

West Virginia
Race to the Top Application
Section VI

Submitted to the U.S. Department of Education

January 2010

VI. 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)¹ 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;

¹ 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). **T**
- 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)

Introduction to West Virginia and the Race to the Top Application.

In this application, the governor, the West Virginia Board of Education, all 55 school systems, and a coalition of critical

stakeholders present a comprehensive description of West Virginia’s strategies to address the most pressing issues for the state— *raising student performance, increasing graduation rates, closing achievement gaps, and ensuring that all students are college and career ready*. For the past five years, West Virginia has initiated an aggressive and systemic set of educational reforms that are the foundation for reaching these outcomes. The resulting policy infrastructure, common vision, and statewide commitment place West Virginia in an imitable position to embrace the significant changes outlined in the Race to the Top proposal. We believe that the specific strategies required in the grant guidelines for rigorous standards and assessments, effective teachers and leaders, struggling schools, and access to timely and relevant data are the natural progression of what has been solidly built by West Virginia educators and policy makers.

Beginning with the 2005 Partnership for 21st Century Skills, an alliance of essentially all key educational stakeholders, West Virginia has been on a determined path to transform its educational system into one that mirrors the best in educational innovation, research, and reform. We believe this grant will allow us to continue this aggressive path, thus energizing West Virginia’s economy and providing our students with the requisite knowledge, skills, and disposition for success in the global, digital world of the 21st century. Although it is true that West Virginia faces numerous challenges to raising educational attainment and economic development, we believe that there is no other rural state better poised to reach the level of success for students that will be delivered throughout the next four years and beyond. This application is our plan for addressing the four components of the grant and for achieving the next steps to educational transformation in West Virginia schools.

West Virginia

In order to better understand the strengths of this proposal, one must also understand the state context and specific issues West Virginia faces as it strives to raise students’ levels of educational attainment. The population is small (37th in the nation), rural (the largest city has just over 50,000 residents), and 95 percent white. The geography of the state and its largely rural population mean that West Virginia’s schools and school districts are small. Only two of its 55 districts enroll more than 12,500 students; the average enrollment in West Virginia’s 694 schools is less than 350 students.

Poverty has been, and continues to be, a challenge for West Virginia as well. It is the state with the lowest median household income, the fifth highest level of persons living below the poverty line, and 51 percent of its 280,000 students are eligible for free or

reduced price lunches. Educating students when more than half live in poverty presents numerous difficulties for the state, and one of the most consistent has been to move students into and through higher education. Only 58.8 percent of West Virginia's high school graduates go on to pursue higher education, and of those, less than half graduate in six years. Only 17 percent of West Virginia's citizens age 25 and over have a bachelor's degree or higher, 12 percent lower than the national average. Likewise, West Virginia's terrain and rural demographics present challenges that affect allocation of scarce resources. Many school districts cover large physical areas but have small student populations. Thus, transportation costs are significantly higher than urban and suburban districts across the nation. The rural demographics and transportation time affect the overall costs involved in supporting small schools. Consolidation in many areas is not a solution to allocation of limited resources.

Despite these challenges, the political and educational leaders of West Virginia have committed themselves to preparing the state's citizens to be full stakeholders in the social and economic opportunities of the 21st century. The support is demonstrated by an investment of more than \$10,000 per K–12 student annually, an amount above the national average and totaling 46 percent of the fiscal year (FY) 2009 state budget. During the economic recession of the last two years, West Virginia has fared better than many states because of its policies of fiscal responsibility. Educators and leaders know, however, that funding is not enough, and that it must be accompanied by innovation, dedication, and political will. This combination of factors, along with an increased awareness of the deep interconnection between the state's educational attainment and economic well-being, has been developing in West Virginia throughout the last decade. The changes of the past five years, including the appointment of a new state superintendent, the formation of a P–20 education council by the governor made up of leaders in government, education, and industry, and a series of public discussions about the best way to prepare students for living and working in the 21st century, have poised West Virginia schools to be at the forefront of preparing their students to be critical, innovative, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) competent, and ready for college and careers.

Educators and leaders in West Virginia have seen what does not work and have devoted a great deal of time and energy to developing ways for the state to chart a course that advances each school's ability to understand and respond to the academic and personal needs of each learner. Much work has been done in the past five years to move the state forward, and the groundwork has been laid to bring the state's students to where they need to be to take full advantage of the jobs and opportunities that are available to

them. The efforts to date have built a strong infrastructure that West Virginia will build upon in the years ahead. Although the infrastructure has not been in place long enough to have achieved significant and measurable gains for a large enough number of students, there are glimpses of success and clear plans for how to apply state and federal funds to reach goals. West Virginia intends not just to demonstrate measurable gains for our students, but also to provide a model of reform and development that can be showcased nationally and internationally. Certainly, our country is at a serious crossroads in economic and educational policy. We believe that West Virginia can add much to the national discourse on how to energize educational transformation in rural America and in those places continuing to struggle with the great challenge of educating students in poverty.

West Virginia's Reform Agenda 2010-2015

As described in the opening section of this proposal, West Virginia's educational community is focused on four interlocking goals: (1) consistent and equitable gains in student achievement, (2) increasing high school graduation rates, (3) ensuring college and career readiness, and (4) preparing all students with the global 21 skills necessary for success in the economic environment of the 21st century. West Virginia's reform agenda, from the statehouse to the classroom, is clearly centered on *accountability* in these areas. Furthermore, all aspects of the various *reform strategies* outlined in this proposal are designed to positively impact these valued outcomes.

To fully understand the possibilities of this grant proposal, the reader must understand the solid foundation and web of support that undergirds this next phase of work. Educational history is replete with efforts of episodic change. Thus, the governor, the West Virginia Board of Education, and other stakeholders have worked tirelessly to *build a system* rather than implement disconnected programs. Even with scarce resources, the state has prioritized education and invested millions of dollars in an educational infrastructure, understanding full well the importance of this investment to the state's economic future. The work in the past four years, guided by national and international experts, has focused on four foundational areas:

(1) ***Creating the vision and building coalitions that support the vision.*** Using a series of collaboratively developed documents titled *Frameworks for High Performing 21st Century Districts, Schools and Classrooms* as the basis, the governor, the West Virginia Board of Education, and educational leaders have worked together to create a new vision for public education. Central to this work was the creation of the Governor's 21st Century Jobs Cabinet in 2006 whose role is to advise and shape coherent

educational and economic development policy. Leaders also worked with key professional associations, including the West Virginia School Boards Association, the West Virginia Association of School Administrators, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) West Virginia, and the West Virginia Education Association (WVEA) to solicit input and shape direction. In addition, there were public forums, meetings, and informal discussions in all 55 local education agencies (LEAs) to communicate the compelling new direction for public education.

(2) Developing a deep understanding of the components of a 21st century educational system and the urgency for change.

Realizing that knowledge is a prerequisite for effective change, the state launched a consistent and pervasive effort to develop understanding of the global educational issues facing our nation. This included small, low-cost professional development initiatives as well as multimillion dollar investments. In 2005, the work started small with all 55 county superintendents, state board members, and state education agency (SEA) staff being given Friedman's *The World Is Flat*. The facilitated discussion around the themes in this book (and subsequently many other scholarly works), informed discussions, and broadened understanding. These informal learning processes continued while major professional development initiatives were designed and launched. The substantive work began with nine days of professional development for essentially *all* the staff of the SEA, Regional Education Service Agency (RESA) staff, and teams from all higher education institutions in the state. This level of intensive development was *a first* in West Virginia educational annals and created a base knowledge from which growth could occur. The other significant developments were the creation of four major targeted high profile professional development efforts designed by the SEA and funded through the West Virginia Legislature: (1) the West Virginia 21st Century Principals Institute (11 days for 200 school leaders annually), (2) the District Team Leadership Initiative (6–12 days annually for all superintendents and their district leadership teams), (3) the Teacher Leadership Institute (5 days plus digital forums for 200 teacher teams annually), and (4) the Special Education Leadership Institute (5 days plus digital forums for 100 special education teacher leaders). Key to the success of these major efforts was a commitment to using 21st century delivery models, such as problem-based learning, providing digital tools and applications, and building depth of knowledge through intensive and sustained learning over time. All involved guidance from the nation's leading consultants and practitioners. Although these major institutes were the centerpiece to the massive professional development effort, they do not represent all that happened. There were at least 20 other large-scale professional development efforts that targeted specific audiences or issues. Simultaneous to the high profile

effort, the SEA was also designing an infrastructure for a digital and blended delivery system for individualized and school-based professional development needs. Since this online structure began, the SEA has created a platform and process that has reached over 7,000 educators.

(3) *Raising Expectations Through Key Policies that Govern Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, Innovation, Professional Standards and Accountability.* Since policy and code are key leverage points for change, West Virginia has spent considerable time rethinking the policies and code that govern the key elements of the system. Each policy, developed by stakeholders under the guidance of nationally recognized consultants, has defined the parameters for creating a Global 21 system. Major change in policy and code have guided the development of such things as universal early childhood education; development of 19 innovation zones; revision of curriculum standards and assessments that align with national and international benchmarks; redefinition of professional standards for superintendents, principals, teachers and teacher leaders; restructuring higher education preparation programs; advancing policies that govern educational resources to align with digital tools and applications; and restructuring the processes by which schools and school systems are evaluated and accredited.

(4) *Creating Global 21 Resources for Professional Growth and Practice.* In building a Global 21 educational system, the methodology and tools of teaching and learning will significantly change. Thus, part of West Virginia's infrastructure has been a focus on developing the digital tools, applications, supports, and resources essential for rigorous, relevant, and personalized instruction and individualized professional growth. This work has included expanding bandwidth across the state, creating the Teach 21 and Learn 21 platforms, expanding digital professional development opportunities, and increasing the availability of virtual learning and digital communication opportunities. West Virginia has won numerous awards and recognitions for enhancing teaching and learning through its technology infrastructure.

Because West Virginia now has a strong foundation upon which to build, it can move quickly and efficiently to take the state education system forward. West Virginia is poised to demonstrate great gains throughout the course of the next four years, applying the Race to the Top funding primarily in areas of critical need, but also in those areas that have the strongest potential to positively impact teaching and learning in all West Virginia classrooms and schools. With the initial work done to build the broad policy and support system, the work in the next four years must ensure that all efforts come together to significantly improve professional

practice at the school and classroom level. West Virginia educators are not satisfied with current student performance. Our commitment is to build quickly on the solid infrastructure to see measurable results in student achievement and to close gaps among subgroups of students. West Virginia's National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores and other credible measures of student performance must be improved; we must graduate more students, and all of our students must be college and/or career ready when they do graduate from high school. Through the VITAL Survey results (Appendix A-1), West Virginia teachers and principals have been explicit about their needs to accomplish these goals: collaborative time, resources, and empowerment. We know we must have highly effective teachers in all of our classrooms, teachers that are strong on content, especially in the STEM areas, and proficient at instruction. Our high-risk, high-need districts and schools must have access to innovative and effective means to recruit and retain the best teachers. Teachers and leaders in these schools face significant challenges and, as a state, we must commit to providing the supports, resources, and processes that support their commitment to success.

West Virginia's reform agenda is designed to affect change in each of the areas described above, and we are confident that our plans in the areas of standards and assessment, data systems for support, teacher and leader effectiveness, and support for struggling schools will yield these measurable results for our students. There are several components to our plan with goals, benchmarks, and outcomes that together create a comprehensive and cohesive action agenda with elements that build on each other and occur synchronously. To effectively impact every school and classroom, we propose an integrated system of professional learning communities (PLCs) that operate both vertically and horizontally and provide the backbone for connecting educators at all levels of the system in teams that share best practices, address barriers and challenges, define new efficiencies, and identify and leverage resources. This transformative system of PLCs promotes shared learning and development inside schools, districts, RESAs, and at the SEA (horizontal). At the same time, cross-functional PLCs (vertical) support teams of representatives from schools, districts, RESAs, and the SEA who are trained to be master facilitators and mentors will ensure that the horizontal PLCs are viable, effective, and sustainable.

Standards and Assessments.

Since 2005, extensive work has been done to embed West Virginia's K–12 content standards and objectives with increased rigor and stronger alignment to NAEP, SAT, ACT, PISA, and TIMSS. Curriculum standards were reviewed by experts in the field

such as William Schmidt (Michigan State) and Norm Webb (University of Wisconsin–Madison) and by Achieve, a nationally recognized organization in this area. Based on these reviews, standards were changed to reflect feedback on rigor, relevance, and scope. Subsequently, in response to the revised standards, the West Virginia state standardized student achievement test (WESTEST) was revised to align with newly developed international benchmarked content standards.

West Virginia believes that depth of content knowledge is one component of successful learning. This knowledge, however, must intersect with the development of Global 21 skills, the use of appropriate digital tools, and be evaluated by performance assessments to result in learning that is lasting and meaningful. To this end, West Virginia became one of the first states to join the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21), a national organization that advocates for the integration of critical thinking, problem solving, and communication into the teaching of core academic subjects. P21 brings together education leaders, the business community, and policymakers to change policy and practice and develop research-based resources to support every child graduating prepared for life and work. West Virginia also has completed an Analysis of College & Career Readiness Common Core Standards and has adjusted its Content Standards and Objectives in Math and English to create a stronger alignment. The direction of these efforts was focused and clear—i.e., more rigor, stronger academic standards, and the integration of skill attainment as the basis for learning, especially in English and mathematics.

Certainly, West Virginia has become a leader in standards and assessment reform and the proposals in this application reflect this leadership. West Virginia officials stepped forward to take a leading role in the drive toward 21st century skills and were among the first states to commit to the common core standards movement. West Virginia’s current state assessment contract expires in 2013–14 school year. The West Virginia Department of Education will replace WESTEST 2 with the newly developed summative assessments from the work of the upcoming U.S. Department of Education common core assessment grant requirements in 2014–15. In fact, the state superintendent is currently a lead voice in a national effort to apply for the common core assessment grant and build a consortium of states willing to work together to build and implement a system of balanced assessments in both summative and formative areas.

However, going forward West Virginia recognizes that even a rigorous common core of standards matched with high-quality balanced assessments are not enough to improve student achievement. They must reach the classroom where teachers and leaders are

fully prepared to implement curriculum and instructional practices aligned with them. Structured professional support that includes master teacher leaders, targeted resources, access to best practices, and time dedicated to building expertise must be enhanced. West Virginia has built one of the best professional support processes in the country (i.e., the West Virginia PLC prototype) and is now fully ready to tailor and replicate this process throughout the state. Concentrated professional development will be systematically provided through the support process to all of West Virginia’s mathematics and science teachers to build deeper content knowledge and greater instructional prowess.

Looking ahead, West Virginia is committed to using a rigorous and balanced assessment system to measure student progress. In Year 1, WESTEST 2 will be used to determine acceptable and expected year-to-year individual student growth. In Years 2 and 3, West Virginia will add Acuity benchmarks to determine growth, while at the same time participating in a cross-state common core assessment grant consortium that will further develop and pilot the components of a new balanced assessment. By 2014–15, this will be fully implemented in the new state assessment system for both summative and formative assessments.

Data Systems to Support Instruction

West Virginia’s statewide longitudinal data system (SLDS) was initiated in 1990, making it among the oldest of all state SLDSs. It is also a leader, in terms of the scope and depth of data it contains, and in the fact that it is fully transactional, with daily data refreshes. Early on, West Virginia education leaders recognized the need for broader information about learner performance—i.e., data other than what is generated from state standardized tests—and identified the data necessary to create a more holistic student profile that would serve as the basis for differentiating learning opportunities. In addition, more and different kinds of data were needed at the classroom, school, and district level to drive systemic reform. To this end, West Virginia built a data system that meets all but two of America COMPETES longitudinal data system elements (the two missing elements involve connection to postsecondary education) and has 9 of 10 Data Quality Campaign elements (here West Virginia is only missing the connection of P–12 to higher education). Recently, the governor allocated \$5 million from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF) to address this gap and establish a more meaningful data connection between K–12 and higher education.

Moving forward, West Virginia will expand the access to data for continuous improvement and will augment the professional

support needed by teachers and administrators to effectively use data. Early warning systems aligned with relevant intervention strategies will be developed, and training on these systems will be a priority in high-need, struggling schools. Building on an existing strong transactional data system that serves the SEA and all LEAs in the state, West Virginia is focused on developing warning systems that get useful, practical data into the hands of administrators, teachers, parents, and students as part of a regular feedback loop and provide information to adjust instructional practice and organizational patterns in intentional ways that are imperative to increasing student achievement. Officials realize that West Virginia can no longer build systems and wait for them to be used. Leaders must be proactive and intentional in constructing guided pathways for improved use of data and information to address the goals of this proposal.

Great Teachers and Leaders

West Virginia is one of only a few states where the K–12 sector and higher education institutions work consistently together to restructure professional preparation and practice of teachers and leaders. For two years, a task force convened by the West Virginia Board of Education has worked to construct new Global 21 professional teaching standards. These standards, adopted by the West Virginia Board of Education in December 2008, will be the basis for instruments used to evaluate K–12 teachers, as well as assessing quality outputs of West Virginia teacher training institutions. While the work on teacher standards progressed, a collaborative of state, Institutions of Higher Education (IHE), and district stakeholders worked for 18 months to create a master plan for improving leadership. This work included development of Global 21 leadership standards for principals, superintendents, and teacher leaders. It also included 15 code, policy, and practice recommendations for dramatically improving leadership recruitment, succession planning, preparation, internship, licensure, induction, professional development, and evaluation. Led by Joseph Murphy, Ph.D., a professor at Vanderbilt University, this work, when implemented, has the potential to create the finest educational leadership system in the nation.

Building from a common understanding across the state about teacher and leader effectiveness, West Virginia’s reform agenda will now target three areas for development and implementation. Highly effective teachers and leaders are the strongest connection to enhanced student achievement. Thus, West Virginia’s goal is to ensure that we prepare, recruit, retain, and support West Virginia’s teachers and leaders and that we build a fair and comparable evaluation system to ensure continued effectiveness at all levels and in all schools. Going forward, our focus will be on getting more highly qualified effective teachers into our classrooms, especially in high-

need areas such as mathematics, science, and special education. In partnership with the 22 IHEs, West Virginia will revamp and strengthen the teacher and principal preparation programs to align with the new standards. Alternative routes of certification will be developed through both IHE and non-IHE programs, and teachers will be actively recruited to high-need and hard-to-staff areas using innovative incentive programs. Teacher performance will be tied to student growth, and multiple measures of student performance will become components of a comprehensive statewide teacher evaluation system. The professional learning communities' structure will be used to connect teachers to effective professional development and will ensure that teachers are well prepared and have access to continual improvement opportunities. These PLCs will be the standard mechanism through which professional learning happens, resources and best practices are shared, and deeper content and instructional expertise in literacy, mathematics, and science are built.

Turning Around Struggling Schools

One of our successes during the past five years has been the development of the West Virginia Standards for High Quality Schools (Appendix E-8). These standards were developed to guide the process of state intervention in low-achieving schools. We have since begun applying these standards to all school improvement efforts throughout the state. Creating consistency in school and district expectations will bring a concentrated focus and a common language regarding the components of a high-performing schools and school systems.

In 2004, West Virginia designed and implemented the Closing the Achievement Gap Professional Development Demonstration Schools (CAG Schools). The purpose of the program is to improve the academic achievement of all students, particularly in schools with high percentages of poor, minority, and underachieving students. In order to provide these schools with additional support, the SEA provides a Closing the Achievement Gap Liaison who works in three schools in each county. These liaisons lead professional learning communities in which teachers analyze data, identify gaps in student learning, and then differentiate their instruction to meet student needs. Between 2004 and 2008, the percentage of CAG schools that embedded time for teacher collaboration in their school schedules increased from 0 percent to 72 percent. As a result of this sustained, job-embedded professional development, student gains on statewide assessment tests were larger in CAG schools than in other state schools for every subgroup in reading and mathematics (Appendix A-2).

As further evidence of our success with low-achieving schools, in 2008–09, eight of 23 Title I schools identified for

improvement met adequate yearly progress (AYP) and four of the schools were removed from improvement status as a result of the collaborative efforts of local school staff and the Title I staff from the West Virginia Department of Education. Effective strategies included hiring new principals to signal the need for dramatic change, adding instructional leaders to the administrative team who focus on curriculum and instruction, implementing a new research-based curriculum or instructional program, restructuring the school day to provide collaborative working time for teachers, hiring school improvement specialists who lead professional learning communities that provide teachers with sustained and embedded professional development, and engaging outside experts to help the school build capacity.

In order to build on this success, West Virginia has identified three objectives for improving student achievement in low-achieving schools. Our commitment is to integrate these strategies into a comprehensive plan that will guide the transformation of low-achieving schools statewide. The objectives are to (1) build the capacity of the SEA and LEAs to drive transformative interventions in low-achieving schools, partnering with credible external providers as necessary to add capacity and expertise; (2) strengthen teacher/leader effectiveness in low-achieving schools to improve the quality of instruction; and (3) develop comprehensive systems of supports in low-achieving schools that have professional learning communities as an integral part of the system.

LEA Participation in West Virginia's Reform Agenda

Every District, Every School in West Virginia's Race to the Top. The commitment to reform of West Virginia's school systems is clear and indisputable. We have received 55 memorandums of understanding (MOUs) from all West Virginia school districts; an example MOU accompanies this proposal (Appendix A-3). Every LEA has agreed to participate in meeting the goals of this proposal and thereby continue the reconstruction of West Virginia's educational system. These signatures represent a deep understanding by local leadership that West Virginia's schools are ready to take the next step in implementing transformative change and that the responsibility for this change is shared across the system. Regional meetings were conducted with superintendents and community representatives across the state, and the details of the Race to the Top proposal were discussed, revised, enhanced, and debated. Ultimately, the plan outlined in this application represents not a compromise of will or politics but rather collaboration toward creating a West Virginia Global 21 system. District and school leaders agree that while what is proposed will not be easy and will require hard work and a willingness to do things differently, it is the path to build on the foundation created together during the

past several years.

While the MOUs represent unanimous support for the general projects and activities outlined in this document, the application is designed so that specific local priorities will drive how Race to the Top dollars will be spent across the state. A distinct advantage of these local interests is that they permit West Virginia to pilot variations on key themes, to test what works, what works better, and under what circumstances and with what resources new programs will be implemented. Rather than implementing a one-size-fits-all program or mandating statewide implementation, the state, in many instances, will recruit districts that are “shovel ready” to pilot such areas as revised teacher and leader evaluations, the adoption of new standards and assessments, and/or student early warning data systems and diagnostics. Some of these variations will be evaluated under rigorous pseudo-experimental designs; others will move more quickly, building on best practices that are carefully observed, analyzed, and documented.

Translating LEA participation into broad statewide impact

All 55 district superintendents have signed an MOU agreeing to support the scope of work and specifically designating those initiatives in which they prefer to participate. All districts have indicated a commitment to developing effective school and district professional learning communities as a means to implement the reform efforts in ways that will sustain change at the school and classroom level. A statement of the state’s initiative should we not receive the award is included in Appendix A-4.

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

Elements of State Reform Plans	Number of LEAs Participating (#)	Percentage of Total Participating LEAs (%)
B. Standards and Assessments		
(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	55	100%
C. Data Systems to Support Instruction		
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction:		
(i) Use of local instructional improvement systems	55	100%
(ii) Professional development on use of data	55	100%
(iii) Availability and accessibility of data to researchers	55	100%

D. Great Teachers and Leaders		
(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance:		
(i) Measure student growth	55	100%
(ii) Design and implement evaluation systems	55	100%
(iii) Conduct annual evaluations	55	100%
(iv)(a) Use evaluations to inform professional development	55	100%
(iv)(b) Use evaluations to inform compensation, promotion and retention	55	100%
(iv)(c) Use evaluations to inform tenure and/or full certification	55	100%
(iv)(d) Use evaluations to inform removal	55	100%
(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals:		
(i) High-poverty and/or high-minority schools	55	100%
(ii) Hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	55	100%
(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals:		
(i) Quality professional development	55	100%
(ii) Measure effectiveness of professional development	55	100%
E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools		
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	36	100%

[Optional: Enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data]

Nothing in the Memoranda of Understanding between LEAs and the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) shall be construed to alter or otherwise affect the rights, remedies, and procedures afforded school or school district employees under Federal, State or local laws (including applicable regulations or court orders) or under the terms of collective bargaining agreements, memoranda of understanding, or other agreements between such employers and their employees.

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

Signatures acquired from participating LEAs:			
Number of Participating LEAs with all applicable signatures			
	Number of Signatures Obtained (#)	Number of Signatures Applicable (#)	Percentage (%) (Obtained / Applicable)
LEA Superintendent (or equivalent)	55	55	100%
President of Local School Board (or equivalent, if applicable)	55	55	100%
Local Teachers' Union Leader (if applicable)	NA	NA	NA

Barbour	9	2,479	1,519	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Berkeley	28	17,446	7,881	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Boone	15	4,672	2,436	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Braxton	8	2,230	1,320	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA
Brooke	10	3,403	1,596	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA
Cabell	26	12,552	6,457	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Calhoun	3	1,104	717	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Clay	6	2,043	1,396	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Doddridge	3	1,169	730	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Fayette	20	6,766	4,053	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Gilmer	5	939	573	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA
Grant	5	1,935	1,032	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Greenbrier	13	5,285	2,877	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Hampshire	9	3,653	2,212	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA
Hancock	9	4,311	1,955	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA
Hardy	6	2,307	1,190	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA
Harrison	23	11,328	5,217	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Jackson	12	5,040	2,345	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA
Jefferson	15	8,595	2,930	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA
Kanawha	68	28,492	15,044	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Lewis	6	2,650	1,542	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Lincoln	9	3,626	2,444	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Logan	17	6,431	3,545	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Marion	19	8,116	4,039	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA
Marshall	12	4,821	2,414	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Mason	10	4,308	2,363	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
McDowell	11	3,669	2,973	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Mercer	24	9,552	5,573	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Mineral	12	4,481	2,091	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Mingo	14	4,619	3,032	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA
Monongalia	21	10,588	4,274	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Monroe	4	1,945	1,166	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Morgan	8	2,655	1,388	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA
Nicholas	15	4,043	2,353	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ohio	13	5,283	2,430	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA
Pendleton	4	1,085	621	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA
Pleasants	4	1,299	639	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA
Pocahontas	5	1,202	734	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Preston	12	4,628	2,551	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Putnam	22	9,517	3,538	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA
Raleigh	28	12,340	6,330	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA
Randolph	14	4,382	2,409	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ritchie	6	1,626	823	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA
Roane	6	2,554	1,576	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Summers	5	1,566	995	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Taylor	5	2,451	1,252	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA
Tucker	3	1,097	640	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Tyler	4	1,482	836	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA
Upshur	9	3,825	2,137	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Wayne	21	7,556	3,794	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Webster	6	1,577	1,134	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Wetzel	9	2,864	1,430	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Wirt	3	967	562	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Wood	27	13,486	6,724	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Wyoming	13	4,161	2,481	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

(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)

Success Factors: Leadership Capacity, Support for LEAs, Partnerships and Sustainability plans

West Virginia’s size and coherence allow it to scale up and sustain initiatives more easily than most states. Lawrence Lezotte, the noted researcher, observed on a consulting trip to West Virginia that the state was in an enviable position for initiating change; with the limited number of school districts, the history of collaboration, and the regularity with which educators communicate and network, Lezotte felt the culture and the structures promoted collaborative change. This coherence is demonstrated in the strong working relationship among state leaders as well as the regular collaboration and communication among the 55 school districts. Superintendents meet together by region each month and with the state superintendent of schools seven or

eight times each year. However, the ability to scale up also comes from informal networks and relationships. Having to accomplish much for students with scarce resources, West Virginia educators are skilled at forming networks and professional coalitions to advance their efforts and improve their work. The SEA's professional development work with the School District Leadership Teams, the Principals' Institutes, and the Teachers' Institutes have resulted in friendships and statewide networks of educators who are knowledgeable and passionate about creating a Global 21 school system. West Virginians are proud of their state, are greatly offended by stereotypes that convey low expectations, and are thus challenged by the opportunity to show the nation their ability to establish standards and programs of an international caliber.

Leadership Capacity

It is critical to the success of West Virginia's work to have strong leadership, structures to support the work systematically and systemically, a plan for sustainability, and partners who add and complement expertise and capacity.

National Leadership: Because of a strong commitment to national educational reform and the Global 21 initiative, several of West Virginia's top leaders have been involved in leadership activities that have supported and influenced that national education agenda. Governor Joe Manchin is currently the Chair of the Southern Region Education Board (SREB) and, as the Chair, his initiatives are focused on college completion and career readiness. The governor also is currently the Vice Chair of the National Governors Association, and when he becomes Chair in July, he intends to focus his "governor initiative" on education, specifically high school and college completion. Other state leaders are also in key national positions that advocate education reform. Lowell Johnson, Ph.D., Member and past President of the West Virginia Board of Education, is currently President of the National School Boards Association. [West Virginia Senator and Education Chair Robert Plymale](#) currently Co-chairs the National Conference of State Legislatures' Task Force on Federal Education Policy. Dr. Steven L. Paine, State Superintendent of Schools, is the President-Elect of the Chief State School Officers and Board Member of NAGBE, the governing body of NAEP. Certainly, these positions are a testimony to the caliber of West Virginia's state leaders. More importantly, however, this powerful involvement with the national and international discourse on education allows West Virginia to be connected with the best thinking, research, and minds dedicated to moving the nation's educational system forward.

State Leadership: West Virginia has strong, sustained, and cohesive state leadership, which is demonstrated by the

collaboration between the governor, the State Board of Education, the state superintendent, and the Higher Education Policy Commission. These leaders work to define, resource, and implement education reform strategies that are unified, powerful, and actionable. This collaboration is built on a shared and deep understanding of how systems work and how coalitions and partnerships are built to ensure stakeholder buy-in for sustainability.

The governor is committed to working with the Legislature to maintain education funding as a priority in order to sustain and scale successful reform efforts after the ARRA dollars are no longer available. The State Board of Education has pledged to work toward sustainable reform by supporting policies and legislation that will promote statewide implementation of effective practice. Throughout the course of the next four years, these entities will work together to enact legislative changes necessary to create conditions for reform efforts to be initiated or to expand.

In addition, in 2006, Governor Joe Manchin created the 21st Century Jobs Cabinet of West Virginia. This Cabinet focuses on promoting a seamless education system that connects every level of education from early childhood to graduate study and encompasses job training and lifelong learning—enhancing and supporting the state’s job creation and economic development efforts. The Cabinet includes the Secretary of the Department of Education and the Arts, the State Superintendent of Schools, the Chief Executive Officer for the Center for Professional Development, the Chancellor of Higher Education, the Chancellor for Community and Technical College Education, the Commissioner of the Bureau for Children and Families, the Executive Director of the West Virginia Development Office, the Director of WORKFORCE West Virginia, and other key public and private stakeholders across the state. The Cabinet has worked together on educational issues such as improving the preparation, retention, and professional development of educators at all levels; creating the West Virginia career pathways model; and, ensuring the integration of vocational and technical education and career counseling into all levels of education.

Annually, the State Board of Education pledges to align its strategic goals with those outlined in this Race to the Top grant—targeting them at the four student outcome goals outlined in the beginning of this proposal. In addition, the West Virginia Department of Education is taking advantage of this unique opportunity to restructure how it operates. The West Virginia Department of Education will create a more coherent and connected internal system of support for struggling schools that aligns and leverages disparate funding sources for maximum results and ensures that technical and professional support to districts and schools

is efficient, coordinated, and targeted. The West Virginia Department of Education will create a SEA unit to coordinate school turnaround and transformation efforts, managing funding received through both 1003(g) school improvement grants as well the Race to the Top grant. (See Appendix A-5 for a summary of actions).

Support Structure for Local Implementation

West Virginia sees the Race to the Top funds as the additional leverage needed to further build capacity at the local level, capacity that West Virginia will sustain and develop more broadly over time. To ensure that districts have sufficient and targeted capacity, the SEA will work with LEAs to create effective structures and processes that they can rely on for sustaining change now and into the future. West Virginia is well prepared to expand the system of support—making it more integrated and targeted—and the source of continuous improvement. It stands ready to be the backbone for delivering technical and professional support, implementing new initiatives, scaling powerful successful approaches, communicating and sharing best practices, and establishing statewide effective professional learning communities.

In the spring of 2009, the state superintendent concentrated efforts and funding to support local education agencies to gain expertise and the means to create professional learning communities at the school and district level. He believed, and the LEAs agreed, that reform initiatives had to drill deeper and reach the classroom, giving teachers and principals the resources and capacities to be stronger agents of reform. It was agreed that districts would utilize a portion of their state fiscal stabilization money to ensure that teachers are provided with the appropriate structures, resources, training, and time to meet together to improve student performance in every school throughout the state.

In addition, for the last two years West Virginia launched a new project—the Classroom Assessment Network (CAN), which is designed to build the capacity of regional and district leaders to support professional learning communities at the school level. Under CAN, there are currently eight collaborative teams, one in each RESA, which include leaders from 38 of West Virginia’s 55 school districts. These regional teams are led by a coordinator from the SEA who is an experienced facilitator of collaborative teams and includes the director of professional development from the RESA, district leaders of curriculum and assessment, and school leaders from the region. These teams were intentionally formed with stakeholders from different groups across the system to enable them to learn together about the professional learning community (PLC) process and then to bring that process back to their

respective groups across the multiple levels of the educational system—state, regional, district, and school. During the 2008–09 school year, this cadre received intensive professional development about the structures, supports, and processes that undergird successful PLCs. Moving forward, this cadre will use their new knowledge and experience to train additional cadres of regional support teams who will then provide support and technical assistance to districts and schools in their region. This mechanism of building functional PLCs at the school, district, regional, and state level have become a prototype that provides the architecture through which other reform initiatives can more efficiently and effectively reach the classroom.

Although West Virginia firmly believes that much of the support for reform can be built from the current cadre of teachers, leaders, and regional education service agencies, we do recognize that outside expertise and capacity will be essential. During the course of the next four years, we will engage partners to ensure that our system of support can and does provide the right training, tools, resources, and just-in-time expertise to all schools. Throughout the past four years, consultants and thought partners have been sought to guide West Virginia’s Global 21 initiatives. In addition, state leaders have traveled across the globe to develop a better understanding of necessary reform. As the state progresses with the Race to the Top initiatives, this dedication to learning and understanding from the best minds will continue.

The West Virginia Department of Education is also committed to more intensive and comprehensive support to chronically low performing schools and districts. This support will be delivered in concert with external service providers indentified through a state request for proposal (RFP) process. These partners will be required to demonstrate that they have a research-based instructional model and evidence of successful school and/or district transformation. School Improvement funds and Race to the Top funding will be coordinated to support these more intensive efforts. (See the state’s completed Race to The Top Budget in Section 8.)

Sustainability and Partnerships

The proposed scope of work in this proposal is a model of stakeholder group collaboration, integration, inclusion, and efficiency. Currently, the governor and the state superintendent of schools have strong support from both the education community and the general public for building an education system that prepares all learners for the 21st century. They understand that positive partnerships, networks, and relationships are critical to any successful reform agenda. Throughout the course of the past five years,

strong ties have been built with stakeholders across the spectrum from district superintendents to parents and the business community. The scope of work includes the active participation of representatives from West Virginia's teaching and principal ranks, AFT and NEA teacher organizations, other state-based membership and professional organizations such as the Parent-Teachers Association, and the Principal Associations, Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs), Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs), and the Chamber of Commerce. Leadership of both education associations (AFT and NEA) has indicated a willingness to engage in the codevelopment of initiatives concerning new evaluation and compensation systems for teachers and principals in the state (Appendix A-6). Local and national foundations, such as Benedum and New Venture Fund, have provided financial support for the development of the plan presented. The governor's educational and legislative liaisons are part of the policy efforts and all of the IHEs have agreed to join forces to revamp the teacher education and alternative certification programs in the state. RESAs will be tapped to be part of the vertical system of transformation that will undergird and streamline technical support to schools and districts. The implementation of these proposed plans is dependent on sustaining the strong coalitions for reform that have developed in the state throughout the past several years. West Virginia understands that this is done through effective, relevant, and timely communication and through inviting and honoring diverse voices as initiatives are developed, funded, and implemented.

In addition, national experts, nonprofit organizations, and for-profit service providers will be drawn upon to support this plan. Major universities, the Southern Regional Educational Board (SREB), the Appalachian Regional Comprehensive Center (ARC), and the Appalachian Regional Educational Laboratory are a few of the resources that will be tapped. West Virginia will also continue strong membership in effective coalitions of states and multistate collaboratives, often sponsored through the Council of Chief State School Officers. (See Appendix A-7 for letters of support.)

(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

Progress in raising achievement, closing gaps, increasing graduation rates, and enhancing college and career readiness

Four-fifths of the state's LEAs contain between 45 and 65 percent free lunch eligible students—a very narrow band compared with many other states. Similarly, the middle performing half of schools (on the 2009 WESTEST 2) fits in a band ranging from just 50 to 70 percent proficient. Figure 1 in Appendix A-8 displays this highly uniform scatter of schools across the state. Schools do not cluster geographically, most schools are small (see Table 1 in the Appendix A-8), and the range of performance variations across schools and districts is not wide. Where achievement gaps exist, they exist throughout the state rather than clustering in a few schools. Because of the way school achievement is distributed, identifying a small subset of struggling schools requires drawing some very fine distinctions, distinctions that may not be consequential. Given this uniformity, West Virginia has been focusing turnaround efforts not so much on individual schools as on such critical matters as adding appropriate content and

rigor to curricula, upgrading teacher skills across the board, maximizing the use of technology, assuring adequate funding to all schools and service agencies, etc.

West Virginia targets significant resources to drive improvements in student achievement, increasing graduation rates, closing gaps, and preparing our students for college and careers. There are now several foundational efforts that are based on research and best practice, and these are beginning to show evidence of success. Although only small gains can be reported at this time, the West Virginia Department of Education is monitoring reform efforts closely to support continuous improvement and development. We are confident that strong and positive outcomes will emerge.

Highlights of progress and capacity include academic content standards and assessments that are strong now but will be stronger with the adoption of the common core standards and the implementation of balanced assessments. Schools are provided with a suite of additional, more frequent measures of academic performance and growth in a variety of content areas. West Virginia's data system is broad, deep, and rich, truly longitudinal and fully transactional with daily updates. Assuring great teachers is high on our reform agenda, and a number of initiatives, each with a strong research base, are in place to grow the capacity and skills of the teaching staff already on the job. The state's institutions of higher education have been actively collaborating with the Department of Education to promote the inclusion of 21st century skills in teacher preparation curricula and to assure competency in these skills before licensure. The Department, higher education, and teacher organizations also have drafted standards for teacher practice and have begun to develop metrics to assess practice. Assuring great leaders has also been an area of rich progress for West Virginia throughout the past four years. A Leadership Collaborative composed of representatives from higher education, public education, and select policymakers began the process of framing new standards for teacher leaders, principals, and superintendents.

Some additional examples of the major initiatives and efforts currently supporting West Virginia's state reform efforts include:

21st Century Jobs Cabinet of West Virginia. This Cabinet focuses on promoting a seamless education system that connects every level of education from early childhood to graduate study and encompasses job training and lifelong learning—enhancing and supporting the state's job creation and economic development efforts. The Cabinet includes the Secretary of the Department of Education and the Arts, the State Superintendent of Schools, the Chief Executive Officer for the Center for

Professional Development, the Chancellor of Higher Education, the Chancellor for Community and Technical College Education, the Commissioner of the Bureau for Children and Families, the Executive Director of the West Virginia Development Office, the Director of WORKFORCE West Virginia, and other key stakeholders across the state. The Cabinet has worked on educational issues, such as improving preparation, retention and professional development of educators; creating the West Virginia career pathways model; and ensuring integration of vocational/technical education and career counseling into all levels of education.

Southern Regional Educational Board (SREB) State College and Career Readiness Consortium. As part of this consortium, West Virginia has agreed to have one set of readiness standards in reading, writing, and mathematics which define in detail both content and performance at the K–12 and postsecondary level. The purpose is to enhance classroom teachers’ ability to understand the standards and commit teaching associated curricula. West Virginia has committed to assessing students’ progress no later than junior year and students who need targeted help, based on the assessment are required to participate in college transitional mathematics and English courses.

West Virginia High School Redesign Initiative. In 2005, the State Board of Education created a West Virginia High School Task Force to review the status of high school performance and make policy and practice recommendations to facilitate improved student performance and outcomes. The result of this effort led to a number of recommendations that were translated into State Board policy. Given that high school student performance and outcomes continue to be a concern of the State Board, even after two decades of working with SREB initiatives and policy revisions, the state applied for a National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) high school improvement grant in November 2008 and was one of three states to receive an award to continue the high school redesign work. Since that time, much effort has been focused on evaluating the structure and functions of the current traditional high school model through the engagement of a large stakeholder group, student forums across the state, and extensive dialogue within the context of a State Board subcommittee. The tentative results of these efforts include a redesigned high school model based on three student-focused criteria: purposeful, personalized, and proficiency based. The realization of this new model is dependent upon many of the components described in the West Virginia Race to the Top grant application (i.e., comprehensive data system, standards and assessment, focus on struggling schools, and great teachers and leaders). The goal of the West Virginia High School Taskforce is to complete the consensus building process relative to the new design and have policy developed to support

implementation by September 2010.

National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center). West Virginia is one of six selected states—**Colorado, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Tennessee, and West Virginia**—to develop comprehensive state dropout prevention and recovery policies through the State Strategies to Achieve Graduation for All initiative. The initiative will help states clearly identify their dropout problem; assess the gaps in student supports for preventing students from dropping out of school and recovering the students that drop out; and create a dropout prevention and recovery action plan for implementation that includes tactics such as state policies, executive orders, advisory councils, legislation, or regulatory reforms.

Kids First. Governor Joe Manchin developed the West Virginia Kids First program so that children could benefit from a caring health professional working closely with their parents and school. By creating a medical home for the state's children, the three important parties can come together to establish the best resources and services for each child. Kids First guarantees that every child who is entering school (prekindergarten and kindergarten) will receive a comprehensive wellness exam (following the American Academy of Pediatrics Bright Futures Guidelines) by a health care provider that includes hearing, speech, language, and growth and development.

The West Virginia Healthy Lifestyles Act. In 2005, the state Legislature passed the West Virginia Healthy Lifestyles Act. Language within the law specifically targeted to public school settings includes (1) increasing access to healthy beverages, (2) increasing physical education time, (3) regular fitness testing, (4) regular BMI assessment, and (5) health education assessment (HEAP). Only a handful of United States governors and legislators have demonstrated such bold and innovative leadership in targeting childhood obesity. Many entities, including Action for Healthy Kids; the West Virginia State Medical Association; the Partnership for a Healthy West Virginia; the West Virginia Department of Education; the West Virginia Bureau for Public Health (WVBPH); the West Virginia Public Employee Insurance Agency; the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation; and others, worked collaboratively to ensure that this legislation passed. This legislation authorized the West Virginia Bureau for Public Health's Office of Healthy Lifestyles (OHL) to serve as the coordinating entity for efforts addressing obesity and related weight problems and allocated resources, in the form of a state line item, to support physical activity and nutrition efforts.

Federal Transition to Teaching Program. The West Virginia Department of Education Transition-to-Teaching Project is

a partnership between two institutions of higher education and 26 high-need LEAs. The program recruits and trains mid-career professionals and recent college graduates with non-education degrees to teach high-need subject areas, including English, foreign language, mathematics, science, and special education. Participants receive full-time pay and benefits as they complete the online certification courses offered through Marshall Graduate College or West Virginia University. Project activities include recruitment and retention initiatives, a multimodal instructional component delivered through distance technologies, a two-year mentoring experience, an online platform for candidate interaction with others, the development of an electronic portfolio, and financial incentives.

Federal Troops to Teachers program. The West Virginia Troops to Teachers program is a benefit provided by the Defense Activity for Non-traditional Education Support to qualifying military personnel. The West Virginia Troops to Teachers was initiated in 1994 by the West Virginia Department of Education and offers assistance to individuals looking to switch careers or start a secondary career. Members who qualify for financial assistance are eligible for either a \$5,000 stipend to cover certification expenses or up to a \$10,000 bonus with a three-year commitment to teach at a low-income school. Troops can apply to any of the seven alternative certification programs offered in West Virginia to complete their certification.

Improving Student Outcomes

At the turn of the 21st century, the academic performance of West Virginia’s students, as measured by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), the nation’s report card, was by and large not distinguishable from national averages. The next four charts (prepared from the NCES NAEP State Profiles) provide five-year subgroup trend data for West Virginia by reading and mathematics performance in Grades 4 and 8.

WV NAEP Mathematics for Grade 4 Percent At or Above Proficiency							
	All	Female	Male	White	Black	Low SES	SWD
2005	25.1	22.4	27.5	25.3	16.9	18.2	12.7
2007	32.6	30.4	34.6	33.0	18.8	22.2	18.0
2009	28.1	26.3	29.8	28.5	19.6	19.6	13.5
Change 05 to 09	3.0	3.9	2.3	3.2	2.7	1.4	0.8

- The percentage of students in all subgroups scoring at or above the proficient level **increased** (2005-2009).

WV NAEP Mathematics for Grade 8 Percent At or Above Proficiency							
	All	Female	Male	White	Black	Low SES	SWD
2005	17.9	18.1	17.7	18.1	5.7	10.0	1.7
2007	18.5	15.5	21.5	19.0	4.0	10.3	3.7
2009	19.4	17.8	21.0	19.6	11.3	11.3	2.2
change 05 to 09	1.5	-0.3	3.3	1.5	5.6	1.3	0.5

- The percentage of students in all subgroups, except the female subgroup, scoring at or above the proficient level **increased** from 2005 to 2009.

WV NAEP Reading for Grade 4 Percent At or Above Proficiency							
	All	Female	Male	White	Black	Low SES	SWD
2005	25.6	28.2	22.9	26.1	14.7	16.6	11.3
2007	27.8	31.9	24.1	28.3	13.3	19.0	9.0
2009	Anticipated release is Spring 2010.						
Change 05 to 07	2.2	3.7	1.2	2.2	-1.4	2.4	-2.3

- The percentage of students in all subgroups, except the Black and SWD subgroups, scoring at or above the proficient level **increased** from 2005 to 2007.

WV NAEP Reading for Grade 8 Percent At or Above Proficiency							
	All	Female	Male	White	Black	Low SES	SWD
2005	21.9	27.3	17.0	22.3	10.3	12.6	4.7
2007	22.9	27.5	18.6	23.4	11.2	14.8	3.1
2009	Anticipated release is Spring 2010.						
Change 05 to 07	1.0	0.2	1.6	1.1	0.9	2.2	-1.6

- The percentage of students in all subgroups, except SWD subgroup, scoring at or above the proficient level **increased** from 2005 to 2007.

In 2005, West Virginia’s leadership decided that this situation required major redirection and restructuring. Thus, the bold decision was made to raise the level of student expectation to a more rigorous competitive national and international level. Although this change would potentially result in more schools being designated as low performing, the SEA felt that it was necessary to challenge students with more rigorous curriculum and assessments. Thus, West Virginia has worked with Dr. Gary Phillips and Dr. Norman Webb, members of the West Virginia Technical Assistance Committee (TAC), to significantly revise assessments and create more international performance level cut scores for Proficiency on WESTEST 2. The wide breadth of policies, programs, and practices that followed this bold decision is documented elsewhere in this proposal. The point here is to make the connection between the data on student performance and policy. The thoughtful, research-informed policies, programs, and practices that West Virginia has enacted comprise a coherent and comprehensive suite, one that is consistent with the four ARRA reform areas. West Virginia educators are therefore positioned to face successfully the many challenges associated with improving schools. We know what works. We know that success takes place by changing instruction in each and every classroom. West Virginia has designed a delivery system to make this work happen. With Race to the Top dollars, West Virginia will accelerate this process. The pattern of the state’s tested student performance will change markedly over the next half decade. More importantly, all West Virginia students will be able to see a better life and to have the confidence and skills to go wherever their dreams lead them.

(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.²

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.

Evidence for (B)(1)(ii):

² 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.

For Phase 1 applicants:

- A description of the legal process in the State for adopting standards, and the State’s plan, current progress, and timeframe for adoption.

For Phase 2 applicants:

- Evidence that the State has adopted the standards. Or, if the State has not yet adopted the standards, a description of the legal process in the State for adopting standards and the State’s plan, current progress, and timeframe for adoption.

Recommended maximum response length: Two pages

The West Virginia Department of Education signed a Memorandum of Agreement in which we committed to adopt the common standards developed by the Common Core State Standards Initiative (Appendix B-1). The state is uniquely positioned to take a strong leadership role in the development and adoption of the Common Core Standards due to the West Virginia Department of Education’s 2005–09 work on creating international benchmarked standards based on the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). Governor Joe Manchin, chair of the National Governors Association (NGA) Center for Best Practices, and State Superintendent Steven L. Paine, president-elect of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), support the work of international benchmarks for standards, assessment, and performance in West Virginia and the nation. West Virginia will join 47 other states, two territories, and the District of Columbia in our development of a set of common K–12 standards in English language arts and mathematics. (The participating states and territories are listed in Appendix B-2.)

The Common Core State Standards Initiative has released a draft of the college and career-readiness standards developed by Achieve, ACT, and The College Board. These rigorous standards are internationally benchmarked, research and evidence based, aligned with college and work expectations, and inclusive of rigorous content and higher-order thinking skills. (Appendixes B-3 and B-4 contain a draft of the college and career-readiness standards as well as evidence that these standards are internationally benchmarked.) The Common Core State Standards Initiative currently plans to request public comments on the K–12 standards early in 2010. Both sets of standards will be validated by a panel of experts before being finalized in spring 2010.

West Virginia will adopt the finalized K–12 Common Core Standards by August 2, 2010. W. Va. Code §18-2E-5 authorizes the West Virginia Board of Education, as the constitutional body charged with the general supervision of schools, to establish state

standards, assess the performance of students against the standards, hold schools and districts accountable, and help schools and districts build their capacity to implement the standards (Appendix B-5). The charge of the West Virginia Board of Education is not only to adopt the standards but also to build the capacity of schools and districts to implement high-quality standards-based instruction in all classrooms throughout the state. The implementation of the Common Core Standards will be completed at the end of the timeline defined in this grant application and fully effective in the 2014–15 school year. West Virginia Board of Education Policy 1242 provides the legal process that the West Virginia Department of Education will follow to adopt the Common Core Standards (Appendix B-6).

After the standards are finalized, the West Virginia Department of Education will engage key stakeholders in the revision of proposed state policies to adopt the Common Core Standards in reading/language arts and mathematics. These state policies will be revised in advance of the May 2010 meeting of the West Virginia Board of Education. At this scheduled state board meeting on May 12–13, 2010, the board members will review and approve the proposed policies for placement on public comment. The public review process will adhere to the aforementioned policy requirements, and the policies will be revised and returned to the West Virginia Board of Education for adoption at the scheduled meeting on July 14–15, 2010, well in advance of the target deadline of August 2, 2010. The new policy officially adopting the Common Core Standards will be posted on the West Virginia Department of Education website. The process for aligning to the Common Core Standards will begin immediately after adoption—with full implementation, effective with the complete alignment and development of summative and formative assessments in school year 2014–15. The implementation plan is further described in section (B)(3) of this proposal and is a replication of a model that served us well with the rollout of our current nationally recognized standards.

(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

West Virginia signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Balanced Assessment Consortium (BAC) that commits the West Virginia Department of Education to a leadership role in the development of summative and formative assessments through the upcoming U.S. Department of Education common core assessment grants. These balanced assessments will align with the K-12 Common Core Standards (Appendix B-7). BAC states will be led by the School Redesign Network (SRN) at Stanford University (Appendix B-8).

The West Virginia Department of Education will collaborate with other BAC states to develop a balanced system of both formative and summative assessments and apply for a Common Core Assessment Grant. The development of this balanced system of high-quality assessments will be guided by the following principles:

- Assessments and accountability systems include multiple measures designed to assess 21st century learning skills, content, and technology integration through project-based scenarios/tasks and will be validated through the production of technical reports that document validity, reliability, and comparability.
- Assessments are developed to continuously monitor student progress with multiple measures, including all students with

individualized education programs and English language learner students.

- Assessments establish cut scores on summative measures that are aligned with international performance benchmarks, such as TIMSS and PISA.
- Assessments elicit evidence of actual student performance on challenging tasks and include the student as a key stakeholder in monitoring learning progressions.
- Assessments engage teachers in the development and scoring of multiple measures to redirect instruction.
- Assessment systems incorporate new instructional and administrative technologies that enhance engagement, access, and accurate demonstration of the student’s knowledge with greater speed and reliability of results.

The Executive Director for Assessment will serve as the liaison to facilitate the establishment of the BAC.

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

West Virginia's Race to the Top application supports the continuation of the state's systematic and systemic restructuring of public education. This systemic process started with changing standards, assessments, instructional resources, technology integration, and professional development. The transformative activities were recognized in the 2009 *Technology Counts* publication, with West Virginia receiving an "A"; the 2010 *Quality Counts* publication, which reports West Virginia as No.1 in the nation in standards/assessments (Appendix B-9); and national recognition by the Partnership for 21st Century Skills for West Virginia's outstanding professional development through the Teacher Leadership Institutes and exemplary capacity-building instructional resources developed by West Virginia teachers for West Virginia teachers on the Teach 21 website. Preliminary evidence of five-year increases in National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores and increases in student performance—from the WESTEST 2 field tests to the operational tests—indicate positive support for the systemic changes to date and the need for support for goals set forth in this application. West Virginia remains dedicated to the pursuit of an exemplary P–20 education system that equips all West Virginia students for college and career success in a global society.

In order to realize this transformative vision, implementation of the Common Core Standards and the assessments that are aligned with those standards will be focused on the following four goals:

- Lead statewide implementation of internationally benchmarked K–12 Common Core Standards.
- Develop a balanced assessment system that is aligned with the Common Core Standards.
- Improve rates of college and career readiness for graduates from West Virginia's schools.
- Build a comprehensive system of horizontal and vertical supports for educators.

Goal 1: Lead statewide implementation of internationally benchmarked K–12 Common Core Standards.

West Virginia will adopt the new Common Core Standards in 2010 and commit to aligning the universal Prekindergarten Early Learning Standards to support the Common Core Standards. In addition to collaborating with other states in the Balanced Assessment Consortium, the West Virginia Department of Education is committed to taking a leadership role in the development and/or revision of curriculum instructional resources (Teach 21) that align to the Common Core frameworks (Appendix C-3).

The following paragraphs summarize three major initiatives for ensuring implementation of international benchmarked K–

12 standards: alignment, professional development, and instructional resources.

Alignment: Beginning in 2010, master teachers across all programmatic levels and selected higher education faculty will work with the West Virginia Department of Education to identify the gaps and inconsistencies between the state’s current grade-specific Content Standards and Objectives (CSOs) and the Common Core Standards in reading/language arts and mathematics and resolve those gaps and inconsistencies through creation of West Virginia’s new 21st Century Common Core Content Standards and Objectives (CSOs). The state’s experience in using master teachers to develop its current nationally respected Content Standards and Objectives suggests that new standards are accepted and implemented with less resistance when classroom educators are at the heart of the alignment process and subsequent changes.

Although this work of resolution and creation is expected to continue across the first two years of the grant, a coalition of master teachers, West Virginia Department of Education staff, and higher education faculty, working collaboratively with the Division of Curriculum and Instruction, will begin by 2011–12 to implement the CSOs in reading/language arts and mathematics classrooms through an array of professional development formats. These formats will begin with large-scale content academies, teacher specialization forums, and instructional resources available through symposiums hosted by Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs). Then they will extend into the school and classroom through the systematic structure of professional learning communities and the restructured Teach 21, which will house interactive standards, curriculum frameworks, instructional lessons, performance and formative assessments, instructional strategies, and videos.

Funding sources at the West Virginia Department of Education, including state allocations and federal dollars, will be braided to cover the extensive professional development necessary to implement the new CSOs and maximize the reality of interrelated work and commitment to train all teachers in these new standards.

West Virginia’s commitment to PK–12 instruction and planning necessitates a revision of its Prekindergarten Early Learning Standards (West Virginia Board of Education Policy 2520.15) to complement the learning expectations of early-grade students being instructed by the CSOs. The revision of the early learning standards will be undertaken in conjunction with the review of gaps between the current CSOs and the Common Core Standards and with intended implementation in the 2012–13 school year. Extended Standards for use with the 1 percent special education population also will be revised to be in alignment with the CSOs

following their final adoption.

Professional Development: The West Virginia Department of Education intends to implement comprehensive professional development structures that represent evaluation findings from 14 states in implementing mathematics and science professional development that impacted student learning (Blank, de las Alas, & Smith, 2008); these findings indicate that mathematics/science professional development focused on content and follow-up pedagogical knowledge (50 hours or more) results in increased student achievement. The West Virginia proposed model will exceed 50 hours of professional development per teacher and enhances this learning experience through the expansion of online experiences (such as courses or webinars) that support continuous learning of teachers based on identified areas of concern.

The provision of professional development focused on increased content knowledge triangulated with 21st century skills and technology is essential for teachers to teach a more rigorous curriculum aligned to the Common Core Standards. Given the number of all high school course failures occurring in mathematics and science as well as the national urgency to prepare students for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) careers, West Virginia has determined to use Race to the Top to support mathematics and science professional development for Common Core instruction and learning. West Virginia commits to braiding allowable state education agency (SEA) and local education agency (LEA) funds, Title VI, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Title I, and Title II to support similar professional development in English/reading and social studies. Collaboratively working with institutions of higher education will result in the seamless integration of preservice graduates into the mathematics and science classrooms.

West Virginia has been actively engaged in the development of structures for mathematics and science Common Core implementation that support the integration of innovative research-based mathematics and science pedagogy. West Virginia has been working diligently to support STEM achievements through the establishment of a foundational network of organization and programs that include the following: Project Lead the Way, Globaloria, Math Science Partnerships, Math County Leadership Teams, Science with Inquiry Modules pilot, Problem-Based Learning Units, techSteps, National Science Teachers Association science packs, geographic information systems state site license, robot Algebra project, college transition math course, environmental literacy, and a stakeholder STEM coalition (Appendix B-10).

West Virginia proposes to support these foundational networks through the following core activities proposed in this application:

- Provide sustained professional development for professional learning teams in mathematics/science content, integrated with 21st century learning skills and technology tools, in every elementary school with departmentalized intermediate grades. A two-year professional development experience focused on the content knowledge and pedagogical skills necessary to implement inquiry-based learning in mathematics and science will serve as the foundation for completion of an endorsement in elementary mathematics and science.
- Support the implementation of the National Science Foundation–endorsed, kit-based science program until 2013, when SEA instructional material funds will be utilized to sustain the K–6 kit-based science program.
- Increase the content knowledge and content-specific pedagogical skills of 1,200 teachers of 7th- and 8th-grade mathematics/science over a three-year period (average of 7.5 teachers per school). Statewide textbook adoption in 2010 will be inquiry-based and supported by SEA, RESAs, LEAs, and institutions of higher education. A research-based study on project-based learning implementation in mathematics/science will be completed by the Buck Institute for Education.
- Establish Algebra I support classes to assist struggling students in the mastery of Algebra I standards by the end of 9th grade. Students not demonstrating sufficient skill acquisition, as identified in the West Virginia data system, will receive extended time during the school day and 24/7 access to research-based online support. Race to the Top funds will be utilized to support essential online professional development for 9th-grade Algebra teachers in implementing the research-based instructional materials.
- Support the professional development of teams of teachers engaged in professional learning communities in every high school (average 8 teachers and 1 principal per team) in West Virginia. The professional learning communities will focus on the implementation of STEM through acquisition of content standards and support the Southern Regional Education Board college readiness standards. Race to the Top funds will be utilized to support the teachers of mathematics/science, and SEA, LEA, and IDEA funds will support the general and special educators of English, social studies, and other relevant content

areas and principals. Following the initial one-year intensive professional development and technical assistance experience, schools will receive continued vertical and horizontal support leadership (see Goal 4). Year 1 intensive professional development and technical assistance will be followed in Years 2–4 with teachers developing a problem-based learning design to dispel misconceptions in promoting STEM.

- Provide vertical and horizontal systems of support at every operational level for effective implementation of professional learning communities, and utilization of research-based resources aligned to the CSOs and STEM education (see Goal 4).

Resources: At the center of the Common Core Standards/Assessment system of transformation is a focus on improving learning through a variety of research-based instructional resources and technology tools. To accomplish the goals of this application, an infrastructure of learning, requires a shift from a hardware concept to a collaboration of international scope and engagement for using 21st century learning resources. The successful transition for all learners to the Common Core Standards and assessments is dependent on the alignment of the Teach 21 content and other resources to the Common Core Standards. Funds will be used to support the assembly of master teachers to review and align all current Teach 21 resources to the Common Core Standards. Of equal importance, West Virginia commits to aligning all future resources to authentic 21st century balanced assessments.

Students will be engaged learners in the classroom, and adults will be engaged learners in professional learning communities through the utilization of “always accessible” aligned electronic resources and virtual tools. These resources provide anytime collaboration for all stakeholders—from the classroom to the boardroom. The development of the Learn 21 “virtual place” will coordinate and align all current and future resources, online curriculum material, resource partners, and tools (Web 2.0 and 3.0). This virtual place will be the statewide collaboration point regarding the classroom activities to implement the Common Core Standards. The success of the Common Core Standards and assessment transition is contingent upon the new learning technologies, which must be utilized in the 21st century professional development arena to promote instruction for student learning that ensures success in higher education institutions and, ultimately, the 21st century workplace.

Activities	Timeline	Responsible Party
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Align CSOs to Common Core	Years 1–2	SEA—Office of Instruction
Provide Professional Development aligned to Common Core	Years 1-4	SEA- Division of Curriculum and Instruction
Realign Resources around Common Core	Years 3-4	SEA- Division of Curriculum and Instruction

Goal 2: Develop a balanced assessment system that is aligned with the Common Core Standards.

As part of this Common Core Standards grant application, West Virginia will work closely with other states to establish a Balanced Assessment Consortium, which will develop formative assessments that are grounded in the standards, performance based, and structured to continuously improve teaching and learning. The formative assessment design in this application will create multiple measures of learning to assist in improving current course grades, end-of-course assessments, high school graduation, and/or college admissions.

As part of West Virginia’s collaborative work with other states in the upcoming Common Core Assessment grant application, a balanced, comprehensive assessment system will be developed. The West Virginia Department of Education further pledges to work with the Balanced Assessment Consortium to (1) combine the formative work of the Common Core Standards grant application; and (2) ensure that the summative assessment design will offer a variety of options for 21st century item formats and adaptive technology applications, as per the guiding principles in Section B(2).

If approved by U.S. Department of Education, the Balanced Assessment Consortium will require and create a system of technical quality documentation for summative assessments that will include valid, reliable, and comparability data about annual student growth. In Year 1 of grant, the existing state assessment, WESTEST 2, will be used to provide teachers with data about annual student growth. In Years 2–3, growth measures will be available that are based on student progress on multiple measures to include Acuity benchmark assessments. (Acuity is SEA funded for all districts.) Then during Year 3, West Virginia will pilot the curriculum-embedded assessments developed by the Balanced Assessment Consortium for this grant. In Year 4, West Virginia’s

contract with the current vendor expires and the summative assessments that are developed by the Balanced Assessment Consortium will be administered in 2014–15 as a state summative assessment tool.

Professional development to support formative assessments will include teacher, STEM, content, and Special Education academies; online courses; and school-based professional learning communities. Professional learning communities will be supported by district-level teams that include chief instructional leaders, master-level content teachers, and others who will receive intensive training through SEA and RESA efforts during Year 2. District leadership teams will then support teachers in their school-based professional learning communities as teachers learn to develop learning progressions that are linked to the new national standards and design classroom assessment that are linked to these learning progressions and BAC assessments.

In Year 3, RESA and district leadership teams, will deliver intensive and sustained professional development to assist teachers in embedding problem-based learning in classrooms.

Activities	Timeline	Responsible Party
Align assessments to Common Core	Years 2–4	SEA- Division of Curriculum and Instruction and CAG Liaison for Assessment

Goal 3: Improve rates of college/career readiness for graduates from West Virginia’s schools.

During the first year, state leaders will engage teachers, district leaders, and representatives from institutions of higher education in the alignment of high school exit criteria and college entrance requirements with the new standards and assessments. In addition, the West Virginia Department of Education will provide online credit opportunities for students who are struggling with course completion.

As an integral part of its overall effort to dramatically improve literacy, numeracy, 21st century skills, and the graduation rate, West Virginia proposes a strategic deployment of additional high-quality, research-based online learning resources and virtual courses through the West Virginia Virtual School. West Virginia recognizes a root problem leading to an increased number of dropouts and a lack of preparedness for college and career readiness is the large number of failures in required high school core

courses. During the 2008–09 school year, more than 34,000 failures were reported in high school mathematics, English, science, and social studies. West Virginia further recognizes that access to STEM courses that prepare students for STEM careers, college, and career readiness is limited due to insufficient availability of highly qualified teachers and funding restrictions. The Race to the Top application will address these two identified needs through the following initiatives:

- **Expansion of West Virginia Virtual School** will (1) expand access to virtual credit recovery of core courses and ensure mastery of skill deficiencies; (2) expand access to STEM-related courses; (3) expand availability of K–5 courses for skill acquisition and acceleration; (4) expand college courses to allow students to complete a high school diploma and the basics of an associates degree while still in high school; and (5) identify a group of at-risk high school students who will acquire their high school diplomas through a blend of virtual courses, adult basic education, and career and technical offerings, resulting in the award of general equivalency diploma and/or a standard high school diploma, including re-enrolling high school dropouts.
- **Creation of a Postsecondary Collaborative Coalition** will target areas for dual and advanced credit and make recommendations to determine if the West Virginia Virtual School needs to become a diploma-granting school similar to the current working process of diplomas granted by West Virginia districts.

Activities	Timeline	Responsible Party
Expand virtual resources to improve college and career readiness	Years 1–4	SEA- Division of Curriculum and Instruction and Division of Career & Technical Educ.

Goal 4: Build a comprehensive system of horizontal and vertical supports for educators.

The organizing framework to drive the transformation of teaching and learning must occur at all organizational levels: SEA, RESAs, LEAs, institutions of higher education, schools, and classrooms in West Virginia. This transformation is based on a system focused on changing a school culture to one that is defined by collective accountability and consists of the full implementation of

the following elements related to professional learning communities: (1) pervasive, ongoing collaboration (face-to-face and virtual) focused on student and teacher learning; (2) shared knowledge regarding student learning; (3) application of a balanced assessment system to monitor each student’s learning progressions; (4) full use (development, implementation, and student accountability) of multiple measures to assess learning needs and inform individual and collective practice; (5) ongoing professional learning that occurs as part of routine work practice; and (6) use of a data system that informs, clarifies, and monitors student proficiency in every essential skill and engages students, teachers, and parents.

West Virginia is committed to implementing the Common Core Standards and a balanced assessment system but recognizes that neither instruction nor student achievement will improve without a transformative system of vertical and horizontal supports that enable all stakeholder structures to build capacity that supports dramatically improved teaching and learning within and across the system.

Educators at the SEA, RESA and LEA levels are all *learners* in this system of transformation. Intense focus on improving the learning of all stakeholders to guide all decision making is essential. Students will be engaged learners in the classroom, and adults will be engaged learners in professional learning communities that are facilitated within schools, districts, regions, higher education, and the state education agency. Within these professional learning communities, adults across the system of transformation will engage in collaborative teams that analyze student data, set goals, and align resources in order to improve student achievement, particularly in numeracy and literacy.

During Year 1, vertical supports of professional learning communities will include structures that allow West Virginia Department of Education, RESAs, institutions of higher education, district leadership, and Classroom Assessment Network (CAN) stakeholders to become more knowledgeable of both the processes of professional learning communities, Common Core Standards, and balanced assessment processes. Concurrently, county and school strategic plans will be revised to include horizontal evidence of the defined implementation of elements related to the establishment of professional learning communities. District superintendents will set aside a professional development time for interactive exercises in establishing or strengthening schools’ professional learning communities. Professional development provided by any vertical professional learning communities will support the use of content information and improved professional practice. Consistent with research, West Virginia’s efforts have

encouraged professional collaboration among teachers and provided teachers with frequent and ongoing opportunities for active learning focused on local problems of practice (Carnegie Council on Advancing Literacy, 2010; Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001). Race to the Top will strengthen professional learning communities and assist teachers to maintain focus on research-based instruction (Herman et al., 2008; Marsh et al., 2005).

Activities	Timeline	Responsible Party
Revise county and school strategic plans to establish horizontal support networks	Year 1	SEA—RTTT Director
Provide vertical supports for professional learning communities	Years 1-4	SEA—RTTT Director

References

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Marsh, J. A., Kerr, K. A., Ikemoto, G. S., Darilek, H., Suttorp, M., et al. (2005). *The role of districts in fostering instructional improvement: Lessons from three urban districts partnered with the Institute for Learning*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. Retrieved January 13, 2010, from http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2005/RAND_MG361.pdf

Performance Measures Performance measures for this criterion are optional. If the State wishes to include performance measures, please enter them as rows in this table and, for each measure, provide annual targets in the columns provided.	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
(Enter measures here, if any.) Not Applicable					
WESTEST2 Proficiency Trajectory <i>*(two years of baseline data are required to determine proficiency trajectories [approved in WV's Accountability Workbook] and determine appropriate scale score growth for one year)</i>	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Graduation Rate	72.63	74.0	75.6	77.1	78.3
Percentage of students meeting college readiness benchmark <i>*(Benchmark scale scores are not available until WESTEST2 2010 scores are confirmed accurate)</i>	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	60%

(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

The West Virginia statewide longitudinal data system includes 10 of the 12 elements of the America COMPETES Act and nine of the 10 essential elements measured by the Data Quality Campaign.

1. A unique statewide student identifier that does not permit a student to be individually identified by users of the system—COMPLETED

A unique statewide student identifier has been in use since 2004 for all students in West Virginia. This ID is uniquely created for student records in the West Virginia Education Information System (WVEIS) and is used within all schools and districts in the state.

2. Student-level enrollment, demographic, and program participation information—COMPLETED

WVEIS includes student record data on student enrollment, race/ethnicity, gender, disability status, special education status, English language learner (ELL) designation, enrolled school, teachers, course schedules, attendance, student retention, discipline, and other information including program participation. W.Va. Code §18-2-26(f) requires all public schools and districts to use this statewide data system as they maintain their student data records (Appendix C-1).

3. Student-level information about the points at which students exit, transfer in, transfer out, drop out, or complete P–16 education programs—COMPLETED

The West Virginia Department of Education maintains student data on P–12 enrollment, transfers, dropouts, graduates, and exits from school including specific programs such as special education and English as a second language (ESL). The Higher Education Policy Commission (HEPC) maintains student data on college enrollment, participation in remedial courses, course completion, transfers, and degree completion.

4. The capacity to communicate with higher education data systems—COMPLETED

The West Virginia Department of Education has the capacity to communicate with higher education data systems.

Transcripts currently are shared through the National Transcript Center, and a process is being developed to expand the data shared.

5. A state data audit system assessing data quality, validity, and reliability—COMPLETED

Audits, business rules, and data definitions have been created for WVEIS since its inception over a period of 19 years. Data audits assessing data quality, validity, and reliability are conducted during submission of data from local education agencies (LEAs) to the state education agency (SEA) by a limited group of administrators responsible for WVEIS reporting.

6. Yearly test records of individual students with respect to assessments under section 1111(b) of the ESEA (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)) —COMPLETED

West Virginia State assessments for the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) have been maintained for individual students since the inception of the current assessment and accountability system. Individual student assessment records include student demographics related to subgroups, proficiency level, scale score, and testing accommodations.

7. Information on students not tested by grade and subject—COMPLETED

In order to identify students not tested, student enrollment data is matched to a data file of students who are tested. Information on student grades, tested subjects, and demographic information is pulled from the state data system. Then, a Web application is used to collect information from the districts on the reasons why students were not assessed.

8. A teacher identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students—COMPLETED

All West Virginia educators have an employee ID that is matched to classrooms and individual students through the state's school scheduling system. In addition, the primary teacher of record for special education students is identified in the individual student special education information record.

9. Student-level transcript information, including information on courses completed and grades earned—COMPLETED

The West Virginia Education Information System creates student transcripts that meet Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council (PESC) standards. Course completion and grades earned are included in the data collected from transcripts.

10. Student-level college readiness test scores—COMPLETED

Student-level college readiness scores are generated from student responses to the state of West Virginia's achievement test WESTEST2. Scores are reported for individual students with their WESTEST2 score reports.

11. Information regarding the extent to which students transition successfully from secondary school to postsecondary

education, including whether students enroll in remedial coursework—NOT COMPLETED

It is anticipated that this will be completed by Year 2 of the grant period.

12. Other information determined necessary to address alignment and adequate preparation for success in postsecondary education—NOT COMPLETED

It is anticipated that this will be completed by Year 2 of the grant period.

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.³

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

We believe that using data in a way that drives decisions on instruction, policy, management, and overall effectiveness can transform our classrooms into hubs of student achievement, involvement, and interest. Although data from the state’s statewide longitudinal data system currently can be accessed online through real-time interactive reports, the data reported is used for school and district administrators to access federal and state accountability reporting or to inform basic school operations, such as student scheduling. We recognize that in order to make lasting changes in the classroom, data needs to inform and engage students, parents, teachers, administrators, SEA staff, and external stakeholders. Throughout the next several years, we plan to build on our strong

³ 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.

statewide longitudinal data system to provide data to decision makers that will respond to their needs and guide them in making decisions that result in increased achievement, graduation rates, and college and career readiness. Governor Joe Manchin has dedicated \$5 million of West Virginia’s State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF) toward expanding the state’s longitudinal data system to meet the following goals (Appendix C-2):

- Create connections to postsecondary data and early childhood data maintained by external agencies.
- Include benchmark and formative assessment data in the statewide longitudinal data system.
- Engage stakeholders in the development of indicators and reports generated from the statewide longitudinal data system.

Goal 1: Create connections to early childhood data and postsecondary data maintained by external agencies.

In order for the West Virginia Department of Education to prepare students to be college and career ready, we must have access to data that tells us how our students perform at all stages of development, including before they enter prekindergarten at age four and after they transition from high school to postsecondary education and the workforce. This information will inform how we improve core instructional practices and school support systems to ensure that students have the foundation to be successful throughout elementary, middle, and high school and beyond.

Early Childhood: The West Virginia Department of Education has developed a partnership with the Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR) to gather early childhood education data. DHHR maintains records on children receiving prekindergarten through their Birth to Three programs. This data will provide us with information necessary to provide students entering our prekindergarten program with specialized supports. From the analysis of this data, we will identify subgroups of our student population that need extra assistance in the transition to prekindergarten and from prekindergarten to kindergarten. The data will guide the development of programs that target needy subgroups with interventions focused on improving their school readiness: cognitively, socially, and emotionally.

Postsecondary Education and the Workforce: The West Virginia Department of Education has developed a partnership with the Higher Education Policy Commission (HEPC) and the Department of Labor’s Workforce Division to gather postsecondary data. HEPC maintains all public higher education data and will provide West Virginia with access to data from the National Student

Clearinghouse, allowing us to track college enrollment and completion for our students in institutions across the country. The Department of Labor’s Workforce Division collects wage records from employers, which will allow us to track whether our students are employed and the wages they earn. This data will provide us with information necessary to identify subgroups of our student population that need extra assistance during elementary and secondary schooling. From the analysis of this data, we will develop programs that target low-performing subgroups of students. These interventions will build student awareness of how to prepare for college and careers and provide them with the practical knowledge they need to be college and career ready.

Activities	Timeline	Responsible Party
Establish infrastructure (servers and database software) for storing data and making it accessible.	Years 1–2	WV Network (3rd party)
Develop data governance policies, business rules, and data dictionaries.	Years 1–2	WV Network (3rd party)
Begin data-sharing process.	Year 2	SEA and WV Network

Goal 2: Include benchmark and formative assessment data in the statewide longitudinal data system.

It is imperative that schools and instructional leaders have access to formative data so they have early indicators of educational failure and can make timely corrections to prevent decline in student achievement. Benchmark and formative assessment data currently exist in West Virginia, but they are not linked to the statewide longitudinal data system. By the end of Year 2 of the grant, the data will be included in the state’s data system, making it accessible to stakeholders.

Activities	Timeline	Responsible Party
Develop mechanisms to include benchmark and formative assessment data in the statewide longitudinal data system.	Years 1–2	SEA—Office of Information Systems

Goal 3: Engage stakeholders in the development of indicators and reports.

In order to move our existing data system from its current focus of accountability reporting to one that is responsive to the

needs of stakeholders and drives change at the classroom level, we must better understand the needs of the stakeholders. With the support of external researchers, we will engage stakeholders in visioning discussions that will drive the development of reports that provide actionable data to systemically manage continuous instructional improvement. We will use information gleaned from evidence-based practice to guide the visioning discussions and refine feedback.

Activities	Timeline	Responsible Party
Engage stakeholders in visioning discussions to identify data needed to inform practice and decision making.	Years 1–2	SEA—Office of Information Systems

Performance Measures Performance measures for this criterion are optional. If the State wishes to include performance measures, please enter them as rows in this table and, for each measure, provide annual targets in the columns provided.	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
(Enter measures here, if any.) Not Applicable					

(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

It is clear from West Virginia's National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and ESEA data that the existing local instructional improvement systems are not as effective as needed to improve student achievement (Appendix A-8). We need to be proactive and create systems that will transform the way we support students and teachers to change what is learned inside and outside of the classroom. The following four interrelated goals are focused on connecting data to action and providing mechanisms for students, parents, educators, and administrators to rapidly receive feedback to evaluate the effectiveness of the action taken:

- Modify existing local instructional improvement systems (Teach 21 and Online Strategic Plan) to better support instructional planning.
- Expand the statewide longitudinal data system to include new local instructional improvement systems that meet state needs for improving student achievement.
- Provide professional development on the use of instructional improvement systems.
- Develop processes to make data available to researchers to evaluate the effectiveness of educational strategies with different subgroups of students.

Goal 1: Modify existing local instructional improvement systems (Teach 21 and Online Strategic Plan) to better support instructional planning.

Teach 21: Developed by the West Virginia Department of Education, Teach 21 is a Web-based instructional improvement system focused on providing teachers with the resources needed to guide instructional planning. Teach 21 provides educators with easy access to 21st century content standards, learning skills, and technology tools (Appendix C-3). As we transition to the common core, we will modify Teach 21 to be a continuous support system for teachers. Teachers will be able to access standards, lesson plans, and project-based learning activities related to the common core to help them make informed decisions on instructional steps.

Electronic Strategic Plan: The West Virginia Department of Education uses an Electronic Strategic Plan where schools examine information about their school and set school improvement goals annually (Appendix C-4). The Electronic Strategic Plan currently includes school outcome data to inform decision making. In order to make the Strategic Plan a more meaningful support tool to schools, we plan to infuse the electronic system with more real time data that will allow school administrators to properly evaluate the effectiveness of the actions they have recently taken and make corrections where needed to improve achievement. We will also incorporate the newly developed West Virginia Standards for High Quality Schools to provide schools with standards for continuous improvement processes as they are making formative decisions about their school improvement goals (Appendix E-8).

Activities	Timeline	Responsible Party
Modify Teach 21	Years 2–4	SEA—Office of Information Systems
Modify Electronic Strategic Plan	Year 1	SEA— Office of Information Systems

Goal 2: Expand the statewide longitudinal data system to include new local instructional improvement systems that meet State needs for improving student achievement

West Virginia is planning to develop three new instructional improvement systems that are focused on student needs, educator needs, and other stakeholder needs. To ensure that these systems are responsive to all stakeholders, including parents and external agencies, we will engage a group of stakeholders who will provide input before and during the development of these systems.

Teacher E-Portfolio: In order to increase the number of highly effective teachers and leaders in West Virginia, we need to

have an instructional improvement system focused on teacher and leader needs. To support the Great Teachers and Leaders reform plan criteria in Race to the Top, we will develop a Teacher E-Portfolio that will provide teachers, administrators, and district, regional, and state decision makers with rapid-time data to provide teachers and leaders immediate support to help them achieve the status of highly effective and ensure that they stay highly effective. The Teacher E-Portfolio will:

- Track teacher evaluation data and professional development data aligned with curricular and teacher/leader standards.
- Allow teachers to upload artifacts that document their professional and instructional work and to chart their own professional learning.
- Link to available professional development opportunities and other professional growth opportunities, such as virtual communities of learning.
- Provide reports with actionable data at the teacher, school, district, regional, and state levels focused on managing continuous instructional data.

Learn 21: In order to transform classrooms across West Virginia to improve achievement in numeracy and literacy, we are developing a system called Learn 21. It will provide teachers and other stakeholders with rapid-time data to inform decisions on the appropriate next instructional steps by integrating instructional data with student-level data (Appendix C-5). Learn 21 will gather formative assessment data tied to learning standards and student learning progressions. Learn 21 will:

- Have unique student profiles that identify their individual learning paths.
- Use standards-based data to identify student deficiencies by each standard.
- Provide data necessary to target personalized instructional practice.
- Complement the Teacher E-Portfolio by providing information that can be used to target teacher professional development.

Comprehensive Early Warning System: The West Virginia Department of Education is using non-Race to the Top funds to create a Comprehensive Early Warning System that will provide multiple stakeholders with rapid-time feedback loops so that they can use actionable data to promote early intervention decisions related to student achievement. The Comprehensive Early Warning System will focus on student, teacher, and school at-risk indicators related to educational failure through the following three systems.

Student Early Warning System: Provides educators at the school and district level with data on a variety of indicators that identify specific students at risk of educational failure so that the students can be connected to the appropriate services, supports, or interventions that will help them be successful.

Teacher and Leader Early Warning System: Provides relevant educators at the school and district level with data that identifies teachers and leaders who are at risk of becoming ineffective so that they can be connected to the appropriate professional development to get them back on track. Indicators will tie to data collected through the Teacher E-Portfolio.

School Early Warning System: Provides state and district leaders with a set of early warning signs that indicate schools that are at risk of becoming struggling schools so that these leaders can become more proactive in their intervention efforts. Indicators will include student achievement data and evidence related to teacher and leadership effectiveness.

Activities	Timeline	Responsible Party
Identify project manager to oversee development of Teacher E-Portfolio and Learn 21.	Year 1	SEA Office of Information Systems
Identify consultants and software vendors for development of systems.	Years 1–2	Project manager
Engage stakeholders in visioning discussions to identify data needed to inform practice and decision making.	Years 2	Project manager
Work with external researchers to identify the key data points for the early warning reporting systems—predictors of student, teacher, and school success on state’s goals.	Years 1–2	Project manager
Develop, pilot, and revise instructional improvement systems.	Years 2–4	Project manager

Goal 3: Provide professional development on the use of instructional improvement systems for continuous improvement.

We believe that improvements in student achievement will be achieved only if we engage in active data use at all levels of the West Virginia educational system. Instructional improvement systems will be used as a foundation of targeted conversations on

improving educational achievement across the state. These conversations will take place vertically through the Classroom Assessment Network (CAN) and horizontally through professional learning communities (PLCs).

CAN teams will be the primary vehicles for building capacity of regional and district leaders to support professional learning communities at every level of the educational system: classroom, school, district, region, and state. CAN teams are poised to lead cross-functional, data-driven conversations that will reach all districts by the end of the four-year grant period. CAN teams will engage state, regional, district, and school leaders, including some teachers, to have focused conversations on how to use Teach 21, the Electronic Strategic Plan, Learn 21, the Teacher E-Portfolio, and Early Warning Systems to support their work. These conversations will focus on understanding what the data shows, discussing what actions they need to take at every level to address the data, and how they organize their actions to result in statewide impact.

CAN teams will provide the vertical supports for professional learning communities (PLCs) to occur horizontally at every level of the educational system. This horizontal layer of collaborative teams will be modeled by the West Virginia Department of education, at the district level, and at the school level. While the content focus of PLCs will vary, the foundational element of every PLC will be the inclusion of data in the conversation. Similar to the conversations of the CAN teams, PLCs will focus on understanding what the data shows, discussing what actions they need to take to improve student achievement, and how they coordinate their actions to improve instructional practice. The PLCs will have focused conversations on how to use Teach 21, the Electronic Strategic Plan, Learn 21, the Teacher E-Portfolio, and Early Warning Systems to support their work. This will be coupled with professional development on how to technically use the software and data systems.

Activities	Timeline	Responsible Party
Provide professional development to users of the instructional improvement systems to understand how to use systems and data to support continuous instructional improvement.	Years 2–4	Closing the Achievement Gap Liaison for Assessment

Goal 4: Develop processes to make data available to researchers to evaluate the effectiveness of educational strategies with

different subgroups of students.

The West Virginia Department of Education currently shares data from the longitudinal data system with external researchers and evaluators who are working in partnership with the Department of Education. As the instructional improvement systems are developed, we will ensure that data is collected and maintained in a manner that allows the data to be easily extracted for sharing with researchers. In addition, we will make data publicly available when possible. Because it can be difficult to process numerous data requests from researchers, we will work to develop relationships with a few higher education institutions that will help us continuously evaluate the effectiveness of our educational strategies as well as provide research for the greater good of education. We will ensure that all data provided complies with student privacy regulations.

Activities	Timeline	Responsible Party
Develop data-sharing policies and procedures.	Year 2	SEA—Office of Information Systems
Engage institutions of higher education to discuss research partnerships.	Years 1–2	SEA—Office of Information Systems

Performance Measures	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
Performance measures for this criterion are optional. If the State wishes to include performance measures, please enter them as rows in this table and, for each measure, provide annual targets in the columns provided.					
(Enter measures here, if any.) Not Applicable					

(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

West Virginia has led groundbreaking work to develop alternative certification programs for teachers and recognizes alternative certification as a valuable tool needed to address teacher and principal shortages. Through Race to the Top, we aim to

systematically grow and establish alternative certification as a vital pathway for teachers and principals to fill critical shortage areas. Strong features of the state’s alternative certification programs include online coursework offerings, coteaching experiences, and systematic ongoing support through mentoring and academic coaching. Although our current framework for alternative certification programs is comprehensive and articulated in state law, there has not been a significant demand statewide for alternative programs because the number of vacancies has not matched that experienced in other states. However, current demographic data on projected retirements reveal a potential crisis in the availability of teachers and leaders. We recognize that alternative certification programs play a key role in addressing looming principal and teacher vacancies that will result from projected retirements (West Virginia Department of Education, 2007 Task Force on Teacher and Principal Shortages). Teacher shortages in West Virginia vary from one corner of the state to the other. Increasingly, positions posted in mathematics, the sciences, and world languages are not filled by qualified candidates. As a nation, if we are expected to continue to produce scientists and engineers prepared for a global society, we must have competent and knowledgeable professionals in our classrooms. The problem facing West Virginia’s public schools today is twofold; not only is there a lack of supply of adequately prepared teachers, but there also is a looming population of eligible retirees. The complex problem demands the attention of West Virginia’s educational community. The solutions that are generated will need to address the immediate needs of the state and put into action plans for correcting the problem on a long-term basis.

Provision to allow alternative routes to certification

W. Va. Code §18A-3-1a (Appendix D-1) provides authority for the State Board to approve alternative routes to professional licensure for teachers. Details of this code assure that alternative programs are both flexible and rigorous. Flexibility is illustrated by the various types of qualified providers allowed, including a school, school district, consortium of schools, or regional educational service agency (Appendix D-1). Rigor is pursued through selectivity and training, which must include supervised school-based experiences and ongoing support through effective mentoring and coaching. Noting these components, West Virginia is confident in awarding successful completers the same level of certification awarded through traditional preparation programs. Although current code does not restrict principal alternative certification routes, efforts are under way to better define alternative routes for principals. The proposed revision of W. Va. Code §18A-3-1a for principals (Appendix D-2) illustrates these efforts. This code revision has

been approved by the West Virginia Board of Education and currently is awaiting consideration by W.Va. House and Senate Education Committees. This revision will allow qualified teachers who are aspiring leaders to earn principal licensure through a performance-based alternative certification program delivered by a non-IHE institution and aligned with new leader standards (discussed in following sections). In addition, the West Virginia Department of Education will develop two alternative preparation programs for principals. The first of these is an Alternative Certification for School Leaders based on the National Board Certification for Education Leaders, which will assist teacher leaders as they develop the skills and knowledge required to lead struggling schools. The second is an Alternative Certification for Aspiring Leaders in Struggling Schools. Based on the New Leader Standards and the Principal Leadership Institute, this residency program will be a “grow-your-own” approach for teacher leaders.

Existing Alternative Routes to Certification

West Virginia currently has seven teacher alternative certification programs that include the Transition to Teaching and Troops to Teachers Programs. These state-approved alternative routes offer certification and endorsements in a wide variety of critical shortage subjects and specializations. A total of 81 teachers completed alternative routes to certification in 2008–09. The following table presents completion rates:

Table 1. Alternative Certification Route Completion Rates in West Virginia in 2008–09

Program	Number of Graduates
Concord University	2
West Virginia State University & RESA III (Collaborative)	1
Marshall University & RESA VIII (Collaborative) & Marshall University & RESA III (Collaborative) & Marshall University & RESA IV (Collaborative)	69
Fairmont State University	4
West Virginia University	5
West Virginia TOTAL	81

(See Appendix D-3 for a breakdown and detailed description of each program.) Noting the projected shortages in store for West

Virginia, we have focused efforts on building alternative certification programs for teachers and principals throughout the state (see Appendix D-4). Completion numbers will steadily rise with the development of the Transition to Teaching Program, the development of additional STEM alternative routes, and the scale up of professional development for existing teachers to earn certification through mathematics and science partnerships. Our target goals illustrate our resolve. By 2014, we will have an additional 120 teachers through Transition to Teaching, eight teachers through additional STEM alternative routes, 30 teachers through the scale up of professional development, and 20 new alternatively certificated principals to fill vacant positions.

Addressing teacher and principal shortage areas

Two reports and one task force have addressed the current monitoring of teacher shortages. In 2007, the state superintendent convened a task force on West Virginia's teacher shortage (Appendix D-5) that documented teacher shortages in mathematics, science, and world languages and offered short- and long-term solutions, many of which have been incorporated into policy and/or practice. Since then, the *Educational Personnel Data Report* (2008) and the *Annual Highly Qualified Teacher Reports* (2006, 2007, and 2008) have documented special education as a critical shortage area leading to the code revisions that offer alternative certification programs for special education. The Educational Personnel Report is compiled and published annually by the West Virginia Department of Education and contains data related to the need for, the preparation of, and licensure/staffing of professional personnel for West Virginia schools. Now in its 16th year, the Data Report identifies areas of teacher shortage by disaggregating the data to illustrate vacancies by field, first-class permits, and out-of-field authorizations both by county and by field. Within this report, principal shortages also are documented, along with reasons for continued vacancies (e.g., lack of qualified applicants, fiscal restraints, etc.) and first-class permits and out-of-field authorizations awarded per county. Such data illustrate which counties and subject areas are struggling to fill positions with high-quality teachers and why and which counties struggle to fill principal vacancies. The *Annual Highly Qualified Teacher Reports* (2006, 2007, and 2008) indicate the percentage of courses in each school and district within West Virginia and have disaggregated data on subject, level, adequate yearly progress, minority status, and poverty status. In the first two years of this funding cycle, both reports will be used to monitor, evaluate, and identify areas of teacher shortage. Development of a comprehensive statewide longitudinal data system will significantly expand the state's ability to

monitor, evaluate, and identify areas of teacher and principal shortage and recruit and prepare appropriate numbers of teachers and principals to fill these areas of shortage. In addition, the launch of a comprehensive recruiting website, Teach 21, also serves to market the state's education profession nationally. Noting the teacher shortages West Virginia has experienced in STEM subjects, world languages, and special education, the data will be disaggregated to look specifically at these subject shortage areas. In addition to addressing shortages, we will further use the statewide longitudinal data system to monitor, evaluate, and analyze the effectiveness of our various certification pathways.

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

Armed with the knowledge that teachers and principals are two of the most important factors for improving student achievement (Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Hattie, 2009; Leithwood et al., 2004; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005), we describe West Virginia’s vision for improving teacher and principal effectiveness through the performance assessment process. At the core of this vision is a willingness and commitment on the part of the state to make teacher and principal performance assessment one of the central tenets of our overall human capital management strategy. Doing so allows educators who are prepared and recruited into schools to participate in a continuous improvement process in which they self-reflect, dialogue with peers and administrators, and use information about the growth of their students in an effort to identify strengths and weaknesses, and continually perfect their craft. This vision also helps to facilitate a level of support and accountability to which all professionals want to be held—a level of support and accountability that West Virginia’s educators deserve. To achieve this vision, there are three primary goals: (1) establish an interim and long-term, multiple-measure student growth model that is valid, reliable, and transparent and that is developed from recommendations of education stakeholders along with local and national experts; (2) revise the teacher/principal performance assessment system using the agreed-upon multiple measure growth measure (this goal encompasses several subgoals, including rolling out the new teacher and leader standards; revising the teacher evaluation/observation form; developing principal indicators and rubrics that reflect the new leader standards; monitoring and learning from a progressive scale-up of the use of a revised teacher

and leader performance assessment system across the state; and participation in the Teacher Performance Assessment Consortium); and (3) pilot alternative compensation models.

Goal 1: Through the engagement and support of several state stakeholders and local and national experts, establish an interim and long-term, multiple-measure student growth model that is valid, reliable, and transparent.

As an October 2009 Battelle for Kids report aptly put it, “Before any analysis of teacher effectiveness can be completed, the instructional linkage between teachers and students must be captured accurately and transparently” (Battelle for Kids, p. 4). The Battelle report also lays out the abundance of considerations, nuances, and difficulties in accurately measuring and reporting on this student-teacher linkage. West Virginia’s plan to develop a multiple-measure student growth model reflects a strong focus on including stakeholders in the design and implementation of this model, as well as an effort to assure that the growth model is fair and reliable, and that there is a communication plan that provides the opportunity for teachers to understand the model and to make accurate assumptions about their instructional practices and the relationship to student performance.

As discussed in the Standards and Assessments section (B), the state plans to participate in a national Balanced Assessment Consortium that will develop new student assessments to replace the current assessment system. This will facilitate a strong, valid, and reliable measure of student growth that has stakeholder buy-in and can contribute to assessing teacher and leader effectiveness. During the transition to the new assessments, West Virginia will design and implement an interim measure of student growth based on a combination of current standardized and performance-based assessments. Teachers and principals will be involved in the development, review, scoring, and evaluation of the new assessment as part of a professional development cycle focused on improvement of instruction.

West Virginia seeks to design a system of monitoring growth toward proficiency on academic standards that is fair for all students, particularly for those students for whom there are assessment challenges. The first year of grant implementation focuses on reviewing, developing, and recommending an interim growth measure. Taking the first year of grant implementation to develop the student growth measure allows West Virginia to develop the measure in collaboration with stakeholders; cultivate something rigorous and valid; develop a model that erases within-school effects; and gain buy-in and elicit expert advice. Specific information

about the yearly, phased-in approach for this goal is outlined in Table 1. Much of the work described in Table 1 will be conducted by two stakeholder groups, the Improving Teacher Effectiveness Taskforce and the Improving Leader Effectiveness Taskforce. The composition of these taskforces will be described in more detail in the next section (D)(2)(ii).

Table 1. Yearly Activities and Responsible Parties for Establishing Approaches to Measuring Student Growth

Timeline	Activities ¹	Responsible Parties
<p>Year 1 (2010-2011)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Acquire baseline data:</i> To acquire baseline data, West Virginia will examine WESTEST 2 data using a simple regression approach to look at score increases on a vertical scale. • <i>Review and recommend interim, multiple-measure student growth models for teachers of both tested and non-tested grades and subject areas² as well as for principals (until assessments from a national consortia are ready to be used and piloted in selected sites):</i> West Virginia will develop a complex, multivariate approach to analyzing multiple measures/assessments, that controls for variability factors other than student test scores (e.g., socioeconomic status). The multiple measures/assessments will include a combination of standardized tests and performance tasks based on what teachers are doing in the classroom as well as evidence of student learning based on standards³. A system that counts all students equally and analyzes progress, not just proficiency, is ultimately more fair, motivates all stakeholders, and allows for a more accurate analysis and differentiation of support. • <i>Begin work with a national Balanced Assessment Consortia⁴:</i> As is described in the Standards and Assessment section, West Virginia will begin its work with a national assessment consortia to design, pilot, and field test assessments. In the future, these assessments will be used as one of multiple measures in a student growth model that is utilized in teacher and leader performance assessment. In its work with a national consortia, West Virginia will be committed to having stakeholders involved in the process through such efforts as content reviews and item-development. Transparency is an important part of the assessment system to establish buy-in with teachers, students, parents, and community members. It will be important for the Taskforces to communicate these ongoing efforts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Virginia Department of Education • Improving Teacher Effectiveness Taskforce, Improving Leader Effectiveness Taskforce, West Virginia Department of Education, and Technical experts • Improving Teacher Effectiveness Taskforce, Improving Leader Effectiveness Taskforce, West Virginia Department of Education, and Technical experts
<p>Year 2 (2011-2012)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Progressive scale-up:</i> Implement the use of the interim student growth measures as one component of several for assessing teacher and principal performance in pilots in twenty-seven districts across the state. Technical experts (consultants/evaluators) and participants will share experiences and learnings with the Taskforces three times throughout implementation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants in twenty-seven school districts, Improving Teacher Effectiveness Taskforce, Improving Leader Effectiveness Taskforce, West Virginia Department of Education, and Technical experts

	<p>Taskforce members will recommend adjustments accordingly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Continue work with the Balanced Assessment Consortium:</i> West Virginia will continue its work with a national assessment consortia to design, pilot, and field test assessments for their future use as one of multiple measures in a student growth model. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving Teacher Effectiveness Taskforce, Improving Leader Effectiveness Taskforce, West Virginia Department of Education, and Technical experts
<p>Year 3 (2012-2013)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Progressive scale-up:</i> Considering lessons-learned from Year 2, implement the use of the interim student growth measures as one component of several for assessing teacher and principal performance as a pilot in the remaining twenty-eight districts across the state. The twenty-seven pilot districts from Year 2 continue to implement their work. Technical experts (consultants/evaluators) and pilot participants will share experiences and learnings from the pilots with the Taskforces three times throughout the pilot implementation. Taskforce members will recommend adjustments accordingly. At the end of Year 3, there will be two years of data for Year 2 pilot participants and one year of data for Year 3 pilot participants from which to compare results. • <i>Continue work with a national assessment:</i> West Virginia will continue its work with a national assessment consortia to design, pilot, and field test assessments for their future use as one of multiple measures in a student growth model. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants in all school districts, Improving Teacher Effectiveness Taskforce, Improving Leader Effectiveness Taskforce, West Virginia Department of Education, and Technical experts • Improving Teacher Effectiveness Taskforce, Improving Leader Effectiveness Taskforce, West Virginia Department of Education, and Technical experts
<p>Year 4 (2013-2014)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Implementation:</i> Recommendations from the Taskforces on Improving Teacher and Leader Effectiveness, along with that of local and national experts, will be used as the basis for a multiple-measure student growth model that districts may choose to implement as one of several components of a teacher and leader performance evaluation system. Depending on the status of the national consortia on assessments, this multiple-measure student growth model may or may not utilize the new assessments. The status of when and how these assessments are included in a student growth measure will be determined over time as the West Virginia Department of Education continues to work with a national assessment consortia. The Taskforces will remain involved as the work evolves and contribute to the decision-making about the use of these assessments. See Table 2 for more details about communication, implementation, and support around this agreed-upon multiple-measure student growth model and its future use in the revised teacher and leader performance assessment system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving Teacher Effectiveness Taskforce, Improving Leader Effectiveness Taskforce, West Virginia Department of Education, and Technical experts
<p>¹For budget purposes, the work described in this table around reviewing and recommending a student growth measure, pilots, and communication and implementation are captured in the parallel process underway in the next section, (D)(2)(ii) under the project name, “Reform Teacher and Leader Performance Assessment System.” We show these activities (review and recommend, pilots, and communication and implementation) in this section only to alert you to the fact that we recognize the importance of these activities for (D)(2)(i). However, they are part of the overall process that will be discussed in more detail in (D)(2)(ii) and are reflected in a project budget associated with (D)(2)(ii).</p> <p>²Hear from researchers who developed the paper, “The Other 69%: Fairly Rewarding the Performance of Teachers of Non-Tested Subjects and Grades” (Prince et. al, 2008).</p>		

While this paper is based on methods of measuring teacher performance for the purposes of compensation reform, there are several models West Virginia will consider as a method by which the state might develop a student growth measure using existing assessments for teachers of non-tested grades and subject areas.

³The TEACH 21 website (<http://wvde.state.wv.us/teach21/>) has a growing database of performance-based assessment examples that can be used in addition to WESTEST for a multiple-measure student growth model. They all have rubrics (either specifically developed for the performance/project or using some standardized, state-developed ones), instructional resources, performance objectives, assessment activities and are tied to standards. West Virginia has invested in training through the Buck Institute and other sources (ETS, Teacher Leadership Institute, CAN, etc.) where they have worked on standardization of the process and components.

⁴Any budget-implications for participation in this work are included in Standards and Assessment.

Design and implement rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation systems for teachers and principals that (a) differentiate effectiveness using multiple ratings that take into account data on student growth as a significant factor, and (b) are designed and developed with teacher and principal involvement.

As evidenced by recommendations from teacher and leader stakeholder groups, West Virginia is committed to a comprehensive reform of teacher and leader standards, as well as to the use of these standards as the basis for reform of the current system of teacher and leader performance assessment. West Virginia Board of Education Policy 5310 establishes a detailed rule for teacher evaluation in West Virginia (Appendix D-6). This policy assures that teacher evaluation *across the state* must provide:

- Indicators of improved performance
- Indicators of satisfactory performance
- Documentation for dismissal
- Basis for programs of professional growth
- Standards for satisfactory performance and the criteria for levels of performance, including technology standards
- Provisions for a written improvement plan
- Notification to persons with unsatisfactory performance, to include a remediation plan and timeline
- Guidelines for recommending dismissal should the performance continue to be unsatisfactory

Although there is a strong platform for assessment reform in West Virginia, there clearly are weaknesses in the performance assessment system that will be addressed through Race to the Top efforts. As in most states, teachers and leaders have not traditionally been evaluated as often or as rigorously as needed to ensure instructional quality (The New Teacher Project, 2009).

Acknowledging the flaws in the state’s performance assessment system, West Virginia will use a broad stakeholder group to recommend comprehensive reform to the current system that will provide teachers and leaders the capacity they need to improve their instruction in order to focus on improved student achievement. Stakeholders will be convened in a series of facilitated forums to collect data, receive recommendations, and give feedback on the changes and reforms that must be implemented. These recommendations will address several components of the performance assessment system, and once analyzed and summarized, will be brought to West Virginia Legislature to leverage current state policy.

The West Virginia Board of Education and the state superintendent directed the work to revise the teaching standards to assure alignment with the state’s teaching and learning initiative. These new teacher standards were approved in the West Virginia Board of Education Policy 5100 in December 2008 (Appendix D-7). A broad group of stakeholders, including West Virginia Board of Education members, teachers, teacher organization leaders, higher education representatives, county and building administrators, and legislative liaisons were involved in the revision process for the teacher standards. The work of national experts including Charlotte Danielson and Linda Darling-Hammond provided the foundation for the development of these teacher standards, and Charlotte Danielson served as a consultant during the development of the rubrics. The recently approved new teaching standards are performance-based, measurable, focused on improving student achievement, and have multiple rating category rubrics (unsatisfactory, basic, proficient, and distinguished) (Appendix D-8). Function and indicator rubrics are built into the new teaching standards as well, another example of how the revised teacher standards are more robust and beyond what many states’ teacher standards encompass. For any given standard, there are a variety of functions that clearly define the standard. Furthermore, for each function, there are indicator statements that clearly define the function. This allows for a more precise measure of examples of standards in practice during the evaluation process. A specific example is as follows:

- **Standard:** Teaching.
- **Example of a function for the “Teaching” standard:** Communicating with students: The teacher creates and maintains a positive, supportive classroom climate and communicates with students in a variety of ways.
- **Example of an indicator for the “Communicating with students” function:** Clear and accurate directions and procedures.

Because West Virginia has a statewide educator performance evaluation system that is detailed in state law and state board policy (see Appendix D-6), there is strong capacity to assure uniformity of implementation across all districts. The state's performance evaluation system will be revised to align to the new teacher standards and this will serve as a driving force in the design of an effective, streamlined, and rigorous system for improving teacher effectiveness.

Parallel to the teacher performance evaluation reform design, West Virginia also has engaged in the development of new leader standards and has a strong policy platform for the reform of principal evaluation and for the identification, distribution, and support of principal effectiveness. The West Virginia Board of Education Policy 5500.03 outlines the qualities, proficiencies, and leadership skills required of principals (Appendix D-9). In addition, although less detailed than the teacher evaluation process, the West Virginia Board of Education Policy 5310 also establishes the rules for principal evaluation. (See Appendix D-6, Policy 5310 section 15.) West Virginia's new leader standards were developed in fall 2009 by a 45-member stakeholder group, the West Virginia Collaborative for Leadership Development and Support. These new leader standards serve as a policy framework to develop, support, and focus West Virginia leaders on creating school conditions that prepare all students for powerful life options in the 21st century. Appendix D-10 provides an Executive Summary of the Leadership Collaborative plan for improving teacher and principal leadership in West Virginia. Over the next two years, West Virginia will align the new leader standards with an enhanced principal and superintendant evaluation system to be piloted in year three.

Goal 2: Using the agreed-upon student-growth measure, revise the teacher and principal performance assessment system.

With the new teacher and leader standards as a foundation, plans for implementation of a task force on teacher effectiveness have been formed, and a task force on leader effectiveness is under way. Formed from core members of the stakeholder groups that developed teacher and leader standards, the teacher and leader effectiveness task forces are charged with creating a new educator performance evaluation system aligned with the new standards. Several members of the team of people who revised the teacher standards reconvened in September 2009 as part of the state's Teacher Evaluation Taskforce and Teacher Evaluation Executive Committee in an effort, among other things, to shepherd the process of creating a new teacher evaluation system based on the newly adopted professional teaching standards. The Teacher Evaluation Taskforce and Teacher Evaluation Executive Committee already have considered the future of West Virginia's teacher evaluation system. A 15-member executive committee was formed to outline

the work of the larger 50-member teacher evaluation task force. The membership of both the executive committee and the larger task force is made up of a cross-section of education stakeholders: classroom teachers, building and district administrators, other state education service providers (RESAs and the West Virginia Center for Professional Development), leaders of West Virginia teacher organizations, and higher education and West Virginia Department of Education resource individuals. Although the work of this task force temporarily was suspended awaiting Race to the Top guidance, the work will resume again when the group reconvenes under the new title *Improving Teacher Effectiveness Task Force*. The work of this group is not only to make recommendations about reforming the teacher performance evaluation system to align to the new teacher standards but also to include recommendations for a multiple-measure student growth model that will contribute to other measures of a teacher’s performance. To do this, the task force will review research and best practices as well as make recommendations as to how educator performance can be used to inform decisions about various aspects of the teaching career continuum, such as tenure, compensation, and promotion. West Virginia’s vision is that this task force, along with the parallel leadership effectiveness task force, will work hand-in-hand to help develop and implement a new evaluation system that will identify, distribute, and support highly effective educators. In addition, West Virginia plans to continue to engage the experience and expertise of many members of the Collaborative for Leadership Development and Support under the new auspices of the Improving Leadership Effectiveness Taskforce, a parallel group to the Improving Teacher Effectiveness Taskforce. These taskforces will be managed by the West Virginia Department of Education.

Mindful of the barriers that other states and school districts have encountered in attempts to reform their educator evaluation systems, West Virginia has chosen a steady and gradual approach built on strong stakeholder buy-in and commitment. Based on examples in current literature, e.g., *Determining Processes that Build Sustainable Teacher Accountability Systems*; Steiner, 2009, and on the state’s collective thinking, the Improving Teacher and Leader Effectiveness Taskforces will follow the general plan outlined as follows in the four years of grant implementation around reforming the educator performance assessment system.

Table 2. Yearly Activities for Reforming Teacher and Leader Performance Assessment System

Timeline	Activities	Responsible Parties
Year 1 (2010-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Alignment:</i> Review and recommend methods for aligning the new standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taskforce members, West Virginia

<p>2011)⁵</p>	<p>with the current state policy for personnel evaluation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Teacher and leader standard roll-out:</i> West Virginia plans to disseminate information about the revised teacher standards using one or more of the following methods: 1) Regional meetings; 2) Webcasts/webinars; and/or 3) Virtual liaison meetings that convene an educator performance assessment liaison (yet to be determined) from every district who stays informed about the developments at the state-level and communicates information back to the districts. The Standards and Assessment section discusses the roll-out of new content standards by August 2010. The state will use opportunities to combine communication and support efforts around the roll-out of the three sets of standards: content, teacher, and leader standards. • <i>Revise teacher evaluation/observation form/process:</i> The current form/process needs to be revised to align with the new teacher standards. The revised form/process will continue to evolve over the course of grant implementation as the overall teacher evaluation system is reformed. • <i>Principal rubrics:</i> Similar to what is already in place for teachers, rubrics for the principal standards with differentiated levels of performance will be developed to be aligned with the revised principal performance assessment • <i>Review of research and best practices; reform teacher and leader performance assessment system:</i> In an effort to enhance the current teacher and principal performance assessment system, Taskforce members will hear from experts and practitioners in the field about examples of performance-based assessment systems (e.g., Peer Review and Analysis System [PARS], the Danielson model, Teacher Advancement Program [TAP], Houston’s ASPIRE program; VAL-ED for principals [Condon & Clifford, 2009]; NBPTS Principal Certification/Take One!). West Virginia is particularly interested in the PARS model as it represents a collaboratively developed peer-review system that allows for a widely-accepted due-process mechanism for identifying, supporting, and/or ultimately exiting poor performing teachers. West Virginia’s goal is to establish a performance-assessment system in which the evaluation component is rooted in self-reflection, peer-analysis, and administrator review. Based on research and best practice, the Taskforces will recommend a revised teacher and principal performance assessment system that is rooted in the new teacher and leader standards and indicator rubrics for teachers (principal rubrics with differentiated levels of support are being developed this first year). These recommended performance evaluations systems will be based on multiple components such as evaluation/observation measures, a multiple-measure student growth model (as a significant factor), and other measures such as schoolwide gains or measures relevant for a school 	<p>Department of Education, Technical experts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Virginia Department of Education • Taskforce members, West Virginia Department of Education, Technical experts • Taskforce members, West Virginia Department of Education, Technical experts • Taskforce members, West Virginia Department of Education, Technical experts • Taskforce members, West Virginia Department of Education, and Technical experts • Technical experts/researchers, West Virginia Department of Education, and Taskforces
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	<p>principal. These will be agreed-upon by the Taskforces.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Evidence and artifacts:</i> Taskforce members will engage in a review of examples of evidence or artifacts of observable teacher and leader behavior that can be utilized in a revised teacher and leader evaluation system. Although we previously described that the state has new teacher standards, functions, and indicator rubrics for measuring these standards, the state <i>does not</i> yet have a pool of approved examples of what evaluators might use for evidence or artifacts for actually measuring observable instances of behavior outlined in the new standards. The taskforce will review and recommend evidence and artifacts for this purpose. • <i>Alignment study:</i> Launch a study to review the alignment between the teacher and leader standards, the revised teacher and leader performance assessment system, and student outcomes. Over time, the study will help ensure that the revised teacher and leader performance assessment system are actually measuring the standards and that the performance assessment system results align with student achievement results. 	
<p>Year 2 (2011-2012)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Progressive scale-up:</i> Provide the option for selected schools with a majority of faculty support to implement the revised teacher and principal performance-assessment system in at least twenty-seven districts statewide. Districts will receive technical assistance and professional development from consultants and technical experts who will share experiences and learnings with the teacher/leader effectiveness taskforces at least three times during the implementation period with task force members recommending adjustments accordingly. • <i>Alignment study:</i> Continue to conduct study and track results. Report formative feedback to Taskforces. • <i>Communication:</i> In an effort to focus on transparency around the design and implementation of the revised teacher and leader performance assessment system, West Virginia will institute a comprehensive communication plan using one or more of the following methods: 1) Regional meetings; 2) Webcasts/webinars; and/or 3) Virtual liaison meetings that convene an educator performance assessment liaison (yet to be determined) from every district who stays informed about the developments at the state-level and communicates information back to the districts. • <i>Support:</i> The state will draw on a vertical (across schools, districts, RESAs and the state) and horizontal (within schools, districts, RESAs, and the state) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants in twenty-seven districts, Improving Teacher Effectiveness Taskforce, Improving Leader Effectiveness Taskforce, West Virginia Department of Education, and Technical experts • Technical experts/researchers, West Virginia Department of Education, and Taskforces • West Virginia Department of Education, Technical experts • Representatives from schools, districts, RESAs, and SEA representatives.

	<p>network of support to provide consistent information, facilitation, and dialogue around the emerging new system as well as opportunities for colleagues within and across all levels of the system to share best practices. This network of support is described more fully in (D)(5) and is also going to be used as a system of support for Standards and Assessment and Struggling Schools⁴.</p>	
Year 3 (2012-2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Progressive scale-up:</i> Provide the option for selected schools with a majority of faculty support to implement the revised teacher and principal performance-assessment system in at least twenty-eight districts statewide, with the twenty-seven districts from Year 2 continuing their work. Districts will receive technical assistance and professional development from consultants and technical experts who will share experiences and learning with the teacher/leader effectiveness taskforces at least three times during the implementation period with task force members recommending adjustments accordingly. • <i>Alignment study:</i> Continue to conduct study and track results. Report formative feedback to Taskforces. • <i>Communication:</i> In an effort to focus on transparency around the design and implementation of the revised teacher and leader performance assessment system, West Virginia will institute a comprehensive communication plan using one or more of the following methods: 1) Regional meetings; 2) Webcasts/webinars; and/or 3) Virtual liaison meetings that convene an educator performance assessment liaison (yet to be determined) from every district who stays informed about the developments at the state-level and communicates information back to the districts. • <i>Support:</i> The state will draw on a vertical (across schools, districts, RESAs and the state) and horizontal (within schools, districts, RESAs, and the state) network of support to provide consistent information, facilitation, and dialogue around the emerging new system as well as opportunities for colleagues within and across all levels of the system to share best practices. This network of support is described more fully in (D)(5) and is also going to be used as a system of support for Standards and Assessment and Struggling Schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants in twenty-eight districts, Improving Teacher Effectiveness Taskforce, Improving Leader Effectiveness Taskforce, West Virginia Department of Education, and Technical experts • Technical experts/researchers, West Virginia Department of Education, and Taskforces • West Virginia Department of Education, technical experts • Representatives from schools, districts, RESAs, and West Virginia Department of Education
Year 4 (2013-2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Implementation:</i> Recommendations from the Task Forces on Improving Teacher and Leader Effectiveness, along with that of local and national experts, will be used as the basis for a multiple-measure student growth model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representatives from schools, districts, RESAs, and West Virginia Department of Education

⁴ The budget for the infrastructure of this system is reflected in Standards and Assessment. The project “System of Support” that is described in (D)(5) is where Great Teachers and Leaders has budgeted staff time and training to fit into this system.

	<p>that districts may choose to implement as one of several components of a revised teacher and leader performance evaluation system. Despite the fact that by the end of Year 3, all school districts will have had the opportunity to engage in one or two years of trialing the revised multiple-measure teacher/leader performance evaluation systems of which a multiple-measure student growth model is a component, districts will continue to need support in understanding and fine-tuning this work as well as utilizing it in a meaningful way. West Virginia will continue to rely on the vertical and horizontal network of support described in (D)(5) to dialogue and offer support around this work. In addition, West Virginia Department of Education will begin producing reports (based on the new definition of student growth). These data will also link to the Teacher E-Portfolio System to help identify where teachers and principals need support and for teachers and principals to be proactive in the pursuit of improving their skill set where they are weak. The E-Portfolio System will become an essential tool for the revised teacher and principal evaluation process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Communication:</i> In an effort to focus on transparency around the design and implementation of the revised teacher and leader performance assessment system, West Virginia will institute a comprehensive communication plan using one or more of the following methods: 1) Regional meetings; 2) Webcasts/webinars; and/or 3) Virtual liaison meetings that convene an educator performance assessment liaison (yet to be determined) from every district who stays informed about the developments at the state-level and communicates information back to the districts. • <i>Alignment study:</i> Continue to conduct study and track results. Report formative feedback to Taskforces. • <i>Recommendations:</i> The Taskforces make recommendations to the West Virginia State Board of Education for the criteria and processes around a revised teacher and leader performance assessment system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Virginia Department of Education, technical experts • Technical experts/researchers, West Virginia Department of Education, and Taskforces • West Virginia Department of Education, Technical Experts, Taskforces
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⁵These Year 1 activities will also include the reviews and recommendations described in Year 1, Table 1 around the interim, multiple-measure student growth models.

Note: The budget for the infrastructure of this system is reflected in Standards and Assessment. The project “System of Support” that is described in (D)(5) is where Great Teachers and Leaders has budgeted staff time and training to fit into this system.

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.

A review of current research reflects a lack of meaningful application of educator evaluations for both the evaluator and the educator being evaluated (Weisberg et al., 2009). Nationwide, and in West Virginia, annual evaluations are required only in the early years of one's career. Most West Virginia teachers who are tenured (after five years in the classroom) are permitted to set goals and provide evidence of meeting those goals rather than participate in a systemwide evaluation system. The goal of the revised evaluation system is to have baseline data for the education performance evaluation system and incorporate a peer analysis review system that will inform the state's goal to provide all teachers with consistent, constructive feedback to engage in a process of continuous improvement.

Appendix D-11 shows proposed language for West Virginia Code §18A-2-12 that requires an annual evaluation. However, it should be noted that as described in (D)(2)(ii), West Virginia will use the process of reforming the teacher and leader performance evaluation to move away from the "single-shot" administrator annual review to a multifaceted process in which teachers and principals engage in annual performance management reflecting a combination of administrator review, self-reflection, and peer analysis. Enhancing this policy in practice will be part of the reviews and recommendations of the Improving Teacher and Leader Effectiveness Taskforces through the progressive scale-up process described in Table 2. For example, the taskforces will need to consider important questions about the implementation of annual evaluations, particularly in specific contexts such as small, rural elementary schools where teachers sometimes function as part-time principals. In addition, the Teacher E-Portfolio System (see Data Systems section) will eventually be the primary mechanism for teachers, peer reviewers, and/or principals to access and use important and reliable data about their students' growth, their classes, and/or their schools in order to inform their performance as well as the overall evaluation process. The Teacher E-Portfolio System will allow for timely and constructive feedback as well as identifying areas of proficiency or lack of proficiency for improving instruction and where professional development might be most targeted.

Use these evaluations to inform decisions.

Systems of accountability and rewards for teachers and principals are critical aspects of any performance management. Teachers and principals can be trained, recruited, assigned, supported, etc., but along the way, two systems are required: one system of accountability that ensures students have access to the highest quality educators and another that provides hardworking, effective

educators with several opportunities to be rewarded across their careers. Although West Virginia has some policies and structures in place to support a system of accountability and rewards, there are areas for enhancement. Following is an overview of some of the current West Virginia infrastructure that supports (D)(2)(iiv) as well as plans for improving upon that structure for an enhanced system of accountability and rewards for educators that is tied to performance.

Criteria (a), (c), and (d) of (D)(2)(iv) (developing teachers and principals, granting tenure and/or full certification to teachers and principals, and removing ineffective teachers and principals) are already, by and large, embedded in a variety of West Virginia policies and/or initiatives. For example:

- (a) Developing teachers and principals, including by providing relevant coaching, induction support, and/or professional development:
 - W.Va. Code §18A-3-2b and §18A-3-2d (Appendix D-12) require a beginning internship for both teachers and principals.
 - West Virginia Board of Education Policies 5900 and 5899 require teacher and principal mentors (Appendix D-13).
- (c) Whether to grant tenure and/or full certification (where applicable) to teachers and principals using rigorous standards and streamlined, transparent, and fair procedures:
 - W.Va. Code §18A-3-3 and §18A-2-2 (Appendix D-14) speak to this criteria. Code requires teachers to have completed three years of successful employment before tenure is granted and the second tier of licensure is granted.
 - West Virginia plans to participate in the Teacher Performance Assessment Consortium. The Consortium has worked to develop, pilot, and validate two nationally available Teacher Performance Assessments that will be made available to states and programs that wish to improve their capacity to evaluate teachers for initial licensure and professional licensure. West Virginia anticipates that the first assessment will support teacher development and evaluation for the initial license across a wide variety of routes into teaching and that a related assessment will support our ongoing teacher and principal evaluation reform efforts by assessing teachers further along the teacher career continuum, at the point at which a West Virginia professional teaching license is issued (i.e., after five years of teaching).
- (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.
 - W.Va. Code §18A-2-12 (Appendix D-15) stipulates that evaluation of all school personnel should “serve as documentation for a dismissal on the grounds of unsatisfactory performance.” In addition, the code states, “Any professional whose performance evaluation includes a written improvement plan shall be given an opportunity to improve his or her performance through the implementation of the plan. If the next performance evaluation shows

that the professional is now performing satisfactorily, no further action may be taken concerning the original performance evaluation. If the evaluation shows that the professional is still not performing satisfactorily, the evaluator either shall make additional recommendations for improvement or may recommend the dismissal of the professional in accordance with the provisions of section eight of this article.”

These policies provide a solid framework to enhance our performance management system to connect evaluation information to decisions about support, tenure, certification, and/or removal. There are places in the state where these policies are not fully in effect and sites where these policies or related system components need to be put in place or enhanced in order to be fully realized. West Virginia will use the “progressive scale-up” process described in (D)(2)(i) and (D)(2)(ii) as a mechanism to pilot the process of using performance evaluation information for decisions related to the criteria listed in (D)(2)(iv). However, LEAs have a base from which to begin—policies above can be trialed and then enhanced within the context of the new performance assessment systems. It will be important that through the communication and support processes outlined in Table 2 as well as through the taskforces, participants and technical experts supporting the progressive scale-up process of reforming the teacher and principal evaluation system share experiences and best practices around connecting evaluation information to decisions about development, tenure, certification, and removal. After all districts have had the opportunity to trial these connections in Years 2 and 3, the taskforces will make recommendations to the West Virginia State Board for how districts should proceed with connecting this information in Years 4 and beyond. Enhancements to policy and code may happen at that time.

Goal 3: Pilot alternative compensation models.

The inability to sustain alternative compensation reform is one of the most common reasons such reform efforts do not succeed (Guthrie & Prince, 2008). To its credit, West Virginia has not previously attempted to tie compensation to student growth and thus has not experienced the type of failure in this area as have many districts and states nationwide. West Virginia’s proposal to engage in alternative compensation reform is based on strong stakeholder support and design options that allow sustainability.

West Virginia’s initial efforts in the area of compensation reform are evidenced by draft recommendations from the West Virginia Educator Advancement Task Force in 2007 (Appendix D-16). Although never recommended to the West Virginia Legislature by the West Virginia Board of Education due to budget constraints, these recommendations represented an approach to

compensation that was supported by a broad base of stakeholders. In addition, West Virginia submitted a National Governors Association (NGA) policy academy grant focused on a variety of compensation models recommended by the West Virginia Educator Advancement Task Force. Although the NGA grant proposal was unsuccessful, the grant application process built on Task Force recommendations and represented a strong coalition between the West Virginia Department of Education and the governor's office in the area of compensation. Finally, West Virginia is a member of a six-state consortium funded by CCSSO, ETS, and NSDE that is focused on designing a model continuum for educators that includes compensation reform. The work of this continuum will strengthen West Virginia's efforts to build a compensation system on a foundation of strong teacher and leader standards and a revised evaluation system for teachers and leaders.

Following the example of Baratz-Snowden (2007) and Max and Koppich (2007), West Virginia's plan would allow participating districts in Years 2 and 3 of the progressive scale-up to include locally designed alternative compensation models that build on the recommendations of the West Virginia Educator Advancement Task Force and tap into best practices from other districts nationwide that utilize performance-based compensation models (e.g., Teacher Incentive Fund grantees). Authority for implementation of the progressive scale-up pilots in Years 2 and 3 would be requested under provisions of W.Va. Code §18-5B-5(c) and West Virginia Board of Education Policy 3236 (Innovation Zones) (Appendix F-4) in which participating schools, groups of schools or districts request an exception to W.Va. Code §18A-4-5a (Appendix D-17) to permit the granting of compensation linked to student achievement. Participating districts will have access to technical experts as well as West Virginia Department of Education staff to assist with the design and implementation of these locally developed alternative compensation models. Again, it will be of the utmost importance that technical experts and participants share with the taskforces and the West Virginia Department of Education their experiences with these programs as part of their "progressive scale-up" efforts so that the taskforces can make decisions about a set of alternative compensation models to be utilized for an intensive pilot in Year 4.

West Virginia will encourage selected districts to incorporate criteria (D)(2)(iv)(b) in Year 4. Some districts will continue to engage with their teachers and principals around how to achieve success with compensation reform. Based on the learnings of Years 2 and 3, the taskforces will recommend an alternative compensation model or menu of models for five districts, through a competitive process, to pilot in Year 4 using Race to the Top funds. In addition, pilot districts will receive support from technical

experts and West Virginia Department of Education staff around how to implement the recommended model(s) in their district. This support will include, among other things, assistance around how to think about creatively repurposing or more efficiently using current funds (or accessing new, additional funds at the local level) in order to sustain the alternative compensation efforts after Year 4. Eligible districts that would like to engage in the pilot will need to make the case that they are ready to pursue such an effort. After the pilot year, participants and evaluators will inform the taskforces of their experiences and the taskforces will then consider and recommend how this work will be pursued in the state after Year 4.

Performance Measures 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).		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
Criteria	General goals to be provided at time of application:	Baseline data and annual targets				
(D)(2)(i)	Percentage of participating LEAs that measure student growth (as defined in this notice).	100%	0%	49%	51%	100%
(D)(2)(ii)	Percentage of participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems for teachers.	0	0	49%	51%	Up to 100%
(D)(2)(ii)	Percentage of participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems for principals.	0	0	49%	51%	Up to 100%
(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"> Developing teachers and principals. 	N/A	N/A	Up to 49%	Up to 51%	Up to 100%
(D)(2)(iv)(b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compensating teachers and principals. 	N/A	N/A	Up to 49%	Up to 51%	Up to 100%
(D)(2)(iv)(b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting teachers and principals. 	N/A	N/A	Up to 49%	Up to 51%	Up to 100%

(D)(2)(iv)(b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retaining effective teachers and principals. 	N/A	N/A	Up to 49%	Up to 51%	Up to 100%
(D)(2)(iv)(c)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Granting tenure and/or full certification (where applicable) to teachers and principals. 	N/A	N/A	Up to 49%	Up to 51%	Up to 100%
(D)(2)(iv)(d)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removing ineffective tenured and untenured teachers and principals. 	N/A	N/A	Up to 49%	Up to 51%	Up to 100%
<p>The target for compensation reflects the option for an individual teacher to “opt in” to a compensation system based in part on a qualifying evaluation system as defined in this notice. “Promoting teacher and principals” in West Virginia would be defined as differential pay for additional assignments as defined in revised W. Va. Code §18A-4-5a. “Retaining effective teachers and principals” is based on participation in selected pilots that implement incentive pay options to address equitable distribution situations.</p>						
General data to be provided at time of application:						
Total number of participating LEAs.		55				
Total number of principals in participating LEAs.		711				
Total number of teachers in participating LEAs.		19,894				
[Optional: Enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data] Not Applicable						
Criterion	Data to be requested of grantees in the future:					
(D)(2)(ii)	Number of teachers and principals in participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems.					
(D)(2)(iii) ⁵	Number of teachers and principals in participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems who were evaluated as effective or better in the prior academic year.					
(D)(2)(iii)	Number of teachers and principals in participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems who were evaluated as ineffective in the prior academic year.					

⁵ Note that for some data elements there are likely to be data collection activities the State would do in order to provide aggregated data to the Department. For example, in Criteria (D)(2)(iii), States may want to ask each Participating LEA to report, for each rating category in its evaluation system, the definition of that category and the number of teachers and principals in the category. The State could then organize these two categories as effective and ineffective, for Department reporting purposes.

(D)(2)(iv)(b)	Number of teachers and principals in participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems whose evaluations were used to inform compensation decisions in the prior academic year.
(D)(2)(iv)(b)	Number of teachers and principals in participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems who were evaluated as effective or better and were retained in the prior academic year.
(D)(2)(iv)(c)	Number of teachers in participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems who were eligible for tenure in the prior academic year.
(D)(2)(iv)(c)	Number of teachers in participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems whose evaluations were used to inform tenure decisions in the prior academic year.
(D)(2)(iv)(d)	Number of teachers and principals in participating LEAs who were removed for being ineffective in the prior academic year.

(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

West Virginia is committed to ensuring that students in high-poverty and high-minority schools have access to highly effective teachers and principals and to ensuring that critical content such as mathematics and science are taught by highly effective teachers. Our conviction is illustrated by the following plan to strategically examine and expand our efforts and incentive schemes through targeted pilot programs and the rigorous use of data from the state longitudinal data system. We recognize that our strategies for combating inequitable distribution should be focused and intentional. To that end, we have developed a four-year strategic plan for reducing inequity in high-need schools. Included in this plan are 14 incentive schemes or programs that will provide districts a cadre of resources to prevent inequity. This plan, including goals, activities, timeline, and party responsible, can be found in Appendix D-17. To assure that our policies and incentive schemes are effective, pilots will be evaluated to examine the variation of inequities that exist in West Virginia and determine the respective solutions to those inequities. Finally, beyond pilot programs, we use the statewide longitudinal data system to refine our monitoring, identification, and analysis of equitable distribution for more targeted action.

Our initial efforts to address distribution issues emerged from knowledge about teacher and principal shortages (explained in the State Superintendent’s Task Force on West Virginia’s Teacher Shortage, shortage areas include mathematics, science, world languages, and special education) and concerns about the potential inequities in high-poverty and/or high-minority schools that may

result from the retirement of our aging workforce. Recent reports indicate that nearly one quarter of West Virginia's teachers are eligible for retirement and suggest that a wave of teacher retirements is likely in the next decade (West Virginia Department of Education, 2007b). The same is true for our principal workforce: approximately 1,000 West Virginia principals will be eligible to retire in the next five years (West Virginia Leadership Collaborative, 2009). Given current vacancy rates across the state (more than 10 percent in 2006–07; West Virginia Educational Personnel Data Report, 2008) and recognizing looming retirement concerns, West Virginia has developed multiple incentive structures and programs that combat the inequitable distribution of properly certificated teachers in critical shortage areas. Throughout the past five years, we have successfully written or revised state code four times to address inequity. These developments allow (1) retirees to teach for 140 days without penalty in critical shortage areas, (2) out-of-state certificated teachers to earn a West Virginia teaching certificate with fewer obstacles, (3) incentives for counties to encourage teachers to add another area of certification in a critical shortage area, and (4) multiple alternative certification programs for teachers in critical shortage areas. These programs allowed the opportunity for the Transition to Teaching and Troops to Teachers programs to directly address high-need schools through program incentives.

Beyond these revisions to code, West Virginia has approved five additional initiatives that address the distribution of highly effective teachers and principals:

- In an effort to increase the number of National Board Certified Teachers, the West Virginia Department of Education offered a variety of incentives to 25 teachers in high-poverty and/or high-minority schools who applied for and completed the candidacy process for the 2009–10 academic year. Participants in this program received: mentor support, access to video equipment, three professional leave days, monthly meetings, paid travel, and a stipend.
- To increase the number of certificated teachers working in the public educational system seeking an additional endorsement in a shortage area, the state also offers tuition reimbursement for courses completed in a verified shortage area. Up to 15 semester hours can be reimbursed with a minimum 3.0 GPA.
- To increase the effectiveness of special education teachers in high-need schools, West Virginia offers professional development in literacy using the report of the National Reading Panel, the University of Texas' *Special Education Reading*

Program, and the Carnegie Corporation’s *Time to Act*. The annual Special Education Leadership Academy and its follow-up activities provide 300 special educators with comprehensive introduction and use of instructional resources through technology and use of the state’s online standards based IEP with its embedded access to summative and formative assessment data and the interactive West Virginia Content Standards and Objectives.

- To increase the effectiveness of school leaders in high-need schools, the West Virginia Institutes for 21st Century Leadership provide in-depth professional development and support for West Virginia’s outstanding school leaders. This yearlong experience promises to expand the principal’s understanding of the Frameworks for High Performing 21st Century Schools and develop the leadership skills necessary to transform schools to engaging and rigorous 21st century learning environments for both students and staff.
- West Virginia has professional development offerings that increase the effectiveness of teachers in STEM through training that helps existing teachers earn certification in STEM disciplines.

High-Minority and/or High-Poverty Schools

To address inequity, we have developed definitions of “high-poverty” and “low-poverty” schools based on the number of students receiving free or reduced lunch, where each is defined by the top and bottom quartiles of poverty in the state, respectively, based on ESEA Section 1111(h)(1)(C)(viii). Our definitions of “high-minority” and “low-minority” schools also were developed during this work and designate high-minority and low-minority schools, respectively, as the top and bottom quartiles of schools when schools are ranked from highest number of minority students to the lowest number of minority students.

We recognize that our strategies for combating inequitable distribution should be more focused and intentional. To that end, we have developed a targeted four-year strategic plan for reducing inequity in high-poverty and/or high-minority schools. Included in this plan are eight incentive schemes or programs that will provide districts a cadre of resources to prevent inequity. The overall goal/project will address the inequitable distribution of teachers in selected pilot sites. Incentives and programs to ensure that students in high-poverty and/or high-minority schools have equitable access to highly effective teachers and principals include:

- The suggested revision of code to allow teacher differential pay

- Funding for teacher and principal differential pay for pilot sites struggling to attract effective teachers and principals
- Alternative certification programs for principals in hard-to-staff schools
- Alternative certification for school leaders based on the National Board Certification for Education Leaders
- Alternative certification for aspiring leaders in struggling schools
- Increased incentives for NBPTS certification
- Revised legislation to address salary caps teachers face as they consider transferring to a high-need school
- Scaling up the Transition to Teaching Program

Our detailed plan is outlined in Appendix D-17.

Critical Shortage Areas

To ensure that our policies are effective, West Virginia will implement pilot programs in three districts that consistently struggle to fill positions with qualified candidates. Pilots will allow the state to examine the variation of inequities that exist in West Virginia and determine the respective solutions to these inequities. We recognize that there are a variety of challenges to equitable distribution in our state, salaries notwithstanding. Current inequities exist due to four primary factors: (1) the remote geographic locations of schools, (2) the depressed economic conditions of school communities, (3) the fast-growing regions that experience large vacancies because of sheer growth of the student population, and (4) the competition with bordering states of higher salary schedules. Recognizing these differences, we will create pilots in each of these four contexts to better examine what incentives can ameliorate the inequities therein.

In addition to the incentives and programs listed above, we will increase the number and percentage of effective teachers teaching *hard-to-staff subjects* through:

- The revision of code to allow teacher differential pay
- Funding for teacher and principal differential pay for pilot sites struggling to attract effective teachers and principals
- Additional alternative certification programs for STEM subjects
- Scaling up the Transition to Teaching Program for STEM, world languages, and special education

- Further development of Teach West Virginia to serve as a recruitment site and as a resource for LEAs
- Scaling up professional development for existing teachers to earn certification in STEM subjects

Within these pilots, we will provide funding for incentives, professional development for program officers and administration around equitable distribution and the contexts driving inequities, and technical support for these districts as they develop equity plans that can address equitable distribution in their locales. These pilots will address not only the inequity in our highest need schools but also will contribute to our collective understanding as a state. Through the pilot process, we will collect and analyze detailed information connected specifically to policies designed to affect the distribution of teachers. Guided by the scholarship of Imazeki & Goe (2009), and the expertise of our evaluator, our evaluations will examine which initiatives reduce the inequitable distribution of teachers, which initiatives reduce the inequitable distribution of leaders, and in which contexts incentives are most effective. Over time, the pilot evaluations will inform the evaluation of our state policies for cost effectiveness in the reduction of inequitable distribution at the state level. We will examine the specifics of the policies themselves, such as the type, amount, and eligibility requirements of incentives. Our detailed plan is outlined in Appendix D-18.

Beyond pilot programs, West Virginia will use growing data sets to refine our monitoring, identification, and analysis of equitable distribution. We will pursue three avenues to use our State Longitudinal Data System for more refined action: (1) Use data from successful Transition to Teaching to request additional dollars from the Legislature for future alternative certification programs that target high-need schools; (2) Use data and personnel records to identify where the needs are; and (3) Use the Teacher E-Portfolio System to develop more rigorous analyses of shortage areas, high-minority, high-poverty subject areas, and train pilot LEAs to use this information to develop plans and use incentives. Evaluation results and further data analysis of inequities and shortages through the E-Portfolio will drive the appropriate cessation or dissemination of strategies. Our detailed plan is outlined in Appendix D-18.

Performance Measures for (D)(3)(i) <i>Note: All information below is requested for Participating LEAs.</i>	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
General goals to be provided at time of application:	Baseline data and annual targets				
Percentage of teachers in schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are highly effective (as defined in this notice).	N/A	N/A	TBD	+20%	+25%
Percentage of teachers in schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are highly effective (as defined in this notice).	N/A	N/A	TBD	+20%	+25%
Percentage of teachers in schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are ineffective.	N/A	N/A	TBD	+20%	+25%
Percentage of teachers in schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are ineffective.	N/A	N/A	TBD	+20%	+25%
Percentage of principals leading schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are highly effective (as defined in this notice).	N/A	N/A	TBD	+20%	+25%
Percentage of principals leading schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are highly effective (as defined in this notice).	N/A	N/A	TBD	+20%	+25%
Percentage of principals leading schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are ineffective.	N/A	N/A	TBD	+20%	+25%
Percentage of principals leading schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are ineffective.	N/A	N/A	TBD	+20%	+25%

Data to measure teacher/leader effectiveness will be available from pilot programs in increasing numbers beginning in the first year of implementation through the four years of the grant. In 2011–12, we will use the new measures of teacher and principal effectiveness to develop a baseline. In 2012–13, we will use the new measures to monitor, identify and assess the influence of incentives and programs used to combat inequitable distribution within our pilots and aim to increase the percentage of highly effective teachers and principals by twenty. By 2013–14, we will increase the percentage of highly effective teachers and principals by 25 percent, and we will have the incentives, code changes, task force definitions, and professional development in place to ensure that students in high-poverty and/or high-minority schools have effective and highly effective teachers at equal rates to students in other schools. In 2013–14, we will use these measures to monitor, identify and assess statewide distribution of teachers and principals.

General data to be provided at time of application:

Total number of schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice).	275
Total number of schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice).	345
Total number of teachers in schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice).	7582
Total number of teachers in schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice).	9333
Total number of principals leading schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice).	258
Total number of principals leading schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice).	309

[Optional: Enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data]
Not Applicable

Data to be requested of grantees in the future:

Number of teachers and principals in schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who were evaluated as highly effective (as defined in this notice) in the prior academic year.
Number of teachers and principals in schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who were evaluated as highly effective (as defined in this notice) in the prior academic year.

Number of teachers and principals in schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who were evaluated as ineffective in the prior academic year.

Number of teachers and principals in schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who were evaluated as ineffective in the prior academic year.

Performance Measures for (D)(3)(ii) <i>Note: All information below is requested for Participating LEAs.</i>	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
General goals to be provided at time of application:	Baseline data and annual targets				
Percentage of mathematics teachers who were evaluated as effective or better.	N/A	N/A	TBD	+20%	+25%
Percentage of science teachers who were evaluated as effective or better.	N/A	N/A	TBD	+20%	+25%
Percentage of special education teachers who were evaluated as effective or better.	N/A	N/A	TBD	+20%	+25%
Percentage of teachers in language instruction educational programs who were evaluated as effective or better.	N/A	N/A	TBD	+20%	+25%
<p>Data to measure teacher/leader effectiveness will be available from pilot programs in increasing numbers beginning in the first year of implementation through the four years of the grant. We anticipate that pilot programs will have gains in teacher and principal effectiveness. We will be able to adequately measure such gains when the measure of teacher effectiveness becomes available in 2013–14. In 2011–12, we will use the new measures of teacher effectiveness to develop a baseline. In 2012–13, we will use the new measures to monitor, identify and assess the influence of incentives and programs used to combat inequitable distribution within our pilots and aim to increase the percentage of highly effective teachers by 20 and then 25 percent. By 2013–14, we will have the incentives, code changes, task force definitions, and professional development in place to ensure that students in critical shortage areas have effective and highly effective teachers at equal rates to students in other schools. In 2013–14, we will use these measures to monitor, identify and assess statewide distribution of teachers.</p>					
General data to be provided at time of application:					
Total number of mathematics teachers.	2486				

Total number of science teachers.	1693
Total number of special education teachers.	1808
Total number of teachers in language instruction educational programs.	2301
[Optional: Enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data] Not Applicable	
Data to be requested of grantees in the future:	
Number of mathematics teachers in participating LEAs who were evaluated as effective or better in the prior academic year.	
Number of science teachers in participating LEAs who were evaluated as effective or better in the prior academic year.	
Number of special education teachers in participating LEAs who were evaluated as effective or better in the prior academic year.	
Number of teachers in language instruction educational programs in participating LEAs who were evaluated as effective or better in the prior academic year.	

(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

As West Virginia aims to improve the effectiveness of teachers and principals across the state and improve overall human capital, we plan to consider and concentrate on several points along the educator's career continuum, including preparation. In West Virginia, there are 20 traditional-route teacher preparation institutions in the state, five credentialing programs for principals, and seven alternative routes to certification for teachers. Most of West Virginia's educators are prepared within the state, so it is critical that we have the highest quality preparation and credentialing programs in place as the foundation for the initial training of highly effective educators for our schools. To this end, we have three primary goals for improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal programs: (1) Track the performance of teachers and principals by credentialing program; (2) Revise educator preparation programs to align with the new teacher and leader standards; and (3) Build on the work of the CCSSO, ETS, and NSDC multistate consortium to develop and implement a self-assessment tool to be used during preservice/fieldwork as one way of monitoring pre-performance and assuring that proficient teachers continue on to enter the teaching profession. In addition, the mechanisms described previously related to the expanded alternative routes to certification contribute to this goal. (See (D)(1) and (D)(3).)

Goal 1: Track the performance of teachers and principals by credentialing program.

Currently, institutions of higher education submit to the West Virginia Department of Education an annual report inclusive of data on (1) progress toward meeting any program standards that were not fully met in previous program accreditation reviews; (2) candidate preparation to teach the West Virginia Content Standards and Objectives; (3) required Title II data; and (4) data about the number of individuals seeking initial licensure, number of candidates completing programs, and placement of program completers. In addition, each public institution of higher education is required to submit annually to the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (HEPC) indicators of progress.

West Virginia is now renegotiating how the percentage of program completers is reported for the purpose of Title II to more accurately represent the number of successful program completers compared to all program candidates. This enhanced definition will be a stronger metric by which to evaluate educator preparation programs. Additional descriptive data also will be collected to give the West Virginia Board of Education more information by which to make decisions about program approval status.

We will enhance these efforts to ensure higher quality preparation programs by tracking the performance of teachers and principals by credentialing program. These data will tie teacher performance back to the credentialing institute and provide monitoring data for the West Virginia Department of Education as well as data that can be used by teacher and principal preparation programs to inform the process of continuous improvement. Our institutes of higher education have been in conversations with the West Virginia Department of Education, and we are confident that they will support a stronger method by which to track program completers, monitor preparation program quality and effectiveness, and track job placement.

We are developing a Teacher E-Portfolio (described in more detail in Section C) that will include data points to track the preparation institution/program (including traditional and alternative routes) for all teachers and principals. In addition, we currently have the capacity as part of our accountability reporting system to track student growth (based on the new definition) by school, by classroom/subject, and by teacher and principal. These data, using the Teacher E-Portfolio system, will depict, for both teachers and principals, student growth aligned to specific preparation program. Once the Teacher E-Portfolio is fully functioning, the West Virginia Department of Education Office of Information Systems will produce reports presenting these data on an annual basis. Data and analysis of these reports will be used to inform state decisions regarding funding and program authorization.

Goal 2: Revise educator preparation programs to align with the new teacher and leader standards.

West Virginia will provide incentives to preparation institutions in the state to revise their programs to align with the new teacher and leader standards. Currently, the preparation institutions are informed about this work and they are “on board.” Technical and professional support will be provided by the West Virginia Department of Education to the preparation programs as they engage in the steps of the revision process, including developing self-analysis and peer-analysis tools, revised program submission requirements, revised program review criteria, and ultimately revised program approval.

Goal 3: Build on the work of the CCSSO, ETS, and NSDC multi-state consortium to develop and implement a self-assessment tool to be used during pre-service/fieldwork as one way of monitoring pre-performance and assuring that proficient teachers continue on to enter the teaching profession.

West Virginia is a member of a six-state consortium on teacher quality that is funded by ETS and NSDC. One of the consortium’s goals is to determine the effectiveness of assessment instruments that will identify when educators are ready to move

to the next level of preparation. This consortium is developing a research-based survey tool that preservice teachers can use to assist them in making informed decisions about future placement and will support candidates in making better decisions about the instructional setting that best suits their personal characteristics. Once tool development is complete, West Virginia plans to fold it into the educator preparation program revision process.

Performance Measures	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
General goals to be provided at time of application:	Baseline data and annual targets				
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.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Establish baseline
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.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Establish baseline
[Optional: Enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data] Not Applicable					
General data to be provided at time of application:					
Total number of teacher credentialing programs in the State.	20				
Total number of principal credentialing programs in the State.	5				
Total number of teachers in the State.	19,894				
Total number of principals in the State.	711				
[Optional: Enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data] Not Applicable					
Data to be requested of grantees in the future:					

Number of teacher credentialing programs in the State for which the information (as described in the criterion) is publicly reported.	
Number of teachers prepared by each credentialing program in the State for which the information (as described in the criterion) is publicly reported.	
Number of principal credentialing programs in the State for which the information (as described in the criterion) is publicly reported.	
Number of principals prepared by each credentialing program in the State for which the information (as described in the criterion) is publicly reported.	
Number of teachers in the State whose data are aggregated to produce publicly available reports on the State’s credentialing programs.	
Number of principals in the State whose data are aggregated to produce publicly available reports on the State’s credentialing programs.	

(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

West Virginia strives to provide highly effective support to teachers and principals through ongoing and job-embedded professional development, coaching, induction, and training for teachers and principals. We aim to continue to increase the effectiveness of our educators through a system of transformation—horizontal and vertical integrated networks that will support educators as we transform teaching and learning in West Virginia through Race to the Top. We will use regional meetings, webcasts/webinars, liaison meetings, and professional learning communities (PLCs) to support and train educators in the following initiatives: Teacher Leader Standards, Teacher and Principal Performance Assessment System, Instructional Improvement Systems, and the use of data and incentives to address inequitable distribution.

West Virginia has continuously offered high-quality support to teachers and principals through ongoing and job-embedded professional development, coaching, induction, and training. To date, we have implemented innovative professional development programs, robust induction and mentoring systems, and structures that demonstrate the importance of common time for teacher planning and collaboration. With Race to the Top funds, West Virginia will build a system of vertical (across schools, districts, RESAs and the state) and horizontal (within schools, districts, RESAs, and the state) supports for educators so that they have access to high-quality professional development that addresses the reform initiatives developed in this proposal.

West Virginia recognizes that to ensure student mastery of 21st century competencies and to improve student achievement in numeracy and literacy, teams of teachers must be empowered in collaborative communities. We know that by combining individuals' strengths and experiences in a team, teachers are better able to understand and use data, measure progress toward teaching and learning standards, assess and strategize about the quality of teaching schoolwide, and provide and receive support to work with the most challenging and low-performing classrooms. Teaming creates the environment for teachers to become continual, reflective learners and to work across disciplines, while creating new opportunities and roles for teachers.

Professional learning communities provide time for teachers to work interdependently to achieve common goals that are related to student learning (Dufour, 1998). Too often, educational systems are silos of isolation—leaders isolated from other leaders, schools isolated from other schools, classrooms from other classrooms, teachers from other teachers, school systems from the outside world. Implementing PLCs effectively will be a major step toward dismantling these silos and will be used to build educators' capacity to deeply engage in these reform initiatives.

Learning teams have a unique capacity to build a strong sustainable structure to support and train teachers and school leaders to gather, analyze, and use data for the improvement of instruction. These collaborative teams are the vehicle through which teachers will learn how to design instructional strategies for improvement, create school environments supportive of data-informed decisions, and differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all learners. PLCs can be used to align systems in order to more effectively implement instructional practices designed to improve student learning outcomes. West Virginia's strategic plan includes all of these methods and uses professional learning communities as a vehicle to provide effective support to teachers and principals. The plan can be found in Appendix D-19 and described in more detail as follows.

In the spring of 2009, State Superintendent Steve Paine recommended that districts utilize a portion of their state fiscal stabilization money to ensure that teachers are provided with the structures and time to meet together collaboratively in every school throughout the state. The structure for teacher collaboration now exists, but West Virginia recognizes that it is also essential to provide educators with a range of differentiated supports to enable the success of these collaborative teams. Vertical supports will be available for school-based collaborative teams through the Classroom Assessment Network (CAN) described in earlier sections. To continue to grow the CAN initiative, we plan to build a system of horizontal and vertical supports for educators so that they may access a powerful system of professional development that addresses the new initiatives developed through our overall Race to the Top plan.

West Virginia will invest time and effort in the CAN initiative because it will increase the capacity of leaders at the regional and district levels along the vertical axis of the system of transformation. Leaders trained in the CAN will be able to train and support educators in school-based PLCs in their school, district, or region. CAN leaders will provide technical assistance to schools and districts as they create effective, high-functioning professional learning communities focused on student learning.

In the 2010–11 year, the West Virginia Department of Education plans to develop three additional teams per region using the CAN model and assist in the further development of school PLCs through regular face-to-face and online meetings and webinars. The CAN I and CAN II regional teams will be the vehicle through which the school-based professional learning communities are supported and trained. These teams will be well-versed in the process and structure of PLCs and will use the following forms of content to build the capacity of schools and districts:

A) Training and Support for Teachers and Leaders in the Revised Teacher Leader Standards CAN Regional Team

Cohort I will work extensively within each district to communicate the new teacher leader standards. Three primary vehicles will be used to disseminate information about the revised teacher standards: (1) Regional meetings; (2) Webcasts/webinars; and (3) Liaison meetings that convene a student growth/educator performance assessment liaison (yet to be determined) from every district who stays informed about the developments at the state level and communicates information back to the districts.

B) Training and Support for Teachers and Leaders in the Teacher and Principal Performance Assessment System

West Virginia will rely on a statewide network of PLCs, including virtual PLCs, for communicating and continuing to offer support around this work. CAN Regional Team Cohorts I and II will work extensively with Progressive Scale Up Cohort I (this term refers to the first pilot cohort of 27 districts that will test the teacher and principal performance evaluation system) as they implement the revised teacher and principal performance assessment systems in twenty-seven pilot districts across the state. Supports will focus on gathering, analyzing, and using data to inform instruction, designing instructional strategies for improvement, differentiating instruction, and creating school environments supportive of data-informed decisions using the new standards. Three primary vehicles will be used to build collaboration and knowledge around evaluation systems: (1) Regional meetings; (2) Webcasts/webinars; and (3) Liaison meetings that convene a student growth/educator performance assessment liaison (yet to be determined) from every district who stays informed about the developments at the state level and communicates information back to the districts. CAN Regional Teams will continue to work extensively with Progressive Scale Up Cohort I as they continue to implement the revised teacher and principal performance assessment systems in Year 2. Support in Year 2 will focus on designing instruction to meet the specific needs of high-need populations and aligning systems and removing barriers to effective implementation practices designed to improve student learning outcomes. Regional CAN Cohorts I and II will work extensively with Progressive Scale Up Cohort II (this term refers to the second pilot cohort of 28 districts that will test the teacher and principal performance evaluation system) in Year 2 as they begin to implement the revised teacher and principal performance assessment systems in twenty-eight pilot districts across the state. Support will focus on gathering, analyzing, and using data to inform instruction, designing instructional strategies for improvement, differentiating instruction, and creating school environments supportive of data-informed decisions.

C) Training and Support to Use Instructional Improvement Systems

CAN Regional Teams will be used to further train and support districts in the use of our Instructional Improvement Systems. As noted in Section (C)(3), we are developing a system called Learn 21 to improve achievement in numeracy and literacy by providing instructional leaders with rapid-time data to inform decisions on the appropriate next instructional steps by integrating instructional data with student-level data. Learn 21 will gather formative assessment data tied to learning standards and student learning progressions so that teachers and leaders can personalize their instructional practice to student needs. In addition to Learn 21, we are developing a Comprehensive Early Warning System that will provide multiple stakeholders with rapid-time feedback loops for the early intervention of academic failure. The Comprehensive Early Warning System will focus on the student, teacher, and school at-risk indicators.

Districts will require training and support in these new systems, and the CAN teams will be poised to lead the effort. The focus of the trainings will include at a minimum: (1) using rapid-time student-level data to inform instructional decisions, (2) uploading artifacts that document professional and instructional work, (3) charting professional learning, setting goals and meeting objectives, and (4) accessing and using available professional development opportunities and other professional growth opportunities, such as virtual communities of learning. School leaders will need additional support and training to use the Teacher E-Portfolio System to (1) use rapid-time data at the teacher, school, district, regional and state levels to better inform efforts to increase student achievement and intervene in cases of academic failure, (2) better understand the Teacher E-Portfolio System's capacity, requirements and structures for all members of their education teams, (3) identify teachers who are at risk of becoming ineffective so they can be connected to the appropriate professional development to get them back on track, and (4) run reports using preservice and induction data to assist in the recruitment and retention of effective teachers. Three primary vehicles will be used to build collaboration and knowledge around E-Portfolio Systems: (1) Regional meetings; (2) Webcasts/webinars; and (3) Liaison meetings that convene an E-Portfolio Liaison (yet to be determined) from every district who stays informed about developments at the state level and communicates information back to the districts.

D) Training and Support for School Leaders in the Use of Data and Incentives to Address Inequitable Distribution

For our four equitable distribution pilot sites, local CAN regional teams will provide additional training and support to help

school leaders better recognize the variety of reasons for inequitable distribution in our state as explained in Section D(3), analyze data to identify likely factors for inequitable distribution in their district context, and develop local equity plans to give teachers and principals an incentive to work in high-minority, high-poverty, and/or critical shortage schools and areas. Details of this plan are described in (D)(3).

Measurement, Evaluation, and Continuous Improvement of Supports

West Virginia will measure, evaluate, and continuously improve the effectiveness of the supports offered through the CAN network with a clear focus on how they improve teacher success in improving student achievement. At a basic level, the CAN network will continuously review evaluations of their training sessions to realign efforts to better target the needs of teachers and leaders within the districts. More formally, an annual systematic evaluation of professional development efforts will examine annual outcomes and specifically identify problems with the training and support offered at state, regional, district, and school levels. Initially, data from the current longitudinal data set regarding school AYP, graduation rates, attendance, and our initial measures of student growth will be used to assess which schools need additional support. As the E-Portfolio System develops more refined data, it will help all education leaders make better informed decisions regarding professional development and support. Using the E-Portfolio System, West Virginia will be able to examine and pinpoint school-level effectiveness to adjust the type and intensity of professional development offerings. As noted in (C)(2), the Teacher E-Portfolio System will provide teachers, administrators, and district, regional, and state decision makers with the information necessary to provide teachers and leaders immediate support to help them achieve the status of highly effective and to stay highly effective. The state will use the Teacher E-Portfolio System to examine teacher and principal evaluation data with professional development data and measure, evaluate, and continuously improve the effectiveness of supports to improve student achievement.

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Performance Measures Performance measures for this criterion are optional. If the State wishes to include performance measures, please enter them as rows in this table and, for each measure, provide annual targets in the columns provided.	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
(Enter measures here, if any.) Not Applicable					

(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

Under *No Child Left Behind*, Title I Section 1116, The West Virginia Department of Education has the legal authority to intervene directly in the state’s lowest achieving Title I schools and districts that are identified for improvement. Currently, West Virginia has 21 districts in corrective action, six districts in year one or year two of improvement, and 28 districts that are not identified for improvement. The West Virginia Department of Education currently manages four of these districts after taking over the district and removing the superintendent. The methodology for determining corrective action in the state of West Virginia is included in Appendix E-1.

Intervention in Schools

According to W. Va. Code §18-2E-5 (Appendix E-2) and West Virginia Board of Education Policy 2320 (Appendix E-3), West Virginia has the legal authority to intervene directly in both low-achieving schools and districts.

State code and Policy 2320 authorize the West Virginia Board of Education to assign a school low-performing accreditation status when the school falls below the criteria for full accreditation in three of the following performance measures: student

achievement, participation rate, attendance rate, or graduation rate. Whenever a school is issued low-performing status, the West Virginia Board of Education appoints a team of improvement consultants to make recommendations to the Board within 60 days. If the school's low performance continues six months after the recommendations have been received by the school district, the West Virginia Board of Education can appoint a monitor to the school. The monitor will work in the school, collaboratively with school leadership, to bring the school to full accreditation status.

If the low performance continues one year after the appointment of a monitor, the West Virginia Board of Education is authorized to intervene directly in the operation of the school. This intervention may include, but is not limited to, establishing instructional programs, taking such direct action as may be necessary to correct the low performance, removing the principal, and replacing administrators and principals in low-performing schools in districts in nonapproval status with individuals determined by the state superintendent to be the most qualified for the positions. The West Virginia Board of Education may choose to appoint a monitor to assist the school principal after state intervention in the operation of the school has been completed.

The West Virginia Board of Education has requested that the state legislature modify the state code in 2010 to enable the West Virginia Department of Education to intervene more quickly and more directly in schools than is possible through current policy and to include an additional condition that would cause a school to receive a low-performing accreditation status—that the school's results on the most recent statewide assessment in reading and mathematics place the school in the bottom 5 percent of performance at their programmatic level.

Intervention in Districts

W. Va. Code §18-2E-5 and West Virginia Board of Education Policy 2320 authorize the West Virginia Board of Education to assign a school district nonapproval status if a school district on conditional approval status fails to meet the objectives and timeline of its revised improvement plan or fails to achieve full approval status by the date specified in the revised plan. Whenever a district is assigned to nonapproval status, the West Virginia Board of Education appoints a team of improvement consultants to make recommendations to the Board within 60 days.

If the school district's low performance continues six months after the recommendations have been received by the school district, the West Virginia Board of Education is authorized to intervene in the operation of the district to ensure that improvements

are made. These interventions may include, but are not limited to: taking any direct action necessary; removing the district superintendent; and delegating decision-making authority to the state superintendent regarding expenditure of funds, the employment and dismissal of personnel, the establishment and operation of the school calendar, and the establishment of instructional programs. Finally, the West Virginia Board of Education may intervene immediately in the operation of a school district if the Board finds that delaying intervention for any period of time would not be in the best interests of the students in the county school system or if the Board previously intervened in the same school district within the last five years.

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

West Virginia's Race to the Top is focused on change at the classroom level, with the student at the center of change. We recognize that, to date, our collective efforts to create vertical and horizontal learning and support systems have fallen short of our ultimate goal, which is to transform classrooms. Consequently, our approach aims resources and supports directly at classrooms and seeks to build capacity within and across the system to support dramatically improved teaching and learning. Our approach to intervene in the lowest achieving schools and districts is shaped by the persistent challenges reflected in these school communities. However, the pinnacle for success is no different in struggling schools than in nonstruggling schools. We are relentless in our pursuit of an exemplary P–20 education system that equips all West Virginia students for college and career success in a global society.

Identification of Schools

The West Virginia Department of Education will use our federal authority to intervene in at least 23 Title I schools identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring. However, this is only a starting point for West Virginia because we are committed to more than doubling the federal expectation to intervene in only the lowest achieving Title I schools. In addition to the 23 Title I schools, we also have identified four Tier II schools that can be served with 1003(g) school improvement grants and the 72 lowest -achieving schools in the state that are not eligible to receive 1003(g) school improvement grants. Of these 72 schools, we will provide intensive supports for the lowest achieving 24 and some support for the other 48. In identifying all of these schools, we considered both the absolute performance of a school on the state's assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics *and* the school's lack of progress on these assessments over time.

The first set of schools that we identified are those 27 schools that can be served with Title I 1003(g) school improvement grants—five Tier I schools, four Tier II schools, and 18 Tier III schools. There are currently 23 Title I schools in West Virginia that are identified for improvement, corrective action or restructuring. Guidance from the U.S. Department of Education encouraged the state education agency (SEA) to intervene in either the lowest achieving 5 percent or the lowest achieving five schools on this list of Title I schools identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring. Because 5 percent of 23 schools would yield only one school, we chose instead to intervene in five schools—the largest number of Tier I schools possible under the federal guidance. Tier

III includes the remaining 18 Title I schools identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring.

As another strategy to maximize the number of schools in which we can support interventions with 1003(g) school improvement grants, we followed the sequence of steps recommended in the December 2009 *Guidance on School Improvement Grants Under §1003(g) of the ESEA Act of 1965* to identify five Tier II schools. These steps are outlined in Appendix E-4. Tier II includes the bottom 5 percent of low-achieving secondary schools that are eligible for but do not receive Title I funds and in which at least 40 percent of the students are from low-income families. We will apply for a waiver from the U.S. Department of Education in order to use 1003(g) school improvement grants to fund interventions in these four Tier II schools. The list of Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools in which interventions will be supported with 1003(g) school improvement grants is available in Appendix E-5.

Unfortunately, because of the restrictions on Title I 1003(g) funding, many of the lowest achieving schools in our state do not appear on the list of Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools. As a result, we intend to go well beyond this list to ensure that we are supporting interventions in, at a minimum, all of the lowest achieving schools in the bottom 5 percent statewide, whether or not these schools are eligible to receive 1003(g) school improvement grants. Because the majority of Tier I and Tier III schools in West Virginia are elementary schools, we will use Race to the Top funds to broaden our scope and provide assistance for schools at all three programmatic levels. We will identify an additional 24 of the lowest achieving schools in the state that do not appear on the list of Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools—eight elementary schools, eight middle schools, and eight high schools. These schools will be identified, as were Title I schools, by considering both the absolute performance of a school on the state’s assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics *and* the school’s lack of progress on these assessments over time. Interventions in these 24 non-Title I schools will be funded largely through Race to the Top dollars in combination with other federal funds that will support these improvement efforts. These 24 schools will receive the most intense and longest duration of technical assistance. The other 48 non-Title I low-achieving schools that we identified will be involved in professional development for 45 days over a three-year period to build capacity in their schools.

During the first year of intervention efforts, the schools will be relieved from onsite visits from the West Virginia Department of Education Office of Education Performance Audits and state sanctions. This incentive, provided for a period of one year, is designed to enable the schools to focus on the continuous improvement process rather than on accountability. Sustainability will be

fostered by means of internal accountability developed through the continuous improvement process. Federal accountability measures will remain applicable for Title I schools.

Intervention Models

The U.S. Department of Education has recommended that state education agencies support turnaround efforts in local education agencies (LEAs) by implementing one of four school intervention models: restart, school closure, turnaround, or transformation.

In the restart model, an LEA would close a school and reopen it under a charter school operator, a charter management organization (CMO), or an education management organization (EMO). This option currently is not available in West Virginia because there is not a charter school law. If a charter school law is passed in the future, this may be an option for struggling schools in West Virginia.

The second intervention model is school closure. The West Virginia Board of Education and the State Superintendent of Schools' authority to close a school is related to the condition of the facilities (i.e., the physical structure of the building warrants school closure) (Appendix E-6). At times, the LEA working with the SEA will close a school because of low academic performance and the need to upgrade the facility.

Both the school closure and the turnaround intervention options are complicated by the rural nature of the state. More than half of all West Virginia schools are in rural areas, and nearly 40 percent of students statewide are from rural areas—more than double the national average of 19.4 percent (Johnson & Strange, 2009). Of the 55 school districts in West Virginia, 25 have enough students to support only one high school (Appendix E-7). In rural counties with small numbers of schools, school closure may not be a viable option because students will not have another school to attend, if, for example, the one high school in their district is closed. The turnaround model may also be put to limited use in rural districts. It will be difficult to replace the principal and more than 50 percent of the staff in districts that are currently struggling to fill all of their teaching positions with highly qualified teachers.

For these reasons, we anticipate that the most commonly selected intervention will be the transformation model. However, because there are not more than nine low-achieving Title I schools in any district in West Virginia, the federal restriction on the use of the transformation model will not apply.

West Virginia's Design for the Transformation of Teaching and Learning

West Virginia's Standards for High Quality Schools (Appendix E-8) will be finalized and adopted by the West Virginia Board of Education in 2010 to structure accountability/compliance systems and will then be used in all schools throughout the state to guide school improvement planning and to drive the needs assessment process in struggling schools. At the state education agency, we will also align our work around these standards.

Modeled after our effective Closing the Achievement Gap Professional Development Demonstration Schools (CAG Schools) program, we will provide schools with direct, sustained, personalized support. The CAG Schools program was designed and implemented in 2004. Its purpose is to improve the academic achievement of all students, particularly in schools with high percentages of poor, minority, and underachieving students. In order to provide these schools with additional support, the West Virginia Department of Education provides a Closing the Achievement Gap Liaison, who works in three schools in each county. These liaisons lead professional learning communities in which teachers analyze data, identify gaps in student learning, and then differentiate their instruction to meet student needs. Between 2004 and 2008, the percentage of CAG schools that embedded time for teacher collaboration in their school schedules increased from 0 percent to 72 percent. As a result of this high-quality, sustained, job-embedded professional development, student gains in proficiency on statewide assessment tests were larger in CAG schools than for schools statewide for every subgroup in both reading and mathematics (Appendix A-2).

A second strong example of success is our Title I program. School improvement specialists work closely with each school identified for improvement, conduct a needs assessment, and align appropriate supports, resources, and professional development to meet the needs of the schools. As a result of these intensive and targeted interventions, 36 of the 59 Title I schools that have been identified for improvement since 2004 have been removed from improvement status. Lessons learned from past interventions in the state are highlighted in the evidence table that follows. These effective strategies include hiring new principals to signal the need for dramatic change; adding instructional leaders, who focus on curriculum and instruction, to the administrative team; implementing a new research-based curriculum or instructional program; restructuring the school day to provide collaborative working time for teachers; hiring school improvement specialists who lead professional learning communities that provide teachers with sustained and embedded professional development; and assisting the school in building capacity.

In order to build on the foundation of our past success, we have identified the following three goals, which are designed to improve student achievement in low-achieving schools:

- Build the capacity of the SEA and LEAs to drive transformative interventions in low-achieving schools.
- Strengthen teacher and leader effectiveness in low-achieving schools in order to improve the quality of instruction.
- Develop comprehensive systems of supports in low-achieving schools.

Evidence

Approach Used	# of Schools Since SY2004-05	Results and Lessons Learned
Reopen school as public charter school.	0	There are currently no charter schools in West Virginia.
Replace all or most of the school staff who are relevant to the failure of the school.	0	N/A
Contract with external provider.	0	N/A
Turn the operation of the school over to the SEA.	0	N/A
Engage in other major restructuring efforts.	59	<p>Results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2004–05, three of the 37 schools met AYP in 2004. • In 2005–06, 15 of the 36 schools met AYP in 2005. • In 2006–07, 12 of the 25 schools met AYP in 2006. • In 2007–08, two of the 19 schools met AYP in 2007. • In 2008–09, six of 23 schools met AYP in 2008. • In 2009–10, four of 23 schools met AYP in 2009. • Overall, 36 of 59 schools are no longer identified for improvement. <p>Lessons Learned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hiring a new principal was an effective strategy because the principal is the instructional leader and change agent at the school. • Adding an instructional leader, who focused on curriculum, to the leadership

		<p>team enabled the school to sustain improvements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing a new research-based curriculum or instructional program successfully required additional embedded professional development and support for teachers. • Restructuring the school day to provide collaborative working time for teachers enabled the establishment of professional learning communities (PLCs). Successful PLCs were supported by a school improvement specialist who provided teachers with sustained and embedded professional development • Engaging outside experts in the school improvement process was successful when the experts were highly skilled not only in curriculum area but also in how to effectively lead and manage change and when they were in the school consistently for adequate amounts of time.
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Goal 1: Build the capacity of the SEA and LEAs to drive transformative interventions in low-achieving schools.

We recognize that it will not be possible to direct high-quality intervention efforts in 51 schools at the same time. Thus, our two-pronged approach will be to phase in schools for interventions over time and to spend the first year building capacity at the state education agency. Because interventions are currently under way in the 23 Title I schools and because 1003(g) funds must be spent during the next three years, these interventions will be continued and intensified during the 2010–11 school year. Interventions also will begin in the four Tier II schools during the 2010–11 school year. During the 2011–12 school year, the school transformation process will be implemented in the 24 lowest achieving non-Title I schools. Intensive intervention efforts will continue in all 51 schools during the 2012–13 and 2013–14 school years. The phases of this approach are outlined in the following Performance Measures table.

Performance Measures	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
The number of schools for which one of the four school intervention models will be implemented each year.	23	23 Title I schools and add 4 Tier II schools	Add 24 lowest-achieving non-Title I schools	Continue in 51 schools	Continue in 51 schools
Running total	23	27	51	51	51

We are committed to transforming as many schools as possible in West Virginia during the next four years with intensive interventions supported by 1003(g) school improvement grants, Title II dollars, and Race to the Top funds. This short-term commitment to transform 51 schools also must be linked to a long-term commitment to increase the capacity of the state education agency, the Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs), and school districts to develop a sustainable network of supports for struggling schools in the future. Capacity building in Year 1 will focus primarily on the SEA and RESA levels. The capacity-building focus will shift to LEAs and schools in the next three years. We will begin with a realignment of the supports and services provided at the state education agency to better support the implementation of the High Quality Standards in schools throughout the state. This realignment process will be determined in 2010 but will likely involve the creation of a unit at the state education agency that oversees school and district transformation that is staffed with a cross-functional team under the State System of Support. The State System of Support unit has three purposes: (1) to coordinate the implementation of the High Quality Standards across the agency and in schools statewide; (2) to coordinate funds from different funding streams, provide consistent oversight, lead quality control, and monitor and evaluate efforts; and (3) to coordinate efforts to support struggling schools (currently the shared responsibility of the state director for

Title I and the executive director of the Office of Organizational Effectiveness and Leadership).

After we realign our resources, we will select, through a competitive process, an external supporting partner who will help us to build capacity at the state level. Our external supporting partner will have four responsibilities: (1) to help us develop a cohesive and aligned state system of support that will enable the implementation of a school transformation process that builds on the success of previous interventions in West Virginia and nationwide expertise and experience with successful turnarounds; (2) to develop a matrix of benchmarks to help low-achieving schools understand what type of growth over time is expected and to allow early indicators to demonstrate the schools in which transformation efforts are successful and those where it is not working (these benchmarks will include indicators related to achievement and multiple measures that assess climate and culture); (3) to use technology to build capacity, most likely using a series of online training modules for staff from RESAs, LEAs, and schools; and (4) to develop a competitive request for proposal (RFP) process in the spring of 2010 for external supporting partners who will provide intensive and sustained supports for low-achieving schools during the transformation process. Engaging external supporting partners to build the capacity of schools and districts is supported by the research, and we believe this external support will be critical to the success of our transformation efforts (Calkins, Guenther, Belfiore, & Lash, 2007; Hanes, Kerins, Perlman, Redding, & Ross, 2009; Marsh et al., 2005; Mintrop & Trujillo, 2005; Walberg, 2007). External supporting partners that are selected through the RFP process will be added to a state-approved list. From this list, districts will then be able to hire the external supporting partners that are best able to meet the needs of low-achieving schools in their district.

In their applications, school-level external supporting partners must clearly define their process and capacity to lead school transformation and describe how they will ensure that the school's goals are aligned with West Virginia's vision of increasing numeracy, literacy, graduation rates, and 21st century skills. Given the strong focus on 21st century skills in West Virginia, supporting partners that emphasize science, mathematics, and technology into their approach will receive special consideration. External supporting partners for secondary schools also will need to emphasize the state's well-crafted high school redesign strategy that offers students multiple pathways to graduation.

External supporting partners will provide sustained technical assistance and support for the school and the district to help both organizations build their capacity. External supporting partners will work collaboratively with school and district leaders to analyze

data, develop a school improvement plan for the low-achieving school, provide professional development that is aligned with school needs, and monitor progress over time. In addition, external supporting partners will work closely with district and school leaders to realign existing resources, including budgets, staff, and time, to increase learning time and to provide a range of supports for both students and adults. Finally, external supporting partners also will help school and district leaders take full advantage of existing flexibility in state policies, such as the powers related to personnel, budget, and calendar that are given to the state when they intervene in a school or district, as outlined in W. Va. Code §18-2E-10, which allows schools to provide additional learning time and support for students who have not achieved critical skills, and the West Virginia Innovation Zone Grant program, authorized by section W. Va. Code §18-5B-2, which enables schools to request waivers of county or state policy that impede the school improvement process and to apply for funding for innovative new approaches that are aligned with their school improvement goals (Appendix E-9 and Appendix F-4).

In addition to receiving assistance during the first year from the SEA's external supporting partner, the State System of Support's unit that oversees school and district transformation will scale up internal capacity by identifying four SEA support staff. This strategy will be based on our success with the liaisons for the CAG Schools program. One staff person will be supported through Title I 1003(g) administrative funds and will coordinate transformation efforts in the low-achieving Title I schools to which he or she is assigned. Each of the three other SEA staff will coordinate transformation efforts for the identified non-Title I schools in the programmatic groups to which they are assigned. With support from the existing SEA staff and the external supporting partners, these SEA school improvement coordinators will work on multiple levels to support low-achieving schools. First, they will work collaboratively with SEA staff to coordinate state-level resources for struggling schools. Second, they will engage RESA-level teams in professional learning communities to build the capacity of these teams to provide regional supports for struggling schools. Intensive training will be provided for these regional teams during the summer. During the school year, these RESA teams will be led by the SEA school improvement coordinators and may include RESA experts in wellness, special education, professional development, and response to intervention (RTI). Third, SEA school improvement coordinators will work closely with the LEAs in their regions to hire a school improvement specialist and an external supporting partner for each low-achieving school. Districts will fund the salaries of the school improvement specialists through their 1003(g) grant, state fiscal stabilization funds, or LEA share of Race to the Top

dollars. Districts will hire the external supporting partner from the state-approved list that can best help them transform the low-achieving schools in their districts. Title I schools will use 1003(g) funds to hire their external supporting partners. For the 24 non-Title I schools that will be identified by the West Virginia Department of Education, the state education agency will provide each school with more than \$200,000 over three years to hire an external supporting partner.

After a school improvement specialist and an external supporting partner are in place in each school, the SEA school improvement coordinator will work with them to collaboratively conduct a needs assessment, or diagnostic review, at each of the low-achieving schools in the region. The diagnostic review will gather multiple forms of data from student assessments, climate surveys, leader assessments, High Quality Standards self-assessments, curriculum alignment studies, Instructional Practices Inventory (IPI), and diagnostic visits. After reviewing the diagnostic data, the SEA school improvement coordinator, school improvement specialist, external supporting partner, and school leaders will collaboratively link the identified needs of the school to a strategic plan for instructional improvement that is based on the High Quality Standards. They will then structure professional learning communities at the school level that may include district leaders (e.g., directors of assessment, curriculum, or Title I), school leaders, teachers, counselors, and support staff. District leaders will be included in the professional learning communities to help them build their capacity to support other low-achieving schools in the district. During the summer, intensive training that is aligned to the needs of the schools and the instructional improvement plan will be provided for teams of teachers and district leaders. In the interest of maximizing resources, this training will be made available not just for teams from the lowest achieving 51 Title I and non-Title I schools that will receive intensive support, but also for teams from an additional 48 non-Title I schools that are lowest achieving. The 48 non-Title I schools that are not receiving intensive technical assistance will use their school team in conjunction with the RESA team and SEA school improvement coordinator to build capacity in the school and to improve student achievement. Professional learning communities at each school will then build on the intensive summer training as they work collaboratively throughout the year to strengthen the capacity of their school team to transform their low-achieving school.

Engaging external partners and identifying SEA school improvement coordinators will help us to build capacity at the state, regional, district, and school levels. This development of human capacity also will be supported by data and technology. During the first two years of Race to the Top funding, we will work closely with the Office of Information Systems at the state education agency

to develop two components of a comprehensive data system that will be essential for the improvement of struggling schools.

The first component will be a Comprehensive Early Warning System that has elements focused on both students and schools. The Student Early Warning System will provide educators at the school and district level with data on a variety of indicators that can be used to identify students who are struggling. The School Early Warning System will aggregate school-level data and provide state and district leaders with a set of early warning signs that indicate the school is at risk. Based on these indicators, leaders can become more proactive in their intervention efforts to help schools prevent educational failure before it happens.

The second component of the comprehensive data system that will be particularly useful for struggling schools is the development of a dashboard that stores all of the different data that is collected when diagnostic reviews are conducted in identified struggling schools. A great deal of data is currently collected in order to accurately diagnose the most critical issues in low-achieving schools. However, that data is not stored in one central location. This diagnostic dashboard will store all of the data related to the diagnostic review process so that it can be easily accessed by state and district staff and to facilitate the identification of patterns within and across low-achieving schools. Indicators to be included in this diagnostic dashboard include data from student assessments, school climate surveys, organizational health inventories, leadership assessments, High Quality Standards self-assessments, accountability visits, instructional practices inventories, school counseling audits, and information from the Comprehensive Early Warning System.

The final activity related to building capacity will allow us to evaluate the transformation process on a regular basis, to determine what is working and what is not, and to use this feedback to improve the transformation process during the four-year period. We will hire an external evaluator to design a rigorous evaluation of the transformative interventions that are being implemented statewide and then report formative results annually for three years and summative results at the end of Year 4. We will carefully examine these formative reports and use this information to redirect resources away from strategies that are not working in order to concentrate effort and resources on those best practices that should be implemented more widely throughout the state. Administrative funds from the 1003(g) school improvement grant will be used to support 50% of the salary for a SEA staff person who will oversee the external evaluation and evaluate the quality of the external supporting partners that are working at the school and district levels.

Activities	Timeline	Responsible Party
Engage external supporting partner to help SEA build their capacity to support the transformation of struggling schools.	Years 1	SEA—State System of Support unit that oversees school and district transformation
Realign and expand the current capacity of the State System of Support structure to monitor the process of transformation at all struggling schools in the state and build capacity at the RESA and LEA levels.	Years 1–4	
Develop online training modules for RESAs, LEAs, and schools.	Years 1–2	
Build strong teams to support struggling schools at the RESA level.	Years 1–4	
Build strong teams to support struggling schools at the LEA and the school levels.	Years 2–4	
Design a Comprehensive Early Warning System that enables multiple users to use data to drive the school improvement process.	Years 1–2	SEA—Office of Information Systems
Design a dashboard to store data from the multiple measures used to gather information during the needs assessment process.	Years 1–2	
Hire external evaluator to design a rigorous evaluation and report formative results annually for 3 years and summative results at the end of Year 4.	Years 1–4	SEA—State System of Support unit that oversees school and district transformation

Goal 2: Strengthen teacher and leader effectiveness in low-achieving schools in order to improve the quality of instruction.

West Virginia is committed to strengthening teacher and leader effectiveness across the state and will place additional emphasis on struggling schools. The research is clear—teacher quality is the most important component of a school’s effect on student learning, and leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to student learning (Harris & Sass, 2009; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). Consequently, the focus of our work during the next four

years will be to strengthen the effectiveness of teachers and leaders in low-achieving schools in order to improve the quality of instruction.

As the recent Institute of Education Sciences Turnaround Panel recommends, our first step will be to ensure that the right leadership is in place in each low-achieving school (Herman et al., 2008). If the school needs new leadership, we will use the state authority described in W. Va. Code §18-2E-5(Appendix E-2) to hire a new principal, which will signal a dramatic change in leadership. We also recognize that traditional teacher and leader preparation programs do not often effectively prepare their graduates for the challenges of low-achieving schools. As a result, several models have been developed specifically for turnaround teachers and leaders, such as the Academy for Urban School Leadership teacher development program in Chicago and the Center for Collaborative Education's Principal Residency Networks. We will examine best practices for teacher and leader preparation programs nationwide and work collaboratively with institutions of higher education to design turnaround specialist certification programs that will prepare effective educators for these challenging schools.

The second component of this strategy is to provide teachers with high-quality, sustained, job-embedded professional development. We recognize that our past practice, in which the state education agency delivered the majority of professional development, has not been effective in implementing reforms at the classroom level or in improving student achievement statewide. In contrast, what the research supports and what West Virginia's experience with the Closing the Achievement Gap program demonstrates, is that professional development that increases teachers' knowledge and skills and fosters improvements in teaching practice is intensive, sustained over time, encourages professional collaboration among teachers, and provides teachers with opportunities for active learning that are integrated into the daily life of the school (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001). The primary vehicle for this professional development in turnaround schools in West Virginia will be through PLCs at each struggling school. There will be multiple PLCs in each low-achieving school that may include leadership teams, grade-level teams, subject-specific teams, or cross-functional teams. These PLCs will help teachers maintain the consistent focus on improving instruction that researchers identify as critical to turning around schools by giving them the time and support to analyze student data, identify gaps in student learning, develop learning progressions that are linked to the new national standards, design assessments that are linked to these learning progressions, and use student feedback from the formative assessment process to inform and differentiate their

instruction (Herman et al., 2008; Marsh et al., 2005).

In order to ensure that teachers have dedicated time during their school schedules to work collaboratively, we encouraged districts to use part of their funding from state fiscal stabilization dollars to create concentrated blocks of time in the school schedule for teacher collaboration. From the state share of Race to the Top, we will provide an additional incentive of \$40,000 over four years to districts to support the pervasive implementation of PLCs throughout their districts. Consequently, the time for the PLCs should be allocated in all schools. The SEA school improvement coordinator, the external supporting partner, and school and district leaders will be responsible for providing intensive training during the summer and then developing the structures and supports that teachers need to build their capacity in professional learning communities throughout the school year.

Activities	Timeline	Responsible Party
Develop, pilot, and scale up turnaround specialist certification/endorsement to be provided by the West Virginia Department of Education.	Years 1–4	SEA—Office of Professional Preparation
Implement the structures, supports, and professional development that teachers need to be successful in professional learning communities.	Years 2–4	External supporting partners

Goal 3: Develop comprehensive systems of supports in low-achieving schools.

The West Virginia Department of Education plans to improve the quality of instruction for all students by creating a differentiated system of schoolwide supports. The SEA school improvement coordinator will work closely with the special education directors and the RTI specialists who are based at each RESA to ensure that there is a comprehensive set of supports in place for struggling learners and students with disabilities at each low-achieving school. Both the special education directors and the RTI specialists have strong expertise in reading and will serve as additional resources for the school as they develop instructional plans to improve student literacy. The SEA school improvement coordinator will also work with the external supporting partner and school and district leaders to provide supports and professional development for teachers to better prepare them to differentiate their instruction to meet the needs of all learners.

West Virginia is committed to developing and using the Comprehensive Early Warning System across all levels of the education system. The Student Assistance Team (SAT), another school-level professional learning community, will examine student data in the Early Warning System related to nonacademic issues. SATs currently exist in all schools because both federal and state policies require the establishment of school wellness councils. SATs may include school leaders, the school nurse, school counselors, health and physical educators, school nutrition staff, community providers of wellness services, parents, and students. SATs will be charged with providing comprehensive services to high-need students, creating positive school climates, and implementing strategies to effectively engage families and communities in supporting the academic success of all students.

This process will be largely supported through an infrastructure that is currently being developed by the West Virginia Coordinated School-Public Health Partnership (a partnership of the West Virginia Department of Education and Department of Health and Human Resources). The development of the SATs and the process for linking data about students to a network of supports, services, and interventions is being piloted in nine districts during the 2010–2011 school year. The pilot effort is being funded through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources. This is an unprecedented statewide effort to move wellness efforts for school-age populations from a risk behavior approach to a coordinated holistic wellness approach that promotes the development of protective factors and school connectedness. Intensive initial training for SATs at each of the identified 51 low-achieving schools is included in the Race to the Top budget. Ongoing support for these teams will be sustained with funding from tobacco money that is currently available in the state budget, the CDC, the United States Department of Education, the United States Department of Health and Human Services, the United States Department of Agriculture, and foundations.

Activities	Timeline	Responsible Party
Provide a schoolwide system of differentiated supports for struggling students and students with disabilities.	Years 1–4	SEA—Office of Special Programs

Establish school-based case management teams to identify nonacademic issues for struggling students and then align the appropriate supports and services to the students' needs.	Years 1–4	SEA—Office of Healthy Schools
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(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

Throughout the past five years, the West Virginia Department of Education, Office of the Governor, and legislative offices have consistently made education a funding priority. In a relatively poor state, public education (K–12 and higher education) still garners 56% of the state budget (fiscal year [FY] 2009), which is more than \$10,000 per K–12 student annually. This commitment to education reflects the governor’s, state superintendent’s, and legislative leaders’ shared belief that a strong and progressive education system directly ties to a strong and progressive state economy. As a concrete example of this shared belief, in 2005, West Virginia became the second state to join the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21), thereby committing to prepare all students for a global society. Governor Joe Manchin, State Superintendent Steve Paine, Senate and House Education chairs, teacher organization leadership, and other business leaders and policymakers signed the P21 application.

Table F1 shows that although the overall percentage of the total revenues available to West Virginia used to support elementary, secondary, and public higher education remained substantially unchanged in 2009 compared with 2008, the overall funding dedicated to education increased by \$67.7 million to reach a total of \$2.39 billion (Appendix F-1).

Table F1. West Virginia Funding for Education

Year	State Total Revenues	Amount (Percentage) of State Funding for K–12 Education	Amount (Percentage) of State Funding for Public Higher Education	Total State Funding Used to Support Public Education	Total Percentage of State Funding Used to Support Public Education
FY 2008	\$4,094,000,000	\$1,866,200,000 (45.6%)	\$454,000,000 (11.1%)	\$2,320,200,000	56.7%
FY 2009	\$4,268,000,000	\$1,914,900,000 (44.9%)	\$473,000,000 (11.1%)	\$2,387,900,000	56.0%

Equitable Funding for LEAs

West Virginia state policies are designed to provide equitable funding between high-need local education agencies (LEAs) and other LEAs as well as between high-poverty schools within LEAs and other schools. West Virginia is consistently ranked near the top regarding the equity of its state aid funding formula. For example, *Education Week* in its 2009 edition of *Quality Counts* reported that the difference in per-pupil expenditures between the district with the highest per-pupil expenditures and the district with the lowest per-pupil expenditures was the smallest in the nation (Appendix F-2).

The Public School Support Program (PSSP) ensures that all schools receive this equitable financial support for public schools in West Virginia (Appendix F-3). PSSP specifies the statutory responsibilities of both the state and the 55 county school districts. The state formula provides allowances for personnel salaries, employee benefit costs, transportation operating costs, general operating costs, substitute costs and allowances for faculty senates, and improvement of instructional programs, increase in technology funding, and advanced placement programs. Additional allowances are provided for alternative education, increased enrollment, and other programs.

(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

West Virginia does not currently have a charter law. Interest from charter management organizations has not been great in West Virginia, making charter schools a relatively untouched conversation in educational planning in West Virginia. The relatively low interest in charter schools may be due to the state’s rural context because charter management organizations tend to migrate to urban areas where they can attract greater numbers of students. However, the West Virginia Department of Education understands the importance of providing schools with the autonomy needed to solve educational problems and increase student achievement. To help fill the void of charter schools, the West Virginia Legislature passed a bill in June 2009 (H.B. 109) authorizing school innovation zones. Innovation zones enable LEAs to operate innovative, autonomous public schools that have structures similar to charter schools. W. Va. Code §18-5B-1 through §18-5B-9 describes the provisions of the School Innovation Zones Act (Appendix F-4).

Innovation zones encourage schools across the state to pilot projects that use innovation to break down existing patterns within the school that prevent increases in student achievement. Innovation zones may happen within a school or within a consortium of schools. They allow waivers to state laws, rules, and policies to give teachers and principals greater local control over the curriculum, schedule, and staffing in their schools. Elements of innovation zones within the public school structure include: (1) flexibility in policy and code to define instructional models and curriculum while allowing for increased accountability for student achievement; (2) alteration of the school calendar and school day to meet the needs of today’s students and provide time for job-embedded professional development; (3) creation and expenditure of supplementary innovation zone budgets by local educators; (4) restructuring of school governance to elevate teacher and student voice; and (5) opportunity for institutions of higher education to establish innovation zone schools as laboratory schools in collaboration with the local school district.

Since passage and enactment of the School Innovation Zones Act in summer 2009, 45 schools and school consortiums have applied for innovation zone status. The first application review was recently completed, and 19 applicants were awarded innovation zone status—95% of them requested waiver of policy or code (Appendix F-5). The designated innovation zones are distributed across the state and consist of at least one school or consortium in every regional education service area in West Virginia. The innovations awarded propose a significant paradigm shift within schools and request waivers to state laws, rules, and policies. These waivers will allow teachers and principals greater local control over the curriculum, schedule, and staffing in their schools. In addition, the West Virginia Department of Education will form a statewide team with representatives from these innovation zones to support each other as they implement their innovations.

(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

West Virginia is committed to ensuring that every student has the opportunity to be successful. The work of the West Virginia Department of Education is focused on making sure that every student is healthy and well, demonstrates achievement, graduates from high school, has 21st century skills, and is ready for college and careers.

Student Wellness

West Virginia Board of Education Policy 4321.1 requires that districts have school wellness policies. School wellness councils have been formed in districts and schools with the focus of connecting school and community-based resources to ensure that every student is healthy and well. In addition, West Virginia receives funding from the Centers for Disease Control for a Coordinated School Health Program. This funding is used to provide comprehensive services to high-need students, create positive school climates, and actively engage families and communities in supporting the academic success of students. Under the leadership of the governor and the Legislature, the West Virginia Healthy Lifestyle Act of 2005 established an Office of Healthy Lifestyles and a 13-member coalition composed of business, education, health care, nonprofit, and government organizations to develop a collaborative effort to address the problem of obesity in the state. In addition, the governor established the Kids First Healthcheck initiative as a comprehensive screening that includes hearing, speech, language, and growth and development. Beginning with the 2008–09 school year, all children enrolling in kindergarten received this wellness exam. These preventative measures further illustrate the state’s comprehensive approach to meeting the needs of children and its investment in serious reform.

Early Childhood Education

In 2000, the state passed legislation calling for the expansion of preschool education to all 4-year-olds in the state by the 2012–2013 school year. Renamed the West Virginia Universal Pre-K System, the state’s preschool initiative now offers prekindergarten programs in all school districts. The state is working with its 55 counties to ensure that there are a sufficient number

of classrooms meeting the state's quality standards, and it is anticipated that an increase in classrooms across counties will enable the initiative to meet the 2012–2013 deadline for universal, voluntary access.

In March 2009, the National Institute for Early Education Research at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, released its report *The State of Preschool in 2008*. West Virginia ranked sixth in the nation for access for 4-year-olds to state-funded prekindergarten programs; seventh in the nation for access for 3-year-olds in a state-funded prekindergarten program; and 12th in the nation for state spending per child in state-funded prekindergarten programs. West Virginia also met seven of the 10 identified quality standards for a high-quality state-funded prekindergarten programs. These standards included, but were not limited to, teacher specialized training in prekindergarten, comprehensive early learning standards, and class size.

Continued quality improvements, such as increased requirements for teacher assistants, updated and revised standards and assessment systems, and a comprehensive professional development system are among the state's identified focal points to ensure that West Virginia's Universal Pre-K System operates as premiere, nationally recognized program of innovation.

High School College/Career Readiness Standards

As a member of the Southern Regional Education Board, West Virginia participates in ongoing efforts to develop statewide college/career readiness standards (based on the adopted national standards). The West Virginia Department of Education engaged stakeholders from across the state and from multiple stakeholder groups in developing a new model for high school redesign. Through implementation of the high school redesign model, students will have multiple clear pathways to graduation and personalized learning opportunities that fit their career goals. These pathways will be designed to ensure that all students who graduate from high school are college and career ready regardless of whether they plan to enter the workforce directly, enroll in an advanced technical training program, or enroll in a college or university.

These pathways will include early college or dual enrollment programs for students who embrace advanced academic challenges or accelerated career pathways that lead to an associate's degree or a postsecondary certificate in a technical field. As evidence of our past success with P–20 pathways, West Virginia used Tech Prep funding to create the Earn a Degree, Graduate Early (EDGE) program as one way to create connections between high school and institutions of postsecondary education. During the 2008–09 school year, 61,473 students took more than 356 courses at institutions of higher education in West Virginia. As part of

Race to the Top, we will build on this success by combining Race to the Top funds with Perkins and Tech Prep dollars to fund the development of model sites for innovative 21st century high schools that will engage our students and prepare them for the global economy of the 21st century.