



Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2



Colorado Application #2250CO-11

A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	22	34	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	2	4	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	15	25	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	5	5	

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Although the reform agenda described in this section of the application articulates goals for the four educational reform areas described in the ARRA, the plan is rather vague. The plan is called the Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K). The CAP4K framework identifies new academic standards for 10 content areas but lacks a clear emphasis on STEM. The plan has a vague definition of post-secondary and workforce readiness that does not include performance measures or the level of rigor expected for high school graduation. The most detailed aspects of this section of the plan refer to higher education initiatives and expansion for the statewide longitudinal data system (SLDS), which received a federal SLDS grant of \$17.4 million in May 2010 according to the applicant. There is a timeline chart identifying the state's legislative actions supportive of educational reforms since 1992, but there is no clear evidence of successful outcomes from these policy reforms. The state describes very ambitious student achievement targets of 20% increases on NAEP performance which has been largely flat since 2003; therefore, the state's student achievement targets may be unrealistic or not achievable in the given time span. There is a clear description of key educational system issues which have led to what the applicant calls "inadequate results" from reforms despite its legislative policy efforts. The plan's timeline also appears overly ambitious or unachievable. For example, the applicant states that a definition of teacher and principal effectiveness will be created by March 2011 and the first annual report rating Colorado's most effective education preparation programs will be published by fall 2011, which appears to be too short a timeframe for identifying and analyzing a reliable data source based on a new criterion. The plan proposes to deploy data coaches to foster data-driven instructional improvement in 2012, which seems rather late to support the student achievement targets identified in the proposal.

There are terms and conditions in the Colorado Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) that do not reflect a clear and strong commitment. The Duration/Termination section has a null and void clause that provides an "opt out" option if the LEA and State are unable to finalize a scope of work within 90 days of a RTTT award announcement. So the agreement by some LEAs to participate may be tentative. The applicant's MOU has a State Recourse Section that does not clearly identify the basis for its "appropriate enforcement action" to deal with non-performance at participating LEAs. Only about 2% of applicable teacher union leaders signed the Colorado MOU. The remaining 98% of local teacher union leaders who did not sign the MOU represent approximately 70% of students at participating LEAs. These numbers are calculated from the data in the LEA participation table in the proposal. Without wide-spread teacher support among participating LEAs, the plan may face opposition in participating schools. In Colorado, the state law enforces and upholds local control by LEAs. Teacher union opposition or lack of support for the state's RTTT plan could be a major barrier to success of this plan. The applicant indicates that superintendents and presidents of the local school boards at 114 of 180 LEAs, or 63% of the state's LEAs, did sign the MOU

agreeing to implement 100% of the reform measures in the RTTT plan. Overall, the applicant does not provide evidence of strong support among educators for this RTTT proposal which weakens the likelihood of widespread impact from this plan.

This section of the proposal does not provide any additional information than was presented in the sections described above. With only 63% of the state's LEAs signing the modified MOU and only a small percent of local teacher union leaders in a system with local control supported by state law, the applicant faces a huge challenge implementing its RTTT plan. There are student achievement targets proposed by subgroup that appear over-ambitious. Participating LEAs represent 91% of students in poverty; however, there is lack of a strong commitment from these LEAs. The most promising aspect of the plan appears to be the expansion of the SLDS that will identify individual students who are at-risk of failure using early warning indicators although these indicators are not clear. The proposed early warning data may allow educators to identify students in need of intervention earlier than currently possible.

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)

i. During the state team discussion, the applicant articulated its vision for educational reform more clearly. Other concerns cited under Tier 1 for this section still persist.

ii. During the state team meeting, the applicant verified that its new law, S.B. 191 which was passed prior to submission of this application, requires all LEAs to comply with using evaluation methods that include 50% based on student growth and compliance with a yet-to-be written definition of educator effectiveness. The team was convincing in describing a strong state-wide mandate for LEA support of this component of its RTTT plan. A copy of the bill was not included in the application so the contents of the new law were not available to examine. While the team presentation on this topic was encouraging, Tier 1 comments about aspects of the MOU still are a concern.

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	17	17	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	12	12	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	5	5	

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The applicant describes a reasonable approach to implementing its proposed plans. There is an organizational chart for the new Colorado Department of Education's (CDE) system of accountability and support for RTTT. Changes made to the existing CDE organizational structure include additional units for LEA outreach, learning community, and educator effectiveness. In addition, oversight of fund allocation and performance management accountability will be handled by existing units within CDE. Contractual and temporary units will be added to support the RTTT program management office, SchoolView system development and implementation, external partnership coordination and communication. The proposal does provide letters of support from a number of organizations representing national, state-wide and community-based leadership including the Colorado – American Federal of Teachers, the Business Coalition to Advance Reform of the Education System representing some of the state's economic development and business leaders, the state association of school boards, Executive Secretary of the Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs, the Colorado League of Charter Schools, Colorado Legacy Schools, Colorado STEM Network, the Colorado Space Coalition, Colorado's Technology Association, statewide and local children advocacy groups and foundations, state institutions of high education, science-related museums, elected state and federal congressional representatives, Colorado's Government Data Advisory Board and State Chief Information Officer, Mayor of Denver, chairmen of the state's Senate and House Education Committees and General Assembly, Colorado Association of School Executives, and U.S. Air Force Academy.

The applicant proposes a continuum of support based on LEA need. All participating LEAs will receive access and training for using assessments and evaluation systems and data through SchoolView. Additional support for participating LEAs will be provided through a rollout of the Statewide System of Accountability and Support (SSAS) including identification of schools needing intervention, development of performance plans for school turnaround, evaluation of impact of support and interventions, and dissemination of best practices. The applicant's evaluation plan will track implementation and impact data through a new University of Colorado research consortium. The external evaluation budget may be high since it appears that a significant volume of data needed to answer the proposed evaluation questions will to be available through SchoolView and the state department of education's data gathering efforts.

The applicant describes a reasonable approach to re-purposing other Federal and State funds to support the RTTT reform initiatives in this plan and to address results of the RTTT evaluation effort. The proposal also indicates a commitment of matching funds of \$6 million from Mass Insight to execute a partnership zone strategy. However, there is no letter of support from this organization in the proposal that verifies a commitment to providing matching funds.

The applicant explains that most of the RTTT reforms are already codified in State law, which the applicant interprets as meaning that policies will "automatically have dramatic statewide impact and will remain in place beyond RTTT funding". While the policies may continue to exist, the notion of automatic impact is questionable. There is little evidence that existing policies and laws have substantially increased student achievement which raises issues about the state's capacity to implement reforms.

The budget summary and project details indicate that the applicant's plan supports a substantial workforce of temporary and contractual professionals. While it is understandable that RTTT requires an increase in support teams and leadership positions, use of temporary workforce for core initiatives may not build sustainable human capital within the state to continue the support to LEAs for proposed reforms.

The applicant enlisted the help of more than 600 stakeholders to participate in a public input process informing the development of its RTTT plan. There is evidence of strong support from the state's elected officials for the proposed reforms and from a number of civic and business leaders described in letters of support. There are letters of support from the state's school board and school executive associations, AFT and charter school organization. There is no letter of support from the Colorado Education Association (CEA) although the applicant says CEA has been involved in development of its growth model, content standards, and rallied stakeholder support for the RTTT plan. The lack of evidence showing strong commitment for RTTT among teacher leaders is problematic in this proposal. The applicant proposes to engage teachers and principals through its SSAS, Content Collaboratives and Regional Support Teams. The plan incorporates Mass Insight as a key partner in deploying the partnership zone model of multi-school turnaround efforts but this organization did not provide evidence of its commitment to conduct the activities described in this plan. The applicant does says that Mass Insight has been working with the state since 2009 on developing turn around strategies. A description of progress or outcomes from this partnership effort is not given.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	13	13	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	3	3	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	10	10	

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Applicant has made progress in the area of legislation and policies supportive of educational reforms. There is a chart showing a number of reform laws passed since 1992. In May 2010, the state enacted legislation that requires educators to earn and retain tenure based upon an annual performance evaluation that uses students' academic growth as a key criterion. The law also eliminated the forced placement of teachers. Implementation of successful reforms appears to be weak. The applicant said in the proposal that reform policy will automatically lead to desired impacts. There is little description in the narrative to show success, over the past several years, of implementing programs in each of the four education reform area. It does

show progress in building its SLDS but no plan to prepare educators to use data to make instructional decisions until 2012. There is mention of a growth model but no clear data about how the model has been useful in helping LEAs support student learning. The applicant says it used ARRA and State Fiscal Stabilization funds to support the four reform areas in RTTT, including the creation of a Turnaround and Intervention Unit and its partnership with Mass Insight and Public Impact.

The applicant's record of improving student achievement is weak and there is little information describing lessons learned from previous reforms. The applicant claims that its students are scoring above the national average in math and reading but the NAEP data is reported as percentages, not raw scores so it is difficult to analyze. The applicant reports data showing some progress in student achievement for some subgroups in 4th grade reading but declines for 6 or 7 student subgroups in 8th grade reading since 2003 as measured by NAEP. In math, NAEP scores are more consistently increasing in both 4th and 8th grades although the student proficiency percentages are low in many subgroups. Particularly problematic are the persistently low achievement levels on NAEP reading performance for English language learners (ELL), students in poverty, and Hispanic and Black students. Only 3% of the state's ELL, 16% of students in poverty, 7% of those with disabilities, and 15% of Hispanics and Blacks score proficient or advanced on NAEP 8th grade reading. The percent proficient or advanced in 8th grade math is similar for each of the subgroups. More White and Asian students are proficient or advanced in 8th grade math (51% and 55%) than they are in reading (43% and 41%). There is a chart indicating that the gap between Hispanic and White students has decreased 5% since 2003; however, that is because white students' proficiency levels decreased 4% during this time period. The results for the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) show much larger percentages of students scoring proficient or advanced in reading and math, and moderate progress closing achievement gaps among most subgroups. In 2009, the state's graduation rate was 75%. The graduation rate table in the application shows a downward trend in graduation rates, particularly for minority subgroups since 2003. However, the state has since made significant changes to its calculation method for high school graduation rates (i.e. changing from calculation of cohorts to individuals, changing from exclusion to inclusion of GED and transfer rates) which makes it difficult to compare yearly scores since 2003. The state recently passed legislation to create an Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement to help LEAs adopt strategies to decrease the dropout rate.

Total	125	52	64	
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B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards	40	35	40	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20	20	
(ii) Adopting standards	20	15	20	

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Colorado is participating in the Common Core Standards Consortium of 48 states sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association (NGA). A copy of the Memorandum of Agreement with CCSSO/NGA is included in the proposal and signed by the chief state school officer. The agreement explains the process for validating high school graduation expectations and certifying state adoption of the standards.

The applicant submitted a copy of the core standards and states that it will recommend these for legal adoption in August 2010. Exhibit B-4 in the proposal explains the required procedure in the state for adopting new standards. The language in the procedure and detail in the narrative indicates that an

alignment process will be used to compare CAP4K to the common core standards and changes to CAP4K will be made to improve alignment as needed. It is not clear if alignment, as specified by Colorado law, adequately meets the RTTT criterion for adoption of the common standards. However, the applicant explains that the new standards already closely resemble the current standards and an alignment study is currently underway to identify gaps. The plan to disseminate adoption of new standards to LEAs involves organizing content collaboratives and regional support teams. The timeline for all teachers in participating LEAs to be trained on the new standards is stated as August 2011 in the Fig. B-1 chart but the performance measure says 70% by August 2011 and 100% by August 2012. It is unclear which timeline is correct.

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)

The state team provided evidence that clarified its language regarding alignment and adoption of the common set of standards called for by RTTT. On August 2, 2010, the state actually did adopt the standards.

(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	10	10	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality assessments	5	5	5	
(ii) Including a significant number of States	5	5	5	

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Colorado joined the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Consortium, both of which represent a majority of states. There is a signed copy of each consortium's MOU in this application. The applicant formed an Assessment Stakeholder Advisory Committee to ensure that assessment redesign is consistent with Colorado principles that are identified in the plan. The members of the advisory committee represent strong expertise in assessment.

(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	12	12	
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The applicant clearly identifies its goals, activities, timelines and responsible parties involved in the transition to new standards and associated assessments. The strength of the transition plan is its partner organizations and advisory committee that represent national expertise in data-driven instruction and assessment practices. However, the specific activities for these partners to conduct in relationship to the regional support teams and/or content collaboratives are not clear in this plan. The applicant proposes to use RTTT funds to create 12 new full time regional support team manager and five half-time content specialist positions to oversee content collaboratives and regional support teams facilitating transition to new standards and assessments in six content areas, i.e. language arts, social studies, world languages, arts, health/physical education and STEM. There is little explaining how the proposed transition activities with strengthen high school graduation and career readiness. The rationale, process for and participants of the peer review to evaluate the quality of implementation is not clear given the funding proposed to support both CDE evaluation and an external evaluation team. The timeline appears realizable for this plan with the first year of impact on student learning anticipated in 2013; however, three years is a long time for current students in need to wait for these teams to have an impact.

Total	70	57	62	
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C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	22	22	
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</p> <p>The state has a chart explaining the 11 America Competes Act elements currently in place. One of the strengths of this applicant is its SLDS, which is continues to expand and improve through a new SLDS federal grant.</p>				
(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	5	5	
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</p> <p>The state proposes to enhance its SchoolView information portal to make individual student data accessible to all parents and students. It proposes activities to train all user groups on how to access the SchoolView dashboard. The narrative does a good job of describing the evolution of its data system and how its SLDS grant will be used to make enhancements to the system. The applicant proposes to use RTTT funds to host online communications with all stakeholder groups about how to use SchoolView. The narrative clearly explains how data will also be available to researchers. The applicant anticipates that its SLDS will enhance educator collaboration and promote the use of data for among stakeholders. Its performance measures appear doable.</p>				
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	9	9	
(i) Increasing the use of instructional improvement systems	6	3	3	
(ii) Supporting LEAs, schools, and teachers in using instructional improvement systems	6	3	3	
(iii) Making the data from instructional improvement systems available to researchers	6	3	3	
<p>(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</p> <p>The applicant is unclear about the extent of the proposed expansion of its existing SchoolView Instructional Improvement System (IIS) that is already in use according to the applicant. The extent of the expansion is not articulated in a manner to determine the level of ambition or innovation in this plan.</p> <p>The applicant proposes to support participating LEAs in using the IIS and providing professional development through data coaches and the Regional Support Teams. With only 63% of the state's LEAs participating, implementing a comprehensive, centralized instructional system with formative/interim/summative assessments within the proposed time span could face substantial barriers in terms of cooperation among LEAs. The level of local support for this plan does not ensure that all teachers will have access to the same level of SchoolView professional development through RTTT funds, which in turn could affect SchoolView usage rates leading to inequities for students' learning opportunities.</p> <p>The applicant explains that researchers in Colorado already have access to SchoolView statewide as well as individual LEA and school level data from its growth model. The applicant proposes to accelerate the research conducted with formative assessment data to link results to instruction. The applicant does not have a baseline of researcher use in its performance chart and proposes to only increase data-access satisfaction rating for authorized researchers by 20% between now and 2014. A description of who will qualify as an authorized researcher was not found.</p>				
Total	47	36	36	

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	14	14	
(i) Allowing alternative routes to certification	7	7	7	
(ii) Using alternative routes to certification	7	4	4	
(iii) Preparing teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage	7	3	3	

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The applicant includes ample evidence that it has legal and regulatory provisions that allow alternative routes to certification for teachers and principals. These routes allow for alternative providers in addition to institutions of higher education.

The state does provide ample alternative routes to certification as evident in the list of approved alternative providers in the application. However, the applicant says no data currently exists to indicate how many of the educators licensed each year used one of the state's alternative routes.

The applicant describes a process for monitoring and identifying areas of teacher and principal shortage through emergency authorizations requested received by the CDE. The state conducted a study of these requests in 2009. The applicant admits needing to improve its process for monitoring and responding to teacher and principal shortages.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	35	38	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	4	4	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	8	8	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	8	8	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	15	18	

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The state's approach to measuring student growth is through use of the Colorado Growth Model. Details about this model are not evident in the application.

The state passed a new law (SB 191) that establishes a new State Council of Educator Effectiveness to develop an initial set of recommendations for an educator performance evaluation system. The council is charged with developing a definition of teacher and principal effectiveness by December 31, 2010. The applicant explains that the council was established in collaboration with the Colorado Education Association and is comprised of practicing teachers, school administrators, school board members, students, parents and community leaders. There is no evidence that the council has met yet to develop its definition of effectiveness. The new law calls for the Council to articulate a definition centered on an educator's demonstrated ability to achieve and sustain adequate student growth that includes a set of professional skills and competencies related to improve student outcomes. The applicant does not provide any description of rating categories to differentiate effectiveness or research-based frameworks or tools identified to serve as the basis for defining effectiveness or for designing a rigorous evaluation system for educators in the state; therefore it is difficult to determine its fairness or its rigor. The applicant does say starting in 2012-13 the state will begin using student growth data as 50% of the evaluation system's criteria.

The applicant explains that the new law SB191 requires that teachers and principals receive annual evaluations based at least 50% on student growth beginning in the 2010-13 school year. Student growth data will be provided to educators through the SchoolView system. The applicant says the CDE's Educator Effectiveness Unit will provide technical assistance to make sure evaluations include timely and constructive feedback but does not say how the technical assistance will be delivered, when it will be provided or to whom. The Colorado plan also advocates use of teacher-peer evaluations as a support within LEAs for aligning local resources and policies for annual evaluations. By fall 2011, teachers and principals will receive student growth data by subject areas based on results of summative state assessments with the addition of results from interim assessments in 2012-2013.

The applicant explains ways it plans to use evaluations to inform decisions. There are reasonable performance targets for this section; however, there is no clear plan that describes how principals will receive professional development and so there appears to be inconsistency between the targets and the narrative. The plan is to require teachers and principals to have individual professional development plans informed by previous years' evaluations and the Educator Impact Report data. Educators' plans will be required to respond to area of practice needing improvement based on data from the evaluations. The applicant plans to providing LEAs with access to professional development materials through the teacher portal of SchoolView but there is no clear plan for providing actual professional development programs or meeting principals' professional development needs.

Under SB 191, all LEAs have to use evaluations to inform compensation and promotion of their educators. RTTT funds will be used to support career ladder incentive programs that are designed to reward schools and LEAs for innovative best practices.

The state has a new law (SB 191) addressing how it will grant non-probationary status (tenure) for teachers based on three consecutive years of evaluations documenting effectiveness. Teachers are not granted permanent tenure in Colorado. Teachers will return to probationary status after two years of consecutive evaluations documenting ineffectiveness. The applicant does not address standards or procedures pertaining to principals in this section.

This plan does provide ample time (two years) for teachers to improve after receiving poor evaluations. Rigor of the evaluation standards is difficult to determine because the applicant has not provided details about an evaluation approach. It appears that LEAs will be able to design their own evaluation systems. It is unclear whether or not removal of ineffective teachers and principals will be mandated by the state. The narrative says that participating LEAs who signed the MOU have agreed to use evaluations to remove ineffective teachers. The applicant does not describe a process or standards for removal of principals.

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)

iv. **During their presentation, the state clarified that their intermediaries will use RTTT funds to provide some coaching to staff working in LEA. The number of coaches available to LEAs may not be robust enough to address the needs for training in this area within the short timeframe of this grant; nonetheless it is addressed in this plan. Teachers and principals' access to SchoolView was mentioned several times in the presentation as a solution but robust pathways to supporting LEAs' effective use of SchoolView still did not come through strongly.**

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	11	11	
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	4	4	
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	7	7	

(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The applicant acknowledges a poor track record in this area. The performance measure chart does not identify any targets for equitable distribution of teachers and principals. The applicant does not provide prior

data about effectiveness to determine gaps. There is reference to the state's High Quality Teacher Plan (HQT) of 2008 but no clear report of its outcomes. The applicant says a new plan to ensure equitable distribution of teachers and principals will not be ready until December 2011, which makes it difficult to determine the quality of a plan yet to be developed.

The applicant describes several good strategies for increasing the number of teachers in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas called for in the RTTT criteria. Strategies include stipends for 200 teachers annually to earn national board certification with the requirement to agree to work in high-need schools and/or subjects; train 400 teachers for AP courses in math, science and English in high-poverty schools; provide incentives for up to 500 effective teachers to obtain certification to teach English language acquisition, special education, science and/or math. There is no data about shortages in this proposal to show if these numbers will meet existing needs.

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	7	7	
(i) Linking student data to credentialing programs and reporting publicly	7	2	2	
(ii) Expanding effective programs	7	5	5	

(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

This section of the plan is not highly credible. The state passed SB 036 to support publishing an annual report evaluating its teacher preparation programs. The first report is due to be published July 2011. The source of the data for the pending report is unknown. There is a vague reference to return-on-investment metrics to be used for the July 2012 report.

The applicant does not identify specific targets for expansion of high-quality options and programs for teacher and principal preparation and credentialing. However, the plan does identify a couple strategies for strengthening support for programs producing effective teachers and principals. The applicant proposes to use competitive grants to invest in effective programs, to strengthen alignment of programs to standards for accreditation, and to terminate accreditation for ineffective programs. There are a number of credible resources the applicant has cited that will inform the development and implementation of these strategies.

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	15	15	
(i) Providing effective support	10	8	8	
(ii) Continuously improving the effectiveness of the support	10	7	7	

(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The applicant proposes to provide all of its educators with Educator Impact Reports with student growth data and customized professional development resources to inform design of professional development plans at the LEA level. It will certify professional development programs for effectiveness and only fund those that are certified. The process for certifying is not explained, however. Educators in high-need schools and hard-to-staff subject areas will be provided with additional support through a Turnaround Leadership Academy that will be evaluated through CDE. The CDE will also survey induction programs to determine effectiveness and award grants to expand effective programs. Data coaches will be available through the Regional Support Teams to provide LEAs with technical skills needed to analyze and use data to improve instruction. CDE will provide LEAs with access to regional workshops and online training modules to learn how to interpret and correlate ACT results to content standards and college readiness indicators. It will also administer its Teaching, Empowering, Learning and Leading (TELL) survey to assess teaching and learning conditions and provide grants to LEAs to develop improvement plans.

While the applicant describes an approach to evaluate these supports through a combination of self-reported surveys and using the state's growth model, self-reports are not a robust or ambiguous approach to measure and evaluate effectiveness. The state proposes to publish annual LEA and school rankings based on these metrics for LEAs to use to guide professional development planning. These data will also be used to help inform CDE's funding decisions for profession development programs.

Total	138	82	85	
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E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	10	10	10	
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) The applicant explains that the Education Accountability Act of 2009 provide CDE with the statutory authority to intervene directly in its persistently lowest achieving schools and LEAs, including those under improvement or corrective status as defined by ESEA.				
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	30	30	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	25	25	
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) The applicant has identified 72 failing schools in its proposal. The school list identifies the sources of data used to categorize each school as low performing. The data points are reading and math proficiencies and graduation rates. The state set ambiguous performance targets for all of its 72 low-performing schools to meet benchmarks for improvement by 2014. The narrative describes efforts started in 2009 to develop a comprehensive approach for intervening in its low-performing schools through partnerships with Mass Insight and Public Impact consulting firms. The applicant explains four ambiguous goals to build its long-term capacity to address struggling schools. The goals focus on helping LEAs identify which of the four required intervention models are appropriate for their local context. The CDE will also provide oversight to ensure quality control of LEA contractors, use financial incentives to increase number of effective educators working in these schools and to support start up of new schools. The applicant provided evidence of its record working with 9 schools through NCLB school improvement efforts. The results for the nine schools were mixed. It is not known whether or not the newly proposed strategies will have more success.				
Total	50	40	40	

F. General

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	10	10	
(i) Allocating a consistent percentage of State revenue to education	5	5	5	

(ii) Equitably funding high-poverty schools	5	5	5	
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
The applicant reports a 0.3% increase in total revenues available to the state that were used to support its educational system. The amount of revenue spent on education increased by 5% in 2008-09. The applicant explains a complex formula that provides evidence of a strong policy supporting equitable funding between high-need LEAs and other LEAs, and for high-poverty schools within LEAs.				
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	39	39	
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	8	8	
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	8	8	
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	8	8	
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	8	8	
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	7	7	
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>The applicant has a strong record of supporting charter schools and other innovative schools. The state has a charter school law that does not prohibit increasing nor does it cap the number of charter schools that can operate in the state.</p> <p>The proposal clearly explains the regulations for charter school authorization. The proposal explains that LEAs are responsible for holding charter schools accountable for performance expectations. The charter school application describes evaluation rubrics used to determine renewal of charter contracts, which includes student achievement and enrollment rate.</p> <p>Its per-pupil funding to charter school students is at the same level as funds provided to traditional public school students with additional funds provided to charters serving high-need students.</p> <p>The state does provide funding for facilities to charter schools and does not impose facility-related requirements that are stricter than those applied to traditional public schools.</p> <p>The state passed the Innovation Schools Act of 2008 that authorizes schools with the flexibility to operate other types of innovative, autonomous public schools. Examples are provided of these types of public schools operating in Denver and Aurora, although alternative schools are not used much in the state.</p>				
(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	3	3	
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
The applicant provides ample evidence of laws and regulations that would appear favorable to educational reform and innovation. The applicant's record of implementing reform programs supported by its regulations and laws that have increased student achievement or graduation rates and narrowed achievement gaps among subgroups is less robust.				
Total	55	52	52	

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
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Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	0	0	
Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>The applicant does not clearly describe a rigorous course of study in all four STEM subject areas. It does describe strategies for increasing students' access to Advanced Placement (AP) courses in math and science and increasing teachers for these two subject areas. It does not describe a high-quality plan related to technology and engineering subject areas. The state has an impressive list of STEM related industries with expertise in these areas but there are no strategies describing how students will access or interact with technology and engineering experts or curricula. There is no clear plan for providing professional development to teachers in technology and engineering. The STEM in Action funding is minimal (\$600,000) to develop applied STEM content in cooperation with industry experts, museums, universities, research centers and other community partners. STEM content development is only one of six content foci for the content collaboratives, funded through RTTT, to serve as learning communities to engage LEAs in the creation and dissemination of standards-based assessment and instructional materials. There is an additional \$1,000,000 in the budget to expand proven or promising STEM initiatives; however, there is a lack of detail about how recipients will be identified or the criteria to qualify for these incentive awards. There is no clear pathway to ensure that under-represented student groups will have access to the full range of STEM studies and to supports they will need to be successful in rigorous STEM studies.</p>				
Total	15	0	0	

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes	Yes	
Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>The applicant does have a plan to address all four education reform areas. The state has an innovative SLDS system and vision for expanding use of existing SchoolView portal to provide stakeholders with access to resources and data needed to implement statewide reforms. A majority of the state's LEAs have agreed to participation and commit to ensure successful implementing of its goals though only support from local teacher union leaders is minimal. The applicant describes how the state and its participating LEAs will use RTTT funds to support programs and resources aimed at improving student achievement, decreasing achievement gaps, and increasing graduation rates although aspects of the plan are vague including its pathway to fairly evaluating the effectiveness of teachers and principals.</p>				
Total		0	0	
Grand Total	500	319	339	



Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2

Colorado Application #2250CO-10



A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	56	58	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	4	4	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	39	41	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	13	13	

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

A 1 i - Colorado's Race to the Top agenda is comprehensive and coherent and builds on work already in progress around the four Race to the Top (RttT) areas (Figure A-1: Colorado's Legacy of Reform). The plan is focused by five strategies to improve student learning. These are threaded throughout the application and include: 1) improving teacher mastery and delivery of common standards and assessments 2) leveraging quality data 3) ensuring all students have access to effective teachers and principals 4) turning around lowest achieving schools and 5) building a state-wide accountability and support system. Targets for student achievement are impressive while the track record of improvement around low performing schools and closing the achievement gap is spotty at best. The plan takes into account the diversity of the Local Education Agencies (LEA) of which the smallest has 26 students and the largest 86,000, and the geography of the State by focusing attention on the need for collaborative as well as virtual and web-based support for educators and students. The applicant needs to clearly articulate activities and benchmarks of progress across all initiatives to ensure the agenda remains "comprehensive and coherent" across the four year grant period.

A decade of education reform codified in rules and regulations provides the framework for the State and LEAs to move ahead on their RttT goals. As an example, the Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K), 2007, "promises" to close achievement gaps and halve dropout rates. In 2008 CAP4K (SB 08-212) called for redefined standards and assessments which reflect post-secondary and workforce readiness. There is a Longitudinal Assessment Bill (2007, HB 04-1048), a 2009 Dropout Prevention Bill and the Colorado Growth Model which provides reports on each student's academic growth and achievement history. The State's plans build on these initiatives and LEAs understanding of these extant rules. These laws remain in place both for the LEAs that commit to the MOU as well as those that do not.

A 1 ii - 114 of the State's 180 LEAs, and 139 of 153 of its charter schools have signed the MOU committing them to the Preliminary Statement of Work (Appendix A-3 pp. 15-23). This commitment represents 90 % of the student population and 91% of students in poverty. The MOU is substantially the same as the model provided in the RttT packet.

Although a commitment from LEA's that covers 90% of students in the state has been obtained, Summary Table for A1 ii c shows only 5% of Local Teachers Union Leaders signatures were obtained, while 100% of Superintendents and School Board Presidents did sign. The Colorado Education Association submitted a letter of support and has been involved in discussion of the plan, but this did not appear to translate into local support. There is no statement in the application that suggests the lack of participation by unions is of concern to the State nor any indication as to how the absence of their investment in the work will be

addressed. Consideration needs to be given to the possibility that the Preliminary Statement of Work may be substantially challenged absent commitment from the union/association leadership.

A 1 iii - The application lays out clear lines of responsibility for the State, LEAs, schools, educators and students. Student Achievement Outcomes (Figure A-7) are ambitious and include, as example, a) increasing college enrollment from 62.9 to 70%; b) increasing college retention from 66.3 to 75%; c) increasing 4th grade and 8th grade Math and Reading proficiency on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) by 20%; and d) reducing the achievement gap from 30% to 10% between all student subgroups. Colorado (CO) anticipates changes to the calculation of on-time graduation to include 5 and 6 year completers, increasing on-time graduations rates to 90%. However, the current 74.6% is therefore not comparable.

In 2006, Colorado created the Closing the Achievement Gap Commission and charged it to recommend a statewide strategy to close gaps, which in time informed the development of the Closing the Achievement Gap (CTAG) initiative (described in Section(A)(3)(i)), to close persistent gaps in achievement. Colorado Reading First was also launched to improve literacy among 82 of the State’s most disadvantaged schools. The application notes that each of these initiatives has narrowed gaps in achievement among students directly served (e.g. 4th grade NAEP Reading scores between Hispanics and whites closed 6% between 2003-2009 and during the same time period the gap between Blacks and whites closed 3% - Fig. A -17). CO's plans include building on the work of CTAG and Reading First.

Exhibit A-4 provides specific subgroup goals with and without RttT funding. This chart shows scores for several subgroups more than doubling on the State Assessments which is somewhat confusingly on the same chart as NAEP goals. There is no clear indication if these are four year goals tied to the years of the grant or if there is another target date.

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)

The information shared in the presentation concerning the impact of legislation (specifically S.B. 191 impact on teacher and principal evaluation) on conditions of local control is convincing in terms of ensuring LEA participation in important aspects of the RttT Plan.

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	25	25	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	17	17	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	8	8	

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

A 2 i – The state plan has bi-partisan political support, “strategic implementation partners” for each Assurance Area and teams that will be dedicated to implementation, monitoring and supporting the RttT plan.

The role of the partners is not delineated.

A Commission on Innovation and Reform, members of whom will be appointed by the Governor and Commissioner of Education, will provide long-term oversight to ensure cross departmental collaboration and coordination for implementation, fiduciary oversight and coordination of public policy and legislation to support the agenda. In Year 1 a Race Launch Team will report to the Commissioner, and an RttT Program Office will be established to oversee critical program functions. Several extant Colorado Department of Education (CDE) units will be dedicated to RttT. Restructuring CDE to be more supportive as opposed to top down is commendable.

Teams of state personnel and external consultants will provide TA to LEAs in developing new evaluation, compensation and termination systems. It is anticipated that contractors will be engaged for 2-3 years to support implementation and transition sustainability to CDE, LEAs and partners. The application suggests

that a cultural change will be effected. Specific information as to how this will occur and be measured is lacking.

There are interventions proposed in the case where LEA results are insufficient, and they primarily embody providing further "front end support and monitoring," although provision for withdrawal of funds is included in the MOU. A differentiated support model is proposed. Differentiation will be determined after formative evaluation measures gauge fidelity of implementation and impact of RttT activities.

Provision for external qualitative reviews of intervention in low-performing schools is an important component to ensure capacity. However, it is not clear what criteria will be used to make a qualitative evaluation nor the steps of "differentiated intervention" that might be provided. Strong language around consequences for non- performance are also lacking.

The application and budget narrative detail how RttT funds will be used and how the state plans to repurpose Title IA, Title IIa, Title III, IID and IDEA funds to support RttT activities. Moreover future general and categorical funds distribution will be informed by RttT evaluation results.

SB 191 – Great Teachers and Leaders Bill is frequently cited in the application as important to accomplishing the state’s plans. However, the Bill itself is not available for review as part of the application or the Appendix.

A 2 ii- Over a series of months, the application notes, the state had a robust involvement from stakeholders with more than 600 participating in a public input process. Strategic partnerships for implementation were formed, practitioners were engaged and support was garnered from private and non-profit sectors. The RttT approach was led by the Lieutenant Governor. A high level of political support is evident. Both state level teachers’ unions were engaged and there are letters of commitment. from the state associations. There is however no explanation as to why only 5% of union leaders committed to the MOU. This signal of non-commitment suggests challenges to the agenda. Notably absent too is formal support from minority groups.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	25	25	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5	5	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	20	20	

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

A 3 i - CO has demonstrated progress in each of the four education reform areas. In 2008, Colorado enacted CAP4K, which legislated the next-generation of standards and assessments to ensure that Colorado students exit high school prepared for post secondary and workforce success. In December 2009, Colorado adopted new, internationally benchmarked content and performance standards in 10 academic content areas. Assessments are in the process of being realigned. The Colorado Growth Model and *SchoolView* put actionable data in the hands of students, teachers and parents/guardians to help guide student growth. In addition, the Educator Identifier System will be integrated into *SchoolView* to directly link individual educators to the academic growth of their students. The Colorado Growth Model is the basis for the longitudinal student data systems adopted by Massachusetts, Indiana, Arizona and Wisconsin. SB 191 requires that every Colorado educator will receive an annual evaluation based at least 50% upon the academic growth of their students, and that evaluations will be used to inform key decisions from hiring, placement, retention and compensation and tenure. Ten years ago, Colorado revised its licensing system to require that the award of an initial teaching license be performance-based, and in 2003 required the same for principal licenses. Focus on performance is also embodied in SB 191, requiring teacher performance evaluations to include multiple measures of student performance. CO is one of seven states chosen by Mass Insight to develop a comprehensive strategy to turn around low performing schools.

Colorado was one of only 20 states to be awarded the competitive Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems grant in May 2010. The \$17.4 million in funding to be received will fund Colorado's completion of *SchoolView*.

CO has a history of work in the four RttT areas on which they intend to build.

A 3 ii - CO has significant gaps in achievement for poor and minority students, averaging about 30% difference in proficiency. In 2006, the state created the Closing the Achievement Gap Commission and charged it to recommend state wide strategies. Efforts are being piloted in six LEAs and initial findings of program implementation are said to show some promise as noted in A 1 iii a. However, a data display would be helpful. In math, where there has been a statewide focus, CO students have made a nearly 10% gain since 2003. Students did only slightly better on the 4th grade NAEP from 2003 -2009. The narrative however states "both 4th and 8th grade NAEP reading scores remained stable" which is discrepant from Figure A-12: NAEP reading scores, which indicates that for all students, except Hispanics and those with disabilities, the 8th grade scores declined between 2003 -2009. This needs to be clarified.

Prior to the 2009 implementation of CAP4K, the state did not provide support and intervention in reading. CDE, in 2009, created internationally benchmarked standards for reading, writing and communication and the CO literacy alignment project will be completed by Sept. 2010. This effort is similar to the one done earlier for mathematics where it proved successful. This state's intervention to date in seven pilot districts does not include data specific to those initiatives nor is the scale up strategy going forward clear.

The discrepancy between NAEP scores and state CSAP scores is marked and the presentation on the same chart distracts from a straightforward acknowledgement of the challenges. Because the standards for proficiency on the CSAP tests are significantly lower than for NAEP, as presented they may lead to the interpretation that CO students are doing relatively well.

CO made significant changes in its method for calculating high school graduation rates – it now includes 5th and 6th year graduates. It is therefore not possible to present trend data. CO has been chosen to participate in NGA's State Strategies to Achieve Graduation for All initiative.

CO achievement gaps are significant and the plan, as described, to change this reality may not be bold enough to achieve timely improvement.

Total	125	106	108	
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B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards	40	40	40	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20	20	
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20	20	

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

B 1 i & ii - CO is participating in the Common Core Standards consortium of 48 states (MOA, Appendix Exhibit B-1). CAP4K requires the use of high quality, internationally benchmarked standards that build toward college and career readiness. In 2008, standards revision was codified by the State Legislature. Because of its work with its own standards, CO application states they were early leaders and full participants in the consortium. An alignment study of the CO Standards against the drafts of the CCS is contracted for and will be completed within 90 days of release of the CCS. The application notes that the

State Board of Education will take action in August 2010 or within 60 days of receiving the results of the formal alignment study. (Appendix Exhibit B).

(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	9	9	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality assessments	5	5	5	
(ii) Including a significant number of States	5	4	4	

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

B 2 i & ii - Colorado has signed Memoranda of Understandings with and is participating in two Consortia of states working toward jointly developing and implementing a battery of common, high-quality assessments that align with the Common Core Standards: the Summative Multi-State Assessment Resources for Teachers and Educational Researchers (SMARTER) Balanced Assessment Consortium which includes 32 states and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Consortium consisting of 26 states. High points are given for being included in consortia with significant number of states however, it is not clear how discrepancies that may arise between the two sets of assessments will be resolved.

(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	16	16	
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

B 3 – Colorado's overall strategy for supporting the transition to enhanced standards and assessments is through a number of initiatives focused by ensuring that teachers master and deliver on the common standards and assessments. The State's theory of change is focused by building professional learning communities and providing differentiated support as needed. The plan includes two major initiatives to build the capacity of educators. Content Collaboratives comprised of selected district personnel will be formed to conduct needs assessments for each district. These Collaborative will also develop new curricula, instructional materials, assessments and training materials, and be supported by Regional Support Teams (RST) who will provide local professional development. In small and rural LEAs, the RSTs will provide targeted support. The on-line data system "SchoolView" will provide, in addition to student data, access to high-quality instructional materials and formative assessments as well as professional development options.

The State's plan is commended for recognizing and addressing the importance of involving expert practitioners and utilizing their social capital to engage others. The criteria for selecting these "Fellows" is vague and the guidance provided by CDE is not well clarified. The utilization of web based resources is vitally important given the states geography.

Measuring the effectiveness of the Collaboratives and Regional Support Teams does not occur until Dec. 2013 (Figure B-5, p. 78 - Timeline). It is unclear whether there will be earlier interim measures to evaluate progress and assess challenges and successes for more immediate changes, as needed, in the initiatives. Overall, there does not appear to be a sense of urgency exhibited in the timeline.

The standards and assessment initiative is also expected to impact teacher and principal preparation programs through the inclusion of "preparation programs" in the Content Collaboratives and a revision of standards for these programs such that they align with the new Academic Standards. However, there are no details provided as to how program faculty and other university personnel will be engaged, nor is there any information provided about the standards revision process for these preparation programs.

Total	70	65	65	
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C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	22	22	
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</p> <p>Colorado's statewide longitudinal data system currently meets 11 of the 12 America COMPETES Act elements. The educator identifier system is considered "In Progress." System enhancements of several components is either occurring or planned as per the chart in the application.</p>				
(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	4	4	
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</p> <p>The <i>SchoolView</i> platform is the center of CO's data system. It was launched in 2009 and provides a highly credible basis for CO's goals of significantly increasing the number of stakeholders accessing and effectively utilizing <i>SchoolView</i> to advance student achievement. Colorado's Growth Model and <i>SchoolView</i> are well received in the education technology community as evidenced by 12 states signing on to adopt the model and build onto the reporting tools (Footnote, p.85) . Investments in the system are focused upon increasing data immediacy, implementing educator collaboration and social networking technology, enhancing data visualizations and providing user friendly dashboards. The system supports English and Spanish and additional languages will be implemented. It is evident that appropriate stakeholders have been engaged in the ongoing development process.</p> <p>How widely the system is currently being used is not clear. Expectations for its future use are ambitious, but there is lack of clarity as to what is actually required of teachers and principals in relation to <i>SchoolView</i></p>				
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	16	16	
(i) Increasing the use of instructional improvement systems	6	5	5	
(ii) Supporting LEAs, schools, and teachers in using instructional improvement systems	6	5	5	
(iii) Making the data from instructional improvement systems available to researchers	6	6	6	
<p>(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</p> <p>CDE will provide school districts with TA around the uses of the <i>SchoolView</i> platform, particularly the Instructional Improvement System (IIS) which will be developed with RtT funds. IIS will integrate student summative and interim assessments, educator effectiveness with students, related instruction resources and enable the results to be incorporated into educator evaluation systems. What is not clear is whether teachers will be required to utilize this system or if participating LEAs will monitor and evaluate educators use of the technology.</p> <p>The State's plan for increased data informed instruction includes providing both initial training and ongoing coaching as relates to the data systems. Data coaches will be embedded in each of the Regional Support Teams to provide support to practitioners in the LEAs and will also work with CDE and higher education staff to improve the educator preparation portal. The narrative suggests that there are incentives for using</p>				

data-driven instruction in the Education Accountability Act although the summary provided in the Appendix (Exhibit E 1) does not state that explicitly.

This approach to increasing the use and functionality of data to improve student learning appears to include systems that are aligned and potentially impactful, although State and/or LEA monitoring of use and consequences for non-compliance are not clearly delineated.

Exhibit A 6: Colorado Education Research Consortium (CERC) documents the mission and activities of CERC. This infrastructure provides for the development of a coordinated research community which is comprised of all the anticipated stakeholders as well as the Department of Human Services and Department of Labor and Employment. This group is tasked with developing and making public a research and evaluation agenda supported through RtT evaluation funds. SchoolView will house a social networking site to virtually support researchers. CERC is also tasked with developing a business plan for sustainability after the end of the project.

The CERC model encompasses a wide array of stakeholders and appears to incorporate theories that promote interventions that impact the whole child.

Total	47	42	42	
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D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	15	15	
(i) Allowing alternative routes to certification	7	5	5	
(ii) Using alternative routes to certification	7	5	5	
(iii) Preparing teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage	7	5	5	

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

D 1 i & ii – CO statues appear to be supportive of alternative preparation routes given twenty-six (26) entities are approved in the State to provide alternative teacher preparation programs. Ten (10) programs provide alternative preparation for principals. Most of these programs are LEA based. The application notes that each must meet the five elements included in the application criteria. There is no longitudinal data indicating how many educators were licensed each year through an alternative route. During 2008-2009 793 teachers (a total of 5,768 teachers obtained a license in that year) and seven (7) principals (of 741 licensed) completed one of the State’s alternative preparation programs. Earlier studies, the application states, confirm that approximately half of CO’s educators are prepared out of state. There are no details provided as to the elements of these programs save to note they are developed to meet an identified need of a particular school or LEA. Specific legislation is not mentioned.

The State plans to improve the data and transparency of information about these programs as well as target incentives to expand the number of alternative programs offered. There is no information provided as to the impact of these programs, thus it is difficult to evaluate whether expanding them is appropriate. Moreover, given the high percentage of educators who are licensed/certified in other states, a description of extant inter-state agreements as quality and comparability would be helpful.

D 1 iii – CDE monitors educator shortages through requests received for emergency authorization. These are reviewed annually. In 2009 there was an in depth analysis of the need for effective educators in Title I and rural schools as well as Special Education needs statewide. The legislature created the Quality Teachers Commission, charged to study and issue recommendations to close the teacher gap, and provide a statewide educator identifier system. These recommendations are to be included in the full build

out of *SchoolView*. This will enable LEAs to track their own shortages. Preparation programs will also be able to anticipate and respond to needs trends. An initial set of recommendations for the system is anticipated January 2011.

CO does not appear to have a strong history of monitoring, evaluating and identifying areas of teacher and principal shortage. The current plan however will improve data collection and transparency, and as described in detail in Section D3, provide incentives for individuals and/or programs to meet these hard to fill need areas.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	48	48	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	4	4	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	12	12	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	8	8	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	24	24	

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

D 2 i -The State currently measures individual student progress for all students in grades and subjects tested by the State's summative assessments. By executive order (see appendix Exhibit D-4) the state will identify assessments that LEAs can use to measure student progress in grades NOT included in the state summative assessments. This is a hugely ambitious undertaking and a completion date within the timeframe of the grant seems unlikely given the extent of the vetting process that will be required.

D 2 ii - SB 191 requires that the State Council on Educator Effectiveness (a recently created entity) determine the parameters for an evaluation system for teachers and principals in which student growth measures determine at least 50% of the evaluation rating. Teachers and principals are on the Council and it is suggested they will have a strong voice in the process. A coherent, developmental plan and timeline is presented in Figure D2 Implementation Plan. The state, through the Council will 1) develop definitions and measures of effectiveness and guidelines for implementation of the evaluation system, 2) provide a resource bank with assessments, tools, policies and processes for LEA use, 3) provide TA and planning grants to LEAs for purposes of revising their hiring, promotion, compensation and staffing systems 4) deliver impact reports at teacher and principal level to inform individualized PD, and 5) publicly report results.

Performance targets were established based on LEA input and there is a tiered rollout anticipated. The State does not explicitly delineate a systemic view of evaluation but rather suggests a series of steps that are implicitly aligned. The application would benefit from a more definitive description of the purpose and processes of an aligned system of evaluation and its relationship to student achievement.

Student growth data, by July 2011, will be available to teachers and principals on an individual teacher basis for use as part of the evaluation of each teacher. *SchoolView* will offer teacher access to PD resources aligned with identified areas of need and principals will have access to best practices of model teachers in each content area and grade level.

The application is not explicit about the existing evaluation system and current definition of an effective educator.

D 2 iii - SB 191 allows principals' designees to conduct evaluation reviews. This was previously not possible in the State. This provides a significant means for expanding capacity; however, criteria for individuals taking on these new roles is not clear. Under SB 191 achieving non-probationary (tenured) status for teachers is more rigorous but there is also now flexibility for teachers who show potential for improvement after three years. Previously a decision on status had to be made after three years. This is a strategy that will help address local needs and recognizes growth potential. Provisions of assistance and timelines for reaching non-probationary status are unclear.

By July 2011, Educator Impact Reports will be available to individual teachers and principals through *SchoolView* portal, providing growth data for their students in subject areas and grades tested on the State's summative assessment. Reports for teachers of all other content areas will be available to LEAs as interim assessments in those areas are implemented. Beginning in the fall of the 2013-2014, each teacher and principal will receive student growth data for their students as well as those of their school, LEA and the State and it will be weighted at a least 50% of their evaluation process.

While there is a timeline and developmental plan for the big picture, there is a lack of relevant detail. Importantly for this goal, a process through which to engage local union/association leaders over the two year timeline is not specified.

SB 191 allows principals' designees to conduct evaluation reviews, which was previously a role limited to the principal. This provides a significant means for expanding evaluative capacity; however, criteria for individuals taking on these new roles are not clear.

Under SB 191 achieving non-probationary (tenured) status for teachers is more rigorous but there is also now flexibility for teachers who show potential for improvement after three years. Previously a decision on status had to be made after three years. This is a bold strategy that helps address local needs and recognizes growth potential.

D 2 iv- Teacher and principal improvement, according to the application, rest heavily on several initiatives:

- A requirement for an individual PD plan with goals tied to student measurement results .
- Extra compensation for principals and teachers who sign on and deliver results in challenging schools. The signing bonus of \$10,000 and annual bonus of the same amount for those who deliver results is significant.
- Career ladders with incentives provided to identify new ways of staffing that enable effective teachers to lead while remaining in the classroom.

The career ladder concept is a promising way of keeping quality educators in the field and providing principals with ways to distribute leadership responsibilities.

The application does not delineate a) how the bonuses will be maintained when the grant is expended and b) the roles for strategic partners, (i.e. preparation programs, businesses).

The application states that all LEAs will use evaluations to inform compensation, promotion and retention of effective educators, and the dismissal or non-renewal of ineffective educators. Performance targets for the roll out of the evaluation system were established based on LEA responses with 100% commitment to each criteria by 2013-2014. Here again concern is raised about the reality of implementation absent the full support of the union /association leadership.

Under SB 191, achieving non-probationary (tenured) status for teachers is more rigorous but there is also now flexibility for teachers who show potential for improvement after three years. Previously a decision on status had to be made after three years. This is a bold strategy that helps address local needs and recognizes growth potential.

Additionally, SB 10-191 establishes that a teacher may be assigned to a particular school only with the consent of the hiring principal and with input from at least two representative teachers employed at the school. This goes a long way to ensuring "fit" at hiring.

SB 191 may have dramatically changed the landscape by ensuring that non-probationary (tenured) teachers with two consecutive years of demonstrated ineffectiveness be moved back to probationary status, opening paths to distributing leadership and requiring the consent of the principal in hiring. Principals will require support as they take on these new roles. A description of the kinds of supports that will be provided to evaluators would be helpful. While the impact on principal preparation programs is briefly mentioned it is unclear whether any assistance will be provided to these programs as they realign course work and programs to prepare principals for their several new roles.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	18	18	
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	10	10	
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	8	8	

(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

D 3 i & ii

Figure D-3: Strategy, Goals, and Activities provides a clear plan and timeline to ensure the equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals. This plan begins with the recommendation, in March 2011, of a statewide definition of principal and teacher effectiveness. This definition will be adopted by the State Board of Education by September 2011. Ambitious goals are noted to increase each year, beginning in 2012-2013, the percent of effective teachers in language (+ 20%), special ed. (+ 20%), college ready math and science (+35%) and decrease ineffective teachers in high poverty and/or high minority schools by 50% annually. Activities to achieve these goals include a) reallocating Title IA and Title II funds to recruitment and retention grants so that targeted LEAs may increase the number of effective teachers and principals in high need schools, b) providing stipends for educators to obtain national board certification and then work in high need schools and subjects and c) subsidizing costs to obtain endorsement in high need areas in order to serve in high need schools. Absent from the application is consideration of attracting non-traditional candidates to the profession.

The applicant notes a poor track record as regards this criterion. Until the Council develops the definitions of effectiveness, the CDE will continue to track the equitable distribution of educators based on credentials and experience. The September 2011 adoption date for the definitions places the true starting gate for this initiative on a somewhat distant horizon which suggests an absence of a sense of urgency here.

LEAs have, since 2006-2007, been required to create plans to address issues of inequitable teacher distribution. Analysis of these plans and resultant improvements or lack of improvements inform the activities (Figure D 4: Analysis and Action Plan) going forward. A biennial survey (Teaching, Empowering, Leading and Learning Initiative -TELL) of school working conditions first administered in 2008-2009 is also guiding improvement efforts in this area.

References to the TELL survey and its impact on current realities and future improvement plans are threaded throughout this application but the survey itself is not found in the Appendix.

SB 191 has established the authority of local school boards to develop incentive systems to encourage effective teachers in high-performing schools to move to jobs in schools that have low performance ratings. LEAs will be held accountable for the equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals and Federal dollars will only be available for use by LEAs that implement proven or promising strategies and methods.

Colorado has a seven point plan for increasing the number of effective educators in hard to staff subjects:

1. Provide incentives to recruit and retain educators in low achieving schools;
2. Expand the number of teachers and principals prepared by residency-based programs who commit to teach for 3 years in these hard to staff subject areas;
3. Establish up to 200 scholarships to teachers and principals that successfully complete national certification programs in agree to work in high need schools and/or subjects;
4. Expand minority student participation in Math, Science and English AP classes (by training 400 teachers to provide these courses);
5. Utilize additional TFA math teachers in high poverty schools;
6. Provide incentives to up to 500 effective teachers to obtain certification in ELA, SPED and science/math; and
7. Increase the reach of blended and remote instruction in remote areas

This is an impressive agenda with primary responsibilities for implementation resting at the State level. LEAs are tasked to improve teaching conditions in high need schools based on Teaching, Empowering, Learning and Leading (TELL) survey results. Absent information as to the supports and consequences directed at LEAs around this mandate, it is not possible to know whether this vital component of the plan to increase the percentage of effective educators in high needs schools and subject areas will be as successful as anticipated.

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	11	11	
(i) Linking student data to credentialing programs and reporting publicly	7	6	6	
(ii) Expanding effective programs	7	5	5	

(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

D 4 - *School/View* will publish annually, beginning in July 2011: 1) a public report linking student growth and achievement directly to preparation programs where those teachers and principals were prepared 2) a return on investments metric for these programs and 3) placement, mobility and retention rates for completers employed by CO LEAs. By September 2011, revised standards and criteria for accrediting principal and teacher preparation programs will be disseminated. Programs whose results indicate a persistent inability to adequately prepare candidates will have accreditation terminated.

Revision of standards and termination followed by reaccreditation of programs often requires closing programs and revising them to meet the new standards. There is no information on the state's role in reaccreditation to support the development of higher quality programs; nor is there any indication that out of state entities that may be providing preparation for educators within the State, both virtually and within a bricks and mortar environment, will be included in this public documentation of results.

To expand quality preparation program options: 1) expansion grants will be given to effective and high potential programs to expand the number of educators they prepare and 2) targeted investments will be given to, as example, Teach for America and the Turnaround Leaders Academy

Criteria for determining an "effective" program are denoted as those which improve "student growth and achievement." There is a lack of clarity as to what constitutes student "growth" beyond academic achievement and graduation. Moreover, in the case of principal preparation programs, it is unclear how multiple intervening variables (i.e. serving or not serving as an assistant principal, how many years in an administrative role prior to placement, how many years intervene between program completion and placement as a principal, the impact of mentoring, or lack of same, etc.) will be accounted for in the data.

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	18	18	
(i) Providing effective support	10	9	9	
(ii) Continuously improving the effectiveness of the support	10	9	9	

(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

D 5

1. *School/View* will provide a) individualized reports to teachers and principals with student growth measures for their students, schools and LEAs b) expert content to inform development of curricula, instructional material and assessments, and c) promising PD practices
2. Annual principal and teacher evaluation will include individual professional development plans
3. CDE will create, by January 2011 the Educator Effectiveness Unit which will be tasked with providing LEAs the following:

- Identified and certified proven PD models
- Expanded leadership development programs for teachers and principals
- Financial incentives for effective teachers and principals to share practices
- Incentives to implement proven models of induction, plans for improving learning conditions, and/or innovative models for career ladders
- Administration and analysis of the biennial TELL survey measuring teaching and learning conditions and trends that correlate with student achievement and targeted areas for improvement.

LEAs will engage in an improvement planning process supported by CDE's Turnaround and Intervention unit. Data coaches and Regional Support Teams will provide job-embedded PD support implementation of these plans particularly around the use of data.

This plan as presented has multiple and necessary parts. It would be helpful if a detailed explanation of the alignment among the various efforts were presented. A clear explication of how the definition of teacher excellence, the evaluations, and the PD are related and, as example, what criteria will determine whether a particular PD program will receive certification is needed.

Additionally, there do not appear to be any contingency plans should LEA efforts not be implemented effectively.

Total	138	110	110	
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E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	10	10	10	
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
Colorado's Education Accountability Act of 2009 (SB 09-163) (Exhibit E-1) and the School Performance Framework (Figure E -2) give the State the statutory authority to intervene at the LEA and school level and a reform plan to turn around the 72 schools identified as failing. By September 2010 an annual performance review using Federal AYP measures to identify its persistently lowest achieving schools, as defined in the RtT notice, will occur and 100% of "persistently low achieving schools" will be identified. It is unclear whether the 72 currently noted as lowest achieving are the same schools that will meet the standards specified in the application for the Sept. 2010 identification. By 2014 it is anticipated that 100% of the states lowest achieving schools will be in turnaround.				
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	29	35	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	4	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	25	30	
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
E 2 i -By September 2010, through an annual school performance review using Colorado's performance framework and Federal AYP measures, Colorado will identify 100% of its lowest performing schools and prioritize them for turnaround intervention. The parameters by which Colorado defines <i>persistently lowest achieving school</i> are delineated in the application . It is substantially based on academic achievement of students in terms of assessments of reading and math over three years and schools with graduation rates less than 60% over three years for both Title I and non-Title I recipients.				

Seventy-two (72) schools have been identified for turnaround during the RttT grant period in Colorado. Currently 2% of these schools are engaged in one of the four intervention models with 100% anticipated intervention by 2013-2014. This suggests a limited agenda around turnaround to date.

E 2 ii - The application states that the reform plans build on the states authority to "directly intervene" (p.160) and that the persistently lowest-achieving schools will be identified and "financial incentives will be granted at the CDE's discretion to those LEAs who **voluntarily commit** to implementing one of the four Federal intervention models" (E 2 ii, p.154). Preliminary Work Plan for Assurance Area E (Appendix p. 27) notes that the State will "identify persistently low-achieving schools for turn-around intervention. Intervene when necessary to **induce LEAs to re-try** in failed efforts or increase state role & direction." The Work Plan attached to the MOU does not clearly state that LEAs will turn around these schools by implementing one of the four school intervention models: turnaround model, restart model, school closure, or transformation model.

While there are specific and comprehensive plans for supporting low achieving schools, the language surrounding when and under what circumstances the State will mandate intervention is vague. There is a reference in the application to withdrawing funds for noncompliance but other language around consequences is not explicit. It is also unclear at what point, if any, implementing one of the four interventions will be required.

At the time an intervention is determined, the support plan for those schools that will be turned around will benefit from Mass Insight and Public Impacts efforts in CO. These entities are working with CDE and its newly formed Turnaround and Intervention Unit to build internal capacity to implement school turnaround. Mass Insight chose CO in 2009 as one of five states to begin work, as part of a multimillion dollar partnership, to create turnaround clusters of the lowest achieving schools.

CDE Turnaround and Intervention Unit (TIU) will:

- Hire a Principal Consultant tasked with supporting LEA efforts to apply for innovation school status;
- Design and provide tools and processes tailored to LEA needs to help them determine the most appropriate intervention mode; and
- Provide oversight and recommendation regarding contracts between LEAs and external providers
- Identify and vet eligible providers

CDE will:

1. Build human capital pipelines to support successful turnaround efforts by providing incentives to encourage effective teachers to serve in turnaround schools;
2. Implement a Turnaround Leaders Academy to screen and train 20 Turnaround Leaders statewide;
3. Offer financial incentives to individuals who assume leadership of failing schools and achieve high targets;
4. Provide Financial incentives for teams of effective educators to work in persistently low-achieving schools;
5. Require LEA to restructure their compensation system to reward the most effective teachers to serve in low achieving schools;
6. Build a supply of operators to restart struggling schools and open new schools across the State;
7. Use data to garner public support for turnaround efforts;
8. Adopt a public oversight process; and
9. Directly engage students locally in all stages of the turnaround process.

These initiatives are frequently bold, sometimes creative (as in the case of garnering public support and involving students) and consistent with the overall focus of CO plans for improving the education offered in the State's lowest achieving schools. The State is appropriately promoting flexibility and collaboration in recognition of LEA and school context. However, in this section of the Plan it is unclear whether participating LEAs will be required to adopt one of the four intervention models specified in the application criteria.

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)

E 2 i & ii - During the panel discussion it was made clear that the state is carefully balancing state level guidance and district level autonomy. Regarding school turnaround, the Colorado panelists clarified that a number of the State's persistently lowest achieving schools have, to date, adopted one of the four RttT models and that S.B. 163 ensures the State's right and willingness to intervene. The turnaround process is not delineated in sufficient detail.

Total	50	39	45	
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F. General

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	10	10	
(i) Allocating a consistent percentage of State revenue to education	5	5	5	
(ii) Equitably funding high-poverty schools	5	5	5	
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>F 1 i - The percentage of total revenues available to the State that were used to support elementary, secondary and public higher education increased from 47.9 percent in State fiscal year 2008 to 48.2 percent in fiscal year 2009. The amount of revenue spent on education increased 5.2 percent from fiscal year 2008 to fiscal year 2009. In 2000, Colorado passed Constitutional Amendment 23 requiring the State to increase base per-pupil K-12 funding by at least inflation plus one percent annually for 10 years, and by at least inflation thereafter.</p> <p>F 1 ii - In Colorado, average per-pupil funding in high-needs LEAs is \$10,100 compared to \$9,800 to LEAs not considered high-needs. Quality Counts 2010, for example, ranks Colorado ninth in the nation for funding equity using restricted range differences. Additionally, Colorado's School Finance Act (CRS 22-54-101 et seq.), uses a funding formula that adjusts base funding to LEAs according to student and LEA characteristics and LEAs are required to allocate at least 75% of at-risk funding to school, or LEA-wide instructional programs for at-risk students or for staff development associated with teaching at-risk students. This is the only earmark required by the State.</p>				
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	36	36	
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	8	8	
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	5	5	
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	8	8	
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	8	8	
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	7	7	
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>F i-Colorado's Charter Schools Act ranks fifth in the country according to the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. Colorado's Charter Schools Act places no limits on the number of charter schools in the State or on the number of students who may attend charter schools and the law prohibits LEAs from placing moratoria on the number of charter schools in their LEAs. More than 153 charter schools educate approximately 8 % of the State's students. Since 2006 nine charter schools have been closed.</p>				

F ii -The LEA is responsible for holding charter schools accountable for local and State performance expectations. Nine charters were closed over a five year period (F 2 ii Table 1). This may indicate a very high success rate for charters in the state or raises concerns as to the level of oversight and accountability for outcomes. The rating on F2 ii is in response to the lack of a full explanation concerning accountability.

F iii & iv -Charter schools receive 100% of LEA per pupil operating revenues and since 2004 receive additional funds if their at-risk population is at least 40%. There are multiple facilities funding sources including a dedicated annual appropriation, equal access to certain State funds, a dedicated bond enhancement program and an opportunity to participate in local bond issues to support facilities.

F v - The Innovation Schools Act of 2008 encourages LEAs to manage diverse portfolios of schools, and encourages innovation in many aspects of schooling. The Act provides a means for LEAs to authorize one or more schools to implement a package of waivers and also provides for the authorization of innovation zones,consisting of a set of schools with common interests. Bargaining unit members at the school must approve such waivers by a 60% vote. Four Denver Public Schools have received such waivers. While the statutory authority for autonomy exists it is only minimally utilized perhaps suggesting a challenging environment for innovation.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	4	4	
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>The State's application notes that Colorado has had an education reform agenda with bi-partisan political support for over a decade. The application provides information suggesting these reform efforts are closely aligned to RttT assurances and provides the framework for the proposed RttT goals, activities and initiatives as set forth in the application. Based on past efforts and unmet needs CDE is being restructured (administratively and fiscally) to align with new strategic priorities detailed throughout the application. Since 2009 and for the next three years, CDE will fund partnerships to reduce high school dropout rates, expand learning options, promote school health and wellness, enhance blended learning opportunities and expand local innovation around early childhood education. Several of these efforts are supported by specific requirements in the Education Accountability Act or other legislation noted in the application. It is too early to have data supporting student progress as a result of these efforts, but research suggests that attention to these underlying needs of children of poverty is essential if academic efforts are to succeed. However there is scant evidence that previous efforts have resulted in progress toward closing the achievement gap.</p> <p>There is no mention of how the state monitors or measures these efforts.</p>				
Total	55	50	50	

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	15	15	
Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>Threaded throughout the CO proposal are STEM initiatives. Since 2006 Colorado has been among the several states engaged by an National Governors' Association grant to develop a State STEM network. There is a STEM community in the state that has promoted STEM education and provides a framework for continuing attention to this Competitive Preference Priority. Absent is a coherent plan to bring what feels like disparate parts together.</p>				

Total	15	15	15	
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Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes	Yes	

Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Colorado's application comprehensively and coherently addresses the four reform areas. The plan is generally systemic with each area informing and supporting the work in another area. There is an elaborate system of support from CDE, Regional Support Teams and Data Coaches. There is a great deal of local control of the plan which is to be commended. However, two strong caveats: 1) local union leadership does not appear to be on board and there are no plans noted to garner their support and 2) the turnaround activities in particular seem to rely on LEAs determining their own brand of turnaround absent a specific timeline of requirements ensuring they must, under specified conditions, choose from among the four proposed RtT interventions.

Total		0	0	
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Grand Total	500	427	435	
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Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2



Colorado Application #2250CO-8

A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	41	52	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	4	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	30	40	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	7	7	

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(A)(1)

(i) Colorado has set ambitious goals guided by an acknowledgement by the State that it can do more to impact student outcomes. Colorado's reform plan is informed by an analysis of past practices and outcomes to determine the key issues that have led to inadequate results. The plan is also informed by the involvement of prominent internal and external stakeholders from many disciplines with an interest in the plan's strategies and outcomes. The State's reform agenda is being built on a foundation of historical legislative policy, a redefined organizational construct, a strong technology-based information system, community support and the resident will to impact student outcomes.

Colorado's plan is comprised of five reform strategies that are aligned to the Race To The Top (RTTT) reform areas. These strategies are focused on teacher mastery and the delivery of standards and assessment, utilization of high quality information, the development of effective teachers and principals, turning around Colorado's lowest performing schools and building the statewide accountability and support systems to accomplish and sustain its goals. Each strategy defines associated goals and outlines key activities and timelines, including the State and LEA resources that are necessary to bring the agenda to scale.

The implementation of new organizational structures, processes, resources and accountabilities are the hallmark of Colorado's plan; however, what is not evident throughout the application are the specific details about how the CDE will navigate the potential challenges of working with the Local Education Associations (LEAs) to embed the State's multi-faceted approach into local support structures that accelerate and sustain local efforts.

(ii)

(a) The State notes that the "Section 7, Conflicts; Collective Bargaining" clause originally included in the Phase One application has been eliminated from the MOU. Section 6 of the MOU states "that in the event the LEA and State are unable to finalize the Final Scope of Work on or before the date specified in Section 4 (a) above, the MOU shall be deemed null and void". This clause weakens the LEAs commitment in that it suggests that if the State and LEA do not finalize the Scope of Work within 90 of being awarded the RTTT grant either party could terminate the MOU.

(b) The Scope of Work provides specific detail of State and LEA responsibilities for each of Colorado's five strategies for reform.

(c) Of Colorado's 180 LEAs, 114 LEAs have signed an MOU. Of these MOUs, 100% have Superintendent signatures, 100% have School Board President signatures and only 5% have Local Union Leadership signatures. A letter of support from the AFT President cites legislation in SB191 that will ensure teacher evaluation systems are good for children and fair to teachers. There is no letter of support from the Colorado Education Association.

The absence of signatures from 95% of the LEAs local union leadership is significant as they include the largest 13 schools districts, each with over 15,000 students, in the state. This represents approximately 295,382 students of which approximately 181,501 students, or 61%, are student in poverty. The potential exists, given the terms of the MOU and the lack of Local Union Leadership signature on the MOU, that the State could not have the anticipated participation and statewide impact.

(iii)

(a) The participation of 114 LEAs represents 89.8% of all students and 91% of students in poverty. 100% of all 114 LEAs have indicated a commitment to participant in all aspects of the RTTT reform agenda and therefore, have committed to the strategies outlined in the State's application which has goals to increase college enrollment, increase college retention, increase National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) proficiency, increase high school graduation rates, increase Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) proficiency and reduce the achievement gap. Colorado's state laws lay a foundation for focus on the aforementioned goals and for adherence and engagement by the LEAs in the State's reform plans.

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)

(i) Mention made during the presentation about elements of the State's plan, including the strength of the State's legislative climate, the intention to form stronger LEA partnerships, the use of strategies and support structures to reduce LEA isolation, plans to increase the State's systemic focus and the availability of evaluative tools and processes provided evidence in support of a comprehensive and coherent reform agenda.

(ii) The information shared during the presentation about the enactment of SB191 in May 2010 establishes a basis for teacher and principal evaluation standards and is intended to define performance targets for effectiveness and student growth. By definition this legislation induces CEA and AFT support and establishes a framework for LEA adoption. This reviewer believes that this legislation creates a climate that will result in greater commitment for the State's reform agenda.

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	26	26	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	17	17	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	9	9	

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(A)(2)

(i)

(a) In addition to the dedicated teams of Colorado Department of Education (CDE) professionals, the CDE support for the Race to the Top grant extends to many levels of State governance and leadership, including the State Governor, Members of the Federal and State Legislature and the Commissioner of Education. The State will put into place a Commission to oversee the statewide collaboration and coordination of the reform agenda and provide fiduciary oversight of RTTT funds. This Commission will also coordinate public policy and legislation to support the reform agenda. Strategic partnerships will link State and public/private resources to ensure the full implementation of the reform agenda and the State's strategies.

The CDE is being organized around the RTTT effort. The plan is being supported by two key departments; The Office of Performance and Policy and The Office of Learning and Results. These two offices are focused on the core components of the reform plan. Three new groups have been formed within these offices - LEA Outreach, Learning Community and Educator Effectiveness. A Program Management Office is being established to support the reform plans and to build a culture to sustain the reform efforts beyond the RTTT grant period. The Program Management Office includes resources experienced in communications, organization development, knowledge management, strategic partnerships, and issues management.

It is evident that the CDE is being reorganized to align its efforts on the State's reform strategy and to ensure compliance with the RTTT reform areas. A smooth transition to integrate new personnel and new departments into the CDE infrastructure along with a change management plan is critical to ensuring that the CDE's new work processes accelerate rather than hamper LEA support.

(b) The State's plan is designed to ensure that LEAs are held accountable for adherence to the agreements in the MOU and the Scope of Work and for translating these efforts into improved outcomes. LEA results will be the State's indication of how effectively the LEA has implemented the reform plan and what resources are needed to improve LEA performance.

The State believes that it is more efficient to provide front end support that includes frequent monitoring, processes to share best practices and resources to improve performance, before schools are in trouble. However, when an LEA or school does not perform the Statewide System of Accountability and Support (SSAS) is intended to provide LEAs with a roadmap for improvement. The SSAS focuses on differentiated support based on the improvement cycle and whether the LEA or school needs universal, targeted or intensive support. Although not mentioned in this portion of the narrative, the State's SchoolView system and Regional Support Plan will be provided to LEAs as part of the effort to introduce a technology based instructional support system to support the reform plan.

(c) Through the State's Grant's Fiscal Management Office, the State has in place processes and a system of checks and balances to oversee the grant administration and contracts. A centralized accounting system, the Colorado Financial Reporting System (COFRS) will manage allocations to LEAs and provide reports on all expenditures, encumbrances and balances. The State's coordinated system allows the State to roll expenditures into a master grant level report for monitoring and tracking. The State's narrative did not indicate the ability to link grant expenditures to performance measures and tracking.

(d) The State's budget details expenditures for every assurance area and related strategy. The State will repurpose TIA, Title IIA, Title III, and Title IID funds. The distribution of State education funds, both general and categorical funds, will be informed by evaluations of the results of the use of RTTT grant funds.

(e) Colorado state laws ensure that reform strategies will extend beyond the grant period. The State plans to implement the following additional strategies to ensure sustainability:

- Foster executive and leadership support for reform funding,
- Implement an organizational model with less dependence on contracted resources,
- Seek operation efficiencies using processes and technology to reduce overhead and other costs, seek private sector and non profit investments,
- Encourage sharing of LEA best practices, technology investments and programs to maximize investments,
- Re-purpose State and Federal funds.

The State did not provide performance measures and tracking information.

(A)(2)

(ii)

(a) The State's union leaders participated in the development of the State's reform plan. The Colorado Education Association (CEA) leaders participated in the development of the Colorado Growth Model and the model content standards. Both the CEA and American Federation of Teachers (AFT) were involved in the design of Colorado's RTTT plan to set the stage for successful implementation of the plan. LEA teachers and leaders are planned to participate in the Standards and Assessment Content Collaboratives and to plan, design and roll-out the dashboards and instructional improvement systems.

(b) The State has support from leadership in the public and private sectors. More than 600 stakeholders participated in the public input process. The State has the support of the Governor and Lt. Governor, both of Colorado's Senators, the Colorado Board of Education as well as other political leaders in the human services, labor and employment, information technology and public safety. Associations, including those who represent school executives and administrators, school boards, teachers, charter schools and parents have shown their support. The business community is involved through a coalition of business members, BizCARES that includes chambers of commerce, economic development organizations, business roundtables and industry associations. No student involvement was mentioned in the narrative.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	18	18	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5	5	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	13	13	

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(A)(3)

(i) The State indicates that during the past four years it has made progress in the following reform areas, which lays the foundation for the RTTT assurances:

Standards and Assessments – State has maximized the use of the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) to improve student outcomes and created the Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K), a standards and assessment system, to focus on school readiness and post secondary and workforce readiness; adopted the Colorado Growth Model.

Data Systems to Support Instruction – Developed SchoolView and is in the process of completing the Educator Identifier System.

Great Teachers and Leaders – The State has enacted legislation, SB 191, and improved performance evaluation to require an annual review with at least 50% of performance is focused upon student academic growth; revised the performance based licensing system for teachers and principals; worked with The New

Teacher Project and Colorado Legacy Foundation to realign the CDE's organizational structure and initiate a focus on teacher effectiveness; established the School Leadership Academy and the Blue Ribbon Panel on Clinical Preparation focused on effective teacher training; and created a higher education focus on teacher and leader pathways.

Turning Around Persistently Low Performing Schools – The State introduced the Education Accountability Act of 2009 that gives the State authority to monitor LEA performance and intervene in persistently low performing schools and the State has been awarded a grant to work with Mass Insight to develop a comprehensive State strategy to improve chronically under-performing schools.

Use of ARRA funds – The funds were targeted for use by LEAs, through a grant process, for the four reform assurances using RTTT criteria. Additional funds from the State were directed to high school initiatives, alternative teacher compensation, roll out of academic standards, drop out prevention, the School Leadership Academy and enhancing the Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS).

(ii)

(a) Colorado's student achievement results for both NAEP and CSAP show only modest gains in overall achievement and mixed results for each subgroup in both Mathematics and Reading.

- The State's narrative indicates that Colorado students have consistently outperformed the NAEP Reading national average since 2003, and in 2009 exceeded the Grade 4 and Grade 8 NAEP Mathematics national average by 7 points.
- The State's CSAP Overall Reading scores have remained relatively flat for the past seven years with an increase in percent proficient from 66.1% in 2003 to 68.3% in 2009. Students in all subgroups showed modest, yet improved results from 2003 to 2009.
- The State's CSAP Mathematics scores have increased slightly from 50.6% in 2005 to 54.5% in 2009. Students in all subgroups showed improved results from 2005 to 2009.

(b) Although the State is showing slow and steady growth towards proficiency, Colorado's student achievement data reflects a persistent achievement gap between White and Asian students and African American, Hispanic and American Indian students. The gaps in achievement for Hispanic, Black and Native American students and for students eligible for free and reduced lunch reflects an approximately 30% difference in proficiency. The largest gaps are in Mathematics and exist between White and Asian students and English Language Learners (30.30%), Students with Disabilities (44.80%), Black students (29.80%) and Hispanic students (28.40%). It is interesting that these gaps persist in light of the historical and significant investments of time, money and resources dedicated to implementing the State's legislative policies and programs.

The Closing the Achievement Gap pilot and the Colorado Reading First initiatives are two actions the State has taken in an effort to close the gaps. The State attributes improved changes between subgroups, from a .2% improvement for children in poverty to a 6.0% improvement in NAEP scores between 4th grade Hispanic and White students, to these initiatives. It is noted in the narrative that students who participated in these initiatives showed marked and sustained improvements. In 2008, six LEAs with the largest achievement gap initiated pilots based on these initiatives. It is stated in the narrative that data from these LEAs show overall improvement in Reading and Math and that students in poverty have substantially greater progress than their counterparts. Data specific to these two initiatives was not provided in the narrative.

(c) When accounting for changes to the calculation for the graduation rate described in the narrative, the 2009 graduation rate is 75%; 2% points higher than the national average, as noted in the application. The data provided points to the observation that the rate has remained flat for 4 years. Consistent with the student achievement gap mentioned in section (b), a high school graduation gap also exists between subgroups. The data provided indicates that the graduation rate for Asian and White students are both over 80% while the rate for Black students is approximately 70%, the rate for Hispanic students is approximately 60% and the rate for American Indian students is approximately 58%. The State has an ambitious agenda to cut the drop out rate by half and double the number of certificates and degrees earned in the next 10 years. An increase in the graduation rate would benefit students; however, given the lack of success of past to efforts to close the achievement gap, especially at the lower grade levels, the CDE's goal to improve the graduation rate could be too ambitious.

Total	125	85	96	
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B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards	40	40	40	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20	20	
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20	20	
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
(B)(1)				
(i) The State has signed an MOU with the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) for the adoption of Common Core State Standards (Appendix B-1). The consortium is comprised of 48 States and Territories.				
(ii) The State intends to adopt the Common Core Standards by August 2010, or within 60 days of receiving the results of the formal alignment study, whichever is earlier. The adoption of the standards will follow the process as outlined by State Law as outlined in the Colorado State Board of Education Procedures for Adopting Standards (Appendix B-4).				
(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	10	10	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality assessments	5	5	5	
(ii) Including a significant number of States	5	5	5	
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
(B)(2)				
(i) The State has signed MOUs with two consortia to develop a battery of high quality assessments that align with the Common Core Standards. This includes the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (Appendix B-5) and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Consortium (Appendix B-6). The				

involvement in these consortia establishes a comprehensive K-12 approach to assessment by ensuring that the State's educators have insight into the student progress compared to the common core standards and student readiness for college and careers.

(ii) The SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium includes 32 states and the PARCC includes 26 states.

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

20

13

15



(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(B)(3)

The State application describes a structured strategy for the statewide adoption and integration of the common core standards into LEA and classroom instructional and assessment practices. The CDE Office of Learning and Results, the Standards Implementation Director, The Race To The Top Program Office and the Learning Community Manager will support the statewide adoption process.

The CDE strategy includes a process of targeted activities linked to goals supported by CDE and LEA resources to create awareness of the new standards; transition to the new curriculum, instruction and assessment practices; implementation of standards-based, data-driven instruction to transform learning and LEA monitoring requirements. The underlying intention of the strategy is to sustain educator capacity to use standards based instruction and assessments supported by data driven decisions to improve student achievement.

The strategy includes three initiatives –

- The creation 8 Content Collaboratives (content areas including STEM, School Readiness and Post-Secondary and Workforce Readiness content). The Collaboratives are comprised of LEA, CDE and external professional resources to create content and provide input into LEA dashboards and instructional improvement systems. These Collaboratives will create new curriculum, instructional materials and classroom level assessments,
- The deployment of 12 Regional Support Teams to deliver professional development and establish an LEA train the trainer process. These teams will provide local professional development and support the standards based and data driven statewide practices,
- The use of the SchoolView platform to create and disseminate formative assessment items.

The Content Collaboratives and Regional Support Teams will use a 4 stage, 10 month roll out plan –

- Stage 1 – Build awareness among all educators and district leaders (month 1-3)
- Stage 2 – Needs assessment conducted and transition design for each LEA (month 4-9)
- Stage 3 – Formation and implementation of each LEAs plan based on the needs assessment (month 10 and ongoing)
- Stage 4 – Peer evaluation and measurement of the effectiveness of the Collaboratives and Regional Support Teams (month 10 and ongoing)

The combination of the Collaboratives, Regional Support Teams and SchoolView platform creates a system designed to provide educators with a broad array of resources to acquire the knowledge, build the capacity and use the data needed to improve student achievement. A variety of professional development processes will be employed (technology based learning systems, train the trainer, regional meetings, etc.) to ensure the transmission of information, the utilization of tools and resources and the evaluation of the effectiveness of the processes will be used throughout the state. Customized solutions will be developed for low performing and rural LEAs and schools. Additional elements of the strategy include the use of incentives and the revision of teacher and principal preparation standards to align with the new P-12 academic standards.

The CDE narrative describes a large scale implementation plan that is built upon a sound theory of action; however, the plan is also designed with structural complexities. These two dynamics, if not well managed, could affect the CDE's

ability to translate the strategy into action within the LEAs. The CDE's past experience and success implementing large scale initiatives contributes to the CDE's confidence that the strategy presented will achieve its goals.

There are several points of concern about the State's reliance upon this strategy. First, is that the majority of CDE resources charged with development and oversight of the strategy are either new or temporarily contracted departments and positions. Secondly, the results of previous statewide efforts had minimal impact on student achievement and closing the achievement gap. Third, the span of influence between the regional support teams and the LEAs has the potential to impact strategic fidelity and affect performance outcomes. Finally, the focus on monitoring and the absence of leadership capacity-building presents a gap in the strategy.

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)

Additional points were added as a result of the State's elaboration on its plan to leverage the Board of Cooperative Education Services to complement the Content Collaborative and Regional Support Teams to help ensure the LEA adoption of the common core standards.

Total	70	63	65	
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C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	22	22	

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(C)(1)

The State's longitudinal system meets 11 of 12 COMPETES elements. Element 8, educator identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students, is currently in development.

(C)(2) Accessing and using State data

5	4	4	
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(C)(2)

The State's SchoolView system is a State owned technology that is being enhanced to -

- Capture P-20 student, program and teacher information,
- Link the CDE and other state agencies across multiple levels,
- Provide all stakeholders with access to data to inform instruction, assess performance, analyze efficacy of improvements, assess return on investment, as well as to inform policy.

With SchoolView as the platform to capture, link and report data, LEAs will have a rapid response system that integrates student data, teacher data, professional development information and digital content to inform instructional practices. As well, the system will have the capability to link student attendance, behavior and course records and provide an early warning for students at risk.

It was stated in this and other sections of the application that the SchoolView system will provide insight into instruction and resource allocation. It was not apparent in the narrative is how the SchoolView system will be linked to systems that provide insight into policy, operations, management and other system effectiveness.

(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	14	14	
(i) Increasing the use of instructional improvement systems	6	4	4	
(ii) Supporting LEAs, schools, and teachers in using instructional improvement systems	6	4	4	
(iii) Making the data from instructional improvement systems available to researchers	6	6	6	
(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
(C)(3)				
<p>(i) The State's SchoolView system is being enhanced to serve as the Statewide Instructional Improvement System. This system is designed to be used by LEAs and augmented, if necessary, to interface with locally adopted interoperable systems.</p> <p>Strategies for the acquisition, adoption and use of the instructional improvement system will be supported by the 8 Content Collaboratives. These Collaboratives are being structured to engage LEAs in the creation of standards based assessments, as well as to develop the SchoolView dashboards, that may customized to the unique needs of each LEA, principal, teacher, parent, student and other stakeholders. Twelve Regional Support Teams will be established to deliver professional development using multiple, blended delivery methodologies. Finally, 2-3 data coaches will be assigned to support each region and to provide LEA support. The budget indicates that approximately \$15M of State RTTT and \$19M of LEA RTTT grant funds will be used to enhance and integrate the SchoolView system into LEA platforms. It is not clear from the narrative what the State's plan is to manage and support the integration of each participating LEA's system (114) into the SchoolView platform.</p>				
<p>(ii) The State plans to use Regional Data Coaches (2-3 per region) and a "train the trainer" model to provide ongoing job embedded professional development to support the use of the SchoolView system and to institutionalize the use of data into instructional practices. Coaches are intended to be the link between the Regional Support Teams, CDE, higher education staff and the Center for Teaching and Learning to continue to improve the LEA support processes. The successful integration of the SchoolView system into LEA operating systems and the professional development needed to support this effort are critical to the migration of skills and the use of the Instructional Improvement System. The allocation of 2-3 Data Coaches per region, given the scope of the effort, does not appear to be sufficient to ensure that SchoolView's capacity is fully utilized by those intended to reap the benefits of the data and insight it provides.</p>				
<p>(iii) Researchers currently have access to SchoolView and the Colorado Growth Model data for State and individual LEAs and schools. The inclusion of the instructional improvement system data, pre-K, post secondary, workforce and revenues data will provide researchers with expanded opportunities. The SchoolView system is being designed to offer researchers a secure portal to promote collaboration and customized inquiry.</p>				
Total	47	40	40	

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
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(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	18	18	
(i) Allowing alternative routes to certification	7	7	7	
(ii) Using alternative routes to certification	7	7	7	
(iii) Preparing teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage	7	4	4	

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(D)(1)

(i) The State's Alternative Path to Licensure is supported by the 2009 Senate Bill 09-160 and meets the five criteria outlined in the RTTT definition (see Appendix D-2).

(ii) There are currently 26 entities authorized to provide alternative teacher preparation programs and 10 entities to provide alternative preparation for principals. The list of these entities is provided in Appendix D-1. The State does not currently maintain records of where each educator licensed in Colorado was prepared. The narrative indicated that in 2008-09 793 teachers and 7 principals completed one of the State's alternative preparation programs. The new Educator Identifier System, when fully implemented in 2012, will track this information.

(iii) The applicant admits to not being able to monitor and track teacher shortages. Currently, LEAs inform the CDE about shortages. The Teacher Quality Commission (TQC) and the creation of the Statewide Teacher Identifier system will be created to monitor and respond to teacher shortages.

The State has conducted an analysis of LEA data which indicates a need for effective teachers in Title I and rural schools and to teach special education. The CDE offers LEAs Federal funds for retention and recruitment grants as well as using stipends to recruit master teachers. The TQC is charged with studying and making recommendations to close the teacher gap among LEAs. The Statewide Teacher Identifier system will enable LEAs to track shortages, enable the State to identify trends by geographic area and content area, and to inform preparation programs in anticipation of shortages. Although the State informs teacher preparation programs about shortages, it was not mentioned in the narrative how teachers are being prepared to fill shortages; nor was it mentioned how principal shortages will be addressed.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	37	37	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	5	5	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	10	10	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	10	10	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	12	12	

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(D)(2)

(i) The Colorado Growth Model currently measures individual student growth for all students in grades and subjects tested on the CSAP assessment. In the future the State will also identify a body of assessments for grade levels not included in the State summative assessments. The SchoolView system currently makes it possible to capture and report student data and planned enhancements will make it possible to link student growth data to other important indicators and metrics.

(ii)

(a) By legislative mandate, SB 191, the State Council on Educator Effectiveness will determine the parameters for annual evaluation for teachers and principal that are fair, transparent and consistent. A significant requirement of the legislation is that the evaluation uses three rating categories and student growth measures to determine at least 50% of the evaluation performance rating.

(b) The 15 member State Council on Educator Effectiveness is comprised of four practicing teachers, three school administrators, two school board members and students, parent/guardians and community leaders. The Council was created with the intention that teachers and principals would have a strong voice in the development of their evaluation system. The Council, with State involvement, has a process to include educator voices in a process for approval of the statewide evaluation system.

To support the adoption of the evaluation system in the LEAs the State will form Local Transformation Councils comprised of local staff to inform and customize SB191. The Councils will help LEAs consider, adopt, customize and implement the evaluation system.

It is not specified in the narrative what aspects of the current evaluation system and processes will be changed. For example, the State's point of view is not evident from the information provided about what comprises a high quality evaluation system, including the definition of effectiveness and the three performance anchors that are being considered. It is mentioned in the narrative that the LEAs may change the evaluation; however, it is not clear to what extent this is allowed and whether there is the potential for LEAs to substantively impact the intended outcomes of the evaluation system.

(iii) SB 191 legislates that by 2012-2013 each teacher and principal will receive an annual evaluation and feedback by the end of the school year based on at least 50% on student growth. SchoolView will be used to provide the student growth data for each educator's students, classes, and schools. Principals' evaluations will be linked to teachers in their schools, those teacher's student growth results and other performance factors. It is planned for 2013-2014 that teachers and principals will also receive growth data for their schools, LEA and State and will be included as part of the evaluation process. The legislation stipulates that educators receive their feedback at least two weeks prior to the end of the school year. Technical assistance will be provided to ensure that timely feedback occurs. Additionally, the evaluation of teachers is being expanded to include peer evaluation. Funds will be provided to LEAs to support the implementation of the new evaluation system.

(iv)

(a) The teacher and principal evaluation will be used to inform Individual Development Plans (IDP) linked to student goals. The IDP will serve as the basis for targeted professional development for each teacher. SchoolView and career ladders will be available as resources to support coaching. What is outlined by the State provides teachers with an annual review of performance and establishes future performance expectations. What is missing from the plan is how LEA and school leaders will use the evaluation as a basis for *frequent, relevant and ongoing feedback and coaching throughout the year*. There is no mention, for example, of teaching principals to conduct behaviorally-based performance observations or how to use aggregated teacher data to create team based differentiated professional learning communities that support teacher needs for improvement.

(b) Teachers and principals will have the opportunity for additional compensation and responsibilities through the State's plan to develop career ladders. These career ladders include: hybrid leadership roles, model teachers and principals and turnaround teachers and principals. Grant dollars will be available to LEAs and schools that demonstrate innovative approaches aligned with the career ladders. Teachers and leaders identified as "model" can earn up to \$2,500 for ideas shared on SchoolView and additional dollars based on the number of "hits" received. Principals can earn an additional \$20,000 per year and teachers can earn up to \$20,000 per year from working in and succeeding in turning around the State's lowest performing schools. There are 40, \$75,000 grants (given out at a rate of 10 per year) to develop, document and disseminate hybrid leadership models. The total amount to be awarded is \$3,000,000, however only \$1,500,000 is noted in the budget. There are no line items specified for the "model" teacher and principal payments. These incentives are capped by the budget and therefore do not allow a broad opportunity.

(c) SB191 legislates that teachers in Colorado earn tenure based on three years of demonstrated effectiveness. If a teacher is evaluated as ineffective for two consecutive years tenure protections will be lost. Given that effectiveness is defined by the RTTT criteria as a teacher whose students demonstrate at least one grade level achievement in an academic year and that 50% of Colorado's evaluation is based on student growth and there is a persistent statewide achievement gap with student growth is modest at best, the State and LEAs could be faced with many teachers losing tenure status. Given that the LEA has local authority over the evaluation, it is possible that there could be inconsistencies from LEA to LEA regarding the granting of tenure.

(d) The process for removing ineffective teachers can take up to three years based on the terms outlined in the narrative. Based on the culture of local control the term "ample time to improve" provides for local interpretation which can result in inconsistency of practice across LEAs as well as profound negative impact on students even as the State requires that LEAs manage the removal of effective teachers as part of a school's and LEA's improvement plans.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	12	12	
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	5	5	
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	7	7	

(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(D)(3)

(i) The CDE does not currently have a methodology to determine the distribution of effective teachers and principals in high poverty/high minority schools. This is the result of the absence of a statewide evaluation system that defines and measures effectiveness. The data provided by the CDE indicates that 47% of schools qualify as high poverty/high minority schools and 85% or 14,445 teachers teach in these high poverty/high minority schools. More importantly, participating LEAs have 91% of the total number of students in poverty.

Legislation (SB10-191) requires that by the end of SY 2012 - 2013 LEAs will implement a qualifying system to measure effectiveness. Consistent with this legislation the State, by the end of SY 2011, will have a comprehensive data informed plan based on input from several State policy groups to:

- Establish metrics to annually monitor teacher placement and performance,
- Use the teacher performance evaluation system to monitor progress to goals,
- Implement LEA accountability monitoring to expand or cease ineffective practices,
- Include the use of relevant data and offer incentives for innovative practices to recruit and retain highly effective teachers.

A part of the CDE's plan to identify gaps includes the requirement that LEAs adhere to the CDE's plan and to report its progress.

The narrative suggests that its efforts in recent years to ensure the equal distribution of effective teachers in high poverty and high minority schools has equalized the distribution of effective teachers among high poverty/high minority schools. It is not clear how this has been possible given the lack of a system to identify these teachers.

The absence of a way to measure effective teachers, the high percentage of teachers in the high poverty/high minority schools and the high number of students in poverty makes the equal distribution of effective teachers critical to efforts to impact student achievement. These existing conditions and the elimination of forced placement, brings into question the CDE's ability to achieve its goals to increase by 20% the number of special education and English language teachers and to reduce by 50% the number of ineffective teachers by the SY 2014. This is mentioned because the CDE's goals have been established without baseline data, which isn't going to be available until the end of SY 2012 -2013, leaving the LEAs and the CDE very little time to make progress. Additionally, there is no historical trend data to establish a reasoned process to establish the goals.

(ii) The State's plan focuses on strategies to:

- Encourage teachers to teach math, science, English Language acquisition and special education,
- Offer incentives for retention and scholarships to acquire additional content certification,
- Use alternative pathways to teaching,
- Introduce alternative and blended instructional practices.
- Increase the number of teachers in the residency program who are willing to teach hard to staff subjects.

The above mentioned strategies are intended to increase by 800 (or at least 35%) the number of teachers teaching college ready mathematics and science by SY 2013 - 2014. Of the 800 new teachers, 300 would be new teachers and 500 would be existing teachers. The successful deployment of the strategy seems to a large extent dependent upon the CDE's management and the LEAs use of the planned evaluation system to identify the effective mathematics, science and English language teachers and to identify the teachers that would most likely be enticed by incentives to remain or move to high poverty/high minority schools. It seems that the incentives, because of the elimination of forced placement, will become increasingly important to meeting the CDE's goals. Also, the plan seems very dependent upon building a large pipeline of new teachers via the teacher preparations programs.

The plan is designed to enlist a variety of resources and avenues to accomplish the established goals. The plan's reliance upon incentives (which may not be sustainable) and inducements to incur an increase in enrollments of new teachers into the most difficult content areas brings into question how teachers will respond and whether the CDE will meet, and more importantly sustain it goals. Of equal concern to ensuring the equitable distribution of hard to staff subject and specialty areas is the lack of a high quality performance evaluation plan to define teacher and principal effectiveness in the hard to staff subjects and specialty areas.

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	12	12	
(i) Linking student data to credentialing programs and reporting publicly	7	6	6	
(ii) Expanding effective programs	7	6	6	
(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
(D)(4)				
<p>(i) As a result of SB 036, enacted this year and put into practice beginning July 2011, the CDE will publish on SchoolView an annual report that will identify and evaluate the effectiveness of each teacher and principal preparation program in Colorado. Return on investment metrics, based on this data and provided by SchoolView, will inform future teacher preparation programs about the most cost effective programs.</p>				
<p>(ii) The State plans to use funds from the RTTT grant to offer expansion grants to the preparation programs that are shown by the data to produce the most effective teachers, especially those programs proven to prepare teachers to impact the achievement gap, the lowest performing schools, students with disabilities, under performing students, English language acquisition and college readiness in math and science. SchoolView will be used as a feedback mechanism to provide preparation programs with information regarding their graduates and as a means to inform their program development. The plan is to make a portal available to new teachers to access information regarding instruction and to revise the criteria for accreditation to ensure these programs are aligned with the correlates of effective teaching and leadership. Programs will have until 2013 to improve their programs; otherwise steps will be taken to terminate their accreditation. There is an important link in this process between the teacher and principal evaluation system and the teacher preparation programs. The implementation does not include a step to introduce the new teacher and principal evaluation program to the institutions to give the institutions an opportunity to assess and align their curriculum to the State's new teaching and leadership standards.</p>				
(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	13	13	
(i) Providing effective support	10	5	5	
(ii) Continuously improving the effectiveness of the support	10	8	8	
(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
(D)(5)				
<p>(i) The CDE plans to offer a multi-tiered differentiated strategy, based on the LEA's achievement profile, for universal, targeted and intensive professional development resources. The CDE's goal is that 100% of teachers and principals will receive effective professional development. All Colorado teachers and principals will be involved at a minimum in State approved professional development.</p> <p>The Content Collaboratives and Regional Training Teams play heavily in the professional development strategy, as will the performance evaluation system. Data coaches from the Regional Training Teams will utilize resources created by the Collaboratives and work within LEAs to ensure that teachers and principals experience job embedded professional development, learn to use the content instructional materials and integrate data from SchoolView into instructional decisions. The size of the LEA will determine whether a train the trainer strategy will be employed. A key consideration for the type, duration and intensity of the support will be based on the schools', LEAs' and teachers' student achievement status.</p>				

Beginning January 2012, The Educator's Effective Unit will use SchoolView to generate Educator Impact Reports. These reports will provide teachers and principals with information about growth measures for their student's, the school and LEA. Through these reports educators will have a portal to targeted professional development offerings which will be available, online or by peer providers, through the SchoolView system. All professional development will be certified effective by the Research and Evaluation Unit. LEA provided professional development must meet the requirements of "certified effective" to be funded by State grants.

Educators working in low achieving schools will be provided additional resources that focus on leadership development, STEM and Advanced Placement content. Principals will be provided additional opportunities for professional development through the Leadership Academy. Involvement will be monitored through SchoolView and programs that are proven to impact leadership and teacher effectiveness will be provided.

Additional strategies will be used to expand the professional development community. Teachers will have the chance to provide content, demonstrate mastery and serve as content specialists and mentors to other teachers. The SchoolView platform will serve as a central source for instructional social networking to create a community of learners.

The professional development plans described are based on student data, provide all teachers with personalized content and target the use of use resources where they are need most to support the lowest performing students, schools and LEAs. The delivery mechanisms and methodologies described encourage, for the most part, independent and technology based experiences, albeit targeted individual learning.

There is no mention in the narrative about the State encouraging LEAs to embed school structures to support common-planning time, collaboration or other innovative structures that lead to improved student outcomes. It was not specifically stated that the professional development curriculum offering would focus on differentiated instruction or aligning systems and removing barriers to effective practices. This could be inferred, however.

Professional development is an important aspect of the strategic change process. Although the State describes a comprehensive approach, it is not clear from the narrative how the State intends to leverage the professional development strategy and use the SchoolView system to ensure the systemic connection between student growth and achievement data and the elements of the performance evaluation system to target teacher and principal needs for improvement. Using student data as the only source of data (as it is described in the narrative) to inform a professional development plan is insufficient as it focuses on students rather than the educator as the means to improvement.

The narrative states that LEAs may provide certified programs. It is not evident from the application the criteria that will be used to certify these or State offered programs.

The concerns expressed previously along with the sheer size of the Regions and the span of influence between the Content Collaboratives, Regional Training Teams and the Data Coaches, along with the lack of specific LEA and school designated professional development resources, again, calls into question how the State plans to have its intended impact. The complexity of the State's plan could challenge the State to ensure that the processes it puts in place maintain a high degree of fidelity and have a timely impact on the LEA staff and achieve the ultimate goal of professional development efforts.

(D)(5)

(ii) The State has a process in place to measure, monitor and continuously improve the effectiveness of supports to improve student achievement. The process includes stakeholders from the State's Evaluation Unit responsible to collect, analyze and correlate educator survey data, student, school and LEA data and professional development data annually; the Educator Effectiveness Unit uses the data to work with the LEAs, the CDE and Education Associations to make modifications to the initiatives. The Evaluation Unit looks for trends in the data relative to student demographics and the supports used. The Colorado Education Growth Model is also incorporated in the analysis to identify key metrics. The results for each

<p>LEA will be presented on SchoolView. The State has three specific areas of focus – induction; mastery of data usage; and teaching and learning conditions. The process outlined in the narrative meets the criterion.</p> <p>The State has put an organization in place to measure, monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of supports to improve student achievement. However, it is not clear from the narrative how the State will use the data to continuously improve processes or what metrics will be used to determine the effectiveness of the support processes.</p>				
Total	138	92	92	

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	10	10	10	
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</p> <p>(E)(1)</p> <p>The State has legal authority to intervene directly into LEAs and schools. Although the State has the legal authority to intervene, language in the narrative calls into question whether the State will actually take this type of action.</p>				
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	23	23	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	18	18	
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</p> <p>(E)(2)</p> <p>(i) The State has parameters established to identify 100% of all its lowest performing schools and to prioritize them for turnaround intervention.</p> <p>(ii) The State currently has 72 failing schools and intends to use the four intervention models to turn them around by 2014. It is currently partnering with Mass Insight and Public Impact to develop comprehensive strategies for intervening in the lowest performing schools. Internally, the State has established a Turnaround and Intervention Unit with dedicated resources to work with the lowest performing schools. To meet the State's goals the Unit will intervene with LEAs and focus on four strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fostering conditions for successful turnarounds, • Building human capital pipelines to support successful turnaround efforts, • Training a cadre of school operators to restart struggling schools and open high-quality, new schools across the State, • Using data from intervention efforts to drive further improvement. <p>These strategies will be funded by RTTT grants and the Turnaround and Intervention Unit will work closely with LEAs to identify external partnership and create binding agreements, provide incentives for educators to lead and work in the lowest performing schools, extend the reach of educators through innovative instructional practices and structures, offer RFP's for grants to fund alternative schools, establish</p>				

performance standards that include goals, indicators and specific timelines, establish knowledge management systems to share best practices among low performing schools. In addition to these strategies the State is also considering student involvement in the decision about the intervention strategies and plans.

The State has set goals and approached the strategies for its lowest performing schools with the same ambition it exhibits throughout the application. The State is bringing the full scope of its resources to bear on these schools. The State has laid out a comprehensive and intentional game plan supported by grant funds and experienced resources. However, given the State's history of not closing the achievement gap and not turning around its lowest performance schools over the past five years it is questionable that the State will achieve its goals. This issue is compounded by the large number of schools, the learning curve of internal and external resources and the immense coordination of resources required in a newly restructured organization.

Total	50	33	33	
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F. General

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	8	8	
(i) Allocating a consistent percentage of State revenue to education	5	3	3	
(ii) Equitably funding high-poverty schools	5	5	5	

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(F)(1)

(i) The percentage of total State revenues available to support elementary, secondary and public higher education increased from 47.9 percent in fiscal year 2008 to 48.2 percent in fiscal year 2009. This reflects a .3 percent increase in revenues which is substantially unchanged from fiscal year 2008 to fiscal year 2009.

(ii)

(a) Equitable funding is the total of State and local funds allocation. The State funding formula sets a base amount per pupil which is then adjusted by factors that take into account each LEA's cost of living, personnel costs and population size to arrive at a Total Per Pupil Funding. Using the Total Per Pupil Funding the State then considers a number of additional factors, such as, the percentage of students in the LEA who are eligible for Federal free and reduced lunch subsidies and students who did not take State assessment because of their English language learning status and on-line enrollment status. The State's share of funding for 2009-2010 is 65 percent. The local share of funding is determined from property tax and vehicle ownership taxes. If the local share is insufficient to fund the LEA's Total Program the State funds fill the gap. LEA's receive additional funding based on six other considerations (e.g. gifted and talented, ELL, Special Education, etc.). Based on the formula used the result is that in Colorado the average per-pupil funding in high needs LEAs is higher than in other LEAs.

(b) The School Finance Act requires LEAs to allocate at least 75% of its at risk funding to school or LEA-wide instructional programs for at risk students or for staff development associated with teaching at risk

students in the LEA. Alternative funding models are currently being tested or piloted to address the issues of at risk funding and the equitable distribution of LEA revenue.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	40	40	
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	8	8	
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	8	8	
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	8	8	
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	8	8	
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	8	8	

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(F)(2)

(i) The State has no caps on the number of charter schools operating in the State and an LEA may not place a moratorium on the number of charter schools in the LEA. LEAs may not limit place limits on enrollment in schools. There are exceptions. A charter school and its authorizer may agree to certain limitations to achieve the school's mission and goals or to stay within the school's physical capacity.

(ii) Laws governing charter schools are in place to govern charter school applications, operations and student performance. An important aspect of charter schools in Colorado is to provide expanded learning experiences for low achieving students. There are three means by which a charter school is governed – an LEA, Colorado Charter School Institute or as an independent charter school. In each case the governing body is responsible for holding its charter school accountable to state and local performance expectations and has jurisdiction over renewals and closings based on its ability to make progress towards student performance goals and fiscal management. Since 2006 a total of 9 charter schools have been closed.

(iii) The State's charter schools receive 100% of LEA per-pupil operating expenses. Since 2004-2005 charter schools that have 40% or more at-risk students receives additional funds. The LEA must direct a proportionate share of Federal and State funds for aid programs to charters schools. Unless otherwise specified the LEA provides the charter school with Federally required educational services.

(iv) The State's charter schools have options and various means to acquire funding to support capital improvements and acquisition of facilities that are similar to those for public schools. This can be accomplished through the local LEA, through the Charter School Capital Facilities Act, The Public School Capital Assistance Fund, or The Public School Capital Assistance Fund. These resources provide charter schools with the opportunity to be involved in local bond issues, to receive cash grants, to be provided funding for lease-purchase agreements and capital construction projects.

(v) The Innovations School Act provides an avenue for LEAs to operate innovative, autonomous schools. The Act also provides for Innovation Zones which allows for a set of schools with common interests. To apply for Innovation School status the school must submit a plan that describes the mission, reason to seek innovation status, proposed innovations and collective bargaining waivers. LEAs are also free to experiment with their own versions of autonomy to pilot best practice models.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	3	3	
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
(F)(3)				
<p>The State has created conditions for innovation and reform through a combined emphasis on the State's policies, legislative commissions, a revamping of CDE infrastructure, programs and strategic partnerships and LEA local autonomy and accountability (detailed in Appendix A-8). Based on information provided in the narrative the State is also involved in national reform efforts that provide exposure to best practice reforms. The reform agenda has three goals: to close the achievement gap, decrease high school drop outs and increase student's accumulation of college degrees and certificates. In addition, the CDE partners with foundations to focus on innovations that include expanded learning options, school health and wellness, blended learning and early childhood learning. The CDE innovations provide a foundation for P-20 strategies to make progress in the four reform areas.</p> <p>Even with the State's demonstrated commitment to creating reform conditions, the State's focused effort have had little impact on student achievement. CSAP and NAEP results indicate that the State has not closed the achievement gap among the subgroups and has resulted in level or modest growth with the subgroups. Colorado's average graduation rate in 2009 was 75%. This reflects a 1% increase from 2006. African American, Hispanic and American Indian students scored below the State's average.</p>				
Total	55	51	51	

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	0	0	

Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Competitive Priority

Throughout the application the State has referenced its STEM initiatives and has included a description of Colorado STEM Network collaborative and STEM in Action program. What is described in the application is a series of what appear to be STEM focused, yet, unrelated initiatives designed to engage educators, industry, higher education and business to integrate STEM content into the State's reform agenda. The efforts focus on building teacher capacity in STEM content through the STEM Content Collaboratives, using technology (SchoolView) to support STEM professional development, STEM programs for rural areas, training for high school AP teachers and \$1 million in incentive grants to expand STEM efforts aligned with the State's agenda. Colorado has also allocated more than \$2 million of the RTTT grant targeted to STEM initiatives.

Although the State is focused on STEM education and has invested in STEM initiatives, the application lacks a comprehensive and cohesive high quality STEM plan and strategy that addresses the criteria for a rigorous course of study in mathematics, the sciences, technology, and engineering; cooperation with industry experts, museums, universities, research centers, or other STEM capable community partners to prepare and assist teachers in integrating STEM content across grades and disciplines and offering applied learning for students; and preparing more students for advanced study and careers in the sciences, technology, engineering, and mathematics, including addressing the needs of under represented groups, women and girls in the area of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. In addition, the State did not present a plan to link and integrate STEM initiatives into the reform agenda in a way that includes key goals, key activities including a rationale for the activities, a timeline for implementation, the responsible party or parties, as well as performance measures and supporting evidence of its efforts.

Total	15	0	0	

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes	Yes	
Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>Colorado's plan describes a large scale effort built on a foundation of legislative policy to support the State's Success Factors and drive LEAs to achieve performance outcomes. Colorado's five Success Factors align with the Race to the Top reform agenda by focusing on teacher mastery and the delivery of common standards and assessments, leveraging high quality information to drive increase student performance, access for all student to effective teachers and leaders, turning around persistently low performing schools and building a statewide system of accountability and support to accomplish and sustain goals.</p> <p>Colorado's legislative environment creates the conditions for reform and the legislative action establishes an independent standard for the State to generate commitment to its agenda. This legislative authority which is an underlying aspect of the strategies outlined in the application may give the State confidence in its ability to achieve its goals.</p> <p>Student, teacher and principal success are the focal point of each of the strategies detailed in the application. Each strategy describes goals, activities, timelines and stakeholder responsibility. Each tactic appears to balance improvement with accountability through the intention to monitor LEA progress. Overall, the timelines described use the first two years of the grant for evaluation, to build capacity and define and embed new processes. These efforts to gear up capacity shifts the impact of innovations towards the end of the 4 year continuum. As a result, students, it appears, won't benefit from systemic improvements for 3 or more years.</p> <p>The State has more than 90% of its LEAs committed to the Race to the Top grant criteria. Of these, only 5% of the LEAs have local union leadership signatures on the MOU. In an environment of collective bargaining this brings into question the impact this will have on the State's ability to harness local support to move the agenda forward. The budget outlines how the RTTT grant funds will be used to support each area of the reform agenda.</p> <p>The State's theory of change focuses on the use of data and prescribed processes to hold LEA accountable and the use of financial incentives to change and drive behavior. The plan leverages the disciplines of human capital management, knowledge management, professional development, leadership, accountability, instructional capacity, data driven informed action and assessment literacy to drive reform. Formal structures, at the CDE and regionally, will be put into place to ensure the development and delivery of technology and expert resources. There is a dependence upon the addition of new employees and contracted resources to support and implement the plan. Through the Effective Educator Unit, CDE strategies are designed to embed a comprehensive performance improvement system driven by goals and supported by Regional Training Teams and Content Collaboratives. It is not evident how the CDE, beyond its plan to hold LEAs accountable and monitor LEA progress, will leverage the the aforementioned disciplines and supporting structures to ensure that LEAs build resident capacity to create and sustain systemic change beyond the grant period.</p>				
Total		0	0	
Grand Total	500	364	377	



Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2

Colorado Application #2250CO-7



A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	50	60	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	30	40	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	15	15	

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it

(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda

REVIEWER'S EVALUATIVE COMMENTS:

In this reviewer's judgment, Colorado's reform agenda is fundamentally comprehensive and coherent and clearly articulates goals for implementing reforms in the four education areas described in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) legislation. The agenda builds upon existing and/or pending State legislative and/or policy initiatives specifically including—but not limited to—those related to internationally benchmarked P-12 academic standards, charter schools, and perhaps, most significantly, Colorado's Senate Bill 10-191 which includes new provisions for evaluating licensed teacher and administrative personnel based in part on student achievement and to use these professional evaluations as the partial basis for making decisions about hiring, compensation, promotion, assignment, professional development, earning and retaining probationary status, dismissal, and contract renewal or non-renewal. Colorado's plan also shows a deep commitment to improve its under-performing schools and to address other needs of its high-poverty and/or high-minority student populations—especially including its extensive Native American student population.

(ii) Securing LEA commitment

REVIEWER'S EVALUATIVE COMMENTS:

This reviewer notes that participating LEAs in Colorado's RTTT plan have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) substantially similar to and containing all elements in the model MOU provided by the U.S. Department of Education. In signing the MOU these LEAs expressed commitment to Colorado's plan to implement reforms related to the four education areas identified by ARRA and specified in RTTT guidelines. LEAs, representing approximately 90% of Colorado students, and 139 of 153 of its charter schools, are participants. Each participating LEA secured on its MOU the signature of both its superintendent and the chair of its board of education—support which reflects the success of Colorado's public engagement process, as well as reform leadership within the state's LEAs and among state political and business leaders. However, this reviewer notes that evidence of LEA support is compromised by the failure of the applicant to gain support of the Colorado Education Association (CEA). Without the support of the CEA the applicant will

predictably face difficulties in the implementation of its multifaceted reform effort which must depend heavily on the goodwill and commitment of the majority of the state's teachers.

(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact
REVIEWER'S EVALUATIVE COMMENTS:

In the judgment of this reviewer, Colorado's RTTT reform plan proposes a strong partnership between the state, LEAs, schools, educators and students with clear lines of responsibility, continuous analysis of results, and a nimble structure that enables quick response when results fail to meet expectations. These commitments are intended to translate into a statewide impact including—but not limited to—adoption and implementation of internationally benchmarked standards; development of formative and interim assessments that provide and gauge immediate results; provision of data systems that allow user-driven inquiries and that also present information in an easy-to-understand-and-interpret dashboard; and a strong emphasis on the professional improvement of the state's teachers and principals by focusing on each step of the educator life cycle from:

- (a) preparation-to-induction-to-placement; (b) compensation; and (c) retention or dismissal.

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)

This reviewer's score for criterion A (1) (ii) has been modified based on the information shared by the Colorado Presentation Team—specifically including that of Commissioner Jones—in which he clarified RTTT support by the Colorado Education Association because SB 191— requiring mandatory teacher and principal evaluation including a significant component based on student performance—is now state law.

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	25	25	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	20	20	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	5	5	

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

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

(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement

REVIEWER'S EVALUATIVE COMMENTS:

Colorado's plan provides, in this reviewer's judgment, evidence of an impressive level of state executive and legislative support accompanied by a commitment of cross governmental agency collaboration in the implementation and administration of the State's proposed RTTT agenda. The suggested administrative structure—including but not limited to—an Office of Administrative Operations, Office of Performance and Policy and Office of Learning and Results suggest careful attention by the applicant to the urgency of a well conceived organizational infrastructure essential to the implementation of its complex statewide reform agenda. Additionally, a strong commitment is made by the applicant to ensure that education remains a priority in the state budget and that both public and private fiscal resources will be leveraged in support of RTTT priorities. Special attention is given by this reviewer to the commitment of the applicant to a radical change in the structure of the CDE from a compliance entity to a service bureau designed to directly support LEAs in implementing the RTTT plan.

(ii) Using broad stakeholder support

REVIEWER'S EVALUATIVE COMMENTS:

Evidence of broad stakeholder support for the applicant's proposal is substantial and is primarily represented by correspondence in the appendix which represents a wide spectrum of individuals,

organizations and others interested in the success of Colorado's RTTT educational reform agenda. These include—but are not limited to—letters of support from the state executive branch, Bureau of Indian Affairs, foundation administrators, representatives of institutions of higher education, legislators, charter schools, non-profit organizations and many others. However, as mentioned in relation to criterion A (1) (ii), there is a notable absence of formal support from the Colorado Education Association. This is a serious issue and threatens to compromise a full and successful implementation of the applicant's RTTT agenda.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	25	25	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5	5	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	20	20	

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

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

(i) Making progress in each reform area

REVIEWER'S EVALUATIVE COMMENTS:

In the judgment of this reviewer, Colorado has provided compelling information to support progress over the past several years relative to each of the four reform areas including evidence of the use of fiscal support for these efforts from Federal and State funding sources. Specifically: (a) in 2008 Colorado enacted the Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K) which legislated the next generation of standards and assessments while also focusing on critical points of educational transition which particularly emphasized school readiness and postsecondary and workforce readiness; (b) two programs (Colorado Growth Model and School View) have been designed and implemented in order to capture, analyse and place "actionable information" in the hands of students, teachers and parents to help guide student academic growth; additionally, the Educator Identifier System—yet to be implemented—will link individual educators to the relative academic growth of their students; (c) the Educational Accountability Act of 2009 (SB 10-191) provides a framework for monitoring school/LEA performance; and (d) the Colorado Education Accountability Act of 2009 (SB 09-163) creates among other provisions—a more transparent and more effective support and intervention framework for monitoring school and LEA performance including a Turnaround and Intervention Unit.

(ii) Improving student outcomes

REVIEWER'S EVALUATIVE COMMENTS:

Colorado's reading achievement scores have not significantly improved in the last 7 years although both 4th and 8th grade National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading scores remained stable and outperformed the nation from 2003 to 2009. This is seen, by the State, as significant given substantial demographic changes including increased percentages of non-native English language students and students in poverty. Based upon a statewide study of reading and writing standards and related research, instructional practice and achievement results, Colorado reports that it has overhauled its state reading standards (2009) including creation of internationally bench-marked standards for reading, writing and communication.

Colorado's mathematics students have made significant gains since 2003, credited in part to a systematic statewide aligned focus on mathematics including revision of mathematics standards. Between 2003 and 2009 4th and 8th grade students who scored as proficient or above (per NAEP) advanced in every demographic sub-category except one: English Language Learners (ELL), grade 8.

A substantial achievement gap still exists between/among Colorado's demographic subgroups. The state's Closing the Achievement Gap (CTAG) initiative has had some measure of success. Proficiencies have increased yet performance gaps still exist between/among student subgroups although evidence is presented by the State which shows gap improvement in every subgroup category based on Colorado Student Assessment (CSAP) and NAEP data.

Colorado implemented a high school student tracking system (2008). Findings are still tentative but, based on the data presented in the RTTT application, some progress has been made in the improvement of graduation rates. In 2009, the graduation rate for Jefferson County Public Schools (the state's largest district) rose more than 4 percentage points while in the Denver Public Schools the increase was 3 percentage points. Currently, Colorado is participating in a six state collaborative designed to improve graduation rates for all student subgroups.

Total	125	100	110	
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B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards	40	40	40	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20	20	
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20	20	

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards

(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards

REVIEWER'S EVALUATIVE COMMENTS:

Colorado is a member of the 48 state consortium—under the leadership of the National Governor's Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)—seeking to develop K-12 Common Core Standards (CCS). The Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K) mandates that standards be internationally benchmarked and that they build toward college and career readiness by the time of high school graduation. It is particularly noteworthy that Colorado's early leadership on standards development was recognized by the NGA/CCSSO consortium. As a consequence, Colorado was invited to comment and edit early drafts of the Common Core Standards and to begin integration of them into its own standards. Consequently, the State has satisfied this criterion.

(ii) Adopting standards

REVIEWER'S EVALUATIVE COMMENTS:

In preparation for the formal adoption of the NGA/CCSSO Common Core Standards, Colorado has contracted with WestEd to perform a formal alignment study of the present Colorado P-12 Academic Standards and the Common Core Standards. This study will be completed within 90 days of the final release of the Common Core Standards. The Colorado State Board of Education is formally committed to take action with respect to the new standards adoption in August 2010 or within 60 days of receiving the results of the WestEd formal alignment study—whichever comes

earlier. Colorado will implement the newly aligned Common Core Standards using processes outlined in the Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K) legislation.				
(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	10	10	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality assessments	5	5	5	
(ii) Including a significant number of States	5	5	5	
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</p> <p>(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments</p> <p>(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality assessments</p> <p>(ii) Including a significant number of States</p> <p>REVIEWER'S EVALUATIVE COMMENTS:</p> <p>Colorado is participating in two consortia in which groups of states are working jointly to develop and implement a battery of common high-quality assessments that align to the NGA/CCSSO Common Core Standards. These consortia are: (1) The Summative Multi-State Assessment Resources for Teachers and Educational Researchers (SMARTER) Balanced Assessment Consortium (30 states); and (2) the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Consortium (11 states). Consequently, the State has satisfied these criteria.</p>				
(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	20	20	
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</p> <p>(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments</p> <p>REVIEWER'S EVALUATIVE COMMENTS:</p> <p>In this reviewer's judgment, Colorado has provided significant evidence of carefully orchestrated plans for supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments. Specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colorado's roll-out plan for implementing newly adopted common core standards and aligned assessments includes support for educators at all levels in order to: (a) build awareness of the new standards; (b) transition to new curriculum and assessments; and (c) implement standards-based, data-driven instruction; • Colorado's roll-out plan for implementing newly adopted common core standards and aligned assessments will leverage the expertise of educators across the State through already established strategic partnerships including collaborative development of standards-based assessments and collaborative development of instructional materials—especially including a statewide improvement resource bank—and development of regional professional learning communities; • In September 2010, Colorado will initiate the formation of two types of professional learning communities in support of its standard and assessment implementation goals: Content Collaboratives will engage LEAs in the creation and dissemination of standards-based assessment and instructional materials; and Regional Support Teams will leverage Colorado's existing regional support structure in order to develop and deliver training to teachers and principals on standards-based data-driven instruction utilizing a blended learning approach. • Following the planned adoption (August 2010) of the NGA/CCSSO Common Core Standards, the Colorado State Board of Education and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education will jointly 				

adopt assessments of post-secondary and workforce readiness as part of the criteria for both high school graduation and entrance into Colorado's state colleges.

Total	70	70	70	
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C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	22	22	
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</p> <p>(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system</p> <p>REVIEWER'S EVALUATIVE COMMENTS:</p> <p>This reviewer notes that Colorado's statewide longitudinal data system (LDS) currently meets 11 of the 12 America Competes Act elements. The exception is an incomplete element 7: Educator Identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students. At present the Colorado LDS manages more than 3,000 separate data elements covering students, educators, programs, assessments, instruction and other educational factors. Applicant responses to this criterion include substantive plans for refinements in certain elements using RTTT funds, as appropriate. Of special note by this reviewer is the applicant's intent to complete a more robust and secure Educator Identifier System in keeping with the implementation of the state's Great Teachers and Leaders RTTT initiatives especially including implementation of Colorado's recently passed legislation: Ensuring Quality Instruction Through Educator Effectiveness" (EQUITEE) (Senate Bill 10-191) which requires a system that evaluates the level of performance based on the effectiveness of licensed professionals including teachers and principals.</p>				
(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	5	5	
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</p> <p>(C)(2) Accessing and using State data</p> <p>REVIEWER'S EVALUATIVE COMMENTS:</p> <p>In this reviewer's judgment, Colorado has provided a strong response to this criterion. The State's goal is to significantly increase the number of stakeholders accessing and effectively using its statewide data system in order to advance professional competency and student achievement. Strategies for reaching this goal include: (a) Insuring data immediacy, (i.e., moving data availability to as near as possible to "real time"); (b) augmenting educator collaboration and social networking technology to include parents/guardians, policymakers, and interested community members; (c) introducing enhanced data visualizations in order to compellingly communicate performance data; (d) providing user-friendly interactive dashboards which support both English and Spanish languages; and (d) increasing research and policymaking capabilities.</p>				
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	18	18	
(i) Increasing the use of instructional improvement systems	6	6	6	
(ii) Supporting LEAs, schools, and teachers in using instructional improvement systems	6	6	6	

(iii) Making the data from instructional improvement systems available to researchers	6	6	6	
<p>(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</p> <p>(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction</p> <p>(i) Increasing the use of instructional improvement systems</p> <p>REVIEWER'S EVALUATIVE COMMENTS:</p> <p>The applicant recognizes that this is potentially a profound moment in time in terms of Colorado's proposed RTTT educational reforms and that higher levels of professional accountability require higher levels of excellence in the use of data to improve instruction including professional development designed to achieve this goal. Colorado proposes to provide a common and basic statewide instructional improvement system which includes assessment information, educator outcomes and practices, digital curricular and instructional resources and school financial and related improvement strategies. The statewide instructional improvement system will be communicated through SchoolView, an award winning web portal designed to facilitate efforts to ensure that all students graduate ready for postsecondary and workforce success. The SDE will also deploy an IIS (Internet Information Services) application directed to individual teachers that integrates: (a) student growth on summative and interim assessments; (b) information about the teacher's effectiveness with his/her students; (c) digital instructional resources; and (d) opportunities for professional development. Colorado has provided a strong and potentially very powerful response to this criterion.</p> <p>(ii) Supporting LEAs, schools, and teachers in using instructional improvement systems</p> <p>REVIEWER'S EVALUATIVE COMMENTS:</p> <p>Colorado's plan for increased data-driven instruction also provides support for educators through data coaches deployed by the CDE coupled with a train-the-trainer model for LEAs as well as using Regional Support Teams to directly support LEAs in small and rural districts. Data coaches will be charged with developing teachers' and principals' technical skills needed to analyse data as well as related pedagogical skills to improve instructional techniques. Data coaches will also work with the CDE, institutions of higher education and others to design, implement and sustain an education preparation program portal to be used as part of the state's educator preparation programs. In this reviewer's judgment, Colorado's response to this criterion is practical and innovative, as well.</p> <p>(iii) Making the data from instructional improvement systems available to researchers</p> <p>REVIEWER'S EVALUATIVE COMMENTS:</p> <p>Researchers already have significant access to statewide educational data in Colorado. The present proposal will insure access by researchers to instructional improvement system data and other information about school-level formative and interim assessment results. Links between instructional activities, expenditures, student outcomes and educator effectiveness data that can be correlated with multiple data points housed in the states longitudinal data system. This is a strong and specific response to the criterion.</p> <p>This reviewer was especially impressed by Colorado's intent to make its new Internet Information Services available not only to teachers and principals but also to students—a very important step in a large state with many rural and often isolated communities.</p>				
Total	47	45	45	

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	17	17	
(i) Allowing alternative routes to certification	7	7	7	
(ii) Using alternative routes to certification	7	5	5	
(iii) Preparing teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage	7	5	5	
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</p> <p>(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals</p> <p>(i) Allowing alternative routes to certification</p> <p>REVIEWER'S EVALUATIVE COMMENTS:</p> <p>Colorado has legally allowed alternative routes for teacher licensure since 1990 and for principals since 1994. Presently, 26 entities are approved to provide alternative teacher preparation programs and 10 additional entities are approved to provide alternative preparation programs for principals. Each approved program must meet all 5 of the elements including within the RTTT definition of "alternative routes to certification".</p> <p>(ii) Using alternative routes to certification</p> <p>REVIEWER'S EVALUATIVE COMMENTS:</p> <p>The applicant provided no longitudinal data showing use of alternative routes to certification for teachers and principals. The applicant states that "...until Colorado's Educator Identifier system is fully built-out in 2012, the state does not maintain records of where each educator's licensure preparation occurred." It is noteworthy that Colorado's application indicates that approximately one-half of Colorado's educators are professionally prepared out-of-state. Equally notable is the fact that during 2008-2009, 793 teachers and 7 principals completed one of Colorado's alternative preparation programs.</p> <p>(iii) Preparing teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage</p> <p>REVIEWER'S EVALUATIVE COMMENTS:</p> <p>The Colorado Department of Education monitors educator shortages on a continuous basis through the requests it receives for emergency authorization. These requests are reviewed annually to identify geographic and content areas with the greatest needs. The Colorado Department of Education uses Federal funds to make recruitment and retention grants available to LEAs with identified need and to make stipends available to attract master teachers to these schools. Additionally, the Colorado legislature has created the Quality Teachers Commission (QTC) and charged it to study and make recommendations to close the "teacher gap" statewide. The commission's initial recommendations will be issued in January 2011.</p> <p>Although Colorado was not able to fully respond to the basic information requested by the criterion the State has demonstrated in its application its serious efforts to provide alternative routes to certification and to use these routes to prepare teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage.</p>				
(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	43	43	

(i) Measuring student growth	5	5	5	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	10	10	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	7	7	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	21	21	

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance

(i) Measuring student growth

REVIEWER'S EVALUATIVE COMMENTS:

The Colorado Growth Model (See Section C) currently measures individual student progress for all students in those grades and subjects tested on the state's summative assessments administered under the Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Via the State Council on Educator Effectiveness (created by executive order in January 2010) Colorado will also identify a body of other assessments to use to measure student growth in grades NOT INCLUDED in the State summative assessments.

(ii) Developing evaluation systems

REVIEWER'S EVALUATIVE COMMENTS:

Codified by recently passed SB 191—*Ensuring Quality Instruction Through Educator Effectiveness*" (EQUITEE)—the Colorado State Council on Educator effectiveness will determine parameters for a "rigorous, transparent, consistent and fair evaluation system" for teachers and principals that uses student growth measures to determine at least 50% of their evaluation. The Council is charged with: (a) ensuring that educator evaluation systems are designed and developed with meaningful teacher and principal involvement; and (b) providing support for the successful statewide implementation of the new evaluation procedures. Colorado's State Council on Educator Effectiveness (see above) was established with the collaboration and support of Colorado's largest teacher association, the Colorado Education Association (CEA). The Council includes 4 practicing teachers, 3 school administrators, 2 school board members plus other stakeholders—parents/guardians, community leaders, and students. The Council was designed to ensure that teachers and principals would have a strong voice in the development of their evaluation system. However, as previously noted by this reviewer, the CEA did not provide a statement of support for Colorado's RTTT application. The absence of CEA support for Colorado's application will have a potentially negative impact on efforts to ensure, as the criterion specifically addresses, a rigorous, transparent and fair evaluation system designed and developed with teacher and principal involvement. This reviewer does not believe that the full intent of the criterion can be satisfied by a Council with 4 teachers and 3 school administrators unless the efforts of the teacher representatives receive CEA support.

(iii) Conducting annual evaluations

REVIEWER'S EVALUATIVE COMMENTS:

As noted above, Colorado's SB 191—*Ensuring Quality Instruction Through Educator Effectiveness*" (EQUITEE)—provides that by the beginning of the 2012-2013 school year each teacher and principal will receive a "fair and consistent annual evaluation" based at least 50% on student growth. In order to achieve this goal relevant student growth data for each teacher's students will be provided through a statewide web portal. Principal evaluations will be linked to those of teachers and thus to student growth as demonstrated through their teachers' performance. Beginning in the fall of the 2013-2014 school year, each teacher and principal in Colorado will

receive student growth data for their students as well as those of their school, LEA and the state. This information will allow multiple comparisons useful in the implementation of teacher and principal evaluations based at least 50% on student growth. The applicant does not state why the timeline is protracted. NB, A more accelerated implementation schedule would have resulted in a higher point score by this reviewer.

(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions

REVIEWER'S EVALUATIVE COMMENTS:

• Under SB-191 all participating Colorado LEAs will use educator evaluations to inform determination of their compensation, promotion and retention including determination of tenure and/or revocation of tenure. Evaluations will also be used by participating LEAs to develop teachers and principals through coaching, induction and/or other kinds of professional development. Performance bonuses will be available to the most highly effective educators meeting the hardest educational challenges. Of special note, by this reviewer, is the proposed implementation of career ladders which will provide opportunities for teachers to experience new leadership roles other than the principalship. NB, Additional discussion of this criterion would have strengthened the applicant's proposal.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	19	19	
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	12	12	
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	7	7	

(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

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

(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools

REVIEWER'S EVALUATIVE COMMENTS:

By December 2011, Colorado is committed to develop a comprehensive statewide plan to ensure that students in high-poverty and/or high-minority schools have equitable access to highly effective teachers and principals. Colorado will ensure that these students are not served by ineffective teachers and principals at higher rates than other student populations. This plan will be informed by the recommendations of the Quality Teachers Commission (QTC) to eliminate the teacher gap, as well as results from the implementation of the state's High Quality Teacher Plan (QTP), and by strategies developed by the School Leadership Academy (SLA) to train leaders for high-needs areas and thus reduce the principal shortage. Further elaboration of the State's response to this criterion would have resulted in a higher score by this reviewer. However, implicit in the response is a firm commitment to ensure equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals in high-poverty and/or high-minority schools.

(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas

REVIEWER'S EVALUATIVE COMMENTS:

Colorado has proposed to take immediate steps to ensure equitable distribution, through RTTT investments, in a comprehensive set of strategies and activities—directly informed by the state's efforts to date—to ensure equitable distribution of hard-to-staff subjects. At the same time as the State Council develops the statewide definitions of "effectiveness", the CDE is committed to

continuing to track the equitable distribution of educators using other proxy measures including years of experience and evidence of highly qualified teacher status. As a result of these steps, by 2014 Colorado proposes to: (a) increase by 35% the number of effective educators teaching college-ready mathematics and science courses; (b) increase the number of effective teachers of English language learners and students with disabilities by at least 20% annually; (c) reduce by 50% the number of ineffective teachers and principals serving at high poverty and/or high-minority schools. NB, The indicated timeline (2014) for achieving these goals is far from ambitious.

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	14	14	
(i) Linking student data to credentialing programs and reporting publicly	7	7	7	
(ii) Expanding effective programs	7	7	7	

(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

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

(i) Linking student data to credentialing programs and reporting publicly

REVIEWER'S EVALUATIVE COMMENTS:

In this reviewer's judgment, Colorado has provided a strong response to this criterion. Specifically, the State proposes to improve the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs by focusing on on three key objectives: (a) linking student growth and achievement data directly to the programs that prepared their teachers and principals and report that information publicly each year; (b) using this information to identify those programs that consistently prepare effective teachers and principals and those that do not, and (c) working with programs to identify the elements of those programs that result in success and those that impede program impact. Beginning in July 2011, the Colorado Department of Education proposes to publish on its statewide web portal an annual public report that will identify and evaluate the effectiveness of each teacher and principal preparation program in Colorado. The annual report will link student growth and achievement data to the programs where those teachers and principals were prepared, both in-state and, when available, out-of-state.

(ii) Expanding effective programs

REVIEWER'S EVALUATIVE COMMENTS:

Colorado proposes to increase the number and percentage of teachers and principals prepared by the most successful programs by: (a) making strategic investments to expand preparation programs that demonstrate the greatest success in producing effective teachers and principals; (b) improving the ability of all programs to succeed as a result of aligned standards for both their accreditation and customized data portals; and (c) terminating the accreditation of those programs that consistently fail to prepare effective teachers and principals. By July 2012, the CDE proposes to identify those professional preparation programs that are most successful in producing effective teachers and principals for: (a) Colorado schools overall; (b) the hardest to staff schools and subjects; (c) high-poverty and/or high-minority and rural schools; and (d) ELL, special education, science and mathematics. Using this information, expansion grants will be awarded to those programs that are shown to be most successful at preparing teachers and principals and that increase the achievement and growth of Colorado students. Priority for these grants will go to

programs that prepare teachers and principals to be highly effective in addressing the State's toughest student achievement challenges

In essence, Colorado's response to this criterion is straightforward: (1) make strategic investments to expand preparation programs that demonstrate the greatest success in producing effective teachers and principals; (2) improve the ability of all programs to succeed as a result of aligned standards for both their accreditation and customized data portals; and (3) terminate the accreditation of those programs that consistently fail to prepare effective teachers and principals.

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	20	20	
(i) Providing effective support	10	10	10	
(ii) Continuously improving the effectiveness of the support	10	10	10	

(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

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

(i) Providing effective support

REVIEWER'S EVALUATIVE COMMENTS:

Colorado proposes to reach 100% of its teachers and principals with effective professional development opportunities. The State proposes to provide a pyramid of professional support services—based on its RTTT plan. The CDE Educator Effectiveness Unit (EEU) will be responsible for ensuring that these supports are delivered efficiently and effectively to the field. The CDE will connect practitioners in the field to each other and directly to available supports. By January 2012, Educator Impact Reports will be provided to each teacher and principal. Available through a secure portal on the statewide CDE website, these individualized reports will provide teachers and principals with student growth measures for their students, schools and LEAs. These reports will also provide direct access to a variety of professional development resources that have been proven effective. (This commitment to effectiveness is somewhat vaguely defined.) Resources will range from information about course offerings, to online peer content and online learning opportunities. Based on the foregoing response, this reviewer believes that Colorado has provided a strong, even bold, response to the criterion.

(ii) Continuously improving the effectiveness of the support

REVIEWER'S EVALUATIVE COMMENTS:

In this reviewer's judgment, Colorado has provided a strong response to the criterion. The State propose continuous monitoring of its support systems by the CDE Evaluation Unit with the results fed back to the CDE's Unit of Educator Effectiveness. A combination of self-reported survey data by teachers and principals, as well as analysis of student, school and LEA performance, will be used to continuously monitor access to and the impact of effective support offerings. Data on which offerings are being based and their impacts will be publicly reported at least annually on the statewide CDE web portal. Customized reports will be provided to LEAs. An analysis of what supports have been used and those that have been proven effective with other students of similar demographics will also be included within qualitative analyses of schools and districts that are performed by the CDE's Turnaround and Intervention Unit. The CDE, in partnership with the Colorado Legacy Foundation and The New Teacher Project, will complete a strategic re-alignment of its staff and activities, including the appropriate use of Federal funds, in a manner that reflects the improvement of educator effectiveness and the working conditions that foster the same. This is perceived as a critical priority for the Department overall and is projected to increase the

Department's capacity to meet or exceed its annual targets for the effectiveness of all teachers and principals in Colorado's public K-12 schools.				
Total	138	113	113	

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	10	10	10	
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</p> <p>(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs</p> <p>REVIEWER'S EVALUATIVE COMMENTS:</p> <p>Colorado's Education Accountability Act of 2009 gives the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) statutory authority to intervene directly in the state's persistently lowest achieving schools and LEAs, including those that are in improvement or corrective action status, as defined under the ESEA. Each year, in addition to measuring AYP and determining Federal improvement categories, the CDE evaluates each school's and LEA's level of performance on four key indicators: (a) student growth; (b) student achievement; (c) extent of achievement gaps; and (d) postsecondary readiness (measured by high school graduation rate, ACT scores and dropout rate). An LEA's or school's performance on the identified indicators is determined through the district and school performance frameworks. Based on their students' results, LEAs and schools are put in one of four performance categories: <i>Performance, Improvement, Priority Improvement, Turnaround</i>. About 15% of LEA's and schools fall in the bottom two categories with about 10% in Priority Improvement and the bottom 5% percent in Turnaround. LEAs and schools may remain in the bottom two categories for a maximum of five years prior to a State Board of Education order of restructuring that may include reorganization for an LEA and closure for a school. Restructuring options also include external management or conversion to a charter school. During the first year as an identified Priority Improvement school or Turnaround school, the State supports LEAs and schools in implementing intensive interventions consistent with Federal intervention strategic options. NB, The State's authority under the Colorado Education Accountability Act is bolstered by its authority under Federal accountability statutes. Together, these strengthen the State's ability to withhold Federal funding from LEAs and schools that are not performing adequately. Together, State law and Federal authority place Colorado in a strong position to intervene directly in the State's persistently lowest-achieving schools and LEAs and to ensure implementation of the four school intervention models defined in Race to the Top.</p>				
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	40	40	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	35	35	
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</p> <p>(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools</p> <p>(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools</p> <p>REVIEWER'S EVALUATIVE COMMENTS:</p>				

By September 2010, through an annual school performance review using Colorado's performance framework and Federal AYP measures, the Colorado Department of Education proposes to identify 100% of its lowest performing schools and to prioritize them for turnaround intervention. Colorado defines persistently lowest achieving schools as any Title I school that: (a) is among the lowest achieving and growing 5% of Title I schools whose status is improvement, corrective action, or restructuring; (b) is a high school that has had a graduation rate that is less than 60% over three years; (c) is any secondary school that is eligible for, but does not receive, Title I funds and is among the lowest achieving and growing 5% of secondary schools in the State that are eligible for, but do not receive, Title I funds; (d) as well as other appropriate criteria.

(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools

REVIEWER'S EVALUATIVE COMMENTS:

Colorado proposes to turn around 72 failing schools by 2014. Given the state's statutory authority, combined with an ambitious reform plan, this reviewer is convinced that the State is positioned to accomplish this goal. It is noteworthy that beginning in 2009, Colorado was one of five states to begin working with Mass Insight. (*Mass Insight is described in the application as a collaborative three year, multi-million dollar public-private partnership to create scalable and sustainable strategies for turning around clusters of the lowest achieving schools.*) Colorado will be one of six partner states—along with Delaware, Illinois, Louisiana, Massachusetts and New York—to participate in this partnership. Additionally, Colorado has directly engaged Public Impact, a national education policy and management consulting firm. Public Impact consults nationally with leading organizations to create policies and approaches that give schools the freedom, motivation, and capacity to develop a comprehensive approach for intervening in the lowest achieving schools. Additionally, in 2009, the CDE established within the agency a Turnaround and Intervention Unit and dedicated resources focused specifically on the effective and efficient execution of State turnaround strategies. By December 2011, the CDE Turnaround and Intervention Unit will be expanded in order to build internal expertise in designing and implementing turnaround strategies. The Turnaround and Intervention Unit will design and provide tools and processes to help LEAs determine which type of reform intervention model is most appropriate in each identified persistently low-achieving school. For those LEAs that choose to work with an external contractor in one or more schools, the CDE Turnaround and Intervention Unit will provide oversight and recommendations regarding the development of contracts between LEAs and external providers including key performance conditions and expectations regarding achievement goals, autonomy and financial responsibilities. *NB, In this reviewer's judgment, this is perhaps the most substantive, well-argued component of Colorado's RTTT plan.*

Total	50	50	50	
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F. General

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	10	10	
(i) Allocating a consistent percentage of State revenue to education	5	5	5	
(ii) Equitably funding high-poverty schools	5	5	5	
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority				
(i) Allocating a consistent percentage of State revenue to education				

REVIEWER'S EVALUATIVE COMMENTS:

The percentage of total revenues available to the Colorado that were used to support elementary, secondary and public higher education increased from 47.9 percent in State fiscal year 2008 to 48.2 percent in fiscal year 2009. The amount of revenue spent on education increased 5.2 percent from fiscal year 2008 to fiscal year 2009. Colorado notes in its application that, as in other states, fiscal year 2009 was an extremely difficult year for Colorado's economy and the State's revenues. The State's sales tax collections were down 9.1 percent over fiscal year 2008 and the State's individual income tax collections, which fund the State Education Fund, were down 12.9 percent. In 2000, voters in Colorado passed Constitutional Amendment 23 in response to the decline in K-12 education spending during the 1990s. Amendment 23 requires the State to increase base per-pupil K-12 funding by at least inflation plus one percent annually for 10 years, and by at least inflation thereafter.

(ii) Equitably funding high-poverty schools

REVIEWER'S EVALUATIVE COMMENTS:

Colorado's average per-pupil funding in high-needs LEAs is higher than in other LEAs. In 2008-2009, per-pupil State and local funding for high-needs LEAs was more than \$10,100 compared to \$9,800 for LEAs not considered high-needs. In its application, Colorado states that independent organizations have rated Colorado's school funding policies as equitable relative to most other states. Quality Counts 2010, for example, ranks Colorado ninth in the nation for funding equity using restricted range differences. The state's school funding equity derives from Colorado's School Finance Act (CRS 22-54-101 et seq.), which uses a funding formula that adjusts base funding to LEAs according to student and LEA characteristics. Each LEA receives a base amount per pupil set by the state legislature, and increased by Amendment 23, which is then adjusted by factors that take into account each LEA's cost-of-living, personnel costs and population size to arrive at Total Per-Pupil Funding. The formula also calls for additional funds for the percentage of students in the LEA who are eligible for Federal free-lunch subsidies and students who did not take State assessments because of their English language learning status. Colorado's School Finance Act requires each LEA to allocate at least 75% of its at-risk funding to school or LEA-wide instructional programs for at-risk students or for staff development associated with teaching at-risk students in the LEA. This is the only earmark required by the State. It emphasizes Colorado's priority on equitable distribution of fiscal resources for high-poverty students and schools.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	37	37	
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	8	8	
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	8	8	
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	8	8	
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	8	8	
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	5	5	

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

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

(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"

REVIEWER'S EVALUATIVE COMMENTS:

Colorado's Charter Schools Act places no limits on the number of charter schools in the State or the number of students who may attend charter schools. The Act expressly prohibits LEAs from placing moratoria on the number of charter schools in their LEAs and states that authorizers may not place limits on enrollment at a specific school. The exception is that a charter school and its authorizer may agree upon limits that are necessary to achieve the school's mission and goals or to stay within the school's physical capacity. As a result, 100% of the schools in Colorado may hypothetically be charter schools, and 100% of Colorado's students may attend charter schools.

(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes

REVIEWER'S EVALUATIVE COMMENTS:

Any person or entity may apply to open a charter school in Colorado. The application itself must include a mission statement, goals and objectives with respect to student performance; evidence of adequate public support; a research-based educational program; the process by which the school will collect and analyze longitudinal student data; procedures for corrective action in the event student learning goals are not met; a proposed budget and other evidence that the plan for the school is financially sound; a description of proposed governance and operation; the relationship between the charter school and its employees; employment policies; a transportation plan; an enrollment policy; and a dispute resolution process. Colorado's LEAs are responsible for holding their charter schools accountable for local and State performance expectations consistent with Colorado's Education Accountability Act of 2009 and for reporting information on its charter schools to the State. Charter schools may apply for renewal of their contracts and the renewal application must contain information about the progress of the school relative to its goals and objectives with respect to student and operational performance. The LEA may revoke or non-renew a contract with a charter school if the school committed a material violation of its contract; failed to make reasonable progress towards its goals for student performance; failed to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management; or violated any provision of applicable law. There are currently 130 charter schools in Colorado operating under a charter with an LEA.

(iii) Equitably funding charter schools

REVIEWER'S EVALUATIVE COMMENTS:

Under Colorado's School Finance Act, charter schools receive 100% of LEA per pupil operating revenues. The authorizer may choose to retain up to 5% of these funds for the charter school's share of central administrative overhead costs. Any charter school that (1) began operations in the 2004-2005 school year or after, (2) is located within an LEA that has been given exclusive chartering authority, and (3) has a student population consisting 40% or more of at-risk students receives additional funds through the state's alternate at-risk funding calculation. This formula would appear to give charter schools a proportionate share of the at-risk funds provided to the LEA through the School Finance Act.

(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities

REVIEWER'S EVALUATIVE COMMENTS:

The Colorado Charter School Capital Facilities Financing Act provides that charter school capital needs must be considered for inclusion on LEA ballot issues using the same priority assessment used for other LEA schools. The Public School Capital Assistance Fund, established in 2008, uses monies from income derived from State school land trusts to provide cash grants and enter into lease-purchase agreements for capital construction purposes.

(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools

REVIEWER'S EVALUATIVE COMMENTS:

Colorado's Innovation Schools Act of 2008 gives schools increased flexibility to meet the changing needs of students. It also encourages LEAs to manage diverse portfolios of schools that can meet different needs and to encourage innovation in areas such as curriculum, educational programs, provision of services, teacher recruitment, hiring, compensation, governance and school management practices. Any Colorado public school may apply to its LEA for Innovation School status and groups of schools may apply for Innovation Zone status. The innovation plan must include the school's mission, reason for seeking innovation school status, proposed innovations and State, LEA and collective bargaining agreement waivers required to implement the innovations. A majority of the teachers, administrators and members of the school accountability committee at the school must indicate support for the application. It is within the discretion of the LEA to approve the application, which results in a waiver of the requested LEA policies. The LEA then applies to the Colorado State Board of Education for the waivers of State law and regulations on behalf of the school which the State board is required to grant unless it determines that the waivers are likely to result in a decrease in student achievement or are not fiscally feasible. To date, the innovative, autonomous public school option has been sparsely used in Colorado. In 2009, Denver Public Schools (DPS) presented 3 schools to the State Board of Education (SBE) for its approval to receive innovation school status. All three were approved. A fourth DPS school was approved in 2010 and at least two other Colorado schools are scheduled to be presented to the SBE later in 2010. Close monitoring of the use of the law would contribute to assurances that it is indeed an effective option for LEAs to utilize.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	5	5	
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions				
REVIEWER'S EVALUATIVE COMMENTS:				
Colorado's key education reforms over the past decade are closely aligned with the RTTT selection criteria and encompass a P-20 alignment strategy. The state's Great Teachers and Leaders Bill (SB 191), the Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K), the Education Accountability Act of 2009, the Educator Identifier Act, the Innovation Schools Act, the establishment of the School Leadership Academy, the Colorado Growth Model and other critical advancements are central to Colorado's reform plan and provide substantial examples of the state's commitments to educational reform.				
Total	55	52	52	

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	15	15	
Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
REVIEWER'S EVALUATIVE COMMENTS:				
In this reviewer's judgment, Colorado has responded appropriately to the conditions defined in the Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM. The State develops its response to the criterion in relation to an existing statewide STEM initiative by systematically adding elements				

embedded in its RTTT reforms. These relate directly to each of the priorities described in the criterion.

Total	15	15	15	
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Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes	Yes	
Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform It is the judgment of this reviewer that Colorado meets and substantially exceeds the specifications defined for the RTTT Absolute Priority criterion with the singular exception of the failure to gain the endorsement of the CEA. Having said this, it is essential to add that Colorado's RTTT proposal, taken in its entirety, is substantive, persuasive, powerful and far-reaching in its potential consequences for improving student achievement throughout the state. The plan is carefully articulated, fundamentally bold, and replete with the kind of cutting edge thinking sought by the RTTT initiative.				
Total		0	0	

Grand Total	500	445	455	
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Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2

Colorado Application #2250CO-5



A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	52	57	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	4	4	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	35	40	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	13	13	

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The Colorado application contains many planned changes to the State education system and demonstrates Colorado's commitment to RTTT principles in the plan submitted. The Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K) is led by the 2007 "Colorado Promise" program, which is designed to close achievement gaps, lower dropout rates and increase the number of post secondary certificates and degrees. The 2008 CAP4K called for redefined standards and assessments which reflected a new definition of *postsecondary and workforce readiness* common to high school graduation, college entry and workplace success in Colorado. CAP4K also provided for 2009's renewal and adoption of new internationally benchmarked P-12 academic standards in 10 content areas, as well as to create the nation's first five-year dual-degree program, allowing high school students to earn an associate's degree along with a diploma. A number of reform bills also have been passed by the Colorado General Assembly in support of the goals outlined in the Race to the Top (RTTT) application criteria.

Many of the important reforms included in Colorado's Race to the Top application are already codified in State law. This means that some new policies will automatically have statewide impact and will remain in place for districts that sign on to Race to the Top and for those who don't. It also means that these reforms will be in place statewide after the Race to the Top funding has disappeared and the MOU's are no longer valid.

Participating LEAs with Colorado in Race to the Top signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) similar to and containing all elements in the model MOU provided by the U.S. Department of Education. In signing the MOU, participating LEAs expressed commitment to Colorado's plan to implement reforms related to the four education areas specified in Race to the Top guidelines. The scope of work provided with the State's MOU describes the expected activities to be completed by the State and by participating LEAs or charters for the Race to the Top program. This statement of work outlines expectations for each assurance area, but with limited evidence of a history of success it is questionable whether the ambitions the plan sets out will be reached.

Colorado reports that 114 LEAs, representing approximately 90% of Colorado students, and 139 of 153 of its charter schools, are participating in this application. Each participating LEA secured on its MOU the signature of both its superintendent and the chair of its board of education—which reflects the public engagement process, as well as reform leadership within LEAs and among State leaders.

Colorado's reform plan is planned to impact all of Colorado's students not just those within the participating LEAs serving approximately 90% of Colorado's students. The plan is for LEAs to be held accountable for achieving results. Colorado's reform plan lays out a partnership between the State, LEAs, schools, educators and students with lines of responsibility, continuous analysis of results, and a structure that enables a response when results fail to meet expectations.

Because some large districts did not offer union leader support implementation may be impacted. Additional sign offs would give credibility to the likelihood of larger statewide impact.

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)

In the presentation comments were made regarding and clarifying LEA support by the commissioner. His comments demonstrated that there was greater commitment on the part of LEA's to supporting the plan than originally found in the application.

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	27	28	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	18	19	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	9	9	

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Colorado's capacity to implement and sustain a reform plan appears to be in place. State policies such as CAP4K's readiness and academic content standards and the recently signed Great Teachers and Leaders Bill (SB 191) demonstrate one part of Colorado's commitment to improve student outcomes, close achievement gaps, and create opportunities for students for post-secondary education workforce readiness. Colorado is focusing on implementing systemic change that may build sustainable statewide capacity to execute and maintain the reforms set in motion. Colorado's capacity to implement fundamental organizational transformation is apparent in some of the following core tenets: Governor, State Board of Education, State Legislature, and Commissioner of Education have made a commitment to the education reform agenda. A team has been established to implement Colorado's education reform plans with responsibilities and authority. Colorado's leadership has built a foundation for implementation of the planned reform agenda. They also have the support of the Colorado General Assembly and the State Board of Education members representing each of Colorado's seven congressional districts. Colorado's reform plan also has the support of LEAs across the State. A Commission on Innovation and Reform is to provide sustainable program oversight for the implementation of the reform agenda. As a steering committee, the Commission plans to provide advisory support and through governance functions for Race to the Top, plans to ensure sustained executive leadership and cross departmental collaboration, coordination and support for the implementation of the reform agenda; provide fiduciary oversight of the Race to the Top program; coordinate public policy and legislation to support the educational reform agenda.

In Colorado's reform plan local autonomy is to follow results. In the past, intervention from the CDE came primarily in the form of responding to failure. However, the planned change in culture and practice that both the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) and Colorado's proposal proposes will result in greater attention to front-end implementation, frequent monitoring, dissemination of best practices and the provision of resources to improve performance along the way. This practice will conserve fiscal resources, which can then be reallocated, as the need for intensive interventions is reduced. CDE's approach will be accelerated using Race to the Top funds.

Colorado's detailed budget narrative details how Race to the Top grant funds will be used to support the education reform agenda. Key sources of funds that will be re-purposed, include:

- a. Title IA to support the number of effective educators serving high-poverty schools and turning around persistently lowest-achieving schools.
- b. Title III funds to close gaps in achievement among English language learners using targeted interventions and training for educators to serve these students.
- c. Title IIA, Title IA, professional development expenditures in all Federal and State programs, and Colorado educator license fees to support educator effectiveness initiatives.
- d. Title IID funds to support effective use of technology.
- e. State education funds, both general and categorical funds, distributed in the future will be informed by the evaluation of results of the Race to the Top investments.

Colorado has demonstrated support from key stakeholders, both in the private and public sectors. Colorado's process for crafting its Race to the Top proposal was inclusive. More than 600 stakeholders participated in a public input

process. Colorado has formed partnerships with key entities for implementation of the Race to the Top proposal and plans to engage teachers and principals throughout the entire implementation process through the Statewide System of Accountability and Support (SSAS), the Content Collaboratives and Regional Support Teams. More detail on how the State Department culture will change to a service model would be helpful. Plus it is not clear how they are going to leverage there LEA partners to participate in some of the reform efforts. There also is an absence of significant stakeholder support from minority groups.

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)

Presentation comments demonstrated that there was greater capacity to implement the proposals outlined in the plan, specifically expanding on the role of the regional agencies helped to clarify capacity.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	25	25	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5	5	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	20	20	

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Colorado has made progress in all four of the assurance areas and student outcomes have improved from 2003 to 2009, with increases in overall student achievement and in proficiency among subgroups. Achievement gaps persist and NAEP scores show that overall achievement needs improvement. The State's reform plan targets high-needs students with targeted interventions to be taught by effective teachers, and all students are to receive effective instruction on new, more rigorous standards.

Colorado has made progress and has used ARRA and other Federal and State funding to further its reform efforts. For example in one area: *Standards and Assessments* the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) was implemented in 2001, and in the years since, Colorado has used information in the system on student outcomes. Colorado's approach to setting high standards and tracking student progress has resulted in improvements in reading and math proficiency on State and national measures.

According to the application "Colorado's reading achievement was and has remained better than the national average since 2003. However, reading achievement has not significantly improved in the last seven years. Since early in 2000, significant Federal resources have been directed toward improving reading achievement through programs such as the Reading Excellence Act and No Child Left Behind. These efforts have led to pockets of improvement in the schools receiving resources but not notable statewide gains."

Prior to the 2009 implementation of the CAP4K and the statewide system of accountability and support, Colorado has not provided statewide support and intervention in reading. Colorado gaps in achievement for Hispanic, Black and Native American students and for students eligible for free or reduced lunch average approximately 30 percent difference in proficiency.

In addition to the Closing the Achievement Gap (CTAG) initiative Colorado has taken critical steps to close these gaps for all students statewide. In 2006, Colorado created the Closing the Achievement Gap Commission and charged it to recommend a statewide strategy to close gaps, which in time informed the development of the CTAG initiative to close persistent gaps in achievement. However, scores are relatively flat for some student groups and although slow, steady progress is acknowledged, persistent gaps in sub group scores remain.

Total	125	104	110	
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B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards	40	40	40	

(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20	20	
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20	20	
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>Colorado has executed a Memorandum of Agreement demonstrating its commitment to jointly develop and adopt a common set of K-12 standards, placing the state among 48 states and territories participating in a Common Core Standards consortium sponsored by the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO).</p> <p>Based on recommendation from the Commissioner of Education, the Common Core Standards are planned for presentation to the Colorado State Board of Education for adoption in August 2010, and as of now has not yet happened.</p> <p>Colorado's CAP4K reform agenda requires the use of high-quality, internationally benchmarked standards that build toward college- and career-readiness by the time of high school graduation. In 2007, the Colorado State Board of Education committed to revising the Colorado Model Content Standards, and in 2008, the State Legislature codified the standards revision in CAP4K.</p>				
(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	9	9	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality assessments	5	5	5	
(ii) Including a significant number of States	5	4	4	
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>Colorado has signed a Memoranda of Understanding with and is participating in two consortia of states working toward jointly developing and implementing a battery of common, high-quality assessments that align with the Common Core Standards, the Summative Multi- State Assessment Resources for Teachers and Educational Researchers (SMARTER) Balanced Assessment Consortium and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Consortium. Colorado appears committed to make cross-state comparisons on common assessments. Because Colorado belongs to two different consortia some difficulty may arise in bringing assessment recommendations into alignment.</p>				
(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	18	18	
(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>In 2008, Colorado began implementing a comprehensive preschool through post-secondary education alignment plan, supported by CAP4K. To move the plan forward, the State adopted common definitions of <i>postsecondary and workforce readiness</i> and <i>school readiness</i>, and internationally benchmarked P-12 academic standards that map learning targets between the two readiness definitions.</p> <p>Colorado's plan is to leverage the expertise of educators across the State through established strategic partnerships, collaborative development of standards-based assessment and instructional materials, a statewide instructional improvement resource bank, and the development of regional professional learning communities. Colorado plans to build on the teaching capacity of educators to improve instruction and increase student achievement. The plan includes engaging partners such as the Center for Transforming Learning and Teaching (CTLT), the Colorado STEM Network, the CDE Unit for Educator Effectiveness, participating LEAs, Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), and others to assist in successful implementation.</p>				

Colorado's plan for supporting the transition to enhanced instruction and standards-based assessments appears on track, and is also in keeping with the characteristics of a local-control framework, and the goal of building capacity to improve instruction and increase student achievement. According to the application, Colorado has a history of success utilizing cross-functional collaborative teams to accomplish goals. By improving the quality of available instructional materials, creating collaborative learning communities, and creating a statewide instructional resource bank through SchoolView, Colorado will attempt to transform teaching and learning and reach its achievement goals.

The state department is proposing a major cultural change with many new people and new strategies and their history of success with this kind of change is not well documented.

Total	70	67	67	
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C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	22	22	
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>Colorado's statewide longitudinal data system currently meets 11 of the 12 America COMPETES Act elements. Initiated in 2001 and expanded with a 2007 Institute of Education Sciences (IES) grant, Colorado's P-20 longitudinal data system manages more than 3,000 separate data elements covering students, educators, schools, programs, assessments, instruction and other education factors. One element is missing.</p>				
(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	5	5	
(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>Colorado's plan is to improve data access and use centers on maximizing the potential of P-20 longitudinal data to support local, State and Federal performance management and research purposes. Colorado was one of only 20 states to be awarded the competitive Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems grant in May 2010. The \$17.4 million in funding to be received as a result of this award could enable Colorado to complete the work initiated years ago by enabling transfer of relevant data in a secure system between Colorado's education systems, as well as with other State agencies including health and human services, labor and corrections.</p> <p>The purpose of Colorado's strategy for data access and use is to build the capacity of stakeholders to understand student, school and system performance, to access and collaborate with resources to aid improvement; to answer critical questions about the effectiveness of these strategies; and to improve student outcomes.</p> <p>Colorado's SchoolView provides a hub for stakeholder access and interaction with data and a platform for broad collaboration about improving educator practice and student results. Advances in technology coinciding with Race to the Top funding appear to put Colorado in a position to provide students and educators the tools they need to achieve improved student learning. Colorado plans to bring about educator collaboration about performance and practice by promoting the use of instructional improvement systems that span multiple forms of assessments, digital instructional resources, evidence of educator outcomes and practice, and improvement strategies and their costs. Planned services to stakeholders, supported by coaching and regional teams, will likely deliver on the promise of the investment in State longitudinal data as a means of demonstrating improved student learning.</p>				
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	18	18	
(i) Increasing the use of instructional improvement systems	6	6	6	

(ii) Supporting LEAs, schools, and teachers in using instructional improvement systems	6	6	6	
(iii) Making the data from instructional improvement systems available to researchers	6	6	6	
(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>With SchoolView and the Colorado Growth Model in place, Colorado will be equipped to increase the use of data to improve instruction. With the recently enacted Great Teachers and Leaders Bill (SB 191), principals and teachers are to be held accountable for individual student growth per the Colorado Growth Model, and principals will be more accountable for the effectiveness of their teachers.</p> <p>Colorado's obligation is to provide educators and students with the tools they need to achieve the results expected and to hold them accountable for achieving these results. An important tool is the Instructional Improvement System which Colorado plans to develop under the Race to the Top grant.</p> <p>Colorado plans to provide a common and basic statewide instructional improvement system, via SchoolView, which districts and schools can augment with adopted systems locally. The CDE plans also to provide districts technical assistance in the adoption of compatible Instructional Improvement Systems.</p> <p>The Colorado Department of Education plans to further partnerships with regional entities to implement systems that span district boundaries. With Colorado's evolving statewide broadband infrastructure, Web-based tools and remote hosting services plans are to help equalize the technology playing field for rural school districts.</p> <p>Researchers in Colorado have access to SchoolView and Colorado Growth Model data for the State and for individual LEAs and schools. The integration and inclusion of instructional improvement system data may provide additional information about LEA and school-level formative and interim assessment results; links between instructional activities, expenditures and student outcomes; and educator effectiveness data that can be correlated with multiple other data points housed in the longitudinal data system. The Colorado Education Research Consortium plans to accelerate the research conducted, partner with the State in sustaining an ongoing body of cumulative research, and promote access and use of P-20 data with the research community at large.</p> <p>Colorado's SchoolView affords numerous opportunities to leverage data, associate interim and summative assessment results with individual students and educators, provide appropriate instructional materials, and share results and resources with stakeholders. Colorado plans to encourage use of the system through professional development that spans initial training and ongoing coaching through statewide Data Coaches. The system's visuals, body of data, and opportunity to obtain the underlying data for demonstration will assist researchers to use the system, enabling Colorado to gain access to their research results.</p>				
Total	47	45	45	

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	19	19	
(i) Allowing alternative routes to certification	7	6	6	

(ii) Using alternative routes to certification	7	7	7	
(iii) Preparing teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage	7	6	6	
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>Race to the Top funding is planned to expand some of the alternative pathways already in use, thereby increasing the number and percentage of effective educators prepared to teach Colorado students. Colorado has Teach for America, the Troop to Teachers program, the Peak to Peak Charter School as examples of alternative preparation routes and programs currently in place.</p> <p>In Colorado, alternative routes for licensure have been available for teacher candidates for many years and for principal candidates since 2004. At present, 26 entities are approved to provide alternative teacher preparation programs and 10 additional entities are approved to provide alternative preparation for principals in Colorado. Each approved program has met all five of the elements included within the definition of "alternative routes to certification" within the notice of application for the Race to the Top. Colorado's current list of approved alternative preparation providers are varied and include nonprofit organizations like Teach for America; private schools and public charter schools; LEAs; institutions of higher education; and cooperative associations between private and public entities. A current list of approved alternative preparation program providers is included in the Appendix of the grant application. Alternative route programs are reviewed and approved by the Colorado State Board of Education and undergo a periodic site-based reauthorization process to ensure compliance with applicable statutory requirements.</p> <p>During 2008-2009, the most recent academic year for which complete information is available, a total of 5,768 teachers and 741 principals obtained a Colorado license. Prior studies of Colorado's educator route to certification indicate that, on average, approximately half of Colorado's educators are prepared out-of-state. In addition, Colorado issues licenses each year to educators who are returning to the work force after an absence from the field. These returning and out-of-state educators are included in the total number above. Until Colorado's Educator Identifier system is fully built out in 2012, the State does not maintain records of where each educator licensed in Colorado was prepared. As a result, no data currently exists to indicate how many of the educators licensed each year were prepared by one of Colorado's alternative preparation programs, or what percentage of the total number of educators prepared in-state these educators represent. During 2008-2009, a total of, 793 teachers and seven principals completed one of the State's alternative preparation programs.</p> <p>The CDE currently monitors educator shortages on a continuous basis through the requests it receives for emergency authorization. These requests are reviewed annually to identify the geographic and content areas with the greatest needs. Based upon this information, in 2009 the CDE completed an in-depth analysis of the need for effective educators to serve school-wide Title I schools. In response to the results of that analysis, the CDE has used Federal funds to make recruitment and retention grants available to LEAs with identified need, as well as made available stipends and incentives for schools to attract master teachers to these schools. Funding from Race to the Top should help to expand these efforts and supplement them by investing in other programs that prepare teachers to fill shortage areas.</p> <p>Colorado's plan to help teachers with alternative routes to certification is well documented, but the same level of detailed commitment to helping principals reach certification is not noted in the proposal. There is also not a clear process delineated for monitoring how shortages will be monitored.</p>				
(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	51	51	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	4	4	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	12	12	

(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	9	9	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	26	26	

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The Great Teachers and Leaders Bill (SB 191) set up one aspect of Colorado’s plan to ensure that all teachers and principals are evaluated annually in a way that is rigorous, transparent. SB-191 requires that each educator’s evaluation will be based at least on 50% student growth and on multiple measures of effectiveness. It also stipulates that educator retention will be based on performance—that teacher tenure (non-probationary status) will be based on three consecutive years of demonstrated, evaluated effectiveness. Senate Bill 191 sets forth criteria to increase compensation and career opportunities for effective educators, as well as the removal of those who are ineffective. The State plans to create a common evaluation platform for all LEAs to use.

The Colorado Growth Model currently measures individual student progress for all students in grades and subjects tested on the State’s summative assessments administered under the Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The State Council on Educator Effectiveness, also will identify a body of assessments for districts to use to measure student growth in grades *not* included in the State summative assessments.

Codified by SB 191, the State Council on Educator Effectiveness will determine the parameters for a rigorous, transparent, consistent evaluation system for teachers and principals that uses at least three rating categories and student growth measures to determine at least 50% of the evaluation rating. The State Council will also ensure that educator evaluation systems are designed and developed with teacher and principal involvement. The State Council will support statewide implementation of a new evaluation system to:

- a. Recommend statewide definitions of teacher effectiveness and principal effectiveness.
- b. Develop quality standards for measuring teacher effectiveness and principal effectiveness.
- c. Recommend measures of longitudinal academic growth for use in educator evaluations.
- d. Recommend criteria used to differentiate between performance standards that include, at a minimum highly effective, “effective” and “ineffective”.
- e. Develop and recommend guidelines for adequate implementation of high-quality evaluation systems that are compatible with the State’s system.

The plan outlined in SB 191 is that by the beginning of the 2012-2013 school year, each teacher and principal in Colorado will receive an annual evaluation based at least 50% on student growth. Relevant student growth data for each educator’s students, classes and school(s) will be provided through SchoolView and incorporated into the evaluation. Principal evaluations will be linked to those of their teachers and thus to student growth, as demonstrated through their teachers’ performance.

SB 191 states that all LEAs will use evaluations to inform compensation, promotion and retention of effective educators, and the dismissing or non-renewal of ineffective educators. Colorado teachers will *earn* non-probationary status (tenure) based on three consecutive years of demonstrated, evaluated effectiveness, and teachers will again return to probationary status after two years of evaluated ineffectiveness.

Colorado will ensure that the standards and criteria applicable to teacher and principal licensure and the accreditation of preparation programs are directly aligned with and support the preparation and licensure of effective educators. Colorado’s stated vision is to have an effective teacher in every classroom and an effective principal in every school. A policy framework is in place and national examples of performance evaluations are underway. Colorado is on the road to improving teacher and principal performance. Colorado’s approach to performance evaluation is part of a plan to support the educator development process, from recruitment and preparation into the profession all the way through an educator’s career. With the passage of SB 191, Colorado has put into place an important piece needed to ensure that teachers and principals have clear expectations for their performance, receive timely feedback and relevant supports. The plan would benefit from additional clarity on exactly how student growth is going to be measured. If student growth measures are unclear then it is hard to be clear about how growth measures will be used in evaluation plans. Further discussion is needed about the state’s point of view about teacher evaluation, why more has not been done to this point with the evaluation process and how LEAs will use data that has largely been summative in nature to assist

in the evaluation process. Assumptions are made that principals know how to do this work, incorporating student growth measures into teacher evaluations and there is no evidence that is the case.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	22	23	
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	13	14	
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	9	9	

(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Colorado’s reform plan reflects a commitment to both the development and equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals—particularly for high-poverty and/or high-minority schools— informed by results of actions already taken.

Colorado’s proposal starts with a statewide definition of “effectiveness” followed by frequent monitoring and annual reporting of progress towards the state’s goals, and targeted investments and interventions to assure goals are achieved. As a result of these steps, by 2014, Colorado's plan is to:

Increase by 35% the number of effective educators teaching college-ready mathematics and science courses.

Increase the number of effective teachers of English language learners and students with disabilities by at least 20% annually.

Reduce by 50% the number of ineffective teachers and principals serving at high poverty and/or high-minority schools.

By December 2011, Colorado plans to have a comprehensive statewide plan to ensure students in high-poverty and/or high-minority schools have equitable access to highly effective teachers and principals. This plan is to be informed by the recommendations of the Quality Teachers Commission to eliminate the teacher gap, as well as results from the implementation of the State’s HQT plan, and by the strategies developed by the School Leadership Academy to train leaders for high-needs areas.

The Colorado plan is to respond to the need to increase the number and percentage of effective educators teaching hard-to-staff subjects with a combination of short-term and long-term strategies. Analysis of results to date provides information for the following immediate steps: math is the area in which college freshman require remediation most frequently; rural and small schools have limited access to college-ready math and science courses; and special education teachers in rural LEAs have high rates of attrition. English language learners and students with disabilities are over-represented in Colorado’s lowest-achieving schools.

Colorado’s plan is to provide all students equitable access to highly effective teachers and addresses the need created by gaps in high-needs and hard-to-staff schools and content areas. Through information and evaluations available through SchoolView, legislation that enables evaluation based on student-growth, rewards and incentives to increase the number of highly effective educators, and a system of monitoring the success of implemented strategies, Colorado's plan is to make an immediate and long-term impact on all schools in general, and its high-poverty and/or high-minority schools in particular.

The application acknowledges a lack of success in the area of access and there is no data to demonstrate or review their progress. The state method to determine distribution is unclear.

Given the long timeline (2014), the plan to move in this area is not considered ambitious.

(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)

Presentation comments by team members demonstrated that there was an understanding and a commitment to improvement in the area of equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals. Specifically discussed was how effective staff were to be reassigned based on identified need.

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	14	14	
(i) Linking student data to credentialing programs and reporting publicly	7	7	7	
(ii) Expanding effective programs	7	7	7	

(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Colorado proposes to improve the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs with three key objectives. First, the State will link student growth and achievement data directly to the programs that prepared their teachers and principals and report that information publicly each year. Second, Colorado will use this information to identify those programs that prepare effective teachers and principals and those that do not, and will work with programs to identify the elements of particular programs that result in success and those that impede program impact. Third, Colorado proposes to increase the number and percentage of teachers and principals prepared by the successful programs by a) making strategic investments to expand preparation programs that demonstrate the greatest success in producing effective teachers and principals, b) improving the ability of all programs to succeed as a result of aligned standards for both their accreditation and customized data portals, and c) terminating the accreditation of those programs that consistently fail to prepare effective teachers and principals.

Beginning in July 2011, the CDE plans to publish on SchoolView an annual public report that will identify and evaluate the effectiveness of each teacher and principal preparation program in Colorado. The annual report will link student growth and achievement data to the programs where those teachers and principals were prepared, both in-state, and when available, out-of-state. Also included will be the placement, mobility, and retention rates for Colorado graduates employed by Colorado LEAs.

Colorado's plan to ensure that all teachers and principals are well-prepared to be effective focuses upon three strategies: expanding successful programs; enhancing efficacy of all programs; and eliminating the programs that consistently fail to prepare effective educators.

By July 2012, the CDE plans to identify those preparation programs that are most successful in producing effective teachers and principals for Colorado schools overall and for the hardest to staff schools and subjects in particular: high-poverty and/or high-minority and rural schools; and English language instruction, special education, science and math expertise. Using this information, expansion grants will be awarded to those programs that are shown to be most successful at preparing teachers and principals that increase the achievement and growth of Colorado students.

With reliable information Colorado may be able to identify the programs having positive impact and those that consistently fail to deliver. With this information and the results of the multiple efforts to identify effective program elements and early measures of future effectiveness, Colorado programs should have an opportunity to improve their performance.

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	18	19	
(i) Providing effective support	10	8	9	
(ii) Continuously improving the effectiveness of the support	10	10	10	

(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Colorado plans to provide support to teachers and principals across the State. Colorado plans to offer educators comprehensive and cohesive professional development that is proven effective and individualized to respond to specific needs and interests. Each of the key activities offered are planned for monitoring and improving based upon feedback received from teachers, principals and administrators in LEAs, as well as analysis of student, school and LEA performance data. CDE's partnership with the Colorado Legacy Foundation and The New Teacher Project could result in a strategic realignment of the CDE staff and activities to ensure that program goals are explicitly focused upon the improvement of educator effectiveness, and that the use of State and Federal funds is limited to programs demonstrated to achieve that goal.

The Colorado plan is to provide a variety of supports to teachers and principals statewide. The CDE Educator Effectiveness Unit is to be responsible for ensuring supports are delivered efficiently and effectively to the field, using an array of methods from specific programs run by the CDE to include a review of supports provided by LEAs. The CDE plans to connect practitioners in the field to each other and directly to available supports.

The Colorado plan is for one hundred percent (100%) of teachers and principals to be provided effective professional development opportunities. Colorado will achieve this goal by doing the following:

1. The Research and Evaluation Unit will certify professional development offerings demonstrated to be effective in improving student achievement overall, and for identified student populations (including English language learners, students with disabilities, students in poverty, and minority status students).
2. Second, Educator Impact Reports available on SchoolView will provide each educator with immediate access to proven professional development resources that address identified areas for improvement and/or development.
3. Third, significant additional supports will be directed at school principals and at teachers and principals serving high-poverty and/or high-minority schools, as well as those serving or preparing to serve in Colorado's persistently lowest-performing schools and/or hard-to-staff subject areas.

Colorado is planning key activities to be continuously monitored by the CDE Evaluation Unit with the results fed back to the CDE Unit of Educator Effectiveness. The Educator Effectiveness Unit will in turn work directly with LEAs as well as other the CDE staff and educator associations to improve the effectiveness of supports available to teachers and principals and expand the use of those supports proven to be most effective.

There is a need for additional clarification about how LEA's will respond to the proposed professional development strategies.

(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)

Presentation comments demonstrated that there were additional vehicles (eg. the role of intermediate units and coaches) established to provide support to teachers beyond what in the review of the application.

Total	138	124	126	
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E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	10	10	10	

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Colorado's Education Accountability Act of 2009 gives the CDE statutory authority to intervene directly in the State's persistently lowest achieving schools and LEAs, including those that are in improvement or corrective action status, as defined under the ESEA. Each year, in addition to measuring AYP and determining Federal improvement categories,

the CDE is expected to evaluate each school's and LEA's level of performance on four key indicators: student growth, student achievement, extent of gaps and at the high school level, postsecondary readiness measured with graduation rate, ACT scores and dropout rate.

An LEA's or school's performance on these indicators is determined through the district and school performance frameworks. Based on their students' results, LEAs and schools are put in one of four performance categories (Performance, Improvement, Priority Improvement, Turnaround). About 15% of LEAs and schools fall in the bottom two categories with about 10% in Priority Improvement and the bottom 5% percent in Turnaround.

The Education Accountability Act of 2009, supported by Federal law, gives the State the authority to directly intervene in the persistently lowest-achieving LEAs and schools, including ordering their reorganization or closure.

(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	35	37	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	30	32	

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Colorado plans to turn around all of its failing schools by implementing one of the four school intervention models: turnaround, transformation, restart or school closure.

Seventy-two schools have been identified for turnaround during the Race to the Top grant period. Colorado is working with two outside entities, Mass Insight and Public Impact, to build internal capacity with the CDE Turnaround and Intervention Unit to implement additional school turnaround capability.

By September 2010, through an annual school performance review using Colorado's performance framework and Federal AYP measures, Colorado plans to identify 100% of its lowest-performing schools and prioritize them for turnaround intervention.

Beginning in 2009, Colorado was one of five states to begin working with Mass Insight in a collaborative three-year, multi-million dollar public-private partnership to create scalable and sustainable strategies for turning around clusters of the lowest-achieving schools. In addition, Colorado has directly engaged Public Impact, a national education firm, to develop a comprehensive approach for intervening in the lowest achieving schools. CDE developed partnerships with each of these entities in order to enhance its internal capacity to engage in school turnaround. At the same time, in 2009, the CDE established within the agency a Turnaround and Intervention Unit, dedicating resources focused specifically on the effective and efficient execution of State turnaround strategies. Plans are that by December 2011, the CDE Turnaround and Intervention Unit will be expanded in order to build internal expertise in turnaround.

Colorado's commitment to turning around its lowest achieving schools and lowest-achieving LEAs is a foundational element of its reform plan to support and direct change and intervention in schools and LEAs that are not meeting performance criteria. CDE's expansion of the CDE Turnaround and Intervention Unit builds on the State's authority to directly intervene in persistently underperforming schools. Colorado's reform strategies will further support local LEAs in creating the conditions they need to build and sustain improvements, however in the last several years the department has only worked with 9 schools, out of 72, and a larger number would seem to be in order, along with documentation regarding how the work progressed.

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)

Presentation comments demonstrated that there was a philosophy, an understanding and a commitment to improvement in the area of turning around the lowest achieving schools.

Total	50	45	47	
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F. General

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	10	10	
(i) Allocating a consistent percentage of State revenue to education	5	5	5	
(ii) Equitably funding high-poverty schools	5	5	5	
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>Colorado has demonstrated a commitment to education funding with increased appropriations to education in the General Fund, as well as utilized SFSF funds for furthering educational reforms in Colorado.</p> <p>In 2000, Colorado voters demonstrated their support for education funding by passing Constitutional Amendment 23 to increase base per-pupil funding, and in 2008, the largest investment to date in school facilities was enacted with the Building Excellent Schools Today Act. Funds are equitably distributed, utilizing a formula that results in average per-pupil funding for high-needs LEAs to be higher than other LEAs. In addition, Colorado provides equitable funding for charter and innovation schools.</p> <p>The percentage of total revenues available to the State that were used to support elementary, secondary and public higher education increased from 47.9 percent in State fiscal year 2008 to 48.2 percent in fiscal year 2009. The amount of revenue spent on education increased 5.2 percent from fiscal year 2008 to fiscal year 2009.</p> <p>In Colorado, according to the application, average per-pupil funding in high-needs LEAs is higher than in other LEAs. In 2008-2009, per-pupil State and local funding for high-needs LEAs was more than \$10,100 compared to \$9,800 to LEAs not considered high-needs. Quality Counts 2010 ranks Colorado ninth in the nation for funding equity using restricted range differences. This equity derives from Colorado's School Finance Act which uses a funding formula that adjusts base funding to LEAs according to student and LEA characteristics. Each LEA receives a base amount per pupil, set by the State legislature, and increased by Amendment 23, which is then adjusted by factors that take into account each LEA's cost-of-living, personnel costs and population size, to arrive at Total Per-Pupil Funding. Next, the formula calls for additional funds for the percentage of students in the LEA who are eligible for Federal free-lunch subsidies and students who did not take State assessments because of their English language learning status. An online student, regardless of LEA, is funded at a set amount.</p> <p>The State's School Finance Act requires each LEA to allocate at least 75% of its at-risk funding to school- or LEA-wide instructional programs for at-risk students or for staff development associated with teaching at-risk students in the LEA. The legislature recently passed House Bill 10-1183, which created the Alternative School Funding Models Pilot Program to encourage school districts and charter schools to develop alternative models for distributing funding within an LEA. The bill specifically asks the applicants to this program to address the challenges of at-risk funding, and further expresses the goal as identifying the most equitable distribution of LEA revenue.</p> <p>Colorado's actions demonstrate a commitment to increasing education funding, to distributing that funding equitably across high-needs schools, districts and LEAs, and to equitably fund charter schools and innovation schools.</p>				
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	40	40	
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	8	8	
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	8	8	
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	8	8	
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	8	8	

(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	8	8	
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</p> <p>One of the first states to adopt charter school legislation in 1992, Colorado has improved upon the strength of this legislation. In Colorado’s application it is noted that the Charter Schools Act ranks fifth in the country according to the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools’ recent report <i>How State Charter Laws Rank Against The New Model Public Charter School Law</i>. This report assesses the strengths of each State’s charter school law against the 20 essential components of a strong law, which is contained in the new model public charter school law released by the Alliance in June 2009. Colorado has passed legislation to permit any school to gain “innovation school status,” providing charter-like autonomy.</p> <p>Colorado’s Charter Schools Act places no limits on the number of charter schools in the State or the number of students who may attend charter schools. The Act prohibits LEAs from placing moratoria on the number of charter schools in their LEAs, and provides that authorizers may not place limits on enrollment at a specific school. The exception is that a charter school and its authorizer may agree upon limits that are necessary to achieve the school’s mission and goals or to stay within the school’s physical capacity. As a result, 100% of the schools in Colorado may be charter schools, and 100% of Colorado’s students may attend charter schools.</p> <p>Under the Charter Schools Act, a charter school may be authorized by an LEA, by the Colorado Charter School Institute (CSI) or by the State as a result of a turnaround process.</p> <p>Until recently, authorizing practices for charter schools were left largely to local development efforts. In the last few years, several important efforts have improved the quality and ease of authorizing and overseeing charter schools. In 2004, a partnership between the CDE, the Colorado League of Charter Schools, LEA charter school liaison, and CSI resulted in a recommended common charter school application and rubric. Improvements in authorizing practices have led to fewer appeals to the State Board of Education from would-be charter schools from the denial of charter applications. It was noted in Colorado's application that Colorado was one of six states selected by the National Governors Association (NGA) to receive a grant to improve state support for quality authorizing practices and its work in that effort has been nationally recognized.</p> <p>The CDE has told LEAs that they must equitably share funding obtained from Race to the Top with the charter schools they authorize. Under the School Finance Act, charter schools in Colorado receive 100% of LEA per-pupil operating revenues. The authorizer may choose to retain up to 5% of these funds for the charter school’s share of central administrative overhead costs and must provide an accounting for all such funds withheld. The authorizer must refund any of these funds not actually used for central overhead costs. (For LEAs with fewer than 500 students, the LEA may retain up to 15% for overhead costs.) Any charter school that began operations in the 2004-2005 school year or after, is located within an LEA that has been given exclusive chartering authority <i>and</i> has a student population consisting 40% or more of at-risk students receives additional funds through the alternate at-risk funding calculation. This formula gives charter schools a proportionate share of the at-risk funds provided to the LEA through the School Finance Act.</p> <p>Costs for facilities continue to represent a significant cost to charter schools. Charter schools in Colorado have access to a variety of potential funding sources for their facilities, including a dedicated annual appropriation, equal access to certain State funds, a dedicated bond enhancement program and an opportunity to participate in local bond issues to support facilities.</p> <p>The Innovation Schools Act of 2008 was passed to give schools increased flexibility to meet the changing needs of students. The Act sets out provisions for LEAs to manage diverse portfolios of schools that can meet different needs, and to encourage innovation in areas such as curriculum, educational programs, provision of services, teacher recruitment, hiring, compensation, governance and school management practices. The Innovation Schools Act provides a means for LEAs to authorize one or more schools to implement a package of waivers. These waivers are from LEA policy, State laws and regulations and collective bargaining agreement provisions, if applicable. In addition to authorizing individual innovation schools, the act also provides for the authorization of innovation zones, consisting of a set of schools with common interests.</p> <p>One demonstration of Colorado’s charter and innovation school success is demonstrated by steadily increasing enrollment, which is now at approximately 8% of the total student population. Colorado supports these schools through legislation, equitable funding, and by improving the quality and ease of authorizing.</p>				
(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	5	5	

(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Colorado's education reforms are closely aligned with the Race to the Top selection criteria and encompass a P-20 alignment strategy. The Great Teachers and Leaders Bill (SB 191), Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K), the Education Accountability Act of 2009, the Educator Identifier Act, the Innovation Schools Act, the establishment of the School Leadership Academy, the Colorado Growth Model and other critical advancements are critical pieces to Colorado's reform plan described throughout this Race to the Top proposal.

Colorado supports charter and innovation schools, and reforms aimed at closing the achievement gap, increasing school and post secondary and workforce readiness, and increasing the high school graduation rate. The State's laws, regulations and other policies provide support for possible improvement in these areas. Student outcomes have shown improvement over time, and with Race to the Top funding, Colorado could accelerate the increase in student achievement, growth and readiness, to help prepare all of Colorado's students to succeed in post secondary education and the skilled workforce by the time of graduation.

Total	55	55	55	
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Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	15	15	

Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Colorado's RTTT proposal integrates STEM initiatives throughout the Selection Criteria. These initiatives may help Colorado further its agenda to increase capacity, replicate best practices, and increase representation of minorities and girls in STEM-related careers. Over \$2 million of Colorado's budget will be invested in a variety of initiatives discussed throughout the application that advance this agenda including: aligning STEM instructional content with Colorado's standards and creating STEM content learning communities, Increasing the social network capacity of the existing Colorado STEM Network and its regional STEM Centers, previously created through an NGA grant, Developing a STEM in Action multimedia outlet that links informal science education organizations, universities, and business and industry scientists and research to K-12 schools through SchoolView.

Total	15	15	15	
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Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes	Yes	

Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Important reforms included in Colorado's Race to the Top application are codified in State law. Some new policies will have statewide impact and will remain in place for districts that sign on to Race to the Top and for those who don't. The proposed reforms will be in place statewide after the Race to the Top funding ends and the MOU's are no longer valid. Investments made as a result of a Race to the Top award will facilitate reforms that will be

implemented. Fundamental changes to the Colorado education system as detailed in the proposal are expressions of the principles of Race to the Top.

Total			0	0	
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Grand Total	500	455	465		
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