



# Race to the Top

## Technical Review Form - Tier 2



Maryland Application #3050MD-6

**A. State Success Factors**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it</b>	65	45	50	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	30	35	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	10	10	

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

(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda

Maryland sets forth a clear agenda for its RTTT plans. In this section, they highlight the progress they have made in each of the 4 assurance areas and then detail these plans to build on their work:

**Standards and assessments:**

They plan to adopt Common Core State Standards, incorporate rigorous STEM courses, participate in Achieve's consortium assessments, align PreK-12 standards with college and university admission standards, redesign high school graduation requirements to include four years of mathematics, and add a college-ready and STEM-ready endorsement to the high school diploma.

**Data and technology infrastructure:**

They will complete all 12 elements of the America COMPETES Act, build a statewide technology infrastructure, provide performance data on individual students, classrooms, and schoolwide groups; provide support to diagnose student learning needs and customize instruction; link academic growth of students to teachers and to teachers' preparation institutions; and launch performance dashboards.

**Great teachers and leaders:**

They plan to redesign and strengthen their model for preparation, development, retention, and evaluation of teachers and principals; create a new statewide evaluation system with 50 percent weight for student achievement growth, focus on preparing teachers and principals to serve in low-achieving schools and teach STEM subjects, reduce the teacher equity gap, ensure that all vacancies in high-poverty, high-minority, or persistently low achieving schools are filled by highly qualified teachers with satisfactory ratings, create an induction program, create Educator Instructional Improvement Academies for administrators and school-based coaches in all schools; and train all LEA leaders on new principal evaluation.

**Turning around low-achieving schools**

They plan to expand their Breakthrough Center approach to transform 16 low-achieving schools and LEAs; adopt one of the four school intervention models, work with LEAs to adopt policies to grant funds and staff low-achieving schools with high quality/successful staff; ensure that no teacher or principal rated "Ineffective" for two years in a row is employed in a persistently low-achieving school; assure safe and healthy climates at these schools, and create a pathway for new teachers and leaders to excel in low-achieving schools.

According to efforts described in the application, MD has done a lot of work in the past 20-plus years, and is proud of its efforts. Their goal is to go from national leader to world class leader, though the specifics of what world class means are not spelled out. They do have targets set for 2020: 100% proficient in ELA and math, 90% graduate from high school, 75% enroll in college. These are very ambitious (certainly with regards to the 100% proficient). To get there, they put forth doing more in each of the 4 categories, and these actions come across as logical as they consider past strengths and address current gaps.

(ii) Securing LEA commitment

22 of Maryland's 24 LEAs have signed on to the Race to the Top effort. That said, the MOU they have signed is loosely held together, essentially assuring that nothing in the MOU or scope of work can alter or affect the rights, etc. afforded school and district employees under the terms of collective bargaining agreements. That means that it is up to the unions to agree to any reform.

Specific language:

**D. COLLECTIVE BARGAINING RESPONSIBILITIES**

Nothing in this Memorandum of Understanding shall be construed to alter or otherwise affect the rights, remedies, and procedures afforded school and school district employees under Federal, State, or local laws (including applicable regulations or court orders) or under the terms of collective bargaining agreements, memoranda of understanding, or other agreements between such employers and their employees. By way of the signatures below, the LEA and local collective bargaining representative agree to confer in good faith over matters within the scope of the MOU and agree further that those portions of the MOU subject to collective bargaining shall be implemented only upon the agreement of the LEA and the local collective bargaining representative.

Maryland has worked hard to get virtually all 24 districts in the state to sign on. They have also worked hard to include union representatives in the preparation of the application and conducted 35 focus groups for educator groups to solicit feedback. The MOU as it is now written is not really binding in any way, and yet only 2 teachers unions signed on (though these were Baltimore City and Prince Georges County, 2 significant districts for reaching low income and minority students.) That said, MD passed the Education Reform Act of 2010 addressing tenure, student growth requirements in educator evaluations, annual evaluations and teacher and principal ratings. It is possible this act will compel the unions, but much still remains unknown. For this reason, medium points are awarded.

(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact

The 22 districts that signed MOUs encompass most of the state, and its high poverty, high minority schools. These 22 LEAs include the majority of Maryland's students: 79 percent of all students, 77 percent of minority students, 94 percent of high-poverty schools and 85 percent of students in poverty.

MD has specific goals and targets set for 2020 for increasing student achievement; decreasing achievement gaps; increasing graduation rates; and increasing college enrollment

1. Eighty-five percent of Maryland students, in every student group in 4th and 8th grades, will score Basic and above on the NAEP reading test, up from 70 percent and 77 percent, respectively, in 2009.
2. Ninety-five percent of Maryland students in every student group in 4th grade and 90 percent of students in 8th grade will score Basic and above on the NAEP mathematics test, up from 85 percent and 75 percent, respectively, in 2009.
3. One hundred percent of Maryland students in every student group in elementary and middle school will meet State standards in reading, up from 87 percent and 82 percent, respectively, in 2009.
4. One hundred percent of Maryland students in every student group in elementary school and middle school will meet State standards in mathematics, up from 85 percent and 71 percent, respectively, in 2009.
5. Ninety percent of Maryland high-school students will pass all four assessments — English, algebra, government, and biology — up from 75 percent overall in 2009.
6. Ninety percent of students will graduate from high school within four years of entrance.
7. Increase the overall college-going rate as determined by Maryland's annual Documented Decisions Survey to 75 percent and the college persistence rate to 65 percent.

The goals and targets are ambitious, and the plans seem solid. If these districts fully implement the MOU, they would represent virtually the entire state. With so many conditional acceptances, however, there remain questions as to how many districts will eventually sign on.

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

(ii) Based on answers in the Tier 2 presentation, the state further explained how the Education Reform Act and individual collective bargaining agreements would interact, with individual LEAs working with their unions, however if the state board feels they are not bargaining in good faith, they will step in. For this reason, there are more assurances that LEAs and unions will be compelled to work together on issues such as teacher evaluation, rating and removal.

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

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

(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement

The state superintendent has been in the position for 18 years and has presided over the major reforms that have been implemented in the state.

Maryland's local, state, and federal budgets are aligned to the four assurances and STEM, with particular attention to the "funding cliff." The new resources necessary to implement the application will not add permanent staff, but redeploy current staff or add contracted resources to accomplish the goals.

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) plans to redirect its strengths and mission to align with Race to the Top goals in three key ways:

(1) building department capacity through reorganization/renaming, and appointing a deputy superintendent that will oversee MD RTTT implementation, with teams dedicated to each assurance area;

(2) providing grant administration, management, and oversight with a Deputy Superintendent of Finance who will oversee RTTT funds as well as all other education funds and ensure their alignment;

(3) tracking the performance of LEAs using their current annual Bridge to Excellence master plans, with added RTTT goals for the participating LEAs.

The leadership, oversight and alignment seem solid and experienced.

(ii) Using broad stakeholder support

An Executive Steering Committee coordinated MDs Race to the Top application, working to include all stakeholders and their suggestions. The committee is co-chaired by State Superintendent Grasmick and James DeGraffenreidt, Jr., the president of the State Board of Education. Membership includes the Director of Policy for Governor O'Malley; the presidents of the Baltimore Teachers Union (AFT) and the Maryland State Education Association (NEA); the State associations of Superintendents, school boards, elementary principals, and secondary principals; the Maryland Parent Teacher Association; the Maryland Business Roundtable; representatives from higher education (state and private colleges and universities, and community colleges); and an advisor from the national AFT.

MD includes an impressive stack of letters of support, from elected officials, universities, community groups, museums, etc. This reviewer could not find any from the teacher union leaders who participated on the steering committee or who signed MOUs. It is understood that the conditional district unions would not sign letters, but seems an important omission that none of the participating union leaders would write letters to state they supported, even with reservation, the ideas behind the reforms. Charter school leaders were also noticeably absent from the steering committee or letters of support.

<b>(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>28</b>	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5	5	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	23	23	

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

(i) Making progress in each reform area

**Progress in standards and assessments:** MD timed its issuance of ED Tech ARRA grants to local school systems to ensure local plans for use of the funding would be aligned with Maryland's third wave of reform and its goal of ensuring that all students graduate college- and career-ready.

**Progress in data systems to support instruction:** MD has addressed 100 percent of the America COMPETES Act requirements, with 10 of 12 requirements currently operational, one under development to be implemented over the next 12 months, and another in progress and scheduled for completion in December 2010.

**Progress in great teachers and leaders:** All teacher preparation programs are evaluated on common performance criteria aligned with State and national outcomes; Maryland has closed one program and placed three others on probation for subpar performance. The State Board of Education adopted professional development standards to ensure quality professional development, including induction. LEAs provide a teacher induction plan that follows beginning teachers through the tenure period. The State's 24 LEAs have focused recruitment efforts to hire highly qualified, experienced teachers in high-poverty schools, using salary incentives, targeted mentor support, and co-teaching models to pair highly qualified teachers with special education teachers.

**Progress in turning around low-achieving schools:** Maryland has developed a series of needs assessments, standards, and planning guides to assist schools in determining the direction for change.

MD has made a great deal of progress in the past years to address each of the 4 assurance areas long before they were highlighted as important by others. They have directed their funding to support these initiatives.

(ii) Improving student outcomes

#### **Gains on MSA and NAEP**

MSA scores have climbed in both elementary and middle school reading and mathematics since implementation in 2003, both overall and for all subgroups. The percentage of students scoring Proficient or better in reading and mathematics increased by 25 points at the elementary level between 2003 and 2009. In middle school, the percentage of Proficient students improved by 22 points in reading and by 32 points in mathematics during the same period.

With regard to NAEP, Maryland students outperformed and outgained the nation in reading (2009) and mathematics (2009), with statistically significant growth.

#### **Closing Achievement Gaps and Increasing Graduation Rates**

The high-school data show that, although gaps have been reduced for all groups between 2003 and 2009, African-American and Hispanic students show the most consistent improvement in reading and mathematics as measured by the High School Assessment (HSA).

The gap for African-American students was reduced by 16.4 points in reading and 18.8 points in mathematics. The gap for Hispanic students was reduced by 16.2 points in reading and 16.4 points in mathematics. The gap for ELLs was reduced by more than 26 points in reading.

In general, MD has seen higher scores than the national average, an increase in scores overall and among subgroups, as well as a narrowing of the achievement gap. The only area where they have not made much traction is among the achievement gaps between groups scoring Proficient and above which, in most cases, have widened since 2003. Although Maryland had success in moving students at the lower end of the achievement scale, the State has not had the same success at the upper end.

Maryland's graduation rate has increased slightly over the years to 85 percent, though Hispanic and Special Ed students have decreased by 7 and 11 points, respectively.

Early childhood education, curricular improvements, a new high school requirement assessment program, more rigorous courses, more highly qualified teachers, and increased school funding are what MD attributes to the gains they've made in the past decade.

Total	125	98	103	
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**B. Standards and Assessments**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards</b>	40	40	40	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20	20	
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20	20	
<b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards				
On June 1, 2009, Maryland signed the Memorandum of Agreement to participate in the development and adoption of internationally benchmarked State standards through the Common Core State Standards Initiative led by the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). This initiative now includes 47 other states.				
(ii) Adopting standards				
The State Board will adopt the Common Core State Standards on June 22, 2010, as set forth under Maryland Education Code Ann. §2-205(h), which gives the State Board authority to adopt standards for all public schools in Maryland. Maryland will submit an amendment to the U.S. Department of Education on or before August 2, 2010, which provides evidence of the State Board action in adopting the Common Core State Standards.				
<b>(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments</b>	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>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				

(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality assessments; (ii) Including a significant number of States

Maryland will collaborate in a consortium with a significant number of other states to develop high-quality summative assessments, interim assessments, and formative assessments. Classroom teachers will be able to access interim and formative assessments through the Online Instructional Toolkit.

Maryland has signed an MOU with PARCC, an assessment consortium facilitated by Achieve. Twenty-seven states are in this College and Career Readiness consortium, which is focused on summative assessments that will measure each student's readiness for college and careers and will be sufficiently reliable and valid for student and school accountability. The member states currently are Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, and Tennessee.

<b>(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments</b>	20	20	20	
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**(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

MD has determined that the standards must be: (1) translated into challenging and engaging curriculum, lesson plans, classroom projects, and homework assignments; (2) delivered by effective instructors in schools that are managed by effective principals; and (3) supported by a technology infrastructure and longitudinal data system that can identify achievement gaps among students and help educators intervene in a timely way to close those gaps.

MD has experience implementing standards, beginning in 2003 when they switched from a local curriculum to statewide curriculum, working collaboratively with educators to develop the curriculum, pilot it and adopt it. They then went on to replicate this process for other subject areas. They also developed a useful Online Instructional Toolkit, which they will revise to support the new standards.

With a statewide technology infrastructure, the Longitudinal Data System, and the Online Instructional Toolkit, Maryland will provide professional development to reach staff in all 1,400 schools.

Top priorities are to:

Influence, support, and expand the 1,800 school-based coaches already working with teachers across the State; give teachers customizable, real-time access to high-quality professional development; and ensure that teachers in low-achieving schools receive the best professional development.

MD plans to build in active collaboration between MSDE and Maryland's IHE community at all stages of the development of formative, interim, and summative assessment tools. Importantly, to ensure that assessments are fully aligned with the college admissions requirements and employers' hiring criteria, Maryland's higher education faculty will participate extensively in the multistate consortia's activities

The timeline is fast paced, with most everything starting fall 2010, and if the responsible people are not already assigned, the departments are.

These plans are comprehensive, built on experience and successful supports from past efforts.				
Total	70	70	70	

**C. Data Systems to Support Instruction**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system</b>	24	20	20	
<p><b>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Unique student ID number – yes</li> <li>2. Student demographic, enrollment and program participation information – yes</li> <li>3. Student transition information P-16 – yes</li> <li>4. Capacity to communication to higher ed data systems – yes</li> <li>5. Audit system to ensure data quality – yes</li> <li>6. Yearly test records for assessment required under the ESEA – yes</li> <li>7. Information on students not tested by grade and subject – yes</li> <li>8. Teacher identifier to match teachers to students –in progress</li> <li>9. Student level transcripts containing courses and grades – under development</li> <li>10. Student scores on college readiness tests – yes</li> <li>11. Transition data from secondary to higher ed – yes</li> <li>12. Data on the alignment and adequacy of student preparation for post secondary education – yes</li> </ol>				
<b>(C)(2) Accessing and using State data</b>	5	5	5	
<p><b>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b></p> <p>MD has a comprehensive plan to ensure that data from their longitudinal data system is accessible and useful to key stakeholders.</p> <p>They plan to: (1) expand the existing MLDS that has been operational since the mid-1990s so that it integrates with multiple state and local education agency educational systems for easy data transfer and statewide data consolidation; (based on their success creating and using CitiStat, StateStat and Law Enforcement Dashboards)</p> <p>(2) expand the current longitudinal subsystem (Effectiveness, Accountability, and Performance) reporting to be an on-demand system to help teachers and schools improve education delivery and help students improve their learning.</p>				

Among 10 steps they are taking toward these ends, they will implement a new and expanded public education portal. By December 2011, they expect the project to provide a single, one-stop, secure education information portal for students, parents, educators, researchers, LEAs, policymakers, and the general public. The portal will consolidate access to multiple education information systems, such as the educator toolkit, performance dashboards, online training, and all State systems that support the LEAs, and will equip educators with teaching tools.

The state has a clear plan, based on past successes, to expand their data and its usefulness to stakeholders.

<b>(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	
(i) Increasing the use of instructional improvement systems	6	6	6	
(ii) Supporting LEAs, schools, and teachers in using instructional improvement systems	6	6	6	
(iii) Making the data from instructional improvement systems available to researchers	6	3	3	

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

(i) Increasing the use of instructional improvement systems

MD has made the development and implementation of a high-quality Instructional Improvement System the heart of its reform agenda. It will draw from the technology infrastructure, the Longitudinal Data System, and the Online Instructional Toolkit to give teachers and leaders access to student-performance data, curriculum resources, assessment item banks, and professional development resources.

They describe a nine-step process for strengthening classroom instruction to help struggling students catch up, on-track students accelerate their progress, and prepare all students for college and careers.

This starts with an online portal for teachers to identify the specific instructional objectives for the day and week from the Common Core State Curriculum, then moves on to consulting a student-performance dashboard to get up to speed on the past performance of each student and design a standards-based lesson plan, using the online resource to prepare a daily or weekly formative assessment, interpret the assessment to adjust instruction, conferring with the student, and assessing again to determine which content objectives students have mastered and where they need additional help.

This is a straightforward, common sense approach that is backed up by the advances in data collection and online resources already offered by the state. By making instructional improvement via data analysis a central part of their reform, they are able to fine tune this approach and make it available to every educator in the state. For this section, high points are awarded.

(ii) Supporting LEAs, schools, and teachers in using instructional improvement systems

MD plans to develop and implement Educator Instructional Improvement Academies to provide in-depth training for 5,800 administrators, school-based coaches, and teacher leaders on the instructional

Improvement System, the Longitudinal Data System, the Common Core State Curriculum and assessments, and the Online Instructional Toolkit.

Professional development activities will include engaging teachers in basic information regarding key aspects of the Instructional Improvement System — curriculum, assessments, data management, and the online resources. MD also plans to work with all higher-education institutions providing pre-service training to ensure that they give teacher candidates hands-on experience in effective use of the Instructional Improvement System.

Priority Schools (identified low performing schools) will serve as pilot sites for initial implementation. Teachers in these schools will engage in intensive, ongoing professional development.

MDs plans will make sure the PD is aligned with the aspects of the improvement system that will help teachers, coaches and administrators make use of the data. The plan makes sense and is targeted to the highest needs schools first.

(iii) Making the data from instructional improvement systems available to researchers

MD plans to ensure that all databases from the existing and proposed system will use be coded to allow for rapid selection and extraction of data sets to qualified researchers.

They have a plan for addressing researcher data requests that protects student information, creates guidelines for creating anonymous data sets and enters into data sharing agreements. Maryland will invite research efforts from the federal Race to the Top evaluation teams and from Maryland institutions of higher education to use these data for evaluations and studies.

Though MD seems open to researchers, their language does not make explicit that researchers are welcomed and encouraged, that data will be shared with legitimate researchers in a timely manner, or that researchers will be able to get data that connects students to teachers, schools, programs, etc. This may be implied, but it is not explicit.

Total	47	40	40	
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**D. Great Teachers and Leaders**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals</b>	21	19	19	
(i) Allowing alternative routes to certification	7	7	7	
(ii) Using alternative routes to certification	7	7	7	
(iii) Preparing teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage	7	5	5	
<b>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
(i) Allowing alternative routes to certification				

State regulation (COMAR 13A.12.01.07) allows LEAs, alone or in partnership with colleges, universities, and nonprofit organizations (e.g., The New Teacher Project, Teach For America), to design and operate alternative route programs for teachers that meet high standards for program delivery and results and address identified needs in each school system. A corollary regulation allows for the same kind of alternative pathways and residency-based programs for principals.

In May 2010, the State Board of Education approved a revision of the current Guidelines to provide for implementation of a "test-in" strategy for candidates wishing to participate in an alternative pathway without evidence of a major or equivalent coursework in a field of study. These teacher candidates will be able to take a State-approved content assessment and enter the alternative program through this route. This change in policy will increase the number of high-quality candidates to enter an alternative preparation program based on content knowledge and not solely on coursework.

MD provides evidence of their selectivity, reduction of coursework, emphasis on school-based experiences, and that graduates are awarded the same certification as those from IHEs.

(ii) Using alternative routes to certification

For teachers, Maryland now has 19 State-approved alternate pathways operated by 12 LEAs, including programs offered in partnership with The New Teacher Project; Teach for America; five four-year institutions of higher education; three community colleges; and one district, Prince George's County, operating its own program. These partnerships produced 626 certified teachers in 2008-2009.

For principals, the most prominent alternative pathway is New Leaders for New Schools, which involves training cohorts of new-principal candidates in the State's most urban school systems — Baltimore City and Prince George's County.

Since 2005, a variety of different pathways have prepared more than 500 teachers per year, which in 2009–10 represented about 32 percent of all Maryland-prepared new hires.

A partnership with New Leaders for New Schools produced 78 new leaders in 2009–10 who earned principal certification, affecting 24,000 children in Maryland schools.

(iii) Preparing teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage

Since 1984, Maryland has annually surveyed colleges, universities, and LEAs, and published the *Maryland Teacher Staffing Report*—more recently, they have included principals in this report as well.

To determine critical shortage areas, Maryland uses the percentage of Highly Qualified Teachers (HQTs) by content area, the five-year rate of hiring in each content area, and information from LEAs on the number of vacancies. This report assists the State and LEAs in projecting the number of teachers and principals that could be brought into the workforce through alternative programs and in budgeting for these efforts. In

addition, the report provides data to contributing colleges and universities as they plan program expansions or reductions to meet the needs of Maryland LEAs more efficiently.

It is a useful report to get a broad picture of the need (all LEAs report shortages of teachers in the usual subject matter) and colleges report the number of students who are being trained to be teachers in specific fields. But it does not look at the shortage within LEAs. To say that an LEA has a shortage does not say whether all of its schools experience this equally, or whether, more accurately, some of its lower performing schools are where the real need lies.

The state uses a variety of federal and state incentives (scholarship and loan programs, signing bonuses, etc.) During the 2007–08 school year, 5,193 teachers representing all 24 LEAs received more than \$9 million in awards.

MD has a fairly robust method for determining shortage and enticing teachers and principals to work in shortage areas, but it seems to be missing some finer grain details that would help direct policies to address where true shortages lie.

<b>(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>47</b>	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	5	5	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	15	15	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	7	7	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	20	20	

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

(i) Measuring student growth

MD is in the process of developing measures of student growth for teachers and principals.

1. For teachers of mathematics and reading in grades 3–8, MSDE will adjust scaling of the existing Maryland School Assessment (MSA) to allow calculations assessing individual student growth — from a baseline to at least one other point in time — to be performed. MSDE is designing these technical changes in close consultation with its National Psychometric Council, which the application notes is a group of nationally recognized psychometric experts who provide external validation of Maryland’s assessment processes.

2. For all other teachers, to generate student growth information, MSDE will seek to identify objective pre- and post-tests that are comparable across classrooms and appropriate for each grade and subject already in use by school districts throughout the State. The State’s National Psychometric Council has drawn up criteria to help guide the selection, review, and approval of these assessments.

3. For principals (and as a fallback for teachers in any grade or subject for which appropriate assessments for calculating individual student-learning growth are not found to be available), MSDE will aggregate student growth gains — from a baseline to at least one other point in time — for the entire school in mathematics, reading, and science (as measured by MSA for elementary and middle schools) and in

algebra, biology, English, and government (as measured by the end-of-course High School Assessments for high schools).

4. In addition, MSDE will calculate a combined index reflecting the gains a team of teachers collectively contributes to student growth — from a baseline to at least one other point in time — using MSA performance gains in mathematics, reading, and science.

5. Finally, MSDE will calculate the progress each school makes in closing overall achievement gaps as measured by MSA for elementary and middle schools and in end-of-course exams in algebra, biology, English, and government (as measured by the end-of-course High School Assessments for high schools).

MD is taking a careful approach, considering the best ways to measure teachers and principals depending on their grades and subjects, and consulting with evaluation experts to develop growth measures that are meaningful.

(ii) Developing evaluation systems

In April 2010 the Maryland State Board of Education passed proposed regulations that are now going through the regulatory process. These regulations specify that student-learning gains should comprise 50 percent of the evaluation. There will be a pilot phase with the seven pilot school districts that will result in statewide implementation of this new standard by the 2012–13 school year.

To ensure that the new evaluation system will be viewed as a fair and useful tool, a series of 24 focus groups consisting of 432 stakeholders — including superintendents, human resource directors, teachers, representatives of teacher associations, and representatives from higher-education teacher preparation and arts and sciences faculty — provided input on the draft framework for teacher evaluations. Eleven focus groups engaged 200 principals and 30 supervisors of principals on the draft framework for principal evaluations.

Early feedback from the focus groups showed a strong interest in allowing LEAs flexibility in this plan, so the state has opted to allow LEAs to choose from a state model of evaluation, or a menu of several possibilities, all of which add up to student growth as 50% of the evaluation. In addition, the State model also becomes the automatic default option for a teacher evaluation system if a local school district and local bargaining unit cannot agree on one.

The remaining 50 percent of the evaluation of teachers will include at least four components: planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibility. For principals, the evaluation will include at least the eight standards for instructional leadership set forth in the *Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework*. LEAs have the flexibility to add to these four components for teachers and the eight standards for principals.

In April 2010, the State Board of Education also included in the new regulation a *minimum* of three rating criteria: Highly Effective, Effective, and Ineffective and possibly one more if the workgroup thinks it would be useful.

The state has involved educators in the creation of the evaluation process, listened and responded to concerns, and has crafted an evaluation that uses multiple rating criteria.

(iii) Conducting annual evaluations

As part of its April 2010 proposed regulations for the new evaluation system, the State Board of Education agreed that, beginning in the 2012 school year, all teachers and principals will be required to have annual evaluations on student growth.

With these annual evaluations, MD has determined that whenever lack of sufficient student growth indicates a failure on the part of a teacher or principal to meet targets and earn a rating of Effective, it will trigger additional evaluations of the teacher's or principal's performance and determine what intervention and/or supports may be necessary.

To adjust to this new evaluation and rating system, intensive training, including use of new faster access to performance data, will be given to those who supervise and conduct the evaluations.

These seem like sensible plans for enacting the new evaluation system, though MD has pushed the annual evaluations out by 2 years, waiting for the new system to come into play. They may be missing a chance to get a head start on higher expectations by starting annual reviews sooner.

(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions

**Use Evaluations to Inform Decisions Regarding Developing Teachers and Principals**

The new teacher and principal evaluation results will drive support and PD in these ways:

- Beginning in 2011, the 1,800 PD coaches will receive intensive training over three years on the emerging Common Core State Curriculum, new assessments, the Instructional Improvement System, and the Online Instructional Toolkit the State is developing. Teacher leaders will also be trained to ensure every school has a reading, mathematics, and STEM coach/lead teacher.
- Beginning in 2012, as the new evaluation system becomes a statewide requirement, all principals and supervisors will receive intensive and ongoing training of and support to ensure that all supervisors understand their roles, and how to use evaluation results to tailor professional development.
- By 2014, teachers and principals will be able to choose professional development online, as identified by their evaluations.

**Use Evaluations to Inform Decisions Regarding Compensation and Promotion of Teachers and Principals**

To support and accelerate the efforts of LEAs who will consider new compensation models to reward effective and highly effective teachers and principals (which will need to be consistent with locally negotiated collective bargaining agreements), MSDE will convene superintendents, human resources officers, and local union leaders from five Maryland school districts that have developed new compensation models and incentives and thus can serve as examples to others.

MD will also encourage LEAs to reward high achievers with new responsibilities or professional growth opportunities, including roles as new-teacher mentors, peer reviewers and coaches, and resource teachers.

### **Use Evaluations to Inform Decisions Regarding Granting Tenure and Certification to Teachers and Principals**

The Education Reform Act of 2010 changed the probationary period for teachers to achieve tenure from two to three years. Novice teachers must achieve a rating of Effective by their third year of teaching or their contract will not be renewed. Under Maryland law, principals have never had a right to tenure and can be dismissed from the position whenever they demonstrate a pattern of ineffective performance.

Maryland is well under way to restructuring the current certificate system to a three-tiered, performance-based structure.

### **Use Evaluations to Inform Decisions Regarding Removing Ineffective Teachers and Principals**

After the first year of being rated Ineffective, non-tenured/novice teachers receive additional supports and extra coaching, feedback, and evaluations. After the first year of being rated Ineffective, principals and tenured teachers modify their professional development plans in conjunction with their supervisor and identify clear improvement goals and specific ways and opportunities for improving their effectiveness, based on problems identified by their evaluation. If a non-tenured teacher cannot achieve a rating of Effective within three years, the teacher's contract will not be renewed.

After being rated Ineffective for two years, tenured teachers either are removed or transitioned to a second-class certificate and enter into a specific performance-improvement plan with their supervisor. Consistent with local bargaining agreements, a tenured teacher rated Ineffective for a third year in a row will be terminated. Principals who are not rated Effective will move into a performance-improvement plan with their supervisor. Principals can be removed from their positions at the will of the LEA Superintendent.

While much of this application can move ahead as it stands, it becomes clear in this section how tenuous some of the reform ideas are when 20 districts' unions want to wait and see and negotiate on the teacher and principal-related reforms such as compensation.

For example, LEAs are being encouraged to consider new pay for performance compensation plans, but because they are constrained by locally negotiated collective bargaining agreements, the state's hands are tied. The most MD can do is model what it can look like by some forward thinking districts.

But beyond union constraints, this section is less bold, as in the case of what MD plans with removing ineffective principals.

Removing ineffective principals: The language on removing ineffective tenured teachers says that "Consistent with local bargaining agreements, a tenured teacher rated Ineffective for a third year in a row will be terminated." It is unclear to the reviewer whether this means it has been agreed upon by local unions or not. If not, it would seem to have little strength to it. Ineffective principals move into an improvement plan, and "can be removed" by the superintendent, but there is no signal or trigger to clearly say that there is a time limit to how long a principal can be ineffective.

MD has done a lot of hard work, but it will not see the kinds of improvements in performance it hopes for until it is ready to remove ineffective teachers and principals.

<b>(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>19</b>	
(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)**

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

According to the application, MD's teacher-quality gap is one of the largest in the nation, particularly influenced by the disproportionate number of high-poverty and high-minority schools in three school districts, including Baltimore City schools.

MD believes that getting highly effective and effective leaders in these schools, will increase their chances at improving and retaining the teachers at these schools too. Over the next four years, Maryland vows that virtually all of the principals at its 489 high-poverty/high-minority schools will be principals who have been rated Effective or higher and that each of its high-poverty/high-minority schools has at least 30 percent of its teachers rated as Highly Effective, with the proven skills and ability to improve the achievement of high-needs students.

To do this, MD plans better means of identifying and developing exceptional educators; new recruitment routes that can bring new people to the profession; redesigned certification routes that uniquely prepare candidates for the challenges of struggling schools; larger incentives to attract educators to these schools; strong commitments to removing ineffective educators; and more attention to monitoring progress and policies to ensure they are working.

These are solid plans, but will not be initiated until Fall 2012—2 years out, though some pilots will start in 2011. With 489 high poverty/high minority schools identified, thousands of students will miss out on the benefits of these future policies. MD might rather consider a very accelerated policy to work with the 2 most impacted districts to dramatically address these inequities starting in Fall 2010.

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

In its *Teacher Staffing Report 2008–10*, MD found the following to be areas of shortage:

- Career and technology areas (7–12);
- Computer science (7–12);
- English for speakers of other languages (PreK–12);
- Foreign language areas (7–12: Chinese, German, Italian, Japanese, Latin, and Spanish);
- Mathematics (7–12);
- Science areas (7–12: chemistry, Earth/space science, physical science, and physics);
- Specific special education areas

This report provides data to colleges, universities, and alternative preparation providers to plan program expansions or reductions to meet the needs of Maryland LEAs.

**To address STEM subjects shortages:**

MD commissioned a STEM taskforce that produced recommendations to triple the number of teacher candidates in STEM shortage areas; increase the five-year retention rate from 50 percent to 75 percent; enhance the STEM preparation for elementary and early childhood teachers; and, by 2015, increase the number of STEM college graduates by 40 percent.

To do this, MD is working with its universities to recruit and train more teachers in STEM subjects, and will focus particular attention on ways to build in special rewards and incentives for rewarding STEM teachers rated Effective or Highly Effective.

**Strategies to increase effective teachers in world languages and ESOL:**

Maryland has entered into an MOU with Spain, China, and Italy to enhance international education and world language programs. The MOUs provide options for LEAs to hire effective international teachers in critical needs/shortage areas through comprehensive visiting teacher programs sponsored by Spain and China.

**Publicly reporting progress:**

MD will begin collecting data in 2011–12 on preparation programs, candidate and educator demographics, professional development, teacher effectiveness based on evaluation, certificate status, and future employment. Data will be collected to track the effectiveness of hiring, recruitment, retention, and compensation of teachers hired in critical shortage areas by certification area; the effectiveness of teachers from all preparation programs by program; implementation of the recommendations in the STEM report; and pathways for ESOL, special education, and world language teachers.

MD's plan to address the shortage is rooted in data they have collected about what subjects they are short in, and what local and international solutions they can come up with. These are solid plans. The only deficit again is in determining which schools are actually experiencing the shortages, and if these schools are low performing, having specific plans and incentives in place to attract highly effective STEM, language and special education teachers to teach and stay at these schools, which was not mentioned.

<b>(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	
(i) Linking student data to credentialing programs and reporting publicly	7	7	7	
(ii) Expanding effective programs	7	5	5	

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

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

MD already generates regular reports that identify which preparation programs are closed, are on probation, or have faced problems in being reapproved. All teacher and principal preparation programs are required to develop and maintain an assessment system based on candidate performance data.

As more useful data becomes available MD will provide technical assistance to program providers to align and monitor program revisions with the teacher and principal evaluation system.

In the last 10 years, MD has closed one program and placed three on probation for failure to meet State Program Approval requirements and/or comply with Higher Education Act Title II reporting requirements.

With the upcoming K-20 Longitudinal Data System (LDS) and better measures of educator effectiveness beginning in 2012, MD will link teacher and principal prep programs to evaluation data for teachers and principals that will connect certification to effectiveness.

MD will annually publish a report card of results detailing the effectiveness of each preparation program through the effectiveness ratings of teacher and principal graduates.

Beginning in 2013, MD will begin annual reviews of the report card to identify program elements that promote teacher and principal effectiveness and eliminate or restructure ineffective elements.

MD has a clear plan to link student achievement/growth to preparation programs and to publicly report the findings. It is presumed that this will lead to ways to expand the best performing programs, but no details are offered.

(ii) Expanding effective programs

MD used this section to describe the rigor and real world experiences teacher and principal candidates get in the current programs, and the ways the current programs will get up to speed with new standards and assessments expected of their graduates. It's possible that the applicant views this as the best way to expand successful programs, but perhaps the question was misunderstood. In a table, there is mention of expanding Troops to Teachers, and a Teach For Maryland Consortium, however the application does not cite proof of their effectiveness. In other sections, MD describes ways that more STEM, language and special education teachers will be recruited into education and trained for MD schools.

<b>(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>19</b>	
(i) Providing effective support	10	9	9	
(ii) Continuously improving the effectiveness of the support	10	10	10	

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

(i) Providing effective support

Maryland's plan is to improve the quality of professional development in LEAs and at the State level and eliminate the fragmentation, incoherence, and ineffective use of resources.

To do this, MD has six principles for providing professional development:

1. Build on and take to scale what already works in Maryland.
2. Leverage Maryland's manageable size.
3. Jointly train principals and teachers on strategies for improving practices in their schools.
4. Provide data-informed professional development.
5. Demand quality control and winnow the supply to proven options.
6. Focus especially on the capacity of struggling schools

The application details an array of solid professional development initiatives that will be offered. With a mix of off site, summer, job embedded and yearlong projects, MD's plans for supporting and training executive officers, principals, teachers and coaches is coherent and regularly followed up. There is however, no mention of common planning and collaboration time for teachers and principals, which was a requirement of this element of the criterion.

(ii) Continuously improving the effectiveness of the support

MD has standards in place for PD quality, including Teacher Professional Development Standards, and a *Planning Guide* and *Evaluation Guide* that require all professional development activities to be described, whether they were useful and relevant, and evidence to measure uptake and outcomes.

The new online instructional toolkit will provide equitable access to targeted quality professional development for all MD teachers and principals. It will also identify who is accessing the portal and using its resources, generate follow-up surveys three and six months later for educators and their school-based professional development coaches, and compile evaluation summaries for use by key stakeholders and policymakers.

MD will track participants to their schools and student achievement, which will guide professional development quality control, revisions, and updates, and to help winnow choices and control quality at the front end. MD will also assess the PD offered by colleges, universities and other nonprofits.

An external evaluator will also be assessing the programs and their outcomes.

These evaluation plans make good use of new technologies, and extend to all providers of PD.

Total	138	116	116	
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**E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools**

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

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

The Maryland State Board of Education and the State Superintendent of Schools, through Md. Educ. Code Ann. §§ 2-103 and COMAR 13A.01.04.07-.08, operate schools and govern schools in improvement, corrective action, and restructuring. The regulations mandate direct interventions at each stage of improvement. The State derives its district- and school-level intervention authority from these two regulations.

Full points are awarded for the legal authority to intervene in low achieving schools and districts.

<b>(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>35</b>	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	30	30	

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

(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools

MD has identified 16 schools that are persistently low-achieving.

**Tier I — Persistently Lowest-Achieving Schools**

Maryland defines “persistently lowest-achieving Tier I schools” as those Title I schools that are the lowest 5 percent of all Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring in the State. Maryland identified 71 schools in this status based on the 2009 spring administration of the Maryland School Assessment. There are no Title I schools with grades 9–12 or combination PreK–12 in Maryland. The five identified Title I schools below have not met performance standards in combined reading and mathematics in the “All Students” subgroup for the full academic year 2008–09.

**Tier II — Persistently Lowest-Achieving Schools**

Maryland defines “persistently lowest-achieving Tier II schools” as those Title I-eligible secondary that are the lowest 5 percent of all secondary Title I-eligible schools in the State. Maryland identified 11 Title I-eligible secondary schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring operating in school year 2009–10 for Tier II designation based on performance on the Maryland School Assessment in mathematics/algebra/data analysis and reading/English language arts combined.

Maryland also identified Title I-eligible high schools that have a graduation rate of less than 60 percent over three years. Two schools meet this definition during the 2009–10 school year; however, they were already identified as persistently lowest-achieving schools. Maryland will exercise the option to apply for a waiver to include three Title I combination schools as Tier II schools because these schools fall lower in performance than some of the identified Tier II secondary schools. The identified Tier II schools have not met performance standards in the “All Students” subgroup for the full academic year 2008–09.

(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools

The application catalogues MD's history of intervening in low performing schools through improvement plans or specific proven practices; audit tools to assess teacher capacity and school-improvement priorities; and restructuring efforts that must be reviewed and approved by the State Board of Education.

These measures have been implemented in more than 500 schools in the past 15 years. However, MD was not seeing consistent improvements, so they commissioned an overhaul by working with the National Governors Association, MassInsight, Education and Research Institute, The Education Alliance at Brown University, and the American Youth Policy Forum to overhaul its approach to low-achieving schools. The result was the creation of MD's Breakthrough Center in 2008 and an attempt at a more coherent strategy for leveraging and coordinating services to turn schools around.

MD has worked in 17 schools in two school districts to implement and test the Breakthrough Center approach. Analysis has led to their conclusions about what works:

- Getting the most-effective educators to the children who need them.
- Targeted and coordinated resources
- Understanding the specific challenges and causes of persistent low-performance
- Behavior, safety, and health matter
- Support feeder schools that exhibit low levels of performance.
- Flexibility for district leadership

The pilot phase of the Breakthrough Center has seen some early success:

- In one year, with strong principal leadership, zero-based staffing, and intensive instructional work, the high school targeted in a large district made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). One more successful year and it will exit restructuring altogether.
- In a smaller district, three of the five schools were in some state of improvement with the high school at risk of moving into Restructuring Planning. In 2009, all schools in the district made AYP, making it one of only four *districts* in Maryland to make AYP. The high school did not move into restructuring status and is positioned to exit from improvement altogether if the trend continues in 2010.

The plan of action for turnarounds:

- Scale the Breakthrough Center services to provide coordinated turnaround services to the bottom 5 percent of schools.
- Establish a Breakthrough Zone that provides resources, assistance, flexibility, and authority.
- Drive turnaround with needs assessments, a focus on teacher and principal effectiveness, networks for persistently lowest-achieving schools and districts, technology and improved school culture, climate, and student support to increase performance.

MD is leaving the choice turnaround model to school teams, which leaves the process vulnerable to conflicts of interest (for example, difficult to choose a model where teachers and principals are removed.) If these teams include interested outsiders (parents, community leaders, researchers) that may help make the process more neutral.

MD has a relatively small number of schools that will need turnaround attention. Their Breakthrough Center has narrowed in on the elements that make a difference and they plan to focus resources (human and financial) as well as flexibility on these schools and districts. This is a detailed, piloted and refined plan that seems poised to make the changes MD is hoping for.

Total	50	45	45	
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**F. General**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(F)(1) Making education funding a priority</b>	10	6	6	
(i) Allocating a consistent percentage of State revenue to education	5	3	3	

(ii) Equitably funding high-poverty schools	5	3	3	
<p><b>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b></p> <p>(i) Allocating a consistent percentage of State revenue to education</p> <p>State appropriations for fiscal years 2008 and 2009 for public K–12 and higher education demonstrate a consistent (virtually unchanged) level of support: 2008 = 47.8%, 2009 = 47.9%</p> <p>(ii) Equitably funding high-poverty schools</p> <p>Maryland's separate Compensatory Education grant provides additional State funding to school systems based on the count of students eligible for free and reduced meals. The amount per pupil used in this formula was determined using a professional-judgment approach, which established the effective weight associated with the additional support necessary to meet the needs of these students. MD's policies are designed to ensure equitable funding between high need LEAs and other LEAs.</p> <p>MD allows for flexibility at the local level to empower systems to target the funding to schools most in need. To ensure accountability for State funding, school systems are responsible for student performance outcomes and are required to submit annual comprehensive master plans detailing how programmatic and funding strategies will be combined to address the needs of these students and schools.</p> <p>More than 90 percent of the Bridge to Excellence funding is wealth-equalized: State aid per pupil is higher in low-wealth jurisdictions and vice versa. MD believes that this establishes available State funding for high-poverty schools within LEAs.</p> <p>MD's policies are designed to ensure equitable funding between high need LEAs and other LEAs. However, there are only loose ties between state funds and how districts choose to spend their money on their schools, high poverty or otherwise.</p>				
<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	40	21	21	
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	4	4	
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	2	2	
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	8	8	
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	2	2	
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	5	5	
<p><b>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b></p> <p>3(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"</p> <p>Maryland technically has no charter school cap, nor does the State restrict student enrollment, however the schools are authorized by district boards of education, and each of these can put limits on charter school numbers.</p> <p>(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes</p>				

The state has a number of statutes that provide general rules for authorizing (granting charters, authorizing process and application, ensure that operators of the charter school are informed of the human, fiscal and organizational capacity needed to fulfill the school's responsibilities) and has developed some model guidance for each LEA to consider when authorizing charters (policies, application, founders manual, special ed, performance and closure.)

In the past five school years, three charter schools have closed and 45 applications have been denied for incompleteness and lack of quality (approximately half of those that applied). The three charter schools closed due to issues not directly related to student achievement.

MD notes that external groups have criticized their charter authorization and renewal process as not always transparent and that the State should do more to ensure that authorizers are incorporating effective processes to support the establishment and continuation of high-quality charter schools. As a result, Maryland has developed a policy to increase transparency in all chartering processes. The State Board of Education is scheduled to adopt the overall policy during the June 22, 2010, board meeting.

MD charter school teachers however are all bound by their districts' collective bargaining agreements, and it appears as though this will remain the case for the foreseeable future.

The state has some general policies about what districts ought to do when considering authorizing, but these are advisory, not binding. Constraining teacher work rules are also a concern for charter school autonomy and flexibility. Indeed, it's hard to see what makes them different from traditional public schools in MD. Low points are awarded.

#### (iii) Equitably funding charter schools

Maryland's charter school law requires that charter schools receive commensurate funding (Education Code 9-§109, Disbursement of Funds). The Maryland State Board of Education has established a definition for commensurate funding. This definition has resulted in the establishment of a funding formula for charter schools so that charter school students receive the same amount of per-pupil funding as their peers in non-charter schools in the same school district.

No details are provided on how this plays out—for example, figures from districts and what their charter schools receive. However, the reviewer gives MD the benefit of the doubt. Full points are awarded.

#### (iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities

MD does not provide funding, access or levies for facilities. If a charter school happens to be housed in LEA-owned properties, they are eligible for State Public School Construction Program capital funding, as a traditional public school would be. But they are given no extra help. They may use State operating dollars for facilities expenses, and the State does not impose any facility-related requirements on charter schools that are stricter than those applied to traditional public schools.

MD recognizes that charter schools face different facilities burdens than non-charter schools, and plans to seek and support opportunities for legislative changes that will increase facility supports to charter schools directly, however this is a future endeavor so low points are awarded.

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

According to the application, LEAs have wide latitude to open schools in such areas as dropout prevention, recovery of dropouts, and academically disadvantaged students.

In addition, Senate Bill 714, Education – Residential Boarding Education Program-At-Risk Youth established a Maryland boarding school under the supervision of MSDE, a public boarding school for at-risk youth.

Maryland's 24 LEAs also experiment with innovative school models. Baltimore City Public Schools began experimenting with innovation schools in 2001 to redesign, transform, and revitalize neighborhood high schools. Each school is operated by a nonprofit governing board with the authority to oversee the implementation of the reform efforts in the schools.

Baltimore City also has transformation schools, with specific themes and a unique curriculum designed for college readiness or alternative programs. Operated by experienced, independent education entities, these schools provide students and parents with additional choices for their grades 6–12 education. Presently, there are 12 transformation schools in Baltimore City, and the expectation is for 24 more to open in the next four years.

Though no explicit statute or code is mentioned, nor any absolute numbers of autonomous schools provided, it appears as though MD has several models in place. For this section, medium points are awarded.

<b>(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions</b>	5	5	5	
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**(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

MD has taken some important steps that have prepared them for the RTTT opportunity.

**Improving Teacher and Principal Effectiveness:** In the 2010 legislative session, the Maryland General Assembly passed the Education Reform Act of 2010, among other things, increased the time to tenure to 3 years, and provides specific mentoring to teachers not on track to tenure. It also passed regulations on the use of student growth to be a significant component (50%) of the teacher and principal evaluations, annual evaluations, and teacher and principal ratings. It also authorizes the State Board to establish a program to support locally negotiated incentives including “financial incentives, leadership changes, or other incentives” so that highly effective teachers will be attracted to the lowest-performing schools.

**Systemic Reform:** MD revamped education funding in Maryland, creating an equitable funding system and increasing funding to Maryland public schools by more than \$1 billion. In response, each of Maryland's 24 school systems must submit a comprehensive Master Plan and annual updates to the State Board.

**Establishing Innovative Schools—**In 2006, MD passed a law to allow the establishment of a boarding school.

**Early Childhood Education:** In 2005, the Maryland General Assembly transferred the authority to regulate childcare providers to the MSDE which has allowed them to create an education program for pre-schoolers in childcare.

Education reform that builds on prior efforts is not new in MD, and for this section, full points are awarded.

Total	55	32	32	
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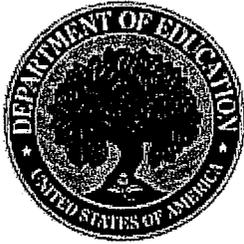
**Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM</b>	15	15	15	
<b>Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>MD does a very good job emphasizing STEM throughout the application. In fact, it's a core piece of their RTTT effort, as they see this as the way to the world class education they hope to provide. They focus on attracting more students into studying STEM subjects in college, drawing more of these candidates into the education field, building stronger college programs with connections to industry, and steering graduates into MD schools. They have incentives to encourage this, and they have plans, with new standards, assessments and online professional development tools, to improve the teaching of STEM courses from elementary school through high school. They demonstrate a real commitment to STEM and are awarded the 15 points on this competitive priority.</p>				
Total	15	15	15	

**Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform</b>		Yes	Yes	
<b>Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>MD has done very well for most of its students over the past 20 years. As they note in their application, they are regularly recognized as leaders in everything from standards and assessment to accountability, the collection of data, and to their overall NAEP scores. Their pride in accomplishments shows throughout. That said, there are subgroups of students who are not benefiting from the current array of reforms. MD has turned its attention to these students -- low income, urban, rural and African American and Hispanic students -- and seems to be realizing that success must mean ALL students. A new focus has been placed on improving the teaching in the schools where these children attend, increasing the standards and subject matter they are taught, and making connections for them to get to college or decent careers. The plan is clear and the reasoning is plausible. MD is a small state; however, its population is larger than its size would suggest. It is well poised to take the RTTT funds and target some of its successful programs into struggling schools, and develop models other states could use.</p>				
Total		0	0	

<b>Grand Total</b>	500	416	421	
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# Race to the Top

## Technical Review Form - Tier 2

### Maryland Application #3050MD-5



**A. State Success Factors**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it</b>	65	47	57	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	30	40	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	12	12	
<p><b>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b></p> <p>(i) Maryland has designed a comprehensive and coherent reform agenda that articulates its plans for implementing reforms in the four education areas: standards and assessment, data systems to support instruction, great teachers and leaders, and turning around the lowest achieving schools. The State summarizes its plan in a chart. The over-arching theme is to improve student achievement. The six distinct strategies are: adopting Common Core Standards, aligning and enhancing curriculum, aligning assessments, linking student achievement to teacher and principal evaluation, targeting professional development, and improving instruction. The state success factors are addressed and the incorporation of Science Technology Engineering Mathematics (STEM) is found throughout. There is a compelling narrative of strategies for each area.</p> <p>(ii) The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is very similar to the model provided; however, Maryland included a paragraph in its MOU regarding collective bargaining. The 22 of 24 LEAs that have signed are committed to the State's reform efforts. There are only participating or non-participating LEAs. The 22 signatures that Maryland secured included the Superintendent or Chief Executive Officer in each LEA and the Board of Education president (except in one county). Only two of the 24 teachers unions signed the MOU. The signature of such a low number of teachers' unions weakens the reform effort in critical areas, such as great teachers and great leaders and turning around the lowest achieving schools.</p> <p>(iii) The LEAs that are participating in the State Race To The Top (RTTT) plans will translate into broad statewide impact only in three areas: increasing achievement in reading language/arts and mathematics, increasing high school graduation, and increasing college enrollment. Decreasing achievement gaps between subgroups were not addressed.</p> <p><b>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)</b></p> <p>Based on information shared during the interview process, Maryland has developed a strong collaborative relationship with the unions. I am confident that the effort involved in getting groups to participate in discussions and giving input will translate into commitment.</p>				
<b>(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans</b>	30	27	27	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	20	20	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	7	7	

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

(i) The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) will redirect its organizational strengths and mission to align with the RTTT goals. The Office for Academic Reform and Innovation, a new office, will be staffed with a Deputy Superintendent who will report directly to the State Superintendent of Education. The Deputy Superintendent will oversee all aspects of Maryland's RTTT proposal, and manage the MSDE cross-divisional teams in charge of implementation. These cross-divisional teams will be centered on the four assurances within the application, with staff responsible for STEM activities sitting on the teams. The Project Manager will be responsible for the overall monitoring of grant implementation in-house as well as in the LEAs. The Project Manager, along with a Staff Specialist, will also coordinate logistics, monitor implementation of MOUs, oversee timelines, monitor financial aspects, meet reporting requirements and ensure accountability. The Project Manager and the Staff Specialist will report to the Deputy Superintendent for Academic Reform and Innovation. The Division of Business Services within the Office of Finance will be responsible primarily for budget reporting and fund disbursement. The Deputy Superintendent for Finance will work closely with the Deputy Superintendent for Academic Reform and Innovation to ensure that the RTTT funds are spent in accordance with the proposal's goals. Current and future State and federal funding streams will be aligned with the RTTT goals to provide consistency and coherence and enable the State to use fiscal, political, and human capital resources to make sure that Maryland's reform agenda thrives after the four-year RTTT grant period concludes. Twenty points were awarded because of the compelling case outlined to ensure capacity to implement.

(ii) Only two of the State's teachers' unions signed MOUs; however, former teachers of the year, Milken Award winners, and individual teachers sent letters of support. Other stakeholders who sent letters of support include a number of legislators, Maryland Association of School Boards of Education, Maryland Association of Counties, Maryland Association of Secondary School Principals, Maryland Association of Elementary School Principals, Maryland Business Roundtable for Education, Maryland Public Television, Port Discovery Museum, An Association of Marketing Students (DECA), Career Technology Student Organization, Maryland State Conference of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and numerous colleges and universities, to include community colleges. The list of supporters was very long and impressive; however, the majority of the teachers' unions did not show support.

<b>(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>27</b>	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5	5	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	22	22	

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

(i) Maryland has made progress in revising and strengthening standards, realigning assessments to higher standards, developing a statewide school improvement web site to provide instructional support, establishing Maryland Approved Alternative Preparation Programs, and has developed a series of needs assessments, standards, and planning guides to assist schools in determining the direction for change. The State used America Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and other Federal and State funding to pursue these reforms. The State made a compelling case in this response.

(ii) Maryland State Assessment (MSA) scores have climbed in both elementary and middle school reading and mathematics since implementation in 2003. The percentages of students scoring Proficient or better in reading and mathematics increased by 25 points at the elementary level and 22 points in reading and 32 points in mathematics at the middle level. Maryland's scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) confirm and validate the improvements seen in the MSA, moving students from Basic to Proficient levels. Charts showing the closing of the achievement gaps on MSA at the elementary level reflect the new initiatives. Charts are also included to show closing of the gaps between various

subgroups to be statistically significant. The State's graduation rate has increased only slightly, from 84.68 to 85.24 since 2003. The actions that contributed to the outcomes were explained in detail.

Total	125	101	111	
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**B. Standards and Assessments**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards</b>	40	40	40	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20	20	
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20	20	
<b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
(i) On June 1, 2010, Maryland signed the Memorandum of Agreement to participate in the development and adoption of internationally benchmarked State standards through the Common Core State Standards Initiative led by the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). This initiative now includes 47 other states, which is significant. (ii) The State Board will adopt the Common Core State Standards on June 22, 2010.				
<b>(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments</b>	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>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
(i) Maryland will participate in a multistate consortium -- the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) to redesign its assessment system. PARCC plans to change the mix of assessment items to reflect a full range of knowledge and skills in the Common Core State Standards. (ii) The number of states involved are 27, which is slightly more than one-half.				
<b>(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments</b>	20	20	20	
<b>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
The State's plan to transition to enhanced standards and high quality assessments has three goals to implement the Common Core State Standards: developing the state transition plan in detail, ensuring that stakeholders understand the transition plan, and revising the curriculum assessment system. Five goals are directly related to high quality assessment. Areas addressed are formative assessment, summative assessment, and the comprehensive assessment system. In addition, an Online Instructional Toolkit will be expanded for use by LEAs.  High school graduation requirements will be revised and the Maryland State Department Education (MSDE) along with the LEAs will develop an interdisciplinary STEM-based curriculum. Activities, (as noted above) timelines and responsible persons are ambitious including all stakeholders. The innovations are centered around the use of technology.				

Total	70	70	70	
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**C. Data Systems to Support Instruction**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system</b>	24	20	20	
<p><b>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b></p> <p>Maryland is implementing America Competes Elements 1-7 and 10-12, for a total of ten. Elements 8 and 9 are in the statewide plan, but are in various stages of implementation. Element 8 is in progress and scheduled to be completed December 2010. Element 9 is under development. Ten of the twelve elements have been achieved.</p>				
<b>(C)(2) Accessing and using State data</b>	5	5	5	
<p><b>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b></p> <p>The State has a 10 step initiative for assessing and using data. The initiatives range from expanding the Maryland Longitudinal Data System-Effectiveness Accountability, Performance MLDS-EAP reporting subsystem to implementing a new and expanded public education portal and student-teacher linking and growth/performance reporting. Initiatives 1-2, 5-6 are scheduled for 2010-2012. Initiatives 3, 4, and 7 are scheduled for 2010-2014 and initiatives 8-9 are on-going. Many initiatives are scheduled to be completed at the same time, which increases the probability of implementation. The program is designed to increase the type and usefulness of educational data delivered to a variety of educational stakeholders. The initiatives seem credible.</p>				
<b>(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction</b>	18	18	16	
(i) Increasing the use of instructional improvement systems	6	6	6	
(ii) Supporting LEAs, schools, and teachers in using instructional improvement systems	6	6	6	
(iii) Making the data from instructional improvement systems available to researchers	6	6	4	
<p><b>(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b></p> <p>(i) Maryland has set clear technological standards needed to implement its statewide Instructional Improvement System. The technology infrastructure in each of Maryland LEAs support classroom teachers and administrators in implementing real-time, data-based planning and instruction. Maryland's Online Instructional Toolkit provides electronic access to tools that support teachers implementing effective instruction aligned to the intended student learning. In addition, Maryland will expand this resource by locating, purchasing, or developing additional multimedia electronic resources in partnership with Maryland Public Television, College Board, and the Maryland Business Roundtable. The plan is credible.</p> <p>(ii) Maryland will develop and implement Educator Instructional Improvement Academies to provide in-depth training for 5,800 administrators, school-based coaches and teacher leaders on the Instructional Improvement System, the Longitudinal Data System, the Common Core State Standards and assessments, and the Online Instructional Toolkit. The provision of pilot sites enhance the quality of the plan.</p> <p>(iii) All databases from the existing and proposed system will use both an appropriate data query language and a platform metadata layer, enabling rapid selection and extraction of data sets to qualified researchers. The response was direct.</p>				

**(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

Based on the interview, Maryland's clarification of the plan to make data from the instructional improvement systems and statewide longitudinal data system available and accessible to researchers limits the availability by using a management group to filter request.

Total	47	43	41	
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**D. Great Teachers and Leaders**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	
(i) Allowing alternative routes to certification	7	6	6	
(ii) Using alternative routes to certification	7	7	7	
(iii) Preparing teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage	7	7	7	

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

(i) State regulations (COMAR 13A.12.01.07) allow LEAs, alone or in partnership with colleges, universities, and nonprofit organizations to design and operate alternative route programs for teachers. A corollary regulation allows for the same kind of alternative pathways and residency-based programs for principals. Four of the five elements were clearly met; however the element of "same level of certification" was not used. The term "highly qualified" was substituted, therefore it was impossible to tell if it was included or not.

(ii) Maryland Approved Alternative Preparation Programs (MAAPPs) are alternative routes for teachers. There are nineteen such MAAPPs. Five hundred or 32% of all new teachers hired during 2009-2010 completed an alternative preparation program. The alternative route for principal preparation is New Leaders for New Schools. Seventy-eight principals have completed the program. The response to this criteria is credible.

(iii) The State publishes the Maryland Teacher Staffing Report annually, which includes data for teachers and principals on supply and demand. To determine critical shortage areas, Maryland uses the percentages of High Qualified Teachers by content area, the five year rate of hiring in each content area, and information from LEAs on the number of vacancies. This report assists the State and LEAs in projecting the number of teachers and principals that could be brought into the workforce through alternative programs. This response was credible.

<b>(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>53</b>	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	5	5	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	15	15	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	10	8	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	25	25	

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

(i) In April 2010 the Maryland State Board of Education passed proposed regulations that are now going through the regulatory process. These regulations specify that student-learning gains should comprise 50

percent of the evaluation. MSDE envisions a system of growth measures that will provide alert data for students not making progress during the school year. The explanation addresses teachers of mathematics and reading assessing individual student growth using MSA, and for other teachers, MSDE will seek to identify objective pre and post tests to generate student growth information. This response is strong in that individual student growth will be measured for grades and subjects not assessed by the MSA.

(ii) Maryland's plan for the new teacher evaluation system includes the following factors: student learning and growth for an individual teacher (30%) and for educator teams (20%), and teacher skills and knowledge (50%). The plan for the new principal evaluation includes the following factors: student learning and growth aggregated for an entire school (30%), closing the achievement gap for the entire school (20%) and Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework's eight outcomes (50%). In each plan, local goals can be substituted for state goals, local plans must still include student growth as a significant factor. The percentages are distributed in such a way that the rigor has been delegated to the LEAs. An Educator Effectiveness Workgroup has been created to make recommendations about the teacher and principal evaluation system that include teachers and principals, the response is scored in the high range.

(iii) The State plans to evaluate every teacher and principal at least once annually by 2012 using the new evaluation system. The system is designed to provide feedback data to teachers on student growth, for their students, classes and schools. This response is credible.

(iv) The plan addresses all four areas of decisions regarding: professional development of teachers and principals, differentiated compensation for teachers and principals, and granting tenure for teachers (which has been moved from two to three years). Principals have never had a right to tenure, and can be dismissed from the position whenever they demonstrate a pattern of ineffective performance. The plan is ambitious in all areas except teacher and principal compensation.

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

Information secured during the interview process confirms that annual evaluations do not presently take place and will not begin until 2012.

<b>(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>23</b>	
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	15	15	
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	8	8	

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

(i) Maryland has decided that a key leverage point will be to focus on leadership. The State has also determined that aggressive actions across five areas will be necessary to ensure equitable distribution of teachers and principals in high-poverty and/or high minority schools. The areas are: better means of identifying and developing exceptional educators; new recruitment routes that can bring new people to the profession; redesigned certification routes; larger incentives to attract educators to these schools; strong commitments to removing ineffective educators; and attention to monitoring progress and policies. Maryland has developed a bold plan in each of the above areas. The activities, timeline and responsible parties make it all seem possible.

(ii) The State has committed to developing elementary STEM curriculum and a corresponding Elementary STEM Teacher Certification. Additionally, Maryland will establish partnerships with the University System of Maryland to design a STEM teacher preparation program based on a proven national model, such as the National Math and Science Initiative's UTeach program. Several LEAs have collaborated with IHEs to identify required coursework and establish cohorts of effective teachers who are certified in other content areas to seek an endorsement in English for Speaker of Other Languages (ESOL). The plan is credible.

<b>(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	
(i) Linking student data to credentialing programs and reporting publicly	7	7	7	
(ii) Expanding effective programs	7	7	7	
<b>(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>(i) Maryland plans by fall 2012 to link K-20 LDS with the Educator Information System (EIS) to identify where Maryland teachers and principals are employed, where they received their preparation, and whether they have been rated Effective or Highly Effective as measured by student growth. Maryland Pre-K 12 students already receive an identification number upon entry to school, which will continue into higher education. An identification number also will be given to anyone entering a Maryland Assessment Program (MAP) or MAAPP teacher/principal preparation program and to teacher/principal preparation programs themselves. These identification numbers will allow the LDS to link to the teacher/principal preparation program and link the teacher/principal with student growth. The response was compelling.</p> <p>(ii) Building on the success of the Professional Development Schools (PDS) as a vehicle to create a pipe line of effective and highly effective teachers, the State plan is to create the Teach for Maryland Consortium. The Teach for Maryland Consortium will facilitate a partnership between teacher and principal preparation programs to recruit and prepare teachers especially for high-minority and high poverty schools. The State will also review MAPs and MAAPPs report card data to assess the alignment of the teacher and principal evaluation systems and take action to approve and close or require modifications to programs as needed. This response is strong.</p>				
<b>(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	
(i) Providing effective support	10	10	10	
(ii) Continuously improving the effectiveness of the support	10	10	10	
<b>(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>(i) The State Board of Education approved regulations that establish a comprehensive teacher induction program. Beginning no later than 2011-12 school year, all new teachers must participate in the program until they achieve tenure and veteran teachers new to a school district must participate for one year. In August 2010, MSDE will present to the State Board a regulation outlining State standards for principal mentor programs. Maryland will also expand its Promising Aspiring Principal Institute to serve all regions of the State.</p> <p>(ii) Maryland is creating its Online Instructional Toolkit that will serve to inform, shape, evaluate, and referee the quality of the professional development opportunities that teachers can access. To better assess its overall plans and activities at a macro level, MSDE will hire an evaluator with experience in assessing large scale professional development initiatives.</p>				
<b>Total</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>130</b>	

**E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools**

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

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

The Maryland State Board of Education and the State Superintendent of Schools use the powers given them by statute to supervise and administer the public schools in Maryland--Md.Educ.Code Am. 2-103. They do so by promulgating a comprehensive set of regulations governing schools in improvement, corrective action, and restructuring--COMAR 13A.01.04.07-.08. The State derives its district-and and school-level intervention authority from these two regulations. The response is compelling.

<b>(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>35</b>	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	30	30	

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

(i) Maryland has identified the 16 persistently lowest-achieving schools. These 16 schools include 5 in Tier I and 11 in Tier II. Maryland defines "persistently lowest achieving Tier I schools" as those Title I schools (PK-5 and 6-8) and combination PK-8 that are at the lowest 5 percent of all Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring in the State. Maryland defines "persistently lowest achieving Tier II schools" as those Title I-eligible schools that are the lowest 5 percent of all secondary Title I-eligible schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring. Maryland also identified Title I-eligible high schools (2) that have a graduation rate of less than 60% over three years.

(ii) Maryland has attempted to turn around 17 schools and two districts to implement and test the Breakthrough Center Approach. In the short time that the Breakthrough Center has intervened in these districts, there has been improvement in the districts capacity to organize and achieve success. The State plan is to use the Breakthrough Center Approach to provide coordinated turnaround services to the bottom 5 percent of schools. The establishment of a Breakthrough Zone will enable the provision of resources, assistance, flexibility, and authority to schools and districts identified for inclusion in the Breakthrough Zone. These schools and districts will have the resources to support one of the four intervention models; however, there is no plan to ensure that the most effective model will be chosen. Five core strategic priorities have been planned for Breakthrough Zone schools. The activities, timeline, and responsible person are outlined in detail.

<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>45</b>	
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**F. General**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(F)(1) Making education funding a priority</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	
(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) Maryland has slightly increased the State appropriations for fiscal years 2008 and 2009 education allocations for public K-12 and higher education. High points are earned if the total revenues are higher.

(ii) The State identifies high needs LEAs and high poverty schools and group them in a special category as economically disadvantaged. As a result, in addition to base level support, Maryland's Compensatory Education grant can provide additional State funding. This funding is based on the count of students eligible

for free and reduced meals. Extra funding does not necessarily translate into equitable funding because the needs are so much greater in high needs LEAs and high poverty schools.

<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>31</b>	
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	4	4	
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	4	4	
(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) Maryland has no charter school "caps" nor does it restrict student enrollment. However, charter schools are authorized by the LEAs and LEAs can set limits.

(ii) Maryland enacted its charter school law--- Maryland Education Code, Article 9-101 et. in 2003. It establishes charter schools as alternatives means within public schools. The charter school law identifies the responsibilities of public charter schools and authorizers, which in Maryland are the local boards of education. The local boards of education (LEAs) have the flexibility of supporting or not supporting the establishment charter schools.

(iii) Commensurate funding has resulted in the formula for charter schools so that charter schools students receive the same amount of funding as their peers in the same school district. The response is clear and direct.

(iv) Charter schools housed in LEA-owned properties are eligible for State Public School Construction Program capital funding. State operating dollars provided to charter schools may be used for facilities expenses, and the State does not impose any facility-related requirements on charter schools that are stricter than those applied to traditional schools. The facility support is the same as traditional schools.

(v) Maryland has a record of expanding innovative initiatives. The Maryland State Board voted to support Senate Bill 714, Education Residential Boarding Education Program-At Risk Youth. The bill established a Maryland boarding school under the supervision of MSDE. LEAs have wide latitude to open schools in such areas as dropout prevention, recovery of dropouts, and academically disadvantaged students. One such school, the Baltimore Leadership School for Young Women opened in 2009. There are other examples that make this response compelling.

<b>(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	
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**(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

In 2002, the Maryland General Assembly passed legislation entitled "The Bridge to Excellence Act," that revamped education funding in Maryland. In 2005, the Maryland General Assembly established into law the Principal Fellowship and Leadership Program. Also, in 2005, the Maryland General Assembly transferred to the Maryland State Department of Education the authority to regulate childcare providers. In 2006, the Maryland General Assembly passed a law creating a residential boarding school for at-risk- youth. The Education Reform Act of 2010 proposed by the State Board, changed the rules for evaluating teachers and principals. The above five other reform conditions represent a significant number.

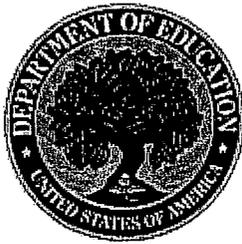
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>46</b>	
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**Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM</b>	15	15	15	
<b>Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>(i) Maryland offers a rigorous course of study in STEM courses by revising the graduation requirements to align with college expectations, requiring four math credits and continuing with the requirement of three science credits. MSDE, district, higher education and interstate consortia will determine summative end-of-course assessments and develop STEM-ready high school exit criteria.</p> <p>(iii) Maryland plans to launch a STEM Innovation Network, which will be a comprehensive, physical, and virtual network to support communications, convey knowledge, and share resources among all of Maryland's STEM stakeholders. An electronic system will provide services and support to principals and teachers in the development and delivery of STEM instruction.</p> <p>(iii) Maryland plans to provide STEM internships, co-ops, or lab experiences for all interested high school and college students to jump-start their successful transition to the workplace.</p> <p>The State has a high quality plan which was incorporated throughout the entire proposal.</p>				
<b>Total</b>	15	15	15	

**Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform</b>		Yes	Yes	
<b>Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>Maryland's application comprehensively and coherently address all four education areas as well as success factors criteria. The State has commitment from a broad base of LEAs to implement and achieve the goals in the RTTT. The plan clearly describes how the State, in collaboration with its LEAs, will use RTTT and other funds to increase student achievement, decrease the achievement gaps across subgroups, and increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers.</p>				
<b>Total</b>		0	0	
<b>Grand Total</b>	500	452	458	



# Race to the Top

## Technical Review Form - Tier 2

### Maryland Application #3050MD-10



**A. State Success Factors**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it</b>	65	58	59	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	40	40	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	13	14	

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

Maryland has a rich and successful history of instituting reforms over the past two decades resulting in significant positive results in student achievement, closing the gap and high school graduation rates. Maryland ranks near the top of the nation in all these areas and more. Building on that strong foundation of past reforms, the state has articulated in its application a clear set of goals for implementing reforms in the four areas of Race to the Top, and pathways to achieve these goals. The strategy is sound and achievable.

Maryland has 22 of its 24 districts participating in the Race to the Top application. This represents 81.6% of the schools in the state, 78.7% of the students, and 84.6% of students in poverty. One district chose not to participate for fear of "loss of control," and another because it wanted to maintain its teacher evaluation system. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) determined that the district's evaluation system does not calculate student growth, so MSDE refused the district's request to participate in Race to the Top. Of the 22 districts where the superintendent and Board President signed the MOU, only two of the teachers' unions signed the MOUs. The two unions which did sign the MOU were from Baltimore with 92% minority and 51.5% of the high-poverty schools in the state, and Prince George's County with 95% non-white student population and the second largest LEA in the state and containing 21% of the state's high-poverty schools, second to Baltimore. In addition, the participation in Section D, Great Teachers and Leaders, and Section E, Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools for the 22 districts is conditional, contingent upon collective bargaining. In summary, only the two largest school districts signed up with all three required signatures, and those two are conditional for two of the four areas in Race to the Top.

At first look, this would seem to be relatively weak commitment with potential impact only for urban schools. However, the legislature passed the Education Reform Act of 2010 that, according to a letter signed by the President of the Senate and Speaker of the House of Delegates, puts in law requirements that, among others, requires student growth to be a significant component of performance evaluations, furthers the states longitudinal data system and requires the State Board of Education to explore the use of innovative scheduling models in low-performing or at-risk schools. In short, new laws and regulations will require schools and districts to participate in many of the reforms.

Maryland has listed truly ambitious goals for 2014 and 2020 in student achievement, decreasing achievement gaps, increasing high school graduation, and increasing college enrollment and sustaining that enrollment. The plans with the LEAs participating in the Race to the Top, whether measured by the 2 districts committed with union signatures or the 22 with and without union signatures, will translate into broad statewide impact. The goals are highly ambitious, but the extent to which they are achievable,

especially for different subgroups, is questionable, as are the goals themselves. For example, the goals for NAEP 4<sup>th</sup> grade Math are to have 90% of all students scoring Basic and above by 2014. In 2009, the beginning points for subgroups vary from students with disabilities at 67%, ELL at 71% and Black at 72% to Asian at 95% and White at 94%. For those students achieving at a lower rate, the leap is very large and there is virtually no growth for those subgroups doing very well currently. The intent with the goals, no doubt, is to show no gap among subgroups – which is admirable – but there also is the implication that there will be little growth for white and Asian. This pattern is consistent through all measures. In spite of these concerns, the plan will have broad statewide impact.

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

During the panel presentation, the representatives from Maryland clarified that there were significant efforts underway and planned to address the needs of high achieving students, including special resources in the Online Toolkit for all kinds of students. The high rate of participation in Advanced Placement programs throughout the state is another indicator of these efforts.

<b>(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>29</b>	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	20	20	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	9	9	

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

Maryland has a very strong and logical approach to creating statewide capacity to implement, scale up and sustain the proposed plan. Within the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), the superintendent is reorganizing the Department to build capacity specifically for the Race to the Top and also to align the entire department with the goals of Race to the Top. The staffing to support Race to the Top very wisely builds on the structure that the department used in the application writing process; thus there will be greater fidelity to the plan as implementation progresses. The internal structure includes direct responsibility for the grant as well as a cross divisional team for each of the four areas of Race to the Top. This structure should enhance communication and ensure that there is full coordination across all aspects of the grant and is commendable.

The department also has clear lines of responsibility established for accountability and all components of grant administration and oversight. These build upon current structures so that they are not an unnecessary burden for LEAs or the Department, which should be welcome by both the LEAs and the Department and save time and effort for all. The state plans to go forward with all its reform efforts whether or not the grant is approved, but the difference in resources without the grant will expand the timeline for implementation and results. This is an admirable goal. In order to accomplish this, they have aligned the local, state and federal budgets to the four assurances and STEM while being highly cognizant of the “funding cliff.” For staffing, some positions related directly to Race to the Top will be contract positions, as opposed to full time equivalent positions, so that when the grant funds run out and certain tasks are no longer necessary, those positions can go away easily. This is wise and sustainable approach.

The support to LEAs falls under the area of evaluation in this section of the application. The state will partner with a research arm of the University of Maryland System (MARCES) to identify promising practices and evaluating their effectiveness as well as disseminating the results to LEAs. The evaluation model is an impressive and thorough three-stage approach including looking at any new products created such as software systems and professional development, and whether the process and products are easy to use. A second part of this first stage is to see if the professional development (for example) was effective. Recipients will be tested to see if they learned what was presented and at a level needed to facilitate its use. The second phase – utilization – concerns how many educators actually used created materials and how they used them. The third phase looks at impact and whether or not the materials made a difference. This is a very thorough approach to evaluation and should be highly beneficial for LEAs to rely on a source to tell them what materials and process are effective in what situations. This is a long-term approach, and the application does not look at the short term support in this section. Finally, because Maryland has only

24 districts, communication through monthly meetings between the LEA superintendents and the State Superintendent will be able to address problems as well as disseminate activities that are working well.

The state established a Race to the Top executive steering committee co-chaired by the President of the State Board of Education and the State Superintendent. Members of the committee included representatives from various state organizations including the boards of education, superintendents, three teachers' associations/unions, both principal associations, the University of Maryland System, the Independent College and University Association, and Association of Community Colleges, the PTA, the Business Roundtable for Education and the Governor's office. The state also had significant outreach resulting in an impressive volume of letters from every kind of organization related to education imaginable, not to mention individual teachers. While teachers' associations/unions were involved with the process, there are no letters of support from from these organizations, and no charter schools have letters of support either. In spite of the lack of union and charter letters of support, this is a very impressive array of interest and support for the effort in Maryland.

<b>(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5	5	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	23	24	

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

Maryland has been very busy in each of the four education reform areas over the past several years. The application does an outstanding job of listing specific activities in each area and pinpointing funding for virtually every activity. This is a very impressive list and a thoughtful accounting of funding for the activities.

Maryland has made enormous strides in student achievement, both at the Basic level as well as moving students from Basic to Proficient. In virtually every category the state has significantly outpaced the national average. In addition, the state is ranked first in the nation in both participation and performance in Advanced Placement exams. Maryland also has made huge strides in closing the achievement gap, especially at the elementary school level, for all subgroups. Gap reductions vary for level and group, but examples demonstrate how significant these closures are: Maryland State Assessment for Free and Reduced Meal students 11.3, for African American 11, for ELL 7.9, 8<sup>th</sup> grade NAEP math for special education 14, for black 10, for 4<sup>th</sup> grade NAEP math for special education 20, for Hispanic 10, for black 9. The list goes on. The only area for concern regarding the gap is the percent of students at or above proficient where gaps have widened somewhat. This is understandable in that students that start farther behind have farther to go. Maryland's graduation rate has increased slightly over the years to 85%, this in spite of the implementation of more rigorous high school exit exams. African Americans have shown the most improvement in graduation rate.

Maryland has been able to point to specific reforms that have caused these impressive improvements and draw a direct line between the reform activity and the improvement. For example, Maryland began to increase support of early childhood education in 2003 when only 52% of students entered school ready to learn. By 2009, 73% of students entered school ready to learn helping to explain the reading gains from 58.1 percent to 84.9 percent and math gains from 65.1 percent to 84.3 percent. The state made changes in the curriculum, especially in reading and math which also contributed to the increase in achievement. At the high school level, the state implemented a high school graduation requirement and implemented more rigorous courses. The graduation rate, already higher than most in the country, did not suffer for most groups as new requirements were put into place. Of some concern, however, is the drop in graduation rate for Hispanic and special education groups and the significant fluctuation for ELL students. The state was able to increase the number of highly qualified teachers and national board certified teachers, partially through greater collaboration between institutions at all levels. Finally, the state invested an additional \$1.3 billion over previously existing funding formulas from 2003 through 2009. Not only is the list of reforms impressive and a model for other states, but also impressive is the state's analysis linking the reforms to the

results. While this is not a perfect science, it at least demonstrates a willingness and ability to learn from past efforts. This bodes well for successful implementation of future reforms.

**(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

During the panel discussion, representatives from Maryland clarified both the causes of low graduation rates for Hispanic and special education groups and plans for improving those graduation rates for Hispanic students in particular, including co-teaching with English Language Learner (ELL) teachers and English teachers and having an ELL curriculum aligned with the English Language Arts curriculum.

Total	125	115	117	
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**B. Standards and Assessments**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards</b>	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)**

Maryland has signed an MOU to participate in the development and adoption of the Common Core Standards Initiative that includes 48 states. This is built upon a history of developing and implementing very strong standards. The Maryland State Board of Education endorsed the Common Core Standards on May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2010 and will adopt them on June 22, 2010. The State Board has the authority in statute to adopt standards for the state. The state has made other recent efforts to become ready to adopt and implement the standards including have representatives from Maryland colleges and universities serving on development or feedback teams, and other organizations from the state provide feedback. These activities easily meet the criteria for this section.

<b>(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments</b>	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)**

Maryland is a member of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC). Twenty-seven states are in this consortium. The application also discusses the rationale for this consortium, including ongoing assessments, formative assessments, online administration and scoring, having representation from Maryland's IHEs, and using a student growth model. These activities satisfy the criteria for this section.

<b>(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments</b>	20	20	20	
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**(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

Maryland has a robust, well-detailed, and thorough plan for supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high quality assessments. The plan begins from a foundation of similar activities, especially in using a very inclusive process for developing and rolling out a statewide curriculum. Building on this process the

state will use a gap analysis to align the curriculum with the new standards and maintain those parts that are still appropriate while creating new components. This will save time and maintain comfort with teachers. The state already has what the application calls a very popular and highly used online instructional toolkit which will be expanded with the curriculum revision and realignment, including providing additional resources and materials. The online toolkit will be linked to an instructional improvement system and the longitudinal data system not only to provide resources to teaching and learning, but also to provide professional development tied to instructional needs. The state also is creating a STEM curriculum and a world languages pipeline.

The plan identifies goals, activities, a timeline and responsible people. At its core is the professional development available in a number of ways including online and with support from embedded content coaches. Especially notable in the component of the plan related to assessment is the active collaboration of the MSDE and Maryland's IHE community in all aspects of the process. This is an outstanding plan.

Total	70	70	70	
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### C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system</b>	24	20	20	
<b>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> Maryland's Longitudinal Data System (MLDS) includes 10 of the 12 elements in the America COMPETES Act. The other two are in the process of development.				
<b>(C)(2) Accessing and using State data</b>	5	5	5	
<b>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> Maryland's plan to ensure data are accessible and used and the data support decision makers is based upon experience in the state with other multi-agency systems. The plan is extremely thorough, detailed and viable and includes 10 integrated initiatives. Notable among the initiatives is implementation of an enterprise security system to protect the systems and the data and ensure compliance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and implementation of a series of 32 dashboards customized for specific audiences or functions to make access and use easy for a variety of users. Together the ten initiatives will provide access to data for all stakeholders and make the use of that data easy, resulting in improved performance across all four reform areas and beyond.				
<b>(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction</b>	18	16	16	
(i) Increasing the use of instructional improvement systems	6	4	4	
(ii) Supporting LEAs, schools, and teachers in using instructional improvement systems	6	6	6	
(iii) Making the data from instructional improvement systems available to researchers	6	6	6	
<b>(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> Maryland's approach to local instructional improvement systems is to establish the requirements to carry out a typical 9-step process in planning, teaching and evaluating a lesson, and then go to each LEA and, working with key staff, do a gap analysis between what capabilities the LEA has and what are needed. According to the project level budget for this activity, some LEAs have significant capabilities and systems				

already in place and others will choose to use the state system only. Once the gap analysis is completed, the LEA will be funded to the extent needed to implement the infrastructure. The project budget for this activity shows \$4.75 million for this project, but there is no analysis as to how the state reached this number nor what it might do in the event there is not sufficient money to complete the project. The process is sound, but the budget is unclear. In addition, Maryland will expand the existing Online Instructional Toolkit and use a cadre of experienced teachers to work with vendors to build instructional modules aligned to the Common Core Standards. This hybrid approach of setting requirements and then working with the LEAs to figure out the best way to meet the requirements is very wise. It leaves the choice to the LEA, immediately increasing the likelihood of buy-in by teachers and leaders, but it also sets clear requirements to ensure that LEAs will be able to take full advantage of the system as it grows. This is a solid, well-thought out approach, albeit with an unclear budget.

The key to effective use of instructional improvement systems is well-designed and implemented professional development activities, according to the application, and Maryland will provide that through Educator Instructional Improvement Academies. The Academies will provide in-depth training to 5800 administrators, school-based coaches, and teacher leaders on all aspects of the instructional improvement system. After baseline training, the coaches and teacher leaders will direct school-based activities that follow up. The state will encourage the use of the technology infrastructure to collaborate across school and district lines. The continual encouragement to use the established yet growing technology infrastructure for a variety of purposes will increase familiarity with the system and thus usage of the system. This is a positive strategy that will ensure money spent on the technology infrastructure is not wasted. In addition, the state will collaborate with all higher education institutions offering pre-service training to ensure they provide hands-on training with the system to prospective teachers. Finally, the teachers and leaders who may need this training and support the most – those most in need of improvement (termed Priority Schools) – will be the pilots for these efforts and get first access to the training. This is a coherent and sensible approach to supporting LEAs. The success of the endeavor depends on the actual training developed, but the plan and entities responsible seem more than qualified to make it successful.

Maryland will make both technological and policy accommodations to ensure data are accessible to researchers. All systems will use SQL, a powerful but relatively easy to use data query language, and a metadata layer to make selection and extraction of data sets easy for qualified researchers. On the policy side, they will create a process for assessing and servicing valid data requests while protecting student personal data. The system will allow tracking of various programs and strategies that teachers use. MSDE personnel will monitor usage and use the data to refine the delivery of interventions, especially in low-achieving schools. Maryland also will encourage researchers to use data for evaluations and studies. This controlled, yet open, approach and attitude should encourage and enhance research in the state.

Total	47	41	41	
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**D. Great Teachers and Leaders**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	
(i) Allowing alternative routes to certification	7	7	7	
(ii) Using alternative routes to certification	7	7	7	
(iii) Preparing teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage	7	6	6	
<b>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				

Maryland has regulatory provisions that allow alternative routes to certification, including routes that allow for providers in addition to institutions of higher education. These are created by LEAs often in partnership with a private provider or two- or four-year college or university, or may be created solely by the LEA, and targeted to the specific needs of the LEA. These programs are available for teachers and principals and meet all requirements of the definition in the Notice.

Maryland has 19 alternative teacher certification programs (Maryland Approved Alternative Preparation Programs – MAAPPS). These are being used primarily to train teachers in specific content areas that the LEA needs. Since 2005, these routes have prepared more than 500 teachers per year, which in 2009-2010 represented about 32% of all Maryland-prepared new hires. These statistics indicate that the routes not only are available, but also they are being used by a substantial number of educators to be. In 2010, the State Board of Education approved a “test-in” strategy, which should increase the number of candidates to enter an alternative program. This is an admirable and effective strategy for recruiting high quality teachers.

There is an alternative program for principals as well, using a partnership with New Leaders for New Schools. This produced 78 new leaders in 2009-10 affecting over 24,000 students. Maryland realizes that this one program is not sufficient, so the state plans to build on its experience with the teacher routes and utilize the New Teachers for New Schools model especially for rural districts as well as an Officers to Principals pathway to tap into the military. While not as robust as the teacher routes, the principal route is highly used and in the process of being expanded.

Since 1984, the state has surveyed colleges, universities and LEAs annually and published the Maryland Teacher Staffing Report, and in 2005 it was expanded to include principals. There was no mention of taking the survey down to the school level. For large districts, school level data is critically important to fully understand the nature of the shortages. The state uses a formula to determine critical shortage areas and also makes projections on the number that could be brought into the workforce. This data also helps colleges and universities in planning for expansions of programs. The state has a number of incentives to facilitate the training and placement of teachers and principals in critical shortage area. This is a very impressive set of incentives and resulted in 5,193 teachers representing all 24 LEAs receiving more than \$9 million in awards. This is a powerful model for others to emulate.

<b>(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>55</b>	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	5	5	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	15	15	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	10	10	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	25	25	

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

The state has a high-quality plan to establish clear approaches to measuring student growth. Like many states, Maryland is looking to the transition from an old testing program to a newer one aligned to the new Common Core Standards. State law has been established that changes in student growth will become a significant factor in the evaluation of teachers and principals, and the state has determined that 50% of the evaluation will be student growth and 50% shall include other factors. A new system based on Common Core Standards will commence in 2014 when new assessments are ready. Until then the state has established 5 factors that will be used in conjunction with existing measures of student growth. They will pilot and refine the growth measures with seven LEAs. Given the limitations the state has to work with in this short term, the factors are solid and represent a range of measures that attempt to address all teachers and principals.

It is in the application of the factors where Maryland shows its attention to detail, concern for fairness and buy-in by educators, yet still retains accountability and rigor – all through involving teachers and principals.

The process was fairly simple yet very savvy. Feedback from educators through a series of 24 focus groups with 432 stakeholders of all kinds resulted in the decision to create a system that blends State expectations with local priorities. LEAs can either use the state model or augment it. There are minimum requirements that a local system must meet, and the overall system must be acceptable to the state. The measure of student growth is amendable, but only in part, and it still must be 50% of the total evaluation. In addition, the 50% of the evaluation that is not student growth also is flexible within guidelines. The state anticipates that the majority of schools will use the state system, largely because the MSDE and pilot districts in which the state system will be tested will product exemplary rubrics, tools and guidance with district staff to implement the system with fidelity. In summary, the state has a high quality plan to measure student growth and still provide flexibility to districts.

The State Board of Education has proposed a minimum of three rating criteria – Highly effective, effective and ineffective. This is subject to change based upon further work by a Governor-appointed group called the Educator Effectiveness Workgroup which will recommend possible changes to this component as well as others. If three categories remain, the state has already determined that teachers and principals who do not meet at least the effective standard on the student-growth portion of their evaluations cannot be rated Effective overall.

Many questions remain to be answered in this process of evaluation development, and the state has anticipated a lot of them. For example, while the system is being piloted beginning January 2011, pilot districts will continue to use their old system for purposes of career impact. The aforementioned Educator Effectiveness Workgroup will make recommendations to the Governor, State Board of Education and State Superintendent by December 2010 on a variety of issues so the pilots may begin in January 2011. The range of issues to be addressed is comprehensive and demonstrates the thoughtfulness and care the MSDE is taking to create a fair and effective evaluation system.

The application states clearly that Maryland has never had a high-quality, consistent statewide system for evaluating teacher and principal effectiveness and to change to a new system the state needs to be sure the evaluation happens regularly and fairly and results of the evaluation have an impact of students. The State Board of Education has created guidelines for the system including that all teachers and principals will be evaluated annually. If student growth demonstrates a failure to meet targets, it will trigger additional evaluation and a determination of what interventions or supports may be necessary. Because this is such a change from past practices, the state will collaborate with an external entity to design, develop and implement an ongoing training and coaching program for all designated executive officers (who evaluate principals) and principals to help them use data and observations to become better evaluators. In addition, coaches will be hired to support the 58 executive officers. The data system will be ready to provide fast and easy access to data pertinent for evaluations by December 2010. This is a thorough and inclusive plan for ensuring high-quality annual evaluations.

Maryland has a good plan to use evaluations to regarding developing teachers and principals. The State Board adopted regulations regarding support for new teachers. Among other things, the new requirements direct LEAs to provide a mentor, regularly schedule opportunities to co-teach or observe, target professional development to a teacher's needs, and conduct regular reviews and observations. When the new evaluation system is operational, the induction program will be a good platform to use for taking action on the result of the evaluation and identifying highly effective teachers who could serve as mentors. This is an excellent us of the evaluation system. Also veteran teachers will be expected to develop professional development plans that are tied to the results of their evaluations. For principals, Maryland is creating a program to develop a principal mentor program. Overall the plan calls for 1800 professional development/data/content coaches to receive intensive training in 2011. In 2012, principals will be trained regarding effective evaluations, and by 2014 there will be online options for professional development linked to teacher and principal needs as determined by the evaluation system. This is a good plan that should prove very effective.

The evaluation system is central to Maryland's plan to provide models for differentiated compensation. The state has enabled differentiated compensation by passing a law that allows teachers and principals designated Highly Effective to receive special, locally-negotiated financial incentives to work in low-achieving schools. The state is also creating a fund for locally negotiated incentives for Highly Effective

STEM teachers and ELL teachers. All participating LEAs will use some Race to the Top funding to experiment with new compensation models. There are five LEAs that already have developed models and both the state and the LEAs will invest funds to refine the models. The five LEAs will form the Performance Compensation Workgroup to develop a model system for both teachers and principals based on evaluation results. Finally special funds and promotion will be developed for those Highly Effective educators interested in pursuing additional responsibilities or professional growth opportunities. This plan builds upon existing local efforts that are of recognized high quality, thus increasing the potential for widespread adoption and a positive impact throughout the state. While retention is not specifically addressed, the opportunity to grow and be further compensated by achieving Highly Effective status should be an incentive to keep these teachers and leaders in the profession.

Maryland has a solid plan for using evaluations to inform decisions on tenure and certification. Teachers now have a three year probationary period to achieve tenure. Novice teachers much achieve a rating of Effective by their third year of teaching of their contract will not be renewed. Principals have never had a right to tenure. As for certification, Maryland has a plan to change its certification system to a three-tiered, performance-based structure. Tier 1 will be an initial license for new teachers and if they have not achieved an Effective rating by the third year they will not receive tenure and will not receive a continuing certification. Tier 2 for tenured teachers will be for 5 years. Teachers create and implement a professional growth plan and teachers and principals need to be rated at least Effective and need to show progress in achieving their professional growth plans in order to have that certificate renewed. Tier 3 is an optional advanced certification which is not fully designed yet.

The application details a very specific process to use evaluations to inform decisions regarding removing ineffective teachers. There are ample opportunities for additional support and focused professional development and then novice teachers rated Ineffective will not have their contracts renewed. Tenured teachers rated Ineffective for two years are removed or transitioned to a second-class certificate and enter into a specific performance-improvement plan. Those who still are not successful and rated Ineffective for a third year in a row will be terminated. Principals do not have tenure. The process is envisioned to be similar to the teacher process, but it is not described fully. The application states, "Principals who are not rated Effective will move into a performance-improvement plan with their supervisor. Principals can be removed from their positions at the will of the LEA Superintendent." There is no indication of how this process will be any different from current practices. The state also will require LEAS to report the percentage of Ineffective, Effective and Highly Effective teachers and principals in their Master Plan update, and the state will post this information on its web site. This is a thorough and fair process for removing Ineffective teachers, but the removal of ineffective principals is less thorough. The additional public display of percentages of teachers and principals in each category should provide much needed transparency and raise public awareness.

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

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

Maryland has a very cogent and thoughtful plan for ensuring the equitable distribution of highly effective teachers and principals. It is focused on the two LEAs with the highest percentage of non-highly qualified teachers in high-poverty elementary schools: Baltimore City and Prince George's County. At the secondary level, these are two of the top three using the same metric. These are the two LEAs that also have union sign-on to the application. The state is prioritizing the distribution of Highly Effective and Effective principals for high-needs schools, as research cited shows the power and importance of principals in the success of a school. However, teachers are not left out of the equation, by any means. The state has a five-part plan. The first part is to rely on the new, high-quality evaluation system to better evaluate teachers and principals

and use the information to support educators. Second is to do a better job of recruiting and preparing principals and teachers for these types of schools in particular. The application cites the previously noted MAAPP program, expansion of New Leaders for New Schools and other steps including addressing rural schools. The programs are all targeted to specific high-need areas and work together in a complimentary fashion. A third step is to encourage effective teachers and principals to work in high-minority and high-poverty schools. The legislature passed a new incentive program to support locally negotiated incentives to encourage highly effective educators to work in these schools. The state will experiment with additional creative solutions. The fourth part is to retain these highly effective educators. This involves transferring ineffective teachers out of high-needs schools and incenting effective and highly effective teachers and principals in. The state also will encourage LEAs to redesign the jobs of Highly Effective teachers to concentrate more time on instruction and/or to assist in coaching and mentoring other teachers, or use technology to leverage their skills across classrooms. This is an especially interesting and unique approach and could provide a model for increasing the impact of Highly Effective teachers. The state will also support LEAs in succession planning to help administrations find and recruit potentially excellent educators. Finally, as in many of Maryland's plans in the application, the state will publically report and monitor progress. This too is a positive component of the plan.

Maryland has established critical teacher shortage areas based upon its Teacher Staffing Report. For the STEM areas, the state's plan has set clear targets for increasing the teacher base in these areas by increasing retention rates and increasing the number of STEM college graduates by 40%. Of particularly commendable note is Maryland will be the first state to develop elementary STEM curriculum and a corresponding elementary STEM Teacher certificate. The state will establish partnerships with the University System of Maryland to design a STEM teacher preparation program. The state also will provide grants to LEAs to support locally negotiated incentives to pay principals and teachers of STEM and other subjects. For world languages and ESOL, the state has entered in agreements with other countries to identify additional pathways for native speakers to demonstrate content expertise when pursuing certification. Other similar steps are listed in the plan. This is a strong plan.

The performance measures for this entire section are ambitious, but possible and their sequence from year to year is logical.

<b>(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	
(i) Linking student data to credentialing programs and reporting publicly	7	5	5	
(ii) Expanding effective programs	7	4	4	

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

Institutions of higher education in Maryland are required to develop and maintain an assessment system based on candidate performance data to inform ongoing program improvement. The state has the Educator Information System (EIS) regarding the determination and issuance of certificates. The EIS will need to undergo significant changes to keep up with reporting requirements. With changes on tap for systems described in other sections, especially the longitudinal data system (LDS), Maryland will link the EIS and LDS through an identification number that will stick with an individual throughout the K-20 system and numbers will be assigned to others who come into the system at any point. While this plan addresses the overall intent of the criteria, it is uncharacteristically lacking in detail about how these process will be implemented.

The plan for expansion of successful teacher preparation programs is to build on the strong internship already in existence and create the Teach for Maryland Consortium. All teacher preparation programs will be required to align their program components to the evaluation systems. The state will provide technical assistance and that assistance will be informed by Maryland's involvement in Teacher Performance

Assessment Consortium. It is unclear how successful programs will be expanded. This plan also is lacking in detail.

<b>(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	
(i) Providing effective support	10	8	8	
(ii) Continuously improving the effectiveness of the support	10	10	10	

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

Maryland’s plan for effective support for teachers and principals will rely on 6 common-sense principles for improving professional development: build on and scale what already works, leverage the state’s small geographic size, reinforce the complementary roles of teachers and principals, provide data-informed professional development, demand quality control based on data, and focus especially on struggling schools. The state has set in motion a requirement that all teachers must be involved in an induction program until they achieve tenure and veteran teachers new to a district must participate for a year. As noted earlier, the state will create principal mentor programs, including a mentor-certificating program. The state will also expand its Aspiring Principals’ Institute. This is a strong plan building on the 6 principals.

To give all teachers and principals the opportunity to become Effective or Highly Effective educators, the state will base its efforts in the Online Instructional Toolkit tied to the educator evaluation system. Educators will be able to look at their own evaluations and professional development plans, analyze student growth data, and find a variety of aligned professional development resources. All will be tracked by the system and analyzed for which resources seem to be having the greatest impact. Executive Officers will receive special training to ensure their evaluations and other efforts with principals are effective. The state will also further support the 1800 school-based coaches working with teachers. These are highly commendable efforts for induction and coaching. To specifically address low-achieving schools, the state will establish a principals’ academy designed specifically for principals of the 200 schools in school improvement of some kind. The application describes the types of activities that will be addressed in the Academies. This is a very thorough and well thought-out plan. The plan does not, however, address common planning and collaboration time.

The state will rely on the Online Instructional Toolkit to help measure, evaluate and continuously improve the supports detailed earlier. The state will be able to identify who is accessing the portal and using its resources, generate follow up surveys and compile evaluation summaries through the system. It also will be able to track those who participate in the professional development and look at outcomes that are registered in the system. Overall, the state will hire an evaluator to evaluate all professional development initiatives and report to the state. The state also will partner with LEAs and IHEs to develop a rubric to evaluate the quality of professional development from various sources. Only the professional development that meets standards based on the application of the rubric will be posted in the Online Instructional Toolkit. This plan should ensure high quality professional development that will increase in both quality and quantity over time.

<b>Total</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>127</b>	
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**E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools**

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

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

The state has the legal authority to intervene directly in the State's persistently lowest-achieving schools and LEAs.

<b>(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>38</b>	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	31	33	

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

Maryland has a definition for the lowest-achieving schools that has been approved by the Department of Education. It includes three tiers.

Maryland has a robust and inclusive plan for supporting LEAs in turning around the lowest-achieving schools. It is based on recent experience in implementing a new organizational structure called the Breakthrough Center which focuses on teachers and leaders, targets and coordinates resources, looks at root causes including non-academic challenges, supports feeder schools and provides flexibility for district leadership, especially regarding staffing. When piloted in two very different settings, it was highly successful in increasing student achievement in a short time. This was an impressive pilot and shows great potential to have broader impact throughout the state.

The plan is to scale the Breakthrough Center services to the bottom 5% of schools, specifically the 16 low-achieving schools and 20 feeder schools that provide students to the 16 low-achieving schools in Baltimore City School and the Prince George's County schools (if a low-achieving school is a middle school, feeder schools are those elementary schools that provide students to the middle school). It should be noted that these two LEAs are the only ones with union signatures on the MOU for Race to the Top. The state will provide a 5-year commitment to these schools including supporting the implementation of the four turn-around models, exploring innovative structures such as flexible teacher schedules, course scheduling, incentive pay and benefits and others, and negotiating policy flexibility with the LEAs and schools as needed. The plan provides detail in the process of engagement, during which the district support team and the school, district and MSDE leaders reach agreement on an intervention model. The state will engage in five core strategic priorities in these schools, many of which have been addressed in prior sections. Notable among these strategies and tactics within the strategies is a very thorough set of school needs assessments involving a variety of experts from inside and outside the district. Also potentially liberating is the assignment of Administrative Managers to schools who will assume school operation functions thus freeing the school principal to be a dedicated instructional leader. There is a strong emphasis on mentoring and professional development aligned with needs assessment, and the inclusion of hands-on STEM approaches to the curriculum which should engage students and increase interest in school. The plan includes a clear recognition of the importance of extending student learning opportunities and coordinating student services to include school health care and liaisons with various family service entities.

This is a very robust and comprehensive plan. Success will hinge on the working with the LEAs and schools in selecting the appropriate turn around model. To that end, the state will cultivate and connect intervention partners by implementing a statewide RFP process to identify and choose school turnaround partners. While contracts with partners must ultimately be signed by the local LEAs, having the state assume the administrative burden of the process and aggregate the demand will significantly help LEAs that choose this model. A potential sticking point in the plan is including a number of people with experience in the school as part of the team selecting the turnaround model. Some of these people may be invested in prior strategies and/or may have relationships with people affected by the decision of which model is chosen. The balance between fully understanding what goes on in a school and making tough decisions affecting individuals with prior relationships is a difficult one to maintain.

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

During the panel presentation and discussion, Maryland representatives clarified the process for selecting a turnaround model. There is robust involvement from all stakeholders, especially the community, and strong leadership from a state team. This should mitigate the concern of too much local investment in prior strategies.

Total	50	46	48	
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**F. General**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(F)(1) Making education funding a priority</b>	10	8	8	
(i) Allocating a consistent percentage of State revenue to education	5	4	4	
(ii) Equitably funding high-poverty schools	5	4	4	

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

The percentage of the total revenues available to education for FY 2009 was slightly greater – one tenth of a percentage - than the percentage in the prior year.

Maryland's fiscal policies lead to equitable funding between high-need LEAs and other LEAs. Principles of the state's funding formula include: high need districts receive additional funding, funding for education is wealth equalized, and funding for education is flexible so local boards of education and superintendents can decide where to spend the money. The state also provides Compensatory Education Program grants of additional state funding to districts based on the counts of free and reduced-price meals. The application clearly demonstrates the application of these principles by noting that four of the state's 24 school systems are considered high-needs LEAs and in 2009, more than 60% of state aid under the Compensatory Education Program was distributed to these four systems, whose combined student population represents 37% of the state's total enrollment. The state does not address in detail the extent to which funding is equitable between high-poverty schools and other schools, although the local flexibility provided to LEAs could address this component. The state clearly fulfills the equitable funding among LEAs but less clearly so the local schools' criterion.

<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	40	30	30	
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	5	5	
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	5	5	
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	8	8	
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	6	6	
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	6	6	

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

Maryland has had a law allowing charter schools since 2003. There are no limitations – caps – on the number of schools allowed in statute. While there are no evident inhibitions to slow down the growth of charter schools in the state, the number of charter schools in the state is only approximately 3% of all the schools. The application states that the State encourages and supports the expansion of charter schools every year, but there have been only 3 new charter schools each of the last two years, plus number of

conversions. Because the only authorizers of charter schools are local boards of education, the state is not in a strong position to truly encourage more charter schools.

The state has laws regarding accountability. Student achievement is clearly required to be a factor in authorization or renewal. The law is not as clear about encouraging charter schools that serve student populations similar to local districts, although one document put out by the state does provide guidelines regarding serving special education students, but these seem to be guidelines only. In the last five years, three charter schools have been closed – none for student achievement problems – and forty-five have been denied. The state acknowledges that its processes may not always have been transparent, and thus made application more difficult, so it is working to improve that problem. Even though the application criteria do not call for a plan for what the state is going to do with Race to the Top funds regarding charter schools, Maryland provides one.

The state's law requires that charter schools receive the same amount of per-pupil funding as their peers in the non-charter schools in the same school district. State and federal program funding is guaranteed to charters as well. This meets the criteria of this section.

The state provides the same funding capabilities for facilities for charters that are in LEA-owned properties, but the application does not provide information for those facilities not in LEA-owned properties. The state does not impose any facility-related requirements on charter schools that are stricter than traditional public schools. However, additional problems for facilities must exist for charter schools in Maryland as the application states: "Maryland recognizes that charter schools face different facilities burdens than non-charter schools, and the State is committed to seeking and supporting opportunities for legislative changes that will increase facility supports to charter schools directly."

The application lists a number of examples of innovative autonomous schools, including a residential boarding education program for at-risk youth. On the local level, LEAs have the latitude to open schools to serve specific needs. Baltimore City Schools is cited as having quite a few of these schools. No other districts are mentioned and it is not clear if that is because the examples do not exist in other LEAs or if Baltimore's were just that outstanding.

<b>(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	
<b>(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>The application reviews some of the key statutes and other efforts the state has created to encourage educational reform, most notably the Education Reform Act of 2010 which focuses specifically on improving teacher and principal effectiveness and buttresses the plans for Race to the Top in multiple sections by helping to overcome a potential perceived problem with lack of union signatures on the MOUs. By itself, this is a very strong piece of legislation, but it does not stand alone. Another impressive law was passed in 2002 that revamped and increased education funding significantly and mandated LEA master plans that the MSDE and Board of Education take very seriously. The state also made great strides in early childhood education with a law that was passed in 2005. The application does not spell out the extent to which these reforms have increased student achievement, but they are reforms consistent with and supportive of Race to the Top.</p>				
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>43</b>	

**Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	
<b>Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				

<p>The state has a high-quality plan for STEM that is integral to other sections of the plan. As with other aspects of school reform, Maryland already had initiatives in place prior to Race to the Top, including a \$2 million annual fund to spur local STEM activities. The plan is based on a series of recommendations emanating from a task force appointed by the Governor in 2009. To address the recommendations and bring them to fruition, MSDE and the Maryland Business Roundtable have created the Maryland STEM Innovation Network. Particularly noteworthy in the plan is the recognition that students of all ages, not just secondary students, need to be engaged in STEM, thus there is attention paid to elementary curriculum as well as secondary. The list of activities fulfills the criteria in the notice.</p>				
Total	15	15	15	

**Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform</b>		Yes	Yes	
<p><b>Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b></p> <p>Maryland's application comprehensively and coherently addresses all four of the education reform areas and fulfills all aspects of the criteria for this priority. It is an extremely well thought out, thorough and detailed application that clearly shows the connections between past successes – which are impressive – and its plans to accelerate gains in all four reform areas. Twenty-two of the twenty-four districts in the state have shown some level of commitment to the application, but of those twenty-two, only two MOUs had the signature of the local unions and those were conditionally committed for the sections on great teachers and leaders and turning around low-achieving schools, subject to collective bargaining. On its surface, this would seem to signal low commitment and low impact. However, the two LEAs with union signatures are two of the largest in the state and have a substantial portion of high-minority high poverty children and schools as well as schools in need of improvement. If these are the only participating LEAs, the impact of the plan would still be substantial. In addition, the state passed a law recently which commits all LEAs to many of the most important key activities in the application, furthering the potential for impact.</p>				
Total		0	0	
<b>Grand Total</b>	500	457	461	



# Race to the Top

## Technical Review Form - Tier 2



Maryland Application #3050MD-8

### A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>56</b>	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	40	40	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	11	11	

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

(i)

Maryland presents a well articulated, comprehensive, and coherent education reform agenda that has been on-going for the past three decades. The state has made impressive gains in student performance as evidenced by NAEP data, in closing the gaps, in making a commitment to STEM programs, and in turning around low-achieving schools. In spite of these successes, the state is not satisfied, plans to work even harder to continue this growth, and is prepared to build on its successes in education by working to close the remaining gaps and by addressing the four core education reform areas in the notice. The state's agenda as outlined meets or exceeds this element of the criterion.

(ii)

The state secured LEA commitments from 22 for its 24 LEAs and was able to secure signatures from 22 of 24 LEA superintendents, and 21 out of 24 school board presidents. Evidence presented shows most LEA's conditional approval around issues related to teacher and principal evaluation.

Maryland is a strong union state, and despite the state's efforts, only two of the 24 teachers' unions signed an MOU. The state will continue outreach efforts to these organizations. The state was able to gain the support of the Baltimore Teachers' Union and the Prince George County Educators' Association, both of which represent teachers from high minority student populations and high poverty schools. The state was also able to obtain the support of from a number of award winning teachers including Milken Award winners who expressed support for the reform effort. In discussing the state's failure to win support from most of the teacher unions, state officials note that they did not want to water down the state's bold plan in order to secure their cooperation and sought instead to move forward hoping that the successes of the proposed effort will bring in teacher unions who did not commit to the state's plan. Evidence of strong commitment for the state plan was provided in the state's application.

(iii)

The state outlines ambitious goals for increased student performance in both NAEP and the state assessments for Maryland students in elementary and middle schools with a target year of 2014, and outlines plans to increase the overall college and college persistence rates by following constructive recommendations made by a statewide college success task force. The state offers a bold plan to improve education in the state, and further states that regardless of federal funding, it plans to proceed with the momentum that has already been established.

Elements of the state's plan include adopting Common Core Standards and new assessments, enabling schools to track students academic growth more closely, incorporating student growth into teacher and principal evaluations, coordinating academic and student support resources for low achieving students, and expanding STEM efforts. In this section, the state's application does not present a comprehensive outline that directly addresses its plan to increase high school graduation rates and to decrease achievement gaps.

The state has partially met this element of the criterion.

<b>(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	20	20	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	8	9	

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

(i)

Maryland states that the proposed reform will be implemented with or without *Race to the Top* funding. The state's commitment to reform appears strong and genuine based both on this application and its history as outlined in the previous section and the capacity that is built into its current system. The provided budget appears thorough and well designed to support the state's plan. The application outlines a plan to reallocate and reposition current funding sources, like federal Title IIA and Title IIB funds; in addition, state and federal funding sources will be redirected to support the state's plan.

The state provides a comprehensive plan for grant administration, management and oversight from the state level to the school level. The proposed budget appears thorough. Reference is made to transparency and accountability, and additional positions are proposed to assist in these efforts.

(ii)

An impressive list of organizations have shown support of the state's application. However, the state does not outline a specific plan to bring in support from teacher unions (the local NEA chapters) that have not made a commitment to the proposed effort.

Maryland's State Superintendent and President of the State Board of Education invited a critical number of stake-holders to join an executive steering committee to both inform and to solicit their feedback on the state's reform plan. Members of this committee included the state Director of Policy, presidents of the Baltimore Teachers Union and the Maryland State Education Association, the State Associations of Superintendents, school boards, elementary and secondary principals, the Maryland Parent Teacher Association, representatives from higher education, and others. No letters of support from charter schools were provided.

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

The State's presentation included a fuller explanation on its commitment to parental involvement in PreK-12 education. For example, the State described its statewide Parental Advisory Committee, which has served as a national model. No additional information was provided on support for the plan from teachers or from charter schools.

<b>(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>28</b>	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5	5	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	20	23	

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

(i)

Maryland has been successful in reform efforts that have been funded by a combination of state and federal funds as outlined in the application's narrative addressing this element of the criterion. Evidence provided documents a successful history in the state of reform from 2003 through the present that addresses each of the four core education reform areas in the notice.

(ii)

The state's reform plans have resulted in student performance gains in core academic areas across all student groups including progress for African American, Hispanic, SWD, ELL, and economically disadvantaged students. Maryland provided documentation of student performance using both state test and NAEP data.

The table entitled "Improving Graduation Rates," shows trends by subgroup that contradict improvement in graduation patterns in the narrative and in the following chart for Hispanic, ELL, and special education students, whose rates show a decline from 2003. The state implemented intervention measures in 2006, but these do not appear to have had an impact on increasing graduation rates for special education, ELL, or Hispanic students.

**(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

The State also provided information on a co-teaching model used for SPED and ELL students that has shown positive results. No additional data was provided on a potentially viable model.

Total	125	109	113	
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**B. Standards and Assessments**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20	20	
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20	20	
<b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
(i)				
Maryland is part of a 47 state consortium lead by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State Officers. The application cites a 20 year commitment in developing high quality standards. In summer 2010, the state board plans to adopt the internationally benchmarked Common State Standards and begin implementation. A list of participating states is provided in the appendix.				
(ii)				
In the application, Maryland outlines a plan for the State Board of Education to adopt the Common Core Standards on June 22, 2010; this is a plan that the Board has endorsed. This action would give the state the authority to adopt the standards for every public school in the state. Maryland briefly discusses the amount of time and effort to get to this point.				
<b>(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality assessments	5	4	4	
(ii) Including a significant number of States	5	5	5	

<b>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
(i) The state plans to work in a multi-state consortium to develop high quality assessments including summative, interim, and formative assessments. Several innovative strategies, some involving technology, are discussed. No reference to developing high quality assessments for ELLs was included.				
(ii) Maryland has an MOU with a College and Career Readiness consortium that includes 27 states with a plan to measure each student's readiness for college or career. The state also plans to work with IHE staff in developing new assessments.				
<b>(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments</b>	20	20	20	
<b>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>The state plans to use <i>Race to the Top</i> funds to re-examine every aspect of its instructional system with the goal of closing achievement gaps. The state emphasizes a commitment to world-class excellence for all students. Plans to improve its current system include enhancements of its "Toolkit," available online so that teachers will be able to analyze student performance data and develop lessons aligned to the new state curriculum. Additional resources are available to teachers via the state's Digital Library. Access to longitudinal data is one of several components of the state's technology infrastructure supporting instruction.</p> <p>Attention is given to developing a STEM curriculum and an innovative foreign languages pipeline that includes cultural literacy to meet an identified demand for multilingual employees. Professional development for teachers and leaders was also discussed, and the state's plan in this area includes the following priorities: expanding the corps of 1800 coaches currently working with teachers, giving teachers real-time access to high quality professional development, and ensuring that teachers in low achieving schools receive the best quality professional development. Additional training will be provided to teachers on a variety of topics, such as on the revised Common Core State Curriculum, the new assessment system, the new Instructional Improvement System, and the online Toolkit. Principals will receive similar additional training.</p> <p>The state has met the requirements of this criterion.</p>				
<b>Total</b>	70	69	69	

**C. Data Systems to Support Instruction**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system</b>	24	20	20	
<b>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>Maryland's educational system is well regarded nationwide. In its application, the state credits an emphasis on using data to inform instruction as one of the major components of the current system. This focus began in the mid 1990's, when the state's longitudinal data system was designed to support a successful decentralized educational environment. The data system is kept current. Senate State Bill 275, passed in 2009, which modified the 2008 version, established the Maryland Longitudinal System Center as an independent unit of the state government. According to the application, the system is sophisticated enough to implement all proposed priorities.</p>				

A table provided outlines all data processing requirements of the America COMPLETES Act, most of requirements have been met, one is in progress, and one is under development. The state has achieved ten of the twelve elements of the Act.

<b>(C)(2) Accessing and using State data</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	
<b>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>The state outlines 10 integrated initiatives to expand its current Longitudinal Data System to become what the state calls "an on-demand business intelligence system" to assist state educators in improving instruction and helping students to improve learning. The proposed first initiative specifically calls for expansion of the current system for the purpose of providing near-real-time information to stakeholders (administrators, teachers, students, parents, and policymakers). The proposed expansion as outlined appears comprehensive and designed to support the proposed reform effort.</p>				
<b>(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>14</b>	
(i) Increasing the use of instructional improvement systems	6	5	5	
(ii) Supporting LEAs, schools, and teachers in using instructional improvement systems	6	6	6	
(iii) Making the data from instructional improvement systems available to researchers	6	5	3	

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

(i)

The center of the state's proposed plan is an instructional system designed to close achievement gaps, support teachers and leaders, and improve the lowest achieving schools. Embedded in its current and proposed technology infrastructure is an online toolkit to provide state educators with student performance data, curriculum resources, an assessment item bank, and professional development resources. The state plans to assess any gaps in its instructional improvement system within the LEAs and as needed is ready to modify it. In assessing the system, the state will collaborate with Chief Information Officers and the instructional staff in all of the state's LEAs to identify and address any gaps and to implement solutions to ensure an effective infrastructure. It was unclear from the budget how the state will determine or justify the level of supplemental funding for LEAs to support the existing infrastructure of the instructional improvement system.

The state has partially met the requirements of this element of the criterion.

(ii)

Maryland's application identifies the critical role of the classroom teacher, and the interactions between teacher and students, as critical components of its reform efforts and outlines various steps to encourage teachers' involvement. Built into the system is a way to track teachers' use of the system over time to assess the level of successful implementation. The state clearly identifies poorly developed and poorly implemented professional development activities as a major reason for the past failure of effective results for data-based decisions. To address this, the state proposes development of Educator Instructional Improvement Academies that will provide training for administrators, school based coaches, and teacher leaders on the Instructional Improvement System, the Longitudinal Data System, and Common Core Curriculum and Assessments, and an online toolkit. This is only part of the proposed solution, which will be supplemented by additional LEA and school based initiatives, collaboration with an IHE, and services through the state's Breakthrough Center, where teachers can receive intensive professional development.

(iii)

The state outlines a process consistent with the *Family and Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA)* by which researchers and IHE partners can have access to and be able to extract data from the state's instructional system.

However, a clearly outlined process allowing all researchers access to state data was missing from the evidence provided. Legitimate educational researchers might find some of departments guidelines, such as, "Identify data sets that may be extracted for research use...", or "Create anonymous data sets...", overly restrictive.

**(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

The State's response on making data available available and accessible to researchers was weak and inadequate. Members of the panel discussed the creation of a representative group that manages such requests. This system appears overly restrictive as members of such a group may not include researchers who understand the research process or its value. The result may be to discourage evaluation of effective materials, effective practice, innovative approaches to educating different types of students, and other potentially valuable research. Because this state appears to have a successful educational system, such research would be of assistance to other states. In addition, a more accessible approach might encourage research that would be helpful in helping the State address any persistence educational challenges.

Total	47	41	39	
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**D. Great Teachers and Leaders**

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

(i)

Under the state's policy guidelines on alternative certification, an LEA must have its proposal for offering an alternative program approved and re-approved on a regular basis by the State Superintendent of Schools.

The state allows LEAs to submit proposals for the alternative certification of teachers in specific content areas in order to meet their specific staffing needs, and each proposed certification program must meet current, national content standards in order to receive state approval. Modification to entry requirements for candidates was made in spring 2010, to allow candidates to enter an alternative program based on taking and passing a state approved content assessment rather than requiring candidates to provide evidence of coursework. The state believe that this change will increase the number of candidates into its teacher certification programs.

To address a gap in the projected number of principals that the state will need, beginning in the 2005 academic year, the state authorized a partnership between Baltimore City and Prince George school districts with New Leaders for New Schools, a well regarded alternative program that using a cohort model

to train principals. Current legislation allows for the creation of new alternate routes for principals; the state supports these efforts.

The state meets this element of the criterion.

(ii)

Over 600 teachers obtained alterative certification in Maryland in 2008-2009, through 19 state approved programs operated by 12 LEAs including programs in partnership with a variety of organizations, such as Teach for America, and institutions (three community colleges, five universities, one district). All programs emphasize field experience, and teachers can be certified in as little as four months. Each program is designed to meet the unique needs of the LEA offering alternative certification for teachers; no reference was made to meeting the unique needs of individual schools. The New Leaders partnership, which includes two districts, produced 78 new principals in 2009.

(iii)

The state offers various solutions in the training and placement of teachers and principals in critical shortage areas including the use of various incentives. These include: Quality Teacher Incentive Act Grants, which includes sign up bonuses, annual stipends for teacher holding National Board Certification (NBC), tax credits for teachers to offset the cost of graduate coursework, stipends for teachers in schools working to restructure; Teacher Education Award for teachers going into critical shortage areas (matched by the LEA); state tax credits; a retire/rehire program for teachers and principals that will not limit their pensions if returning to work in a critical shortage area. Areas of teacher and principal shortages were outlined as being determined at the LEA level rather than at both the LEA and school levels.

The state's plan partially meets this element of the criterion in outlining its process for determining and monitoring shortage areas.

<b>(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>52</b>	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	5	5	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	15	15	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	10	7	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	25	25	

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

(i)

A priority in the evaluation of teachers and principals that is part of House Bill 1263, 2009 supplement, is that student growth will be a significant component. The Bill also states that student growth will not be based solely on an "existing or created single examination or assessment." In spring 2010, the State Board of Education, in creating standards for a new evaluation system to be fully implemented in the 2012-2013 academic year, established that a student growth growth component will be 50% of the evaluation of teachers and principals. The application clearly meets this criterion.

(ii)

The state sought input from all major stake-holders, including superintendents, HR directors, teachers, teacher association members, IHE teacher education programs, and arts and science faculty, in developing their new educator evaluation system model, which districts can adopt or augment. Local flexibility was built into the system when it came to student growth. The new evaluation system uses multiple categories: highly effective, effective and ineffective.

The state requires that LEAs calculate 30% of evaluations on student growth using one of three growth measures, which includes the state assessment, and on the remaining 20% of evaluations on student

growth, the LEA can use either the state model or a locally developed model. The remaining 50% of the evaluation system of teachers, LEAs are expected to assess in four specific domains: Planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities, which were derived from various teaching standards. A similar model in assessing non-growth components in the evaluation of principals was adopted, and LEAs have the option to include outcomes reflecting their priorities. The state maintains oversight of each LEAs evaluation framework, and there is a plan to track performance a the district level.

Flexibility for LEAs has been built into the new system for evaluating educators. For example, an LEA can select a weight of 30% in the student learning domain (growth) for the purposes of evaluating teachers of math and reading (grades 3-8) by using the state's Student Assessment summative tests.

The state has met this element of the criterion.

(iii)

According the the state's application, the historical trends in the data and other reports suggest that every educator in the state is "satisfactory." The state recognizes that requiring all teachers and principals to be evaluated using a new system with a student growth component creates a need to provide significant technical assistance to school districts and plans to on giving administrators faster access to performance data. The application has fully met this criterion.

(iv)

Under the new evaluation system, veteran teachers are expected to develop detailed professional development plans linked to identified needs in annual evaluations. For re-certification (every five years), teachers must demonstrate performance at the effective or highly effective levels and demonstrate that they have met the goals in their professional development plans. Professional development for both teachers and principals is a key element in the state's new evaluation plan.

The state's Education Reform Act of 2010, allows effective teachers and principals to receive locally negotiated financial incentives to work in low- achieving schools. According to the state's application, it plans to use *Race to the Top* funds to experiment with new compensation models. The Reform Act outlines a change from two years to three as the time required for a new teacher to obtain a rating of "effective" and earn tenure.

Principals do not have the right to tenure and can be dismissed due to a pattern of ineffective performance. Little information was provided about how ineffective performance is determined or the process used for dismissing an ineffective principal.

The new system provides support for both teachers and principals in meeting the expectations of the proposed evaluation system. The system is not seamless and consistent across the state. Based on educator feedback, "local flexibility" has produced some inconsistencies in the way some teachers and principals across the state are evaluated.

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

The State's presentation included information that clarified the question of annual evaluation of teachers and principals. They stated that annual evaluations will begin in 2012. Since the State also lauded their strong data system, it was unclear why it had to wait to implement a process that would provide timely and constructive feedback.

<b>(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	
(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	
<p><b>(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b></p> <p>(i)</p> <p>Currently, only 5% of teachers in high poverty/high minority schools are identified as "effective." It is noted that the state has historically used the term "effective" as applied to an effective teacher as based only on certification, not on student learning. Although the state has made impressive progress in closing the gap between low and high poverty schools, from 31.5% in the elementary grades in 2005, to 16.9% in 2008, the gap was acknowledged as one of the largest in the country as stated in the state's application.</p> <p>The state proposes to raise the number of effective teachers in high poverty/high minority schools to 30% in four years. However, there is no system proposed to identify which high poverty/high minority schools are experiencing a shortage of effective teachers or principals. The proposed plan also calls for: (1) better evaluation of teachers and principals; (2) better recruitment of teachers and principals; (3) the encouragement of effective teachers and principals to teach in high poverty/high minority schools using locally negotiated incentives; (4) retaining highly effective teachers and principals and removing ineffective ones from high poverty/high minority schools, and (5) the public reporting and monitoring of progress and articulating a willingness to make changes.</p> <p>The state has made impressive progress in this area; however, the criterion in this element was partially met as it has not effectively addressed the persistent gap in the equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals.</p> <p>(ii)</p> <p>In 2008, the state identified seven hard to staff subject areas across all school levels, and has outlined various strategies in meeting the state's needs in STEM, SPED, and world languages. The state's application included a global focus including a plan to address shortages of effective teachers in world languages. Identification of shortages in hard to staff subjects is through the LEAs rather than through both the LEA and school level.</p>				
<b>(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs</b>	14	12	12	
(i) Linking student data to credentialing programs and reporting publicly	7	6	6	
(ii) Expanding effective programs	7	6	6	
<p><b>(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b></p> <p>(i)</p> <p>The state has plans to build a K-20 Longitudinal Data System to better measure teacher and principal effectiveness as measured by student growth beginning in 2012. Included in the proposed plan is to make public the effectiveness of each preparation program including the aggregate performance data of program graduates annually on the state web site. There was a lack of detail in the state's plan in this section of its application. The proposed plan partially meets the requirements of this element of the criterion.</p> <p>(ii)</p> <p>All of the state's alternative and traditional certification programs are models are already using an extended clinical experiences focused on student performance. The state uses 381 professional development schools (PDS) in 24 LEAs as a pipeline to developing effective teachers. Teachers participating in a PDS internship have a high retention rate and strong performance. By 2013, all teacher and principal certification programs will be required to submit assessment modifications for coursework and for field or clinical experiences that are aligned with the new teacher and principal evaluation system. Little information was</p>				

provided on exactly how the state would expand effective teacher and principal preparation programs; this was listed on its listed activities but was not discussed in the narrative.

The state partially meets the requirements of this element of the criterion.

<b>(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>19</b>	
(i) Providing effective support	10	9	9	
(ii) Continuously improving the effectiveness of the support	10	10	10	

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

(i)

The state's application shows a commitment to offering effective support to teachers and principals by building on what already works including providing data informed professional development, by becoming more strategic in determining which professional development activities are most effective, and by showing a willingness to eliminate ineffective programs.

The state's efforts in this area center on data driven professional development, coaching, and induction. Key elements include induction and mentoring for teachers and principals; providing opportunities for educators to become effective or highly effective through professional development; recognizing the leadership role of principals and building the capabilities of executive officers who supervise principals; expanding the 1800 teacher coaches; adding more principal academies; and targeting professional development for teachers in low achieving schools. Supporting evidence includes a professional development initiative plan and timeline. Full discussion regarding providing "common planning and collaboration time" for teachers and principals, which was listed in the criteria for this element, was missing.

The state partially meets this element of the criterion as outlined.

(ii)

The state outlines a comprehensive professional development plan to impact every educator in every school. The state's application describes a teacher induction program for teachers and plans to expand the 1800 school based coaches who work with teachers.

In collaboration with an IHE, the state proposes development of a principal mentor-certification program based on the state's leadership standards. In addition, the state discusses the overlooked importance of the principal's leadership role in a school system. Utilizing the Executive Officers' Network established in 2003, the state plans to expand the Network's purpose by customizing officers' training in an effort to improve their evaluation of school principals.

The state meets or exceeds the requirements of this criterion.

<b>Total</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>122</b>	
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**E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs</b>	10	10	10	
<b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
(i)				
The state has provided evidence that it has full legislative authority to supervise and administer the state's public schools that includes a <i>mandate</i> to directly intervene at various stages of improvement. The state meets this criterion.				
<b>(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools</b>	40	35	35	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	30	30	
<b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
(i)				
The state has documented a process of identifying three tiers of the lowest-achieving Title I schools as defined in the <i>Race to the Top</i> notice.				
(ii)				
Maryland describes a history of taking aggressive action in turning around low achieving schools and districts, and discuss a variety of improvement measures have been used in over 500 schools over the last 15 years. After twenty years of work with low achieving schools, the state acknowledges significant weaknesses that remain: for example, the need for new pipelines of highly qualified teachers for the lowest performing students, the need for better coordination of the effective use of resources, and non-academic challenges. Using its Breakthrough Model, the state describes a comprehensive plan to work with 16 low-achieving schools and 20 feeder schools in the Baltimore City Schools and the Prince George's County Schools.				
In its application, the state refers to a range of turnaround activities with two models, the Breakthrough Approach, called Goal I, and District Turnaround, called Goal II. Components of these models are consistent with the major components of the various intervention models in the notice. The state has worked with 17 schools in two districts to implement the Breakthrough Approach.				
One goal of the state's Breakthrough Model is to increase the number of effective educators working in low-achieving schools. To meet this need, the state proposes a variety of strategies that include: creation of a consortium that includes one or more IHEs to prepare educators with the skills to work in low-achieving schools; partnership with New Leaders for New Schools that has trained leaders who have had a positive impact in low-achieving urban schools; locally negotiated incentives for the best teachers and principals to work in the neediest schools; and providing effective support for existing educators while working to remove ineffective staff members.				
The state outlines various goals that include improving the school climate and student support by extending Community Learning Centers to offer after school and summer programs. The state proposes the hiring of community liaisons to support engagement with families although the number of these individuals to be hired per school or per LEA was not specified. A general comment is the curious lack of attention paid to the involvement of families in the proposed reform and even in the notice; after all, these families have children in the neediest schools and are a critical part of these children's lives.				

Based on the evidence, the state appears to be making an effort to support LEAs by addressing a self-identified major weakness in its reform plan, which includes providing after school and summer programs to students in persistently low performing schools. Absent from the discussion in carrying out this effort are key stake-holders.

Total	50	45	45	
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**F. General**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(F)(1) Making education funding a priority</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	
(i) Allocating a consistent percentage of State revenue to education	5	5	5	
(ii) Equitably funding high-poverty schools	5	3	3	
<b>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
(i) The state's Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act of 2002, described as "landmark legislation," revamped Maryland's financing of public schools including universities and called for significant increases. In 2008, 47.8% of the states appropriations were for education; in 2009, it was 47.9%. The state has met the requirements of this element of its application.				
(ii) The Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act of 2002 had four major components. The second is "equity" funding for education that is "wealth-equalized." This means that per pupil funding of state aid in less wealthy jurisdictions is greater than per pupil funding in wealthier jurisdictions. The fourth component of the legislation is "flexibility," which provides state aid in the form of flexible grants leaving allocation decisions in the hands of LEAs and superintendents. This part of the legislation allows for the allocation of funding to schools that need it most.  However, the state's application does not outline or discuss a system for the identification of high poverty schools. In addition, LEAs and superintendents have the flexibility, not the requirement, to fund high poverty schools.				
<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>33</b>	
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	4	4	
(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	6	6	
<b>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
(i) The state articulates a need to ensure both quantity and quality of its charter schools. The state established a charter school law in 2003, as an alternative within the public school system. The state has no cap on the				

number of charter schools it approves nor does it restrict student enrollment. The number of charter schools has varied since 2003, from a high of 16 in 2005 to a low of 4 in 2008. An additional four schools will open in 2010. Three schools have been closed. The state's application states that work needs to be done to create a culture where charter schools can be valued as sites for the creative transformation of schools, and *Race to the Top* funding will be used to create a new policy to strengthen the state's charter school law.

However, charter schools apply to the LEAs not to the state, a system that may limit their number and independence, and may hamper the creation of truly innovative efforts.

(ii)

Accountability is built into the state's charter school law that includes requirements for authorization and renewal. Three charter schools were closed for issues not related to student achievement, but for a variety of reasons, such as lack of financial responsibility, faculty issues, and a concern that the school was not meeting its mission (as an educational alternative for troubled youth). About half of the applications for a charter school were denied for incompleteness or lack of quality. Since the closing of the three schools, the state now provides additional support for charter schools to ensure effective management. There is a question about the effectiveness of the current and the proposed processes in authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes.

(iii)

Maryland's Charter School Law requires commensurate funding, and students in charter schools receive the same per-pupil funding as students in non-charter schools in the same district. Documentation of the state law governing this part of the education code was provided.

(iv)

Maryland provides the state's charter schools with several facility supports. Charter schools can be housed in LEA-owned properties and are eligible for Public School Construction Program funding. In addition, provided state dollars can be used for facilities expenses, and the state provides technical support to charter school operators as requested.

(v)

LEA's are allowed the flexibility to new open schools, such as schools that target dropout prevention. For example, Baltimore City Public Schools has 12 "transformational" schools with specific themes and unique curriculums designed for college readiness or alternative programs, which are operated by experienced independent entities, and the LEA has a plan to open 24 more within the next four years.

None of the schools described were devoted to the arts, science/math, or other academic content areas, and it appeared that most innovative schools in the state were designed only for at-risk youth. The only examples offered for innovative, autonomous public schools were in Baltimore.

<b>(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions</b>	5	5	5	
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**(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

In this section of its application, the state refers to various laws that have strengthened public education that demonstrate significant reform conditions.

The state cites passage of the Education Reform Act of 2010, signed into law on May 4, 2010, that included various directives designed to improve teacher and principal effectiveness. Features of the legislation included increasing the time it takes for a teacher to gain tenure (three years); strengthening evaluation rules for teachers and principals that includes using student growth as an important component; establishing a program to support locally negotiated incentives to attract highly effective teachers to the lowest performing schools.

Existing legislation, the Principal Fellowship and Leadership Program, gives superintendents additional governance over schools that are entering a restructuring phase of improvement. Additional

evidence includes other legislation such as the following: the "Bridge to Excellence Act" that revamped how schools are funded and increased funding for public schools; a 2006 law that allowed the creation of residential public boarding schools for at-risk youth; and a 2005 law that transferred to the State Department of Education the authority to regulate childcare providers, legislation that was subsequently used to create strong pre-school programs.

Total	55	46	46	
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**Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM</b>	15	15	15	

**Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

The state is ranked number one in research and development per capita and anticipates a future increase in STEM related professional, scientific, medical and technical positions. Since 2007, the state awards \$2 million annually in local grants so that LEAs can develop STEM initiatives. School leaders also have access to federal and private funding of STEM related curriculums or projects. In 2009, a state task force composed of various stakeholders from education, business, the private sector, and government produced a report listing seven major recommendations that included a focus on supporting a STEM-based workforce, maintaining innovation, and providing an education for all students to remain or to become competitive on a global basis.

The state has met or exceeded the requirements of this priority.

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

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform</b>		Yes	Yes	

**Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

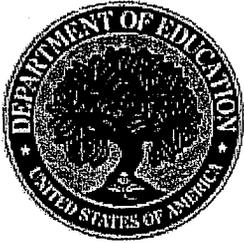
The state has provided a comprehensive and coherent plan to address all four education reform areas and the State Success Criteria.

In addition, the state provided evidence of commitment to support its plan by a diverse group of stakeholders, a detailed outline on the proposed use of *Race to the Top* and other funds to support and to implement its plan, and an outline of the legislative changes and laws, especially those addressing a new educator evaluation system, that will support the components of its plan.

The state has articulated a commitment to a systematic approach of education reform that is largely consistent with the spirit of *Race to the Top*.

Total		0	0	
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<b>Grand Total</b>	500	450	449	
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# Race to the Top

## Technical Review Form - Tier 2



Maryland Application #3050MD-7

### A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>55</b>	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	35	35	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	15	15	

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

The applicant has articulated a very comprehensive, coherent reform agenda which builds upon decades of nationally recognized leadership and strong educational policies which are focused on standards, assessment, and public accountability at the school, district, and state levels. The applicant serves 843,861 preK-12 students across 6 regions. What is proposed has achievable goals in the four education areas of ARRA and a series of plans to implement in LEAs in every region of the state.

There is a firm infrastructure in place with supporting policies that have been built over the past 30 years. The State has a solid track record of implementing comprehensive and complex plans as evidenced by examples given by the applicant such as extensive outcomes of the 2 former waves of reform, positive press in Ed Week Quality Counts, and passage of a new education law. This law moves tenure from two to three years, creates a framework for teacher and principal evaluation systems that require student learning growth as a significant factor in the evaluation, and authorizes locally negotiated incentives for teachers and principals who work in the state's lowest-achieving schools. The State Board of Education passed proposed regulations to establish that 50 percent of a teacher's/principal's evaluation will be based on student growth.

The applicant has included a very detailed budget breakdown, by project and also by criterion with budget narrative.

The Memorandum of Understanding is modeled after the sample in the Race to the Top (RTTT) Request or Proposals (RFP). The column for scope of work was modified, because each signing district had to commit to all phases of the reform plan; there was no option for opting out of some sections. The MOU also includes a paragraph regarding collective bargaining. All of the 22 LEA Superintendents signed the MOUs, and all but one of the local school board presidents signed the MOUs. The 22 LEAs that have signed the MOU are committed to the State's reform agenda, but the applicant has entered a "C" in the appropriate blocks on the chart of participating LEAs out of respect to the current negotiated contracts. Each LEA will handle their union contracts individually. There has been a long history of collective bargaining in this state, and there are bargaining units in each of the 24 LEAs. Both the NEA and AFT have affiliates in the LEAs. Both NEA and AFT had representatives on the executive committee which developed this application.

The sole affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers in the State signed the MOU. This district has a minority population of approximately 92 percent; approximately 51.5 percent of the high-poverty schools in the State are in this District. This jurisdiction also has the most persistently low-achieving schools in the State, and, therefore, is a critical partner for reform. The signature of the second largest district in the State was secured. This district has a 95 percent non-white student population with 21 percent of the State's

high-poverty schools – the second highest percentage in the State. None of the NEA affiliates signed the MOUs. It is noted that correspondence was signed by every 2009–10 Teacher of the Year (including the teachers from the two non participating districts) and from approximately 30 former teachers of the year, as well as Milken Award winners who collectively expressed their support for this reform plan.

All LEAs (those which signed and those choosing not to sign) will be required by law or regulations to adopt the common core standards, common core state curriculum and assessments, participate in the longitudinal database; adopt the statewide teacher and principal evaluation system; foster equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals in the lowest achieving schools and adopt an appropriate turnaround strategy when required.

The State has done everything possible to ensure that the highest commitment possible has been documented from as many stakeholders as possible. The bottom line is that the vast majority of LEAs do not have signatures of the local teachers union. While it is unlikely that the LEA's will choose not to participate once the final MOUs are ready to be signed, there is always that possibility.

The State chose not to participate in the first round of applications because the leaders did not feel that there was enough time for the necessary conversations, debates, research, and passage of supporting laws. There was hope that all LEAs would participate, but having 22 of 24 is a substantial majority.

The State is relatively small in terms of geography and population so with only 24 LEAs, consistent leadership, and a history of close collaboration on educational issues, the applicant is confident that there will not only be success with implementing RTTT, but it will become a national model for other states to replicate. Participation in the RTTT effort will reach the majority of the State's students: 22 LEAs, 79 percent of all students, including 77 percent of minority students, 94 percent of high-poverty schools, and 85 percent of students in poverty. The newly passed state education law requires that all districts change in ways that match RTTT over time, anyway. Currently many of the initiatives proposed in the application are already in progress, even in the 2 LEAs which chose not to participate.

The State also has very stable leadership with the State Superintendent being there for more than 18 years. During her tenure, 2 other waves of reform were satisfactorily implemented with a collaborative working arrangement, dedicated staff, and the ability to reach out nationally and internationally for benchmarking along the way.

The LEAs which signed are totally committed to all aspects of the plan. They understand the level of commitment and expect to increase student achievement for all students on local/state assessments as well as on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The applicant states that the achievement gap will be decreased between subgroups in reading/language arts and mathematics; high school graduation rates will increase; college enrollment will increase; and the number of students who complete at least a year's worth of college credit that is applicable to a degree within two years of enrollment in a higher education institution will increase. There is a plan to address each of these issues. The details in the plan for how the achievement gaps for subgroups will be reduced is lacking.

<b>(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>28</b>	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	20	20	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	8	8	

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

The applicant has described, in detail, information for an effective implementation that not only defines how the leadership will be restructured around the 4 ARRA areas, but also sets into place a better system of accountability which will last beyond the RTTT funding. Below are some examples from the application which show that there is strong leadership, statewide capacity to implement and sustain the reforms in the future, improved grants management to an already acknowledged solid management system, sharing of

promising practices across the LEAs, integration of existing and new resources, and a plan to be successful with the involvement of all stakeholders.

As mentioned before by the applicant and in A1 of this review, the State Superintendent has been a strong leader for over 18 years. There has been support from the General Assembly and governors over the past decades, including the present elected officials who were responsible for introducing, supporting, and passing the new reform legislation. The applicant also cites having expertise in the State Superintendent's executive team to move forward. It is the intention of the applicant to implement the reform agenda whether or not RTTT funds are awarded. None of the requested resources are to add permanent staff.

The State Superintendent will add RTTT tracking, performance and technical assistance to the agenda of monthly meetings with the 24 LEA Superintendents.

The State Superintendent has already restructured departments and will have a Deputy Superintendent as a direct report who will oversee the planned reform. This newly hired person will also oversee the RTTT implementation and manage the cross divisional teams (one team for each of the 4 areas of RTTT) who will be implementing the reform agenda. On each of the teams, there will be staff with STEM responsibilities as well as an assurance facilitator. The Project Manager will be contracted as will a staff specialist person. These 2 will report directly to the new Deputy Superintendent and will have primary grants management responsibilities, at the district and LEA levels, ranging from to coordinate logistics for implementation to overseeing timelines and monitoring financial concerns. The Deputy Superintendent for Finance will work closely with the new Deputy Superintendent to ensure maximized integration of other funding sources and to ensure that the successful history of grant related funding, implementing and monitoring continues.

LEAs and schools have a master plan into which RTTT will be incorporated. This master plan requirement will be expanded to include all Tier 1 and Tier II schools regardless of Title I status. A matrix with implementation information from each school will be required for reporting along with the results of a site visit. This information will be shared quarterly instead of yearly to better track progress, see where assistance might be needed, and confirm that commitments are being met. There will also be an external contractor for evaluation. This contractor will address all 4 ARRA areas and report on process/product, utilization of data, impact on students, teachers, principals, and others.

The applicant is building on a history of successful collaboration with businesses, educators, foundations, and community agencies around improving student achievement. The executive steering committee which coordinated the submission of this application had diverse membership which in addition to the above, also included elected officials, higher education representatives, parents, school board members, principals, teachers, and union leaders from the local, state and national levels.

The applicant has included letters of support and commitment to be involved from very broad based groups of stakeholders representing all that are listed above and more. Individual letters of support from teachers with commitments to be involved are included as well as one letter signed by all of the teachers of the year, past and present. Missing from the group are support and commitment letters from the teachers unions and from charter schools.

The applicant has done an outstanding job of communicating across a broad range of stakeholders and presents evidence of how the individuals, entities, and groups of people are dedicated to the success of the reforms and have a willingness to be involved in the process--except for the teachers unions.

<b>(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>29</b>	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5	5	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	24	24	

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

The applicant provides concrete evidence that significant progress has been made in all 4 of the ARRA areas and also in raising achievement, closing gaps among subgroups, and increasing high school

graduation rates. The State has wisely integrated federal and state funding to invest in these initiatives. At the same time, there has also been a strong focus on STEM education and the integration of technology throughout the system. Some examples of the evidence provided is documented below.

The State has invested heavily in developing, aligning, implementing, and revising high quality standards, assessment, professional development, and materials to support all of these. This will provide a strong base upon which they can build as the RTTT work begins.

The State has built a culture where data is used to make instructional and accountability decisions. Many LEAs have sophisticated data systems providing teachers with information to make data based decisions for instruction. In addition, there is a statewide school improvement web site for instructional support in the use and interpretation of data which is highly used by teachers, principals and others. Over 10 years, improvements have been made to advance the system.

In terms of building the capacity of teachers, the applicant states that teacher preparation programs are evaluated on common performance criteria which are aligned with State and national outcomes. One program has been closed and 3 others are on probation for performance issues which documents that the system is working. In addition, the State has adopted professional development standards to ensure quality across all professional development experiences including induction. LEAs must have an induction plan which follows a beginning teacher through tenure. Continuing certification requires engagement in professional development with the focus on enhancing instructional expertise.

Although the State still uses highly qualified designations in compliance with federal requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), it is beginning to refer to highly effective rather than qualified to begin to use the vocabulary which focuses on outcomes of students.

In terms of building the capacity of principals, the new Instructional Leadership Framework was adopted in 2005 with 8 researched based outcomes that are tied to certification (initial and continuing) and continued employment.

Progress has also been documented by the applicant in turning around low achieving schools. The applicant states that in 2008 the US Department of Education gave the State the authority to fine tune the NCLB system of sanctions and rewards to better customize changes to specific needs of schools.

Since 2003, scores in both elementary and middle school reading and math have increased overall and for all subgroups. The applicant includes charts depicting specific, significant growth on state tests and on NAEP in most areas for most groups. The English Language Learners (ELL) subgroup has insufficient data in some instances. In spite of many successes, the State has a concern that the gaps at the higher end have not shown the same success as the gaps at the lower end of the scale so that is where some of the focus will be to ensure that students are college and career ready.

The annual dropout rate has declined from 2002 to 2009. The applicant cites a significant fact that new exit exams were implemented for the class of 2009, and there was not a decline in the overall graduation rates or an increase in dropouts. The greatest improvements are seen for African American, Hispanic and special education students. In fact, all subgroups showed improvement except for ELL students.

The applicant acknowledges that while the above documents continuing progress, there is still more work to be done to ensure that all students achieve more and that more graduate college and career ready. Strategic policy decisions moved the State to this point on the continuum, and there is a collective will to move forward.

The graduation rate has only increased slightly since 2003 for all students and for some subgroups. The data also shows that the graduation rates have actually decreased during this timeframe for special education students and for Hispanic students. These statistics document an area of weakness in past performance which is acknowledged by the applicant.

Total	125	112	112	
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**B. Standards and Assessments**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20	20	
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20	20	
<p><b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b></p> <p>The applicant cites a recent Education Week Quality Counts publication as giving the State's current standards an A ranking as it has led the nation in establishing strong academic standards and accompanying curriculum through the effective engagement of teachers, LEAs, and IHEs in the process. The applicant states that the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) is the next step in a long process of being in the forefront of providing a set of rigorous expectations for all of the schools in the state. These CCSS are internationally benchmarked, are being adopted by a very large majority of states, and they build toward college and career readiness. The applicant has a signed MOU with CCSS.</p> <p>23 of the 24 LEAs were represented at the content briefings and feedback sessions on the CCSS. The State has been proactive in moving the process of adoption of the standards forward. For example, permission was secured from the Consortium for the 24 Assistant Superintendents to have early access to the draft standards at their February meeting, and they were able to identify concerns. 10 language arts/English specialists from multiple LEAs and 14 math specialists have already begun comparing the draft standards to the existing curriculum to get a head start on the next steps in the process.</p> <p>The State has been involved in the development of these standards, endorsed them in May and intended to adopt them on June 22, 2010 at the State Board of Education meeting. The State intends to submit an amendment to the US Department of Education on or before August 2, 2010 to provide evidence of the action of the State Board in adopting the CCSS.</p>				
<b>(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality assessments	5	5	5	
(ii) Including a significant number of States	5	5	5	
<p><b>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b></p> <p>The applicant is collaborating with a 27 state consortium, the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC). There is a signed MOU with the collaborative. The applicant is actively engaged with the planning and developing of the assessment system. For example, the applicant cites weekly planning meetings by phone with the design team. The State plans to engage IHE staff in the development of new assessments that will fully certify students as college and career ready. In addition, there will be formative and summative assessments which can be customized for teachers. By working with a large consortium, there will be an opportunity to draw upon the broad expertise to develop valid and reliable instruments.</p> <p>The consortium is committed to developing high quality, scalable assessments in a short timeframe. These assessments will be designed for multiple purposes including assessing student performance in high school, evaluating school and district effectiveness, and they will have the ability of isolating student learning gains by group. The consortium also will infuse technology into the system.</p>				

The State reports that it has also worked well with another multistate consortium the American Diploma Project's Multistate Mathematics Assessment Consortium. Fifteen states have collaborated to develop an Algebra II end of course assessment which includes common college ready cut scores by state.

While the consortium has the minimum required attributes, it does not specifically address the needs of ELL students. This is an issue that the applicant highlighted in the application as being problematic both with closing the achievement gap and with the higher than other sub group drop-out rate. It is unclear how the State intends to address this issue of underachieving and early leaving ELL students.

<b>(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments</b>	20	20	20	
<p><b>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b></p> <p>The applicant has identified a high quality plan to support the implementation of a statewide adoption of internationally benchmarked K-12 standards that build toward college and career readiness by high school graduation. Because of past implementation of quality standards and assessments, the State already has many pieces of the plan active, like the online instructional tool kit which is well used by teachers, principals and others. As the State revises its curriculum and expands the web site including the toolkit, there are plans to thoroughly engage stakeholders at all levels. There is a team in place which is mapping out a year-long plan for this transition. The components of the plan which are listed in the application are very well defined and of high quality.</p>				
Total	70	70	70	

**C. Data Systems to Support Instruction**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system</b>	24	20	20	
<p><b>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b></p> <p>The State currently has a sophisticated statewide longitudinal data system in place that has 8 major subsystems. The applicant reports that through this system 10 of the 12 America COMPETES Act (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, and 12) are fully implemented and #8 (Teacher identifier system with ability to match teachers to students) is scheduled for completion in December 2010 and #9 (student level transcript information to include courses completed and grades earned) is under development and will be piloted in September 2011 and not completely implemented until 2014.</p>				
<b>(C)(2) Accessing and using State data</b>	5	5	5	
<p><b>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b></p> <p>Currently, the system being used for data has been effective, accountable, secure, and it easily transfers data for use with other systems. To be more effective and meet a higher standard for continuous improvement efforts, 10 initiatives are outlined that will increase the type and usefulness of the data delivered to a variety of stakeholders. The initiatives are designed to support RTTT reforms as they will ensure reporting effectiveness, accountability and performance data at all levels to promote transparency, efficiency and service performance of the educational process. For example, there will be more than 32 educational dashboards designed, developed and implemented, the first of which will be available in 2011. One of these will provide accountability of RTTT resources and transparent reporting of accomplishments and outcomes.</p> <p>These dashboards will make data accessible to researchers without the need to spend time creating special data sets for their work.</p>				

The applicant has included a high quality plan supplemented by a chart which lists goals, activities, timelines and parties responsible.

<b>(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	
(i) Increasing the use of instructional improvement systems	6	6	6	
(ii) Supporting LEAs, schools, and teachers in using instructional improvement systems	6	6	6	
(iii) Making the data from instructional improvement systems available to researchers	6	6	6	
<b>(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>Having accessible data in real time will support teachers and leaders and improve the lowest achieving schools by closing the achievement gaps. Teachers and principals will have access to student performance data, curriculum resources, assessment item banks, and professional development resources. At the same time, from the data system, administrators, policymakers, researchers, parents and the general public will have timely information to assess how effectively LEAs and the State are meeting instructional goals and how they are helping prepare all students for college and careers. Usage of the system can be tracked through the use of the teacher unique state ID.</p> <p>Chief information officers and instructional staff from the 24 LEAs will meet to identify technical gaps and plan solutions for implementation. Professional development is planned to ensure that all users not only have access, but are trained to use the system and understand it so it can be used to its fullest potential. The system will be piloted so that it can be refined for use on a systemwide basis. IHEs will provide preservice training to ensure that teacher candidates have hands on experience in the effective use of the system prior to being in classrooms.</p> <p>The State has a quality plan for how data will be accessed and used for instructional decision making by educators. It is unclear if the resources allocated in the proposed budget will be sufficient since the results of the needs assessment will not be known until the stakeholders meet and identify the gaps.</p>				
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>43</b>	

**D. Great Teachers and Leaders**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>21</b>	
(i) Allowing alternative routes to certification	7	7	7	
(ii) Using alternative routes to certification	7	7	7	
(iii) Preparing teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage	7	7	7	
<b>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>State regulations allow LEAs, alone or in partnership with colleges, universities, and/or nonprofit organizations (New Teacher Project, Teach For America) to design and operate alternative route programs for teachers that meet high standards and address specific workforce needs. There is also another regulation which allows the same kind of alternative routes for principals including residency-based programs. The applicant reports that their high quality alternative routes for teachers ranks as one of the</p>				

best states on the National Council on Teacher Quality's rigorous ratings of state alternative certification programs.

These programs have four components: recruitment and screening, pre-employment training, internship, and residency. There are benchmark assessments which must be met to move from one component to another. The applicant documents that the program requirements meet the definitions of RTTT's high quality alternative programs. The current 19 programs are committing to expand as needs are identified, and the costs will be built into the LEA budgets.

More than 500 teachers were prepared for special education in 3 LEAs which represented about one third of all State prepared new hires.

For principals there is a projected shortage of about 10%. New Leaders for New Schools produced 78 new leaders in 2009-2010 serving about 24,000 students. The State is creating a new principal residency program modeled on New Leaders for New Schools for rural school districts, and a program for Officers to Principals creating a pathway from the military to the principalship.

The State identifies critical shortage areas through annual surveys. It is unclear if this information on critical shortage is available at the building level or just at the LEA and state levels. The process was begun in 1984 and has been refined over the years. There are a number of identified incentives specifically to help address the identified shortages which are listed by the applicant. For example, during FY 08, 5,193 teachers from all 24 LEAs received more than \$9 million in awards/incentives.

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

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

The State expects teachers and principals to show they can successfully improve student learning to be recognized as effective. The new Education Reform Act of 2010 is the policy to anchor this expectation as it states that changes in student growth will become a significant factor in the evaluation of teachers and principals. The State Board of Education regulations have been approved and are now in the regulatory process. 50% of the new annual evaluation for teachers and principals will be based on student growth. The new evaluation system will be used in all public schools beginning in the 2012 -2013 school year and will rate the teacher or principal as highly effective, effective or ineffective. This system will be piloted in the next 2 years.

Until the common core assessments are in place and can be validated for use in evaluations and personnel decisions, the State will incorporate other assessments of student learning into the new educator evaluation system. There will also be a way to calculate a combined index to reflect collective gains from a team of teachers.

24 focus groups of 432 stakeholders from all levels of education, content areas, higher education, central office, etc. participated in reviewing the draft framework for the teacher evaluations. Concurrently, 11 focus groups with 200 principals and supervisors of principals commented on the draft framework for principal evaluations. It is not clear why teachers, parents, higher ed, and community members were not involved in this process.

The State has a detailed process for providing state requirements and giving local flexibility for measuring student growth. The domains were derived from an analysis of various sets of teaching standards. There will be rubrics, tools and guidance produced through the pilot phase. For principals, LEAs will have

flexibility to add attributes that reflect local priorities to the 8 outcomes. The State will review each LEA framework during the master plan annual update process and exert quality control as needed.

Annual evaluations will be supplemented with data and anecdotal reports. The State will work with an external agency to design, develop and implement an ongoing training and coaching program that will help principals and designated administrators to use data and observations to become better evaluators of staff. The State includes a detailed chart with goals, activities, timeline and responsible party.

Evaluations will be used for professional development, compensation, tenure, promotion, and removal so it is critical that the information be accurate and useful to make informed decisions regarding developing teachers and principals. This is a very complex process, and the State realizes that it will not only take time, but it will need to collaborate across stakeholders to have the necessary input for a system that will benefit all students while being fair and equitable to the adults who serve them. The applicant has a quality plan detailed which addresses the criteria.

The State has just introduced standards for principal mentor programs knowing that all principals can benefit from a qualified mentor. The State will also ensure that 1800 professional development/data/content coaches across all LEAs receive intensive training over 3 years on the new standards, curriculum, assessments, data system and toolkit. In addition, teacher leaders will add to the cadre of coaches to ensure that every school has a coach/lead teacher in reading, math and STEM.

In summary, the applicant has presented a high quality plan to improve teacher and principal effectiveness based on a new evaluation system. The system is legislated, meets all of the RTTT criteria and the plan provides for a pilot, stakeholder involvement and addresses data based decision making regarding tenure, student achievement, professional development, promotion, compensation and removal.

<b>(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>	
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	15	15	
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	10	10	
<b>(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>The State already has begun to reduce the gap in the distribution of effective teachers between low and high poverty schools. At the elementary level it was reduced from 31.5 % to 16.9 % and at the secondary level it was reduced from 27.8% to 11.2% between FY06 and FY09. Now it is ready to tackle the problem of retaining highly effective teachers in high poverty low achieving schools. The applicant has included a chart with goals, activities, timeline and responsible party detailed.</p> <p>The applicant has a plan to increase the numbers of effective teachers in hard to staff subjects which it has already identified. It will target programs and incentives to increase the numbers of effective teachers in STEM areas, world languages, special education, and ELL. Partnerships have been identified at the preservice and inservice level to address the shortages. MOUs have been signed with specific countries to address the world language shortages in addition to establishing a preK-12 pipeline. There will be a system for publicly reporting the information. The applicant has included a chart which details the goals, activities, timeline and responsible party. The narrative addresses the criterion with a quality plan.</p>				
<b>(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	
(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)**

The applicant states that teacher preparation programs are evaluated on common performance criteria which are aligned with State and national outcomes. One program has been closed and 3 others are on probation for performance issues which documents that the system is working.

By fall of 2012, the State will link the educator Information system to the K-20 system to identify where teachers and principals are employed, where they received their preparation and whether they have been rated effective or highly effective as measured by student growth.

Results detailing the effectiveness of each preparation program will be published annually on the State web site. Stakeholders will work with the State to design the components and presentation format of this new report.

By 2013, annual reviews will identify program elements that promote teacher and principal effectiveness, and it will then be possible to eliminate or restructure ineffective elements. The applicant includes a chart which details the goals, activities, timeline and responsible party for this criterion.

The applicant has already completed portions of the system needed to implement this process. The development phase should be possible based on past experience and the quality plan described.

<b>(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	
(i) Providing effective support	10	10	10	
(ii) Continuously improving the effectiveness of the support	10	8	8	

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

The State has adopted professional development standards to ensure quality across all professional development experiences including induction. LEAs must have an induction plan which follows a beginning teacher through tenure. Continuing certification requires engagement in professional development with the focus on enhancing instructional expertise.

The State provides a quality plan for comprehensive professional development for teachers, principals and others. The applicant understands what is important for successful professional development and is thoughtfully planning next steps. Rather than jumping to new programs and ideas, first there will be a close look at what has been working and a plan for how to take that to scale. There will also be attention paid to the needs resulting from the new evaluation process so that timely, job embedded, individually designed, data driven support, with a variety of options for delivery are available to move effective practices forward with the focus always on reducing gaps and improving achievement so that all students are college and career ready. The State does acknowledge the importance of common planning time for collaboration of instructional personnel. It is unclear where/how this will be addressed in the plan.

A table is included which details professional development initiatives, participants, content with outcomes, design, and resources. There is also a chart which details goals, activities, timelines and responsible parties.

In addition to the standards for professional development the State has an evaluation guide which the applicant states was highlighted this year as exemplary by the National Staff Development Council.

Finally an external evaluator will be contracted to provide an evaluation report on a quarterly basis so that the professional development offered can be continually improved. The online system will provide information on what is being accessed when and with what results.

The applicant has provided a high quality professional development plan and a quality plan for assessing evaluating the professional development offerings. Support and oversight for ensuring time for collaboration and common planning time is not detailed in the plan.

Total	138	136	136	
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**E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs</b>	10	10	10	
<b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> The State derives its district and school level intervention authority from two regulations. The State has a process for identifying persistently lowest achieving schools has identified the 16 schools to be improved in this reform effort; all of them are in restructuring. Direct intervention by the State in schools in restructuring is authorized by State regulations that mandate that the school implement an alternative governance arrangement like the ones required for the Title I School Improvement Grant Funds. The State must review and approve all restructuring plans.				
<b>(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools</b>	40	38	38	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	33	33	
<b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> Progress has been documented by the applicant in turning around low achieving schools. The applicant states that in 2008 the US Department of Education gave the State the authority to fine tune the NCLB system of sanctions and rewards to better customize changes to specific needs of schools.  The State reports a history of working successfully with more than 500 schools in the past 15 years in turnaround status. The State wanted to find a better way to sustain turnarounds and have them be successful sooner. Working with several outside agencies, a new model, The Breakthrough Center was created. This model has been very successful and will be used going forward. It focuses on building the capacity of the system to not only succeed, but to sustain the improvements by working comprehensively to provide the needed supports.  Again, the applicant has already done the research, planning and has piloted a successful new model that it will take to scale with the RTTT funding. It is unclear how school level teams and family members, which are key stakeholders in a school, are involved in the planning for the turnaround process to ensure the necessary buy in for a smooth implementation.				
Total	50	48	48	

**F. General**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(F)(1) Making education funding a priority</b>	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	
<b>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				

Education Funding is a priority in this State, as State support has increased by approximately \$1.3 billion over a 6 year period. Most recently, even with the economic turndown, funding for education increased slightly between FY08 and FY09 with the percentage being 1% higher.

The State supports equitable funding for high need LEAs and high poverty schools with a system that has guiding principles of adequacy, equity, simplicity, and flexibility. Using an example from FY09, more than 60% of the state funds were distributed to 4 high need systems which serve 37% of the total enrollment in the state. At the LEA level, it is the Superintendents who have been given the flexibility to move funding among schools. It is unclear in the application if the individual schools within the LEAs are getting equitable funding.

<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>23</b>	
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	3	3	
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	3	3	
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	8	8	
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	4	4	
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	5	5	

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

The State enacted its charter school law in 2003. 42 charter schools are currently serving 11,832 students in 6 of the 24 LEAs. This represents 3% of the total number of public schools in the State. There is an average rate of growth of 6 schools annually. In 2010 4 new charter schools will open. This represents 3% of the total number of public schools in the State. The State acknowledges that it is still in a very early development stage of charter schools, which is evidenced by the fact that there has been very little written about charter schools throughout this application. It is unclear if there are caps on the number of charter schools that can be authorized. From the information presented, the state has no caps. However LEAs which authorize charter schools can put limits on the number of charters within a district, thereby limiting the numbers approved. There appears to be no recourse for charter schools to appeal if they are denied by an LEA, as there is no information included in the application that the State or another authorizing group can intervene/overrule a decision made by an LEA.

The State intends to use RTTT funds and work with 2 school systems that have the greatest number of low achieving schools and provide an incentive for these to convert 2 of the schools to charter schools.

The State does provide equitable funding for Charter schools. Charter schools are eligible for State public school construction program capital funding if in LEA owned property. There is not a separate fund for charter schools to obtain money for facilities.

The State provides support to charters as requested, but there does not appear to be a proactive system of support for charter schools.

The State supports other innovative autonomous schools, but this is in the beginning stages of development. Only one LEA has autonomous schools. There is one school in existence for residential placements and one for young women in grades 6-12. The applicant states that this same district has 12 transformation schools operated by independent entities, with 24 more scheduled to open in the next 4 years.

<b>(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	
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**(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

The State has demonstrated significant reform conditions such as early childhood education which has documented positive results; the public residential school which was authorized through legislation; systemic reform through a series of legislative actions, such as the 2003 Bridge to Excellence Act, and, most recently, the 2010 reform act which mirrors the requirements of RTTT.

Total	55	37	37	
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**Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM</b>	15	15	15	

**Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

The applicant has made a conscious effort, over time, to focus on the integration of STEM across the state. The information included in this application is an extension of that effort. For example, the current Governor, after a needs assessment determined that not enough STEM graduates were available for the workforce, has had a focus on STEM and has been instrumental in spearheading several initiatives. In 2007 he began providing \$2 million annually for local grant funds to enable students and workers. In 2009, the Governor convened a task force with a group of diverse stakeholders to study STEM. The conclusion is that improvements must be made as the State is falling behind. Six out of seven recommendations by the group aligns with RTTT. The report is comprehensive and has action steps for K-12 public education, higher education, workforce development, economic development, research and development.

The State also has a STEM Innovation Network as a result of the 7<sup>th</sup> recommendation of the task force. This group is leading the partners forward to meet their goals, again aligned with RTTT.

The applicant matches the STEM activities of the Governor's Task Force and provides a guide in the application as to where each proposed STEM initiative is addressed. This fully documents that STEM has been carefully infused throughout the application in very meaningful ways.

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

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform</b>		Yes	Yes	

**Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

The applicant has credibly, comprehensively and coherently addressed all of the four education reform areas of ARRA. In addition, the applicant has also addressed each of the State Success Factors Criteria and demonstrated that the State, and its participating LEAs, are taking a systemic and systematic approach to education reform.

The State has provided historical information on its documented successes (many of which are enforced by third party references noted by the applicant). These successes (increasing of student achievement, decreasing the achievement gaps across student subgroups, and decreasing the dropout rate while increasing the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers) align with RTTT and have been funded with the integration of a variety of local, state, federal, and other external streams of funding. The applicant states that this process of integration of resources will continue with the awarding of the RTTT funds. The applicant also states that the forward movement on all that is proposed in

the application will continue with or without RTTT funding. Without the funding of RTTT, the process will take longer. The State is ready to move forward with a restructured department of education, cross divisional teams, each with a focus on one of the four areas of ARRA reform, hands on, consistent, focused leadership, and support from a broad constituency.

The State demonstrates participation of a great majority of LEAs who have signed MOU's indicating that they will participate in all aspects. Numerically, RTTT will be implemented in 22 of the 24 LEAs, which serve 79 percent of all students, including 77 percent of minority students, 94 percent of high-poverty schools, and 85 percent of students in poverty. While the State is lacking signed MOU's from all but 2 local teacher unions, and one school board member, it has confidently presented a plan that they claim will be successful over time. Many teachers have signed support and commitment letters even without their association/union support. All of the LEA superintendents have signed the MOU's. The state principal association and the state parent association have submitted signed letters of support. The recent passage of the new educational reform law, which closely mirrors the RTTT requirements, with the signature of the Governor makes all that is proposed enforceable, in every LEA with or without the signed MOU's by the leaders of the local teacher associations. The law, plus the State's past leadership with successful reform in each of the areas addressed, makes this a viable plan.

**Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

The panel of presenters was very articulate, had a deep understanding of the proposal plans, was aware of potential issues, and was well prepared to answer the questions presented by the review panelists.

The panel clarified how they will provide high quality instruction for English Language Learners through ELL standards (aligned with the curriculum standards), co-teaching models, access to early childhood and dedicated dollars for professional development. They did not address the area of ELL assessment during the presentation or the question and answer period so the score remains unchanged..

The panel also clarified that a charter school can appeal to the state board if it is denied a charter. The charter school scores were not changed as the other concerns listed in the Tier I comments still exist.

It was apparent that the team works closely with each other and also with other stakeholders on an ongoing basis.

Total		0	0	
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Grand Total	500	461	461	
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