



Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2



Louisiana Application #2900LA-6

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	52	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	4	4	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	35	35	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	11	13	

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

State reform agenda was clear and supported through their discussion of past initiatives and future plans. The state covered the 4 ARRA reform areas, and included evidence based documentation from outside sources supporting their efforts of reform. There is a thoughtful reform platform which drives the reform effort.

The state has only 48% LEA participation, 47% of student population, 58% of minority students and 51 % of students in poverty, and even though these LEAs serve a majority of the at risk student population (poverty level and minority status), considerable number of LEAs (students) are absent from targeted reform. The way the data chart reads, each charter school is considered an LEA, the inclusion of the charters is critical but caution is needed when reviewing the aggregate data and percentages. The state does discuss at various times, the plan to sustain the reform effort and expand critical parts to all LEAs, the lack of commitment from additional LEAs is concerning for a state wide reform effort. The state does acknowledge that the participating LEA's must adhere to their MOU in totality and do not have an opt out clause. This elimination of the opt out and the powerful MOU, create conditions for a powerful reform effort. Even though the State has approximately 50% of the LEAs participating, the signature support from these LEAs demonstrates support for the reform plan. This helps strengthen the effort with the engaged LEA and does assist with advancing the agenda across the state. There is an example MOU provided. The MOU details the mandatory components required by the LEA and the state does have legal authority to take over schools if performance measures, timelines and financial distributions are not met. The state did distribute a memo with 10 critical questions the LEA must consider and answer to ensure that the LEA is committed and understands the deliverables. Although the state has just over 50% of LEA participation, the state has indicated that significant portions of the reform plan are applicable to all LEAs with a higher expectation for those that participate. This reform effort is designed to reach beyond the participating LEAs.

The State has developed ambitious and reachable student achievement goals. The State has targeted an increase of 14 % points for students at or above literacy for 3rd graders on state assessment, a 13% increase for 4th graders matriculating to the 4th grade on time, 23% increase for 8th grade scores in English and language arts, and an 18% increase for student who graduate on time and attend at least one year of college. The state proposes a 10% decrease in achievement gaps annually during the reform plan timeline. Data from NAEP was not provided in full. The State documents certain NAEP data sets but complete charts were not available.

A significant portion of the reform plan are priorities for all LEAs in the state. The State has established a plan for pairing participating superintendents with non participating superintendent to share best practices,

lessons learned and to inform about leading data indicators and strategies. The State will host regional forums for best practice for all LEAs in a region, spreading the reform movement beyond participating LEAs. Higher Education will also host a showcase series for participating principal and superintendent to discuss their field operations and their approach to reform in the key grant areas. Finally, the state will establish a fund for seed grants for non participating LEAs to apply for to help incubate selected best practices demonstrated from the reform plan.

The State has initiated the High Performing School Initiative which is a study of best practice in schools performing well with high poverty and high minority. The State also have developed a very strong Partnership Agreement that does not allow for any opt out clauses for the LEAs, ensuring their commitment to the reform. The reform movement is backed by several state regulations, so even though over 50% of LEAs did not participate, they will be impacted by the reform through legislation. The State has taken numerous actions to engage non participating LEAs in the reform movement increasing state wide impact and sustainability.

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

The State provided examples of how state wide impact would be implemented even with 48% LEA participation by using Seed Grants for non participating districts, model demonstration of successes and best practices from participating districts to non participating districts and finally the partnering of cohorts from High Poverty High Performing schools model with non participating districts. The State made clear that they had several innovative models to bring reform and best practice to all districts and schools across the state. District Support Officers are also assigned to all districts including non participating districts to ensure even further expansion of student impact state wide.

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	24	24	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	16	16	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	8	8	

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

The state laid out a strategic plan that is ambitious, achievable and focuses on students. The state does present a plan for systems reform from within that appears to be supportive of LEA/school based reform. The restructuring of the Department of Education is commendable and points towards the State to be bold and transparent in their efforts to correct weaknesses. The restructuring of the central office into regional, parrish and school based support is commendable. The plan discusses content specialists assigned to schools to help identify and implement interventions to address student and staff performance. LA did identify areas of reform responsible for change (Literacy PK-12 Plan). The state describes various internal reform departments, positions, and data systems that will support the actual plan to perform and measure outcomes. The reorganization and development of key departments (Reform Team, District Superintendents, Turnaround Units, Goals Office, Delivery Unit, Policy Unit) all point toward reform change at a systems level, and appear to provide the field based support for schools and LEAs.

The state did state that it had received over 500 letters of support from community based partners, and did present a chart detailing the examples included in the submission. The support was diverse, met all areas of criteria requested and supported initiatives state wide. Letters included national organizations with localized offices which is helpful in reform supports and lessons learned from other regions. Considering that the state has high profile business anchored in the region, business support was not as strong as expected.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	25	27	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5	5	

(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	20	22	
(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>The plan does not clearly connect data collection to assessment of interventions other than its impact on teacher and leader evaluations. LEAs did provide data from National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and state assessments addressing student demographic and sub groups in math and language arts. The state has shown gains in student performance over time in keys areas of concern. Graduation rates were also discussed as was a plan for the 9th grade transition. The state attributes success in math and reading to its Literacy Plan, Turnaround Specialists (2007), Teach for America (TFA) and The New Teacher Project (TNTP), State specific LEAP and Graduate Exit Examination (GEE) assessments, EAGLE (teacher support assessment tool), and the Recovery School District. School based data for the participating schools would be helpful to see what the potential impact would have on students.</p> <p>The State provides examples that demonstrate reform efforts in the key elements over the past several years. Since 1999, the State has been engaged in designing and adopting high quality standards and assessments. The development of the state Comprehensive Curriculum and Enhanced Assessment of Grade level Expectations (EAGLE) are examples of previous reform work. The creation of the Recovery School District, in 2003, is another example of wholistic school reform, embracing the need to be proactive and supportive to schools that are not achieving desired student achievement and are in need of specialized assistance in any one or more areas of school management.</p> <p>The state provides a wealth of supporting evidence of their gains in student achievement from outside documentation of rankings across the country in independent, credible reviews and research. Full reports were not available for study. The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) data, included, did not inform of aggressive student gains over time. Reading data showed slow growth (some small setbacks) over time but all data was below the national average and minority groups did not show aggressive gains compared to other subgroups.</p>				
(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)				
<p>The State confirmed the use of substantial data systems to inform teacher performance and access to individual student performance to impact teacher instructional delivery. District Support Officers will also provide on the ground support at the school and teacher level to ensure effective use of data to ensure that teaching and learning is developed for individual student growth.</p>				
Total	125	99	103	

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>The state has engaged with the Chief Council of State School Officers (CCSSO) and National Governors Association, (NGA) to work with a consortium of 48 states and 3 territories to develop and adopt a set of common core standards. State Board, effective May 2010, has agreed to adopt the standards no later than July 2010. Legal authorization was presented. Evidence is presented of the standards and they are developed using best practices (domestic and international), evidence based research, and lessons learned/student data from high performing states that have used them</p>				

The standards address the common core requirements (English Language Arts (ELA) and Math k-12) and are internationally benchmarked to align with global competition (statement from CSSO on international benchmarking). Standards address a continuum of alignment from K-12 and align with college and work readiness. Plan for implementation take place prior to August 2010. The state has stated a commitment to extend standard adoption to exceed the core and to include science and social studies. State has effective plan for consortium involvement and standards adoption.

(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)				
<p>The state has engaged in a Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers along with 26 additional states, effective May 2010 as per the MOU. The state is one of 8 governing states in the consortium, committed to implementation no later than 2014-2015. There is no statement around the current status of these assessments nor the financial burden expected for the adoption, implementation and evaluation.</p>				
(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	17	17	
(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>The transition plan includes targeted professional development for the use of the new standards and assessments. The professional development will be supported by central office and school based leadership teams, ensuring the capacity is built at the field level. The state also acknowledges the need to change education practices and policies. It is stated that the support for change is provided by Gates Foundation and Achieve Inc. although no support statements are provided as evidence.</p> <p>Timeline documentation was presented in a detailed chart that included the key activities that support the transition plan by including timelines, key activities, and action items. The State also highlights other critical supports for the transition such as the Math and Science Partnership, inclusion of Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM), the awareness and need to address predictors of student failure or risk, conducting a gap analysis for achievement (no detailed plan on this), increasing math specialists, increasing technology implementation, alignment of summative and formative assessments with the common core, continuous quality process to assess current standards and add new ones as needed, utilize response to intervention (RTI) (first time this is mentioned), increase AP, utilization of virtual learning, and the creation of regional support teams with content area specialists.</p> <p>The state does mention the use of multimedia strategies to communicate the standard and assessments paradigm shift to staff, students and larger community base. The state makes career and college readiness a priority in the reform shift. End of course exams are aligned to standards and assessments, and evidence based research is documented. The state has a continuum of services including early childhood education through matriculation to graduation.</p>				
Total	70	67	67	

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
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(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	24	24	
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</p> <p>The state presents the LDS in complete compliance with America COMPETES. All 12 elements are present with definition. The state notes that it is one of 11 states with complete set of elements. No documentation was provided as a "mock" example of the longitudinal data system (LDS).</p>				
(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	4	4	
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</p> <p>The state presents evidence of their current use of data for instructional purposes. The state also describes the importance of data for the larger educational community and stakeholders. The state details what evidence is current or will be available for the variety of involved partners and what systems are available to each sub group of partners. Data will be used, through collaboration with partners to address achievement gap and differentiate instruction. INSIGHT portal will enable prediction of future student success (drive instruction) as well as disaggregate data by demographics to track STEM, AP, and other relevant strategies cross referenced to student data sets so the state can monitor progress of outcome measures in the reform effort. The state presents a set of goals for the longitudinal data system (LDS) to include link of data to instruction, timely release of data, connection to teacher effectiveness, tracking of human capital, transparency of data for larger community. The state presents charts that detail key activity, action items and timelines.</p> <p>The State has described six major initiatives that demonstrate their ability to access and use data. The Value Added Teacher Preparation Program (TPPAM), Value Added Assessments Initiative for Schools and Teachers, Curriculum verification and Results Reporting Portal (CVRP), Human Capital Information System (HCIS), Annual Student Progress Report and INSIGHT. These data systems will collect a variety of staff and student data that will help inform reform needs in the present and assist with projections for the future</p>				
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	15	15	
(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	5	5	
<p>(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</p> <p>The state presents a comprehensive longitudinal data system (LDS) that will be able to collect a variety of data points critical to the reform plan. The LDS will have the capacity to connect student and teacher level data, as well as analyze classroom, content, school, district and state level data to assist the state and the LEAs in identifying priority needs to close achievement gaps. INSIGHT will be the web portal that connect the Enhanced Assessment of Grade Level Expectations (EAGLE) and The Human Capital Information System (HCIS) together for a comprehensive view of student achievement and the impact of individual students by teachers. The first will assist school based staff in identifying needs that directly impact student achievement in the classroom, the second system will help the State and LEAs identify staffing needs in regions, content areas, schools and or other hard to fill content areas or areas in need of more highly qualified teachers. EAGLE is also capable of allowing a social network to develop where staff can share model lessons, provide feedback on instructional materials or projects and share lessons learned in real time. HCIS will allow teachers to see their effectiveness over time with individual students and sub groups, enabling them to design specific professional development plans focused on student achievement and or growth. The State has proposed improvements to EAGLE that will encourage non participating LEAs to adopt the system, supporting increased statewide LEA engagement. Both EAGLE and HCIS provide the</p>				

capabilities for the State, LEAs, schools, principals and teachers to assess individual and aggregated data to make informed decisions about increasing students achievement through school operations, instructional strategies, staffing plans, and overall reform successes, so mid course corrections can be accommodated.

The State has described the professional development expectations for participating LEAs. Imbedded professional development will be designed based on EAGLE and HCIS, as well as targeted school wide and or LEA wide needs. The State will provide coaches to LEAs to assist with data based decision making and the building of capacity at schools for the use and application of data.

Through INSIGHT, research organizations and other involved stakeholders will have web portal access to the state's LDS. The State will also engage in developing a consortium of researchers to help the State assess and identify critical research questions focused on student achievement and the management of reform in public school systems. This consortium will strengthen the reform effort through evidenced based practices, research driven evaluations and insight into best practices being implemented.

These combined data systems will allow the State, LEAs and schools identify necessary resources to implement the reform plan as well as close achievement gaps and increase student successes at all grades and in all core content areas ultimately enhancing supports for student matriculation and graduation on time.

Total	47	43	43	
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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	16	18	
(i) Allowing alternative routes to certification	7	6	6	
(ii) Using alternative routes to certification	7	6	6	
(iii) Preparing teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage	7	4	6	

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

The State provides proof of statutory regulations that embrace alternative routes of certification for teachers and principals. Title 28, Bulletin 746 outline three alternative pathways for certification for teachers and four alternative pathways for principals. Both teacher and principal alternative pathways address the 5 elements provided in the RTTT. Although non institutions of higher education are encouraged to provide pathways, their presence is limited. 85% of providers are IHE. Private providers award less than .03% of teachers and .14% of administrators for 2008-2009. 1270 teacher certifications were earned through alternative routes in 2008-2009 accounting for 12% of all teacher certifications awarded across the state. Private providers accounted for 38% (470) of teacher alternative pathway earners. Private providers accounted for 4% (12) of administrator alternative pathway earners, and 26% of principal endorsements awarded in 2009.

TEACH Louisiana website is a tool to match teachers and leaders to critical shortage areas. The portal enables LEAs across the state to post vacant positions and find qualified and interested candidates. This also informs the State of areas of high need based on number of vacancies, length of vacancies and turnover rate. This information enables the State to inform certification providers of targeted certification needs.

Through the Teacher Preparation Accountability System, Louisiana provides incentives to teacher preparation organizations for producing additional new teachers beyond a baseline in identified teacher shortage areas, and in five districts that had between 31 and 55 percent of the teachers in their districts

uncertified. The plan appears to be sufficient. The State did not specifically identify areas of shortage through non qualified, limited applicants, or regionally based shortages. The alternative routes described did not specify if specific pathways were designed with intent to fill critical shortage areas.

The State needs to provide more detailed information regarding the process for preparing educators for areas of shortage for both content area and geographical area. The State described that LEAs will report on absences but does not detail how this data will be used or coordinated to address the human capital needs.

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

The State confirmed that their goal is to expand alternative certification programs for teachers and leaders. Expansion will include pilot plans and will also focus on hard to fill content areas and areas in need of specially trained leaders. The State also confirmed that alternative programs did address each of the 5 elements for alternative certification.

(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)

The State describes a longitudinal data system (LDS) to measure a variety of data through different operating systems. One of these systems is the Comprehensive Performance Management System (CPMS) used to connect student level achievement and growth data with teacher and principal evaluations, professional development and increased levels of accountability. This system initiates the use of value-added data from student assessments and other quantifiable student achievement/growth sources.

The Curriculum Verification and Reporting Portal (CVRP) will enable every teacher to review aggregate growth data and individual summative assessment results for every student taught. CVRP will be expanded to all participating LEAs in fall 2010. Louisiana Value-Added Initiative will extend the reporting capabilities of the system to include producing value-added measures for principals as well, based on the academic achievement of the students in their school. This real time information will help in leading strategic efforts in professional development at the teacher and school based level.

Effective 2012-2013, all teacher evaluations will encompass 50% of the evaluation based on student growth data (value added data), as well as multiple rating categories and will be conducted at least annually. The State will develop growth measures for students, grades and courses that do not have value added data. The remaining portion of the teacher evaluation will be made of observations, performance rubrics, other student achievement factors, and a learning environment index to identify instructional variables impacting teacher instructional effectiveness.

Principal evaluations will be based on student and teacher data. Included will be the principal's ability to hire, retain and train effective teachers. Student data used to provide one of four effectiveness categories ranging from expert for 1.5 years of growth to less than one year of growth. Evaluations will be annual. Previously both teacher and principal evaluations were conducted every three years.

An Educator Evaluation Advisory Committee will be developed to recommend data sets for students with whom no value added data will be available (50% of group will be teachers and will include parents and other educational representatives from unions and associations). Other state wide educational associations and representative from schools, grades, contents, and regions will be involved in workgroups to design the new evaluation system. Monthly virtual meetings will be hosted for ongoing feedback.

The State presents a reform plan that includes annual evaluations as well as timelines for performance feedback. State law details that formal evaluation will be available within one week and probationary and tenured teachers with constructive feedback within 48 hours. Informal evaluations will require a 24-hour turnaround. The CPMS will provide teachers and principals with data about their individual students, classes and grades so that this information can be used in evaluations as well in plans to increase student and staff performance.

The State is committed to using the new evaluation system as a means to designing a new system for the rewarding and support for teachers and principals. The CPMS and the CVRP data will support the state and districts in defining what specific teacher and principal supports are needed as well as supporting the rewarding of highly effective teachers and the removal of ineffective teachers are intensive supports have been exhausted.

The Louisiana Blue Ribbon Commission for Educational Excellence (BRC), is charged with developing a sustainable and comprehensive teacher compensation system and action plan that will enhance teacher effectiveness. Under Louisiana law, effectiveness data must be used to inform all certification and renewal decisions. Participating LEAs are required to implement a system for obtaining tenure under which administrators make clear and active tenure and re-certification decisions for effective teachers, and discontinue employment for persistently ineffective teachers.

Legislation passed in 2010, LEAs must implement intensive assistance programs (IAPs) for any educator rated ineffective even for a single year, and must initiate dismissal proceedings for all teachers and administrators who, after undergoing IAPs, are still ineffective. Participating LEAs have also agreed to transition to a system in which administrators receive performance contracts, to ensure that decisions to retain principals in a given school are entirely dependent on their ability to improve student achievement.

(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	11	11	
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	8	8	

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

The state details a plan that includes key elements for ensuring equitable distribution in high poverty or high minority schools, as well as identify critical shortages in content areas and in school regions. The State presents data on the staffing plans to increase effective and decrease ineffective teachers in reform schools. Absent from discussion is succession planning for sustainable staffing overtime and attrition.

Incentives are not robust for the recruitment of teachers in critical content, critical schools and regions. Although the plan is thoughtful and comprehensive there must be a concept map for recruitment and retention of talent. The Human Capital Talent Pipeline presents a logic map for the connection of key elements of recruitment, development and retention of critical staff. The State utilizes a variety of sources to identify areas of critical need as well as how new teachers are distributed to ensure that high poverty and high minority schools have equal access to effective teachers.

Several strategies are used to ensure equitable distribution of effective teachers across critical content areas and in high need schools. One is the Expert Teacher Corps. This corps is a group of expert teachers across content areas especially STEM, who through multimedia can be accessible to students across the state. Another strategy is the utilization the Centralized Staffing Services (CSS), and Model Staffing Initiative (MSI), to increase the identification, preparation and assignment of highly qualified teachers in regions and schools in need of critical area staff. The CSS and MSI monitor the recruitment and assignment of teachers throughout the state with attention to high need content areas and high need schools and regions.

Louisiana will also build on the success of its Teacher Preparation Accountability System (TPAS) to recruit teachers for critical areas. Absent from discussion is compensation for teachers to work in hard to fill content areas and regions. Limited details are provided for the recruitment, retention and compensation for principals. The State should provide an explanation of the data chart at the end that documents outcome goals.

Incentives are offered to universities to recruit and train teachers prepared in high need content areas and in high need regions. The State also implemented new fast track endorsement program where teachers can increase the number of content areas they are qualified to teach. Incentives are also offered to effective teachers to teach and or remain in high need schools or regions teaching high need content areas.

The state had identified 7 strategies to ensure that the talent pipeline is effective in the recruitment, training, support and placement of effective teachers. The state will complete an analysis of participating LEAs to determine patterns in certifications, performance evolutions ratings across teaching assignments and then support LEAs in a distribution plan. The state will also provide increased teacher support for effective teachers in critical areas to strengthen already identified effective teachers. The State will also expand teacher certification programs in high need and remote areas through nationally recognized teacher preparation and leadership preparation programs. The plan specifically targets STEM, math, English/language arts, special education, English proficiency and foreign languages.

The state outlines the plan to ensure that ineffective teachers are removed from system after intensive support as well as ensuring that ineffective staff are not bundled in any specific school or district regardless of student demographics and performance.

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	10	11	
(i) Linking student data to credentialing programs and reporting publicly	7	5	5	
(ii) Expanding effective programs	7	5	6	

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

The state describes a system to hold providers of teacher and principal preparation programs to be accountable for the performance of their graduates, linking student success back to the originator of training. Incentives are provided for programs preparing staff in critical areas, but disincentives are unclear for poor performing service providers. Incentives will also be provided for participants but the exact nature is not clear. Mention is made of expanding programs but no specific types or models are expanded upon.

The state does not describe if they have conducted any future projections of the content areas, LEA's, or specialists needed based on student performance, staff attrition, projected outcome measures, etc. The state does mention the need to redesign not just graduate and certification programs but also the undergraduate level. No mention is made about magnet or career academies that would recruit teachers during their high school years - pre-pipeline recruitment. State leadership academy is described as an additional asset. Stronger commitment is needed in expanding alternate paths in areas of high need. No mention made of how to credential experts from industry who want to enter educational arena.

(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)

The State confirmed that their goal is to expand alternative certification programs for teachers and leaders. Expansion will include pilot plans and will also focus on hard to fill content areas and areas in need of specially trained leaders. The State also confirmed that alternative programs did address each of the 5 elements for alternative certification.

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	12	12	
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(i) Providing effective support	10	6	6	
(ii) Continuously improving the effectiveness of the support	10	6	6	
(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>The state presents a clear system of support starting from induction through embedded professional development. There appear to be many systems - human resource support, financial support and data management to support the development of comprehensive coaching and mentoring programs. The state presents numerous avenues to ensure that staff at the state, district, school and classroom level receive targeted professional development based on individual and or school based needs. Part of the State's staffing included the ability to increase data coaches and content area specialists in critical areas (math, special education, language proficiency, STEM). These coaches, in return, will build expert knowledge at the school and district level.</p> <p>The State has engaged outside organizations to assist in the support to teachers and administrators in the reform effort, specifically in data based decision making. National School Administration Manager (SAM) and Vanderbilt Assessment for Leadership in Education (VAL-ED) to maintain focus on instruction through student data and leadership effectiveness (for principals). Special education teachers will have mentoring provided through electronic systems. The Wallace Foundation has funded a grant to develop a video and field guide as an additional mentoring support. It will showcase highly effective principals that manage high performing high poverty schools and the strategies and systems in place that enable strong student achievement.</p> <p>The State has also partnered with Nevada, The New Teacher Center and the National State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) in the development of an electronic mentoring program for special education teachers. The program is designed to support special education teachers during the first three years of teaching and was piloted in spring 2010 with over 40 mentees and 15 mentors; The New Teacher Center plans to expand this pilot next year to over 600 special education personnel across the nation.</p> <p>The State proposes to use the following strategies to enable teachers and principals to make instructionally sound decisions regarding the professional development and academic resource necessary for student achievement. Use the Teaching Improvement Cycle for teachers and leaders to reflect on practices and to improve instruction tied to the standards and assessments, including high need at risk students who traditionally under perform. The implementation of the School Turnaround Specialist Program (LSTS) will train leaders to take over failing schools. Support principals by creating a mentor program between principals from High-Performing High-Poverty (HPHP) schools and principals from high-poverty/high minority low-performing schools. Value-added performance data will be used to match mentors with mentees within their districts or regions. The implementation of the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) in select participating LEA schools, will fund additional Master Teachers to support field based teachers through the expansion of four key elements: ongoing professional growth, instructionally focused accountability, performance-based compensation, and multiple career paths. There is lack of evidence describing the process for continually evaluating and improving the supports for educators.</p> <p>The State has presented an acceptable plan for teacher and principal support.</p>				
Total	138	105	108	

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	10	5	5	
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				

The State provides evidence of regulatory authorization to intervene with the LEA to take over low achieving schools. The State provides example of LEA MOU for LEA's that express interest in working with SEA in turning around poor performing schools - as a potential intervention prior to actual take over.

The State developed the Recovery School District (RSD) in 2003, which empowers the RSD, under authority of the state, to remove control of an academically unacceptable school (AUS) from the local district after four years of unsuccessful turnaround. Assignment of a school to a RSD removes complete authority including funding from the LEA. Schools remain in RSD for a minimum of 5 years with ability to be reassigned to the LEA depending on LEA response to corrective action at which point 3 options are available (close school, RSD keep school, return to LEA with conditions). No mention is made about the ability of the State to intervene in the LEAs, only in the schools.

The State does provide options for districts, through an MOU, to work collaboratively with RSD to avoid school take over. All RSD schools have full authority to change personnel, extend instructional day and must use a data driven system to inform instructional progress based on teachers and in real time.

5 % of all state schools are in RSD and over 90% of New Orleans schools are in RSD. The State reports that New Orleans Parish has 37 RSD Charters and 33 RSD Turnaround schools.

(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	34	39	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	4	4	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	30	35	

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

The state began identifying the lowest achieving schools since 1999 using the state developed Accountability System. This system measured the student academic performance in each schools and converted that to a Student performance score (SPS). The SPS is calculated using a variety of data points specific for each grade area, for example elementary and middle schools used attendance as part of the formula for SPS, but high schools did not, as they used graduation rate.

Schools are scored annually, including Title 1 and non Title 1 eligible schools. Each year the SPS score for AUS is raised. In 2003 schools with a score of 30 or lower were labeled as AUD. In 2011 the cut off score was raised to 65 and to 75 in 2012, effectively raising the bar for schools to remain out of AUS and assignment to RSD. RSD presently consists of 117 schools (out of nearly 1,300 schools statewide), including 33 Recovery School District-operated schools, 51 charter schools and 33 schools operated through the MOU model between the RSD and LEA. House Bill 1033 also stipulates that beginning in the 2011-2012 school year, School Performance Scores, now based on absolute values of student test scores, attendance, graduation rates and dropout data, will contain a value-added component. Under the law's provisions, the state board will decide how much value-added data will account for in school performance scores.

The State has identified 300 additional schools in which 50% or more of the students are performing below grade level. The state demonstrated ability to be proactive in turning around low achieving schools and halting the progression of schools not identified as AUS but showing red flag indicators for increased student achievement gaps and failure. The state predicts the following growth patterns for schools in need of RSD: 118 currently to 190 by 2012.

The State not only supports the 4 model intervention series but states that it has additional options as well. One option is to engage LEA with the High Performance School Initiative (HPSI) - which acts like a proactive preventative remediation strategy to avoid RSD take over. This supports the concept of a cooperative intervention for student, staff and community success. The turnaround will also be supplemented with turn-around coaches to provide guidance to teachers and administrators on instructional delivery, academic interventions, administrative systems and best practices.

The State does address the use of STEM as an intervention and utilizing other evidence based academic and social strategies to improve the instructional climate. The reform plan includes professional development, coaching, and other staffing initiatives to support reforms in teaching and learning and increasing teacher quality in content areas and critical shortage areas.

There was a lack of discussion about serving high need high priority sub groups like special education, homeless, teen parents and students with other unique social/emotional or behavioral needs. The State also ensures that RSD schools are evaluated annually. Annual evaluations do not provide immediate feedback necessary for real time mid course corrections. The State did not identify the types of turnaround models to be used for each school or district, and no mention was made of the restriction for LEAs regarding the transformation model for no more than 50% of schools in any one LEA.

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

The State, through their presentation, demonstrated the process for the identification and support of low performing schools through the Recovery School District, High Performing High Poverty Model and the support provided through District Support Officers and data management elements. Evidence was provided to demonstrate that these schools do in fact show growth greater than other schools state wide. The use of cohort support of like schools supporting like schools and the use consortium of research partners to guide local and national best practices in poor performing schools. The State expects to capture an additional 250 additional schools demonstrating poor performance.

Total	50	39	44	
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F. General

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	9	9	
(i) Allocating a consistent percentage of State revenue to education	5	5	5	
(ii) Equitably funding high-poverty schools	5	4	4	

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

The state reports that 2009 revenues increased by 4.37 % (134,549,219) from 2008.

The state uses a Minimum Foundation Program Formula (MFP) to calculate funding with an inverse ratio of state funding for wealthier LEA. This results in wealthier LEAs, which have a wealthier local tax base, receiving less state funding than a poorer LEA. Weighted variables are used to adjust for student sub groups to accommodate costs for education. In short these formulas ensure that LEAs with high poverty, high minority get equal funding sources as other wealthier LEAs. The weighted variables ensure that schools with high numbers of students with specialized instructional and or behavioral supports also receive equitable resources.

Legislation states that certain funds acquired for certain sub groups (special education, career and technology, free and reduced meals) be used directly for these students enforcing a "funding following the student "model"

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	29	31	
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	6	6	
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	6	6	

(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	6	6	
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	6	6	
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	5	7	

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

The state provides authorizing statues that detail the process for application, selection, evaluation, monitoring, and closing of charter schools. Currently, the State has 77 Charters operating with 16 approved for next school year. Charters serve about 4.5% of the state student population, compared to 2.9% being the national average of state charters schools. The state details that there are no caps or limitations on charter development in the state and that the Recovery School District (RSD) have competitive process of review and selection of high performing charter schools. The State supports the growth of charter schools to help serve at risk and traditionally poor performing students as identified on national and state assessments.

In the last five years, more than 150 charter applications were submitted, and only 79 were approved. State law requires authorizers to engage in an application review process that complies with the Principles and Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing, as promulgated by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA). All authorizers are required to use third-party reviewers to conduct an independent review of each charter application. Charter renewal does include student performance targets. An annual report is developed at the end of year three and is used as the determining factor for continuation of the remaining two years of the 5 year contract. The state has a sliding scale for renewal year operations. Charters that perform high may be given an option for a 10 year operating contract, while schools not meeting performance targets could have the traditional 5 year contract reduced to 3.

The Minimum Foundation Program Formula (MFP) funding is equal to regular LEA based schools and RSD schools. The average range for per pupil funding (PPF) is from \$3,254 to \$4,879. The state funding per child is low and there is no evidence of plan to increase this funding or sustain this funding over time post RTTT. The state describes 3 funding options available for charter schools

The state provides facilities or support in finding facilities based on the type of charter school. 65% of charters are type 5 (State Board of Education authorized and operated by RSD) are provided facilities. Other types receive vacant buildings and or funding (for first 5 years). The funding formula for facilities does not provide an example and unclear how that would equate for a school of 300 students in year one, for an example.

The state provides examples of innovative and magnet schools that are located state wide. It is clear that the state supports reform and innovation but did not address some of the criterion for LEAs to operate innovative, autonomous public schools. The State did not address open enrollment, flexibility with curriculum and assessments, staffing plans, modifications of school day and year, or budget control.

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

State confirmed that it does support the operation of other innovative, autonomous public schools as defined in the Race to the Top definition. Examples were provided of these schools and the specific elements were addressed.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions

5 3 3

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

The state documents additional reform strategies - 4 in total. Considering the number of years they have been working on reform and the data showing student progress additional reform movements were expected. Again dramatic strategies are not listed including technical reform items (reading, math, business partnerships for employment, connections to high need at risk populations; teen parents, mental

health, juvenile justice, substance abuse, intensive community buy in, social development, climate change etc). The state has done a thorough job demonstrating examples of reform work and commitment to the future in planning and philosophical design.

The state did not include state, non public schools, and private schools that receive public funds. These schools serve public school students and need to be included in the state reform movement. Lacking are innovative strategies to engage the business and community partners to work with low achieving, high poverty, high minority schools and LEA's. The state provides a theoretical framework that demonstrates the desire for reform and the internal systems and processes to initiate and support reform. LEA support, technical academic and social interventions are not necessarily robust.

Total	55	41	43	
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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)				
<p>The State included STEM initiatives throughout the entire grant proposal. STEM has been integrated into the reform plan to ensure that under served populations, including young women and girls, have not only exposure to STEM but increased opportunities to engage in high quality academic courses that included STEM and AP classes.</p> <p>The State has engaged a variety partners across the state to help design, implement and sustain the STEM initiatives. These organizations will create the Louisiana STEM Alliance and will provide guidance to course development, internships and preparation for workforce development. The reform plan will also provide opportunities for teachers and principals to engage in STEM professional development to assist with the promotion and sustainability of STEM programs across grades and contents. Human capital plans are critical to this initiative in that STEM teaching needs must be projected and met to ensure that qualified content teachers are available state wide to provide instructional delivery.</p> <p>SEA discussed the partnerships with required partners in industry, museums, and institutions of higher education, research continuums and other relevant community partners. The state discusses the role of STEM Office and advisory council and their strategy for bold reform - dual enrollment through STEM and AP, virtual schools to serve populations in remote areas for state where STEM and AP capacity are limited. Partnerships are strong and regionally diverse and have a plan for ensuring STEM success through professional development for teachers, business partnerships, and student activities and engagement. STEM clubs are encouraged for involved LEAs. Camps, programs, competitions are available to high poverty low achievement schools and direct mention is made of camps targeted for young women.</p> <p>The State plan on increasing STEM focused programs and high schools (NewTech Foundation), as well as create the regional STEM Hubs that are tasked with student and staff engagement for STEM. Each school is encouraged to engage in one type pf STEM program and in return be eligible to participate in STEM activities at no cost.</p> <p>The reform plan contains STEM initiatives embedded through all four ARRA target areas. It should be noted that although the State describes the increased exposure for minority students, females and students of poverty, no mention was made of inclusion of other at -risk sub groups who traditionally are not exposed to STEM activities (special education, behaviorally involved, etc.).</p>				
Total	15	15	15	

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 State presented a thoughtful and comprehensive reform plan to increase low performing students and schools. The plan has some robust and innovative approaches to improving teacher and principal effectiveness. The state has engaged a variety of partners that cut across regions and demographics representing cross sections of the state population. The state has addresses State Success Factors, as well as the four reform areas, and reform plans focuses on closing student achievement gap. The State</p>				

has produced a plan, with academic and organizational strategies, that will address achievements gaps across student demographics. STEM is emphasized throughout the grants as well as discussion of the use of student and staff data to inform school and district based decisions about comprehensive reform. Throughout the grant reference is made to evidence based strategies being adopted and modified as needed to meet the specific needs of students and schools. Although LEA participation is below 50%, the LEA's participating serve 58% of students in poverty and of minority demographics. The State does provide opportunities for the reform to expand beyond participating LEAs through best practice sharing and regional cooperatives for training. The State does address dropout and graduation rates throughout the reform plan. Various partners are engaged in the reform plan to ensure consistency and sustainability across the state including rural and urban areas.

Total		0	0	
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Grand Total	500	409	423	
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Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2

Louisiana Application #2900LA-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	54	57	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	40	40	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	9	12	

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

(i) Louisiana has articulated a comprehensive coherent reform agenda that meets the required four education reform areas: standards and assessments, data use, teacher and principal effectiveness, and turning around low-performing schools. LA describes the growth of their reform plan from a new accountability statute in 1997 through the Recovery School District established in 2003 to required annual evaluations of all teachers and principals passed in May 2010.

(ii) (a) The terms and conditions of the MOU are straightforward and commit the participating LEAs to all aspects of the RTT program. The MOU contains important requirements such as aligning other funding sources at the local level to support RTT which should provide an additional focus to these activities.

(b) The scope of work is preliminary and repeats the key elements of RTT without additional information on timelines and specific responsibilities. The final scope of work for LEAs will need to include many more elements to ensure local implementation. The participation chart indicates that the participating LEAs are working in all of the RTT areas. LA has added an opportunity for districts to place chronically poor performing schools in a "High-Performance Schools Initiative" to receive additional support and funding from RTT. This is a positive strategy.

However, the preliminary scope of work plans are at a non-specific level. It is difficult to determine if the LEAs will implement the plan with fidelity and what monitoring authority the state will exercise.

(c) Of the participating LEAs, 100% of superintendents have signed-off, 100% of school boards with some variation in unanimity, and 88% for those districts with union representation. With this level of support LA will be able to move ahead with RTT in the participating districts.

(iii) 67% of LA's LEAs will participate in RTT. These LEAs represent 48% of the state's schools, 47% of its K-12 population, 58% of its minority students as well as 51% of its students in poverty. Given that approximately one-third of the State's LEAs are not participating in RTT and more than 50% of its students, the possibility of statewide impact is lessened. While the state does provide a positive opportunity for non-participating LEAs to learn from RTT, it would have been useful for the applicant to discuss why a third of the state's LEAs decided not to participate as well as some additional analysis of the potential impact on the state as a whole.

The state has set goals for each of the key areas that require LEAs to increase achievement by approximately 15-20% in each area by 2014. Given their current projections these are achievable and somewhat ambitious given the starting point. LA does not address achievement on NAEP which is lower than proficiency scores on the state assessment.

Participating LEAs will set annual targets with the SEA to ensure strong improvement, are ambitious yet achievable given the RTT resources the LEA receives, and that the individual LEA achievement goals add up to meet the state goals. LA does provide for all LEAs to be held to the same standard (i.e. 15-20% increase in achievement) but states that it will hold RTT LEAs to a higher standard without stating what that standard might be. It would have been useful to know how these targets will be set and how much negotiation might be involved. Holding LEAs to different annual performance targets may provide more achievable goals but it might allow an individual LEA to have a slower climb to improvement.

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

(iii) The state presentation clarified how LDOE will work with the non-participating districts as well as a better explanation of why some of the districts decided not to participate in RTT. The state intends to use the participating districts as "trailblazers" in order to move other districts forward which will increase statewide impact.

(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)

(i) LA will use its RTT funding to reorganize the SEA to provide better assistance and support to local districts and schools with the addition of a "School Turnaround Unit" as well as adding staff to other support offices. Approximately 39 staff along with contractual support will be added to the SEA to support LEA efforts. The opportunity for the SEA to provide this level of intense support and redirection should provide appropriate assistance to the LEAs. LA is establishing a dedicated Reform Unit which will be responsible for RTT and LEA reform. However, there is another office of content experts with major responsibilities that does not report to the RTT office. The coordination of these two units will be critical to the success of building the capacity of schools and districts. The Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent will need to carefully coordinate the work of these different offices particularly when aligning and/or re-purposing funds.

LA has recognized the challenges involved in changing the orientation of the SEA as well as district staff by contracting with the University of Virginia's Partnership for Leaders in Education program. This activity will assist the leadership teams to develop additional skills to monitor progress and provide other management supports. The state has also recognized the need to develop new attitudes and relationships at the district level. Participating LEAs will be part of an extension of a pilot project with Michael Fullan and his team to build the capacity of districts and schools to deliver the "enhanced teaching and learning practices" necessary to implement the RTT plan. One concern in the capacity building plan is that many of the support activities seem to have a top-down emphasis.

(ii) The application includes letters of support from critical stakeholders and impacted groups. The letters provided insight into the dialogue the state undertook with key stakeholder groups. LA indicated that the Reform Group at the SEA would continue to lead "facilitation and integration" efforts with these groups but did not propose specific steering committees or on-going community forums to institutionalize this two way communication. Without specific sponsored dialogues that establish two-way communication on a regular basis, high level stakeholder support may be difficult to maintain over the life of the project.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	24	24	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5	5	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	19	19	

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

(i) LA has made progress in each of the four education reform areas. Of particular note is the Recovery School District (RSD) which has high potential for turning around low-performing schools even though few schools are currently in RSD.

(ii) K-8 state assessment scores have risen fairly consistently since 1999 with a downturn in 2005 - 2006 and then an upward trend through 2009. The state has enacted many reforms that contribute to this increase, including aligned assessments, improved teaching, and better accountability systems. The state presents an interesting chart on the literacy pilot that shows the distance that the state must come in its lowest achieving districts to have every student at grade level.

NAEP trends, however, provide a different interpretation. LA's scores follow the slight uptick nationally but appear to actually be constant rather than rising at the same rate as the state trend data indicate. Math scores appear to be rising at a more consistent rate.

Achievement gaps in LA were very large to begin with and are now less dramatic so that any decrease in the gap must be seen as positive. The approximate 10 point decrease over 10 years will need to be accelerated to close the gap.

The high school graduation rate has risen from 62% to 67% in 2009 as reported by Editorial Projects in Education Research Center. The application does not include state reported data.

While the state is improving, large gaps still exist and the state will need to carefully negotiate annual targets to bring LA students to an acceptable achievement level.

Total	125	103	106	
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B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards	40	40	39	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20	20	
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20	19	
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
(i) The state participated in the Common Core Standards Initiative which included 48 states and 3 territories.				
(ii) The LA state board has approved a resolution to adopt the standards by July 2010.				
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)				
(ii) LA presented evidence on the approval of the Common Core of Standards by a subcommittee of the State Board and indicated that the Board provided a "rubber stamp" approval the following day. LA, however, did not provide a copy of this final whole Board approval.				
(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)				

(i) and (ii) LA is participating with 26 other states in the Partnership for Assessment of College and Career Ready Standards.

(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	14	14	
(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>The state plan to support the transition to standards and assessment includes all appropriate components from awareness to implementation.</p> <p>In regard to the standards, LA intends to contract out the first cross walk exercise and use state content committees and district or school staff "as appropriate" to develop standards for pre-K, science and social studies and Louisiana specific standards. The state does not further define what appropriate involvement might look like. The curriculum development to support the standards will be done by contracted course developers and subject matter experts which will include teachers and leaders. This appears to be the key part of implementing the standards. The development work will culminate in 2012 with the SEA developing a set of professional development modules to model best practices for teachers. Much of the articulated standards plan appears to have most of the action at the state level and the content support teams at the district/regional level. While it is always difficult to provide sufficient release time for teachers to participate, their lack of substantive involvement at the beginning of the process may lead to poor implementation down the road. An additional weakness in the plan is the "marketing strategy" which implies a top-down approach rather than building support and engagement through involvement. The state does, however, recognize the role of "educators" in the development of the common curriculum.</p> <p>LA has added a provision that it may add up to 15% of its own standards. Further discussion of this provision would have been useful in order to know how the state might allow additional standards to be added, in what content area(s) as well as the possible impact on the assessment system.</p> <p>The assessment roll-out will focus on aligning all of its assessment system with the new summative assessment. Results from all the components, including end of course tests, will be integrated with teacher grading which will help all the stakeholders understand how well students are performing. One of the important aspects of the new assessment system will be the two-week turn around time for results so that teachers can use these data to better inform instruction. The state also intends to align the assessments for students with disabilities and English language learners with the new system. LA's formative assessment - Enhanced Assessment of Grade Level Expectations (EAGLE) - will be upgraded to provide diagnostic data four times a year for tested and non tested grades as well as components for daily and weekly assessments. The assessment roll-out plan is very ambitious requiring both a high level of development as well as coordination. While the state has included milestones and action steps for all phases of the system, the application does not provide an end date for all of this work. While this level of development will always be a work in progress, it would have been useful to know when each phase was to be implemented.</p>				
Total	70	64	63	

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	24	24	
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
LA has implemented all 12 elements.				
(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	4	4	

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

The state has an impressive plan to develop and make available a wide array of student, teacher, and school performance data to improve the educational system. The state intends to develop a web-based portal - INSIGHT - which will provide access to formative and summative assessment data, value added measures of educator effectiveness, and the Human Capital Information System among other databases. INSIGHT will use customized dashboards to make the data user friendly. The state also intends to use this portal to identify effective programs as well as predict student performance on summative assessments. The system will be fully operational by 2014.

The state's plan for integrating all of these systems with a web based portal is very ambitious, it will require a unprecedented degree of compatibility and interconnectiveness across the system. It would have been useful to know how the state will provide access to these systems as INSIGHT is being built and a more realistic discussion of how the system will be integrated and used. While the state has planned for a phase-in and pilot testing of the system, appropriate use of these systems as well as diminishing the potential misuse will be critical to the success of the plan.

(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)

(i) LA intends to increase the use of instructional improvement systems by improving its formative assessment tool - EAGLE. While it is unclear why districts have not used the system in the past, the improvements appear to be focused at the state level rather than on local instructional needs. As part of RTT the participating districts are required to implement instructional improvement systems but appear to have some choices. Given that this is a formative assessment system, additional state guidance may be necessary to ensure both the quality and the credibility of the system.

(ii) LA plans to provide an aggressive professional development program to increase the use of data to inform instruction and to improve the capacity of local educators to make instructional decisions based on data. LA will establish a network of coaches (one for every seven schools) to train educators on using EAGLE to plan instruction and analyze data. By using a job-embedded approach and data coaches, educator use should increase. Most of the activities are focused on improving instruction, other important uses by districts and schools are not addressed, e.g. LEA level analyses of gap closing or school curriculum strengths and weaknesses.

(iii) LA will improve the process it uses to make data available to researchers by placing more data into a central warehouse and implementing the web-based portal. The state also intends to work more closely with researchers to better use the results of their research to inform practice. This two-way communication is a positive approach to bartering data access with the access to the studies. FERPA protections are provided.

Total	47	42	42	
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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	9	9	
(i) Allowing alternative routes to certification	7	3	3	
(ii) Using alternative routes to certification	7	3	3	
(iii) Preparing teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage	7	3	3	

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

(i) LA allows for alternative routes to certification for teachers and principals. The alternative routes for teachers are briefly described in the application and include the following required elements: provided by various non IHE providers (2 out of 5); are selective; provide supervised school experiences; and limit coursework. It is unclear without the statutory language whether or not candidates are able to opt out of coursework. The application provides limited information on alternative paths for principals with the exception of teachers seeking to enter leadership positions. The state appears to lack a variety of alternative routes for principals.

(ii) The application indicates that in 2008-2009 approximately 11,000 teacher certifications were issued. Of that number, a little less than one quarter completed alternative teacher certification programs. In the alternate program, 37% of the candidates were certified by private providers.

Principal certification appears to be a weak area with the alternative programs requiring participants to hold or be eligible for a teacher certification. This does not open the profession to a range of candidates. Of the approximately 1200 principal endorsements issued in 2008-2009, only 8 (.6%) candidates were in alternate routes and 26% of all principal endorsements were in redesigned Masters programs.

(iii) The state has minimal processes for identifying of filling teacher and principal shortage areas. The current processes appear to be more of a hiring service than a process for monitoring, evaluating, and/or identifying methods to prepare teachers and principals to fill shortage areas.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	38	38	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	3	3	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	10	10	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	7	7	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	18	18	

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

(i) LA is developing a system to measure student growth in tested and non-tested grades and subjects. The timeline for completion is the end of the 2010-11 school year, at which time teachers in tested grades will be able to access student data to assess their own effectiveness. Principals will have data by spring 2012 to assess school effectiveness. The measures for non-tested subjects and grades will be based on audits of teachers' goals and standards which is a weakness in the system without an increased emphasis on comparability across grades and schools.

(ii) LA is currently developing a teacher and principal evaluation system that will include multiple rating categories as well as student growth as a significant factor, i.e. 50%. The law mandating student growth in teacher and principal evaluations was passed in May 2010 and requires teachers and principals to participate. Given the recent passage of this legislation, there are many implementation steps yet to be worked out. The program is scheduled to be piloted in two LEAs and several charter schools prior to full implementation.

(iii) The requirements for the annual evaluations and the support systems are included in the new legislation. There are very tight timelines for making the evaluations available, providing constructive feedback, as well as to provide informal evaluations. The ability to meet these requirements using student growth measures will require much preparation and assistance by the State which is not entirely addressed in the application. The use of the state level Human Capital Information System (HCIS) will require a high level of design and preparation work. The timelines in this section coupled with the timelines for the new summative evaluation may strain the implementation of all the new value added systems in LA.

(iv) Professional Development is required as part of the new evaluation system. The state intends to provide professional learning opportunities as part of the evaluation information system. It is unclear if the state has had an opportunity to fully explore providing professional development under these circumstances. The professional support and development may need to be more robust than what may be included in Human Capital Information System.

LA's Blue Ribbon Commission for Educational Excellence has developed a teacher compensation system and action plan that will be used as a framework by all districts and schools as they select, develop, and implement a teacher compensation system. The application lacks detail on how the new compensation systems will be paid for. The new compensation system does not apply to principals.

Tenure notification will be incorporated into the new evaluation system with a notification function added to HCIS. Principal's are not tenured in LA.

The new legislation also requires dismissal following an intensive assistance program for ineffective teachers after a single year. The timeline for implementation is not specified. It should be noted that LA intends to enter into performance contracts with principals which will include an effective teacher factor. It is not clear how this will be implemented.

LA will be implementing a new evaluation system many aspects of which are still unclear. The state has the authority to meet this criterion for teachers but the details are still in development. The impact on principals is not clear.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	16	16	
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	9	9	
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	7	7	

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

(i) and (ii) LA's plan to ensure the equitable distribution of teachers and principals includes creating demand through the use of the new teacher effectiveness requirements (i.e. using student growth measures); aggressive recruiting to expand the talent pool using national recruiting, improved screening, and training; and finally to reward in-state universities that produce more candidates in high need areas. The state will create a leadership academy to identify and prepare new Principals.

The state plans to develop a Model Staffing Initiative (MSI) to monitor vacancies, ensure equitable distribution, and provide consulting services to LEAs who are struggling with staffing issues. MSI is consultant based and appears to be providing basic services.

In addition to new teacher recruitment, LA will develop an expert teacher corps based on the effectiveness criteria in hard-to-staff subjects to provide distance learning via the virtual school or broadband capacity.

LA did not present data to indicate their need areas for effective teachers or principals nor a rationale for selecting these approaches. Without data on vacancies by area or subject or type of school it is difficult to know if the plan is ambitious, yet achievable. If the baseline data in the performance measures represent current conditions (or assumed conditions in 2010-2011), 8% of the teachers in high poverty, high minority

schools are highly effective and 10% of the teachers in low poverty, low minority are highly effective; the corresponding numbers for ineffective teachers are 25% and 22% respectively. This implies much room for improvement and an aggressive plan for recruiting, training, and retaining effective teachers.

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	13	13	
(i) Linking student data to credentialing programs and reporting publicly	7	6	6	
(ii) Expanding effective programs	7	7	7	
(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>(i) LA claims it has been a leader in using value-added data to evaluate teacher preparation programs, publicly reporting the data, and requiring the providers to develop plans to increase the effectiveness of their programs. The state is currently developing a similar program for leadership programs. The state will add its new value-added assessments to the evaluation of teacher preparation programs. The state has used these evaluations to hold preparation programs accountable and cites an example in their application of a program that was required to improve its masters program. The program for principals is currently in the development phase and will be fully implemented by 2011-2012. The state will add out-of-state programs to this system as well. However, the state does not provide data on the number of teachers prepared within the state and from out of state programs. These data are important to measure the effectiveness of the program.</p> <p>(ii) The state will provide financial incentives to institutions and to participants in programs deemed effective and agree to teach in districts with shortages.</p>				
(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	16	16	
(i) Providing effective support	10	8	8	
(ii) Continuously improving the effectiveness of the support	10	8	8	
(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>(i) LA's plan to provide effective professional development includes focusing on data informed improvements, increasing the amount of job-embedded professional development, implementing a District Capacity Building process, and providing specific leadership supports. Professional development will become part of the partnership agreements between the state and participating LEAs which should provide more specifics on the expectations including how LEAs will structure the school day to increase professional development experiences. LA acknowledges the difficulties in this approach but does not offer any strategies to assist LEAs in finding more time.</p> <p>(ii) LA will require that professional development be evaluated at two intervals - soon after the training and a few months later. This should provide data on professional development that stays with the teacher and/or principal and is used to improve teaching and learning. LA states that the SEA and LEAs will work together to ensure that programs that do not result in student achievement do not continue but LA does not discuss how programs will be improved.</p>				
Total	138	92	92	

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
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(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	10	5	5	
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>The state, through the Recovery School District (RSD), has the statutory authority to to remove from local control any school that has remained in academically unacceptable status for four consecutive years. After five years with the RSD, the state may recommend that the school be returned to the LEA, continue with RSD, or be closed. Without the inclusion of the statute in the application, it is unclear if the State has similar authority over LEAs.</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	
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>(i) LA has a high quality plan to identify its lowest achieving schools.</p> <p>(ii) LA's Recovery School District (RSD) has become a model for improving consistently low-performing schools using all four of the school intervention models. RSD has shown academic improvements with three approaches: restart (charters), turnaround, and closure. RSD currently operates 117 schools. Given the early success of RSD, LA will use RTT funds to invest in more evaluative and lessons learned activities.</p> <p>Since LA estimates that there are an additional 300 schools where 50% or more of the students are performing below grade level, the state is proposing to use the RTT funds to create a high performing schools initiative (HPSI) to support districts to create RSD like programs before state intervention is necessary. LA is to be commended for not waiting four years for a school to fail before intervening given years of unacceptable performance. This will be a competitive program for districts that have the strongest commitment to turning around an additional 80 low-performing schools. Districts will be provided with resources and additional assistance.</p> <p>For those schools outside the RSD and HPSI, LA will bring other RTT areas to bear, such as 500 highly effective teachers and 60 highly effective leaders to assist in these schools, increasing STEM activities as well as sharing the lessons from RSD. Given the number of schools that are low-performing in the state, the combination of these approaches should lead to positive results.</p>				
Total	50	45	45	

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>(i) State funding for education rose from 43.71% in 2008 to 48.08% in 2009 of the total state budget.</p> <p>(ii) LA funds high poverty schools equitably through its Minimum Foundation Program that considers the wealth of each district and provides state funding in an inverse proportion, i.e. the poorer the district, the</p>				

more state funding. In addition, the state is to be commended for requiring that funds within districts are spent on high need students.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	38	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	6	8	

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

(i) LA has no "caps" on the number of charter schools, the percentage of schools that can be charters, nor enrollment in charters. LA has high score for this area.

(ii) Charter schools may be authorized at either the state or local level and require the same approval process including a third party review. One factor in the review of existing operators is the academic performance of current charter schools. New operators are evaluated on the merits of the written application and the schools of the founding team. Out of 157 applications reviewed by either local or state authorities, 79 were approved. Of those 77 are currently operating. The renewal process is set in statute requiring annual monitoring with a comprehensive review at the end of three years. Student achievement is part of all the reviews. The framework included in the application specifies that charter schools will set academic performance expectations and that the charter can be revoked if academic performance does not meet those standards. The application indicated that one charter has closed primarily for academic performance issues. The statutory authority is clear and measurable allowing the state to hold charters accountable for their performance.

(iii) LA charter schools are funded in three distinct ways based on the formula used to ensure equitable funding across and within districts based on wealth and student characteristics; each of the methodologies guarantee equitable per pupil spending compared to the district in which the charter resides.

(iv) LA supports facilities funding at charter schools.

(v) A variety of innovative autonomous schools are supported both in the Recovery School District and traditional LEAs. Autonomy can mean the more traditional site based management, hiring authority, as well as setting the length of the school day and year. The applicant provides examples that range from magnet schools, career academies, and lab schools associated universities. While the applicant states that LEAs are permitted "certain flexibilities" it is not clear the extent of this autonomy and whether or not it meets the definition in the RTT application.

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

(v) The state clarified that the flexibilities provided to the autonomous schools meet the RTT requirements of open enrollment; flexibility and authority to define instructional models; ability to select and replace staff; implement new structures and formats for the school year and day; and control over the budget.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	2	2	
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(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The areas covered in this criteria were part of other state reform conditions with the exception of the high school redesign project. LA did not present other significant reform conditions outside those presented previously in the application.

Total	55	50	52	
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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)

LA has an aggressive STEM emphasis that flows through every aspect of the application from turning around low-performing schools to supporting high quality teachers. LA will have a dedicated STEM office in the SEA which will be responsible for ensuring that STEM activities are woven throughout the RTT implementation. The state is to be commended for its plan to expand the Advanced Placement programs as well its virtual school into rural areas. LA is very clear on the efforts it will make to address the needs of underrepresented groups and of women and girls in STEM areas.

The state has also established a STEM Alliance to garner support from businesses and foundations to further advance STEM activities through five regional STEM Hubs.

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)

LA has integrated its Education Reform Plan throughout the RTT application to ensure that the priorities of standards and assessments, data use, teacher and principal quality and turning around low-performing schools are enhanced and extended. While only two-thirds of the LEAs chose to participate in RTT, the possibility of statewide impact is increased through the opportunities for non-participating to learn from the reform experiences of others. LA does seem committed to making this a more robust statewide effort than the numbers suggest.

Given the distance LA schools and districts need to travel to raise student achievement to acceptable levels, the state will need to not only monitor the implementation of RTT but also build the capacity of teachers and principals to improve teaching and learning.

Total		0	0	
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Grand Total	500	411	415	
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Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2



Louisiana Application #2900LA-4

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	57	59	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	42	42	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	10	12	
(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>(i) LA has articulated a strong plan with clear goals and an infrastructure to support LEAs in carrying out the plans. The text and accompanying appendices not only provide rich detail about what the state has accomplished in the recent past, with empirical evidence, but also set out new plans that are tightly aligned with the four RTTT reform areas and are consistently linked to the state's nine (sometimes identified in various parts of the proposal as eight) student achievement goals.</p> <p>(ii) The participating LEAs (which represent 67% of the state's LEAs) have all indicated a willingness to commit to the entire MOU or Partnership Agreement. This agreement provides even more detail than the suggested federal model. Letters of support indicate a collaborative environment whereby the preliminary scope of work was negotiated. The applicant also employed a readiness survey that undoubtedly helped LEAs better understand what they were agreeing to commit to. The preliminary scope of work is also carefully aligned with the four RTTT reform areas.</p> <p>(iii) LDOE has outlined clear student achievement priority goals for the participating LEAs with targets that clearly jump start a state system that has in the past not performed well relative to its peers but that has recently made some significant improvements. The targets appear ambitious yet doable given the level of commitment across the board to reform, as reflected in the strong letters of support from a broad range of stakeholders. This reviewer's reservations are that the participating schools only represent 48% of the state's schools, 47% of the state's students and 51% of the students in poverty. The state has suggested a range of events and networks to showcase participating schools' successes, and encourage non-participating LEA buy-in, but there is no real evidence that these will have the hoped for impact on the non-participants.</p>				
(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)				
<p>The state provided evidence in the presentation that non-participating LEAs will have opportunities to be involved in the plan and that involvement will have a positive statewide impact.</p>				
(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	26	26	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	18	18	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	8	8	
(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				

(i) The LDOE proposes a constructive, three-pronged effort to ensure there is internal capacity to implement the reform. The notion that the state is not only willing to reorganize its management structure but to also confront head-on the culture of the institution, moving it from compliance-based to performance-based, is certainly noteworthy. The idea that the state will explore a British model of "delivery" to ensure fidelity of implementation is intriguing. The state also includes in the budget a team of six staff as part of a "Reform Team" to guide both the state reorganization and support LEAs. The acknowledgement that LEA support is needed in a way that meets the unique needs of LEAs is also important. Finally, the plan addresses directly and early on the need to think seriously about sustainability and scale-up by having Michael Fullan train participants. These are all important steps that will help move local capacity in the right direction.

(ii) This reviewer was struck by the tone of the letters of support. They went beyond just support. That is, they also conveyed an enthusiasm for the potential to work together as true partners in fleshing out the details of this plan. The only reservation is that both the teacher and principal letters were ambiguous about wholehearted endorsement of annual evaluations supported by student performance indicators that could lead to decisions related to remuneration, promotion, or removal.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	23	23	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5	5	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	18	18	
(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>(i) The plan was clear and unequivocal in it's evidence that the state has recently made significant progress in each of the reform areas, but also that the state is not willing to just rest on its laurels. It has clear goals, activities, and timelines for making even more significant gains across all four reform areas.</p> <p>(ii) Quantitative data used to document student achievement are a challenge to understand, across most any context, in a comprehensive way since there is so much evidence and so many different ways to present it. The limited evidence provided in the LA application suggests that improvements have been made in the past decade, although it is difficult to assess how significant those gains are from the presented data (e.g., the SPS scores are not clearly explained). The appendices appear to offer a somewhat more muted picture of student progress (at least for NAEP data - Appendix A16). What is clear for all the evidence is that there is still plenty of room for more growth. Perhaps the most impressive improvements have come in the state's most troubled schools, those now being governed by the RSD - a program that provides strong state leverage for persistently under-achieving schools. The degree to which the significant reduction in the gap between African-American and white students is accounted for by RSD or some other factor is unclear. Nevertheless, the accountabilities and plans presented in the LA RTTT proposal offer strong prospects that students in the state will be learning more with an infusion of RTTT funds.</p>				
Total	125	106	108	

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)

- (i) The LA application provides clear backup in Appendices of their participation in the CCSSI initiative. This initiative includes nearly all of the states.
- (ii) The LDOE offers evidence (Appendix B7) that a resolution has been passed by BESE to adopt the CCSSI standards by July 2010 and even takes the extra step of outlining a clear process for that adoption (Appendix B8). More importantly, the application takes the further steps of extending the standards to other content areas, cross-walking the new standards with current state GLEs, modifying curriculum guides to be consistent with the standards, and developing professional development modules to help local teachers better understand these standards. The budget also confirms adequate resources to carry out these actions.

(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)

- (i) Unlike participation in the standards initiative (see B1i), the application is quite clear about how LA was involved by taking a leadership role in ensuring the assessments align with achievement and teacher effectiveness goals. In addition, the applicant noted a commitment to developing timely feedback on these assessments (two week turnaround) to help better inform local decision making, and a promise to expand the assessments to other subjects and learners with exceptionalities.
- (ii) LA is participating in a consortium of states that involves a majority of all the states (n=26).

(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)

The LA proposal offers a clear set of goals, activities and timelines for supporting LEAs in implementing enhanced standards and high-quality assessments. The budget (e.g., funding 16 content specialists, new curriculum guides, and annual professional development modules) offers further evidence that the state is serious. The performance measures associated with the five goals also confirm seriousness of intent (e.g., quadrupling the proportion of graduates scoring at least one 3 on an AP exam). The plan also calls for integrating the new assessments with local grading systems and other student work, as well as developing useful (4 times a year) formative assessments, both of which are valuable contributions. The crux of the issue, as the proposal points out, mostly has to do with building local capacity to carry out implementing the standards so that new assessment tools can track clearly students' improvement. As noted, the state is dedicating significant resources to aligning these standards and making sure that teachers are aware of their existence. Left unanswered in the proposal is how all the professional development will move teachers beyond understanding to detailed adoption of the new standards as part of their regular instructional routines.

Total	70	66	66	
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C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
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(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	24	24	
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) LDOE delineated all 12 elements of the America COMPETES Act and verified that each element is an integral part of the LDS.</p>				
(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	4	4	
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) The LA RTTT application notes that the state is one of only two states with the ability to longitudinally link individual student achievement data to teacher effectiveness, producing a value-added score. The text and budget support the important point that good data is essential to improving instruction. The state has a clear set of activities and associated timelines for moving their innovative data sets from either the design or pilot stage to full implementation. With all the complexity of developing new systems, as well as ensuring that the systems are effectively used, some of those timelines appear somewhat overly optimistic given all the other demands for improvement being placed on local educators. While there are clear plans for educating local practitioners about the various data sets, it is not clear how they will find the time and develop the skills to apply all this new knowledge about data, particularly when data use has not been a particularly strong component of teacher responsibilities.</p>				
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	15	15	
(i) Increasing the use of instructional improvement systems	6	4	4	
(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>(i) The RTTT reform plan criterion for this component refers to "local instructional improvement systems." Yet, the text provided by LDOE suggests that LEAs will be encouraged to adopt an IIS developed by the state (EAGLE & HCIS). An option is provided for other systems, but the emphasis clearly favors the state system. Despite this caveat, it is worthwhile noting two positive parts of this plan -- that all LEAs will be required to adopt an IIS and that the state has made an effort to provide enhanced technology infrastructure (better broadband connection) for more remote LEAs.</p> <p>(ii) The use of data to improve instruction within this plan is premised on the need for substantial coaching and professional development to change the prevailing professional culture. In most schools data use is not a priority activity for teachers. The job-embedded aspect of the training, coupled with coaches who will be available to assist teachers as they try to apply what they have learned in their training, will strengthen the prospects that the professional culture will change. Yet, it is not clear that the coaches will have time to work with individual teachers (it appears they will work with leadership teams) and it is also unclear how teachers will find the needed time to apply these new-found data-use skills, given all the other demands that this plan will place on them.</p> <p>(iii) The plan identifies five important steps (more data in a central location, data accessible through web-based portals, quarterly meetings with researchers to articulate needs, building a business model for researcher privileges, and encouraging more 'data mining' with insights shared more widely) to insure that researchers will have increased access to and will use some of this data to produce research reports that will inform both state and LEA planning purposes. The most important of these steps is to bring the researchers to the table to hear their needs as the new model is developed.</p>				

Total	47	43	43	
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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	14	20	
(i) Allowing alternative routes to certification	7	4	7	
(ii) Using alternative routes to certification	7	4	7	
(iii) Preparing teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage	7	6	6	

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

(i) The LA application clearly specifies legal provisions for alternative certification pathways and, indeed, details a range of those options, including private providers. However, the proposal does not directly address the five elements that are part of the evaluation criteria. Rather, the application refers reviewers to web links (pp. D-2). Using the descriptions from the text this reviewer was able to verify that two of the five elements defined for alternative routes to certification are present (various providers and supervised, school based experiences with ongoing support). Thus, the application was scored with the highest number of points possible given that criterion (i.e., "medium" points).

(ii) The LA application also makes clear that all the identified pathways are in use. Indeed, 1270 teachers and 330 leaders have taken advantage of these pathways. However, as noted in (i) above, for full points to be awarded the applicant must also provide evidence that these pathways that are in use meet the five criterion elements listed in the definition of alternative routes to certification. Again, that information is not available to the reviewer so the point allocation was the maximum for the medium score range - which is all that are eligible given only two of the five elements are clearly present.

(iii) The applicant provided three constructive strategies for monitoring shortage areas (use of the TEACH-LA web-site, expanding recruitment and preparation options, and creating incentives to teacher preparation organizations) and provided an important example of one successful expansion option -- the RSD effort that attracted over 13,000 applicants for just over 700 positions. To bring that plan to scale the state will adopt two programs -- Centralized Staffing Services and the Model Staffing Initiative.

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

During the presentation the state clarified that the alternative route programs for both teachers and principals meet all five elements of the RTTT criterion. As a result, this warrants full points for both sections.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	53	53	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	5	5	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	14	14	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	10	10	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	24	24	

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

- (i) The state plans to expand the existing, and well-recognized, value-added assessment that currently assesses every student in every tested grade or subject to include non-tested grades.
- (ii) By 2012-13 teachers will be have 50% of their evaluation determined by student growth (using the valued-added assessment) and plans are in place to expand that to currently untested grades and subjects. The plan also calls for multiple other factors (other than student performance, e.g., observation of instructional practices). There will be four rating categories. Principals will also be assessed based on teacher performance. These plans have been endorsed by the teacher and principal professional associations and meaningful efforts appear in place to actively involve those groups in the design and implementation of this work (i.e., the Educators Evaluation Advisory Committee).
- (iii) A new state law already calls for annual evaluations of teachers and principals (CPMS), which are linked to student achievement. More importantly, that legislation also carefully spells out the need for "constructive and actionable feedback" which is delivered in a timely manner. Thus, the applicant is awarded full points for this section.
- (iv) The state adopted in May of 2010 a requirement that LEAs provide professional development to all teachers and there is additional intensive assistance required for teachers and principals. The state is also proposing to assist Professional Learning Networks (although the exact work of these Networks remains vaguely defined) and to create a set of online tools and activities to assist teachers. The state has also already been piloting, and plans to expand, a teacher compensation program (TAP - Appendix D8). In addition, the state has sponsored a commission that recently released a well-thought out framework (Appendix D2) for teacher compensation and a transition to performance contracts for principals based partly on teacher effectiveness. The specifics of a leader compensation plan remain to be defined. By law teachers cannot be issued a certificate or renewal if they are deemed "ineffective" and ineffective teachers must be removed if the above mentioned intensive assistance plans don't help them make progress toward becoming effective. The plan clearly warrants full points for all the detailed plans provided with respect to teachers, but the lack of specifics for some of the principal plans warrants a point reduction.

The proposed state performance measurements for assessing progress on this section of the plan call for moving all nine indicators from 0% of participating LEAs to 100% by the end of the third year. The budget also clearly supports this work by hiring 10 specialist staff and contributing \$11 million in contractual funds to build and support these databases.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	21	21	
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	13	13	
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	8	8	

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

The budget for this section supports the plan by hiring four recruitment specialists and establishing contracts to build seven regional Model Staffing Initiative sites (\$7.3 million) to help principals attract, hire, and retain high quality teachers, especially in high-poverty areas.

- (i) The RTTT plan for LA suggests that there are four components in creating an equitable distribution of effective teachers in high poverty regions. These plans appear to be informed by the state's past actions, as well as available data. The plan proposes both a demand and supply side component as well as an expert teacher corps which will provide lessons online for geographic regions that still have shortages (no evidence of support for this was noted in the budget) and the expansion of centralized staffing services through the Model Staffing Initiative. This latter component will draw on lessons from a pilot plan already supported by the Gates Foundation. What appears to be missing from this section of the plan is any financial incentives (which are mentioned as a central part of other subsections in D), other than awarding "bonus points" for universities producing teachers in shortage areas.

(ii) This section of the proposal offers little new information, relying primarily on piggybacking what was said in D3i. There was no evidence offered of the trends for hard-to-staff subjects or specialty areas in the past,

which might help inform future plans. This section is where financial incentives are first highlighted with the suggestion, supported in the budget (\$750,000), of scholarships and signing bonuses.

(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)				
<p>(i) The LA proposal notes that it is the only state in the nation that currently links student growth to individual teacher preparation programs (Appendix A14). In addition to enhancing reporting capability, the plan calls for introducing several new measures (3 different indices noted), expanding the links to out-of-state systems, introducing links to principal training systems and insuring that training institutions will be held accountable for low scores.</p> <p>(ii) The plan calls for a comprehensive set of activities for credentialing programs to expand the number of effective teachers and principals, with appropriate budgetary supports for both groups. Two particularly noteworthy aspects of the plan are the special efforts to better prepare STEM teachers and replication of elements of successful programs in less-accessible parts of the state.</p> <p>The goals for this plan include substantial growth across both performance measures with 95% of the institutions having linked data by the third year.</p>				
(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	13	13	
(i) Providing effective support	10	8	8	
(ii) Continuously improving the effectiveness of the support	10	5	5	
(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>(i) The LA RTTT plan, as it does elsewhere, acknowledges the importance and difficulty in providing effective coaching and professional development. The plan points to the use of Michael Fullan to design a District Capacity Building process, as well as two projects for changing what it means to be a school leader (National School Administration Manager Project and the Vanderbilt Assessment for Leadership in Education). The proposal also highlights a range of encouraged practices from job-embedded professional development to common planning time (but it leaves unanswered how that time should be effectively used) to professional learning networks to involvement in several existing state programs (e.g., TAP & LSTS). The plan acknowledges the importance of training STEM teachers with the introduction of a LA STEM Alliance. The budget clearly supports these actions with four teacher support coordinators, master teacher stipends, stipends for highly effective principals and turnaround specialists, and \$2.7 million for TAP expansion. The outcome performance measures do not seem very ambitious, with an increased proportion of teachers and principals from effective to very effective of only 3%.</p> <p>(ii) The plan provides a convincing professional development logic model as an evaluation framework (Appendix D12). But no specifics are offered as the nature or frequency of evaluation activities. Furthermore, there is no mention in the budget of expenditures to support implementation of this logic model, although there are vague references to evaluation activities associated with the Learning Agenda and expansion of TAP.</p>				
Total	138	115	121	

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	10	5	5	
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) LA has a state entity, the RSD, which has the authority to intervene in schools and has a proven track record (evidence provided in Appendix A3) of turning around a significant number of schools. The application offered no authority for the state to take over entire districts.				
(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	
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) (i) The LA state accountability system, with clear scoring guidelines, has been calculating a School Performance Score (SPS) for all schools (see a sample list in Appendix E3) that is composed of test and attendance scores for elementary; test, attendance, and dropout scores for middle grades schools; and test and graduation rates for high schools. The SPS will begin to include growth scores by 2011-12. The bar has continually been raised for what constitutes a school worthy of intervention. Schools enter the RSD upon four years of academically unacceptable scores. This system provides clear and appropriate criteria for identifying the persistently lowest achieving schools. The state anticipates that the number of schools in RSD will grow from the current 117 to nearly 200 by the time the RTTT grant has ended. (ii) As noted in E1, LA has a nationally recognized state plan for turning around persistently low-achieving schools with the RSD. The application provides evidence that this institution has been working with the lowest-achieving schools and in 75% of the elementary schools and 66% of the high schools have boosted achievement to scores at or above the state average. The state plans to expand the RSD, which offers all four intervention models. The plan also calls for building the capacity within LEAs to create RSD-like institutions. To further the insights from that model the plan calls for using the RSD as an R&D engine to help drive innovation, yet the budget offers no clear delineation of which funds would be used for that purpose. The plan also proposes working with outside experts to identify ways to better prepare teachers in the RSD to deal with STEM content.				
Total	50	45	45	

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)				

(i) The evidence provided in the application suggests that total state funding for education increased by 4.37% from FY08 (43.71%) to FY09 (48.08%). In addition, the applicant offers evidence that the investment is paying off, citing the successes in the RSD.

(ii) The LA proposal is clear that the formula for state funding is in inverse proportion to wealth. That is, schools with low income students receive more state support than schools with higher income students. Furthermore, there are provisions in the law that calculate special weighting for certain student subgroups (e.g., at-risk and special education) and a provision that the funds must be spent on those students.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	34	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	7	7	
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	7	7	
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	4	7	

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

(i) The LA RTTT proposal delineates five kinds of charter schools within the state statute(s) and goes on to stipulate that there are no limits on the number or the budgets. The application adds further evidence that there are 77 currently existing charters, serving 4.7% of the state's school children, which is almost twice the national average. This adds credence to the argument that there is a positive culture in the state for promoting charter school growth.

(ii) The LA plan notes that there are clear, accountable laws not only for initial approval of charters, but also requirements for annual monitoring and renewal after five years. The application provides evidence of the teeth in the initial approval legislation with only about half of the applying schools gaining approval. There has been not enough time lag to assess the monitoring and renewal process, with most charter schools having been only in operation for a few years, but the guidelines (Appendix F3) clearly spell out three key criteria upon which the schools will be evaluated; student achievement, fiscal responsibility, and legal/contractual follow through. The intent of the legislation is that 'the best interests of at-risk students is paramount.'

(iii) The plan describes complicated funding guidelines for five different types of charter schools, but it appears as though charter schools get the same per pupil allocations as traditional schools. They also get equal access to any federal, state, or local flow through funding. The state has set up mechanisms to notify charter schools of competitive grant opportunities but there is no evidence offered about the degree to which charter schools avail themselves of those funds or the level of assistance offered by the state.

(iv) As noted in iii, there are five different types of charter schools and different regulations govern the facilities funding for each. But the majority of LA charters are type 5 and those schools are eligible for free facilities with capital repairs and renovations the responsibility of the LEA. It is more difficult to assess funding for the other four types but there appears to be legislation to at least provide priority access to vacant buildings for these schools.

(v) A range of options are described in the text, including magnet schools and tuition-free schools for highly talented youth in the arts and sciences. But the application is silent about whether these schools are open enrollment -- the primary criterion for assessing full points.

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

The state provided evidence in the presentation that the state's innovative, autonomous public schools meet all of the RTTT criteria. The state clarified that the schools meet the open-enrollment criterion. Thus, this section warrants a higher score.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	3	3	
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
The LA plan identifies five significant programs that highlight the commitment of the state to improve learning conditions and student achievement for students across the state. The majority of these (e.g., TAP, High-Poverty, High-Performing Schools) have been described in detail elsewhere in the proposal, so few new conditions are detailed.				
Total	55	47	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>The LA plan has built in two organizational arrangements that will help raise the level of priority regarding STEM activities: (1) creating a STEM director who will report directly to state leadership, and (2) tapping the expertise (they have already met once) of a broad-based group of STEM stakeholders to help build and support STEM activities. Their efforts will be carried out with a three-pronged approach: (a) ramping up the quality of STEM classes; (b) using regional STEM hubs to work with other partners to prepare and assist teachers (no mention of special actions for under-represented teacher groups) and to energize students about applied science learning opportunities (on this latter point the data on growth in student participation in school STEM-related clubs was a clear move in the right direction); and (c) preparing more students, especially under-represented groups, for careers with STEM emphases. An important first step in this last point was the state's plans to track and report course-taking and success in STEM classes, disaggregating the data by subgroups.</p> <p>In addition to the plans outlined in the section on the competitive preference priority, the application also makes reference throughout the body of the rest of the plan to ways in which STEM work will be integrated with the four federal education reform areas. Indeed, STEM is referenced approximately 90 times throughout the text of the proposal (excluding the competitive preference section).</p>				
Total	15	15	15	

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)				
The LA RTTT meets this priority by responding thoughtfully and completely to all four education reform areas with detailed plans, timelines, and proposed measurement outcomes. Indeed, the state's education reform agenda is organized succinctly around the four reform areas and much of the work to date (and evidence of success) either anticipated or was directly in response to the application criteria.				

The LA SDOE has provided evidence of its collaborative approach in bringing key stakeholders into the planning and design process and has maintained a firm grip on what it expects of its collaborating partners, especially the participating LEAs, which represent two-thirds of the population of LEAs and about half of the state's students. The goals and performance measures focus clearly on increasing student performance and seeking ways to reduce any differences among subgroups.

Total		0	0	
Grand Total	500	437	448	



Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2



Louisiana Application #2900LA-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	57	57	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	40	40	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	12	12	
(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>i. Applicant clearly presents a comprehensive and coherent reform agenda that addresses each of the four RTTT components. Noteworthy, is Applicant's nine goal Educational Reform Plan (Appendix A - 1) that integrates previous reform efforts into each of the RTTT components. Applicant demonstrates a state-wide commitment to their reform agenda by opening several of its reform activities to LEAs who did not sign MOUs.</p> <p>ii. Applicant secured MOU commitments from 67% of the LEAs which represent approximately half (47%) of the public school enrollment. The quality of the participating LEAs is further ensured by the Applicant requesting completion of a 10 question survey that details the level of commitment expected to participate in the RTTT grant and not allowing allow any parts of the MOU to be optional. Applicant's comprehensive reform agenda that integrates RTTT components into its Educational Reform Plan and intention to open reform activities to non-participating LEAs provides a critical mass for their reform initiative. Applicant's 88% union support is significant.</p> <p>iii. Applicant's comprehensive statewide reform agenda has committed to achieving its goals and outcome-based student performance expectations by 2016 for all students in all LEAs. Applicant's comprehensive reform effort and positive 10 year track record of continuing reform efforts and achievements builds upon Education Reform Plan, RTTT support and a deliberate strategy to open reform activities to non-participating LEAs .</p>				
(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	26	26	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	18	18	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	8	8	
(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>i. Applicant has developed a quality plan that will provide support to its comprehensive reform agenda using change theory best practices and will benefit from lessons learned from its own successful Recovery District case study. Applicant will increase its capacity to accomplish its reform agenda through a strategic reorganization that will take it from a "compliance-monitoring bureaucracy to a performance-based customer service organization." The reorganization establishes an intentional alignment of resources and support down to the school and classroom levels. Specific highlights in Applicant's RTTT implementation</p>				

plan include: defined leadership and accountability at each level of the system; measurable goals for each priority; technical support provided by Regional Education Service Centers and the use of the outstanding external expertise .For example, Sir Michael Baber will provide support in creating the Superintendent's Delivery Unit and Michael Fullan's team to guide school system central office, principal and school leadership teams.

ii. Applicant has a wide-range of stakeholder support that includes higher education, community agencies, business, non-profits, civil rights groups, professional educator associations, and legislative leadership/elected officials. Applicant has secured support from the American Federation of Teachers but support is not evident from National Education Association. In addition, support will continue from Teach for America, the Broad Foundation, New Leaders in New Schools, the New Teacher Project and Charter School organizations.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	23	23	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5	5	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	18	18	
(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>i. Applicant clearly demonstrates a record of progress for all four reform areas. For example, Applicant has: instituted a standards-based accountability model that incorporates Enhanced Assessment of Grade-Level Expectations (EAGLE), has instituted a longitudinal data system, recently adopted a performance-based growth model evaluation system for teachers and principals and has been recognized nationally for offering alternative pathways for educators, established a nationally recognized School Turnaround Program and established the Recovery District Program under the capable leadership of Paul Villas.</p> <p>ii. Applicant student achievement results demonstrate positive trend data. This is specifically evidenced by the positive data that has resulted from the work of the Recovery School District and the progress of its charter schools. In addition, achievement scores have been increasing on NAEP at the fourth grade level in reading and math. There is evidence (gap between African American and white students in fourth-grade reading was reduced by 15 points on the NAEP scale score from 1998 to 2009) of narrowing of gaps between African-Americans and white students. Applicant was one of seven states that consistently outpaced the nation in improvement scores according to Editorial Projects in Education Research Center. Graduation rate between 2001-2009 improved from 61.3% to 66.6%.</p> <p>However, the graduation rates are still below the national average and as the applicant has noted progress has not been great enough or is happening at an incremental pace that needs to increase as indicated by the 2014 RTTT student performance goals.</p>				
Total	125	106	106	

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)				

- i. Applicant has signed MOU with Chief State School Officers to participate in Common Core State Standards Initiative and is a member of a consortium of 48 states that is designed to adopt internationally benchmarked common standards.
- ii. By a resolution signed on May 20, 2010, the Applicant to adopt the common core standards no later than July, 2010.

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

Evidence was provided that the Common Core Standards were adopted by August 2.

(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)

i. /ii. Applicant previously participated in two consortia that were formed for purpose of developing high-quality assessments. Applicant now participates with a recently merged consortium group, the Partnership for Assessment of College and Career Ready Standards, that includes 26 States, as noted in MOU. The purpose of the partnership is to implement a shared vision of common assessments that are internationally benchmarked, build toward college and career readiness, measure a common core of standards and utilize technology for efficiency of delivery and scoring.

(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	18	18	
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Upon adoption of the common core standards and related, assessment, Applicant's Reform Plan presents an excellent comprehensive plan that includes five primary goals and a table summary of key activities, supporting evidence, actions and time lines that will support the transition to expanded standards and high quality assessments.

Most importantly, Applicant's online assessment system for the four content areas (EAGLE) will be retooled to provide diagnostic data on student progress toward core mastery of the standards at least four times per school year in both tested and non-tested grades.

The Applicant provides documentation that its standards and assessment system has been nationally recognized (standards and assessment system is ranked within the top ten in the country according to Achieve, Inc., 2007 and Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, 2007) as supportive evidence of its baseline capacity to met the five goals that support the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments.

Total	70	68	68	
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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	24	24	

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

Applicant provides evidence that its longitudinal data system (LDS) fulfills and fully implements all criteria identified in the 12 elements of the America COMPETES Act.

(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	5	5	
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</p> <p>Applicant has provided documentation of national external recognition from the Editorial Projects in Education Research Center that in 2009 ranked it second among 50 states in its ability to measure education progress. In addition, Applicant has provided documentation that it is one of 2 states that have the ability to link student performance to individual teachers and leaders. (Anderson, 2009) This documentation demonstrates the Applicant's proven capacity for accessing and using State data.</p> <p>Applicant will use RTTT funds to further expand accessibility of data to a variety of stakeholders to ensure it can be used for decision making through the following systems: Value-Added Teacher Preparation Program Assessment Model; Curriculum Verification and Results Reporting Portal; Human Capital Information System; Annual Student Progress Report; Insight, a centralized web-based portal that will allow teachers and administrators and partner researchers to see the academic growth pattern of individual students over time.</p> <p>Applicant's has established specific goals that are supported by well developed key activities, actions and timelines that will increase the probability of access and use of statewide longitudinal data.</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>i. Applicant has described planned actions that will give classroom teachers greater access to data that will support their instructional programs. The expansion of Enhanced Assessment of Grade-Level Expectations(EAGLE) and the Human Capital Information System(HCIS) are examples. The combination of these two data sets will provide quality information that can be valuable for improving instruction and student outcomes and increasing teacher effectiveness. Applicant's impressive threefold approach, that is supported by the two previously mentioned systems, has both the capacity and the ability to inform instruction of a timely basis; regional support to increase school and district capacity to use data, and the development of a Longitudinal Data system that is accessible to educators and researchers on multiple fronts.</p> <p>ii. Applicant will develop a progressive embedded professional development program that will support teachers, first on a pilot basis and then be expanded to additional participating LEAs through a network of coaches. Lesson learned from successful practices from the Recovery School district provides guidance for effective implementation strategies.</p> <p>iii. Applicant has a comprehensive plan that describes goals and key activities that ensures data accessibility for researchers. Components of the plan include: INSIGHT, a web-based portal, providing leadership and support for a consortium of researchers to work with staff.</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	20	
(i) Allowing alternative routes to certification	7	7	7	
(ii) Using alternative routes to certification	7	6	7	
(iii) Preparing teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage	7	6	6	

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

i. Applicant provides evidence of the authority to authorize alternative routes to certification for providing high-quality pathways for teachers and principals through alternative and regular routes. Applicant's plan contains the necessary elements in the definition of alternative routes to certification. The Applicant demonstrates the seriousness of its commitment by having numerous routes to obtain effective teachers and principals for the schools.

ii. Applicant has identified 3 alternative preparation programs for teachers and offers 4 pathways to attain leadership certification for administrators and 3 alternative routes. Applicant shows support for programs not part of higher education institutions such as the New Teacher Project and New Leaders for New Schools that have resulted in a significant number of program completers.

iii. Applicant has an effective process to monitor and identify areas of teacher and principal shortages. Applicant's primary strategy is their statewide web site that serves as a tool for matching educators to shortage areas. In addition, the applicant has expanded the successful Recovery School District's national talent pipeline for statewide use.

Applicant has started additional programs based upon newly identified shortage areas such as need for staff for school turnaround programs.

Applicant has an impressive variety of quality programs in use and a process for evaluating and monitoring areas of shortages.

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

D (1) ii. The applicant's presentation clarified that all 5 alternative pathways, as defined by this notice, are present.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	51	51	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	5	5	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	12	12	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	10	10	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	24	24	

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

i. Applicant has developed a model to calculate student growth for every tested grade or subject statewide. Applicant also has plans to design assessments aligned to the common core standards for non-tested grades and subjects.

Recently, the Applicant has passed impressive legislation, HB 1033, that mandates a statewide system for measuring teacher and leader effectiveness that will require 50% of the evaluations to be based on

evidence of growth in student achievement. The statewide adoption of this new evaluation system provides national leadership that is most noteworthy because it is a statewide initiative that extends beyond RTTT LEAs. The Applicant's current policies have already demonstrated its capacity to make changes by already linking student performance to all individual teachers in tested subjects.

ii. Applicant's standards-based accountability system expands current use of value-added measurement model through the development of a new Comprehensive Performance Management System (CPMS) that impressively connects standards, assessments, and student growth to teacher and principal performance evaluations. Noteworthy, is that 50% of the effectiveness measures will be student achievement data. The CPMS is designed to work as a continuous improvement and feedback model that provides information in the development of job-embedded programs to provide teacher and principal support and capacity building. Applicant has received input from teachers and principals in this process. But more importantly is that the Applicant's evaluation system delivered through their CPMS is now part of legislation that includes not just RTTT LEAs, but all LEAs.

iii. Applicant's state law adopted in May, 2010 states that every teacher and principal must receive an annual evaluation that includes criteria that differentiates degrees of effectiveness.

iv. Applicant's CPMS provides a comprehensive framework for informed decisions regarding professional development, compensation, promotion, tenure status, retention or dismissal and levels of effectiveness that encourage professional growth or reward significant expertise. The graphic displayed as Figure 1 (CPMS Implementation and Impact: Creating a culture of performance in every school) provides an excellent example of the comprehensiveness of the Applicant's evaluation program. Strategies for the implementation of the Applicant's Plan include 8 key activities that will, if implemented thoroughly across all LEAs, provide the necessary support to improve teacher and principal effectiveness using the CPMS.

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

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

i. Applicant, using lesson learned from the Recovery School District, that represents 13% of the state's turnaround schools, will build upon their demonstrated success of their priority of placing effective teachers and leaders in their schools (Appendix A 3:Growth in Recovery School District: New Orleans Schools 2007 to 2009). The RSD supports the Human Capital Talent Pipeline to screen teachers for assignment across the state. Additional support is provided through Centralized Staffing Services.

Applicant's purposeful plan for increasing the supply and equitable distribution of effective teachers outlines 7 key activities and actions that will support improvement for ensuring every child is educated by an effective teacher and principal..

ii. Applicant has a system to identify and align resources to provide support for equitable distribution of teachers in hard-to-staff subjects and speciality areas. The Applicant will use their Model Staffing Initiative to redistribute effective teachers in these shortage areas and strengthen the skills of teachers already in the LEAs. In addition, the Applicant will increase their established talent pipeline activities, which includes their expanded partnership with Teach for America, to better recruit teachers in these shortage areas.

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	13	13	
(i) Linking student data to credentialing programs and reporting publicly	7	7	7	

(ii) Expanding effective programs	7	6	6	
(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>i. Applicant has several years of experience with its unique Value-added Teacher Preparation Program Assessment Model. Data has been reported publicly that links student performance to individual teachers and programs that prepared them. Examples of adjustments that have resulted from feedback from this model provide unique leadership.</p> <p>ii. Applicant will transition into its value-added performance-based evaluation system that will qualitatively address and provide direction for expansion of preparation and credentialing programs by providing financial incentives to institutions and program participants.</p>				
(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	17	17	
(i) Providing effective support	10	8	8	
(ii) Continuously improving the effectiveness of the support	10	9	9	
(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>i. Applicant has a significant comprehensive support system planned for teachers and principals with quality, focused, and embedded professional development that will include a new level of student achievement data to inform practice and programs. Lessons learned from RSD successful practices such as coaching and the Teaching Improvement Cycle challenge traditional approaches that have not been effective. Specific mention of support for the Turnaround Specialist Program and the special training it provides for leaders is noteworthy and has a track record for success.</p> <p>ii. Applicant's ability to generate student growth information, that can be now tied to the effectiveness of professional development programs, preparation programs and traditional pedagogical practices will provide for a level of accountability that has not been present in the past. This information will provide the Applicant with key information to determine effectiveness of these programs, and how they provide quality support for teachers and principals and as a result lead to positive improvement of these programs.</p> <p>This represents a powerful and significant shift in practice from monitoring access to programs to program proficiency as measured by outcomes and customer satisfaction.</p>				
Total	138	122	123	

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	10	5	5	
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>In 2003 Applicant boldly enacted legislation that created the Recovery School District for the purpose of turning around under-performing schools. Applicant is the first state to create a statewide entity dedicated to this purpose. The RDS takes over school control and funding for five years in an intense effort to improve these identified schools.</p> <p>Applicant does not have this same authority with school districts.</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	
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>i. Applicant has a established record of identifying persistently lowest-achieving schools since 1999. Applicant has a multi-factor system for identification of these schools as academically unacceptable and has impressively has adjusted its cutoff score to include more schools and has expanded its efforts through the years.</p> <p>ii. Applicant's RSD model provides a successful school intervention strategy that has resulted significant student achievement growth. The RDS model has used all four intervention models. Applicant, indicating a sense of urgency to address still a significant number of schools (300) where 50% or more of the student population is performing below grade level, has expanded its RSD model by creating a High-Performance Schools Initiative that works within LEAs to create RSD-like conditions in their implementation of one of the four intervention models. Applicant's Education Reform Plan outlines six strategies that are supported by nine key activities that aggressively advance turning around the lowest achieving schools. It is clear that the Applicant is not satisfied with the current status quo and aggressively wants to reach additional students. The challenge in decentralizing this successful program will be to maintain a comparable culture of the programs best practices in the LEAs.</p>				
Total	50	45	45	

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>i. Applicant's percentage of total state revenues for education increased from 43.7% in 2008 to 48.1% in 2009 even as the Applicant's total budget decreased.</p> <p>ii. Applicant uses the Minimum Foundation Program that establishes an equity factor in the funding formula, that takes into account the wealth of each LEA thereby distributing funding in an inverse proportion to the LEAs wealth.</p>				
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	38	38	
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	8	8	
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	7	7	
(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)

- i. Applicant charter school law does not have a cap and therefore does not prohibit increasing the number of high-performing charter schools. Applicant's law allows five types of charters and gives priority to charter schools that will support at-risk students.
- ii. Applicant's criteria for accepting charter schools includes prescreening criteria that includes specific expectations. This prescreening has selectively eliminated some charter applications. Applicant has a monitoring and review process that uses student achievement data as a main factor in holding charter school accountable in the renewal process. In general, charter schools provide better student achievement results than traditional schools according to Educational Week article in Appendix E 4.
- iii. Applicant's charter schools receive comparable share of local, State and Federal funding as compared to traditional schools.
- iv. Applicant's law provides for funding for facilities and provides assistance with facilities acquisition that includes access to vacant public school buildings and funding strategies.
- v. Applicant has a provision for traditional LEAs to establish innovative, autonomous schools. Applicant provides over 30 examples of these schools across the state. The degree that these schools are autonomous is not explained.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions

5

5

5

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

Applicant has a variety of initiatives that support reform and have contributed to increased student outcomes as mentioned in this notice. Examples include: the High-Poverty High-Performing Schools Initiative, the High School Redesign Initiative, stipends for National Board Certified teachers and the implementation of the Teacher Advancement Program.

The above initiatives are in addition to the Applicant's significant reforms with its charter schools and acclaimed Recovery School District.

Total

55

53

53

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)

Applicant acknowledges that there is more to do for its STEM initiative to comprehensively reach its desired potential. The first statewide conference in 2009 on STEM resulted in establishing a statewide STEM initiative with regional STEM hubs throughout the state that will enable local resources and interested stakeholders to better collaborate and promote STEM. Specific emphasis is mentioned to increase enrollment of girls, low-income and minority students to enroll in rigorous STEM type courses. The Math Science Partnership and Scientific Work Experience Programs for Teachers will provide teachers with professional development to enable them to integrate real-world STEM applications in their daily lessons.

Total

15

15

15

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes	Yes	
<p>Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</p> <p>Applicant boldly meets the four required RTTT components that mirror their already established comprehensive Educational Reform Plan.</p> <p>In addition, the recent significant legislation to require the student growth criteria to be part of the statewide evaluation system requirement for teachers and administrators complements the Applicant's strategy that did not compromise its expectation that LEAs must buy in for the entire RTTT reform proposal.</p> <p>The Applicant placed its emphasis on the quality of LEA participation over the quantity of LEA participation in the initial years of the implementation of this proposal.</p> <p>At the same time, the applicant has provided inclusive strategies for all LEAs to benefit from many of the RTTT reform activities and provides recognized external experts that can "coach" all professionals in the significant changes and capacity building needed that this bold proposal demands.</p> <p>Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)</p> <p>Applicant's presentation team did an excellent job of providing support to the quality of their application that resulted in the excellent scores they received by this reviewer.</p>				
Total		0	0	
Grand Total	500	454	455	



Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2



Louisiana Application #2900LA-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	56	59	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	42	42	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	9	12	

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

The State has set forth a comprehensive and coherent reform agenda that clearly articulates its goals in each of the four reform areas of the ARRA, makes clear connections between its goals and the four reform areas of the ARRA, and explains how each of its goals builds on previous efforts and will be extended further. The plan is focused, built around a redesign of the State's Department of Education and the creation of a Race to the Top Reform Team that will provide support, assistance, guidance and accountability to the LEAs participating in the State's reform efforts. Improved student outcomes is clearly at the heart of all the reform and, because the State has achieved success in beginning to raise student outcomes over the past several years, further continuing along the path described is credible. Throughout the application cross-references make clear that the reform agenda is both comprehensive and coherent.

The terms and conditions of the State's Partnership Agreement by which districts commit to being Participating LEAs reflect a very strong commitment to the state's plans. In addition to committing themselves to the preliminary scope of work, it should be noted that the scope of work lacks the kind of detail found throughout the application, even including within the survey the State sent to LEAs to help them determine whether they wanted to participate in the application. Participating LEAs are also committed to the more detailed Louisiana Education Reform Plan. There is no provision in the Partnership Agreement that provides an opportunity for those districts represented by teachers unions to opt out of any portion of the scope of work, nor, conversely is there the reserved right of agreeing to discuss in good faith their agreement to comply with terms of the scope of work that controvert any collective bargaining agreement. Significant commitment on the part of the leadership of the 93 Participating LEAs is demonstrated by the signatures of 100% of superintendents and school board presidents and 88% of union presidents in the small number of LEAs in which teachers are represented by a union.

67% of the total LEAs in the State (representing 48% of schools) have committed to participate in the State's Race to the Top program; these LEAs educate:

- 47% of K-12 students,
- 58% of the State's K-12 minority students, and
- 51% of the State's students in poverty

While this represents thousands of students, the statewide impact will not be as broad as would be the case were more districts participating. It is precisely the higher expectation of performance, the additional funds and support and the strict accountability that will be applicable to Participating LEAs that pave the

way for meeting the ambitious goals. While the application argues persuasively that (1) many of the key reforms included in Race to the Top are nonetheless applicable to all districts in the State, as a result of the Louisiana Education Reform plan and state law, and (2) the State will leverage participation of the Participating LEAs by several important mechanisms, these are secondary arguments. The fact remains that the LEAs that are participating in the State's Race to the Top plans do not translate to the kind of statewide impact that will allow the State to reach its goals for increasing student performance, decreasing the achievement gap and increasing college enrollment.

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

The State's presentation discussion about how the State Board of Education's reorganization applies to all LEAs, participating and non-participating, strengthens the likelihood of state-wide impact. In addition, there was discussion throughout the presentation that highlighted the many instances in which districts followed other districts by adopting programs and initiatives that were successful, thus moving the argument about leveraging participation of Participating LEAs from a secondary approach to a persuasive argument about increasing the likelihood of state-wide impact.

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	25	26	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	16	17	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	9	9	

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

The application describes a comprehensive plan to ensure that the State has the capacity to implement, scale up and sustain its Race to the Top plans. Its capacity building plan builds upon an already existing effort to transform the State's Department of Education. To implement its Race to the Top program, the State proposes an overall leadership team (the *reform team*) to manage implementation of the reform plan, including the Race to the Top program, as well as several teams dedicated to implementing and overseeing each distinct part of the program. In particular, responsibility for critical aspects of the program will be housed within newly created District Improvement Superintendents, a Turnaround Unit, a Human Capital Unit, Goal Offices with field staff content specialists and early intervention specialists, Delivery Unit, Policy Unit, and the Recovery School District. The state has determined that the most effective support for schools and LEAs is on-the-ground, thus it plans to deliver technical support from a regional structure and directly to districts and schools. The various units are charged not only with building and providing expert content area support, but also with delivering professional development, disseminating best practices, and evaluation and monitoring functions. While the application speaks of intense district capacity building efforts, it is not clear that they will be sufficient that the Reform Team can be reduced in size and time beginning in the third year of grant administration. With only a few exceptions, however, the plan does not include time-lines or specific activities or tasks with which the responsible parties are charged.

The application states that the Finance and Administration Department has sufficient capacity to provide dedicated finance and budget support and that the Reform Director is responsible for making sure the Department is properly coordinated to carry out these functions. There is no detail presented with respect to who within the Department is responsible for what functions; nor is there a time line or description of the initiatives that will be carried out under this area of responsibility. Performance measure tracking will be part of the responsibility of the Delivery Unit, which will have staff and expertise sufficient to perform this work. The plan for this responsibility is explained in more detail, with parties designated for monthly reports, quarterly meetings, and other time-bound requirements for implementation.

The State's budget and narrative paint a detailed and compelling picture of using both Race to the Top and other state and federal education dollars to accomplish its targets and meet its goals. The State has already aligned state and federal funding streams to support the Education Reform Plan (and provides a helpful matrix in Budget Part I (2)), and its Partnership Agreement commits Participating LEAs to align their funds

with Race to the Top initiatives as well. The project-level budgets are very clear, and each one reflects all the initiatives and staffing required for each project, and is directly relevant and targeted to accomplishing the goals and objectives of each project. The only exception to this is in overall project implementation, where -- given the size of the task before them -- it is questionable whether the State's aggressive plan to down-size the Reform Team will provide sufficient ongoing leadership for the overall grant implementation and success.

The State's Race to the Top reforms are consistent with the already existing, funded, and supported State Reform Team. As a result, it is larger and more long-lasting in scope than Race to the Top. The efforts to build Department and District capacity will ensure that personnel will have the skills and knowledge to continue reforms after funding has ended. The State also describes how it will fill Department positions expected to arise from attrition in a way that will allow the State to continue reform initiatives that have been found to be successful. In several instances the application states that the reforms themselves will demand continued results. That is a hoped-for result, but not one that is or can be planned for.

The State and its LEAs have received support from a broad group of stakeholders, including teachers and principals, as well as legislative leadership, charter school authorizers, business, community, civil rights, foundations, higher education, parents, and STEM partners. In addition, a number of national education organizations that partner with Louisiana in its school reform efforts, such as the Broad Foundation, the Charter School Growth Fund, New Leaders for New Schools and Teach for America, provided support as well. The application makes clear that the State has plans to build upon and leverage this support to the success of its Race to the Top Program.

It should be noted that while the Louisiana Federation of Teachers was invited to and engaged in discussions concerning the State's application, its support is not as strong as that offered by the other education member organizations, including the Associated Professional Educators and Louisiana Association of Principals, both of which pledged to work collaboratively with the state to finalize and implement many of the initiatives which impact upon their members.

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

The State presentation clarified that the Reform Team will not be reduced in size and time beginning in the third year, that rather, it will be moved to state funding and made a more integral part of the organization and culture of the Department of Education. In addition, the description of how the State Department of Education is leading the shift in the culture from one of compliance to one of support clarifies another aspect of the State's capacity to implement the Race to the Top program.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	23	23	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5	5	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	18	18	

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

Louisiana has demonstrated its ability to make progress in each of the four ARRA reform areas over the last several years. The State created K-12 content standards, as well as a standards-based assessment system, including assessments for all of grades 3-11, end-of-course tests for high school students, and two alternate assessments for disabled students. The standards and assessments have been supported with a comprehensive statewide curriculum and an online formative assessment tool. Louisiana also has already created a high-quality longitudinal data system and has recently submitted a grant proposal for a P-20 longitudinal data warehouse that would link student data across multiple state agencies. The state's data capacity has been used to further other areas targeted in ARRA: they have used student achievement data to evaluate and hold teacher preparation programs accountable, informed teacher professional development and compensation, and developed a value-added assessment model. Louisiana has aggressively moved to establish alternative certification programs for teachers and administrators and has

used these, and other, programs as a way of enhancing equitable distribution of teachers and leaders. Finally, Louisiana created the Recovery School District as a structure and mechanism for the state to take over and turn around failing schools. Another mechanism used extensively for turning around failing schools is the creation of charter schools. The State has used various federal and local funding streams to support all of these initiatives.

The application demonstrates that Louisiana has had success in increasing student achievement in English Language Arts and Mathematics over the past several years, as reflected in both NAEP and State assessments. The application states that in fourth grade reading and math, and indicates that the percentages of students scoring *Basic* or *Above* on NAEP rose by 6 percentage points and increased 33 points between 1992 and 2009, respectively. However, it should be noted that the average scale scores for reading in grade 4 did not actually increase between 2002 and 2009 (both were at 207) and by gender subgroup the average scale score decreased from 204 in 2002 to 203 in 2009. The high poverty subgroup, by contrast, did show an increase in average scale score from 197 in 2002 to 201 in 2009. There is no NAEP data for grade 8 or for grade 4 mathematics provided other than in the narrative.

The application provides evidence that the State has had success in improving school performance since 1999. While school performance scores have increased from 69.4 in 1999 to 91 in 2009, School Performance Scores are based on student achievement data and other school factors; this is not purely a measure of achievement in English Language Arts and Mathematics. However, the percentage of fourth and eighth grade students scoring *Basic* or *Above* on the State math and English/Language Arts tests increased by a minimum of 8 percentage points over the period 2000 to 2009. Although student improvement increases are impressive, it is important to note that the increases are bringing students to proficiency; in addition to continuing this trend, the next task -- of bringing students to higher levels -- may be even more daunting.

As measured both on NAEP and state assessments, Louisiana has also demonstrated success in reducing the achievement gap between African American and white students and between students eligible for National School Lunch Program and those not eligible.

And finally, while still low, the ability of the State to successfully graduate increasing percentages of students from high school with a regular diploma in four years (from 62% to 69%) is impressive.

Total	125	104	108	
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B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards	40	40	39	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20	20	
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20	19	

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

Louisiana has demonstrated its commitment to adopting a common set of high-quality standards by participating in the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association Common Core Standards Initiative. The application provides evidence that the standards are internationally benchmarked and that their development included review and consideration by college faculty, as well as surveys of post-secondary instructors and employers to ensure that they build toward college and career readiness. There are 48 states and 3 territories participating in the consortium.

The State school board has committed to approving the Common Core standards by July 2010 and has a plan to adopt and roll out all of the standards. The state already convened a committee of state staff, teachers and leaders to guide the work of adoption, extension and implementation of the standards through a multi-step process, including:

- Formal adoption by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
- Work with WestEd to coordinate a process to develop aligned standards in Pre-K, social studies, science and additional standards as necessary
- Develop a crosswalk between the common core standards and the Louisiana grade level expectations, followed by efforts to adjust existing summative and formative testing blueprints
- Help spread awareness of the new standards and the upcoming implementation through dissemination of materials, in person and online learning
- Revision of the Comprehensive Curriculum with curriculum guides
- Create job-embedded professional development modules for teachers

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

The State provided evidence that the Student/School Performance and Support Committee of the State Board of Education approved adoption of the Common Core Standards on June 30, 2010 and clarified that the full Board has issued its final approval as well. However, the State did not provide evidence of the full Board's full and final approval.

(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)

Louisiana has demonstrated its commitment to improving the quality of its assessments by participating in the Partnership for Assessment of College and Career Ready Standards. The proposed assessments are to be internationally benchmarked, build toward college and career readiness, and be aligned to the Common Core standards. As a Governing State in the Partnership, Louisiana is committed to implementing the assessment system should it win a grant from the Race to the Top Assessment competition.

There are 27 states participating in the Partnership for Assessment of College and Career Ready Standards.

(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)

Louisiana's plan to support the statewide transition to and implementation of the Common Core standards and assessments developed by the Partnership for Assessment of College and Career Ready Standards includes six goals:

- Aligning the curricula with the standards
- Expanding Advanced Placement program
- Aligning the state's other assessments with the new assessments
- Aligning the accountability systems with the new standards and assessments
- Building teacher capacity to meet the new standards and assessment systems

- Fostering statewide awareness and understanding of the new standards and assessments

Each of the goals is supported by key activities, the evidence underlying the selection of the activities, actions and start and end dates. The responsible parties -- at the highest level of department directors -- are specified, but not aligned with the many goals and activities. The activities -- which include rolling out the standards and assessments, working with the state's institutions of higher education, developing new high school end-of-course assessments, developing, disseminating and implementing professional development, supporting schools to offer AP courses, and aligning other standards with the common core standards -- are such that they should enable the state to reach each of its six goals. However, some of the time frames allowed for key actions appear perhaps overly ambitious, for example, between July 2010 and January 2011 the state is planning to align state science and social studies standards to the core standards, integrate engineering and design into the science standards of all K-8 science courses, address technology in the standards in all courses at all levels and include technology in the standards in all courses at all levels. Similarly, the state is allowing very little time to embed the common core standards and the newly aligned comprehensive curriculum in the undergraduate and alternative teacher preparation curriculum.

Total	70	66	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	24	24	

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

The application provides evidence that the Louisiana Longitudinal Data System includes all 12 elements of the America COMPETES Act.

(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	4	4	
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Louisiana's Longitudinal Data System makes a great deal of data available, and the application describes a plan to provide greater inter-connectivity, wider access, and additional information available to key stakeholders throughout the state. Through the detailed plan - complete with activities, supporting actions, and start and end dates - the State will increase exchange and integration of P-20 data within the Department of Education and among statewide agencies, strengthen the already existing link between student achievement and teacher effectiveness, provide parents, teachers, administrators and other stakeholders with data about student indicators, consolidate statewide human capital data into one central repository and create a web-based portal to provide teachers, leaders, researchers and other key stakeholders with a customized dashboard where they can share information and access data about individual students, groups of students, growth patterns, assessment results, predictions, and professional development. While all of the new and/or enhanced data systems will make important and relevant data available to school-based and Department of Education staff, others are also providing access to useful information to parents, researchers, policymakers, foundations, etc. The plan includes specific activities to involve many stakeholders in the design of the data platforms, as well as training to ensure that stakeholders are able to access and use the data. In addition, the Department will create monitoring and support activities so that the data support decision-makers in continuous improvement. However, there is little evidence of how the State plans to ensure that school-based educators are engaged by the data, and

how the data will be used to support decision makers in continuous improvement of efforts in operations, management, resource allocation and overall effectiveness.

(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	15	15	
(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	5	5	

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

All Participating LEAs have agreed to acquire, adopt and use an instructional improvement system. Based on planned improvements and low cost, it is reasonably expected that most LEAs will adopt the State's Enhanced Assessment of Grade-Level Expectations ("EAGLE") system. Participating LEAs will also have access to the Human Capital Information System. These two systems together (1) enable teachers, principals and districts to identify students' strengths and weaknesses, plan curriculum, access targeted classroom resources, use targeted assessments, and share resources, and (2) provide teachers and principals with concrete recommendations for professional development related to their needs demonstrated by their success with individual and groups of students. The State has a detailed plan – complete with key activities, actions, and start and end dates -- for expanding EAGLE so that it has full functionality and is aligned to the new standards, and for providing hands-on training workshops first to district and school test coordinators and then to teachers in how to use the system. The State's plan does not include any similar detailed description of the activities or time frames related to how it will work with LEAs to use the Human Capital Information System as a means of increasing their use of its instructional improvement system.

The State has a high quality plan to support Participating LEAs and schools in providing effective professional development on how to use the instructional improvement systems and data to support continuous instructional improvement. Participating LEAs have agreed to schedule job-embedded professional development opportunities during the day for teachers to reflect on student achievement data and collaborate to adjust and improve their instructional practices. To support LEAs and their teachers to do this, the Department will recruit local coaches to conduct technical and content-based training at the school level on how to use EAGLE to plan instruction, analyze data and develop instructional action plans to meet individual students' needs. It is not clear that there will be sufficient capacity to ensure that there are coaches available to provide the support in each and every school, or that the coaches will have all of the skills necessary to do their jobs effectively. This plan is broken down into activities, each of which has a start and end time, and those responsible for each of the activities are designated.

The State's plan to make the data from its instructional improvement systems more available and accessible to researchers is multi-faceted and comprehensive. In addition, the state plans to collaborate with researchers to identify and conduct research initiatives that will be helpful to the state's efforts to improve instruction for children and to put researcher-generated issues on the state's research agenda. The state's plan for creating this consortium, including a memorandum of understanding regarding data sharing, is of high quality in that it includes goals, key activities, start and end dates and a designation of responsible parties. The plan creatively ties the creation of the central warehouse from which all of its student, teacher and school data can be accessed to access to researchers through the use of a new web-based portal.

Total	47	43	43	
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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	17	18	
(i) Allowing alternative routes to certification	7	5	6	
(ii) Using alternative routes to certification	7	6	6	
(iii) Preparing teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage	7	6	6	

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

While the application states that Louisiana's policies allow for alternative routes to certification for both teachers and principals, and that providers can be institutions of higher education or other organizations, the laws and regulations are cited but not provided. The application states that (1) the programs are selective in accepting candidates, provide supervised, school-based experiences and ongoing support, adapt and limit coursework to complement school-based experience and (2) upon completion, graduates are awarded the same level of certification that undergraduate preparation programs award. There is no evidence, however, that these are requirements of approved alternative pathways.

Seven alternative routes to certification are in use, including three for teachers and four for principals. However, it is not clear that those in use meet the five definitional elements of Race to the Top.

The application describes a few different strategies used to monitor and identify areas of teacher and principal shortage and to prepare educators to fill those areas. Monitoring is done through a statewide website on which LEAs advertise available positions and communicate to the Department of Education what shortage areas exist. In response, the Department expands responsive recruitment and preparation options, including offering incentives to teacher preparation organizations -- by creating new programs and certification options -- and engaging in aggressive nationwide recruitment to increase the pipeline. The application provides evidence that its process of responding to identified needs has been successful. The recruitment efforts that have been used in specific areas will, through the Centralized Staffing Services and Model Staffing Initiative, be launched statewide.

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

The State's presentation clarified and confirmed that alternative routes to certification for both teachers and principals meet the five elements included in the definition of alternative routes specified in the Race to the Top application.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	49	49	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	5	5	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	13	13	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	8	8	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	23	23	

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

Louisiana has provided evidence that it is already committed to measuring student growth, and using it as a basis for informing decisions related to teaching and leadership and has started the process of developing a model to calculate student growth for every tested grade throughout the state. The application makes clear that the state has committed to a single approach to measuring student growth -- using a value-added model. The plan begins with the immediate implementation of the state law requiring the use of value-

added annual evaluations of all teachers and administrators and includes detailed action steps with ambitious time targets for refining measures of student learning in non tested subjects and grades so that student achievement data is collected for every student and used in the evaluation of all teachers and administrators. This is followed by piloting and then wider use of the system statewide. In each case, activities, time frames and responsible parties are designated.

Louisiana has a high quality plan to design and implement rigorous, transparent and fair evaluation systems for teachers and principals that differentiate effectiveness using multiple rating categories that are based 50% on student growth. Effectiveness is defined in Louisiana as it is defined in Race to the Top. The plan includes significant collaboration with teachers and principals, individually and as represented by unions. Steps in the plan – all of which are supported with delineation of actions and time-lines – include

- the creative efforts to create the tools, rubrics, training materials and inputs
- the technical efforts to integrate the data into an information system and create both implementation and monitoring ability
- the engagement of stakeholders in the creation of the system and its tools, and
- the implementation statewide of the evaluation system for all teachers and principals

By law, the value-added evaluations of all teachers and principals will be conducted annually. The application states that formal evaluation results include data on student growth by individual student, class and school and constructive feedback. The screen-shot of evaluation results provide evidence that data and constructive feedback are part of both teacher and principal evaluation results.

In their signed MOUs, Participating LEAs have agreed to use the results of the value-added evaluations to inform decisions regarding professional development, tenure, promotions, compensation, retention and release. The state obtained funding from the National Governors Association to develop a teacher compensation system, the framework for which identifies key elements including value-added data, and implementation steps that will be used for making teacher compensation decisions. The evaluation reports for teachers and principals will include suggested professional development activities that are aligned to their strengths and weaknesses. However, there is no description of the types of professional development that will be provided, or whether it includes coaching or other induction support. In earlier sections, the application describes workshops that will be offered to help teachers become familiar with EAGLE and use data to improve their practice, but otherwise there is no description of the support to be offered. State law already requires connections between educator effect on student growth and decisions regarding their employment status. As part of House Bill 1033, teachers may not be granted certification or renewal if they have not met the state's standards for effectiveness based on student growth data. Participating LEAs must implement a system under which administrators make active decisions for tenure and recertification for effective teachers and discontinue those who are persistently ineffective. The state will support this effort by providing the value-added data to principals and building a tenure notification system. Similarly, House Bill 1033 requires LEAs to dismiss teachers and administrators who under-perform despite receiving legally required substantial support and assistance. The state's plan for putting all of this into effect is fairly detailed, and includes creation of the technical aspects and tools (including model performance driven compensation systems) necessary for the many decision making changes, requires a communications plan, and provides for support to LEAs as they engage in making these changes. Some of the actions, however, are statements of what is to happen rather than meaningful steps in a plan. For example, "Require participating LEAs to change to performance contracts for principals and provide sample contracts and technical assistance for the change." This kind of action step is not particularly meaningful. The plans for use of the principal evaluation system are not as developed as that for the teachers. The state's targets for reaching its goals are ambitious -- with one exception, it expects 100% of LEAs to meet the goals by the end of 2011-2012. The Participating LEAs have committed to these changes and many are required of all LEAs by law, nonetheless it is perhaps overly optimistic to expect to achieve 100% compliance within one year.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	20	20	
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(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	8	8	

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

The state's plan for ensuring that students in high-poverty and/or high-minority schools have equitable access to effective teachers and principals has four components.

1. An assumption that knowledge about the percentage of persistently ineffective educators will create increasing demand for effective educators. Other than the fact that Participating LEAs are required to correct inequities, and therefore will be aggressive about their efforts, there is no evidence to support this idea.
2. Building the pipeline through aggressive recruitment for high-poverty and/or high-minority schools and rigorous screening and providing incentives to programs that prepare educators for shortage areas. The successful recruiting experience of the Recovery School District's efforts to recruit effective teachers for its schools is evidence of the success of this first strategy and the success of prior efforts to produce teachers for shortage areas is evidence for the second.
3. Developing an expert teacher corps to give students throughout the state access to talented teachers with STEM emphasis. Presumably the state assumes that the prestige and additional compensation provided to expert teachers will result in their participation.
4. Providing centralized staffing services and adopting and supporting the Model Staffing Initiative to support low capacity LEAs to realign staffing practices, create strategies for retention, engage in successful planning and vacancy forecasting, and monitor distribution of effective educators. This plan is detailed and linked to areas where support is needed.

The plan for implementing each of these component parts is detailed, broken down into separate actions, and includes both LEA- and state-focused activities. In addition, it specifies funding that is used toward some of the activities. However, some of the activities are aspirational rather than concrete well-planned actions. In addition, while the State is aware of the difficulties associated with staffing remote and rural schools, there are no financial incentives associated with encouraging the equitable distribution of teachers to these areas. The state's targets for decreasing the percentage of ineffective teachers and leaders in high-poverty and/or high-minority schools are ambitious and depend not only on the specific four components, but the implementation of the other strategies (including the new performance evaluation system) that are part of the State Reform Plan. Even with these other Reform Plan initiatives, however, the targets may be overly ambitious.

(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	7	7	
(ii) Expanding effective programs	7	4	4	

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

Louisiana already uses value-added data to evaluate the effectiveness of its teacher preparation programs by linking student performance to individual teachers and the in-state programs that prepared them. Since 2006, the Board of Regents has publicly reported the data for all redesigned or new programs which have 20 or more teachers teaching in specified content areas. Universities and private providers of educational leaders are also currently developing an accountability system that will similarly examine the success of

school leaders who have completed their programs. The state also plans to examine the effectiveness of charter preparation and charter leader programs. As additional data is made available through the soon-to-be-developed educator evaluator system, it will also be provided to preparation and credentialing programs. Another part of the state's plan for expansion is to begin reporting effect estimates for out-of-state programs with licenses to operate in Louisiana.

The plan for expanding the reach and capabilities of the teacher preparation program assessment and for developing and implementing a similar program for principal preparation program assessment consists of several key activities, detailed actions which logically follow, expected start and end dates and a designation of responsible parties. The targets for reaching 95% of teacher and principal preparation programs for which the public will be able to access this data are reasonable, as a model is in place for one and it can be used as a basis for developing the second. In this case, all critical actions are within the control of the Department of Education and the Board of Regents.

With the teacher and leader preparation accountability programs providing information about the quality of teacher and leader preparation programs, the state will be in the position to plan to expand those that are successful at producing effective teachers and leaders. The expansion plan for teachers includes providing financial incentives to institutions and program participants with the highest effect estimates, in particular incentives will be used for programs with high effect estimates in areas of teacher shortages and for participants who agree to teach in districts with shortages. Other strategies include redesigning undergraduate teacher preparation programs and using data to assess and, if necessary, refine them; and recreating the core elements of the most successful programs in less accessible parts of the state. These are all creative and bold strategies that are well-designed to lead to success.

The state's plan to expand effective leader preparation programs includes four strategies:

- Designing the Louisiana Leadership Academy best on existing best practices in leadership training and a network of academies in multiple areas of the state
- Using the educational leader preparation accountability system to identify the most effective leader preparation programs and provide subsidies for high potential educators who attend those programs who commit to working in high poverty, high minority schools.
- Funding a middle leaders program to increase the number of strong candidates entering principal preparation programs
- Funding high potential candidates from leadership positions in high poverty and high minority schools to attend nationally recognized leadership training

These strategies are not at the same high caliber as the strategies for expanding effective teacher programs. First, the State is presumably assuming that the Louisiana Leadership Academy will be a successful model of principal preparation, though without evidence of success it cannot be relied upon as a method of expanding effective programs. Funding a middle leaders program and funding high potential candidates to attend nationally recognized leadership training does not expand successful leader preparation programs – it increases the pipeline of leaders who hopefully will be effective, but it does not expand programs known to be effective. Thus, the state's plan to expand successful preparation and credentialing programs relies solely on providing subsidies for high potential educators to attend the most effective leader preparation programs.

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	11	11	
(i) Providing effective support	10	6	6	
(ii) Continuously improving the effectiveness of the support	10	5	5	

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

The application describes a plethora of activities designed to support teachers and leaders with data-informed job-embedded professional development, specifically including mentoring and instructional-coaching. Recognizing that the LEAs have struggled to implement professional learning well, the State's plan includes a district capacity building plan, a video and field guide, electronic mentoring and other supports. This section and the plan described is a bit more of a hodge podge of support than it is strategic. For example, principals are provided with several different supports, including the School Administrator Model, the Vanderbilt Assessment for Leadership in Education and turnaround principal training, along with possibly participating in the District Capacity Building Program and being responsible for supporting Executive Master teachers to support other teachers to use data to support their improved teaching. Particularly in the less effective LEAs, this will be extremely difficult to manage and achieve any sort of balance and success. Some of the requirements attendant to Participating LEAs are to provide job-embedded professional development based on student outcomes, use the teaching improvement cycle, and implement the school turnaround specialist program. Although the Department of Education will provide support, including regional coaches, it is not at all clear (nor is it made clear within the matrix of activities, evidence, actions, start and end dates) that there are sufficient state supports to enable LEAs to effectively carry out all of these responsibilities. The very modest goal to increase 3% of teachers to move from "effective" to "highly effective" by the end of 2014 is a reflection of a plan that is perhaps not as grounded or strategic as it might be.

The State's plan to measure, evaluate and continuously improve the effectiveness of the teacher and principal supports rests upon a theory and model along with four teacher support coordinators. While the model is sound and the state will have the ability to capture a great deal of data regarding student performance, it is not at all clear how the State will be sure what effects are caused by which professional development inputs. In addition, there are no specifics regarding the frequency of evaluation activities, nor are there funds associated with the activities. This section of the plan lacks sufficient detail to be considered high quality.

Total	138	108	109	
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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	5	5	
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>The State has clear authority to intervene in schools that remain in academically unacceptable status for four consecutive years. It is not made clear whether the definition of "academically unacceptable" is consistent with the definition of "persistently lowest-achieving" used in Race to the Top. However, it is clear that the state has, and has been using, the authority to intervene in failing schools and remove them from local control. The state makes the statement by virtue of its authority to intervene and remove schools from local control – and allow them back based only on compliance with its conditions – it also has the authority to intervene in low-performing districts. While this is true, it does not necessarily confirm that the state's ability to intervene in LEAs is based upon the LEA being in improvement or corrective action status, as required by 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	

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

Louisiana's Accountability System measures the academic achievement of students in every school, whether Title I eligible or not, and converts it to a School Performance Score. All schools whose School Performance Scores fall below a level identified by the state are identified as Academically Unacceptable. Although there is nothing in the law or application that as of yet speaks to a particular percentage of Academically Unacceptable schools that are or will be subject to the turnaround strategies, the plan does begin with the step of identifying the persistently lowest achieving schools according to Race to the Top guidelines.

The State's plan to turnaround the persistently lowest achieving schools is centered on continuing to focus on charter school development and its already existing Recovery School District, which will continue to assume control of and operate failing schools; however, it also has a plan to support LEAs to turnaround schools. The plan includes the following:

- Creating the High-Performance Schools Initiative (in which districts agree to create specific conditions, including fully implementing one of the four intervention models in their struggling schools before getting to the point at which state intervention is required)
- Working with LEAs in the High Performance School Initiative on staffing, including by providing educators trained through the School Turnaround Specialist Program and using the Model Staffing Initiative Initiative, and
- Using a Memorandum of Understanding between the LEAs and the Recovery School District pursuant to which some districts (predominantly rural districts) can continue to operate the schools under strict conditions of cooperation with the Recovery School District

The plan is multi-faceted, strategic and based on analysis and learning that the State has done as a result of its successful turnaround of schools within the Recovery School District. The State's targets for the additional schools that will be turned around under its plan is both ambitious and, given its history, should be attainable.

Total	50	45	45	
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F. General

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	9	9	
(i) Allocating a consistent percentage of State revenue to education	5	5	5	
(ii) Equitably funding high-poverty schools	5	4	4	

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

The State provided evidence that it increased the amount of funds provided to elementary, secondary and higher education from 43.71% in FY 2008 to 48.08% in FY 2009.

According to the application, Appendix F1 is the Minimum Foundation Program (MFP) calculation, which applies an equity factor to funding allocations that considers the wealth of the LEA and applies categorical weights tied to students. Together (with recently enacted laws requiring that the funding be spent on the students whose presence generates the funding) these would be evidence of policies that lead to equitable

funding between high-need LEAs and other LEAs and within LEAs, between high-poverty schools and other schools. However, Appendix F1 does not appear to provide evidence to support this claim.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	30	33	
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	8	8	
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	6	6	
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	7	7	
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	6	6	
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	3	6	

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

Louisiana's charter school law, which provides for five different kinds of charter schools, does not prohibit increasing the number of charter schools, nor does it restrict enrollment in charter schools.

In Louisiana, charter schools can be authorized by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and by local school boards, and both are bound by laws regarding applications, monitoring of performance, accountability and closure. Student performance is at the heart of decisions regarding reauthorization and closure. The framework for evaluating charter school proposals is rigorous, and requires third party independent review as well as the state/board determination. Renewal and reauthorization is a multi-step process, and student achievement must be the primary focus in the several steps. For charters authorized by the Department of Education, the framework for charter school evaluation lays out performance standards that must be met for contract renewal. For charters authorized by local school boards there is more flexibility; the authorizers are to put into effect "effective policies for holding charter schools accountable for academic performance."

Louisiana state law makes clear that at-risk students are the intended beneficiaries of the charter schools, and charter schools are required to seek to attain an at-risk student population similar to, but not exactly the same as, that of the local district.

The application does not provide evidence of the reasons for which charter applications were denied over the past five years. Two charter schools have been closed over the past five years, one of them due "primarily" to academic performance-related issues. No explanation is given for the closure of the second school. Under the Accountability System, however, charter schools that are not meeting their performance targets may have shortened renewal terms, and those that are persistently low achieving must have their charters revoked.

Although funding for charter schools in Louisiana is calculated in different ways, it appears that in all cases the charter schools receive equitable funding compared to traditional public schools.

Different types of charter schools are treated differently with respect to facilities and assistance for facilities under Louisiana law. The majority of charter schools, which are Recovery School District conversion schools, are provided with free facilities; some other charter schools are given priority for district facilities; and still others are provided with facilities related financing based on a per pupil amount. It is not clear, however, whether these different schemes for supporting charter schools result in completely equitable facilities support. All charter schools are eligible to access tax-exempt financing and there are no facility-related requirements for charter schools that are stricter than those applied to traditional public schools.

The application provides evidence that Louisiana allows its LEAs to grant significant flexibility to schools and allows them to grant successful schools flexibility with respect to important conditions, including many of the elements set forth in the Race to the Top definition of innovative, autonomous schools. However, the

application does not provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate that these flexibility options amount to all of the autonomy required in order to meet the definition of innovative, autonomous schools in Race to the Top. While several of the elements exist in some schools, it is not clear that they exist in all of the schools.

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

The State's presentation clarified and confirmed that the innovative, autonomous schools described in the application meet all the requirements of the definition of innovative, autonomous schools in the Race to the Top application.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	2	2	
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(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Because Louisiana's robust and creative education reform agenda is described as being aligned with the requirements of Race to the Top, most of the conditions described in this section have already been described in response to other State Reform Conditions criteria. The reform conditions put into place and already showing signs of success are impressive. However, the only condition in this section not previously described is the high school redesign project which appears to have successfully improved graduation rates where aggressively implemented.

Total	55	41	44	
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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)

STEM content and growth is addressed throughout the State's application. The STEM agenda is supported by leadership at a high and broad level by the existence of the STEM Goal Office and the Louisiana STEM Alliance. The effort begins by aligning the curriculum with new STEM standards and then builds increased access for students as well as professional development for teachers. Access is increased by several efforts to prepare teachers in STEM-related content areas, providing support to increase the number of AP opportunities, broadening partnerships with community, research, museums and business, and several programs designed to spark interest and participation among students and in particular girls and under-represented student groups.

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)

Louisiana's application undoubtedly comprehensively and coherently addresses all of the four education reform areas as well as the State Success Factors criteria. None of the areas of reform is new to Louisiana, which has aggressively been supporting reform for several years. Its plans in all areas are detailed,

supported, and evaluated --from the adoption of standards and assessments, to the improvement and increased access to a sophisticated data system, a welcoming environment for alternative pathways to teaching and leadership, and a well-analyzed and supported effort to turn around persistently low achieving schools. The support needed to implement all of the reform efforts throughout a very low achieving state in which many districts lack capacity is enormous, and the state's plan to include a district capacity building program among its Race to the Top initiatives is critical. While statewide impact is limited by the percentage of Participating LEAs, those that are participating are strongly committed to the program and the state has committed all LEAs to pieces of the reform agenda through law. In all of the reform areas, the application provides evidence that the state is looking at all funding sources and leveraging other federal, state, local and private funds to support its efforts. And importantly, all of the efforts are tied ultimately to improved student achievement and decreasing the achievement gap.

Total			0	0	
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Grand Total	500	422	429	
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