



Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2

Massachusetts Application #3100MA-8



A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	48	48	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	35	35	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	8	8	

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

Massachusetts' foundation for reform is anchored by its 15-plus year education agenda. Its plan provides a comprehensive and coherent reform agenda driven by four objectives aligned to the Race to the Top assurance areas: (1) Attract, develop, and retain great teachers and leaders; (2) Provide curricular and instructional resources to promote and support student achievement; (3) Improve instruction and support in low performing schools; and (4) Increase dramatically the number of students who graduate ready for college and career. Full points were awarded *articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda*. The applicant provided the appropriate LEA commitment tables and narrative; they were clear and descriptive. Statewide LEA commitment to education reform is relatively high. Of 393 LEAs 276 (70%) signed on as participants in the state's reform effort with a high representation of students in poverty (88%). The participants include districts, charter schools, and vocational schools. High points were awarded *securing LEA commitment*. Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) were signed by all superintendents and board presidents. Points were withheld because fifty-six of the 276 union leaders (including Boston) did not sign the MOU and because all MOUs are conditional, contingent upon collective bargaining. Medium points were awarded *translating LEA participation into statewide impact*.

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

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

Massachusetts articulated a design that places people, structures, and processes in a strong position to ensure capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain its plan. A credible entity, their Office of Strategic Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OSPRES) will manage the implementation process. It plans to beef up the OSPRES staff and will fund an implementation manager who will report to the OSPRES director. Two advisory groups, State Implementation Advisory Group and External Advisory Group, are in place, and Massachusetts will use its six regional readiness centers to convene stakeholders and conduct staff development. Specific activities such as annual curriculum summits, half-day work sessions, networking, and self assessment have been identified and coordination and oversight activities built into the design. These include plans, schedules, outside evaluators, and project managers. The budget is aligned to priorities, objectives and tasks, and support structures. The state also plans to re-purpose 33 million dollars and 53 FTEs to support proposed activities. Full points were awarded *ensuring the capacity to implement*. Stakeholder

involvement in planning and 165 letters of support provide evidence of broad-based support and commitment from stakeholders to serve as active participants. The Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education, for example, has already launched work in performance evaluation and compensation. Stakeholders have been involved. Activities include two statewide surveys, 7 face-to-face regional forums, 11 webinars, special meetings of key leaders, and 7 sessions with the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. Full points were awarded *using broad stakeholder support*.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	27	27	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5	5	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	22	22	
(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>Massachusetts has made significant progress implementing initiatives that parallel the RTTP four assurance areas. It added high school science as a competency area for graduation, built a growth model for measuring student performance, updated and strengthened standards, provided statewide access to a data warehouse, developed performance standards for principals, and developed a new framework for data accountability and assistance. The state also changed the legal framework for low achieving schools to include provisions that allow alteration of collective bargaining agreements, lowered the standard for teacher dismissal, and provided an avenue for state receivership of low performing schools. Full points were awarded <i>making progress in each reform area</i>. Massachusetts' NAEP scores are the top scores nationally and have risen significantly in all areas. They ranked first on all four NAEP assessments (English language arts and Mathematics for 4th and 8th grade) for 2005, 2007, and 2009. From 2002 to 2009 the scaled scores of tenth grade students in mathematics rose 18 points and are just below Advanced Performance. This pattern of improvement holds for English Language Arts and Mathematics scores on state assessments. Scores are high and have risen over a 7-year period. Low income students' scores have improved by 25 per cent over a seven-year period. Because the achievement gap in Massachusetts is smaller than the national average and the scores of minority and high poverty students higher than the national average, closing the achievement gap is more difficult in Massachusetts. They have made progress in closing the achievement gap but it has not been significant. Massachusetts has one of the highest graduation rates in the country and continues to experience growth in their high school graduation rates, particularly for Limited English, special education and African American students. High points were awarded <i>improving student outcomes</i>.</p>				
Total	125	105	105	

B. Standards and Assessments

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

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

Massachusetts provides evidence of the state's participation in consortium and in adopting a common set of K-12 standards that are internationally benchmarked and build toward college and career readiness. They are a member of the 51-state CSSO/ NGA consortium and participated in Achieve's America Diploma Project and other activities to promote and strengthen standards. Full points were awarded *participating in consortium developing high-quality standards*. They are in the process of adopting state standards with the appropriate processes and structures in place to complete the work by August 2, 2010. The state board has been apprised of the need to act and the necessary

timelines. Its plan includes a provision to add additional standards and align district curricula to the Common Core Standards. Full points were awarded *adopting standards*.

(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	10	10	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality assessments	5	5	5	
(ii) Including a significant number of States	5	5	5	
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
Massachusetts provides evidence it is poised to play a pivotal role in development of a new common college and career readiness assessment system in Language Arts and mathematics. It is a member of Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC), a 27-state consortium committed to implementation in 2014-2015. Full points were awarded <i>participating in consortium developing high quality assessments and including a significant number of states</i> .				
(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	20	20	
(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
Massachusetts provided a high quality plan for supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high quality assessments. It is anchored in two goals: (1) Creating an aligned, standards-based teaching and learning system, and (2) Increasing dramatically the number of students who graduate from high school ready for college and career. These goals are strategically sound as are the activities and timelines. These activities include (1) alignment of all Massachusetts standards documents to the common core, (2) develop curriculum maps and units, (3) create a digital library, (4) administer interim and formative assessments, (5) extend performance tasks, (6) provide teachers and administrators tools for data-driven instruction, and (7) conduct regional forums and summit conferences. Standards and assessments for STEM and support for students were effectively addressed. The four-year timeline was clear and realistic. Full points were awarded <i>supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments</i> .				
Total	70	70	70	

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	24	24	
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
The applicant asserted that they have developed and implemented data collection activities that address all twelve of the America Competes Act. An appendix was provided that described each element in place. Full points were awarded <i>fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system</i> .				
(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	5	5	
(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
Massachusetts identified and addressed its present access and data use shortcomings that included lack of integration and delivery of "real time" data. Massachusetts has a high quality plan to ensure data accessibility and the use of data to inform and engage stakeholders and support decision makers in continuous improvement of policy instruction,				

operations, management, resource allocation, and overall effectiveness. The plan has clear and appropriate goals and two strategies that anticipate the importance and growth of data usage: (1) Adding data reports to the data warehouse to better support needs of 80 anticipated users, and (2) Improving the usability of ESE's public data profiles on ESE website. Activities such as creating dashboards, adding student discipline data, and expanding the Education Data Warehouse to include financial expenditures and district comparison data are sound and well described. The timeline is doable and the performance measures provided for each strategy are appropriate. Full points were awarded *accessing and using State data*.

(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	16	16	
(i) Increasing the use of instructional improvement systems	6	5	5	
(ii) Supporting LEAs, schools, and teachers in using instructional improvement systems	6	5	5	
(iii) Making the data from instructional improvement systems available to researchers	6	6	6	
(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>Massachusetts has a high quality plan to (1) increase acquisition, adoption, and use of local improvement systems that provide teachers, principals, and administrators needed information, (2) support LEAs in providing professional development, and (3) make data available and accessible to researchers. The plans for each are of high quality. Investing in data systems through on-line repositories, developing a test builder engine, and developing a digital library are sound approaches for increasing the use of instructional improvement systems. The test builder engine start-up, however, was not addressed in the plan timeline. High points (5) were awarded <i>increasing the use of instructional improvement systems</i>. The strategy for supporting LEAs, schools, and teachers in using instructional improvement systems is sound but overly ambitious. The performance measures indicate that 1,000 educators will be effectively trained to effectively use the data to improve instruction and 25,000 by 2013-2014. Given the complexity inherent in the use of data to improve instruction, and the challenges inherent in promoting effective data use the goal to "effectively" train 1000 teachers during year 2 and 25,000 by year four may be overly ambitious. High points (5) were awarded <i>supporting LEAs, schools, and teachers in instructional improvement systems</i>. The plan to make data from instructional improvement accessible to researchers is sound. The state is in a strong position. It currently has a robust system for sharing confidential student-level data with researchers and is pursuing more than a dozen research projects with researchers. It has used data to inform charter school, expanded learning time, and other policy areas. Full points were awarded <i>making the data from instructional improvement systems available to researchers</i>.</p>				
Total	47	45	45	

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	21	21	
(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	

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

Massachusetts' licensure regulations allow for multiple pathways into schools and classrooms. The state allows multiple providers such as professional associations and non-profits to certify teachers and administrators for licensure. These laws and regulations appear to provide flexibility without lowering standards. Full points were awarded *alternative routes to certification*. These laws, coupled with attention by various task forces, committees and subcommittees, are apparently working. Alternative routes in Massachusetts include district-based models, options sponsored by SEA, higher education institutions, professional associations, and non-profits. Residency provides a real world component in many of them. A high number of alternative routes (39) reached more than 1700 educators in 2008, fifteen per cent of new teachers and half of newly licensed principals. Full points were awarded *using alternative routes to certification*. The state also effectively monitors areas of teacher and principal shortage concentrating on English as a second language, special education and STEM. Massachusetts has implemented special programs and initiatives to address shortages and offer incentives in shortage areas; these include English as a second language, special education, and STEM subjects. No principal shortages were identified so plans were not necessary. Full points were awarded *preparing teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage*.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	42	42	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	3	3	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	15	15	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	6	6	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	18	18	

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

Massachusetts asserts it has a head start on measuring student growth; it intends to build on the current student growth model that compares an individual student's growth from year-to-year with the academic progress of peers. However, it only is employed in grades 4 and 8 in English language arts and mathematics and (for an unexplained reason) can only be used in 16 per cent of those classrooms. The state's proposal to scale up the current model that is employed with 69 districts to connect student growth and achievement data in state assessment tested grades by the end of 2010 has merit. But more is needed to understand how the scale-up will occur. Medium points were awarded *measuring student growth*. Massachusetts has a well designed plan to develop evaluation systems. It starts with implementation of a new statewide framework (April, 2011). Two sound strategies will be employed to promote effective implementation: (1) Approve new principal and teacher evaluation regulations, and (2) Provide districts with tools necessary to implement the new evaluation system. The activities to accomplish this are promising. They include establishment of a state-wide task force and implementation of a default evaluation system. High points were awarded *developing evaluation systems*. The state has a plan to ensure that performance evaluations are valid and effective. The plan has some sound elements but lacks clarity. Phasing in the evaluation process in level 4 districts (lower performing) beginning in August 2011 provides them opportunity to collect data and make needed improvements. The remaining districts will implement by 2012. It is not clear how all these and other activities will come together and no explanation of how it will be coordinated was provided. Medium points were awarded *conducting annual evaluations*. The plan for using evaluations to form key decisions is promising but lacks information. The state proposes investing substantially to ensure rigorous new evaluation systems buttressed by performance-based endorsements to licensure. The three strategies proposed include (1) evaluate each teacher and principal annually, (2) use the new state evaluation framework to inform personnel decisions, and (3) develop a career ladder for educators. Activities identified for these are sound. The state ties student achievement to compensation in an indirect way by noting that teacher evaluation would influence moving to roles such as instructional coach where they were likely to receive additional compensation. But, it does not directly tie student achievement to compensation. This does not meet RTTT requirements specified in the notice; points were withheld. Medium points were awarded *using evaluations to inform key decisions*.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	17	17	
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(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	10	10	
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	7	7	

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

The state proposes that incentives and training will significantly impact equitable distribution of teachers and principals in high-poverty or high-minority schools. It proposes financial incentives for principals to work in high priority schools as well as incentives for 200 teachers or principals to develop a corps of master educators. The state also proposes improving school climate in high-poverty and high-minority schools. While this is praiseworthy and may result in more effective teachers and principals no rationale is provided to support the proposition that these strategies will lead to more *equitable* staffing in these schools. It also proposes expanding aMAzing teachers recruitment effort to all high need districts. But, it is not clear what success the effort has enjoyed to date or how it will be expanded. No data were provided as to the quality of teachers in high priority schools currently nor is there a plan to collect such data. In sum, the plan for equitable distribution borders is of medium quality. Medium points were awarded *ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high minority schools*. Massachusetts proposes specific approaches to increase the number of teachers in hard-to-staff subjects. These include a partnership to increase the number of STEM teachers, provision of on-line courses to increase ESL teachers by 800, an on-line mentoring program, and customized professional development. While each of these has merit long-term, a more systemic approach would strengthen the approach. High points were awarded *ensuring equitable distribution in hard to staff subjects and specialty areas*.

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

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

The state proposes two bold and innovative strategies for improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs: (1) Base the preparation program approval and accountability on outcomes and effectiveness measures, and (2) Provide competitive grants to expand and scale-up effective programs. Higher education program approval and accountability based on outcomes links student data to credential programs and is a public activity. The state has sufficient authority to develop new approval and accountability requirements. A web-based public accountability report also has much merit. Full points were awarded *linking student data to credentialing programs and reporting publicly*. The state proposes a number of effective strategies for expanding effective programs. Expansion of a pilot program has merit but no mention of its current use or success was provided. Providing competitive grants to expand and scale effective programs is promising but it was not clear what the plan is for taking the approach to scale. While the state proposed 25 preparation programs be approved by year 4 the activities for years one through three need more explanation to clarify how they will be effectively carried out. Medium points were awarded *expanding effective programs*.

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

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

Massachusetts' approach to providing effective support to teachers and principals is anchored by tying professional development to the state's four overarching objectives. Expanding existing professional and creating new ones where necessary is proposed. The state identified a team of human resource and evaluation specialists and expansion of on-

line training be employed to strengthen support. Readiness centers will play a key role in disseminating results from a workforce report. The state plans to provide curricular and instructional resources so that every educator will have the tools needed. It targets low performing schools and college readiness for professional development. Massachusetts asserts it will shape the existing statewide professional development into a comprehensive professional development system and offers ways to align and coordinate the delivery system. The elements of the plan are appropriate and the total scope is ambitious. Its far reaching scope is understandable; development must be wide and deep to move the needle for all students. Developing a comprehensive system and more coherent staff development plan is crucial. More detail about how this will be coordinated and effectively implemented is needed. High points are awarded *providing effective support*. The state's approach to continuously improving effectiveness of support and holding ESE, providers, and LEAs responsible for providing effective supports aligned with the state's priorities has merit. More is needed to clarify how coordination, involvement, training, and support will be provided. High points were awarded *continuously improving the effectiveness of the support*.

Total	138	106	106	
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E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

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

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

State law provides legal, statutory, and regulatory authority to identify the most needy schools and the authority to do what it deems necessary to bring about change. It identifies two levels of lowest-achieving schools and specifies changes that can be made in these schools. These may include budget, revision of district policy, alteration of collective bargaining agreements, teacher dismissal, and what is frequently called reconstitution. The state has identified ESE and its Center for Targeted Assistance as the responsible parties to lead the effort. Full points are awarded *intervening in the lowest-achieving schools*.

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

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

The state has used regulations in the law to identify 35 schools to serve as the focus of its initial turnaround work. These schools include 20 elementary schools, 8 middle, 3 K-8, and 4 high schools in 9 urban districts. Together they educate 17,000 students. It is a balanced complement and provides an important representative sample population. Full points were awarded *identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools*. Massachusetts proposes four interconnected strategies to build state and district capacity in turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools: (1) A specialized corps of turnaround teachers, (2) Building district capacity to intervene, (3) Identify and scale up effective partners, and (4) Develop, attract, and manage lead partners and turnaround partners. They have begun work on many of these goals and have identified lessons learned. This enabled them to develop a number of sound strategies and create structures that provide a coherent, high quality plan. They specifically identify plans to employ one or more of the four models identified in the RTTT notice, have developed a well designed plan for empowerment zones and have clearly indicated the people and activities to promote success. These include turnaround teachers, turnaround leaders, and intensive professional development. The design for these and other key activities has sound activities and responsible partners. Full credit is awarded *turning around the lowest-achieving schools*.

Total	50	50	50
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F. General

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

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

Massachusetts' annual expenditure for public and higher education has steadily risen, including expenditures for 2008 to 2009. They are projected to rise in 2010. Their funding formula is progressive and provides for equitable funding between high-need LEAs and other LEAs, and within LEAs, and between high-poverty schools and other schools. Full points are awarded *allocating a consistent percentage of State revenue to education* and *equitably funding high-poverty schools*.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	33	33	
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	4	4	
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	8	8	
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	6	6	
(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)

Massachusetts law limits the number of charter schools that can be operating (4 per cent of the total number of students in the state). There also is law that limits district spending on charters. Its charter school law was amended in January of 2010, and on May 25, 2010, the state Board of Education adopted regulations that clear the way for the law to be implemented. Known as the "smart charter law" it allows the state to increase the number of charters serving low performing students. It doubles the percent that can be spent on these charters and also doubles the number of charters that can be developed in Boston. There are 62 charter schools in the state (6%); the current cap allows for 120 charters. The effort to amend the law capping charters appears to be a step in the right direction but has yet to be enacted, only serves low performing students, and constitutes a "high cap". Medium points were awarded *enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"*. The state has mechanisms in place that promote charter school accountability. It has a single authorizing agent for charters and has been recognized as a national model for charter school accountability. It has a rigorous application process, criteria and protocols for site visits, report guidelines, and annual independent audits. It provided a table showing the number of applications, approvals and closures over the past five years. Six charters were approved last year and three of four charter schools closed in the past five years were closed because of lack of academic success. Full points were awarded *authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes*. The state asserts that the funding formula in the state ensures that charter schools receive equitable funding. While there was a difference in per pupil spending (\$1826 per student) the state asserts it was because of differences in special education costs. No data supporting that assertion were provided and points were withheld. Because the per-pupil funding is at least 90 per cent of that provided to traditional students high points were awarded *equitably funding charter schools*. It was not clear whether charter schools facility funding is equal to other Massachusetts public schools. The applicant identified a number of initiatives that the state has put in place to promote

facility use for charters (ARRA funds and Reinvestment bonds). The applicant asserts that there is a set per pupil. High points were awarded *providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities*. In January 2010 the governor signed the Innovative Schools Initiative designed to provide exciting opportunities and create new in-district schools to leverage lessons learned from the nation's public schools. Boston supports autonomous schools by providing autonomy over staffing, curriculum, governance, policies, and budget. It is not clear how much autonomy innovative schools will be awarded. High points were awarded *enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools*.

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

The state has demonstrated a number of significant reform conditions. It funds two programs for increased time for academics that serves 23 high-poverty schools. It also funds a variety of programs aimed at helping students meet graduation requirements. *Connecting Activities* links students to the world of work through internships and academic support. They also fund WFI School of Excellence, a STEM-based school, and a number of other initiatives that align with RTTT and its goals. Full points were awarded *demonstrating other significant reform conditions*.

Total	55	48	48
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Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

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

Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Massachusetts has a high quality plan to offer a rigorous course of study in mathematics, the sciences, technology and engineering. Throughout the application, and in the letters of support, there was evidence it has cooperated with industry experts, museums, universities, and research centers to prepare and assist teachers, to prepare more students by addressing the needs of underrepresented groups and women and girls in STEM areas. Massachusetts targeted STEM by proposing a number of sound initiatives woven throughout the application. It incorporated STEM into its Pre K-12 teaching and learning system by providing students access to high quality curriculum materials model units, lesson plans, etc. It plans to increase the number of STEM educators including Pre-AP and K-8 mathematics teachers. It plans to continue to emphasize STEM in MassCore which will become the state's default high school curriculum. The state funds programs that embed STEM curricula in high school and STEM Early College High Schools. The Governor also established a STEM Advisory Council to promote STEM, guide its work, and connect with educators and the state Board of Education. Full points were awarded *emphasis on STEM*.

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

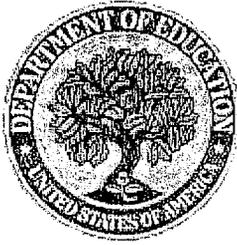
	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes	Yes	

Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Massachusetts has comprehensively and coherently addressed the four education areas specified in the ARRA as well as the State Success Factors criteria. It has demonstrated its application has sufficient LEA participation and commitment to successfully implement and achieve the goals in its plan.

Total			0	0	
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Grand Total	500	439	439		
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Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2

Massachusetts Application #3100MA-4



A. State Success Factors

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

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

(i) Massachusetts has articulated a truly comprehensive, precise and coherent reform agenda. The narrative does an outstanding job of contextualizing the State's journey through the Education Reform Act of 1993, development of four priorities of the Commissioner of Education in 2008, and the enactment of An Act Relative to the Achievement Gap in 2010. Each of these milestones represents an important chapter for the children of Massachusetts and has been clearly used to inform a thorough understanding of the State's current status with regard to its education agenda and a tight focus on a set of prioritized challenges. The application provides evidence of how the State has placed responsibility and authority for the overall reform agenda in the Executive Office of Education to ensure that all of the initiatives are coordinated in a seamless manner. Of particular note is the State's coordination of education with the Department of Health and Human Services in order to create a wraparound element targeted at addressing the State's core focus in its education reforms: a belief that the persistent variation in student outcomes stems from both discrepancies in the quality of the curriculum and instruction and unrelated out-of-school circumstances that can effect a student's ability to learn. This is the heart of the agenda. The plan is carefully and thoughtfully organized to achieve success by addressing these issues and is well described while also strongly aligned with the goals and spirit of this competition.

(ii) The Terms and Conditions of the State's MOU are consistent with the guidelines and meet the requirements of the criterion. The Scope of Work is specific and successfully binds the participating LEAs to a reform agenda reflective of each of the required element of this competition to implement all or significant portions of the State's Race to the Top plans. It is noted that the MOU includes softened language regarding the areas of P-12 Teaching and Learning System and Increase College and Career Readiness by "encouraging" LEA participation rather than requiring it as in the other aspects of the Scope of Work. While this does not substantially detract from the strength of the MOU it does slightly lessen the overall impact of the MOU. The State has generally secured a strong commitment from eligible LEAs with two notable exceptions: the participation of the AFT in only 6 of the 21 eligible LEAs and the absence of union support in the State's largest school district, Boston. The criterion requires signatures from the LEA superintendent, president of the local school board and the local teacher's union leader (if applicable) in order to demonstrate the extent of leadership support within participating LEAs. The absence of support from the AFT does not have a major proportional impact on the participation of eligible LEAs but it does prevent union support for the State's largest district resulting in a reduction of points awarded.

(iii) The application does an effective job in articulating how the State will translate LEA participation into statewide impact by: including 88% of students who are in poverty, almost 2/3 of all eligible LEAs representing a substantial population of the State's schools and k-12 students, and by student subgroup.

The content of the MOU as well as the narrative within the application demonstrate a focus on increasing student achievement in reading/language arts and mathematics as reported both by NAEP and State assessments, decreasing the achievement gap, increasing high school graduation rates, and increasing college enrollment all of which present a credible, high-quality plan.

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	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) (a) The State plans to rely largely on existing staff infrastructure under the responsibility of the Commissioner by re-purposing staff objectives and incorporating what seems to be a limited yet reasonable number of new Race to the Top personnel to assure successful implementation. The State's agenda is broad in scope, aggressive and comprehensive. The resumes provided in the appendix present highly qualified executives to support implementation and the Program Management Structure suggests a sufficient number of additional staff to get the job done.

(b) The application provides reasonable evidence of how the State will support participating LEAs in successfully implementing the education reform plans consistent with the requirements of the criterion and makes a particular point of holding LEAs accountable by an intention to withhold Race to the Top funds should an LEA not comply with its commitments articulated in the MOU. Further, the addition of six positions within the Readiness Centers and District and School Assistance Centers provides credible evidence of decentralized State support to LEAs along with two annual Curriculum Summits all with the goal of linking reform to tools and critical information. These communication mechanisms further increase the State's capacity to implement its statewide reform agenda as it allows localized, more attainable support throughout the State rather than relying on a central access point. In terms of the day-to-day activities required to implement a grant of this scale, a decentralized organization with offer greater, more effective overall support.

(c) The application provides credible and detailed evidence of how the State will provide effective and efficient operations and processes for implementing its Race to the Top grant. This includes specific, ongoing timelines by the Commissioner and the Office of Strategic Planning, Research, and Evaluation for monitoring the grant along with the support of two well-conceived advisory groups. In particular, the structure of the State's monitoring system has been organized to support the continued work of the reform agenda once the grant runs out which greatly strengthens the proposal with regard to the overall spirit of the competition.

(d) The State's budget is presented to strongly support each of the reform goals with particular emphasis on sustaining initiatives beyond the grand funding period. Consistent with the requirements of the criterion, the State has identified and provided evidence of its commitment to coordinate, reallocate or repurpose an additional \$33.8 million and 53 FTEs to support the proposed plan, in addition to including \$9.2 million for independent program evaluation. The State has a strong track record of managing federal and state grants and has devised a budget process to suggest similar success with its Race to the Top funds. One concern, however, is that 54% of the funds provided to the state, exclusive of the funds subgranted to participating LEAs, are designated for contractual services. While this strategy has merit along the lines of the assertion made in the budget narrative by leveraging the expertise and capacity of the State's technology, business and nonprofit sectors, it also has the potential of off-loading much of the responsibility to parties outside the scope of the State's infrastructure therefore creating risk with regard to the procurement process for these services and the availability of contractors to successfully produce the desired results.

(e) Throughout the narrative, the State provides credible and consistent evidence for using the fiscal, political and human capital resources of the State to sustain those reforms funded under the grant beyond the grant period. The State has engaged superintendents, union leaders and school committee leaders in its largest urban districts to ensure that human capital resources are aligned with the reform agenda.

Processes like these develop enduring partnerships and sustained dialogue that will carry on beyond the life of this grant.

(ii) The application includes a letter of support from one of the two teacher's unions in the State, the Massachusetts Teacher Association, although a qualified letter evidencing clear reservations and concerns about the philosophy of Race to the Top which detracts strongly from the strength of their support and has resulted in a reduction in points. Credible letters of support from the principals and superintendent's associations, the State Charter School Association, and each of the applicable categories required by the criterion are also included. The variety and broad range of support by stakeholders as indicated in the letters is impressive.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	28	28	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5	5	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	23	23	
(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>(i) The application makes a robust demonstration of data facts to support the State's progress over the past several years in each of the reform areas and how the State has used its own and American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding to ensure success. Massachusetts has been an unquestioned leader in the nation with regard to National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) performance and has earned extraordinary success in Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) results as well. The success in this regard is incredibly impressive.</p> <p>(ii) The narrative is cogent and clear in explaining the State's success and challenges with regard to improved student outcomes overall and by subgroup in recent years. Massachusetts has demonstrated strong success in increased student achievement in reading/language arts and mathematics on both the NAEP and Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS). The State has made overall improvement in closing the achievement gap as evidenced by both NAEP and MCAS results yet challenges persist in decreasing the achievement gap between subgroups in reading/language arts and mathematics as indicated most particularly by the gaps for English language learners. The State has enjoyed remarkable success with regard to cohort high school graduation rates having achieved an 81.2% graduation rate of the 2008 cohort.</p>				
Total	125	115	115	

B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards	40	40	40	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20	20	
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20	20	
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>(i) Massachusetts is participating in the development of the internationally benchmarked Common Core Standards that are also aligned to college and career expectations. The Appendix provides a list of 51 participating States and Territories as required by the criterion therefore earning maximum points.</p>				

(ii) The application outlines a process underway to ensure adoption of the Common Core Standards by August 2, 2010. Massachusetts has undertaken a number of aggressive steps to engage all necessary stakeholders that increase the probability that the State will in fact adopt the Standards within the timeframe required by the criterion. Further, the narrative presents a credible, high-quality plan demonstrating significant progress to date. It is clear that the State is committed to an aggressive Standards adoption timetable.

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

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

(i) Massachusetts has taken a leadership role in its participating in the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC). PARCC assessments will be fully aligned with the Common Core K-12 Standards for English language arts and mathematics and are scheduled for implementation in 2014-15.

(ii) At least 27 States have currently agreed to participate in PARCC.

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

The application presents credible evidence of the State's plan for rolling out the new Common Core Standards upon adoption through a variety of strategies that include revising and updating all documents so that they are consistent with the Common Core Standards, leveraging the support of nearly 90% of participating LEAs to help the State build a comprehensive PreK-12 teaching and learning system, develop curriculum maps and units, a formalized process for developing a Digital Library, an online scoring and reporting system for interim and formative assessments, online formative assessment resources, a visionary approach to measure multiple standards simultaneously with the support of a respected foundation, and Educator Data Warehouse and regional forums and summit conferences. In the aggregate, the State's thoughtful and carefully-considered approach to effectively rolling out new Standards and Assessments suggests a very high probability of a successful transition. Finally, the Performance Measures indicated in the application are quite aggressive yet achievable based on the demonstrated work already in place to reach them.

Total	70	70	70	
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C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

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

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

Massachusetts has provided evidence in the application that all 12 of the essential elements stipulated by the America COMPETES Act have been satisfied.

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

Massachusetts proposes to utilize some of its Race to the Top funds to build a robust system, over the next four years, that will enable 80,000 K-12 educators to use data to inform their decision-making, target instruction, link data from ESE to the Departments of Early Education and Care and Higher Education, provide near real time data to policy leaders, district and school administrators and teachers, and improve the usability of the ESE public data profiles. The State's plan is comprehensive and coherent with a focus on three specific data systems strategies. The State envisions the creation of role-specific dashboards that expedite the delivery of meaningful data in an easy-to-digest format, incorporates student discipline data to the system, and expands the system to include financial expenditure and district comparison data. The State intends to dramatically improve the effectiveness of its public website in order to streamline the available data and enhance its comprehension. The application includes aggressive yet achievable performance measures that, if successful, will result in statewide use of data to improve instruction, assessment and operation on the part of every district in the State.

(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	12	12	
(i) Increasing the use of instructional improvement systems	6	2	2	
(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	4	4	

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

(i) The criterion requires evidence of a high-quality plan to increase the acquisition, adoption and use of local instructional improvement systems however the narrative does not address this. The application does provide a well-reasoned approach for improving the use of State-generated data systems to inform and improve LEA instructional practices, decision-making and overall effectiveness but does not describe how the State would increase local decision-making to adopt locally selected instructional improvement systems and how those systems would be integrated into the State's overall Education Data Warehouse. The criterion requires evidence of the State's support of locally-driven decisions with regard to increasing the adoption of instructional improvement systems by LEAs and how those local decisions would be integrated into the State's data system. The evidence for this aspect of the plan is absent.

(ii) The application provides credible evidence of a high-quality plan to provide multiple strategies for statewide professional development in the use of data by teachers and principals. Increasing available training course content on the use of data, enhanced tools for course delivery infrastructure, increasing the number of data specialists in the regional District and School Assistance Centers, expanded overall training to educators and improved policies and standards to support the effective use of data.

(iii) The application indicates that a robust system for sharing confidential student-level data with researchers is currently available but does not provide evidence of how frequently the data are being used, how effective the system is for researchers nor any specific examples of how the research is being used to inform decisions. In particular, the criterion requires evidence of how research would be used to evaluate the effectiveness of instructional materials, strategies and approaches for educating different types of students. Evidence for this element is absent resulting in a reduced score.

Total	47	41	41	
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D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	21	21	
(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	

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

- (i) Massachusetts has provided credible evidence of statutory authority allowing for alternative paths to teacher and principal licensure, including providers in addition to institutions of higher education, and that include at least 4 of the 5 elements listed in the definition of alternative routes to certification.
- (ii) The State generated 66% (857 out of 1294 principals in 2007-2008) of its newly licensed principals and 15% (843 out of 5467 teachers in 2007-2008) of its newly licensed teachers through alternative routes to certification demonstrating active alternative pathways in use.
- (iii) The application describes a reasonably strong plan for monitoring, evaluating and identifying areas of teacher and principal shortage in an ongoing basis while providing a specific example of how ESL teachers were alternatively certified in Worcester and Boston as a mechanism to use alternative pathways to address teacher shortages.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	53	53	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	5	5	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	15	15	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	10	10	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	23	23	

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

- (i) The State has presented a credible, high-quality plan for measuring individual student growth. The plan discusses existing challenges in areas such as where only the 16% of teachers who teach 4th through 8th grade math and ELA can be individually matched to a student's growth scores. The activities described for implementing the State's plan provide specific strategies to address these issues and have a high probability for accurately measuring student growth.
- (ii) The application describes a process currently underway involving teachers and principals, among others critical stakeholders, to develop a new framework for a statewide teacher and principal evaluation system. The State plans to implement the new framework in the 2011-2012 school year. The element within the framework will differentiate effectiveness using multiple ratings categories and will use student growth as a significant factor. The plan presents a well-developed and detailed system of evaluations that will assist the State in obtaining an accurate assessment of teacher and principal performance with resulting data to better inform professional development.
- (iii) Massachusetts has presented a comprehensive and robust plan to ensure that all districts in the State will be required to implement annual teacher and principal evaluations in which student growth is a significant factor by school year 2013-14. In the State's plan, teachers and principals will be provided with data on student growth for their students, classes and schools as required by the criterion. The plan

includes provisions for evaluation working groups to develop implementation plans and a mechanism to identify and disseminate model evaluation systems statewide. Also, the State has articulated a sound plan for monitoring the implementation of the new systems.

(iv) The plan describes a commitment to ensure that evaluators receive the training and support needed to conduct fair and meaningful evaluations by using Race to the Top funds to engage a cadre of teams of specialists to conduct training and provide coaching. The plan commits to a career ladder that includes performance-based teacher leader endorsements to licensure by 2012, reviewing and enhancing teacher induction policies and revising the licensure system for principals. The State's plan indicates that tools and assistance will be provided to districts to help them make personnel decisions on comprehensive evaluations and to use the new evaluation framework to inform personnel decisions including professional teacher status (tenure), and a process for the removal of persistently ineffective teachers. However, the narrative does not elaborate on this point by providing evidence of how the streamlined, transparent and fair procedures will be developed nor does it address how rigor will be deployed in the process. Finally, the plan does indicate its commitment to developing a system, initially in a pilot of with selected LEAs, that aligns the key levers of educator growth and development with the removal of persistently ineffective teachers. The State's plan offers a reasonable approach to ensure that teacher and principal evaluations will be effectively utilized to consistently inform all stakeholders and offer enhanced, precise decision-making capacity with regard to the overall effectiveness of teachers and principals. The plan's assertions for effective utilization of evaluations to inform decision-making across the four areas required in this criterion are reasonably strong and coherent. However, the plan stops short in providing fulsome, persuasive evidence of the the specific approaches that will be taken to implement the assertions included in the plan in this challenging area which results in a reduced score.

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

(i) One of the most visionary and catalytic aspects of the State's plan is regarding how to address the underlying causes of the inequitable distribution of effective educators, both teachers and principals. Massachusetts has enabled the principals of the lowest achieving 4% of schools to require all staff to reapply for their positions and replacing the "just cause" standard for dismissal with a "good cause" standard. The State has also provided principals with the authority to make staff selection decisions on each candidate's merits, not seniority. This is a bold step and deserving of praise. It also greatly enhances the strength of the State's plan to ensure equitable distribution of effective teachers specifically related to high-minority and/or high-poverty schools. Additionally, the plan calls for developing a corps of master educators, both teachers and principals, in high-need schools as an aggressive approach to address any deficiencies along with a focus on improving the climate and conditions to improve working conditions, therefore adding another dimension to attract teachers and leaders who are more likely to stay in schools with healthy conditions. Concomitantly, ESE will also provide recruitment and retention incentives as a means to attract National Board certified or district-designated master or lead teachers to transfer to high-need schools. This is a comprehensive and very well-reasoned approach that fully meets the required criterion and establishes meaningful performance targets that prove the State's commitment in this area.

(ii) With a particular emphasis on ESL, special education and STEM fields, the application presents a credible plan, aligned with many of the processes discussed in D3(i), to target initiatives to increase the number of educators entering these areas. The plan describes strategies to incentivize preparation programs to create residency-style models and expand successful preparation initiatives for recruiting and preparing effective educators, with an emphasis on urban teaching in high-poverty schools and high-need fields. Further, the plan has an innovative idea for developing and providing cost-feasible online courses

for 800+ teachers to earn ESL or special education licensure. The application includes a detailed timeline for achieving these objectives aligned with reasonable performance measures.

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	12	12	
(i) Linking student data to credentialing programs and reporting publicly	7	6	6	
(ii) Expanding effective programs	7	6	6	

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

(i) As required by the criterion, the application articulates a plan to develop a web-based public reporting system while clearly linking performance-based criteria, specifically including the use of student achievement and growth data, to identify the strongest teacher and principal preparation programs. The application indicates that the first two years of the grant will be focused on linking databases for students, teachers and licensure to collect data on the effectiveness of a preparation program. The performance target of 20% of principal preparation programs in the State for which the public can access data on the achievement and growth of the graduates' students in the third year of the grant then a target of 100% in the fourth year of the grant seems unrealistic. Overall, the quality of the plan is very strong and indicates a commitment by the State to ensure that student achievement and student growth data will be used to more accurately measure the effectiveness of in-State teacher and principal preparation programs.

(ii) The State has already completed a pilot program approval process based on outcome-based effectiveness indicators through a partnership with 12 representative preparation programs. The plan calls for expansion of this pilot as well as a commitment to expand highly effective preparation programs through additional funding support. However, the plan does not provide specific evidence of how the State will actually scale the effective programs statewide. The elements described within the pilot indicates a multiple-level strategy to make accountability reporting fully transparent and to expand successful programs that support and improve effective preparation programs for both teachers and principals.

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	14	14	
(i) Providing effective support	10	7	7	
(ii) Continuously improving the effectiveness of the support	10	7	7	

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

(i) The application presents a plan relying on two strategic approaches to ensure effective support to teachers and principals. The plan includes job-embedded support elements linked to the State's new evaluation system that will be available to teachers both online and through the teams of human resources and evaluation specialists. Principals will have access to a comprehensive principal leadership program among other integrated supports. What is less clear in the narrative is the capacity of this leadership program and how many principals will be able to participate on an annual basis. The plan also provides face-to-face and online versions of training targeted on the use of data to improve instruction but fails to adequately describe how these offerings will be scaled to a statewide teaching corps. Overall, the plan is detailed and thoughtful in explaining what elements and programs will be offered to teachers and principals in the form of effective support and does an excellent job of integrating relevant elements in order to maximize the potential for success. The timeline is reasonable and achievable. However, a more fulsome explanation of how the many elements offered will actually be organized and scaled to result in statewide impact would be useful.

(ii) The plan indicates that a professional development specialist will be identified to serve as the central coordination point for Race to the Top aligned support to teachers and principals. The plan is comprehensive and logical with regard to how the State will ensure sustained evaluations for professional

development offerings and clearly identifies where the responsibility for this work will be placed. The activities described are aligned with measured impact for educator effectiveness and student growth. The Performance Measures are reasonable except with regard to the percent of LEAs using ESE-developed tools and processes to evaluate the impact of professional supports where only 10% of LEAs will be engaged by the second year of the grant, 25% in the third year followed by a very large jump to 80% in the fourth year. This does not seem realistic nor particularly aggressive in the first two years.

Total	138	125	125	
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E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

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

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

Massachusetts enacted legislation in January 2010 that not only meets the criterion for State intervention directly in persistently lowest-achieving schools and districts but provides broad, specific authority in the process.

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

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

(i) The application presents clear evidence of Massachusetts' process for identifying the lowest-achieving schools in the State, consistent with the definitions of this competition and that are required in the criterion. Further, the plan provides evidence for how this identification process is currently working by describing the first cohort of 35 persistently lowest-achieving schools that have been identified as of March 2010.

(ii) The four strategies described within the application that are designed to offer support to the State's LEAs in turning around schools are comprehensive, bold, granular in detail, and well-conceived. The State's overall premise is that turnaround begins with school leadership and the plan presents a high-quality approach for identifying and training a substantial corps of turnaround experts from among its principals and teachers. The plan is precise in its expectations throughout the process and places emphasis in several critical areas: human resource management at the district level; integrated, wrap-around community support; and focus on three interconnected conditions necessary for success. More than simply asserting that these steps will be taken, the plan goes into ample detail for exactly how it intends to accomplish each aspect. Further, the State has recognized the difficulty in a lack of national capacity for turnaround operators and articulates a process for effective public-private partnerships to overcome this challenge. The plan provides evidence of four prior examples of school and district turnaround interventions and lessons learned as required by the criterion. In sum, this is an exciting dimension of the State's overall plan reflecting considerable thought and a strong commitment by the State to focus its energies in successfully turning around all of Massachusetts' persistently lowest-achieving schools.

Total	50	50	50	
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F. General

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	10	10	
(i) Allocating a consistent percentage of State revenue to education	5	5	5	
(ii) Equitably funding high-poverty schools	5	5	5	
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>(i) The amount of education spending as a percent of total state revenue increased by 4% between FY08 and FY09 while total spending for K-12 education increased by 3% over the same timeframe.</p> <p>(ii) The application presents clear evidence of existing State funding formula and policies that ensure equitable funds distributions between high-need LEAs and other LEAs as well as between high-poverty schools and other schools within LEAs. Funding is determined through the combination of Chapter 70 and the State's foundation budget resulting in an approximately \$2,000 per pupil increase for students in districts and schools with the greatest proportion of poor students. Additionally, the State utilizes a similar progressive formula in awarding grant dollars from Federal and State sources to ensure the students and schools with the greatest need are commensurately treated.</p>				
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	37	37	
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	5	5	
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	8	8	
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	8	8	
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	8	8	
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	8	8	
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>(i) Massachusetts enacted new charter school legislation in January 2010 that eliminated the cap on the total number of students statewide who can attend charter schools and eliminated the cap on the number of district schools that can convert to what are organized as Horace Mann charter schools. The State does not restrict student enrollment in charter schools consistent with the requirements of the criterion. However, the law does restrict the total number of charters to not exceed 6% of all public schools in addition to a cap of 120 charter schools statewide resulting in a reduced score.</p> <p>(ii) Massachusetts has a proven track record of success with regard to its charter school authorization processes. Consistent with each element of the criterion, the application provides evidence that the State has had specific charter school laws in place since 1993 that prescribe a detailed protocol for approving charters, reviewing and monitoring them once granted, and, more recently, placing a focus on ensuring that charter schools serve a student population that is similar to the local district's student population. The statute requires specific adherence to accountability provisions with the ultimate responsibility belonging to one authorizer, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. In addition, the laws provide for comprehensive five year reviews to determine whether to renew, not renew or renew with conditions any of the State's charter schools. The laws also allow for revocation of a charter at any time during the charter term. Three of the four charter schools closed in the past five years were closed for lack of academic success indicating that the State is closely monitoring its charters and willing to take action when they are not working.</p>				

(iii) As required by the criterion, the application provides clear evidence of a funding formula that ensures equitable funding between charter schools and traditional district schools. Federal grants are distributed directly to charter schools by the Department in accordance with Federal requirements consistent as required by the criterion.

(iv) The State's funding formula for charter schools includes a facility component, operates a quasi-public agency that issues tax-exempt bonds to finance the acquisition, rehabilitation or construction of charter schools, and, in the recently enacted 2010 legislation, that provides incentives to districts to offer unused school buildings to charters.

(v) The application provides robust evidence of legislation in place to encourage the development of Innovation Schools in Massachusetts including a description of the first Innovation School which was approved in May 2010. In addition, the Boston Public Schools currently operate a total of 23 pilot schools presenting further evidence of the State's compliance with this criterion.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	5	5	
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
Massachusetts demonstrates a comprehensive, bold environment to support LEAs in the operation of a wide variety of innovative, autonomous public schools, other than charter schools. Both in this section and other areas of the application the State provides a compelling story to support its efforts in this regard.				
Total	55	52	52	

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	15	15	
Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
Throughout the application, Massachusetts has demonstrated its commitment to STEM through a high-quality plan that offers a rigorous course of study in mathematics, science, technology and engineering; presents a solid case that proactive steps are being taken to engage industry experts, museums and universities through the Governor's STEM Advisory Council and other initiatives to prepare and assist teachers in integrating STEM content across grades and disciplines; and, an effort through MassCore to increase STEM college and career readiness in underrepresented groups. Finally, the State has a tight focus on leveraging Race to the Top funds to better prepare students for more advanced study and careers in the STEM fields.				
Total	15	15	15	

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes	Yes	
Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
Massachusetts has presented a comprehensive, well-articulated, persuasive and compelling plan for its embrace of the spirit required and unique opportunity provided in this competition. The narrative				

consistently aligns with the four education reform areas specified in the ARRA and the State Success Factors Criteria in a detailed and clearly presented manner. It is important that the application support statewide reform with substantial participation by eligible LEAs and Massachusetts meets this criterion. Most important, the State's priorities are focused emphatically on student achievement, eliminating the achievement gap, and fully preparing students for college and careers. This is a truly high-quality plan for a robust statewide education reform agenda.

Total		0	0	
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Grand Total	500	468	468	
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Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2

Massachusetts Application #3100MA-6



A. State Success Factors

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

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

(i)

Massachusetts has done an impressive job of outlining a bold, comprehensive and coherent reform agenda that is consistent with the state's on-going reform efforts and with the four core educational reform areas identified in the notice. The state celebrates its educational accomplishments since 1993, when it initiated a standards-based reform; the reforms had noteworthy results. In the *National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)* assessments, the state ranks first in the nation in the core areas of reading and mathematics, and the state also ranks high against national peers on the *Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)* study in science and mathematics.

In its application, the state addresses key goals, key activities to be undertaken and rationale for the activities, timelines for implementing the activities, and identified the party or parties responsible for implementing the activities. Supporting evidence was provided.

While touting its successes, the state directly and clearly articulates recognition in its failure to close the gap for English Language Learners (ELLs), minority, Special Education (SPED), and low income students. The application states that only 58% of Latinos and 68% of African Americans graduate from high school in four years, and more than a third of its public high school graduates require at least one remedial course in their first semester in college.

Each element of the state's application is designed to address these challenges both by focusing on improving the quality of teaching for all students and by providing students and families with needed health and human services, referred to as "integrated community supports." The incorporation of intentional support for students and families when needed is both innovative and noteworthy.

(ii)

The state describes its effort to work diligently to obtain the support of various groups including LEA's and was able to secure 70.2%, or 276 out of 393, LEAs to participate. These LEAs represent the full range of districts and charter schools in the state. LEAs who committed to the plan include 159 traditional school districts, 60 charter schools, 36 regional school districts, and 21 vocational schools. *Participating LEAs include 88% of students statewide who live in poverty.*

Every superintendent, school board president, and local teacher union leader in the participating LEAs provided signed agreements with the state. Securing this level of commitment from participating LEAs was a major accomplishment due to a historic culture of strong local control and powerful teacher unions.

Although 100% of the participating LEAs signed agreements, their agreement was conditional on issues related to the use of teacher and principal evaluation, compensation, and retention. By law, the Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) secured are subject to collective bargaining for teachers; for this reason, the state listed the LEAs commitment in this area as conditional. Some of these issues are subject to existing local collective bargaining agreements and past practices. The state plans to pass legislation on educator evaluation that will require each participating district to bargain the issue and to align their evaluation with the state framework.

While the proposed plan appears reasonable, ambitious, credible, and consistent with the major goals outlined in the announcement, full implementation of the state's plan might be negatively influenced by issues tied to teachers' existing collective bargaining agreements.

(iii)

The state outlines its ambitious but realistic plan to improve statewide performance. Components include increasing student performance on NAEP; reducing the gap on state and NAEP assessments (by 25% by 2014 and another 25% by 2016); improving graduation rates and college enrollment; and reducing the achievement gap in high school graduation, college enrollment, and college completion (15% by 2014 and another 15% by 2016). The state plans to achieve these goals by implementing Common Core Standards, redesigning its accountability plan, improving educator development systems, and improving its data systems.

The state has met the requirements of this element of the criterion by outlining a plan to increase student achievement as reported by the NAEP and the assessments required under the ESEA; to decrease achievement gaps between subgroups in reading/language arts and mathematics, as reported by the NAEP and state assessments as required under the ESEA; to increase high school graduation rates; and to increase college enrollment including increasing the number of students who complete at least a year's worth of college credit.

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

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

(i)

The state has taken concrete steps in planning to implement their proposed plan utilizing the Office of Strategic Planning, Research, and evaluation to manage (OSPRES), and monitor the grant and to report directly to the commissioner. The OSPRES is already responsible for tracking performance measures for the state board in addition to effectively administering several other major programs.

The state has identified use of the Barber approach, which emphasizes use of real-time data, focused analysis and reports, and strong leadership involvement to drive implementation. The approach will assist the state in setting clear goals and in developing a delivery system to 300 districts, 1900 schools, and 80,000 educators. The system allows for mid-course corrections and can provide real-time performance data to help leaders identify situations that need interventions. Senior Board of Elementary and Secondary Education senior executives will be held accountable for the project's execution. A detailed and comprehensive plan outlines the implementation of the state's plan including key personnel. Existing systems, networks, channels of communication, and tools will be used in supporting LEAs implementation.

The state's budget allocates \$23 million to participating LEAs in supplemental funds to support critical initiatives that are focused on activities that can be sustained after the funding period. The state includes a detailed and descriptive budget narrative, which include the state's direct and indirect costs, designed to meet the goals of the proposed project. Indirect cost agreement included. Details includes an anticipated inflation rate of 3% for years 2-4, and 50% of budget to be sub-granted to participating LEAs.

(ii)

The state has longstanding partnerships among various educational, political, and community groups and has worked to initiate discussions and to secure the support of various groups and the public by surveying over 4000 respondents, holding forums and webinars, and meeting with superintendents, union leaders, school committee leaders, and members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. In addition, the state held meetings and focus groups with state association leaders, local and national fund-raisers, community groups, parents, and individual staff from the largest school districts. An opportunity was provided for the general public to comment on an outline of the proposal.

There was a strong response to these efforts and several organizations joined in supporting the state's plan. For example, the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education shared its expertise in performance evaluation, the Boston Foundation formed a coalition to build support for the proposal, and the Massachusetts Association of School superintendents developed training for district leaders that was aligned to the proposal's priorities.

A total of 165 stakeholders signed letters of support, and copies are included in the state's application. Letters of support included letters from U. S. and State legislators, community and civil rights groups, STEM stakeholders (like the Governor's STEM Advisory Council, the Massachusetts Biotechnology Council), business associations, non-profits and other associations, various foundations, and the Dean from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Evidence provided included signed letters of support from the Massachusetts Teachers Association, the Elementary School Principals Association, the Secondary School Administrators Association, the Association of School Committees, the Association of School Superintendents, the Charter Public Schools Association, the Parent Teacher Association, the MassPartners for the Public Schools, and eight other educational associations and agencies. Three community and civil rights groups also signed letters of support; these included Black Leaders for Excellence in Education, Multicultural Dropout Outreach Collaborative, and the NAACP New England Area Conference.

The state had met or exceeded the requirements of this element of the criterion.

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

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

(i)

The state documents a history of progress in student performance across all student groups from 2003 to 2009 that is impressive. The state's modern reform efforts began in 1993 with the Education Reform Act, which significantly increased the state's funding of education while also increasing the accountability for results. Increased accountability called for a rigorous process of reviewing districts, identification of low performing schools, targeting assistance to critical needs, and revision of teacher licensure requirements. More recent reform include revision of the state's Standards and Assessment at the secondary level that called for additional academic requirements for high school graduation.

(ii)

Massachusetts is the only state in the nation to rank first on all four NAEP assessments in 2005, 2007, and 2009. In 2007, according to the *Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study*, fourth graders from the state ranked second worldwide in science education and tied for third in mathematics; eighth graders tied for first in science and sixth in mathematics. Performance rates in the content areas on state tests for students in certain groups (examples: limited English proficient, poor students) showed a higher percentage improvement rates than for the overall state population.

The state has one of the highest high school graduation rates in the country with 81.2% of the 2008 cohort graduating within four years of first enrollment in ninth grade. Most impressive is that in 2007, while there was a .3 percentage rate increase in the overall, 4-year graduation rates, there was improvement of 1.5 to 3 percentage points for limited English proficient, special education, and African American students.

In its proposal, the state attributes this impressive success to high standards, accountability and support, efforts that continue today. For example, recent legislation addresses accountability for persistently low achieving schools; this legislation calls for staff in these schools to reapply for their positions, lowered the standard for teacher dismissal, and made the lowest 10% of districts eligible for Level 5, state receivership.

The state has met or exceeded the requirements in this element of the criterion by providing evidence of increased student achievement in reading/language arts and mathematics both on the NAEP and the ESEA assessments; decreased achievement gaps between subgroups in reading/language arts and mathematics, both on the NAEP and ESEA assessments; and Increased high school graduation rates. Faster improvement gains on student performance in the core content areas were documented since 2003, for limited English proficient, special education, and African American students than for statewide performance. In 2007, students in these groups also showed a greater increase in the 4-year graduation rate than the statewide rate.

Total	125	120	120	
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B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards	40	40	40	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20	20	
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20	20	
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
(i)				
In 2008, the State Elementary and Secondary Education Commissioner joined the National Governors Council, the Council for Chief State Officers, and Achieve to produce a report that called for high quality standards to be adopted by all states. This was the result of a multi-state, decade-long collaboration. The state provides evidence that a total of 51 states participated in this common core effort.				
(ii)				
In spring 2009, the Massachusetts governor and the education commissioner signed an agreement that committed the state to the development of K-12, internationally benchmarked, rigorous core standards in language arts and mathematics aligned to college and career expectations, which had been developed the previous year in collaboration with 51 states. Achieve researchers praised the state's efforts calling its system of academic standards "the best in the country." After six drafts of the common core standards and extensive formal comments, the state describes its plan to adopt the common core standards by August 2, 2010. The state provides a timeline for the adoption of the common core standards.				
(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	10	10	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality assessments	5	5	5	

(ii) Including a significant number of States	5	5	5	
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
(i) and (ii)				
<p>In May 4, 2010, the state's education commissioner signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to participate in the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career where the state along with 27 other states will design principles for a multi-state assessment system aligned with common core K-12 standards for language arts and mathematics. Assessments will include measuring and documenting college and career readiness; ensuring that assessments are comparable across all participating states, meet international benchmarks, support student longitudinal growth, and serve to inform effective instruction.</p> <p>The state provided supporting evidence including a signed MOA, a list of 51 states and territories participating in the Common Core efforts, the final March 10, 2010 version of the Standards, and evidence of international benchmarking.</p>				
(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	20	20	
(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>Massachusetts outlines a comprehensive plan to support the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments. Goals include enabling more students to meet high standards by creating an aligned to internationally bench-marked, standards-based teaching and learning system, and significantly increasing the number of students graduating from high school ready for college or career.</p> <p>To enable more students to meet the state's high standards, they created an aligned, standards-based teaching and learning system. The state's comprehensive plan includes proposed activities such as alignment of all Massachusetts standards documents to the Common Core;</p> <p>curriculum maps and units; a digital library; interim assessment. formative assessment; extended performance tasks; tools for data-driven instruction; and regional forums and summit conferences. A detailed time-line for implementation is include. The state presents a high quality and well thought out plan to support the transition to enhanced standards and high quality assessments.</p>				
Total	70	70	70	

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	24	24	
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>Massachusetts has developed an Education Data Warehouse that address all twelve elements of the America COMPLETES Act. In addition to describing the implementation of each element, the state provides detailed evidence on the current status of each element.</p>				
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)				
(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	5	5	

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

For a decade, Massachusetts has been working on building more comprehensive data systems at state expense to meet its goal of delivering data to all state educators and key stakeholders. Their next step is to build a system that will enable all K-12 educators to use data to inform their decisions and target instruction; to link data from the state Elementary and Secondary Education office (ESE) to the Departments of Early Education and Care and Higher Education; and to improve the usability of ESE public data profiles. To meet the demand for data, the state plans to expand the current system to support the use of data for instruction, policy, operations, management, and resource allocation.

The state plans to provide more efficient supports to projects and strategies for Pre K-12 teaching and learning systems and initiatives to increase educator effectiveness. The state includes performance measures and a timeline to support this element of the criterion so that by 2014, 100% of districts will use its data system to improve instruction, assessment, and operations.

As outlined, the state's plan is cohesive and well designed to inform and engage all major stake-holders.

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

(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	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	

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

(i)

The state's high quality plan outlines three strategies to empower educators to meet the learning needs of every student through access to technology resources; these include investing in data systems and technology to support PreK-12 teaching and learning system; strengthening and expanding educator training and supports for data use; and making state longitudinal data available to researchers.

In order to allow every public school educator in the state to meet the academic needs of a diverse student population, the state plans to make significant investments in a seamless, effective integrated system. To accomplish this, the state is working with a coalition of LEAs to develop tools to meet the needs of all LEAs, such as online repositories for standards and curriculum materials, a test builder engine, and a digital library. The state provides a credible plan to meet this criterion.

(ii)

Working to increase the data available to educators for the past five years, the state recognizes the need to include in its plan a significant investment for training and job-embedded activities as these would encourage data use to become a regular component of their practice. Towards this end, the state currently offers a six course core sequence of Educator Data training that covers both the mechanics of using the system and using data to inform instruction. The state has identified the need for ten additional courses in data use and analysis to be considered electives. The state's plan is to pre-qualify vendors to deliver these courses through LEA's issued contracts. The state provides a credible plan to meet this criterion.

(iii)

The state already offers a system for sharing confidential student-level data with researchers and is working with nationally recognized researchers on a dozen research projects. Findings from these projects have been used to inform policies in charter schools, expanding learning time, school redesign, and others. The

state plans to improve on this effort by upgrading its web site to provide specialized aggregate breakdowns that researchers often require. It will also support investigations on the effectiveness of instructional materials, strategies, and approaches for educating students in various populations.

A time line and performance measures for this element of the criterion are included. The state provides detailed information on how it plans to make data from its instructional improvement system available and accessible to researchers.

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

According to the state's presentation, it does not collect data on primary language proficiency levels and therefore cannot make such data available to researchers. Because the state reported that ELLs are a growing student population, research on these students would assist the state in meeting their academic needs.

Total	47	47	45	
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D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	21	21	
(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	

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

(i)

By law, statutory, and regulatory provisions, Massachusetts offers five different routes to initial teacher certification, and various different routes for different types of administrators (superintendent, assistant superintendent, principal, assistant principal, supervisor/director, special education administrator, and school business administrator). These routes include traditional, IHE certification programs.

(ii)

As defined by the *Race to the Top* criteria, the state lists 32 alternative organizations and programs that offer state-approved, alternative teacher certification, and 12 that offer state-approved alternative principal certification with additional approvals pending. In 2008, 15% of newly licensed teachers and more than 50% of newly licensed principals had received certification through these alternative avenues. An innovative, alternative, master's program described was the *Boston Teacher Residency* program that recruits and trains educators for immediate placement in Boston Public Schools.

(iii)

Massachusetts has taken steps to identify, monitor, and evaluate areas of educator shortage and the districts most affected by these shortages. Numerous programs have been developed to meet shortage needs in English as a second language, special education, and STEM subjects. The state department regularly collects and analyzes data from the state Personnel Management System, the Educator Licensure and Recruitment system, state annual reporting data, annual surveys of program completers, Highly Qualified Teachers reporting, and waiver data. The state plan to combine various data systems that will support the state and the LEAs in targeting shortages and patterns of inequitable distribution of both effective teachers and principals.

The state has already made use of shortage data from its various databases. The state's Recruiting and Retaining Educators Subcommittee's recommendations led to the reorganization of educator policy, preparation, licensure, and leadership into a single center in 2008. Recommendations also helped shape the process for monitoring and expanding the pool and pipeline of effective teachers and principals.

The state has been proactive in responding to identified areas of shortages specifically in high need districts or content areas. In addition to developing programs to address an identified shortage, the state has sought to provide innovative alternate routes for certification in shortage areas. For example, the state collaborated with the Brattleboro Vermont-based School for International Training to provide an alternative route to ESL teacher licensure. In addition, the state offers a variety of incentives and sign-up bonuses for STEM teachers.

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

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

(i)

Massachusetts developed a growth model that allows educators to quantify a student's achievement level and the student's performance growth as assessed on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System. To provide information on a student growth by group, such as by classroom, school or district, data are presented as percentiles that are summarized using medians. Educators have access to student growth data by district, school, LEA, and subgroup. In fall 2010, the first statewide data linking teachers with students' growth scores will be available.

The state described its well developed growth model designed to assess and monitor student performance and to inform educators at the state, LEA, school, and classroom levels.

(ii)

By 2011, the state plans to adopt new regulations that use student performance as a significant factor in teacher and principal evaluations. An additional component of the new system includes a "default" evaluation protocol with forms, procedures and timelines that districts can adopt or modify. Built into the new evaluation system is a process to assess districts' use of the new regulations. In refining the new system, the Board of Elementary and Secondary System voted to establish a task force on the evaluation of teachers and principals with the task of recommending a revised set of regulations and principles and a comprehensive state evaluation framework. The task force was given as a starting point a list of organizing elements that prioritizes "impact on student growth" as a significant factor.

The state has taken concrete steps, including adopting supporting legislation, to modifying its statewide evaluation system for teachers and principals that includes students performance as an essential component.

(iii)

The state plans to implement its new teacher and principal evaluation system for all of the state's 80,000 educators beginning in the 2011-2012 academic year. An implementation plan is included in the state's

application. Strategies provided summarize a comprehensive, effective and logical evaluation system for teachers and administrators that includes a students' growth data component.

(iv)

The evaluation system for educators uses a continuous improvement approach to evaluation. Identified ineffective teachers or administrators as determined by student growth and other factors will be provided with intensive support to improve. After a year of support and based on the ineffective educator's progress on an individual improvement plan that includes student growth, evaluation results can be used to make critical personnel decisions, tenure, compensation, promotion, or dismissal. The state's application cites the importance of evaluator training and support to conduct fair and meaningful evaluations.

Technical assistance will be provided to ensure that all districts have access to an evaluation trainer and coach, exemplary models, and tools and guidance to conducting evaluations. Changes in the evaluation system include endorsements to licensure that includes certification in specialty areas for highly effective teachers giving teachers access to a career ladder, expanded responsibility, and additional compensation. The state's District and Standards Indicators will be used to assess an LEAs performance that includes assessing an LEA's abilities to attract and recruit effective personnel.

The state effectively outlines various well developed strategies and a timeline designed to meet the objectives of this element of the criterion. The state's plan includes support for teachers and principals; compensation, promotion, and additional responsibilities for effective teachers and principals; crafting new rigorous and transparent tenure procedures; and a system for removing ineffective educators following a period of support for their improvement. Additional data, not required, includes related performance measures.

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

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	24	24	
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	14	14	
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	10	10	

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

(i)

The state's plan demonstrates a strong commitment to ensure the equitable distribution of effective and highly effective teachers and educators in high poverty and/or high minority schools while being attentive that students in these schools are not served by ineffective teachers and principals at higher rates than other students;

To ensure the goal of attracting and retaining effective and highly effective teachers and principals to high need districts, the state plans to offer a variety of incentives including increased compensation and targeted initiatives to improve conditions and school climate. The state has already approved legislation that enables leaders in the lowest achieving 4% of schools to require all staff to reapply for their positions and that replaces "just cause" for dismissal with a "good cause" standard. The state's plan has already been implemented in Boston where the faculty in 6 of its 12 turnaround schools were required to reapply for their positions and where the principal was given the authority to hire based on the candidate's merits rather than seniority.

The state's focus as described appears to be focused on processes to dismiss ineffective teachers and principals. A fuller discussion on planned incentives to attract effective teachers and principals to high poverty or high poverty schools would have provided a fuller picture of the state's plan to ensure equitable

distribution. Several well designed strategies developed to effectively support this element of the criterion were included.

(ii)

The state has identified ESL, special education, and STEM field as hard to staff content areas. To address staff shortages in these areas, the state plans to use a monitoring system to target specific initiatives to these fields (to reduce the number of licensure waivers), to increase the number of teachers entering these fields, and to increase the number of successful teachers who remain in these fields.

A strategy offered to support this objective includes providing incentives, support, and alternative pathways to effective educators in hard to staff content areas. The application also cites the Boston Teacher Residency program that recruits and prepares teachers especially teachers of color for high need areas, and the development of an online mentor training program to improve educator retention in high need schools and content areas.

A timeline for implementing the state's plan in this area is included, and performance measures of LEA requirements addressing this element of the criterion were provided. The state has met the requirements of this element of the criterion.

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

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	13	13	
(i) Linking student data to credentialing programs and reporting publicly	7	6	6	
(ii) Expanding effective programs	7	7	7	

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

(i) and (ii)

The state plans to use performance based-criteria, such as job placement rates, retention, and impact on student achievement and growth, to identify the strongest teacher and principal preparation programs in the state and offer them incentives to grow. Under the plan, identified ineffective programs will be provided with assistance and/or closed. The effectiveness of all teacher and principal preparation programs in the state will be publicly reported annually. To support these objectives, the state outlines two strategies: base educator preparation program approval and accountability system on outcomes and effectiveness measures, and provide competitive grants to expand and scale up effective programs. The state's plan to link student data to credentialing programs and reporting publicly was not clearly and fully described in the narrative.

The state describes a high quality and ambitious plan, a realistic timeline to implement it, and relevant performance measures that addresses elements in this criterion.

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

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

(i)

The state's education reform plan includes developing a comprehensive professional development system designed to reduce variation in student outcomes by reducing variations in the quality of instruction.

The state recognizes that without professional development, its reforms will remain unfulfilled. To meet the goal of supporting effective implementation, the state outlines two major strategies: focus the content of professional development on support of the state's four overarching objectives, and shape existing professional development activities into a comprehensive professional development system.

The state describes the steps it will take to provide effective support to teachers and principals. Examples include placing human resources and evaluation specialists to help districts develop and implement educator evaluation systems aligned with the new state evaluation framework; online training for teachers on the new evaluation system; face to face and online training on how to use data to improve instruction; access to mathematics and literacy coaches; various efforts to strengthen educators' content knowledge including special education and instructional technology; online coursework; professional learning communities; regional forums. A detailed, four year timeline for implementing each strategy is outlined.

The state describes a logical, well developed and comprehensive plan designed to provide effective, appropriate, ongoing, job-embedded, and data-informed professional development for teachers and principals that is at the center of the state's proposed plan.

(ii)

The state's goal in continuously improving the effectiveness of support to teacher and principals focuses on holding the state education department and the LEAs jointly responsible for providing effective professional development aligned to the state's priorities. The state plans to establish more rigorous standards for professional development that includes evaluation for the purpose of improving its professional development strategies.

Activities include updating existing standards for professional development, and aligning professional development to state priorities and standards. A timeline is provided and performance measures (not required) are included.

However, supporting materials provided did not always match the narrative, which gave the state's plan in this area a lack of cohesiveness. Some questions remain; for example, the percent of LEAs using state developed tools and processes to evaluate the impact of professional support, shown on the provided Performance Measures, is listed at 10% in 2011 to 2012, then at 25% in 2012 to 2013, and finally, at 80% in 2013 to 2014. No explanations, details, or discussion were included on the state's plan to increase the LEAs' use from 10% in 2011 to 80% in 2013, a significant increase. The state has partially met the requirements in this element of the criterion.

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

Total	138	135	135	
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E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

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

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

(i)

Strong legislation was enacted in January 2010, which was subsequently adopted by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education in April, that gave the Board unprecedented authority to intervene in the lowest performing schools and LEAs. This includes significant autonomy and flexibility in making staffing decisions and to enlist health and human services support for students and their families (a particularly innovative feature).

Amendments to Section 1J of Mass General Laws chapter 69, signed into law in January made eligible for designation as under-performing (Level 4) or chronically under-performing (Level 5) the lowest 20% of schools. Each level outlines various consequences. For example, at Level 5, the commissioner creates a turnaround plan and may appoint an external receiver to operate the school and implement the plan; the commissioner reviews the school annually; if it failed to meet multiple goals, may appoint a receiver not appointed previously.

By state law, any turnaround plan may provide for reallocation of the budget. At Level 4 or 5, all staff must reapply for their positions, and tenured teachers may be dismissed under a "good cause" rather than "just cause" standard.

The state meets or exceeds this element of the criterion.

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

(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	35	38	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	30	33	

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

(i)

The state education board has created a process to identify those schools most in need of intervention based on state test scores, the state's new measure of student growth, and dropout rates. This process is aligned with the notice's definition of "persistently lowest-achieving schools." The state's application includes evidence outlining their process for identifying the lowest achieving 20% of schools.

(ii)

The state's application makes reference to the Turnaround Model and to the Restart Model.

The Restart Model is one in which an LEA converts a school or closes and reopens a school under a charter operator, a charter management organization, or an education management organization system. From the provided timeline, the turnaround operators will be engaged in Years 3 and 4. Year 2, is when the state plans to identify turnaround operators. A more timely response might be warranted in implementing this part of the state's plan.

In discussing the priority area called "integrated community supports for students' social, emotional, and health needs," the state acknowledges the challenging work of integrating community support to meet students' needs, but references two existing models in the state that are doing just that: Integrated Comprehensive Resources in Schools and Boston Connects.

Both models have led to strong improvements in academic performance, classroom behavior, and accuracy of special education referrals. Both models use alternative approaches. The state provides evidence of the efficacy of the two models presented. In this effort, the state is working with the Governor's Cabinet on Child and Youth Development and includes secretaries of other agencies serving children, youth, and families.

These efforts are complemented by a current initiative to identify and intervene with middle and high school students at risk of dropping out; the state has piloted an early warning initiative with urban districts using the state's Student Information Management System and recommendations from the Graduation and Dropout Prevention and Recovery Commission.

The state's application includes some interesting highlights in their plan to turn around persistently low achieving schools. Current and planned efforts to address the non-academic needs of students in these schools are innovative and compelling.

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

During the State's presentation, additional clarification was provided on the state's ongoing process of selecting and using an intervention model to turn around the lowest achieving schools. Members of the State's panel gave a logical reason for no longer using the Restart Intervention Model, as described in the application. The State opted to use the Turnaround Model as it provides a better fit for their lowest achieving schools.

Total	50	45	48	
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F. General

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	10	10	
(i) Allocating a consistent percentage of State revenue to education	5	5	5	
(ii) Equitably funding high-poverty schools	5	5	5	
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
(i)				
In spite of challenging economic conditions, K-12 spending for 2009 increased to 31% in 2009, from 28% in 2008. This increase constituted 36% of the total state revenue in 2009.				
(ii)				
Under the state's progressive funding formula, districts that educate the highest percentage of low income students, based on eligibility for free or reduced lunch, receive the most school aid per pupil. The state provided relevant documentation.				
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	35	35	
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	4	4	
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	8	8	
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	7	7	
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	8	8	
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	8	8	

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

(i)

Massachusetts charter law statute was amended in January 2010, to allow for significant expansion of high performing charter schools in the state's lowest performing districts. In lifting the cap, the Governor and state legislature recognized the successes of existing urban charter schools. In May 25, 2010, the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adopted regulations for implementation of the new statute. The new law also eliminated the 4% cap on the total number of students who could attend charter schools. However, removal of the caps for enabling the creation of high performing charter schools only impacts charter schools in the state's lowest performing LEAs thereby inhibiting the creation of high performing charter schools in other LEAs.

(ii)

Massachusetts is one of two states with a single charter school authorizer, the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. For this reason accountability is consistent. Under regulation 603 CMR 1.00, charter schools are held accountable in three areas: faithfulness to charter, academic success and organizational viability. The criteria in the three accountability areas create protocols for site visits, renewal inspection, and annual report guidelines. Charter applications go through a review process that includes interview with the founding group. Lack of academic success was a major factor in the closure of three of the four charter schools closed in the past five years.

(iii)

The state's charter school statute has three components in its funding formula: a per pupil foundation rate; an "above-foundation" adjustment rate, which adjusts rates upward when the amount the district is spending on students exceeds the foundation rate; a per-pupil facilities component. Charters receive the same amount per pupil as is spent in the sending districts. A higher percentage of low income students in charter schools receive relatively more funding per pupil; charter schools draw from the same local and state revenue sources as traditional public schools.

In fiscal year 2008, charter schools, according to the application, spent \$1826 less per SPED student who attended a charter school. The state attributed this to districts having higher costs for special education than do charter schools; districts must pay tuition for students placed in private SPED schools while charter schools do not. This explanation requires a full discussion.

(iv)

Funding for a charter school includes a per-pupil facility component adjusted for inflation, an interesting detail in the state's application. Recent education legislation offers incentives to districts that offer unused school buildings to charter schools. No facility requirements are placed on charter schools other than normal building codes and accessibility requirements. In 2009, the state legislature passed a law giving the Massachusetts School Building Authority authorization to use a portion of the state's allocation of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Qualified School Construction Funds for Charter Schools.

(v)

State and local districts support the creation of innovative, autonomous public schools. The Innovative Schools initiative was a component of legislation signed by the Governor in January 2010; this legislation allows districts to create innovative schools while keeping school funding within the district. Unlike charter schools, innovative schools are entirely locally based, and the local school committee has the authority to approve an Innovative School. The state's first Innovative School, the Paul Revere Innovative School, was established on May 25, 2010. Additional schools are scheduled to open in September 2010.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions

5

5

5

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

Massachusetts cites a historic commitment to establishing innovative conditions to education reform. The state has two programs that increase time for academics to address the impact that additional time in school can have especially for low performing students. The state was the first in the nation to support a statewide Expanded Learning Program, funded at \$15.7 million in 2010, and serving 23 high poverty

schools. The state also provided \$2 million to fund after school and out of school time grants to improve the quality of after school and summer programs; these funds supported 48 programs providing services to 750 students, including 980 students with disabilities and 630 English language learners. Although no points were withheld, it would have strengthened the state's application if a plan for the collection and analyses of student performance data on the impact of additional time in school, an innovative feature, had been provided.

The state funds a variety of other programs designed to increase high school graduation rates, work place learning, students needing academic support, a STEM focused high school, and a full day kindergarten program; recent legislation was provided for literacy programs. All of these efforts are commendable.

Total	55	50	50	
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Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

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

Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Massachusetts plans to incorporate STEM instruction across the entire PreK-12 curriculum. In its plan, educators will have access to high quality instructional materials, model units, and lesson plans.

To expand the supply of STEM educators, the state proposes intensive recruitment and preparation programs to recruit an additional 250 teachers in STEM fields while also being attentive to retention efforts. A plan is outlined to provide pre-AP teachers with training in mathematics and science and professional development in science and K-8 mathematics for teachers (Massachusetts Intel Mathematics Initiative).

To increase STEM college and career readiness among under-represented groups, the state will continue to emphasize STEM in MassCore, which will become the state's default high school curriculum requiring a minimum of four years of mathematics and three years of lab-based science. The Governor established a STEM Advisory Council, composed of public and private stake-holders, with the task of increasing student interest and preparation for STEM fields.

With a comprehensive plan in place, the state has met 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
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes	Yes	

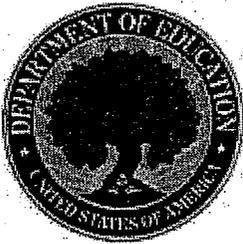
Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The state of Massachusetts has done an outstanding job at addressing all four educational reform areas and all other requirements of the *Race to the Top* notice. Their plan as outlined in the state's application was logical, concise, innovative and at times, inspiring. Sections of the state's plan served to showcase the state's historic and on-going commitment to educational reform. The state described comprehensive efforts including taking the appropriate legislative steps in preparing for the implementation of each component of its plan.

The state was able to secure enthusiastic support of its bold but doable plan from a variety of stakeholders in both the public and private sectors. Interesting features of their plan includes addressing the non-academic needs of students in the lowest achieving schools, and use of expanding learning programs for students in high poverty schools.

The state's plan as presented has the potential to serve as a national model for significant educational reform in the public school system.

Total			0	0	
Grand Total	500	482	483		



Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2

Massachusetts Application #3100MA-7



A. State Success Factors

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

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

(A)(1)(i) The State plan develops *standards and assessments* for success in college and the workplace. The educators, schools, and districts are provided with the tools and strategies to implement the systems by establishing hubs across the state, including six regional Readiness Centers for stakeholder meetings, conferences, and professional development. The plan is ambitious and presents a convincingly credible path with Readiness Centers already in place as of 2009 and Student Growth Percentiles already available across the state to assist teachers with instructional planning. The performance measures indicate goals are achievable for developing strong systems to support implementation of core reform to dramatically improve student achievement factors.

The State will provide new *data systems* that inform instruction with an incredible 72 hour turn-around from tests to reported outcomes. The data systems are expanded through a clear plan that is ambitious and achievable providing a new statewide framework for teacher and principal evaluation. The plan is described convincingly for instance, in the Appendix, a flow chart builds on the Readiness Passport System to report early warnings on student progress in attendance, and at-risk factors. The plan is cohesive across the application from letters from the commissioner, school superintendents, to Board Policy documents, and detailed budget plans support all elements of core reform.

The State designs incentives for *increasing the number of effective educators* and deploying them in hard to staff subjects in high need schools. The State has in place waivers to alter collective bargaining agreements and dismiss teachers and principals under *good cause* rather than *just cause*. The State is well on its way to use student performance as the key barometer of impact and progress for teachers and principals. There is an ambitious and achievable plan including annual targets and goals, provided in the performance indicator tables, and clear Board policy documents showing that educators can be dismissed as early as one year without progress. There are credible discussions concerning policy that affects compensation for hard to staff schools. The plan is presented with convincing evidence that the goals will be reached, and the plan is ambitious to improve student achievement through core reform.

The State plans to *turn around the lowest achieving schools* and already this fall, teachers re-apply for their positions. In addition, the State and state agencies jointly participate in the development of turn-around plans related to health and human services. The plan also includes guidance counselors to focus on college and career choices especially in the lowest performing schools wrap-around programs. Overall, the State will dramatically strengthen its capacity to intervene and support reform in struggling schools with an ambitious plan supported by a Framework of Accountability and Assistance and district self-assessments.

The plan is comprehensive, cohesive across the application, and achievable based on the performance measure, budget plans, Appendix documents, and narrative.

The reform agenda as it is presented is convincing and credible with ambitious goals to improve *student outcomes* statewide by focusing on the lowest achieving schools to concentrate its greatest resources in instruction, in supports, and in its families. The reform plan will provide 450 teachers and 45 principals specialized to contribute substantially to turn-around schools. Concerning clarity, comprehensiveness and the case for a credible path to reform, the State's agenda is well-crafted theoretically, practical, and experientially based. This section was allotted full points.

(A)(1)(ii)(a) The MOUs reflect a strong commitment with all participating LEAs using standard terms and conditions. However, 30% or 117 LEAs are not on board. This includes 61 LEAs or 16% of all LEAs that did not sign an MOU; and 56 LEAs or 14% of all LEAs that the State de-selected amounting to a grand total of 117 (or 30% of all) LEAs as non-participants. This is interpreted to negatively affect the scope and impact of the reform effort across the state. However, the narrative provides a strong case that this decision will work in its favor to increase the level of commitment in a very decisive way so that all LEAs are fully committed to the reform plan. Therefore, deselection is interpreted favorably in the evaluation of this application, except in reference to re-application or non-participation for LEAs, as discussed more fully below (see the sub-section conclusion).

(b) In section D of the form for the preliminary Scope of Work, the MOU is marked as conditional for all participating LEAs. There is a footnote concerning the condition of participation such that the State develops a framework for educator evaluations, and the LEA will negotiate with collective bargaining to align its evaluation system with the State's framework. Otherwise, participation rates for all other sections of the Scope of Work are at 100%, and overall, this is interpreted as a very positive feature enhancing the State's efficacy to implement reform in the four educational areas by addressing the issues with collective bargaining decisively and openly.

(c) The State's leadership support within the participating LEAs is laudable with 100% of the signatures by Superintendents and School Board Presidents, and 94% of the local teachers' unions. Twenty of the 21 LEAs with union ties to the American Federation of Teachers were allowed to participate without union leader support. For LEAs represented by the Massachusetts Teachers Association, 56 were turned-down as non-participating; and 195 are participating with full signatures. Overall therefore, the level of leadership support from the local unions is interpreted to be strong within the participating LEAs.

As a sub-section conclusion, it appears that the State did not discuss options for the non-participating LEAs which represent 26% of the total LEAs and which includes 12% of the total students in poverty. There was no discussion that any of the states might qualify as involved LEAs instead of participating LEAs and therefore be included at a limited capacity. In this way, LEA commitment would offer potential for a higher rate of involvement across the state. This sub-section received a high score at the middle range only for the lack of consideration for alternative involvement and re-apply strategies.

(A)(1)(iii)(a) The State's goal is to increase student achievement in reading/language arts and mathematics using state test scores and a Composite Performance Indicator (CPI) which includes progress measures across each of the five levels of the tests as well as the scores from the alternate (special education) instrument. Both state and NAEP scores to define ambitious and achievable goals are in place for the "all-student group" and sub-groups. Reports are extensive and are provided in the appendix for each sub-group and the "all-group" across all content areas and projected across the life of the grant. These reports thoroughly document the basis for the calculations needed for reaching its goals. In addition, the State sets clear and ambitious goals to improve (b) the achievement gaps by 50% and (c) reduce gaps in high school graduation by 10% and (d) increase the rate of college course completion by 30%. Based on the State's analysis, the performance indicators, its past level of performance, and the annual benchmarks full points were allotted with confidence that the State's plans will have broad and significant statewide impact to improve student outcomes.

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

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

(A)(2)(i) The extent to which the State has a high quality plan overall to

(a) The State provides strong leadership and dedicated teams to implement an ambitious statewide education reform. Each assurance area and each project has a manager; the plan includes manager training for accountability; and the plan includes outside evaluators for each of the projects, as feasible. There are ten leadership positions created at the State level for project management. In addition, the plan utilizes an existing system of state-wide support facilities called District and School Assistance Centers (DSACs) to implement the program connecting LEAs and convening stakeholders as evidenced in achievable performance measures and annual benchmarks. In addition, there are six new positions created for six regional centers to build an infrastructure of resources for professional development, problem solving, and managing systems and resources between schools, LEAs, and the State. As a comprehensive plan, the State will have the capacity needed to implement, scale up, and sustain reform based on the ambitious timelines and goals.

(b) The State will support participating LEAs to successfully implement educational reform in an ambitious and achievable high-quality plan that includes: the identification and dissemination of best practices; evaluation procedures for teachers' performance; supporting staff to use aggregated and disaggregated student achievement data regularly to improve performance; development of a school self-assessment tool to gauge progress on each objective; and multifaceted approaches to monitor and provide intervention. These strategies and approaches are ambitious through scaling up (for example) the technological capacity to provide on-line teacher resources and to develop teacher-prepared interim and formative assessments during years one and two. The plan will scale up in number the State evaluated teacher-made modules for dissemination, and then provide professional development needed for teachers to use them. The modules and the professional development are in place by the third year of the grant. As in this example, and overall, the activities are defined with clear timelines, annual benchmarks, and performance objectives. The goals are ambitious and achievable to support LEAs in the implementation of educational reform.

(c) The State provides effective and efficient operations and processes for implementing its RTTT grant through ten State level management positions, and two advisory groups on implementation, grant administration, and oversight. In addition, there is considerable budget outlays for outside evaluators and policy oversight through meetings of Superintendents statewide. The organization of these operations and processes for implementing RTTT reform are guided by an ambitious plan. The plan provides effective positioning of personnel and personnel resources in the first year of the grant and continues to support these personnel and personnel resources each year of the grant. In addition, the implementation of RTTT reform is achievable, well within the established goals, objectives, and timelines of the plan.

(d) The State provided budgets and budget narratives that indicate that there will be adequate financial resources to support ambitious plans and meet achievable targets. In addition, the State reported that it reallocated over \$33.8 million from other Federal and State sources to support the proposed activities that align with the State RTTT goals including repurposing 50 State positions. In this sub-section, budgets appear to adequately support ambitious plans and provide evidence that the State can and will achieve its annual targets and performance indicators by using its funds appropriately including repurposing State funding.

(e) The State plans to build capacity and to continue successful reforms after the life of the grant based on several ambitious and important, achievable and encompassing approaches. One, there are commitment letters from 165 stakeholders, many address capacity building. Two, there will be a position at the State level to oversee program continuation efforts. Three, the infrastructure, its resources, practices, and support

will continue based on four years of successful reform efforts. Fourth and finally, the State describes how it will use state organizations for developing programs and not hire (then retire) to support program activities. This is interpreted as ambitious capacity-building that is also achievable at the school level by providing a continued role using this reform model well after the life of the grant.

There was nothing found that would otherwise detract from the State's accomplishing its goals. Therefore full points were allotted to this section.

(A)(2)(ii)(a) The State's teachers and principals provided strong letters of support. In addition, there were positive letters from local teacher union representatives. It is important to point out that the Massachusetts Teacher Association (MTA) expressed reservation and concern about RTTT disrupting some of the urban school districts if 50% of the staff are transferred or removed. However, the MTA letter provided the commitment to work as an affiliate to support implementing RTTT reform, in part, because it recognized the State's vision to include significant key stakeholders through meetings and committees to craft its reform plan and consider implementation. Therefore, the letters were strong and support was well documented and received full points.

(b) With 165 letters of support provided in the Appendix, the State galvanized support across a broad constituency of critical stakeholders including the State PTA Association, businesses and philanthropic organizations, colleges, and community organizations, and state legislators. In a review of the letters they

overwhelmingly provided substantial evidence in their statements to support the State's reform plan. This sub-section received full points.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	30	30	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5	5	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	25	25	
(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>(A)(3)(i) Progress over the past several years using ARRA and other Federal and State funding to pursue reform was clearly related to the achievement that the State has witnessed across the four educational reform areas. However, the reform initiatives are not fully detailed in this narrative section but are better described across the narrative of the full application. These initiatives are strong indicators that ARRA, Federal, and State funding are being utilized ambitiously to support the reform effort. For instance, there is Nellie Mae grant funding for a 13 million dollar State longitudinal data system, a grant to study early warning systems, Title I grant funds invested in turn-around programs, Title II D ARRA funds were used to establish networks of alternative secondary schools for MassCore, and there are State funds being used for reallocating positions in turn-around schools. Full points were assigned this section.</p> <p>(A)(3)(ii) Since 2003, student subgroups and all students overall have demonstrated strong academic progress. For instance, tenth grade Mathematics increased by 18 scaled score points for the "all group" category, and tenth grade English language arts increased six points statewide. Other scores increased notably for Hispanic and for the low income groups over the last six years. The narrative adds that gaps are closing but are not completely removed, and in many cases, achievement gaps have already narrowed significantly. In addition, the high school graduation rate has been estimated as one of the highest in the nation, with incremental improvements by sub-groups as well. The State attributes these improvements, in part, to having higher standards for teacher certification in place, expanded high school science requirements for graduation, as well as new standards for assessment in technology and engineering. Overall, the State described how it has improved student outcomes for all students and by subgroup since 2003. It explains and makes clear connections to past actions in reform since 1993 especially in achieving high standards and accountability. Therefore, this sub-section was allotted full points.</p>				
Total	125	120	120	

B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards	40	40	40	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20	20	
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20	20	
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>(B) (1) (i) High quality standards are in place such that:</p> <p>(B)(1)(a)The State has a MOA committing the State to developing and adopting the K-12 internationally benchmarked Common Core Standards in English language arts and in mathematics, K-12.</p> <p>(b) The CCSS is supported by 51 states based on the New Release provided in the Appendix for this section.</p>				

This section received full points.

(B) (1) (ii)The State plan includes adopting K-12 standards in a special meeting in late July 2010.

The State has made significant progress in adopting the standards and has demonstrated commitment to further progress by describing how it will support and monitor the adaption process with the participating LEAs after the adoption date. Therefore this sub-section received full points.

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

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

(B)(2)(1) The State is working toward jointly developing and implementing common high quality assessments that are based on the K-12 CCSS. The State has taken a leading role developing the assessments, and based on the narrative and the timeline, the new assessments are planned to be operational in 2015. Therefore, full points were allotted.

(B)(2)(ii)The consortium for the common set of K-12 assessments includes a significant number of states (27) within the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC). Full points were allotted.

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

(B)(3) The State plan is in collaboration with participating LEAS and is a high-quality plan to transition to new standards and assessments. LEAs will participate in State organized regional forums and summit conferences on topics of implementation. There will be two annual statewide (curriculum, instruction, and assessments) summit conferences to support State-to-LEA collaboration. It is a high quality plan including ambitious goals such as increasing the number of graduating students for college and career readiness and requiring proficiency level on the high school exit exam. There are performance measures with annual benchmarks and a four-year timeline including the person or branch responsible.

In order to transition to the standards and assessments, the State includes ambitious activities to launch the benchmarked K-12 standards across participating LEAs that will build toward college and career readiness by the time of high school graduation. Activities focus on pre-AP courses in high need LEAs, including preparing 1,000 pre-AP teachers through a plan of achievable annual benchmarks and performance measures across the life of the grant. In addition, the plan shows how the State will be able to scale up the number of STEM high schools to include six by the end of the grant period. Other activities include a trainer-of-trainer model to support implementation of assessment and standards across the six Readiness Centers and the District and School Assistance Centers. The plan is ambitious in that the trainer-of-trainer model is mandated for 20% of the lowest under-performing ELAs. Formative assessments, extended performance tasks, how to use the Data Warehouse are other examples of the activities that are identified in an ambitious plan that provides an extensive detail of achievable, annual benchmarks and timelines. For instance, the extended performance tasks, the interim, and the formative assessments will be used by 75% of the teachers in the participating LEAs by the end of the grant period.

In addition, the English language proficiency standards will be ambitiously aligned with the common core standards improving English language learners programs, while the State provides a formative assessment across most all subjects, K-12. Interim assessments will be tied to the standards, and the scoring rubrics will be of high quality by, for example, piloting supplementary benchmarks with scoring rubrics to ensure reliability across classrooms. These activities are explained here because they represent an ambitious

implementation of the standards and they are supported by a quality plan including achievable annual benchmarks and performance indicators.

In summary, the State activities include an ambitious and achievable roll-out plan including: IHE collaboration; alignment of exit criteria, and entrance requirements in standards and in assessments; dissemination of formative and interim materials; PD to support a transitional phase; and the ability to affect practice in the classroom, including high need students. Each of these ambitious activities and approaches are defined by achievable annual benchmarks, performance indicators, and timelines. Therefore, this section received full points.

Total	70	70	70	
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C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

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

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

1. The State has in place a unique numbering system.
2. The State has in place the student level enrollment elements since 2001.
3. The State has in place student matriculation and status through three different educational organizations from early childhood to the Department of Higher Education.
4. The State has in place the capacity to communicate with higher education data systems and there are reports of the enrollments and performance on post-secondary programs.
5. The State has in place an extensive data audit system.
6. The State has annual test records of individual students with respect to assessments as defined under section 1111 (b) of ESEA (20 U.S.C. 6311(b) since 1998.
7. The State has a system in place to record information on students not tested by grade and by subject since 1998.
8. The State has a teacher-identifier system able to match teachers to students through class rosters and recently expanded the capacity to match teachers with students through course assignments.
9. The State has transcript information at the student level including enrollment, courses completed, and grades earned.
10. The State has in place student-level college readiness test scores including SAT and AP. Additionally, they have worked to establish their state standards tests relate to college and university credit-bearing course work.
11. The State has in place information on the extent to which students transition to post-secondary levels and the status of remedial work through data matching and data base efforts with the Department of Higher Education.
12. The State has other information to address alignment and adequate preparation for success in post-secondary education using a college readiness curriculum, Mass Core with state assessment and college readiness scores which provides college readiness reports for each high school.

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

(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	5	5	
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</p> <p>The State has an ambitious plan to extend data access to key stakeholders and describes how it will provide better access using three strategies which are achievable based on the annual benchmarks, performance measures, and timelines. Each strategy is reviewed here. One, it extends the Education Data Warehouse (EDS) to create role specific dashboards. The State will cull the data processing needs of principals and of teachers using interviews. Then the State will be in a position to upgrade EDS to a more streamlined, specified, and user-friendly interface.</p> <p>Two, the State will improve use of data to inform and engage key stakeholders and public use of data by increasing automatic features, and building features to compare districts using financial profiles. This is one example of the upgrades that will help the community, researchers, parents, and businesses keep informed and support decision-makers in their continuous charge toward policy, instruction, operations, management, resource allocations, and overall effectiveness. Other data points that will extend the engagement of stakeholders are suspensions, violent offences, special education, and teacher salaries.</p> <p>Three, the State will increase EDS timelines and accuracy in real time data. A vendor will be hired to prepare systems to integrate cross-agency data, and connect with to Early Childhood Education for seamless preK-12 data. Performance indicators benchmark preparing systems for approximately 77 LEAs each year for four years indicates this is an ambitious undertaking with an achievable plan.</p> <p>The State receives a high-high score for the ambitious three-prong approach that is well supported by achievable annual targets, performance indicators, and timelines.</p>				
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	16	15	
(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	4	3	
<p>(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</p> <p>(C)(3)(i) The State provides a high quality plan that will invest in interim and formative electronic assessment systems PK-12 to meet the needs (starting with two LEAs) and expanding to all LEAs to provide: online repositories of standards materials, test builder engine with 72 hour turn-around, alignment applications so LEAs can adapt assessment items to curricula, and access a virtual library compiled with units of study and assessments ready for classroom instruction. Full points were allotted, not only for being an ambitious plan but for providing achievable goals, annual benchmarks and performance indicators for the activities.</p> <p>(C)(3)(ii) The State provides a high quality plan to strengthen support and training of educators to use the data systems. The number and quality of the activities are ambitious and include: expanding training courses to reach 25,000 educators over four years; upgrading the delivery systems of State certification courses; adding positions for LEA teacher-leaders in the data area; strengthening teacher preparation standards in data use; and utilizing the District Standards and Indicators to monitor district compliance in data systems use. The plan includes achievable annual benchmarks, timelines, and performance indicators.</p> <p>(C)(3)(iii) Data from instructional improvement systems are used with statewide longitudinal data systems and are made available and accessible to researchers so that they have detailed information to evaluate the effectiveness of instructional materials, strategies, and approaches. The State provides a high quality plan to access the longitudinal data for research purposes. This involves providing student-level data,</p>				

providing access agreements, and extending a better research source. However, this criterion requires how the data system will better address researchers' needs about materials, strategies, and approaches for types of students including those achieving well below, well above, special needs, and English learners. It appears that the State provides research capacity for those achieving well below standards and also for special education students. However based on the 12 essential data elements, the State did not clearly address how it identifies English learners, for instance as in English language proficiency levels and by non-English language proficiency levels, nor did the State clearly address data points for students achieving well above proficiency. Both are critical for researchers examining program materials and academic progress by type of student groups and, therefore, this discrepancy resulted in a high score, but at the lower end.

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

Based on the State's presentation, the State does not provide primary language proficiency data for researchers, and therefore, this section was assigned a middle-range score. Proficiency in the primary language for English language learners is an important detail for researchers to access because the level of proficiency in a primary language is related to student progress in the target language English.

Total	47	45	44	
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D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	21	21	
(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	

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

(D)(1)(i) There are legal regulatory provisions that allow for alternative routes to certification for teachers and principals as non-IHE providers including district-based, SEA based, alternate routes through institutes of higher education, and non-profits. There are also a few named for principals. All five requirements for alternate credentialing programs were addressed and full points were allotted.

(D)(1)(ii) Alternative routes to certification are in use accounting for 15% of all newly licensed teachers and more than half of newly licensed principals in 2008. Full points were allotted.

(D)(1)(iii) A process for monitoring, evaluating, and identifying areas of teacher (and principal) shortage and for preparing teachers (and principals) to fill these shortages are in place.

The State has in place a system that regularly monitors, evaluates, and identifies teacher and principal shortages using data base systems, college program completers, and highly qualified teacher reporting requirements. In addition, the State supports alternative credential programs that are listed by name and that supply teachers in ESL, special education, and STEM. In addition, the governor's Readiness Project expands on recruitment techniques such as signing bonuses and differential pay incentives. This section received full points.

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

(D)(2)(i) There is a clear definition of how the State measures student growth that matches the RTTT definition. The State already has in place aggregated Student Growth Percentiles (SGP) in the database and the capacity to produce a scatter plot that compares achievement versus growth for all schools across the State for grades 4-8 and grade 10 in mathematics and English language arts. Educators can access an SGP by student, class, and school. Full points were assigned to this subsection.

(D)(2)(ii) The State has a plan to design and implement rigorous, transparent and fair evaluation systems based on a two-year cycle that prescribes local intensive support for teachers and principals as needed to demonstrate effectiveness and set professional growth targets. The system will be fair based on a framework designed by a State task force of national experts, school representatives, advisories, and subject matter organizations. The rating system provides three levels of effectiveness based on student growth as a significant factor. Other factors to determine student growth such as work-samples are at the discretion of the LEA (through collective bargaining). In both these ways (the advisory and the adaptable model) the State involves LEA input in the design stages.

Other LEA input is planned. For instance, the State mandates that the participating LEAs use the State's model, or adapt one of their own. The adapted models will be reviewed by the State using alignment rubrics to ensure the LEA differentiates effectiveness using multiple rating categories that take into account data on student growth as a significant factor. The systems will be reviewed and accessible on-line. There are abundant opportunities for LEA input. What is notable as well is that the State plans to fully implement the evaluation system by the third year of the grant with the turn-around schools, which according to the performance table, includes 4.4% of the LEAs and 42.3% of the low income students. This section was allotted full points for being ambitious, comprehensive and accountable.

(D)(2)(iii) The State provides a framework in year-one to guide how LEAs and schools conduct annual evaluations of teachers and principals. The framework includes professional development for Superintendents on evaluation procedures for their principals and prescribes that LEAs meet timely constructive feedback plans. The plan provide coaches to help with implementation at the schools and for the LEAs in year two through year four. The Student growth data is available for teachers and principals on their students, classes, and schools, rolled-out over three years, and fully in place by fall 2010. This subsection was ambitious and provided achievable annual targets and benchmarks in a doable timeline. It was allotted full points.

(D)(2)(iv)(a) The State has a high quality plan to support the use of educator evaluations as a means to inform decisions regarding developing teachers (and principals) through coaching, induction, and professional development. The State will train their own coaches to train LEA-teams at the District and School Assistance Centers on how to use the data for these three purposes. As a monitored system, the State will collect the data from the LEAs and provide feedback based on analysis of the data. Likewise, the LEAs are supported to learn to use principal evaluations by providing coaching support and training for Superintendents along the same lines described for teachers. The plan is achievable based on annual benchmarks, performance indicators, and doable timelines.

(b) This plan supports LEAs' use of the evaluation system in decisions regarding promoting (compensating and retaining) teachers and principals by providing a number of positions in teacher leadership roles which will require rating teachers with the new system. The State plans to gear up for these positions by adding a career ladder, a licensure process to meet certificate requirements for the positions, and scaling up teacher induction programs to address these new positions.

The plan can not directly impact whether these positions receive higher compensation or not because compensation is a collective bargaining arrangement. In addition, the LEAs remain in control of their policy for retention of educators despite the tough State monitoring measures. However, because of RTTT reform, this State puts forth a laudable effort to deploy coaches, best-practices, HR guidance workshops, and a full framework that will at the least impact, if not fully change and restructure, how LEAs determine personnel matters of retention, promotion, and compensation.

(c) The State provides LEA multiple levels of support to use educator evaluations to determine tenure or full certification for teachers and principals as described above. The certification decisions will be affected by changing the requirements for induction programs. The procedures are streamlined, transparent, and fair because they will be drawn from the work of a panel of experts and educators available as a Framework.

(d) The State's plan is ambitious for removing ineffective tenured and untenured teachers and principals given ample opportunities to improve their performance using streamlined, transparent, and fair procedures. It is an ambitious plan with use of student growth data to drive improvement plans for all educators in participating LEAs in year one. It is achievable based on providing professional development across centers, and equipping centers with facilitator coaches to support districts access to models, tools, and guidance in evaluation. In addition, the plan includes support in personnel decisions through human resource workshops to help with removal of ineffective teachers and principals using HR tools. Year-two includes summative performance measures of principals and teachers and training to support LEAs to use the evaluation framework. The plan is 100% in place by year two and provides a well-designed implementation model utilizing the centers effectively during years one and two. Full points were allotted to this. In addition, sections (a) through (d) appeared to follow an ambitious and achievable plan with annual benchmarks and performance measures achievable by year three of the grant. Full points were allotted to this section.

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

(D)(3)(i) The State ensures equitable distribution of educators by developing an ambitious yet achievable plan and annual targets informed by review of prior actions and data. The work builds on programs already in place, such as helping districts with their personnel expertise in the Commissioner's schools. Now having that experience to inform the process, and using coaches on site at the District and School Assistance Centers, the State is in a position to support equitable distribution across schools and LEAs.

The State plan is ambitious and achievable according to the Performance Measures with benchmarks showing that high poverty/high minority schools double the percent of highly effective teachers, and triple the percent of highly effective principals. Also, it shows that the percentage of *ineffective* teachers decreases to 10%, and the percent of *ineffective* principals decreases to 12% in the four years of the grant.

The State ensures that high poverty and/or high minority schools have equitable access and are not served by ineffective teachers and principals at higher rates. However, it recognizes that this work is chiefly an LEA responsibility, and through scaling up the educator effectiveness indicators in the self-review process regulated by the State, the State is supportive by monitoring and reporting progress. In addition, the State builds a cadre of strong teacher leaders which will direct reform efforts by sheer number (450 new teachers and 45 new principals), and by the training and expertise that the new cadre provide (through monetary and non-monetary incentives) resulting in equitable distribution in high-poverty, low performing LEAs. Therefore, full points were allotted this sub-section.

(D)(3)(ii) The State will work to increase the number and percentage of effective teachers in hard- to-staff subjects and specialty areas (mathematics, science, special education, and English language instruction). For example, the State estimates that 250 STEM teachers will be inducted through a partnership effort with UTeach. Another 800 English language teachers or Special Education teachers are anticipated through expansion of on-line courses through the State with little student expense. On-line mentoring will be provided to boost support in high need schools and to strengthen induction programs in these specific areas. No other areas were identified by the State. The State believes that it can have the hard-to-staff teachers performing as effective for up to 88% of the total number in the State. Full points were given this sub-section for providing ambitious activities and goals that are achievable based on the timelines, annual benchmarks, and performance indicators.

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	13	13	
(i) Linking student data to credentialing programs and reporting publicly	7	7	7	
(ii) Expanding effective programs	7	6	6	

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

(D)(4)(i) The State plans to link student achievement and student growth data to the students' teachers and principals and the in-state programs where those teachers and principals were prepared as publicly available data by year-three. The three systems involved a data system for students, for licensure, and for teachers. The plan is ambitious and achievable and received full points.

(D)(4)(ii) The State has a plan to expand preparation and credentialing options by scaling up those teacher preparation programs deemed effective under the new evaluation system. The scaling up is based on providing expansion grants in year two, after new requirements for increased standards are formulated for licensure programs. The budget includes five million dollars split with LEAs. One other observation is that there are 103 certification programs currently in the State, yet only 25 programs are reviewed and approved in year four of the program. The time-line is less than ambitious if only in this regulating capacity. Therefore, this section received a little less than a perfect score.

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	14	17	
(i) Providing effective support	10	7	10	
(ii) Continuously improving the effectiveness of the support	10	7	7	

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

(D)(5)(i) The State, in collaboration with its participating LEAs, has a high quality plan for its participating LEAs to provide effective, data-informed professional development, coaching, induction, and common planning time for teachers and principals. The timeline indicates year one will build the participation between the State and LEAs through surveys. Additional relation building strategies are associated with the six Readiness Centers through their efforts as a conduit for equitable staffing and with professional development for the schools that are one notch above the lowest performing schools (level 3).

The activities are ongoing and include math, science, English language learners, literacy, and English language arts. There is a notable program to train middle and high school teachers as pre-AP courses across core content areas. The professional Learning Community model is provided on-line using the test-generator.

To put a face on professional development, there are six Readiness Centers that will provide coaching in math, ELA, and data to inform instruction, and this is specifically geared for level three schools. However,

the coaching is provided at the Readiness Center, not in a classroom. Still even further from the classroom, but important to provide a larger scope, are professional development activities as summits. In addition, there are six professional development units already identified that will be contracted through vendors. This section was rated a middle score but at the high level for not addressing a common planning and collaboration time in schools where job-embedded PD can be provided.

(D)(5)(ii) The State will measure, evaluate and continuously improve the effectiveness of these professional development supports in order to improve student achievement. The State designed an evaluation system with reporting and management features to ensure quality and continued improvement of all of the RTTT based PD programs. The program will use the standards from the National Staff Development Council. The plan includes a timeline, listed activities, and performance measures. However, it was not readily clear how the professional development evaluation platform will be informed by student achievement. There are teacher modules uploaded, and the State selects the best ones for dissemination, but how the State determines that the modules are effective universally for use across the State is not clearly addressed. Therefore, a middle point at the high end was assigned this sub-section for not addressing how the evaluations of professional development will directly impact student achievement.

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

The State clarified that it provides a common planning and collaboration time in schools where job-embedded PD can be provided. The plan for professional development through coaching includes support in the classroom and on site as an important part of this criteria. Full points were awarded this section.

Total	138	131	134	
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E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	10	10	10	
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
(E)(1) The State has the legal, statutory, or regulatory authority to directly intervene in the state's persistently lowest-achieving schools and to intervene in LEAs that are in improvement or corrective action and was allotted full points for this section.				
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	35	40	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	30	35	

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

(E)(2)(i) The State followed a formula to identify 5% of their most persistently lowest achieving schools based on the academic achievement of the "all students" group on the State assessments in reading, language arts, and math; and based on a lack of progress over a number of years by the "all students" group. Full points were allotted.

(E)(2)(ii) The State supports LEAs in turning around schools by implementing one of the four school intervention models. For the 35 schools identified as low performing, there were 22 schools that selected the Transformation model, nine selected the Turn-around model, and two selected the Restart model.

The District plan supports the LEAs by initiating activities and RTTT funds to establish an intermediary. This is done in year three of the grant and occurs when the State takes on five more restart models, as level 5 schools. No level 5 schools were identified for RTTT turn-around (because they would already be in complete take-over status) however, two of the 35 originally identified for RTTT funding are possible Restart models. The Restart model must have an intermediary in year one or two. Hence it appears that there is little to no State support for the two schools that may use the Restart model until year three.

Twenty-two of the schools opted for the Transformation model, and the State supports them through a comprehensive and intensive approach. All intervention activities are scheduled to be up and running by year three. Based on the narrative and accompanying documents, each of the four required areas of the Transformation model are broadly addressed and support structures are identified, for instance, to replace principals and scale up teacher quality; support comprehensive instructional reform strategies; increase learning time; and create community oriented schools.

As for the nine schools that selected to use the Turn-around model, the State provides a clear comprehensive system of support as well. Therefore, this subsection was scored high but toward the middle level for not clearly addressing how it would support the needs of two schools which may well opt for using the Restart model, which requires an Education Management Organization (EMO) or a charter management organization (CMO) in year one or at least by year two.

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

The State clarified that the 35 schools, originally identified for intervention, will be supported in the intervention model process in years one and two of the grant. The State plan supports the LEAs by initiating activities and RTTT funds to establish an intermediary as required for the Restart model. Full points were allotted this section.

Total	50	45	50	
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F. General

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	10	10	
(i) Allocating a consistent percentage of State revenue to education	5	5	5	
(ii) Equitably funding high-poverty schools	5	5	5	
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
(F)(1) (i) The percentage of the total revenues available to the State that was used to support elementary, secondary, and institutions of higher education for FY 2009 was 1% greater than the percentage of the total revenues available to the State for that same purpose in FY 2008. Full points were allotted.				
(F)(1)(ii) The State's policies lead to equitable funding between high-need LEAs and other LEAs so that the LEAs with the neediest students will get over \$2,000.00 more per student. For addressing equitable funding within LEAs, the State encourages grant funding. This section received full points.				
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	36	36	
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	4	4	
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	8	8	

(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	8	8	
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	8	8	
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	8	8	
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>(F)(2)(i) The State has a charter school law that does not prohibit increasing the number of high-performing charter schools as measured by the percentage of total schools that are allowed to be charter schools. In addition, the Smarter Charter Cap Lift was passed in January 2010 and lifted the cap for charter schools. However, there is a spending cap of 9% which acts to effectively inhibit or restrict increasing the number of high-performing charter schools.</p> <p>(F)(2)(ii) The State has laws, statutes, regulations, or guidelines regarding how charter school authorizers approve monitor, hold accountable, reauthorize, and close charter schools such that:</p> <p>The State regulations indicate that student achievement is a significant factor for authorization, monitoring, re-authorizing and closing charter schools.</p> <p>The State requires that charter schools serve student populations similar to local district's demographics with a comparable enrollment clause that meets the requirements of this criterion.</p> <p>The State has closed and not renewed licenses for three ineffective charter schools in the last five years.</p> <p>The above sub-section was given full points.</p> <p>(F)(2)(iii) The per-pupil funding for charter schools is 95% of that which is provided to traditional public school students. In addition, a commensurate share of Federal revenues is available recognizing the State as one of the six highest funders of charter schools. All points for this criterion were allotted.</p> <p>(F)(2)(iv) The State's issues tax exempt bonds to finance acquisition, rehabilitation, or construction for charter schools. The State provides incentives for LEAs to offer their unused facilities to charter schools. In addition, charter schools were apportioned part of ARRA funds to use in construction bonds. There was no indication that the State imposes any facility-related requirements on charter schools that are stricter than those applied to traditional public schools. Therefore, this sub-section was given full points.</p> <p>(F)(2)(v) The State enables LEAs to operate innovative, autonomous public schools and the State extended the opportunities for these schools by legislation in January 2010. Currently there is one in operation that responds to the newer legislation (The Paul Revere Innovative School). There are 23 other pilot schools which operate flexibly within school systems. This sub-section was allotted full points for enabling LEAs to operate these types of schools.</p>				
(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	5	5	
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>(F)(3) The State has created conditions favorable to educational reform or innovation that have increased student achievement through programs that provide test preparation using grant funds. These programs are reported to increase the percent meeting state standards tests by 12 to 34%. In addition, there is another program that has increased the graduation rates and others have affected important educational outcomes for students in high poverty schools through increased time in after-school and out of school time through grant programs. This section was scored as high-high.</p>				
Total	55	51	51	

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	15	15	
Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>The rigorous course work in STEM is seen across the application with targeted professional development in mathematics and science at the Regional Centers, through hiring mathematics coaches, and in providing professional development for teachers to provide Pre-AP courses in math and science for high need middle schools. In addition, RTTT will build on the successful STEM high schools and have at least six of them established across the state.</p> <p>In addition, there is a plan in place to involve stakeholders across education, institutes of higher education, industry, and museums through the important community and network that the new STEM Council will provide.</p> <p>The State has provided resources to increase the number of under-represented groups and of females in the STEM field in careers and in public schools. One approach is through U-teach which is noted for increasing the pool of STEM teachers, especially minority and female. In addition, the State describes programs that are in place to increase awareness for students to enter the STEM field and take advanced courses through improved requirements for high school graduates and for college careers. In addition, the State provides for the formation of the STEM Council that will focus on increasing STEM awareness encompassing females which is fundamental and well publicized nationally under other NSF initiatives. The State, therefore, has in place programs that will be successful in expanding choices and opportunities for increasing women and girls in the STEM fields.</p>				
Total	15	15	15	

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes	Yes	
Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>This application meets the priority for comprehensively and coherently addressing all of the four education reform areas and the State Success Factors Criteria. The application makes a clear commitment to ambitious and achievable reform programs that will improve student outcomes as defined by RTTT.</p>				
Total		0	0	

Grand Total	500	477	484	
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Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2

Massachusetts Application #3100MA-5



A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	57	59	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	38	40	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	14	14	

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

i. The State presents a comprehensive and coherent reform agenda. Its goals are clearly stated. They are well-tailored to the needs of its students, state-wide, and they accurately reflect where the State is in developing its education system. The State's goals are consistent with the four ARRA reform areas. One or more of the ARRA areas are addressed by one or more of the State's goals. The goals are ambitious, often aggressive. Given the State's progress in the recent past, the goals are likely to be achieved. If realized, the goals will substantially improve student outcomes.

The activities included in the agenda are logically connected to the State's goals. The agenda is internally consistent, and many of the activities complement and support one another. The path chosen by the State with this agenda is clear and credible.

The agenda is notable because it includes activities that directly address out of school conditions that represent barriers to student achievement. The State's approach is commendable because it includes mandates requiring public agencies other than education to address these barriers. The agenda is astutely focused, innovative, comprehensive, and worth the investment of Race to the Top funds sought.

ii. The participating LEAs represent 70 percent of all the LEAs in the State. These LEA's encompass 75 percent of the State's schools and serve 78 percent of the State's students including 88 percent of its students in poverty. The terms and conditions of the State's MOU include a clause that enables participating LEA's to opt out of elements of the reform plan if they cannot come to agreement with their local union on implementation. There do not appear to be significant consequences for an LEA which opts out of performing specific elements of the State's plan.

The effect of the opt out clause is exacerbated by the facts that every one of the participating LEA's signed on "conditionally" to the more challenging and sensitive elements of the plan and scope of work. These are the elements which require LEAs to evaluate teachers and principals using growth in student achievement as a significant factor, to conduct annual evaluations, and to use the evaluations to inform decisions regarding compensation, licensure, and retention. Less than 100 percent of participating LEAs (a number that represents just 57 percent of all LEAs in the State) signed on to the transition to enhanced standards and assessments.

There are significant factors which mitigate the effects of both the opt out clause and the conditional commitments. One is the provision in the State's "new" "District Standards and Indicators" which requires districts to begin evaluating teachers using student achievement results. Second is the State's plan to have regulations in place by January 2011 designating the kinds of data to be used in these evaluations. The

result of these will be that by January 2011, the State will be able to compel LEA's to evaluate educators using student growth in achievement as a significant factor without regard to either the opt out clause or conditional commitments.

In summary, although the State would be in a stronger position if there were unequivocal commitment to all aspects of the reform plan from every participating LEA and no opt out clause, the State will be able to effect compliance with its plans including those for evaluation in sufficient time for it to realize its RTTT goals.

Taking all of these factors into consideration, the State earns a score at the low end of the high range.

iii. Because the participating LEAs serve seventy four percent of all students including eighty eight percent of students in poverty, because they serve seventy five percent of the schools, and because the State will be able to compel all LEAs to engage in key elements of RTTT reform during the life of the grant, the State's plan is likely to have broad state wide impact. The nature of the plan is such—focused, aggressive, innovative, coordinated, comprehensive, and addressed to student achievement barriers in and outside the classroom—that its goals are likely to be achieved.

The goals include increasing student achievement in NAEP and ESEA required assessments, decreasing achievement gaps between subgroups, increasing high school graduation rates, and increasing college enrollment. The goals to be realized during the life of the RTTT grant for increasing test achievement and narrowing achievement gaps are ambitious yet achievable. The goals for graduation and college enrollment during the grant are less ambitious, but the State explains that graduation and college enrollment rates are likely to increase more rapidly after other reforms in the plan have time to take effect. This reasoning is realistic and logical. In addition, the nature of the State's plan and the State's record of achieving reform in the past make the statement credible. The State's goals regarding these data points after the termination of the RTTT grant are ambitious.

The State earns a score in the high range.

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

A. 1. ii. During the State's presentation, its representatives indicated that the State was ready and able to withhold or recover RTTT funds from LEAs which do not meet their commitments. The State has also adopted the common standards under "B", below. These partially alleviate concerns previously noted here and have the effect of strengthening the level of LEA commitment.

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

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

i. The State has strong capacity to implement its RTTT reform plan. The current Governor made education reform a corner stone of his agenda on taking office. This caused a rejuvenation of the spirit with which the State began its current reforms in 1993, and it caused a new round of capacity building and policy formulation which has provided the foundation for this very strong RTTT plan.

The State has an accomplished group of educational leaders at the top of its educational hierarchy. Collectively, they possess a range of experience applicable to the nature and scope of the requisite tasks. Within the bureaucracy, there is a strong institutional memory and know-how based on the State's seventeen years of successes in implementing its Education Reform Act of 1993.

The Governor and Legislature created The Executive Office of Education (EOE) in 2008 to work in partnership with the Department of Early Education and Care (DEEC) and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE). The creation of EOE has added administrative clout and energy to the work of the two Departments and has given the state a functioning K-20 system. For the past two years, the three

organizations have been implementing the State's most recent reform initiatives. This experience and the similarities which exist between what is already under way and the State's RTTT proposal have given the State a running start on implementing its RTTT plan.

The descriptions of roles, responsibilities and projects to be performed by the teams and their personnel are clear, specific, and logically related to the proposed reforms. Therefore, Massachusetts has the kind of leadership and dedicated teams that will enable it to successfully execute its RTTT plan.

The State describes existing infrastructure, practices, procedures, and experiences that will enable it to provide effective support to participating LEAs to implement the RTTT plan. Using RTTT funds, the State will supplement and expand its existing capacity—including most importantly, its communication, dissemination, technical support, and monitoring infrastructures. The narrative describes a competent approach to focusing existing and contracted personnel on RTTT activities. Eleven percent of the current staff will be assigned RTTT tasks.

The State's narrative describes an overall approach including processes, operations, and plans to effectively disperse, administer, report, and monitor the resources and activities provided the State through the RTTT grant. The State reports that an independent auditor recently reviewed the State's "ARRA readiness" and certified its controls sufficient to meet state and federal standards for control and the prevention of waste, fraud, and abuse.

The Budget narrative describes existing projects and uses of funds directly related to the RTTT goals and ARRA reform areas. This narrative provides clear information on what the State intends to do with what resources. The State indicates that it will be coordinating, reallocating, and repurposing 19 percent of current funding to support its RTTT plan. The State has also set aside \$23 million to supplement the 50 percent of the RTTT grant funds mandated to be given the LEAs.

The State has planned competently for sustaining the RTTT reforms after the termination of the grant. It has set up by two outside advisory groups. The State Implementation Advisory Group (SAIG) will consist of representatives from key constituencies. The SAIG will meet three times per year to provide guidance on strategy, implementation, and to plan for the continuity of the reforms after the RTTT grant expires. The second advisory group, the External Advisory Group (EAG), will include leaders in education policy, business leaders, philanthropists, practitioners, and researchers. The EAG will provide overall guidance in implementation and strategy from the perspectives of their work at local, regional, national, and international levels.

Significantly, these groups will provide additional stakeholder support and be able to foster additional or renewed commitment to the RTTT reform over time. The State has deliberately chosen not to greatly expand its state level workforce to implement the RTTT grant. This will prevent the termination of the grant from precipitously diminishing the capacity of the State to maintain the RTTT reforms.

The planned activities build capacity and seek to institutionalize practices at the LEA level. They will be sustainable after the termination of the grant. Based on the well-founded presumption that the reforms will result in improved student outcomes, the reforms will also garner support for their continuation at the local level. The nature of the plan and the likelihood that it will be implemented make credible the State's assertions that the RTTT experience will greatly increase the effectiveness of the educators at all levels, and it will create a more collaborative culture among the stakeholders and institutions which provide public education in the State.

Overall, the State's capacity is in the high range.

ii. a. The State says that just 6 of 21 affiliates of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) signed to support the State's plan and that 195 local affiliates of the Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA) signed. The state level AFT leadership does not support the plan while the state level MTA leadership offers support for some initiatives, qualified support for others, and objects to the four turn around strategies—even though they are now codified in State law. The State argues that the MTA's letter of support (Appendix A 13, pp. 151, 152) includes an endorsement of educator evaluations which incorporate growth in student achievement as a significant factor.

The state elementary principals' association supports most of the reforms enthusiastically without mentioning the data-based evaluations. The secondary principals' association support is more general and formulaic. It makes no mention of the evaluation procedures. As discussed at length above, the State has standards and a State Board motion in place that will cause all LEAs to adopt such evaluation systems no later than January 2011.

ii.b. During the development of the RTTT plan, the State engaged in copious and extended outreach. It received substantial input from a wide variety of stakeholders outside the community of professional educators. The State included letters of support from 165 interested groups and stakeholders. Collectively, the authors displayed a remarkable amount of specific knowledge about the State's proposed reforms. Because of the number and the quality of the letters, they are evidence of strong and wide spread support for the State's application.

The formation and work of the State Implementation Advisory Group and the External Advisory Group meet the criterion for actions of support in addition to the letters. For the reasons described above, the formation of these two groups auger well for the successful implementation of the State's RTTT plan.

The State's 17 year history of commitment and successes has made it a lighthouse for those wanting to support and participate in effective educational reform. The State rightly describes itself as the beneficiary of "deep and longstanding" support. The State says that stakeholder and philanthropic groups in addition to the SIAG and the EAG are forming to help implement its RTTT reforms. This is additional evidence of the strong and wide spread support that exists for the State's plan.

All of this outside stakeholder support when coupled with the ability that the State will have to compel participation in key elements of its plan offset the less than full voluntary support for these elements among the professional educators. The State earns a score at the low end of the high range.

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

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

i. The State has made substantial progress in each of the four ARRA areas in the past several years. Its RTTT proposal provides for continuity and for significant advances in each area if it is funded.

Among the more notable areas of improvement are the following. Each improvement noted is consistent with RTTT requirements.

Standards and Assessments:

- Create a core course curriculum to be mastered as a requirement of all students for high school graduation (MassCORE)
- Require all high school graduates to demonstrate competency in Science/STEM
- Add STEM standards for all grades
- Add rigor to the State's standards and assessments so that they now are "nearly equivalent" to those of NAEP

Effective Use of Data:

- Provide "free access" for all stakeholders to the State's education data warehouse including data at the local level; increase real time access
- Provide enhanced data use training curriculum for educators
- Begin the process of lining student performance data with educators and their preparation programs

Great Teachers and Leaders:

- Required that new evaluation standards and regulations (consistent with RTTT requirements) be presented for adoption by February 2011.
- Require that all LEAs use systems based on these standards and regulations.
- Pass legislation which has the effect of requiring these systems to be in use before the end of the RTTT grant.
- Add math proficiency to requirements for an elementary school teacher license
- Provide professional development targeted through data analysis to teachers teaching students demonstrating some of the higher achievement gaps

Turning Around the Persistently Lowest Achieving Schools:

- Pass new accountability legislation which will

- require staff in low performing schools to re-apply for their jobs,
- give greater flexibility for hiring for such schools,
- give the State's Commissioner of Public Education great power to intervene in low performing schools and LEAs,
- lower standards for the dismissal of tenured educators to "just cause, and
- create a more rigorous and activist approach to identifying and improving low performing LEAs and schools.

ii. a. Student Achievement: The 2003-2009 record of the State for increasing student achievement as measured by ESEA tests and NAEP tests is very good. In NAEP only one sub group bucked the trend of increasing scores and that occurred only once over the specified set of years. Using the State's Composite Performance Index (CPI) for Grades 3, 8, and 10 combined, the trend was for increasing scores for the All Student CPI and for the CPI for each identified sub group. The State asserts that it is "first in the nation" in NAEP scores.

ii. b. Gaps: The States' record for closing gaps between 2003 and 2009 is positive. The NAEP scores in Appendix 14 document fourteen instances where gaps between Whites and other subgroups narrowed and six instances where they widened. Using the State's system of comparing specific sub groups with one another, [1]there were 17 instances where gaps narrowed and seven where they grew.[2]

Using the State's approach to comparisons for its ESEA-mandated test scores and using the Composite Performance Index for grades 3, 8, and 10, gaps narrowed in 11 instances and widened in one.[3]

In high school graduation rates, White vs. sub group gaps decreased in four instances and widened in four. [4]

In college enrollment gaps, White vs. sub groups decreased in four instances and widened in three.[5]

iii. Increasing high school graduation rates: The composite "All Student" rate of graduation increased for the years shown, 2006-2008. Graduation rates for seven sub groups, Black, Hispanic, Pacific Islander, White, LEP, FARM, and SWD increased. Rates for Asian and Native American students decreased.

Overall, the State is able to report laudable improvement in the measures of student outcomes for which data was requested. The State provides a detailed and cogent analysis of the connection between what the State has expected of its schools and these results. The State's RTTT proposal is appropriately focused where improvement is needed most in the future—reduction in gaps coupled within ongoing increases in student achievement. The State earns points in the high range. [25]

[1]The State's approach is to compare groups as follows: Black/White, Hispanic/White, ELL/non-ELL, Free and Reduced Lunch (FARM)/non-FARM, and Students with Disabilities (SWD)/non-SWD

[2]Gaps narrowed in Grade 4 Math between genders, Black/White, SWD/non, in Grade 8 Math between genders, Hispanic/White,, FARM/non, SWD/non, in Grade 4 Reading between genders, Hispanic/White, ELL/Non-ELL, SWD/non, in Grade 8 Reading between genders, Black/White, Hispanic/White, ELL/non, FRARM/non, and SWD/non. Gaps increased in Grade 4 Math between Hispanic/White, ELL/non, FARM/non, in Grade 8 Math between Black/White, ELL/non, in Grade 4 Reading between Black/White, and FARM/non. There were no increases in gaps among State identified groups in Grade 8 Reading.

[3]In Math, gaps narrowed between genders, Black/White, Hispanic/White, Low English Proficiency (LEP)/non-LEP, FARM/non-FARM, and SWD/non-SWD. The gap increased for Native American/White by 0.3 of a point. In ELA, gaps narrowed for each one of the above groups.

[4]The State provides data for 2006-2008. This gap decreased for Blacks, Pacific Islanders, FARM, and SWD. The gap increased by 0.1 of a percentage point for Hispanics and 0.2 of a percentage point for LEP

students. The gap widened substantially for Asian and Native American students because their graduation rates decreased while all others increased.

[5] This gap decreased for Asians, Blacks, Hispanics, and FARM students. It increased for Native American students, LEP, and SWD students.

[1] The State's approach is to compare groups as follows: Black/White, Hispanic/White, ELL/non-ELL, Free and Reduced Lunch (FARM)/non-FARM, and Students with Disabilities (SWD)/non-SWD

[2] Gaps narrowed in Grade 4 Math between genders, Black/White, SWD/non, in Grade 8 Math between genders, Hispanic/White,, FARM/non, SWD/non, in Grade 4 Reading between genders, Hispanic/White, ELL/Non-ELL, SWD/non, in Grade 8 Reading between genders, Black/White, Hispanic/White, ELL/non, FRARM/non, and SWD/non. Gaps increased in Grade 4 Math between Hispanic/White, ELL/non, FARM/non, in Grade 8 Math between Black/White, ELL/non, in Grade 4 Reading between Black/White, and FARM/non. There were no increases in gaps among State identified groups in Grade 8 Reading.

[3] In Math, gaps narrowed between genders, Black/White, Hispanic/White, Low English Proficiency (LEP)/non-LEP, FARM/non-FARM, and SWD/non-SWD. The gap increased for Native American/White by 0.3 of a point. In ELA, gaps narrowed for each one of the above groups.

[4] The State provides data for 2006-2008. This gap decreased for Blacks, Pacific Islanders, FARM, and SWD. The gap increased by 0.1 of a percentage point for Hispanics and 0.2 of a percentage point for LEP students. The gap widened substantially for Asian and Native American students because their graduation rates decreased while all others increased.

[5] This gap decreased for Asians, Blacks, Hispanics, and FARM students. It increased for Native American students, LEP, and SWD students.

Total	125	115	117
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B. Standards and Assessments

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

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

(i) (a) and (b): Massachusetts is working with a consortium of fifty-one states to develop common standards that will meet the RTTT requirements. The State provides additional information that leads to the conviction that the standards produced will be of the highest quality and appropriately bench marked. The State earns the highest points available. [20]

(ii): As of the submission of its application, Massachusetts had not adopted the standards. The narrative includes a description of the legal process for adoption, evidence of substantial progress in adoption, and a time frame for completion that is very likely to result in adoption on or before August 2, 2010. Under the Scorer's Scoring Model for Tier I, The State earns the highest points possible. [20]

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

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

(i): Massachusetts is a lead state in a consortium which is developing and will implement common, high quality assessments aligned with RTTT requirements. The assessments will include formative, interim, and summative assessments and will be valid and useable for measuring student growth, graduation rates, college and career readiness, institutional accountability, and teacher/principal evaluations. This meets and exceeds the applicable RTTT requirements.

(2)(ii): The consortium includes 27 states which meets the RTTT requirement.

(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	19	19	
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The State's strong commitment to the transition is reflected in its high quality plan. The plan is of high quality and generally credible because:

- The State has clearly focused on addressing achievement gaps the closing of which is the ultimate goal of its RTTT plan.
- The strategies and activities the State proposes are tailored to address specific barriers identified from the State's experiences in increasing student outcomes. Based on its experiences and the State's data, the State has focused especially on impediments to achievement which affect its minority and low income students.
- The State has extensive experience and documented successes in planning and executing the design and state-wide implementation of standards and assessments similar to the ones emerging from the work of the consortia in which the State is involved. Importantly, this includes demonstrations of political will and perseverance in maintaining high standards and retaining demanding assessments in the face significant resistance and push-back.
- Development of standards and assessments meeting RTTT requirements is under way. At the State level, the State education agency will follow up aligning and adapting what the consortia produce with the State's standards and assessments. The State has indicated that inconsistency in these areas can contribute to achievement gaps. Therefore, the State's keeping this work "in-house" (rather than relying on each LEA to make its own adaptations) is consistent with the concern. This approach will reduce costs, and it addresses the reality that most LEAs have a limited capacity for this work.
- The State has set sequential timelines for each if the activities which make up each of their strategies.

The State's Performance Targets are differentiated by task and show incremental progress year by year. These features suggest that the targets reflect the State's previous experiences with similar tasks. These features lend credibility to the Targets, generally. The Targets are suitably ambitious. There is a concern regarding the Target stipulating 100 percent implementation of the Common Core Standards by all participating LEAs by the end of 2011-12. The concern is that less than 100 percent of the participating LEA's have agreed to implementation. Although this is mitigated by the fact that the not-supporting LEAs are either small or mid-sized and serve relatively few students, the State has not explained how they will be

brought to join in implementation or how this will occur so quickly--during the upcoming school year. The lack of such an explanation prevents the State from earning the highest available points.

Total	70	69	69	
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C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

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

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

The State has a statewide data system that includes all of the America COMPETES Act elements. [24]

(C)(2) Accessing and using State data

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

Although the requirements under this criterion call for the State to describe a plan to ensure both access and use of data, Massachusetts has chosen to direct its discussion to the former and to address the latter under (C)(3). The plan for the more limited purpose is focused on barriers to access created by the data now available (if not available), its form, and/or the overall capacity of the system.

The activities chosen by the State are reasonable approaches to reducing or eliminating these barriers. It is significant that the State plans to interview representative users—especially LEA and school site personnel—before design is completed. Because their use of the system is crucial to the State’s reforms, engaging these most important “end users” during design is likely to result in the kind of use the State intends.

The State sets timelines for implementation. Three of the four Performance Measures, however, merge use with access. This is a matter of form not substance, so the plan earns a score in the high range.

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

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

(i): The State describes a high quality plan to encourage teachers, principals, and other administrators (“LEA based educators”) to use its planned local instructional improvement system. The likely result is that many LEA based educators will use the system to inform their practices and decisions by the end of the RTTT grant. The reasons for this judgment are:

- The elements of the plan are consistent with the State’s ultimate RTTT goal—to reduce variations in the student outcomes, i.e. to reduce achievement gaps.
- The system will provide a rich and easily accessible array of teaching resources, a system of interim and formative assessments which complement the State’s summative assessments, alignment of sources and assessments with the State’s learning standards, an efficient means for rapid scoring and analysis of

results, integration of sources and assessments with the State's curricula for reading, writing, STEM, alignment with the soon-to-be required core high school courses, and the State's new high school graduation /college entrance requirements. The availability of such a package of "tools" creates a power inducement to motivated, diligent, and conscientious educators to use them.

- Teachers who successfully complete a specified training regimen will earn a licensure endorsement and become eligible for promotions and extra pay.
- Access to training will be maximized by the placing both the core and the "elective" courses on line.
- All LEAs state wide will be monitored "frequently" for the use of data by their educators.
- The State will pilot its approach with two large districts (Boston and Springfield) with whom it has successfully collaborated in the past to implement instructional improvements. Significantly, each district experiences significant achievement gaps, and each serves high numbers of low income and minority learners. Based on the history of past successes, the implementation of the model improvement system also likely to succeed. Given the nature of the challenges that will be encountered, starting with these LEAs is an astute strategy because success in them is likely to increase the motivation and commitment in other LEAs.
- The timelines and budgeting for these projects is reasonable and competent.
- The commitments of the participating LEAs are not "conditional."

The Performance Measures are carefully and narrowly described. They are differentiated by task and appear to be built on the State's previous successful experience with what can be done in what time frame in the context of the challenges presented by the participating LEAs. Given the State's remarkable progress in reform over the years, the targets must be seen as both achievable and appropriately ambitious.

The State earns points in the high range.

(C)(3)(ii): The State's plan of support for the participating LEAs is of high quality. It will result in effective professional development for the participating LEAs and their educators. The reasons are:

- The State has successful experience in providing such training. The State will rely on its existing regional centers for dissemination, support, and monitoring support. The State has reorganized and repurposed existing State personnel for this effort, and the RTTT grant will enable the scaling up of support capacities at both the state agency and the regional centers.
- This plan is integrated with other high quality plans for the transition to enhanced standards and assessments, for enhanced access to pertinent data, and for increasing the effectiveness of LEA based educators including their use of data.
- The training will be easily accessible to all LEA based educators.
- As noted, motivated educators will want to master the proposed system and will, therefore, engage in the professional development when it is available. As noted there is a direct incentive for teachers in the form of a license endorsement and the opportunity for advancement with increased pay.
- As noted LEAs will be monitored "frequently" for their educators use of data, and under the plan for effective educators described below, many if not all educators serving in participating LEAs will be evaluated in their data use. In this way, they will be pressed to master the system and, thus, will be motivated to participate in the proposed professional development.
- For the reasons noted under (C)(3)(i), the Performance Targets are ambitious but achievable.

The State earns points in the high range.

(C)(3)(iii): The State's plan is high quality and earns points in the high range because:

- The State's approach to sharing student data with researchers is such that it is currently enabling multiple nationally known researchers to conduct their projects using Massachusetts's data. Data from the system has provided the foundation for a number of significant reforms initiated by the State.
- The State's plan will increase the data available to researchers and make access more convenient.

Total	47	47	47	
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D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	21	21	
(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	

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

(i): There are complementary statutes and regulations creating alternative routes to licensure for teachers and principals. Authorized providers include LEAs, the State agency, professional associations, and nonprofit organizations in addition to institutions of higher learning. The alternative routes usually include site-based experiences, site based support, and limited course work. Aspiring administrators who are career changers can gain a license by portfolio review. Aspiring administrators can also earn a license based on a residency. The license earned via any of the alternative routes is the same as that earned through traditional routes. This meets all the requirements under this sub criterion and earns the State points in the high range.

(ii): The alternative routes are in use. In 2008, 15 percent of newly licensed teachers earned their license by an alternative route. More than half the newly licensed principals earned their license by an alternative route. The State earns points in the high range.

(iii): The State has a process for identifying and monitoring areas of teacher and principal shortage. In 2008, the State reorganized to more comprehensively address areas of educator shortage and inequitable distribution. This year the State caused two of its primary sources of pertinent data to be linked to provide enhanced data regarding shortages and patterns of inequitable distribution. Among the shortage areas identified are teachers for English Language Learners, special educators, and STEM teachers. Elsewhere the State notes the need for placing effective teachers and principals in high needs schools. The State describes several approaches to meeting these needs in its narrative.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	54	54	
(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	24	24	

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

(i): The State has established clear and multi-faceted approaches to measuring student growth for each student. Based on a reading of the supporting Appendices[1], it is reasonable to say that the State is making comprehensive, arguably extraordinary, efforts to ensure the student growth measures are valid and their use as evaluation tools is fair and reasonable.

The State's plan includes grades and subjects now tested under their "MCAS" criterion-referenced state wide achievement tests and grades and subjects not so tested. For the latter group, the State is creating other measurement tools. The State is controlling this development and will provide state wide guidelines for their use to ensure consistency [5]

(ii)(a): To improve teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance, the State has established new performance standards for both groups. It is creating new evaluations systems for both teachers and principals based on the standards. The standards and the State's design criteria for its evaluation systems meet RTTT requirements. So that each LEA will have a system in place which meet these requirements, the State will create model systems. LEAs will have to adopt either the applicable "default model" or prove to the State that the system which they propose to use is superior. The State will determine compliance using its own design rubrics.[2]

The State will provide training to teachers and principals in advance of implementation of the systems. It will provide on-going support as implementation is scaled up. A unique and important component of the training and support is the training of superintendents to evaluate their principals using the new system[3]. Consistent with the State's emphasis on reducing achievement gaps, it will absorb the cost of training the superintendents for the two "levels" of districts containing most of the low performing schools. The State's plan for scaling up from pilot to state wide implementation is competent and its targets achievable.

In each system, evaluators will be able to rate teachers and principals on at least three levels regarding their effectiveness. Each system will incorporate measures of student growth. Growth measures will be available at student, class, school, and LEA levels.

(ii)(b)The State's work on the systems has begun. Teachers, principals, experts, and other appropriate stakeholders have been involved from the outset. The State's plan makes clear that this involvement will continue. There is also provision for feedback to the State from those using and affected by the systems during the time that the systems piloted.

All of these steps are well conceived to enable the State meet the RTTT requirement that the systems be rigorous, transparent, and fair. [15]

(iii): The State's plan for annual evaluations contemplates a two-year cycle with the first year's evaluation under the new system providing the educator with a formative evaluation and the second year including a summative evaluation. The formative evaluation will result in an improvement plan for each educator. Those who are found not to be effective in the first year can be dismissed after the summative evaluation in the second year if the person deemed ineffective has not made acceptable progress on his/her improvement plan. Such improvement plans will include targets for "student and teacher performance." This approach meets the RTTT requirement that the evaluation process provide timely and constructive feedback.

This approach meets the RTTT requirement of "annual evaluations." While it does not conform to the presumption that each year's evaluating would be summative, it provides a more realistic approach to the additional requirement that the ineffective educator have a fair and reasonable opportunity to improve before dismissal. Dismissal at the end of the second year does not appear to be mandatory. This provides LEAs with flexibility and will likely result in those labeled ineffective getting additional time and support before dismissal. [10]

(iv)(a): The formative evaluation and improvement plan described as part of each educators two-year evaluation cycle contemplates teachers and principals receiving targeted support and professional development. This will be especially the case for those needing to improve to retain their positions. [7]

(iv)(b): The systems are to inform decisions regarding retention of teachers and principals as described above. The State's plan provides for a state-wide career ladder for highly effective teachers. The ladder will

enable qualified teachers to earn additional teacher-leader endorsements for their licenses. The State says that these will be available beginning in 2012. The State will "encourage" LEAs to increase compensation for those earning any of the endorsements. This partially addresses the requirements regarding compensation and promotion of teachers.

There is cryptic mention of a career ladder for principals in the State's Budget Summary, but no other mention of compensation or promotion using pertinent data or evaluation system. [3]

(iv)(c): The evaluations systems are to be used to inform decisions regarding tenure and full certification. [7]

(iv)(d): Under the State's plan, teachers and principals who are determined to be ineffective following the evaluation process described can be removed. As planned by the State, the systems and processes will provide ample opportunity to improve before removal. Because decisions will be based on new standards including student growth data, and because teachers and principals will have been trained and supported to meet the new standards, it is reasonable to conclude the decisions made under this system will be transparent and fair. [7]

Regarding Performance Targets:

These processes and systems will be required by state regulation. The targets of April 2011 for the necessary regulations and for a phased-in implementation to be completed by the 2012-13 school year are ambitious. Because the effect of the state regulations will be to require every LEA in the State to implement a conforming evaluation system, the concern regarding the "conditional" nature of the commitment demonstrated by the participating LEAs under the MOU is rendered moot.

In short, the State's plan backed by State regulation will result in every LEA meeting the RTTT requirements under this sub criterion during the life of the grant. That is and will be a noteworthy achievement in educational reform. The State earns points at the top of the high range under sub criterion.

[1]These include but are not limited to Appendices D7 through D11.

[2]It is not clear, however, what the consequence will be for an LEA's not having a conforming system in place. At page 105 of the narrative, the State says, "ESE will annually set aside a meeting of its Education Personnel advisory Committee (EPAC) to review the status of implementation of the new evaluation system. ESE will take action as needed based on their feedback and internal staff assessments." [Emphasis added.] Ideally, the consequence would be that it had to use the model system, but that does not appear to be stated anywhere in the narrative or supporting Appendices

[3]Typically, superintendents are omitted from such training. Given that the use of student growth data is new to all concerned; this training is a wise, thoughtful, and welcome addition. It should contribute substantially to the State's goal of reducing inconsistencies among LEAs in such matters. Ultimately, it is well conceived as a means to help reduce achievement gaps.

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

(i): The State presents a high quality plan to improve the equitable distribution of teachers and principals so that high poverty/high minority schools have increased access to teachers and leaders who are likely to increase student achievement[1]. The plan is high quality because:

- The State will support and enforce new legislation that enables the lowest performing schools to rid themselves of their poorly performing staff members without having to accept other low performers as replacements.
- The State plans for the ESE and its LEAs to provide a variety of incentives to attract successful educators. These include money, pre-service preparation, in-service technical support and professional development, “user-friendly” exchange policies, support networks, logistical support—including most notably School Administrative Managers, and professional collaboration time within the contractual day. No one of these incentives would likely attract the “right kind” of educator, but the combination should prove very enticing.
- The ESE will exercise its authority to require all LEAs to implement two plans that will complement these efforts. One plan will directly address identified inequities, and the other will improve identified school climate issues.
- To underline and support its commitment to reducing gaps, the State will also put “its own” money into addressing school climate issues in low performing schools.
- The State will resource and guide low performing LEAs to improve their HR practices and procedures.
- Each of the initiatives is consistent with reducing achievement gaps because the State has aggressively focused each on the primary sources of its state wide gaps—high needs schools.
- Each of the initiatives is either already proved to improve student achievement or experience/history indicates that it is highly likely to have a positive effect.

The State notes that it does not have fully reliable data regarding the distribution of highly effective educators. Because of this it adjusted the baseline data it used to set Performance Targets using similar data from other school systems. The Performance Targets for reducing the percentage of ineffective educators serving high needs schools are very ambitious. They are made more achievable by using the law requiring staff at low performing schools to reapply for their jobs. Given the promising nature of the State’s initiatives to increase and place “good” educators at its low performing schools, the State’s goals for increasing the percentage of highly effective educators serving high needs schools are ambitious and achievable. The plan ranks in the high range.

(ii): State’s plan is competent and of high quality because:

- The design for regional initiatives will be predicated on an analysis of regional data, implemented by, and the responsibility of the staff of the State’s regional centers.
- The proposed expansions of teacher preparation programs will be modeled on existing programs which have proved successful in producing teachers for hard to staff subjects and high needs schools.
- The on-line licensure program for ELL and special education licenses targets currently licensed teachers. The low/no cost component will be attractive to persons such as these who want to increase their employability but who have relatively little discretionary income and must work additional course work around a demanding professional schedule. Because they already have a license, completing the course work will take far less time compared to a person who is beginning their baccalaureate studies. Because those who earn this second license are already experienced, they are less likely to manifest the inefficiency and ineffectiveness that characterizes novice teachers.

What the State intends to accomplish under this sub criterion is achievable. The Performance Targets are realistically ambitious. The State adds a “Note” which accompanies its table of Performance Targets. In the Note, the State explains that until it can identify “highly effective” educators under its new evaluation system, it must focus on “those likely to increase student achievement” to place in its low performing schools. This demonstration of realism and precision makes the State’s plan more credible. The State’s plan earns a score in the high range.

[1]The State explains that it uses the phrase “likely to increase student achievement” is used because (a) it more accurately defines the types of teacher/leaders the State is seeking for its low performing schools and (b) , until the new evaluation system is implemented, the State must identify teachers/leaders who can help their high needs schools without using the “highly effective” measure. The State notes the same and actually tailors at least one of its initiatives to transition from a focus on “highly qualified” teachers under NCLB to “highly effective” after the State’s evaluation system is in place.

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

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

(i): The State’s plan for linking student data to credentialing programs and reporting publicly is high quality. Its timelines are reasonable. The draft form of a “report card” by which the State will publicize such information meets the RTTT objective of providing various publics including potential program enrollees and policy makers with useful information.

(ii): The State describes a competent and rigorous approach to identifying struggling educator prep programs and to close those that are ineffective. The State has the regulatory authority to do both and to develop new measures of program efficacy. Among the measures that State will develop and use are those which identify programs which produce graduates who are successful in improving student achievement. The State will use such measures in determining which programs to expand and which ones to close.

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

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

(i): Under this sub criterion, the State summarizes and occasionally expands on its plans for professional development described elsewhere in its Application. The strategies and activities described integrate with and complement the strategies and activities described under sections A, B, C, D, and E of the State’s application.

What is described here is consistent with the State’s primary focus on achievement gaps. To that end, the narrative reflects the State’s concentration of resources and attention on increasing LEA based educators’ effectiveness and improving the performance of low achieving schools and LEAs. These summaries also show how support will be directed to the complementary objectives of increasing the number and percentages of proficient educators serving high needs schools, increasing the number of capable teachers teaching hard to staff subjects and enhancing STEM education. These plans reflect the State’s thoughtful and methodical approach to realizing its goal and objectives. They also highlight the State’s efforts to further systematize its delivery of support. Considerable attention is given to making the supports easily accessible and to tailoring them to the needs and requirements of LEA based staff. This includes, where possible, making them job-embedded.

In a significant number of instances, the State supports its approach to professional development by relying on history and/or data. Attention is given to fostering professional learning communities—school-based,

student learning focused collaborative teams which do real time data analysis and instructional improvement. This implies but not does make explicit the State's interest in having common time for collaboration set in the contractual day.

Because this summary demonstrates that the support plans are focused, integrated, and complementary and because the Performance Targets are reasonably ambitious and achievable, the State earns a score in the high range.

(ii).The State says that it will raise its standards for professional development, assign personnel to monitor professional development on an on-going basis, and use a formative assessment protocol designed to ensure continuous improvement of the supports provided. It will collaborate with LEAs and regional centers to implement its more rigorous expectations for professional development and partner to align what is offered in the future with the State's RTTT plans. Even before taking these steps, the State had a history of being able to foster improved student outcomes through the support and direction it provided its LEAs, schools, and site based personnel. Because the plans are clear, logical, and systematic and because the State has demonstrated its ability to elicit continuous improvement in the past, it earns points in the high range.

Total	138	134	134	
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E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	10	10	10	
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
The State has legal and regulatory authority to intervene in both low performing schools and LEAs.				
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	40	40	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	35	35	

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

(2)(i): The State asserts that its ESE has created a process to identify "those schools most in need of intervention" and that "the process aligns with" the RTTT definition of "persistently lowest achieving schools." In the supporting Appendix, E5, the State outlines its process leading to the identification of 33 schools based on achievement and growth data. A "proportionate number" of four schools with problematic graduation rates were added yielding a final list of 35 schools (two percent of the state wide total) which it says meet the RTTT definition. In short, the State does not directly explain how its process coincides with the RTTT definition; so the assertion is taken at face value pending Tier II discussion.

(ii): The State's plan to support its LEAs in turning these schools around is high quality because:

- The State's overall plan under this sub criterion is based on its analysis of its recent turnaround experiences. Data is used to underpin the analysis.
- The rationales for the specific strategies and activities chosen are based on the State's turnaround experiences; data, experiences in other states facing similar issues, and/or research. There is a

logical and reasonable relationship between the barriers to successfully turning around failing schools and the State's choice of strategies/activities. Frequently, the State can also cite to successful experiences or research for additional support.

- The budget, strategies, and activities are integrated.
- Although the State did not point to successful experience as justifying the building of cadres of turnaround educators, the approach is sufficiently unique that it is worthy of support. It is an aggressive response to improving the equitable distribution of effective educators. It is a strong complement to the State's new gap-focused legislation which authorizes re-staffing, and can complement the use of the ARRA Re-Start model.
- The strategies of creating a nonprofit intermediary to scale up the capacities of "turnaround partners" who will, in turn, address and build LEA capacity to address conditions for effectiveness is innovative. The credibility of pursuing both strategies is bolstered by the success of the two models cited. The "conditions" to be first addressed have been identified by the State's analysis of in and out of state experience, data, and research.
- The same kinds of competent analyses have led the State to identify the need to build the capacity of poorly performing LEAs in the four areas described. The comparative brevity of the description of the activities to be undertaken here is mitigated by the many capacity building activities embedded throughout the State's RTTT application.
- The creation of "wrap around zones" is an innovative approach to implementing the State's "gap law" requiring social service agencies to engage in school improvement. The concept is also well conceived in that it addresses what the fragmented, not-systematic manner with which social services would be otherwise be delivered. This plan is bolstered by the fact that the State can model its zones on two existing, successful models.
- The timelines for implementation are competent.
- The opportunity for 10 Level 3 schools to become turnaround schools and garner turn around resources and support before falling to Level 4 is an ingenious way to encourage and reward proactive leadership at either the LEA or school level. It reflects laudable foresight among those drafting this plan. This added dimension adds to the plan's quality.

The Performance Targets are achievable and ambitious. The State's plan earns points in the high range.

Total	50	50	50	
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F. General

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

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

(i): The total revenues available to the State that were used to support elementary, secondary, and public higher education increased from Fiscal Year 2008 to Fiscal Year 2009. This remains the case if certain items not directly related to the education of the State's students in schools are removed from the expenditures—i. e. Transportation, Building Authority, and Retirement System. (See Table F1, "Education expenditures...").

(ii) The State's policies lead to equitable funding between high needs schools and other LEAs and between high poverty schools and other schools.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	36	36	
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	5	5	
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	8	8	
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	7	7	
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	8	8	
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	8	8	

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

(i): The State has recently passed legislation modifying its current charter school cap. In doing so it is acting to encourage the formation of charter schools within low performing LEAs. The overall effect of the State's various laws is to restrict the number of charter schools state wide so that if the cap it were filled, less than ten percent of the State's schools would be charter schools. Accordingly, the State earns points in the mid range.

(ii): The State has laws and guidelines which govern how its authorizing authority approves, monitors, reauthorizes, and closes its charter schools. Student achievement is a significant factor in authorization and/or renewal. Charters are encouraged to serve student populations similar to the local district(s) which they serve. The applicable rules require the implementation of a recruitment and retention plan that further assures a representative population, and the State's recent amendments to its charter school law place special emphasis on new charters serving high needs students. The State has closed ineffective charters in the recent past. Student achievement was a significant factor in one or more of these instances. The State's approach earns points in the high range.

(iii): The State's charter schools receive equitable funding compared to traditional public schools. This is because they receive state funding adjusted for demographic factors at the same level that the sending districts do. In addition, charters receive an additional increment to account for the amount that the sending district supplements its state aid with local fund.

The State says that the difference in average spending per pupil between charters and traditional (Charters spend 15 percent less on average.) districts is primarily caused by traditional districts' serving a higher percentage of special education students including all of those who are provided an out of district education. The State provides some compensation to districts on a per student basis for the students from the district who attend charter schools. The effect of this latter facet of funding on equity between charters and traditional schools is not clear. The State says that the intent of its funding laws is to make funding for charters and traditional schools essentially the same. The State earns points in the high range.

(iv): The State provides charter schools with funding for facilities, assistance with facilities acquisition, encourages districts to make its surplus facilities available, gives charters the ability to share in bonds, and/or provides other supports including loan guarantees. The State does not impose any facilities related requirements that are not also applicable to traditional schools. The State earns points in the high range. [8]

(v): The State has adopted legislation enabling LEAs to operate innovative, autonomous public schools that meet the RTTT requirements. One such school has opened and others are being prepared for the fall. The ESE is required and has provided planning and implementation grants, providing technical assistance, and support to applicants. The State also notes that Boston Public Schools operate 23 "pilot schools" which meet the RTTT requirements under this sub criterion. The State earns points in the high range. [8]

(iii): The State's charter schools receive eatable funding compared to traditional public schools. This is because they receive state funding adjusted for demographic factors at the same level that the sending districts do. In addition, charters receive an additional increment to account for the amount that the sending district supplements its state aid with local fund.

The State says that the difference in average spending per pupil between charters and traditional (Charters spend 15 percent less on average.) districts is primarily caused by traditional districts' serving a higher percentage of special education students including all of those who are provided an out of district education. The State provides some compensation to districts on a per student basis for the students from the district who attend charter schools. The effect of this latter facet of funding on equity between charters and traditional schools is not clear. The State says that the intent of its funding laws is to make funding for charters and traditional schools essentially the same. The State earns points in the high range.

(iv): The State provides charter schools with funding for facilities, assistance with facilities acquisition, encourages districts to make its surplus facilities available, gives charters the ability to share in bonds, and/or provides other supports including loan guarantees. The State does not impose any facilities related requirements that are not also applicable to traditional schools. The State earns points in the high range.

(v): The State has adopted legislation enabling LEAs to operate innovative, autonomous public schools that meet the RTTT requirements. One such school has opened and others are being prepared for the fall. The ESE is required and has provided planning and implementation grants, providing technical assistance, and support to applicants. The State also notes that Boston Public Schools operate 23 "pilot schools" which meet the RTTT requirements under this sub criterion. The State earns points in the high range.

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

The State's programs to help students meet high school graduation requirements and improve college/career readiness reasonably meet the requirements under this sub criterion, and the State provides comparative data indicating that the goals of these programs are being met when the participants are compared to similar students who are not involved in them. The WPI School of Excellence qualifies because it is innovative and has a positive effect on the student outcomes stipulated to be of concern under RTTT.

Because the State did not provide student outcome data regarding its Expanded Learning Time or its after school/out of school time grants programs, it is not clear that they meet both RTTT criteria—innovation plus positive student outcomes. Accordingly, the State earns points in the mid range.

Total	55	49	49
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Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

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

Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The State's plan reflects a consistent emphasis on increasing its students' engagement and success in STEM-focused educational activities. The State's results in its own assessments demonstrate improved student achievement in areas where STEM achievement is tested and reported.

The State's plan will increase the rigor of its courses in the STEM areas. The State's plan includes many activities and strategies where consultants and institutions including those with expertise in STEM areas will be engaged in improving educational conditions for the State's students.

There is a strong emphasis on activities that will result in teachers being better prepared to teach and integrate STEM content across grades and disciplines. There is a major emphasis on increasing teachers of STEM subject. There is a major emphasis on increasing the number of competent STEM teachers serving minority and poor students and placing these teachers in low performing schools.

There are activities designed to and likely to result in more students being prepared for advance study and careers in STEM areas. The needs of students underrepresented in these fields receive significant attention. Given the history of women being underrepresented in these areas and the considerable attention that their underrepresentation has been given, it is reasonable to conclude that they are intended to be and are subsumed under the "underrepresented" rubric. The State meets this priority.

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

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

Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

For the reasons stated throughout the comments above, the State's application comprehensively and coherently addresses all four of the education reform areas specified in ARRA as well as the success factors criteria. The State and the participating LEAs are taking a systematic approach to reform. The State's plan includes a number of highly innovative approaches.

Based on the analysis above and back-stopped in many instances by legislation, the State has or will have sufficient LEA participation and commitment to implement its plans and achieve its goals. The State has or will reorganize its bureaucracy to contribute strongly to the implementation of its plans. It is also refocusing and re-purposing existing funds from federal, state, and local funds to ensure its initiatives have sufficient resources. The State's Performance Targets reflect careful thought. This has made them ambitious and achievable.

The implementation of the reforms in this application is likely to result in increased student achievement, a reduction in achievement gaps, and an increase in both graduation rates and college enrollment. Graduates of Massachusetts high schools will be more college and career ready in the future compared to the past as a result of the planned reforms. The State has carefully planned so that the core of its reforms will be sustainable after the RTTT grant has run its course. The State meets the Absolute Priority.

Total		0	0	
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Grand Total	500	479	481	
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