE will be reviewing the LEAs’ work with school leaders, both for the school-leader evaluations and to study how teacher evaluations are being conducted.

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## **(iv) MAKING INFORMED DECISIONS WITH EVALUATION DATA**

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### **(a) Professional Development**

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In New Jersey, the state professional-development requirement for teachers is tied to the evaluation process. Each tenured and non-tenured teacher is required to develop a professional-development plan, as part of the evaluation process, that supports professional growth, addresses areas in need of improvement, and is focused on improving student learning. Each non-tenured teacher must create a plan with his or her supervisor within the first sixty days of employment. During the annual summary evaluation conference for tenured teachers, the progress that has been made toward the objectives of the previous year’s plan is reviewed, and new objectives may be developed.

Participating LEAs will comprehensively review evaluation results, to target and customize professional services to areas of need for teachers and school leaders. All such evaluations will be filed electronically for participating LEAs, along with personalized professional-development plans. With this information easily accessible, LEAs can streamline programs to offer face-to-face and online training through IIS that meets teacher and school-leader needs. Additionally, the state will be able to leverage economies of scale by encouraging LEAs with similar needs to collaborate in deploying professional services. NJDOE will provide the LEAs with access to and training on the professional-development plan-management software delivered as part of the IIS.

At the LEA level, school leaders will continue to be responsible for using each teacher’s evaluation data to conduct formal observations and act as a resource during the development of teachers’ professional-development plans.

**Image 4: Human Capital**



School Leaders and District Leaders will be able to use teacher quality and student performance data for planning and analysis.

***LEA and school-based professional-development planning:*** The old paradigms of professional development were one-shot workshops and in-service training. But recently, policymakers, school leaders and teachers have begun to learn about and embrace more productive professional-learning strategies and practices that have a track record of success in improving instruction and student results. The implementation of school-based collaborative-learning opportunities requires thoughtful planning, support, monitoring, and evaluation. Both LEA and school professional-development plans need to include a focus on:

- the use of student achievement and school-based data to inform professional development and identify student needs;
- a needs assessment that supports the connection of student-learning goals and professional-learning goals;

- the development of collaborative and individual professional-learning processes and structures for adult learning that are focused on curriculum, instruction, assessment and the social-emotional learning of students;
- planning to set aside the resources and time to support the learning needs of the adults; and
- a comprehensive evaluation of the professional-development plans that assesses each plan’s impact on student learning (as reflected in a change in leadership practices at all levels, a change in teacher and administrator conversations, a change in teacher practices as a result of learning, a change in student behaviors in the classroom and school, and a change in student achievement).

***Individual responsibility and accountability for professional learning:*** Individual teachers are required to develop an annual individual professional-development plan (PDP) that is monitored through the evaluation process at the end of each year. The teacher’s PDP must be developed in collaboration with the supervisor, and the goals of the PDP must be aligned with the learning needs of the teacher in relation to his/her students’ needs, the professional-development standards, the teaching standards, and the LEA and school goals. Teachers in participating LEAs will use also use Professional Learning Communities to address their learning needs, students’ needs, and the school’s goals.

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**(b) Compensation**

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**School-wide Performance Awards**

We believe that the success of a school is the result of a successful collaboration across personnel of all subject areas and responsibilities. As such, we plan to recognize successful schools by creating a school-level incentive bonus for Participating LEAs, which will be allocated among all school personnel. The State Board will establish

parameters for growth expectations that determine school-wide performance awards and for the allocation of funds.

### **Differentiated Professional Opportunities**

Differentiated professional opportunities will be based on both formal evaluation results and student academic growth in participating LEAs. For additional responsibilities undertaken, commensurate compensation will be provided from state-level RTTT grant funds and re-directed RTTT LEA funds. The existing Professional Teaching Standards Board will design guidelines for participating LEA to use in offering differentiated professional opportunities based on the evaluation data for such additional responsibilities as:

- Becoming an instructional coach
- Leading a professional-learning community
- Mentoring a new teacher
- Training a student teacher
- Scoring constructed-response items
- Conducting reviews of LEA or school curricula
- Becoming a teacher leader in specialized content areas

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### **(c) Tenure**

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New Jersey uses evaluations to inform decisions along the pathway towards tenure. For a teacher to move from a provisional to a standard teaching certificate, that teacher must participate in a state provisional-teacher program that includes a formal mentoring and induction process, and undergo three observations, and one summative assessments by the principal. The principal makes recommendation for standard licensure in the summative evaluation.

Participating LEAs will be expected to establish and implement clear criteria, based on multiple measures used in the evaluation, to inform decisions related to the transition from provisional to standard teacher certification at the end of the first year of teaching, and from untenured to tenured teacher status at the end of the third year of teaching.

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**(d) Use of evaluations to inform removal**

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The NJEEC will specify guidelines and streamlined, transparent, and fair procedures, consistent with the rigorous evaluation standards, to remove ineffective teachers and school leaders. The decisions lie with the LEAs, but the State acknowledges that participating LEAs will need support to establish clear guidelines that recognize that in the case of repeatedly-ineffective tenured teachers, concerted action must be taken. The LEA will establish specific criteria, using the NJEEC guidelines, for the removal of tenured and non-tenured teachers and school leaders that take into account the multiple measures used in the state evaluation system, and that adhere to the fair and transparent standard the NJDOE has set.

There is a specific statute regarding the dismissal of tenured teaching-staff members, N.J.S.A 18A:28-5, and such teaching-staff members must be accorded all due process required by N.J.S.A 18A:6-10 et seq. New Jersey has efficiently balanced the need for expediency in such actions with due process considerations.

## TIMELINES

2009–10 SY		
First School Semester (September–December)	Second School Semester (January–June)	Summer Session (June–September)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify potential NJEEC members, issue invitations, and convene NJEEC (30 days post award)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invite &amp; convene New Jersey Educator Evaluation Committee (NJEEC)</li> </ul>
2010–11 SY		
First School Semester (September–December)	Second School Semester (January–June)	Summer Session (June–September)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyze and release NJ Growth model data (2008-09 to 2009-10 SY)</li> <li>State Board of Education reviews first year growth data to set preliminary criteria for school-wide award</li> <li>NJEEC gathers evidence, convenes public meetings for input into evaluation design, confers with experts, evaluates new and existing observation protocols, and provides draft evaluation system for public comment</li> <li>LEA selected to pilot evidence-based observation protocols</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pilot content-specific observation protocols in selected participating LEAs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NJEEC reviews observation protocol pilots</li> </ul>
2011–12 SY		
First School Semester (September–December)	Second School Semester (January–June)	Summer Session (June–September)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Release second year of growth model data</li> <li>State Board of Education sets final criteria for school-based award; and announces first set of school awards.</li> <li>NJEEC convenes to finalize evaluation design</li> <li>Outreach and professional development for school leaders and teachers on the new evaluation system</li> <li>Pilot full evaluation system and accompanying professional development in 10-20 participating LEAs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LEAs specify criteria for differential professional opportunities</li> <li>LEA pilot of evaluation system, including progress measures on interim assessments</li> <li>Ongoing training on school leader and teacher evaluation system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NJEEC reviews pilot data and considers any necessary revisions to evaluation system.</li> <li>For LEAs participating in evaluation pilot, training for Highly Effective Teachers as content-focused instructional coaches, teacher leaders, and mentors</li> </ul>

continue...

2012–13 SY

First School Semester (September–December)	Second School Semester (January–June)	Summer Session (June–September)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full scale implementation of evaluation system and accompanying professional development in participating LEAs</li> <li>• Design and submit for public comment school leader and teacher effectiveness reports</li> <li>• Announce school awards based on growth model data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full scale implementation of evaluation system in participating LEAs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public reporting of school leader and teacher effectiveness across grade spans</li> </ul>

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## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

<b>Performance Measures</b>		Actual Data: Baseline (Current school year or most recent)	End of SY 2010-2011	End of SY 2011-2012	End of SY 2012-2013	End of SY 2013-2014
Notes: Data should be reported in a manner consistent with the definitions contained in this application package in Section II. Qualifying evaluation systems are those that meet the criteria described in (D)(2)(ii).						
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>General goals to be provided at time of application:</b>	<b>Baseline data and annual targets</b>				
(D)(2)(i)	Percentage of participating LEAs that measure student growth (as defined in this notice).	Data not available	100%	100%	100%	100%
(D)(2)(ii)	Percentage of participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems for teachers.		Data not available	Developing	85%	90%

(D)(2)(ii)	Percentage of participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems for principals.			85%	90%
(D)(2)(iv)	Percentage of participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems that are used to inform:				
(D)(2)(iv)(a)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing teachers and principals.</li> </ul>			35%	80%
(D)(2)(iv)(b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compensating teachers and principals.</li> </ul>			50%*	75%*
(D)(2)(iv)(b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promoting teachers and principals.</li> </ul>			40%	70%
(D)(2)(iv)(b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retaining effective teachers and principals.</li> </ul>			40%	70%
(D)(2)(iv)(c)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Granting tenure and/or full certification (where applicable) to teachers and principals.</li> </ul>			20%	90%
(D)(2)(iv)(d)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Removing ineffective tenured and untenured teachers and principals.</li> </ul>			5%**	10%**
<p>The role of the LEA must be kept in mind when considering performance measures in New Jersey. LEAs have the responsibility to negotiate with unions on issues regarding teacher and leader contracts. *Our compensation structure has three components, some of which are tied directly to elements of the system that will be rolled out over time. While the components will be rolled out uniformly, building bonuses will be available and applied sooner. **Keeping in mind the LEA role, the system will have the capacity to inform the removal of ineffective tenured and untenured teachers and principals.</p>					

<b>General data to be provided at time of application:</b>				
Total number of participating LEAs.	378			
Total number of principals* in participating LEAs.	1,635			
Total number of teachers in participating LEAs.	89,006			
<p>It is to New Jersey's credit with LEAs, teachers, and principals that this application demonstrates the involvement of teachers in 70% the LEAs in the state. *Principals are defined as the building head for this count.</p>				

**(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals (25 points)**

The extent to which the State, in collaboration with its participating LEAs (as defined in this notice), has a high-quality plan and ambitious yet achievable annual targets to—

(i) Ensure the equitable distribution of teachers and principals by developing a plan, informed by reviews of prior actions and data, to ensure that students in high-poverty and/or high-minority schools (both as defined in this notice) have equitable access to highly effective teachers and principals (both as defined in this notice) and are not served by ineffective teachers and principals at higher rates than other students; (15 points) and

(ii) Increase the number and percentage of effective teachers (as defined in this notice) teaching hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas including mathematics, science, and special education; teaching in language instruction educational programs (as defined under Title III of the ESEA); and teaching in other areas as identified by the State or LEA. (10 points)

Plans for (i) and (ii) may include, but are not limited to, the implementation of incentives and strategies in such areas as recruitment, compensation, teaching and learning environments, professional development, and human resources practices and processes.

*The State shall provide its detailed plan for this criterion in the text box below. The plan should include, at a minimum, the goals, activities, timelines, and responsible parties (see Reform Plan Criteria elements in Application Instructions or Section XII, Application Requirements (e), for further detail). In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.*

Evidence for (D)(3)(i):

- Definitions of high-minority and low-minority schools as defined by the State for the purposes of the State's Teacher Equity Plan.

*Recommended maximum response length: Three pages*

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## **ENSURING AN EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF EFFECTIVE TEACHERS AND SCHOOL LEADERS**

- Build regional capacity to develop and scale successful programs to recruit and retain outstanding teachers in high-need schools;
- Design and deploy LEA plans to improve the equitable distribution of highly-effective teachers; and
- Expand and strengthen the pipeline of diverse and outstanding teachers in science, mathematics, World Languages, and specialty areas of English-language-learners and special education.

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### **(i) HIGH-POVERTY AND/OR HIGH-MINORITY SCHOOLS**

Having data on the effectiveness of teachers and school leaders is key to discerning an effective solution for the equitable distribution of teachers and school leaders across LEAs and the state. Under New Jersey’s current metric, 99.7% of teachers are considered highly-qualified, but that does not mean they are highly effective. And, we know that our neediest schools do not have access to our best teachers. As New Jersey works to implement the evidence-based state-level evaluation program, we will take the following steps to ensure that high-poverty, high-minority schools<sup>3</sup> have access to well-prepared, experienced teachers with a demonstrated record of improving academic achievement.

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<sup>3</sup> High-minority schools are defined as having a majority enrollment of students of color or English-language learners.

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## **Improving the Teacher and School-Leader Pipeline to Urban Schools**

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Through pilot programs, funded by the U.S. Department of Education Teacher Quality Grants, New Jersey has begun to build a foundation to better prepare teachers and school leaders for the challenges they will face in our neediest schools. Based at William Paterson University, The Garden State Partnership for Teacher Quality (GSPTQ) is a collaboration among Kean University; Rowan University; Bridgeton, Camden, Jersey City, Passaic, Paterson and Union City school LEAs; and the NJDOE. Under this grant, the partnership has developed the Garden State Urban Teacher Residency Program and created fifteen professional-development schools to support and retain teachers and educational leaders in New Jersey’s most challenging urban communities. The GSPTQ is also developing a tracking system, in partnership with the NJDOE, to track whether residency candidates are retained in an urban school LEA, and if so, what impact they have on student learning. New Jersey will increase the number of teachers and school leaders served by such programs as the GSPTQ, and will support the creation of more partnerships to develop and retain highly-effective teachers and leaders. New Jersey will look to expand the existing partnership and also draw upon the resources created in partnership with national organizations to support participating LEAs in developing, recruiting and retaining outstanding teachers for high-need schools. A complete list of activities is available in Appendix II.

New Jersey will also further its commitment to alternative-route certification by continuing to pilot innovative programs that support experienced professionals who are beginning new careers in teaching in our high-poverty, high-minority schools. New Jersey will continue to work with participating LEAs through our Troops to Teachers program to expand the number of retired military personnel placed in high-need, low-income LEAs. We will also track the results of these programs.

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## **Recruitment**

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To support LEAs in actively recruiting experienced and skilled teachers with a history of improving academic achievement, New Jersey will support advertising and circulation of teacher and school-leader positions becoming available through NJ Hire. This state-wide platform to post vacancies will allow LEAs to recruit the best teachers to the neediest schools. As information regarding high-performing preparation programs becomes available (in Fall 2013), LEAs may include strategies to recruit new and highly-skilled teachers for vacancies including seeking help from these alternative-training programs to see which of their candidates might be appropriate as new teachers in the neediest schools.

In return for extended learning time and a longer school year, New Jersey will offer substantial additional compensation and support for teachers serving in persistently low-performing schools, in an effort to attract the best and brightest of our state's school leaders and teachers to serve the students who are most in need (as outlined in Section E2).

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## **Students Becoming Teachers**

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A number of institutions of higher education have programs that recruit students in high schools to become teachers in urban areas. Where the program is well-run, including “student teaching” by those in the programs, the numbers of students recruited is significant. New Jersey will expand these successful programs to target high-poverty, high-minority schools in participating LEAs.

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## **Retaining Outstanding Teachers and Leaders by Improving Teaching and Learning Environments**

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Research clearly shows that additional compensation is only one factor in a teacher’s decision to remain at a school. Equally, if not more, important is the environment in which teachers work. Distributed leadership, coupled with a professional environment in which all teachers seek to improve their practice, will be the cornerstone to supporting LEA efforts to retain outstanding teachers and leaders. Participating LEAs will place a priority on assigning supervisors who are trained to become content-based instructional leaders to high-poverty schools and will assign, as necessary, instructional coaches where there is a specific need for such coaches within particular content areas, e.g., Algebra I. The specific role of supervisors is outlined in section D5. This combination of individual and team support for teachers and leaders is designed to foster a professional environment in which teachers collectively work to improve their practice. New Jersey will also work with the New Jersey Partnership for Professional Learning and national experts to offer training and technical assistance to participating LEAs in moving to collaborative professional-learning environments. Further, New Jersey will work to assess the impact of these collaborative-learning environments through teaching-conditions surveys to ensure that the necessary conditions of reform, such as teacher engagement, are being met.

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## **Using Evaluation Data to Develop Equitable-Distribution Plans**

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With the implementation of the state-level evaluation system in the 2012-13 school year, participating LEAs will develop equitable-distribution plans, complete with timelines and goals, to attract effective and highly-effective teachers and school leaders to, and retain them at, high-poverty, high-minority, and low-achieving schools. As part of these plans, participating LEAs will gather and maintain data on vacancies, recruitment, selection,

staffing, and educator-effectiveness. LEA equitable-distribution plans will also monitor the link between effectiveness data and LEA actions such as tenure decisions, retention programs, and decisions related to professional-development services. Participating LEAs will update and review progress on their plans annually, in conjunction with county offices. As information regarding high-performing preparation programs becomes available (in Fall 2013), LEAs may include strategies to recruit new and highly-skilled teachers from those programs to fill vacancies. During the 2011-12 school year, the New Jersey State Board of Education will conduct a comprehensive review of its LEA evaluation system, QSAC, to monitor the equitable distribution of effective teachers and school leaders. New Jersey will also include monitoring protocols to ensure that students in high-poverty, high-minority schools are not served by ineffective teachers and school leaders at higher rates than other students. NJDOE’s recommended revisions to QSAC will be piloted in the 2012-13 school year, after a thorough review from the NJDOE and after approval by the State Board of Education.

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## **(ii) HARD-TO-STAFF SUBJECTS AND SPECIALTY AREAS**

New Jersey has created successful pilots and programs to attract and retain teachers for hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas. Through support from RTTT, New Jersey will be prepared to rapidly bring to scale the approaches in these programs for participating LEAs in our hard-to-staff areas, including special education, math, science, foreign languages, and ESL/bilingual.

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### **Targeting Shortage Areas**

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Targeted alternate routes in all high-need areas, including special education, ESL/Bilingual, science, math and foreign languages are important routes to find teachers.

These routes provide a flexible and efficient manner for teachers to gain certification and highly-qualified status. (See our results regarding alternative routes in Section D1.)

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## **Special Education**

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Licensure regulations establish an alternate route for the special-education endorsement, allowing any individual who is eligible for an instructional certificate to receive a special-education certification of eligibility, permitting him or her to be employed as a teacher while completing the special-education-endorsement program. New Jersey will expand efforts to recruit individuals under this program.

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## **Mathematics**

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### **Traders to Teachers**

This past year, legislation (commonly referred to as “Traders to Teachers”) was passed that established a pilot teacher-preparation program that allows individuals displaced from the financial sector or similar industries to pursue certification to teach mathematics. This accelerated program, which is supported by the collaborative efforts of the College of Education & Human Services and the College of Science & Mathematics at Montclair University, is for individuals who have used mathematics in their jobs, and who have a sincere desire to become mathematics teachers, whether or not they majored in Mathematics in college.

Successful applicants spend three months in an intensive, full-time (five-days-a-week) program refreshing their mathematics knowledge and learning how to teach the subject; they spend one day each week observing and beginning to teach mathematics in a high school or middle school. Upon successful completion of the three-month component of the program, candidates are placed in paid teaching positions in New Jersey public

schools. Candidates are expected to commit to teach for at least two school years, during which intensive professional support will be provided. After teaching successfully for two years, completing the additional mathematics courses that are necessary (as determined on an individual basis), and passing the secondary mathematics PRAXIS II exam, candidates will be recommended for standard, permanent teaching certification in Mathematics. Through the additional support of Race to the Top funds, New Jersey can expand this program to increase the number of highly-skilled teachers in mathematics.

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## **Science**

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### **Progressive Science Initiative (PSI)—a model for science and mathematics teachers**

New Jersey is taking on the challenge of science education by training a talented corps of teachers who will lead the next generation to high levels of student achievement in science. Through a partnership with Kean University and the Center for Teaching and Learning, this alternate-route program seeks to recruit science professionals to become teachers. New Jersey is using the PSI approach to teach science to highly-skilled teachers, by providing teachers with rigorous curriculum and professional development about how to teach the curriculum, and providing the professional learning just as the teachers need it. The goal is to get great teachers to become great science teachers through PSI. In the program’s first year alone, PSI will have trained and certified twice the number of physics teachers than had been certified in prior years by all the universities in New Jersey. More than 1,200 students are studying physics with that first cohort of PSI teachers. A preliminary indicator of success is that more than 40% of those students, when surveyed in December, have indicated that they intend to take AP Physics B, in addition to PSI Chemistry, next year. With the support of Race to the Top funds, the PSI can expand its selection of currently-certified teachers who have the pedagogical talent and skills, and teach them the content required to lead highly-effective science classrooms, including Chemistry and Biology classrooms.

The approach that provides teachers with great curriculum and then ongoing, deep professional development for what they are about to teach should also be applied with respect to teachers of algebra, geometry, and advanced algebra.

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## **World Languages**

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New Jersey has created an infrastructure to build teacher capacity in the area of World Languages. In 2005, NJDOE initiated a collaboration with the Rutgers University World Languages Institute, Department of Asian Language and Cultures, Graduate School of Education (GSE) and the Chinese Language Association for Elementary and Secondary Schools (CLASS) to develop an Accelerated Chinese-Language Teacher-Certification Program. The program -- the first of its kind in New Jersey -- was state-approved in 2006 and provides training for native or heritage speakers of Chinese who are currently working in other fields, and who seek to earn New Jersey Chinese-teacher certification, to meet the needs of the state's schools. The program has served 102 teacher candidates from 2006 through 2008, with 27 earning Certificates of Eligibility to teach Chinese over the two-year period. With the support of Race to the Top, New Jersey can expand this program to provide participating LEAs with highly-skilled teachers of World Languages, through providing more teaching slots for native or heritage speakers not only of Chinese but also -- through a similar program with the same approach -- of Arabic, Korean, and Hindi.

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## **ESL/Bilingual**

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New Jersey has a growing population of English-language-learners and will need additional ESL and Bilingual teachers to serve these students. New Jersey will work closely with the associations of native or heritage speakers, recruit potential teachers, and create more alternative routes for ESL/Bilingual teachers that will provide training for these individuals who are currently working in other fields and who seek to earn a teacher's certification. Additionally, New Jersey will offer targeted professional-development courses, available to all teachers, on evidence-based pedagogical strategies specific to English-language-learners.

## TIMELINES

2009–10 SY		
First School Semester (September–December)	Second School Semester (January–June)	Summer Session (June–September)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Train supervisors as content-focused instructional coaches</li> </ul>
2010–11 SY		
First School Semester (September–December)	Second School Semester (January–June)	Summer Session (June–September)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supervisor/coaches convene PLCs for teachers by grade or content area in participating LEAs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand Troops to Teacher program for high-poverty, high-minority schools</li> <li>Recruit for expanded PSI program</li> <li>Launch expanded NJ Hire site</li> <li>Expand NJ Partnership for Professional Learning to improve professional environment in high-poverty, high-minority schools</li> <li>Content-focused supervisors and teacher leaders provide ongoing support for PLCs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop online modules to support ongoing learning and collaboration</li> </ul>
2011–12 SY		
First School Semester (September–December)	Second School Semester (January–June)	Summer Session (June–September)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with LEAs to sustain ongoing professional learning communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LEAs specify criteria for differential professional opportunities</li> <li>Recruit of expanded PSI program</li> <li>Review QSAC to consider ways to monitor the equitable distribution of effective school leaders and teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For LEAs participating in evaluation pilot, training for Highly Effective Teachers as content-focused instructional coaches, teacher leaders, and mentors</li> <li>NJEEC meets with evaluation pilot LEAs to gather information regarding plans for equitable distribution of effective teachers, confers with experts and convenes public meets to gather input on LEA equitable distribution plans.</li> </ul>
2012–13 SY		
First School Semester (September–December)	Second School Semester (January–June)	Summer Session (June–September)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with LEAs to sustain ongoing professional learning communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LEAs pilot QSAC provisions to monitor the equitable distribution of teachers.</li> <li>Work with LEAs to sustain ongoing professional learning communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NJDOE approves LEA equitable distribution plans and targets</li> </ul>

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## EVIDENCE

(D)(3)(i):

- Definitions for high-minority and low-minority schools as defined by the State for the purposes of the State’s Teacher Equity Plan do not currently exist. Our Teacher Quality Plan was approved without this variable.

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## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

<p><b>Performance Measures for (D)(3)(i) –</b></p> <p><i>Note: All information below is requested for Participating LEAs.</i></p>	<p>Actual Data: Baseline (Current school year or most</p>	<p>End of SY 2010-2011</p>	<p>End of SY 2011-2012</p>	<p>End of SY 2012-2013</p>	<p>End of SY 2013-2014</p>
<p><b>General goals to be provided at time of application:</b></p>	<p><b>Baseline data and annual targets</b></p>				
<p>Percentage of teachers in schools that are high-poverty , (as defined in this notice) who are highly effective (as defined in this notice).</p>	<p>Available</p>	<p>Year</p>	<p>Baseline</p>	<p>10%</p>	<p>10%</p>

Percentage of teachers in schools that are low-poverty, (as defined in this notice) who are highly effective (as defined in this notice).			10%	10%	10%
Percentage of teachers in schools that are high-poverty , (as defined in this notice) who are ineffective.			10%	decrease	10%
Percentage of teachers in schools that are low-poverty (as defined in this notice) who are ineffective.	Data Not Available	Baseline Year	decrease	10%	10%
Percentage of principals leading schools that are high-poverty, or both (as defined in this notice) who are highly effective (as defined in this notice).			increase	10%	10%
Percentage of principals leading schools that are low-poverty, or both (as defined in this notice) who are highly effective (as defined in this notice).			increase	10%	10%
Percentage of principals leading schools that are high-poverty, or both (as defined in this notice) who are ineffective.			decrease	10%	10%
Percentage of principals leading schools that are low-poverty, or both (as defined in this notice) who are ineffective.			decrease	10%	10%

New Jersey does not have a definition of high- or low-minority. Baseline data for these goals using the highly-effective teacher definition in this application will not be available for New Jersey until the end of the 2010-2011 school year. For participating LEAs, we propose to increase the baseline number of teachers who are highly effective by 10% annually, and decrease the ineffective teachers by 10% each year. We are proposing this based upon the design, implementation, and active use of the reform efforts outlined in Sections B, D, and E. We believe that this ambitious level of improvement is possible with the comprehensive reform efforts we have outlined, and that demonstrate significant improvement over time. ED has raised the stakes by proposing a high level of measurable performance, and New Jersey is proposing to meet and exceed that challenge.

<b>General data to be provided at time of application:*</b>					
Total number of schools that are high-poverty	265				
Total number of schools that are low-poverty	785				
Total number of teachers in schools that are high-poverty , (as defined in this notice).	14,239				
Total number of teachers in schools that are low-poverty, (as defined in this notice).	45,125				
Total number of principals** leading schools that are high-poverty , (as defined in this notice).	265				
Total number of principals leading schools that are low-poverty, (as defined in this notice).	785				

Information on high- and low- minority designation is not collected by the state; the state is electing to present numbers based upon poverty data alone. \*These numbers are estimations of the total numbers based upon a cross-referencing of MOUs received and school and LEA data. \*\* New Jersey is counting only the building head as a principal.

<b>Performance Measures for (D)(3)(ii) –</b>  <i>Note: All information below is requested for Participating LEAs.</i>	Actual Data: Baseline (Current school year or	End of SY 2010-2011	End of SY 2011-2012	End of SY 2012-2013	End of SY 2013-2014
<b>General goals to be provided at time of application:</b>	<b>Baseline data and annual targets</b>				
Percentage of mathematics teachers who were evaluated as effective or better.	Data not available	Baseline	Improve 7%	Improve 7%	

Percentage of science teachers who were evaluated as effective or better.	Data not available	Baseline	Improvement 7%	Improvement 5%
Percentage of special- education teachers who were evaluated as effective or better.	Data not available	Baseline	Improvement 7%	Improvement 5%
Percentage of teachers in language instruction educational programs who were evaluated as effective or better.	Data not available	Baseline	Improvement 7%	Improvement 5%
<p>New Jersey currently maintains a definition of highly-qualified, rather than highly-effective, as described in the text of Section D2. There is currently no data available on the cohort of subject-area teachers and their effectiveness that is comparable across LEAs. We will be able to collect baseline data on teacher-effectiveness as defined in this application no sooner than the 2011-2012 SY. After gathering the initial data, we are committed to raising the percentage of highly-effective mathematics and science teachers by 7%. There will likely be an initial spike in improvement when the professional-development tools are rolled out, but we propose to continue to engage teachers to improve their effectiveness.</p>				
<b>General data to be provided at time of application:</b>				

Total number of mathematics teachers.	9,702			
Total number of science teachers.	6,661			
Total number of special- education teachers.	17,341			
Total number of teachers in language- instruction educational programs.	2,086			

**(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs (14 points)**

The extent to which the State has a high-quality plan and ambitious yet achievable annual targets to—

(i) Link student achievement and student growth (both as defined in this notice) data to the students’ teachers and principals, to link this information to the in-State programs where those teachers and principals were prepared for credentialing, and to publicly report the data for each credentialing program in the State; and

(ii) Expand preparation and credentialing options and programs that are successful at producing effective teachers and principals (both as defined in this notice).

*The State shall provide its detailed plan for this criterion in the text box below. The plan should include, at a minimum, the goals, activities, timelines, and responsible parties (see Reform Plan Criteria elements in Application Instructions or Section XII, Application Requirements (e), for further detail). Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers must be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.*

*Recommended maximum response length: One page*



## **NEW JERSEY’S SUCCESSFUL EFFORTS**

The NJDOE has taken many steps to improve the effectiveness of teacher- and school-leader preparation programs over the past several years. As of January 2009, all professional-preparation programs were required to be nationally-accredited, either by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) or by the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC), and all twenty-four preparation programs have achieved this distinction.

In preparation for national accreditation, all teacher and school-leader professional-preparation programs were required to align their programs with either the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers, which are based on the standards of the Interstate

New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC), or the Professional Standards for School Leaders, which are based on the standards of the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) (NJAC 6A:9-10.1(b)). This work was facilitated by two statewide stakeholder groups, the New Jersey Association of Colleges for Teacher Education and the State Action for Educational Leadership Project (SAELP).

The Higher Education Task Force made recommendations in 2006 for a performance-based approach to program approval. As a result of the recommendations, New Jersey has instituted, through regulations, a new performance-based program-approval process to improve the effectiveness of teacher- and school leader-preparation programs (6A:9-10). As part of this effort, New Jersey is in the process of:

- Creating a professional-educator database and tracking system to gather and analyze data on graduate performance including employment, retention, and impact on student achievement;
- Creating a set of specific program-approval standards by licensure area that are, where applicable, aligned with the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers, School Leaders, and the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standard;
- Planning for performance-based assessments to provide evidence that candidates -- both those who are traditionally-trained and those prepared through the alternate route -- meet the State standards adopted for each certification area, and to determine their readiness for recommendation towards provisional certification;
- Creating a State Program Approval Council (PAC) to coordinate the peer-review program-approval process for initial and substantially-revised programs, conduct the periodic review of programs, and address matters pertaining to higher-education-preparation quality; and
- Examining whether to increase the provisional-licensure period to a minimum of two years, and to provide additional resources during this

provisional period to align and support existing LEA induction and mentoring programs using standards and performance-based assessments in support of beginning educators.

An important goal is to provide a student-teaching experience that leads directly to demonstrating that student teachers are ready to teach. The overarching goal is to develop a system where new teachers can be followed through preparation, student teaching, and observation all the way through to tenure.

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## **(i) LINK STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND GROWTH TO TEACHER-PREPARATION**

As part of New Jersey’s Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) application and also New Jersey’s State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF) application, we propose to calculate individual student-growth scores and enable our data system to compile this information at a teacher level, and, in addition, to include our current statewide annual assessments and propose to include statewide interim assessments. Also proposed in SLDS and SFSF is the creation of Teacher and Course Modules. The Teacher Module will collect individual teacher-level data such as teaching assignment, highly-qualified status, and credentialing/preparation program information. The Course Module will collect enrollment information in each section of each class, so that NJDOE will be able to link student to course to teacher. This functionality will also allow New Jersey to create eTranscripts that compare course grades to end-of-course assessments, and ultimately study the relationship between student course-taking patterns and success in post-secondary institutions and in the workforce.

Importantly, at the state level, we will be able link student-level growth scores and other statewide assessments to teachers’ preparation and credentialing programs. This functionality will allow us to follow recently-credentialed teachers into the workforce, and to study the patterns of their job attainment and their movement in relationship to the schools in which they teach, in order to determine what types of assignments they receive

and how long they remain in an assignment. Furthermore, for all teachers, we will also be able to use this data to study the effectiveness of teacher-preparation programs in terms of teacher longevity in the workforce, student-level outcomes, and success with various types of course content and/or student populations.

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## **(ii) EXPAND PREPARATION PROGRAMS THAT ARE SUCCESSFUL AT PRODUCING EFFECTIVE TEACHERS**

New Jersey will collaborate with traditional preparation programs and employ non-traditional routes to ensure that training on the use of the Curriculum and Assessment Spine is embedded into teacher-preparation programs in advance of the student-teacher experience, to ensure that incoming teachers will be better prepared for their classrooms. Additionally, teacher-preparation programs will focus on the math and reading aspects of the Curriculum and Assessment Spine to ensure that all teachers are equipped with the tools and pedagogic routines necessary to support student achievement in reading and mathematics. New Jersey will leverage existing efforts to create a State Program Approval Council (PAC) to embed the Curriculum and Assessment Spine in a content-specific standards for preparation program. With these efforts, new teachers will receive the same professional learning that more-experienced peers are receiving in school settings.

Using the data collected in the evaluation process, as described in Section D2, the NJDOE will work with the PAC to monitor and improve principal and teacher preparation programs. In conjunction with the NJEEC, a rating scale for key indicators will be developed, and the results will be shared in advance with both traditional and non-traditional programs. Programs exhibiting particular success will be identified and examined to identify correlating success factors. Once success factors have been identified, the NJDOE can explore ways to carefully replicate successful programs. The NJDOE will also publish the complete range of scores for all preparation programs in order to further program transparency and to allow prospective applicants to make informed decisions.

The transparency of the data relating to the programs will help provide necessary information on what is working and should be scaled, as well as what should be changed. Finally, NJDOE will scale the effective partnerships and alternative programs in participating LEAs to recruit students in our high schools to become teachers and to support the development of “student teaching” in these programs.

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## TIMELINES

2010–11 SY		
First School Semester (September–December)	Second School Semester (January–June)	Summer Session (June–September)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver training for teacher preparation programs and Program Approval Council on the Curriculum &amp; Assessment Spine</li> </ul>	

2011–12 SY		
First School Semester (September–December)	Second School Semester (January–June)	Summer Session (June–September)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum &amp; Assessment Spine embedded in teacher preparation program approval process</li> </ul>		

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## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Performance Measures	Actual Data: Baseline (Current school year or most	End of SY 2010- 2011	End of SY 2011- 2012	End of SY 2012- 2013	End of SY 2013- 2014
<b>General goals to be provided at time of application:</b>	<b>Baseline data and annual targets</b>				
Percentage of teacher preparation programs in the State for which the public can access data on the achievement and growth (as defined in this notice) of the graduates' students.	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available	Baseline	20%
Percentage of principal preparation programs in the State for which the public can access data on the achievement and growth (as defined in this notice) of the graduates' students.	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available	Baseline	20%

The data on the links established between higher education and the NJDOE will not be available until the third year of this proposed work. We propose piloting the system with a small cohort of preparation programs once the data become available.

**General data to be provided at time of application:**

Total number of teacher credentialing programs in the State.	116*
Total number of principal credentialing programs in the State.	19**
Total number of teachers in the State.	128,691
Total number of principals in the State.	4,083

\*There are 24 traditional preparation programs and over 90 alternate routes (through different campuses and programs). A list of programs and categories is available in Appendix I.

\*\*There are 18 traditional leader-preparation programs and one alternate route – the EXCEL program – which is described in Section D.



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

The extent to which the State, in collaboration with its participating LEAs (as defined in this notice), has a high-quality plan for its participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) to—

- (i) Provide effective, data-informed professional development, coaching, induction, and common planning and collaboration time to teachers and principals that are, where appropriate, ongoing and job-embedded. Such support might focus on, for example, gathering, analyzing, and using data; designing instructional strategies for improvement; differentiating instruction; creating school environments supportive of data-informed decisions; designing instruction to meet the specific needs of high need students (as defined in this notice); and aligning systems and removing barriers to effective implementation of practices designed to improve student learning outcomes; and
- (ii) Measure, evaluate, and continuously improve the effectiveness of those supports in order to improve student achievement (as defined in this notice).

*The State shall provide its detailed plan for this criterion in the text box below. The plan should include, at a minimum, the goals, activities, timelines, and responsible parties (see Reform Plan Criteria elements in Application Instructions or Section XII, Application Requirements (e), for further detail). Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers must be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.*

*Recommended maximum response length: Five pages*



## **PROVIDING EFFECTIVE SUPPORT TO TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS**

- The NJDOE proposes a professional environment in which teachers and school leaders receive timely and customized support from supervisors, and content-focused instructional coaches help with creating professional-learning communities in their schools.
- New Jersey will also create networks of disciplinary-focused learning communities to build relationships across schools to study, reflect, and assess student work and instructional practice, both face-to-face and online.

New Jersey has spent the past decade developing a content-based, comprehensive, and rigorous professional-development system for all educators, including teachers and school and LEA leaders, as they move across the continuum of practice from novice to veteran educator. Recent regulatory changes have importantly created a school-based, collaborative professional-development-planning process, recognizing that the school is the locus of organizational change.

Through RTTT, we will have the opportunity to increase its capacity to directly provide or coordinate the delivery of face-to-face or online professional services, by implementing a technology platform to support asynchronous professional development. In addition, implementation of the Curriculum and Assessment Spine – a central theme of our proposal – will require new kinds of professional collaboration, new ways of working together, and a new platform for sustained adult learning.

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## **Professional Development for Teachers: An Integrated System of Learning**

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### **(N.J.A.C.6A:9-15)**

State regulations require all teachers to accrue 100 hours of professional-development time every five years, which are tied to teacher evaluations. The regulations also require LEA and school-based planning for professional learning, and call for teachers to play a key role in the design and review of school-based professional-learning opportunities.

### **Professional Development for School and LEA Leaders (N.J.A.C.6A:9-16)**

The school-leader professional-development requirement calls for each school leader to develop a professional-growth plan every three years, by working with a team that supports his or her efforts through collegial reflection. This requirement aligns school leaders' learning with their professional standards, the professional-development standards, and each individual's professional-growth plan (PGP). Every three years, school leaders must provide evidence of plan fulfillment, including a narrative account of

goals and their achievement, along with related documentation. The plans will be strengthened through expanded opportunities for collaborations among school leaders with a particular focus on the Curriculum and Assessment Spine.

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## **Monitoring of the Professional-Development Planning Process**

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Monitoring of the LEA professional-development plan is conducted in two ways: First, the LEAs and their schools are required to develop an evaluation process to examine the impact of professional development on teachers’ practice and student learning. Secondly, LEA professional-development plans are reviewed through the Quality Single Accountability Continuum (QSAC) at the state level, to ensure that the planning and implementation of professional development remains focused on improving student learning.

Individual teachers are asked to provide evidence of learning through their individual professional development plan (PDP), and evidence of the implementation of what has been learned at the annual summary conference, for evaluation. Teachers’ learning is focused on student learning needs and can be team-based to support collective goals, or differentiated to support the specific learning needs of the teacher.

An administrator’s professional learning is monitored annually through peer-review committees. While the professional learning of administrators is not tied to the annual evaluation process, the plan is reviewed and approved by the LEAs’ Chief School Administrator.

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## **PROVIDING EFFECTIVE, DATA-INFORMED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

New Jersey will provide significant professional-development services and support to participating LEAs. There will be face-to-face content-focused training for LEA

supervisors and for principals at Regional Service Centers, and there will be ongoing online support for principals, supervisors, and teachers as they engage with the Curriculum and Assessment Spine.

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## Effective Professional Services to Build Teacher Knowledge and Skills

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Emerging evidence shows that the continuous improvement of practice and student performance requires sustained and content-focused professional development for teachers. The professional development that will occur will be the result of sustained relationships among professionals in the context of specific schools and classrooms. Drawing upon the relevant research, we have outlined below the critical features of effective professional services that will be provided,:

- The adult-learning activity will be **content-based** — improving and deepening teachers’ knowledge of the content of the curriculum they teach. Teachers need to know the content they teach well, and also need to know about common student misconceptions or learning challenges. Professional services will be grounded in pedagogical routines associated with a specific content area, and supported by supervisors who are trained as instructional coaches, and teacher leaders who are skilled in adapting instruction in response to student misconceptions.
- The use of **evidence** in design. Employing evidence of the strengths and needs of learners in the setting, and evidence of what works that is drawn from research and clinical experience, enhances the likelihood that the professional development will contribute to better learning outcomes. We will provide teachers with models of effective practice and tools to improve their skills as diagnosticians, developers, and users of knowledge about their practice.
- The work will emphasize the **collective participation** of groups of teachers from the same school, department, or grade level. Research suggests that the most

effective professional development is organized around groups of teachers from a school who share responsibility for the same children and/or subject. Our approach designs content-focused collaborative learning, led by instructional coaches and, where needed, also led by teacher-leaders, for all teachers across the grade levels within a given discipline. Over time, teachers will engage with teachers in other schools as well.

- There will be an emphasis on **active learning**, as suggested by research on adult learning. Teachers will be engaged in the meaningful analysis of teaching and learning -- for example, by scoring and analyzing student work, by developing and “perfecting” a standards-based curriculum unit, by sharing data and observing a lesson and reflecting on it, and observing classroom practice or video of practice, which will be stored and accessible in video libraries.
- The creation of **coherence** will occur by helping teachers to see connections among student content and performance standards, instructional materials, local and state assessments, school and LEA goals, and the development of a professional community.
- The active support of **school and LEA leaders is critical**. School leaders will participate in professional-development activities as appropriate, in order to be able to support the use of the new knowledge and skills by teachers.

These features imply that professional services should be a serious business, be a product of thoughtful design, and be clear and compelling. From this perspective, if provided with rich opportunities to learn and with compelling rationales for engaging in these activities, teachers who are professionals should be expected to incorporate newly-acquired knowledge and skills into their classroom practices.

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## **Delivering Curriculum-Focused and Sustained Professional Training through a Blended System**

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Relatively few LEAs are now equipped to provide the intensive curriculum-based and labor-intensive coaching, mentoring, and school-based work that is required for teachers to develop and deepen their subject-matter expertise and pedagogical-content knowledge. The Regional Centers will help equip the LEA supervisors with the knowledge they need to provide customized and targeted professional development based on specific teacher needs that are identified in the teacher’s evaluation. Participating LEAs will place a priority on assigning supervisors as content-focused instructional coaches to our neediest schools in order to bring the learning alive in the teachers’ professional communities.

Teachers and school leaders will be supported in improving their practice through face-to-face workshops, asynchronous distance learning, and virtual collaborative environments. In New Jersey’s model, professional development for educators – at any level of the organization – will be rooted in practice and in the communities in which educators work. The focus will be on how educators analyze their practice against examples of “best practices” and principles and routines of effective instruction. Instructional coaching will extend this training by providing on-site support and guidance. Ultimately, the collective work of supervisors, content-focused instructional coaches, and teacher-leaders will reduce teacher isolation, lead teachers to develop common habits of mind, and contribute to the development of a collaborative- learning community.

### **Face-to Face Professional Development for Teachers**

Face-to-face professional services will include two modes: content-focused training, and data-centric training. Instructional coaches and teacher leaders will deliver content-specific professional development through face-to-face workshops and courses. Additionally, teacher leaders, instructional coaches, and supervisors will facilitate workshops to assist teachers in analyzing formative, end-of-unit, and summative

assessment data, as well as adapting instruction based on student needs. These data-centric workshops for teachers are designed to foster a culture of data-driven decision-making throughout the school and LEA.

### **Asynchronous Distance Learning**

To extend the reach of face-to-face professional development, web-based modules will be accessible to teachers and school leaders throughout the school year, to provide ongoing support to individual teachers and teams as they roll out the concepts learned in face-to-face workshops. Online training modules will be structured around readings, discussion forums, and online conversations with colleagues and experts in the field that will address common questions and challenges that educators face. In addition, participants will have access to a library of online resources regarding the content and pedagogical routines embedded in exemplar lessons. Finally, modules will have strands for the instruction of students with disabilities, English-language-learners, and students of poverty, and will include strategies for effective instruction and assessment aligned to content standards.

### **Collaborative Real-Time Feedback by Video**

Video provides an excellent medium for teacher learning—both to view exemplar lessons and to receive feedback on personal practice. The professional-services system will include interactive video features that allow teachers to participate in virtual classrooms where they engage as learners in exemplar lessons. Teachers will also be able to upload video of their own teaching and receive feedback from teacher leaders and instructional coaches on their actual classroom practice. Video recording of classroom instruction, for feedback during or after the conclusion of the lesson, will encourage teachers to collectively observe and examine the pedagogical routines associated with particular content, and share their observations and suggestions with a larger network.

### **Instructional Coaches**

Research has shown that content-focused coaching is a professional-development model that can improve instruction and promote student achievement by supporting teachers in

delivering and reflecting on rigorous, standards-based lessons<sup>4</sup>. Such content-focused coaching helps to expand the capacity of an LEA by assisting teachers in developing their practice. In New Jersey, certificated supervisors will provide targeted, content-based professional development both onsite and through the online system. Highly-effective practicing teachers will have the opportunity to take on additional responsibilities by becoming teacher leaders who provide instructional leadership, as needed, for specific targeted content areas (e.g. algebra , Shakespeare units). Both certificated supervisors and teacher leaders will become well-versed in the pedagogy and content routines illustrated through the exemplar lessons.

In order to ensure a high degree of specialized support to teachers, schools will have access to expertise in all core content areas (English/language arts, mathematics, and science, at a minimum). New Jersey will initially train supervisors as content-focused instructional coaches in participating LEAs. After the roll-out of the state-level evaluation system, highly-effective teachers in participating LEAs may also be selected to serve as instructional coaches. Instructional coaches will be members of the school-leadership team who take an active role in improving classroom instruction and intervention by sharing their expertise through training and in-class support.

Over the next six months, New Jersey will work with the LEAs to design an efficient selection, training, distribution, and accountability system for supervisors as instructional coaches. Additionally, LEAs will work to leverage applicable intermediary educational units, statewide professional-development networks, and/or teacher unions to participate in the professional learning.

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## **BUILDING SOCIAL CAPITAL**

New Jersey proposes to develop and implement a nested learning system of classroom and school supports that will include the pedagogical, social, and structural supports

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<sup>4</sup>Matsumura, L.C. (2009)

necessary for teachers to transform their teaching in core content areas. Such a system depends upon expanding forms of human capital (teacher knowledge and skills), social capital (supportive and demanding professional communities of practice), and organizational design (learning organizations characterized by distributed leadership).

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## **Investing in Social Capital: Building Professional-Learning Communities and Emphasis on Principal Network/Administrative Coaches**

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Professional-learning communities (PLC) will build relationships across schools within the LEAs, treating school buildings as inter-related units. Accordingly, building and sustaining professional-learning communities will require LEA leadership to provide the conditions, resources, infrastructure and accountability system that will be necessary to make the PLCs successful. NJDOE will work with participating LEAs to provide time for teachers and school leaders to collaborate, identify coordinators among supervisors and teacher leaders who are skilled in both content and pedagogy, and set shared expectations for academic rigor.

The PLCs will focus on discipline-based content; therefore, the core group of participants will teach in the same academic area (e.g., English/language arts, mathematics, or science) or grade level, and relationships among PLCs will be built within content areas. In accordance with their focus on content, PLCs will be centered on the teacher-identified hardest-to-teach aspects of the grade-level curriculum (as outlined in Section B). PLCs will collaborate using virtual tools such as discussions, blogs, wikis, and shared resources, between face-to-face meetings. Teachers will also engage in organized visits through school Learning Walks, in which participants spend five-to-ten minutes in each of several classrooms looking at student work and classroom artifacts, and observing instruction through the eyes and voices of students. These Learning Walks will be part of the work of a nested learning community, and will support a recursive process of constantly improving and refining instruction through professional-development and

study. Such a design -- which builds social capital through professional communities of practice, and supports the collective review of student work -- has been correlated with higher teacher satisfaction and retention, higher student engagement, greater student commitment to learning, and higher student achievement.

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## **LEA Collaborative Networks**

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Within each participating LEA, teacher leaders will be responsible for leading a core PLC of cross-grade content-area teachers within each school. Depending on the grade level, teachers may be members of one or more content area groups. LEA curriculum specialists and Instructional Coaches will also facilitate the sharing, development, and refinement of evidence-based practice through cross-school content groups. Both teacher leaders and school leadership teams will engage in a LEA-wide collaborative network to more effectively and efficiently support and grow great teachers by carefully evaluating program implementation and results.

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## **MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS**

Classroom practice measures, analyzed in combination with interim assessments, will provide relevant and timely information to adapt professional services to meet the specific needs of teachers and students. With classroom-observation protocols and formative and interim assessment measures to capture student academic growth, we will have schools and LEAs track student performance by classroom teacher, by the quality of instruction, and by the professional development in which the teacher actively participated. Accordingly, we will have the necessary tools to engage in a rigorous review of the impact of professional services on classroom practice and the effects that practice changes have on student achievement. In the long run, it is the lessons that emerge from this holistic data set that will enable the state and the LEAs to shift attention and resources to the methods and approaches that will best help children succeed.

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## Measuring the Effectiveness of Professional Development

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Classroom-practice measures, analyzed in combination with interim assessments, will provide relevant and timely information to adapt professional services to meet the specific needs of teachers and students. This critical information will allow participating LEAs and school leaders to refine the implementation of professional-development and instructional resources to ensure that they are achieving their intended outcomes, supporting teachers, and increasing student achievement. The NJDOE will provide systems to track professional development in which teachers and school leaders are engaged, track the fidelity of their participation, and enable evaluations of services. They will also work in collaboration with participating LEAs, teachers, and national leaders to design transparent evaluations of professional services including professional-learning communities. Participating LEAs will also be expected to use effectiveness information to improve and scale professional-development programs that have proven to be successful in meeting teacher and school leader needs.

With classroom observation protocols and formative and interim assessment measures to capture student academic growth, coupled with a robust system to monitor professional development, we will have the necessary tools to engage in a rigorous review of the impact of professional services on classroom practice, and the downstream effects that practice changes have on student achievement. In the long run, it is the lessons that emerge from this holistic data set that will enable the state and LEAs to shift attention and resources to the methods and approaches that will best help children succeed.

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### **SPECIFIC ACTION STEPS**

NJDOE will take each of the following specific action steps:

- Train a cadre of highly-effective supervisors to become more highly-skilled, content-focused instructional coaches to support the collective study of lessons, student work, and students' formative-assessment data.
- Implement a blended professional-development system that couples face-to-face professional development, led by content-focused instructional coaches and teacher leaders, with asynchronous and virtual learning environments.
- By means of virtual and face-to-face environments, provide support for school leaders and teachers to learn from master teachers through real-time video, and to engage in a collaborative analysis of exemplar units' pedagogy and content.
- Provide substantive, content-focused professional-development tools and resources for school leaders and teachers on evidence-based pedagogical routines that have been demonstrated to have a large effect on student achievement.
- Develop a nimble technology platform that will support online Professional Communities of Practice and real-time knowledge-management that is responsive to student and teacher needs.
- Work with schools and LEAs to create the conditions necessary for a robust network of Professional Learning Communities, to allow for the collaboration and sharing of best practices and to grow social capital throughout the LEAs and throughout the state.
- Provide substantive, content-focused professional development to teachers and school leaders on evidence-based pedagogical routines that have been demonstrated to have a large effect on student achievement.
- By means of face-to-face and virtual environments, work with teachers to use instructionally-relevant information to support their students and select high-quality and effective instructional tools and approaches.

The NJDOE will expect participating LEAs to:

- Modify school schedules to provide common planning time by grade level and/or subject area for lesson study, collective review of student work, and review of students' formative-assessment data.

- Design and support professional-learning communities, with instructional coaches and teacher leaders, focused on disciplinary content and charged with studying, applying, and reflecting on the implementation of content tools, lesson observations, and student work.
- Evaluate professional development based on student results and changes in classroom or leadership practices.
- Create environments in which teachers and school leaders use instructionally-relevant information to alter their instruction, in order to better support their students, and to better select high-quality and effective instructional tools and approaches.

## TIMELINES

2009–10 SY		
First School Semester (September–December)	Second School Semester (January–June)	Summer Session (June–September)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Train supervisors as content-focused instructional coaches</li> </ul>
2010–11 SY		
First School Semester (September–December)	Second School Semester (January–June)	Summer Session (June–September)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supervisor/coaches convene PLCs for teachers by grade or content area in participating LEAs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roll out professional development in “hardest to teach” areas for mathematics, literacy, and science</li> <li>Implement virtual professional development tools including expanded asynchronous courses</li> <li>Content-focused supervisors and teacher leaders provide ongoing support for PLCs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop online modules to support ongoing learning and collaboration</li> </ul>
2011–12 SY		
First School Semester (September–December)	Second School Semester (January–June)	Summer Session (June–September)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pilot full evaluation system and accompanying professional development in 10-20 participating LEAs</li> <li>Work with LEAs to sustain ongoing professional learning communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing training on school leader and teacher evaluation system</li> <li>Roll out Professional development in “hardest to teach” areas for remaining grade levels and content areas</li> </ul>	
2012–13 SY		
First School Semester (September–December)	Second School Semester (January–June)	Summer Session (June–September)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Full scale implementation of evaluation system and accompanying professional development in participating LEAs</li> <li>Work with LEAs to sustain ongoing professional learning communities</li> </ul>		

2009–10 SY		
First School Semester (September–December)	Second School Semester (January–June)	Summer Session (June–September)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Train supervisors as content-focused instructional coaches</li> </ul>
2010–11 SY		
First School Semester (September–December)	Second School Semester (January–June)	Summer Session (June–September)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervisor/coaches convene PLCs for teachers by grade or content area in participating LEAs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roll out professional development in “hardest to teach” areas for mathematics, literacy, and science</li> <li>• Implement virtual professional development tools including expanded asynchronous courses</li> <li>• Content-focused supervisors and teacher leaders provide ongoing support for PLCs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop online modules to support ongoing learning and collaboration</li> </ul>
2011–12 SY		
First School Semester (September–December)	Second School Semester (January–June)	Summer Session (June–September)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pilot full evaluation system and accompanying professional development in 10-20 participating LEAs</li> <li>• Work with LEAs to sustain ongoing professional learning communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing training on school leader and teacher evaluation system</li> <li>• Roll out Professional development in “hardest to teach” areas for remaining grade levels and content areas</li> </ul>	
2012–13 SY		
First School Semester (September–December)	Second School Semester (January–June)	Summer Session (June–September)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full scale implementation of evaluation system and accompanying professional development in participating LEAs</li> <li>• Work with LEAs to sustain ongoing professional learning communities</li> </ul>		





## **SECTION E**

# **Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools (50 total points)**

## STATE REFORM CONDITIONS CRITERIA

### **(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs (10 points)**

The extent to which the State has the legal, statutory, or regulatory authority to intervene directly in the State's persistently lowest-achieving schools (as defined in this notice) and in LEAs that are in improvement or corrective action status.

*In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.*

Evidence for (E)(1):

- A description of the State's applicable laws, statutes, regulations, or other relevant legal documents.

*Recommended maximum response length: One page*

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## **INTERVENING IN THE LOWEST-ACHIEVING SCHOOLS AND LEAS**

New Jersey has the legal, statutory and regulatory authority to intervene directly in our state’s persistently lowest-achieving schools and LEAs.

In New Jersey, the Department of Education can partially or fully take over a failing school district. The New Jersey Quality Single Accountability Continuum (NJQSAC) system, as required by N.J.S.A. 18A:7A-3 et seq., establishes rules for evaluating and monitoring all public-school districts in the State. NJQSAC is designed to be a single, comprehensive accountability system that consolidates and incorporates the monitoring requirements of applicable State and Federal programs. Under NJQSAC, public-school districts are evaluated in five key component areas of school-district effectiveness— instruction and program, personnel, fiscal management, operations, and governance—to determine the extent to which public-school districts are providing a thorough and efficient education to students.

## REFORM PLAN CRITERIA

### **(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools (40 points)**

The extent to which the State has a high-quality plan and ambitious yet achievable annual targets to—

(i) Identify the persistently lowest-achieving schools (as defined in this notice) and, at its discretion, any non-Title I eligible secondary schools that would be considered persistently lowest-achieving schools (as defined in this notice) if they were eligible to receive Title I funds; and (5 points)

(ii) Support its LEAs in turning around these schools by implementing one of the four school intervention models (as described in Appendix C): turnaround model, restart model, school closure, or transformation model (provided that an LEA with more than nine persistently lowest-achieving schools may not use the transformation model for more than 50 percent of its schools). (35 points)

*The State shall provide its detailed plan for this criterion in the text box below. The plan should include, at a minimum, the goals, activities, timelines, and responsible parties (see Reform Plan Criteria elements in Application Instructions or Section XII, Application Requirements (e), for further detail). In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.*

Evidence for (E)(2) (please fill in table below):

- The State's historic performance on school turnaround, as evidenced by the total number of persistently lowest-achieving schools (as defined in this notice) that States or LEAs attempted to turn around in the last five years, the approach used, and the results and lessons learned to date.

*Recommended maximum response length: Eight pages*

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## Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

- Accelerate student achievement by building LEA capacity to support struggling schools.
- Implement comprehensive and substantive interventions that address the schools’ root causes of low performance coupled with closely monitoring implementation fidelity.
- Recognize that struggling schools are part of a struggling community.
- Create a school renewal zone for cross-district collaboration and alignment of cross-service programs.

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### (i) IDENTIFICATION OF PERSISTENTLY LOWEST-ACHIEVING SCHOOLS

New Jersey has identified the persistently lowest-achieving schools using the RTTT definitions and the list of schools, as well as the methodology we used when we identified these schools, is in the Appendix to (E)(i). Based on the three most recent years of assessment results, New Jersey identified 18 Title I schools on the TIER I LIST and five TIER II schools, as well as six schools with unacceptable graduation rates, for a total of 29 schools.

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### New Jersey History

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New Jersey has a rich history of experience and achievement in turning around the lowest-achieving schools. Our state monitoring system (NJ QSAC) and our Comprehensive State System of School Support, together with a variety of local and statewide initiatives, have contributed to turning around schools and have impacted outcomes for thousands of students who might not otherwise have had the opportunities

to succeed in work, college, and life. The chart of historic performance is in the Appendix as evidence for (E)(2).

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## **(i) (ii) ANALYSIS OF PERSISTENTLY LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS**

Not all low-performing schools are the same, and the reasons for consistently low performance are just as varied. To systemically identify those schools most in need of intensive intervention and support, New Jersey has followed the U.S. Department of Education Guidance which identifies the lowest-achieving schools based on the academic achievement of the “all students” group and the school’s lack of progress on those assessments over three years in the “all students” group. RTTT allows states to identify high schools that have graduation rates of 60% or less using the four-year cohort graduation model. Since New Jersey will implement the four-year cohort next year, the State designed an alternative method.

The interventions for the lowest-performing schools will be designed to address the school-specific root causes. School performance can be affected by many factors including: the learning climate, instructional rigor, student and staff mobility, school management, alignment of LEA curriculum, and LEA policy. For each low-performing school, a needs-assessment review team will be assigned within 15 days to review past reports. This state-funded team, managed by NJDOE, will include outside experts in the areas of academic content, leadership, and school culture. The NJDOE will initiate a school-climate study to evaluate multiple dimensions of school climate, including perceptions of students, teachers, and parents; attendance data; disciplinary referrals, and suspension data. The NJDOE will develop or select a climate-survey and data-analysis guide for use by June 2010.

The Needs Assessment Review Team’s (TEAM) analysis will inform the LEAs’ selection from the four options outlined by the U.S. Department of Education in both Race to the Top and School Improvement Grants under Title I of the Elementary and

Secondary Education Act. The TEAM recommendation will also carefully consider the LEAs' capacity to implement the selected option. Before selecting from the four options, the commissioner will conduct an inventory of space in participating LEAs with a persistently low-performing school to identify opportunities for the consolidation and reallocation of space for more efficient use by the LEA and to determine if space can be made available for charter schools. With declining enrollment in several of our urban centers, LEAs will need to consider ways in which to offer existing facilities for charter schools, magnet schools, or specialty academies. The commissioner's review of the efficient use of facilities and space in the LEA will also consider recommendations for consolidation to allow for successful charter school management organizations (CMOs) to open new schools consistent with the Charter School Program Act, N.J.S.A. 18A:36A-1 et seq., by providing access to underutilized school facilities.

Whichever model is selected, the NTO will work with the principal and LEA staff to present a viable intervention plan to the NJDOE within 45 days. The NTO will ensure the integration of federal programs and funding into the intervention plan, linking the support from School Improvement Grants under Title I of ESEA with efforts under Race to the Top. NJDOE's review of the intervention plans will take into account the evidence-base of the intervention programs and the coordination of federal programs. If the plan is approved by NJDOE, it will take effect immediately. If it is not approved, the LEA will be given specific recommendations and feedback, and will continue to work with the NTO for another 15 days to revise the plan. Failure to receive NJDOE approval a second time will result in immediate intervention by a state officer.

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## **(ii)TURNING AROUND THE LOWEST-PERFORMING SCHOOLS IN NEW JERSEY**

Chronically low-performing schools need intensive support to bring about significant changes in school operations and classroom practice.<sup>1</sup> Persistently low-performing

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<sup>1</sup> Turnaround Challenge, MassInsight, 2007.

schools will institute comprehensive, evidence-based reform designed to dramatically accelerate student achievement that integrates with the content-focused professional development, learning communities, and instructional-improvement services outlined throughout this proposal. State-required and state-supported interventions will include a complete curriculum review, and additional instructional time in the form of a longer school day and/or year coupled with additional compensation for teachers, locally negotiated as necessary. Content-based staff-development programs will be designed on the model of the current successful pilot in physics (the Progressive Science Initiative: Teaching Certificate Endorsement in Physics, described in Section (D)(3) and Appendix II)<sup>2</sup> and will provide intensive expert instruction for teachers in the skills necessary to teach a specific course. In addition, all schools will be expected to build on the comprehensive community-intervention strategies recommended by The New Jersey High School Graduation Campaign report, which recognizes that struggling schools are part of struggling communities (attached in Appendix II). The Network Turnaround Officer (NTO), reporting to the superintendent, will serve as an instructional leader and administrative advisor to the school leader, and will be responsible for monitoring the school’s progress against measurable benchmarks.

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## **Instructional Focus**

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The reform efforts in recruitment and retention, outlined in the Great Teachers and Leaders section, will be clearly implemented in persistently-low-performing schools, as well as the instructional-improvement tools outlined in the standards-and-assessment and data-systems sections. The Needs Assessment Review Team will conduct a comprehensive curriculum audit to ensure that the school’s curricula are aligned to state content standards and to review the fidelity of their implementation in the classroom. Where necessary, consistently-low-performing schools will be directed to adopt the

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2 This refers to the Progressive Science Initiative – more detail can be found in APPENDIX II.

Curriculum and Assessment Spine (discussed in (B)(3)), consisting of exemplar units and lessons that embed the content and pedagogical routines necessary to change classroom practice and increase student achievement. Closely aligned with state content standards, this expanded set of exemplar lessons and units will cover much of the school year and will be supported by a formative-assessment system that is designed to assist teachers in the customization of instruction to meet their students’ specific academic needs.

A team of supervisors, content-focused instructional coaches if needed, and effective teacher leaders<sup>3</sup>, assigned by the LEA, will assist teachers and school leaders in analyzing formative-assessment data, selecting customized, comprehensive instructional interventions that meet the academic needs of individual students, and continuously monitoring student progress towards proficiency. This team of content-focused instructional leaders will support and maintain professional learning communities, and target and adapt professional development in response to specific teacher needs and the instructional demand of the content, in exemplar lessons throughout the school year. At its heart, this work will drive a data-based culture within the school and foster professional communities of practice. This focus on a coherent curriculum with regular opportunities for teachers to continuously improve their instruction has been demonstrated to have the most impact on student achievement.<sup>4</sup>

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## **Transformational Operating Authority Program**

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All principals managing a persistently low-performing school will be given Transformational Operating Authority. Under this program, principals will make direct recommendations for hiring to the superintendent<sup>5</sup> as well as a recommendation to the

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3 Outlined in section (D)(5)

4 Schmoker, 2006; Marzano, 2003.

5 Note that local board of education makes hiring and firing decisions in New Jersey – operating within the context of existing statute and regulations.

superintendent to seek reassignment for any teacher who is not performing satisfactorily per the standardized teacher evaluations within the negotiated contract terms. The principal shall also have the authority to set the schedule and allocate the budget for his/her own school, as long as all federal, state and LEA requirements are met, along with other requirements specified in the school-intervention model.

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## **Network Turnaround Officer (NTO)**

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The NTO will play a critical role in turning around those struggling schools in his/her network. As a facilitator of reform, the NTO will be responsible for initiating improvements in classroom instruction by helping to incorporate research-based practices to identify solutions to problems with student learning. In collaboration with the school principal, the NTO will set a clear pathway toward distributed leadership within the schools, working with a highly-capable team to build a cohesive, professional teaching culture. The NTO will also help the principal develop his/her turnaround management skills. As an evaluator, the NTO will monitor the schools' adherence to the intervention plan and tracking performance metrics, including academic achievement , against quantifiable plan objectives. Finally, the NTO will ensure the integration of the School Improvement Grants and Race to the Top programs.

NJDOE will conduct a nation-wide selection process to find candidates who are outstanding and highly-skilled school leaders. NJDOE will develop an NTO Job Description and post notices regarding applications for the position within three months of a successful award. Once a pool of qualified candidates is collected, LEAs will select and hire an NTO from the state-developed list. The state will fund 100% of the NTO's compensation in the first two years, 65% in the third year, and 30% in the final year before the LEA takes full responsibility through LEA-directed RTTT funds. The NTO contract with the LEA will be renewed on an annual basis, depending upon progress as determined by the LEA, and the state and districts will be able to re-assign the NTO to other low-performing schools as the changes begin to take root in the original schools.

The state will also encourage and support LEAs to find alternative methods of funding these key positions.

The State will create LEA networks comprised of 3-5 schools, taking into account geographic factors, each school’s root causes of low performance, and school context. The LEA superintendents within networks will convene to determine the NTO selection. The state will act in an advisory capacity with regard to NTO placement. In some cases, all the schools will be located in one district, while in others, the NTO will serve schools in multiple districts and will be responsible for coordinating operations across the LEAs in which the schools reside. In these cases, New Jersey’s long history with shared services among LEAs will be a strong foundation on which to build. The NTO will support the cross-LEA relationships necessary to build a collaborative work group among the LEA superintendents and school leaders. The LEA superintendent(s) will evaluate the NTO on the basis of the school’s success in meeting its goals, the results of the state audit report, and the implementation fidelity of school-improvement interventions.

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## **Extended Teaching and Learning Time**

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The time available for learning is a resource that has been found – just as financial support, instructional materials, and teacher expertise are -- to be essential for learning. Even in high-performing schools, students would benefit from additional learning time, and teachers would benefit from more time to collaborate and reflect on their instructional practice. One key difference in the use of school time in high-achieving nations, in contrast to its use in the United States, is the amount of in-school time used for teacher planning and professional development. In European and Asian nations with strong student performance, teachers spend about 15 to 25 hours per week—between 40% and 60% of their total work time—collaborating on curriculum development, lesson

study, action research on instructional outcomes, and professional development.<sup>6</sup> By contrast, U.S. teachers typically receive only about 3 to 5 hours weekly in which to plan by themselves, with little opportunity to share knowledge or to improve their practice. The need for collaborative planning time is particularly acute in the persistently-low-achieving schools identified by the state. To address this need, persistently-low-achieving schools will provide an additional 5% of school time for teachers to collaborate, engage in professional development, and review student work. This additional time for teachers will allow for adequate time for regular, frequent faculty meetings to discuss individual students' progress and school-wide efforts. Time for high-leverage teacher collaboration around curriculum and instruction will translate into improvements in the quality of students' instructional time.

Coupled with this time for teachers, will be an additional 15% of extended learning time for instructional support for students and students' direct contact with their teachers. This extended learning time is geared specifically for students, to reinforce instructional opportunities that lead to greater academic achievement for them and for the school in the aggregate. Research shows that when additional time is part of an overall strategy for improving school performance that includes significantly better instruction, powerful gains can be made in student achievement<sup>7</sup>. Additionally, this extra time provides an opportunity for students to engage in the types of experiential learning that exemplify successful afterschool programs and provide a direct link to the instruction received during the school day. Schools may choose to institute student supports such as academic coaching connected with jobs or sports teams, to provide personalized academic and non-academic support services and to address students' social and emotional needs. Students can also study subjects more deeply or study subjects that may not be taught during the regular school year, such as computer programming, math, science, or engineering. In general, extended learning time for students that is aligned with the school's curriculum,

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<sup>6</sup> Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). (2008). *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators*, 2007. Paris: OECD; Wei, R.C., Andree, A., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2009) How nations invest in teachers. *Educational Leadership*, 66(5), 22-38.

<sup>7</sup> Berliner, D. (1990). What's all the fuss about instructional time? In M. Ben-Peretz & B. Bromme (Eds.), *Time in schools*. New York: Teachers College Press.

features smaller class sizes, offers more one-to-one tutoring or individualized instruction and, if possible, can be tied to some form of parent involvement, will be an effective and efficient use of time as a resource to accelerate student achievement.

School leaders may add 20% teaching and learning time on a daily, weekly, summer and/or annual basis. Teachers will receive additional compensation for the longer school day and school year, as negotiated by the LEA. For schools with existing programs that meet these requirements, NJDOE will consider the LEAs' request to maintain these programs or expand them based on the evidence of their demonstrable impact on student achievement.

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## **Professional Development**

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The integration of successful instructional professional-development activities is essential. The school-intervention plan must re-evaluate all instructional and professional-development programs currently impacting the school, and must demonstrate how these programs are improving instructional practice and academic achievement. Programs implemented for more than two years without a demonstrable impact on student achievement or instructional practice will be eliminated.

During the annual review and revision of the teacher-professional-improvement plan, the principal will include targeted professional development to address areas of need that are identified in the school analysis and that align with the school's intervention plan. The teacher-professional-improvement plan will be crafted to ensure that it addresses not only the goals of the teaching professional, but also the needs of the students, as well as the school climate. The NTO, content-focused supervisors, and lead teachers will provide onsite services for teachers in persistently-low-performing schools to foster professional learning communities and support adapting instruction to student needs. The virtual platform outlined in the Data Systems section will provide a web-based community to teachers and school leaders who are facing common challenges in persistently-low-performing schools and disseminate successful practices. The fidelity by which the

principal offers high-quality and targeted professional-development opportunities and the fidelity by which teachers engage in these professional services will be part of the annual evaluation outlined in the Great Teachers and Leaders section for tenured and non-tenured teaching staff. When the climate survey identifies elements common to entire schools within groups of participating LEAs, New Jersey will work with the LEA and the NTO to provide combined relevant professional-development opportunities that are customized for the two groups. This aspect of teacher professional development will be woven into the professional-development-planning process within the first six months of a successful award.

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## **Leadership Academy**

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Research suggests that principals and superintendents have a greater impact on student learning than any other factor except the quality of classroom instruction.<sup>8</sup> Principals can profoundly influence student achievement by working with teachers to shape a school environment that is conducive to learning; aligning instruction with a standards-based curriculum; organizing resources to improve classroom instruction and student learning; and making good decisions about hiring, professional learning, and other issues that influence the quality of teaching.

Whether the principal is new or retained, substantial and sustained professional development is necessary to develop the new skills that will assist the principal in effecting dramatic change in the level of student achievement. Working in conjunction with those cutting-edge institutions of higher education and other educational entities that are breaking the mold to support turnaround, and with transformational school leaders, the NJDOE will establish a leadership academy to train new and veteran principals. This academy will deliver training during a three-week intensive summer program on such topics as effective use of curriculum and instructional tools, instructional leadership skills, fostering professional learning communities, motivating staff and students, and

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<sup>8</sup> Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004

using data to inform management decisions. This professional-learning community will also serve as a resource to principals to problem-solve and share successful interventions.

The academy will prepare the school-turnaround principal to leverage this unprecedented operational flexibility (including flexibility regarding staffing, calendars/time, and budgeting) in ways that have been proven to build a school culture that is focused on improving the academic achievement of its students, and, as the culture changes, to fill open positions in the school based on candidates' qualifications. The principal will also be given the maximum amount of flexibility in federal, state, and local funding sources to enable the school to pursue evidence-based school improvement.

The training sessions will be integrated with NTOs and LEA superintendents to assure a shared vision and coherent implementation. The formal "networks" for both principals and superintendents will be reconvened semiannually to ensure that the collaborative network is supported throughout the school year.

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## **School Innovation and Renewal Zones**

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School Innovation and Renewal Zones will be created in order to allow more focused community attention where there are clusters of consistently-low-performing schools. When within the School Innovation Renewal Zone, persistently-low-performing schools will receive priority for various federal and state funding sources targeted to schools identified for improvement, and will be given the maximum flexibility in the use of federal, state, and district funds and regulations to implement the turnaround initiative (consistent with the transferability provisions of Title VI of ESEA). With the maximum amount of flexibility allowable, these schools will be able to share and disseminate promising practices across LEA boundaries. Schools will be a central agent for innovation and change in these zones.

Under the New Jersey Education Code, school districts may petition for waiver or an equivalency of Education Code mandates or administrative rules. The NJDOE will work

with participating districts with persistently-low-performing schools to use the waiver or equivalency to remove barriers to interventions plans. Participating LEAs and their local school boards and teachers' unions will engage in focused efforts to address any limitations on intervention-plan implementation to the maximum extent possible. Specifically, the LEA and its teachers' union may address the collective bargaining framework to apply the people, programs, time, resources, and compensation to support the school's intervention plan.

## **Community Engagement**

Supporting the engagement of stakeholders from the community is a critical aspect of the School Innovation Renewal Zone, since a school is often the anchor of a community. The School Renewal Zones will build on the work of the High School Graduation Campaign Forging New Jersey's Cradle to College & Workforce Pipeline for All Children<sup>9</sup> and will work to: ensure strong student/adult relationships within the school and community; maximize parent and family engagement; and make schools and classrooms places where children want to be, where they feel safe, and where their minds are fully engaged.

Each school will translate these practices into a comprehensive program to create a cadre of organizations, individuals, and other interested parties to support the school in its efforts to transform education for its students. Local businesses, higher education institutions, municipal leaders, community-based organizational resources, and interested stakeholders are vital to changing outcomes for students, as evidenced by the work of the Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ) and similar programs around the country. New Jersey is the only state to date with which the HCZ has agreed to work – launching programs in Newark and in Camden. Similar programs are under consideration in other New Jersey high-need communities to create "Promise Neighborhoods." By focusing on the children, we hope to facilitate the development of healthier, more stable neighborhoods and communities, ones that support and nurture children's success. The state will foster state-

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<sup>9</sup>The New Jersey High School Graduation Campaign, Forging New Jersey's Cradle to College & Workforce Pipeline for All Children – Year One, Preliminary Findings and Proposed Plan for Action.

level interagency coordination and collaboration to help promote local partnerships that maximize local assets to help transform the school and the community.

New Jersey State partners also have worked together on several new initiatives, such as the statewide truancy-prevention pilot initiative in Asbury Park, Camden, Newark, Paterson, Trenton and Vineland.

## **Integration Across Services**

New Jersey recognizes that struggling schools are part of struggling communities, and that the pathway to a successful intervention in persistently-low-performing schools often entails cooperation with organizations and agencies outside of the school building. School leaders and NTOs will have access to cross-service data on students in their schools in a manner that maintains student privacy. New Jersey will also roll out cross-service support to school leaders and NTOs. Participating LEAs will be expected to collaborate closely with their municipalities on issues of housing, health services, and job-creation programs. Such collaboration creates its own set of incentives by identifying efficiencies that enable schools to better utilize staff and leverage cross-service resources. New Jersey will pilot this cross-service integration with selected participating LEAs, starting with those that have elected to establish School Renewal Zones. New Jersey will engage the support of institutions of higher education and national experts in selecting, implementing, and evaluating these reform efforts. New Jersey will also encourage LEAs to engage in broad community participation and support, to ensure a complete integration across services.

## **Early Childhood Education**

Building on the earlier work in the office of Early Childhood Education and the Abbott preschool program, the NJDOE will work to ensure early and successful starts for all children. New Jersey will allocate \$10M of its RTTT award to supplement Preschool Aid in districts that did not have the benefit of the Abbott v. Burke preschool mandates. With this support, districts and schools can ensure that more students are benefiting from high-quality, developmentally-appropriate early-childhood education and full-day kindergarten. The LEAs will be required to provide the additional support necessary to

make certain that all students are reading and performing math at grade level by the third grade. Corresponding support strategies will include heavy emphasis on parent engagement and education in the early years, as well as one-on-one tutoring for students in need of extra support. There appears to be consensus that an early and strong start for children may be the best indicator of whether they will later fall behind and, as a consequence, will be at greater risk of dropping out of school.

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## **ENSURING SUCCESS: IMPLEMENTATION FIDELITY AND PROGRESS REVIEW**

In persistently-low-performing schools, high expectations must be established for both students and adults in the building, individually and collectively. The schools’ progress on specific incremental measurable and attainable benchmarks must be closely monitored by the LEA, the NTO and the NJDOE, to ensure the success of these efforts. LEAs will be required to develop rigorous and transparent criteria for schools to demonstrate progress sufficient for them to continue their reform efforts. These measureable benchmarks will be part of the school intervention plan, and thus will be subject to review and approval by NJDOE. In the absence of sufficient progress, the state will take action to close the school and will ensure that students are enrolled in a higher-achieving school in the district. LEAs will be required to develop rigorous and transparent criteria for schools to demonstrate progress sufficient for them to continue their reform efforts. The NJDOE will also encourage LEAs to use funds from multiple state and federal sources to sustain the reform beyond the life of this work.

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### **Implementation Audit**

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On an annual basis, the NJDOE will conduct an external implementation audit of curriculum, academic growth, school climate, teacher evaluations, and accompanying targeted professional development. The report will address all areas of the intervention and explicitly report on progress against the quantifiable benchmarks of the intervention plan. These annual audits of each persistently-low-performing school will include constructive feedback and recommendations for program improvements, as appropriate. In the absence of sufficient progress or lack of implementation fidelity, the audit will include a recommendation for school closure/reconstitution. The results of this audit will be reported publicly and will serve as part of the evaluation of the Network Turnaround Officer. Finally, these audits will be submitted to the local district and reviewed and discussed locally.

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## **Exiting from Persistently-Low-Performing Status**

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A school that successfully turns around academic performance and is no longer considered persistently-low-performing will continue to receive intervention services for up to two years. Services to ensure sustained success will include the NTO’s working with the principal to design and implement personalized professional-development plans for teachers, continued support from content-focused supervisors, and continued access to cross-service integration supports. NJDOE is committed to ensuring that the environment that led to the turnaround continues. Too often, a school that begins to show progress is not able to sustain the acceleration of academic achievement without continued support.

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## **Restart and Closure**

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If a persistently-low-performing school selects either Transformation or Turnaround, it will have up to three years in which to demonstrate measurable progress in academic achievement and graduation rates. In the absence of sufficient progress during any of the



2009–10 SY		
First School Semester (September–December)	Second School Semester (January–June)	Summer Session (June–September)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct climate survey (June)</li> <li>• Needs Assessment Review Team identifies root causes of low-performance</li> <li>• LEA reviews efficient use of facilities</li> <li>• LEA, with Needs Assessment Review Team, selects intervention option under RTTT guidance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Select &amp; train Network Turnaround Officers</li> <li>• Leadership Academy (August)</li> <li>• Curriculum Audit</li> <li>• LEA with NTO and principal design intervention plan with measurable incremental benchmarks and submit to NJDOE for approval.</li> <li>• SEA approves or requires revision of LEA intervention plan.</li> </ul>
2010–11 SY		
First School Semester (September–December)	Second School Semester (January–June)	Summer Session (June–September)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intensive face-to-face professional development on Curriculum and Assessment Spine</li> <li>• Develop personalized professional development plans based on teacher and student needs</li> <li>• Implement intervention plans and monitor progress on incremental benchmarks</li> <li>• Schedule extended learning time &amp; accompanying compensation for teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement intervention plans and monitor progress on incremental benchmarks</li> <li>• Ongoing intensive content-focused and team-based professional development on instructional practice and acting on formative data.</li> <li>• Select pilot LEAs for expanded community engagement support and cross-service integration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SEAs conducts implementation fidelity audit, makes recommendations, and publishes report</li> <li>• LEAs, in collaboration with the SEA, evaluate Network Turnaround Officers</li> <li>• Leadership Academy (August)</li> </ul>
2011–12 SY		
First School Semester (September–December)	Second School Semester (January–June)	Summer Session (June–September)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pilot cross-service integration</li> <li>• Ongoing intensive content-focused and team-based professional development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing interventions for struggling schools</li> <li>• Monitor progress on incremental benchmarks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SEAs conducts implementation fidelity audit, makes recommendations, and publishes report</li> <li>• LEAs, in collaboration with the SEA, evaluate Network Turnaround Officers</li> <li>• Leadership Academy (August)</li> </ul>

continue...

2012–13 SY		
First School Semester (September–December)	Second School Semester (January–June)	Summer Session (June–September)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full implementation of cross-service integration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing intensive content-focused and team-based professional development</li> <li>• Monitor progress on incremental benchmarks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SEAs conducts implementation fidelity audit, makes recommendations, and publishes report</li> <li>• LEAs, in collaboration with the SEA, evaluate Network Turnaround Officers</li> <li>• Leadership Academy (August)</li> </ul>

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## EVIDENCE

This is a report of the 122 schools that have been in restructuring status since 2004-05. Based on the NCLB requirements, these schools were required to implement one of the federal sanctions consistent with state law. They implemented one of the following: conversion to charter, replace all or most of the staff, or implement any major governance restructuring (which could have included replacing the principal). It is worth noting that 83 of the original cohort of identified schools have exited restructuring because of their progress. Another 35 will exit status this year if they continue to show gains.

**Evidence:**

Approach Used	# of Schools Since SY2004-05	Results and Lessons Learned
Closure	1	Closure is less likely to occur than a reconfiguration of the grade spans within the school.
Charter Conversion	0	Districts need information and assistance regarding the steps and process to convert a school to a district- operated charter school.
Major governance restructuring	120	<p>Our key lessons learned from the governance restructuring model include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District decision-makers should not be permitted to re-circulate principals among restructured schools.</li> <li>• Programs must be coupled with implementation fidelity and specific accountability to teachers and leaders, and engagement of stakeholders.</li> <li>• Recommendations must be developed in collaboration with district staff and implemented with fidelity for positive changes.</li> <li>• Technical assistance through workshops and modeling is key to creating change.</li> <li>• Schools and districts continue to add new programs and include numerous ineffective programs in their plans, rather than focusing on strengthening existing programs with potential for success and discontinuing programs that are clearly ineffective</li> <li>• Focusing on school climate in a systematic manner in a school stimulates positive change in conduct policies, staff and student climate, evaluation of existing efforts and access to partnering with community agencies for funding opportunities.</li> </ul>
Replace all or most of the staff	1	

To complement the turnaround approaches described above, New Jersey has also developed and implemented a state system of support for struggling schools which is described in the Appendix I, Section (E)(2).

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## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

We do not know which plan each of the 29 schools identified as persistently-low-achieving as part of this application, will select. Based on our experience over the past five years, we are predicting the following distribution of turnaround models:

Model	End of SY 2010-2011	End of SY 2011-2012	End of SY 2012-2013	End of SY 2013-2014
Closure	0	0	3	3
Charter	2	4	4	4
Transformation	27	22	15	0
Turnaround	0	3	2	0
Exit in need of improvement status	0	0	5	10

Our plan includes the requirement that a school must determine its intervention model and present the plan to the state after

the visit and findings from the Needs Assessment Review Team. We will follow this cohort of schools throughout the four years, but will adjust the projection for intervention strategies as schools exit, show improvement, and require fewer interventions. As new schools are categorically identified on an annual basis, they will be considered for inclusion and proposed in our annual report to ED.



# **SECTION F**

**General**  
**(55 total points)**

## State Reform Conditions Criteria

### **(F)(1) Making education funding a priority (10 points)**

The extent to which—

(i) The percentage of the total revenues available to the State (as defined in this notice) that were used to support elementary, secondary, and public higher education for FY 2009 was greater than or equal to the percentage of the total revenues available to the State (as defined in this notice) that were used to support elementary, secondary, and public higher education for FY 2008; and

(ii) The State's policies lead to equitable funding (a) between high-need LEAs (as defined in this notice) and other LEAs, and (b) within LEAs, between high-poverty schools (as defined in this notice) and other schools.

*In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.*

Evidence for (F)(1)(i):

- Financial data to show whether and to what extent expenditures, as a percentage of the total revenues available to the State (as defined in this notice), increased, decreased, or remained the same.

Evidence for (F)(1)(ii):

- Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers.

*Recommended maximum response length: Three pages*

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## **(i) EDUCATION SPENDING AS A PERCENTAGE OF STATE SPENDING**

New Jersey increased its percentage of spending on education from 36.9% in 2008 to 39.6% in 2009. Nominal education appropriations decreased by 4.7%, from \$12.0B to \$11.5B, a decline that was smaller than the 11.3% decline in total State appropriations from \$32.6B to \$28.9B.

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## **(ii) EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF STATE FUNDS**

The School Funding Reform Act of 2008 (SFRA) represents the first comprehensive New Jersey school-funding system in decades to receive judicial approval as an equitable funding mechanism. The new formula provides the most generous resources in the nation for children at risk. For more than 30 years, New Jersey’s school funding was comprised of piecemeal legislative efforts and numerous court directives in an effort to distribute state funds equitably to local school LEAs. The SFRA is the culmination of, and answer to, funding-equity questions that have surrounded the state since the 1970’s.

The SFRA includes two types of state aid: wealth-equalized and categorical. Wealth-equalized aid is allocated according to each LEA’s ability to raise enough local revenue to support its adequacy budget (as defined below). The equalization formula used in New Jersey considers both a community’s property wealth (measured by equalized property valuation) and its aggregate income to determine the local ability to pay. This formula ensures that those LEAs with a lower ability to raise a local tax levy receive more state support, and vice-versa. In contrast, categorical aid is allocated regardless of a LEA’s wealth. Categorical amounts are generally determined by multiplying the cost factor for a particular category by the number of students who qualify for the aid.

## **Adequacy Budget**

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The adequacy budget is the State’s estimate of the cost for providing a thorough and efficient education to all students in each LEA, given individual student and LEA characteristics. The costs are based on a model LEA that was developed by panelists drawn predominantly from school LEAs, and that was extensively reviewed by stakeholders and experts in education finance. The adequacy budget is primarily funded through equalization aid, and includes most (but not all) of the costs of operating a school LEA. As noted above, there are additional state-aid categories provided through categorical funding.

## **Weighting for Student Needs**

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The calculation of the adequacy budget begins with a base cost that is applied to all students, and incorporates additional costs for resources associated with higher grade levels and students’ special needs. For FY 2010, the base cost per elementary pupil (grades K-5) is \$9,971 and all weights are relative to this amount. Students in grades 6-8 generate a cost that is 4% higher than the base cost, while students in grades 9-12 and county vocational LEAs generate costs that are 17% and 31% higher, respectively. There is also a weight for students who are at-risk, defined as those who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches according to federal guidelines (which require family income below 185% of the federal poverty level). Every at-risk student receives an additional weight of at least 0.47 (47% more than the base cost), but the weight increases for these students as the LEA’s at-risk-student concentration increases. The weight ranges from 0.47 (for LEAs with an at-risk-student concentration of 20% or less) up to a maximum of 0.57 (at-risk-student concentration at or above 60%). Finally, the weight for limited-English-proficient (LEP) students is 0.5, except where the student is also at-risk. For these “combination students” (LEP and at-risk), an LEP weight of 0.125 is added to the at-risk weight. The LEP weight is reduced, in these cases, to account for the overlap in

the resources specified for at-risk and LEP students, such as afterschool and summer-school programs. The application of these additional weights in the calculation of the adequacy budget ensures that LEAs with higher concentrations of low-income and LEP students receive additional state aid.

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## **Special Education**

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A portion of special education is also included in the adequacy budget. Rather than applying a weight to each classified student, special education is funded through a “census-based” method. Using this approach, special-education costs are estimated by multiplying the State’s average “excess cost” for special-education students by the State’s average classification rate, which is then multiplied by the LEA’s total enrollment. For FY 2010, the excess cost used for special-education students is \$11,262 and the average classification rate used is 14.69%. Two-thirds of the census funding is included in the LEA’s adequacy budget (to be distributed through equalization aid), while the remaining one-third is distributed as categorical aid. The adequacy budget also includes the entire census-based cost for speech. For FY 2010, the excess cost used for speech is \$1,118 and the average classification rate is 1.897%.

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

The extent to which—

(i) The State has a charter school law that does not prohibit or effectively inhibit increasing the number of high-performing charter schools (as defined in this notice) in the State, measured (as set forth in Appendix B) by the percentage of total schools in the State that are allowed to be charter schools or otherwise restrict student enrollment in charter schools;

(ii) The State has laws, statutes, regulations, or guidelines regarding how charter school authorizers approve, monitor, hold accountable, reauthorize, and close charter schools; in particular, whether authorizers require that student achievement (as defined in this notice) be one significant factor, among others, in authorization or renewal; encourage charter schools that serve student populations that are similar to local district student populations, especially relative to high-need students (as defined in this notice); and have closed or not renewed ineffective charter schools;

(iii) The State’s charter schools receive (as set forth in Appendix B) equitable funding compared to traditional public schools, and a commensurate share of local, State, and Federal revenues;

(iv) The State provides charter schools with funding for facilities (for leasing facilities, purchasing facilities, or making tenant improvements), assistance with facilities acquisition, access to public facilities, the ability to share in bonds and mill levies, or other supports; and the extent to which the State does not impose any facility-related requirements on charter schools that are stricter than those applied to traditional public schools; and

(v) The State enables LEAs to operate innovative, autonomous public schools (as defined in this notice) other than charter schools.

*In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State’s success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.*

Evidence for (F)(2)(i):

- A description of the State’s applicable laws, statutes, regulations, or other relevant legal documents.
- The number of charter schools allowed under State law and the percentage this represents of the total number of schools in the State.
- The number and types of charter schools currently operating in the State.

Evidence for (F)(2)(ii):

- A description of the State’s approach to charter school accountability and authorization, and a description of the State’s applicable laws, statutes, regulations, or other relevant legal documents.
- For each of the last five years:
  - The number of charter school applications made in the State.
  - The number of charter school applications approved.
  - The number of charter school applications denied and reasons for the denials (academic, financial, low enrollment, other).
  - The number of charter schools closed (including charter schools that were not reauthorized to operate).

Evidence for (F)(2)(iii):

- A description of the State’s applicable statutes, regulations, or other relevant legal documents.
- A description of the State’s approach to charter school funding, the amount of funding passed through to charter schools per student, and how those amounts compare with traditional public school per-student funding allocations.

Evidence for (F)(2)(iv):

- A description of the State’s applicable statutes, regulations, or other relevant legal documents.
- A description of the statewide facilities supports provided to charter schools, if any.

Evidence for (F)(2)(v):

- A description of how the State enables LEAs to operate innovative, autonomous public schools (as defined in this notice) other than charter schools.

*Recommended maximum response length: Six pages*



## **(i) LAWS REGARDING LIMITS ON THE NUMBER OF CHARTER SCHOOLS**

When New Jersey’s charter statutes were initially adopted in 1995, the number of charter schools to be established was capped at 135 for the subsequent 48 months (18A:36A-3b). The size of any charter school was also capped for the following 48 months at the lesser of 500 students or 25% of the student body in the LEA (18A:36A-4e). Since January 11, 2000, when the four-year period expired, there are no longer any caps on either the number of charter schools in the state or the size of any individual charter school.

As of December 31, 2009, there were 68 charter schools opened and operating in New Jersey, categorized by grade ranges as follows:

Elementary	Middle	High	K-12	Total
46	8	8	6	68

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## (ii) CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZATION AND MONITORING

Since charter legislation was adopted by New Jersey in 1995, the DOE has received 365 charter-school applications, of which 111 were approved and five denied. The balance (249 applications) were either withdrawn or never completed. From the 111 charters approved, 105 schools were opened. Thirty-seven of these have since been closed by charter revocation, charter surrenders, withdrawal, or non-renewal. The table below summarizes New Jersey’s charter school activity over the past five years:

**New Jersey Charter School Activity Since 2005-2006 School Year**

Academic Year	Applications	Approvals	Denials	Opened <sup>1</sup>	Closed
2005-2006	25	6	0	4	2
2006-2007	30	6	0	6	7
2007-2008	24	1	0	6	3
2008-2009	25	6	0	6	0
2009-2010	40	11	0	6	1

The large number of application withdrawals or non-completions in earlier years was attributable to the relative inexperience of applicants, many of whom were unable to raise sufficient funds and secure facilities between approval and the planned opening. The authorization of a charter school in New Jersey is a two-step process: 1.) Interested parties must submit an application and budget for approval, and 2.) the NJDOE then

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<sup>1</sup> Existing charter schools with clear evidence of success can open an additional campus without reapplying for a new charter. The Opened category applies to both new schools and campuses.

offers a final grant of a charter after a walk-through of the facility and submission of requisite opening documentation, such as a record of enrollment. In more recent years, as charter-school operators gained experience, they were much better prepared to open within 12-18 months of approval, resulting in a closer match between number of approvals and number of openings in a given year after adjusting for the typical 12-month lag between the two. The number of approvals dropped from an average of six per year to one in 2007-2008, because several experienced charter operators were permitted to open schools as expansions under existing charters. Six schools opened the following year (2008-2009), five of which fell into this category. The number of approvals this year (2009-2010) increased to eleven, with eight meeting the September 30<sup>th</sup> approval deadline and an additional three under the new Early Action Process, which promises approval by January 15<sup>th</sup> for applications received before October 15<sup>th</sup> of the prior year. Early Action is designed to shorten the application and approval timeline for new charter schools while maintaining the rigorous review by NJDOE, allowing more charter schools to open within a shorter timeframe.

Under section 18A:36A-16 of New Jersey state law, the commissioner must conduct an annual review of every charter school to determine whether it is meeting its goals, and conduct a more comprehensive review prior to granting the renewal of the charter. The county superintendent is granted ongoing access to the records and facilities of the charter schools within the county to ensure that each school is in compliance with its charter, and is meeting all of the state- and federally-mandated requirements. To facilitate the annual review, the charter school must submit an annual report to the commissioner. These reports must also be distributed to the parents of each student enrolled in the school. The commissioner may revoke a school's charter if the school either has not fulfilled the conditions required by its charter, or has violated any such condition. The legislature granted the commissioner full authority to develop procedures and guidelines for the revocation and renewal of a school's charter.

According to NJDOE code 6A:11-2.2, each charter school must include in its annual report a review of its assessment program results to date, relative to its goals. The review

must show results on state test data for grades 3-8 and/or 11, as well as setting forth any and all criteria that are used to determine the school's AYP status under ESEA. Schools were required to present current baseline data and/or current cohort data in reading/language arts, writing, and mathematics. Although baseline data may come from both state assessments and standardized tests, cohort data must come from standardized tests. Gains are expected in the achievement of student cohorts over time and will evidence that a school is exhibiting AYP. In the absence of the expected levels of achievement, the DOE expects to see problem areas being identified and changes in curriculum and/or instruction being proposed, in order to address the issues. Schools that serve students through eighth or twelfth grade must list the high schools or colleges that the students will be attending, and in the case of twelfth-grade students, must also include the percentage of students going on to college. The annual review also includes an evaluation of progress along several dimensions other than test scores. For example, the school must demonstrate that the delivery of curriculum is in compliance with New Jersey's Core Curriculum Content Standards. It must also show that it is providing the supplementary services to at-risk students that are necessary to ensure their success.

According to sections 18A:36A-7 and 18A:36A-8 of New Jersey law, charter schools in New Jersey must be open to all students on a space-available basis. Their admission policies are subject to the same anti-discrimination requirements as apply to public schools, with the exception that the charter school may limit admission to students interested in specific areas of concentration such as mathematics, science, or arts, as outlined in the school's charter. Preference for enrollment is granted to students who reside in the LEA where the charter school is located. In instances where there are more applicants than available spaces, the charter school must select students using a random-selection process. To the maximum extent possible, charter schools are required to seek the enrollment of a representative cross-section of the community's school-age population, including racial and academic factors in its determination of what selection of students would be representative.

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### **(iii) EQUITABLE FUNDING OF CHARTER SCHOOLS**

Charter schools in New Jersey receive funding on the same basis that traditional public schools do. For funding purposes, all charter-school students are included in the resident enrollment count on the school registers of the traditional public school. In other words, school funding for the school LEA is calculated based on the total resident student population, which includes the charter-school students. Charter-school state aid flows from the school LEA to the charter school. With the new funding formula, charter schools benefited financially by receiving a greater share of resources for at-risk students. Charter-school aid is calculated pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36A-12b, which stipulates that the school LEA must pay directly to the charter school, for each student enrolled in the charter school, an amount equal to 90% of the sum of the budget-year wealth-equalized state aid per pupil and the pre-budget-year general- fund local tax levy per pupil inflated by the corresponding CPI rate.

The remaining 10% is retained by the school LEA to help cover the cost of administering the charter-school program, including the student-registration-and- verification process. Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36A-13 and N.J.A.C. 6A:27-3.1, the school LEA also provides transportation, or aid in lieu of transportation, to charter-school students in K-12 on the same terms and conditions that apply when it provides transportation, or aid in lieu of transportation, to students attending the traditional public schools. The charter school is not responsible for the funding of any mandated student transportation.

Additionally, the school LEA is required to pay to the charter school 100% of the categorical state aids (those determined on a per- pupil basis) attributable to the student, and a percentage of the LEA's special-education categorical aid equal to the percentage of the LEA's special-education students enrolled in the charter school. If applicable, the school LEA is required to pay to the charter school 100% of preschool education aid.

Charter schools apply directly for, and receive 100% of, all federal entitlement and discretionary funds for which they qualify, pursuant to N.J.A.C 6A:11-4.1. Some minor state-aid categories not discussed above are not required to be passed on to charter

schools. These aid categories represent the phase-in portion of New Jersey’s school funding law, and will be eliminated when the law is fully implemented.

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#### **(iv) CHARTER SCHOOLS’ FACILITIES**

In order to facilitate the acquisition of a safe and viable facility, charter schools are granted flexibility in regard to the type of facility in which they are permitted to locate. They are exempt from State public-schools facility regulations, except those pertaining to the health or safety of students. Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36A-10, charter schools are permitted to locate their facilities in part of an existing public-school building, in space provided on a public work-site, in a public building, or in any other suitable location.

Charter schools are permitted to use local and state sources of revenue for facility costs, including lease payments and mortgage payments. They also have access to any discretionary federal grants that are available for facility expenditures. In 2002, New Jersey charter schools received millions of dollars under the School Renovation Grant. Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36A-6, charter schools are permitted to acquire real property from public or private sources by purchase, lease, or lease with an option to purchase, or by gift, for use as a school facility.

Under section 18A:7F-60 of the state regulations, the Commissioner “shall be authorized to take any affirmative action as is necessary to ensure the effective and efficient expenditure of funds by school LEAs...” The Commissioner can use this authority to free up underutilized school-building space in some urban LEAs that have experienced recent declines in school-age population. This space will be made available for charter schools.

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#### **(v) SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC INNOVATIVE SCHOOLS**

In 1999, New Jersey’s legislature adopted the Interdistrict Public School Choice Program (IPSCP) to allow LEAs to open enrollment of specified schools to students from outside the LEA. IPSCP was adopted to provide greater school choice to students whose home

LEAs may be limited in either the variety or quality of their academic programs. Applications for designating a school as an Interdistrict Public School were evaluated on, among other criteria, the basis of the quality and variety of academic programs that are offered within the LEA and the impact on student-population diversity in the LEA. Admission policies for students from outside the LEA are subject to the same federal and State anti-discrimination laws as apply to admission policies affecting students inside the LEA. At this point, Interdistrict school choice has reached its capacity for participation.

**(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions (5 points)**

The extent to which the State, in addition to information provided under other State Reform Conditions Criteria, has created, through law, regulation, or policy, other conditions favorable to education reform or innovation that have increased student achievement or graduation rates, narrowed achievement gaps, or resulted in other important outcomes.

*In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State’s success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.*

Evidence for (F)(3):

- A description of the State’s other applicable key education laws, statutes, regulations, or relevant legal documents.

*Recommended maximum response length: Two pages*



## **Other significant reform conditions**

There are six significant reform conditions of which New Jersey is proud. The first three (providing alternative pathways for teaching certification, emphasizing STEM, and early-childhood-education programs) have been described extensively in other portions of this proposal.

The first additional condition is the development of a new equitable-funding strategy through a formula supported by the relevant New Jersey Supreme Court decision; the second is our secondary-education transformation initiative; the third is our emphasis on Career and Technical Education Programs producing College-Ready Students. All three conditions are briefly described below:



## **Equitable Funding Formula**



As described briefly in (F)(1), since the early 1990's there has been a series of decisions in the Abbott vs. Burke matter that resulted in a specific group of poor urban districts receiving significant levels of State aid along with Court-mandated programs. These decisions were followed by years of court-driven, ad-hoc approaches to school expenditures. In December of 2007, the NJDOE proposed a new funding formula designed to ensure that all children in all communities have the opportunity to succeed. The proposal is a culmination of five years of work by the NJDOE to develop an equitable and predictable way to distribute State aid for education. In 2009, in a landmark decision, the new formula was approved by the state Supreme Court. The new formula provides the most generous resources in the nation for children at risk. In Education Week's recently released report, *Quality Counts*, New Jersey received among the highest grades in the nation for its school funding formula.

## **Methodology**

The state retained three school-finance experts to analyze existing conditions and make recommendations based upon their research. A model was created through their work and vetted through an Advisory Panel. Stakeholder and legislator meetings were held to encourage stakeholder buy-in. As a result of public feedback, the model was adjusted and implemented.

The model includes two types of aid: wealth-equalized and categorical. Wealth-equalized aid is allocated according to each LEA's ability to raise enough local revenue to support its adequacy budget. The equalization formula used in New Jersey considers both a community's property wealth (measured by equalized property valuation) and its aggregate income to determine the local ability to pay. Both measures are considered equally and indexed by the statewide wealth multipliers. The multipliers ensure equalization of the local tax effort, and are similar to applying a local property-tax rate equally to all districts. The wealth-equalized portion of the funding formula is applied uniformly to all districts, distributing state aid equitably, based on each community's ability to pay relative to that of all others in the state. Categorical aid is allocated regardless of a district's ability to raise local revenue.

## Results

This results in a formula that directs funds toward serving poor **children**, rather than poor LEAs.

After thirty years of strife relating to inequitable services, the funding formula is now in place and its acceptance is increasing in LEAs. Most importantly, the high-poverty children New Jersey are being served more equitably across the state.

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## Secondary Education Transformation Initiative

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New Jersey is committed to effectively preparing students for life and work in the 21st Century. The Secondary Education Transformation Initiative focuses on redesigning middle schools and high schools through action steps and supportive policies that align content standards, assessments and high-school-graduation requirements with college and workplace expectations. While we recognize that many New Jersey school districts have rigorous expectations and high levels of student achievement, secondary-education transformation focuses on raising the bar for all students, so that every child is prepared for success in a rapidly-changing, technologically-driven, globally-competitive world. Whether the goal is to ensure that students succeed in college-level courses without remediation, or that they are ready to enter the workforce to learn job-specific skills, they require the same preparation. The Secondary Education Transformation Initiative encompasses grades 6-12, in recognition of the need to provide a strong foundation in the knowledge and skills required for success in high school and to ensure a smooth transition from middle school to high-school grades.

## Methodology

A suggested framework for preparing every New Jersey student for college and the workplace entitled “NJ STEPS: Re-Designing Education in New Jersey for the 21st Century” provides recommendations of the New Jersey High School Redesign Steering Committee that focus on five areas, including standards and high-school-graduation

requirements, assessment alignment, teachers and school leaders, learning communities and personalized education, and P-16 alignment.

**Standards and High-School Graduation Requirements:** A major goal of the Steering Committee was to help align New Jersey high-school standards and graduation requirements to college and workforce entry requirements. The Steering Committee presented its proposed NJ STEPS Graduation Requirements, which include requiring all students to learn Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, Biology, Chemistry, and .5 years of Economics, along with current state requirements to earn a high school diploma. As discussed in the proposal in section (B) (1), revised core standards are in place for seven of nine content areas.

**Assessment Alignment:** The Steering Committee also proposed a new approach for testing students on the content they would learn through the proposed NJ STEPS Graduation Requirements. A new Language Arts Proficiency Assessment, along with End of Course exams in math (Algebra I, Algebra II, and Geometry), and science (Biology and Chemistry) would replace the New Jersey High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA).

**Teachers and School Leaders:** The Steering Committee proposed a partnership with key stakeholders to research, identify, and implement appropriate recruitment initiatives for teachers and education leaders. Additional suggestions included evaluating and improving teacher-preparation programs in the state, and evaluating and implementing proven models of professional development for New Jersey educators.

**Learning Communities and Personalized Education:** The Steering Committee recommended redesigning high schools as “learning communities” that utilize personalized learning approaches to prepare and support students in meeting the new standards and high-school-graduation requirements. Specific recommendations included providing increased technical assistance to local education leaders, and implementing data-based decision-making programs. This resulted in the consortium described below.

The recommendations of the Steering Committee were derived from two years of public meetings with more than 1,000 educators, members of the public, and education

stakeholders, such as the special-education and career-and-technical-education communities. Members of the High School Redesign Steering Committee included representation from NJDOE, the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association, the New Jersey School Boards Association, the New Jersey Education Association, the Business Coalition for Educational Excellence, the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education, New Jersey United for Higher School Standards, the New Jersey Presidents' Council, and Montclair State University. This committee and the accomplishment of this work together provide a concrete example of NJDOE's using stakeholders to accomplish significant reform.

**21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills-Alignment:** The Steering Committee recommended creating a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills Council that would work to ensure a seamless and aligned system of public education from preschool through four years of college. This was accomplished in 2008.

## **Results**

Sixteen schools were chosen from 90 applications to pilot individualized learning plans. These plans have been implemented for students in sixth and ninth grade in these schools for the two-year study. Teachers and leaders in those schools have access to in-person professional development, online courses, and materials on HS redesign; membership in an online curriculum-framing system; opportunities to collaborate with colleagues from across the state in the design of model units, courses, and practices; and meetings and workshops for district and school leaders that are aimed at collaborative brainstorming and troubleshooting of reform work.

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## **Advancements in Career and Technical Education<sup>2</sup>**

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New Jersey has been using career academies to extend the role of CTE programs of study in high school. Districts are being recruited to create new and rigorous career academies. Many districts have attended workshops that describe the process of designing and implementing a career academy. New Jersey has been working with the National Career Academy Coalition (NCAC) and will be using NCAC standards and practices in the new career academies.

As part of the redesign of the New Jersey Core Content Curriculum Standards to reflect 21<sup>st</sup>- Century life and career skills, New Jersey is developing new and expanded methods of integrating academic and CTE courses. NJDOE staff from the academic areas will be on the team to redesign the CTE curriculum to ensure that academic skills are being integrated. New Jersey is using a similar method to the High School redesign methodology in using team-teaching; providing professional-development seminars for academic and CTE teachers; and offering CTE courses that count for academic credit using both the Math-In-CTE model and the creation of courses such as construction geometry; and the creation and use of AP courses in CTE programs of study. The goal is to provide local districts with as many options as possible so that the districts can utilize relevant resources and promote student participation.

Programs of Study: New Jersey began its Program of Study work with inventories of the CTE courses currently being offered at two- and four-year colleges to determine under which career cluster/pathway program each falls. Inventories of the existing programs are still underway. The state is also developing a model pathway for local programs to follow when developing programs of study.

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<sup>2</sup>This summary was excerpted from work conducted by Meeter Consulting Group on the State Profiles for Career and Technical Education available online at the Association for Career and Technical Education. Please visit their website for a comprehensive list of New Jersey’s reforms.

Dual Enrollment & Articulation: New Jersey will continue to emphasize the importance of developing and implementing articulation agreements between secondary and postsecondary providers of CTE. The formal articulation process can be a challenging one; therefore, technical assistance and ongoing support will remain critical in the development of these agreements and will also ensure an understanding of the value of such arrangements to the future success of CTE in the state. The NJDOE will also develop model articulation agreements that can be adapted for local use.

The NJDOE will also continue to support two additional important examples of state-level collaboration. The NJ TRANSFER initiative supports students' transition from two-year to four-year institutions of higher education through alignment of courses accepted for credit. The New Jersey Pathways Leading Apprentices to a College Education (NJ PLACE) initiative has also shown much promise. NJ PLACE is implemented under the leadership of the State Employment and Training Commission (SETC), the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, and the New Jersey AFL/CIO, and represents a collaboration including New Jersey's 19 community colleges, the NJDOE, and other state agencies. This initiative has already developed a statewide model to award college credit for participation in registered apprenticeships in the building and construction trades.



# **COMPETITIVE PRIORITY**

**Science, Technology, Engineering,  
and Mathematics (STEM)**  
**(15 total points)**

**Priority 2: Competitive Preference Priority -- Emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). (15 points, all or nothing)**

To meet this priority, the State’s application must have a high-quality plan to address the need to (i) offer a rigorous course of study in mathematics, the sciences, technology, and engineering; (ii) cooperate with industry experts, museums, universities, research centers, or other STEM-capable community partners to prepare and assist teachers in integrating STEM content across grades and disciplines, in promoting effective and relevant instruction, and in offering applied learning opportunities for students; and (iii) prepare more students for advanced study and careers in the sciences, technology, engineering, and mathematics, including by addressing the needs of underrepresented groups and of women and girls in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

*The competitive preference priority will be evaluated in the context of the State’s entire application. Therefore, a State that is responding to this priority should address it throughout the application, as appropriate, and provide a summary of its approach to addressing the priority in the text box below. The reviewers will assess the priority as part of their review of a State’s application and determine whether it has been met.*

*Recommended maximum response length, if any: One page*



## **Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)**

This proposal integrates the most innovative STEM work currently underway in New Jersey. We are proposing to expand projects and programs that have made STEM a priority in our educational system. The major goals of all of this work are to improve the delivery of higher-level content in the classroom, to provide more students with access to challenging STEM coursework, and to subsequently provide more STEM career options for the students of New Jersey.

One of our priorities has been providing our classroom teachers with high-quality materials to support the teaching of STEM subjects. There are brief excerpts of standards and lesson plans available in Appendix II to illustrate the resources that we have created for classroom teachers. As part of the development of the Curriculum and Assessment Spine, we will improve the quality of our offerings in science and mathematics, by giving teachers methods to teach the most challenging content. In our lowest-achieving schools,

we will continue to add teachers who are prepared to deliver higher-level STEM classes through expanding the programs described in Section (C)(3). We believe that this commitment will lead to not only more students taking AP exams related to STEM content, but also a more diverse representation of students in the state of New Jersey.

To integrate the STEM work contained in the assurances, and to develop a statewide collaboration for STEM, we intend to create and convene a STEM council. The council will be responsible for refining the strategic vision for STEM work and planning for additional resources to support teachers and students. We envision a committee that contains representatives from higher education, research, industry, education, affiliated education groups, and decision makers.

Finally, to prepare more students for advanced study and careers in mathematics, we will continue to extend student understanding of STEM careers at the middle-school level and look for broader experiences to provide the chance for real-world STEM experiences, both in the classroom and beyond brick-and-mortar settings. We will continue to expand our collaborations on STEM issues in the areas of CTE, and in order to better prepare students to work within state industries. We will also look to strengthen the skill-development of New Jersey's high-school students to prepare them to work in New Jersey's STEM career pathways.

There is copious evidence to support the work we have done to date on STEM, but it could only be briefly excerpted for purposes of this proposal. We urge you to visit the new resource on NJ Core Standards that is launching in February 2010 to see all that we have done to provide rich resources to teachers that relate to STEM.



# **INVITATIONAL PRIORITY**

## **Early Childhood Education**

**Priority 3: Invitational Priority – Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes** *(not scored)*

The Secretary is particularly interested in applications that include practices, strategies, or programs to improve educational outcomes for high-need students who are young children (prekindergarten through third grade) by enhancing the quality of preschool programs. Of particular interest are proposals that support practices that (i) improve school readiness (including social, emotional, and cognitive); and (ii) improve the transition between preschool and kindergarten.

*The State is invited to provide a discussion of this priority in the text box below, but such description is optional. Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful must be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.*



## **NEW JERSEY’S EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS**

New Jersey was the first state in the country to create a state-level office specifically focused on preschool through third grade -- a unique and crucial developmental stage. The Division of Early Childhood Education is expanding upon our state’s commitment to preschool by investing in consistently high-quality kindergarten-through-third-grade education for young learners. We believe – and the research shows -- that success in early childhood is a foundation for future academic success. Thus, we have made early childhood success a foundation of our educational systems and will make it a foundation of our reforms. Outlined below are New Jersey’s accomplishments to date – our reform conditions -- for each of the four assurances under Race to the Top:

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## **Standards and Assessment**

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- The New Jersey Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards are aligned with New Jersey’s K-12 Core Curriculum Content Standards and describe the learning outcomes for preschool children and related teaching practices;
- New Jersey Administrative Code, 6A:13A, Elements of High Quality Preschool Programs was readopted to provide a regulatory framework for implementation of high-quality preschool programs;
- The New Jersey Preschool Program Implementation Guidelines describe how to create an optimal preschool program, drawing on new findings from early-childhood-education research, particularly in the areas of inclusion, dual-language learners, and assessment;
- All of the former-Abbott-school-district preschool programs are using formative assessments to inform instruction that are tied to the districts’ preschool curricula.

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## **Data Systems to Support Instruction**

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- An evaluation-and-improvement cycle is in place that measures and improves each aspect of the former Abbott preschool program. The level of implementation is evaluated every year and used to inform changes in individual classrooms, as well as at the LEA and state levels. The evaluation consists of external and internal evaluations of the classrooms as well as associated child-outcome measures.
- Preschool children are part of the NJSMART database. School districts now use unique identifiers for preschool children to help track children who participate in the districts’

preschool programs. In addition, the definition of the term “school” has been expanded to enable the state to track community-based providers as well as schools.

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## **Great Teachers and Leaders**

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- The Division provides technical assistance and professional development to support the implementation of high-quality preschool programs on a regional and individualized basis to 147 LEAs receiving state aid (Abbott districts and Early Childhood Program Aid and Early Launch to Learning Initiative districts);
- In 2009-10, the Division expanded professional-development opportunities to administrators responsible for P-3, with a focus on early-childhood assessment and curricula, supports for inclusion and dual-language learners, pedagogy, measuring and improving the quality of P-3 practices, and differentiated instruction;
- The P-3 teaching certificate is now supported by a P-3 Praxis exam.

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## **Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools**

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- New Jersey’s LEA-level preschool Self-Assessment and Validation System, based on the program standards, is used by the 31 former Abbott preschool programs and the four additional expanded programs.
- The preschool programs in the former Abbott school LEAs have reached a high level of quality. For the past two years, the average score on Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised has been above a 5.0 on a seven-point scale, a score associated with learning benefits for children. This level of quality is maintained in both provider and in-LEA settings.

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## ELEVATING THE QUALITY OF PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS THROUGH RACE TO THE TOP

New Jersey has earned a national reputation for the quality of its state-funded preschool programs. High-quality preschool education is offered to all 3- and 4-year-olds who reside in 36 of the state's poorest LEAs. The program is specifically designed to prepare young children to enter kindergarten with skills and abilities that approach those of their more advantaged peers. Research has proven that intensive, high-quality preschool programs can close much of the early-achievement gap for lower income children. This substantially increases school success and produces a host of life-long benefits, including decreased grade-retention, increased school achievement and social and economic success as adults (Schweinhart et al., 1993; Barnett, 1996; Ramey et al., 2000; Ramey & Campbell, 1984; Campbell et al., 2002; Reynolds, 2000, Abbott Preschool Program Longitudinal Evaluation Study, 2009).

Elements of high-quality preschool education include:

- A full-year, full-day educational program consisting of 180 days with six hours per day of comprehensive instruction,
- State-certified (P-3) teachers and teacher assistants,
- Small class sizes,
- A comprehensive, research-based preschool curriculum designed to meet preschool teaching and learning standards,
- A developmentally-appropriate and comprehensive authentic, performance-based assessment system that is aligned to the curriculum,
- Classroom-based supports for children with disabilities and for dual-language learners, as needed, and
- Supervision, technical assistance, professional development and program quality-assessment to assure uniform high quality.

Detailed descriptions of these elements of high-quality preschool education programs are provided in New Jersey’s Preschool Program Implementation Guidelines and New Jersey Administrative Code 6A:13A, Elements of High Quality Preschool Programs.

Race to the Top funds will be used to improve the quality of existing preschool educational programs that are located in the *non-Abbott* school LEAs by facilitating the implementation of the high-quality program components that have been found to be effective in the former Abbott districts. Race to the Top funds will be used to:

- Implement appropriate comprehensive, research-based curriculum and assessment models,
- Enhance teacher professional development, particularly in the areas of supports for dual language learners, handling challenging behavior, and supporting the inclusion of children with disabilities,
- Equip administrators with program quality-evaluation and -improvement tools to increase classroom quality, and
- Enhance preschool-specific classroom materials and supplies.

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## **Description of participating school districts**

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There are 111 school LEAs that receive state funds for four-year-old preschool programs outside of the 35 fully-funded school LEAs. All of these currently receive Title 1 funds. Based on 2009-2010 enrollment, an estimated 8,325 four-year-old children (general education and inclusion) are projected to be served in 462 classrooms in these school LEAs in the 2010-2011 school year. Because of limited funding, the majority of these preschool programs have been unable to implement an evidence-based, comprehensive preschool curriculum and assessment system, and have been unable to address the needs of dual-language learners and children with challenging behaviors and/or potential learning difficulties.

**Participating school districts will receive funds as follows:**

- Implement an evidence-based, comprehensive preschool curriculum: \$2,500 per classroom, per year for four years (\$10,000 per classroom);
- Implement an evidence-based, performance-based assessment: \$375 per classroom, per year for training and assessment materials;
- Professional development for administrators on the use of structured-classroom-observation instruments and their use in the measurement of quality (\$33,300);
- Preschool classroom materials and supplies: \$6,000 per classroom for 462 classrooms;
- Professional development for teachers/assistants (in LEA and community-based schools) to better support dual-language learners, handle challenging behavior and optimize the inclusion of children with potential learning difficulties: \$295 per classroom per year (\$1,180 per classroom) delivered by the curriculum developer.

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**Evaluation of implementation**

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- Third-party evaluation of curriculum implementation and overall classroom quality at the beginning and end of the grant period: 462 classrooms at \$750 per classroom (\$346,500 for classroom evaluation, feedback, data entry, data analysis and summary reports by LEA and statewide for pre and post evaluations);
- Tracking of child outcomes through NJ Smart database, examining grade-retention and special-education referral rates in kindergarten, first grade and second grade.

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## **Program administration**

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Three NJDOE program-development specialists would focus solely on the implementation of the program improvements, in three regions statewide.

## **BUILDING RACE TO THE TOP CONNECTIONS BETWEEN EARLY LEARNING AND K-12**

Throughout our Race to the Top Application, we have integrated early learning into the K-12 program. The following description provides the explicit goals and activities proposed for early-learning programs around each of the four assurances:

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## **Standards and Assessments**

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Expand New Jersey’s investment in preschool within a broader education reform agenda that seeks to improve learning outcomes from preschool through third grade, by revising and implementing both learning and program standards through third grade, and facilitating the appropriate use of assessment. New Jersey’s standards, exemplar lessons, and formative assessments for preschool to third grade will be linked to the K-12 Curriculum and Assessment Spine.

- Continue development of New Jersey’s learning standards for preschool through third grade by completing all grade levels for all domains, including use of national standards in mathematics and language-arts literacy;
- Complete the development of program-implementation guidelines and standards comparable to the state’s preschool-program standards to ensure optimal educational practices in K-3;

- Develop and implement a regional training system to support the implementation of the enhanced standards and assessments, including the measurement of classroom quality and child outcomes;
- Create and disseminate modules on the appropriate use of assessment in P-3 programs to inform instruction, to evaluate programs, and to track child progress.

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## **Data Systems to Support Instruction**

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New Jersey has proposed to expand and improve the collection of teacher, classroom and child data at classroom, LEA and state levels to improve classroom quality and specific teaching practices, improve the use of assessment to inform instruction, and track program efficacy.

- Build additional fields into the NJ SMART database in areas such as retention, the language of the child, the language of the teacher, the type of language program, PIRT participation, etc. to examine child outcome in relation to program variables;
- Include classroom quality and additional child-outcome data in the system, allowing stakeholders to connect quality to classroom program components and student learning outcomes.

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## **Great Teachers and Leaders**

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New Jersey proposed to better prepare leaders and teachers to provide P-3 programs that optimize the development and learning of young children.

- Develop a regional training system to support teachers and leaders to improve and expand developmentally-appropriate practices for P-3 education, and to use assessment tools to measure classroom quality and improve teaching and learning

- Provide intensive professional development to school staff on the P-3 implementation guidelines.

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## Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

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New Jersey proposed to improve preschool programs in school LEAs outside of former Abbott districts, and to improve preschool-to-third-grade practices in all eligible school districts with persistently-low-performing schools.

- Conduct an external evaluation of preschool and K-3 classroom quality in school districts outside of former Abbott school districts to get a baseline and target need areas;
- Provide preschool-program technical assistance in eligible school districts that are not already fully implementing high-quality preschool programs. Technical support might include assistance in the implementation of a comprehensive preschool curriculum, supports for dual-language learners, supports for the inclusion of children with disabilities, purchase of preschool-focused classroom materials, installation of playgrounds, and certification of teachers in community-based preschool-provider settings;
- To help school districts assess and improve their level of quality of preschool programs, implement the preschool Self-Assessment and Validation System in all non-Abbott school districts that are receiving state or federal funds for preschool;
- To help school districts assess and improve their level of quality of P-3 programs, develop and implement a district Self-Assessment and Validation System for P-3 that is aligned to the state’s P-3 program implementation guidelines (K-3 to be developed under the grant);
- Develop and implement regionally-based P-3 model programs to complement a regional training system;

- Equip districts with program-quality-assessment tools to measure and improve classroom quality across P-3 settings for all eligible school districts (ECERS, SELA, PCMI, APEEC, and CLASS);
- Equip school-district leaders, teachers and intervention-and-referral staff to appropriately measure child outcome in early-childhood settings (P-3), both to inform instruction and to track child-outcome at classroom and district levels.