Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 1

Nevada Application #3450NV-10

A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	**65**	**55**
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	40
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	10

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

(i) Nevada has articulated a comprehensive reform plan in the areas of standards and assessments, data use, teacher and principal effectiveness, and turning around low performing schools. Its plan - Nevada's Promise: Excellence, Rigor, and Equity - establishes goals in each area and presents a reasonable path to achieve those outcomes.

(ii) All 17 of the state's LEAs have agreed to participate in RTT. 100% of the superintendents and school board presidents and approximately 75% of the local union representatives have signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). In regard to the local union representatives, 2 signed with a conditional approval, 2 refused. The MOU is the standard document and does not appear to include any "opt out" clauses; any changes must be agreed to by both parties. The preliminary scope of work included in the application is a checklist without further detail or binding agreements. The final scope will be negotiated if the grant is awarded.

The 17 LEAs have all agreed to participate in almost all the RTT activities with a few exceptions. One small district indicated no to providing data to researchers. A large district (Elko) said no to compensating, promoting and retaining highly effective teachers and principals; two other districts (Churchill and Lyon) are in "yes/conditional" status for this area.

Since the scope of work descriptions are so broad at this point it is difficult to know exactly which aspects of compensating, promoting, and retaining highly effective teachers and principals these four districts object to and if they may eventually participate. This is a key provision of RTT that 64 schools in the state (approximately 10%) will not participate in at this time.

(iii) Nevada established five achievement goals:

- 4th grade NAEP Reading achievement will increase from 24% advanced or proficient in 2009 to 50% in 2014. 8th grade NAEP reading will increase from 22% advanced or proficient to 50%.
- 4th grade NAEP mathematics achievement will increase from 32% advanced or proficient in 2009 to 50%. 8th grade NAEP mathematics will increase from 25% advanced or proficient to 50%.
- Achievement gaps have a similar distance to travel. NV is aiming for a 50% closing between the Black/White and Hispanic/White gap.
- High school graduation will rise to 85%.
- College enrollment will rise by 50%.

Using NV's trend data on NAEP, the goals are ambitious but will require an intense effort at all levels of the system to double the rate of growth from 2009 to 2014. For example, in 2003 23% of NV's 4th graders

were proficient in NAEP reading, in 2009 32% were proficient, and the goal in 2014 is 50% at proficient. Similar trends are predicted for 4th grade mathematics and 8th grade reading and mathematics. The high school graduation rate will need to move from 47.3%' to 85%. College enrollment data in the application are not consistent with the enrollment goal, therefore it is difficult to determine if this is a ambitious yet achievable goal.

The breakouts for the state assessment provide a very different picture of student achievement in Nevada. The data indicate that the majority of NV students at the elementary (grades 3-5) and middle school (grades 6-8) are meeting state standards in both reading and mathematics. At the high school level (grade 10), only math is below 50% meeting state standards while almost 80% of 10th grade students meet state reading standards.

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	**30**	**19**
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	12
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	7

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

(i) NV will establish an Education Reform Office reporting directly to the state superintendent to implement RTT. The office will have a staff of approximately 20 with appropriate expertise in education reform, content areas, as well as grants and budget management. The state will also establish an Accountability Task Force as an external monitor. The state also plans to establish five "councils" chaired by the reform office whose membership will include district personnel, regional professional development program staff, higher education representatives, teacher and administrator associations, charter schools, and others. The role of these groups is to establish guidelines and policy recommendations. It is difficult to know if these groups will help or hinder the implementation of RTT. The role of the five councils as well as the accountability task force are not clear in the application in terms of their authority and responsibility. The councils could quickly become unwieldy since their role is to develop guidelines and policy recommendations rather than provide comment and feedback to the state education agency (SEA). The budget for these Councils does not appear to be adequate to support the involvement of district participants.

The state also lists other offices in the SEA which will need to be involved in the work of RTT, for example assessment and accountability, teacher licensure, and technology. The state did not indicate if these offices were in Carson City or in Las Vegas with most of the to-be-formed education reform office. The need to coordinate and collaborate across all the functional offices in an SEA is critical to the success of RTT. It would have been helpful to know more about how this was going to be done.

NV did not provide adequate explanations on how extensively it would support its LEAs beyond the education summit, the new technology system and the liaison staff in the reform office. While it did include financial incentives (beyond the basic grant) for using best practices, the depth of support was not apparent.

NV states that it will repurpose other funds but does not provide evidence of other funding streams that will be used to further support RTT goals and objectives.

(ii) The application includes letters of support from state level school boards and administrator groups as well as one from the largest county. There was one letter from the state education association that included a statement of support as well as a statement on nothing in the application altering or affecting the rights of teachers. It is difficult to know if this is support or not. It does raise questions about the level of commitment to some of the RTT areas that might impact teachers

Other letters in the application from state legislators, businesses representatives indicated strong support.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing	**30**	**15**

gaps		
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	10

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

(i) NV has made progress in each of the four education reform areas since the passage of its first education reform legislation in 1997 which focused on standards-based instruction, assessment, and accountability improvements. In the area of standards, the state has been reviewing its standards to add depth and complexity to increase the knowledge tested in its assessments. The state has been using an automated accountability system since 1997 which has been upgraded and enhanced using federal and state funds. The state has also focused on the quality of its teaching force from pre-service incentives for teachers in high need schools to more intense mentoring of new and "old" teachers to ensure that their understanding of content as well as research based methodology is sound. Finally, the state has developed a system of support for its low performing schools.

The state used its ARRA funds to prevent teacher lay-offs and to increase the number of schools receiving Title 1 assistance. The state claims that it saved or created almost 1,000 jobs with all of its ARRA funds.

(ii) NV has made some achievement gains since 2003 in most of its tested areas. However, the state achievement patterns and gaps among subgroups are in need of improvement. On NAEP, the state has improved since 2003 but remains below the national average in both reading and mathematics at the 4th and 8th grade levels. The high school graduation rate has only increased slightly from 2003 to 2008 to approximately 47% which is also well below the national average and even further from the state goal of 85%.

NV provides minimal explanation for the achievement increases in the state assessment from 2003 to 2009. The state asserts that the increases were due to the strategies that will be used for RTT with an increased emphasis on standards and teacher professional development. The state also asserts that the increased diversity in its population has strained its resources. The credibility of the state's assertions is questioned because almost all student groups have similar patterns of achievement. It is difficult to know what the state has emphasized in terms of student growth other than the state assessment.

Total	125	89

B. Standards and Assessments

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

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

(i) NV participated in the Common Core State Standards with 51 other states and territories. NV is also participating in the national science standards framework.

(ii) NV will adopt the standards prior to August 2, 2010.

(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	**10**	**10**
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality assessments	5	5

(ii) Including a significant number of States	5	5
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) (i) and (ii) NV is participating in the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium with 45 other states.		
(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	**20**	**10**
(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) The plan to transition to high quality standards and assessments appears to be focused on four strategies: building assessment systems, providing professional development to teachers, developing curriculum frameworks, and the early reading initiative. The state will build its assessment system by implementing the Nevada Growth Model by 2013-14, using the summative assessments aligned to the Common Core standards, developing an aligned system of local interim assessments, and developing classroom-based formative assessments. These activities will be joint activities of the Reform Office (RTT) and the Office of Assessment, Program Accountability, and Curriculum. While most of the responsibility rests at the SEA level, two of the councils formed to implement RTT will be involved in developing guidelines and policies for the interim assessment (Standards and Assessment Council) and providing targeted technical assistance to all high needs schools and districts (Turn Around Council). It is difficult to determine if these councils will provide the the depth of involvement necessary to ensure that teacher and principal perspectives are included. A feedback loop for NV's educators to review and comment on the plans was not discussed. The professional development plan is to be developed by the Teachers and Leaders Council and the Reform Office. The RTT application includes a few activities that will be included in the plan, such as summer institutes for teachers, an Aspiring Leaders program, and Individualized Development Plans. The regional professional development programs will also directly train 8,000 teachers and principals annually. The Teacher and Leader Council will also work with pre-service institutions to ensure that new teachers are aware of the plan. The type of training, other than job-embedded, was not discussed nor were parameters for the plan to be developed by the Teacher and Leader Council. Developing curriculum frameworks is often the most critical part of implementing new standards and assessments at the school and classroom level. NV's plan is vague and dependent on the the SEA as well as the Standards and Assessment Council, the Teachers and Leaders Council, and the "experience and innovation of its most effective P-20 teachers." The application does not provide more than the most general language for this activity and leaves much to be determined. An early childhood literacy program to extend Reading First programs into selected schools was included in this section without an explanation of how it will fit into the transition to enhanced standards and high quality assessments. NV is also proposing to continue the development of college readiness expectations for English language arts and mathematics. It is not clear in the application how this activity will be integrated into the reform programs.		
Total	70	60

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	**24**	**22**
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)		

NV has completed 11 of the 12 America Competes elements.

(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	2

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

NV's plan for improving the accessibility and use of its longitudinal data system includes two expansion activities:

- Electronic Media Access to Leverage Learning (E-MALL) and
- Comprehensive Oversight for Managing Performance to Achieve Student Success (COMPASS).

E-MALL will focus on instruction and professional development resources aligned with the RTT activities. COMPASS will focus on student achievement and teacher and principal effectiveness data. The systems will be integrated so that evaluation decisions and professional development can be linked. The third leg is the enhancement of the current accountability data base - System of Accountability Information in Nevada (SAIN).

Other than a brief description of each of the three data bases, the application does not provide a thorough plan to ensure that the systems are accessible and used. The applicant mentions increasing dashboard views but does not provide a description of what might be contained in those views.

(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	8
(i) Increasing the use of instructional improvement systems	6	2
(ii) Supporting LEAs, schools, and teachers in using instructional improvement systems	6	2
(iii) Making the data from instructional improvement systems available to researchers	6	4

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

(i) NV's plan to increase the use of the data systems provides for giving teachers and principals user accounts and passwords, professional development on accessing the system, and adding best practices and evaluation information for post-secondary students. This is a very limited plan. While access is critical, the activities outlined here are the most basic steps and do not describe how the acquisition, adoption, and use will be increased.

NV intends to add two additional data sets to the system: formative data for Clark County and graduation data as assessments are added. It is unclear how the Clark County system will increase use across the state. The high school data does not appear to add to the system in any meaningful fashion.

(ii) LEAs will be supported through professional development. Rural LEAs will use the Regional Professional Development Program; larger school districts are provided assistance upon request but only for low-performing schools. It is unclear how other schools in the larger districts are provided professional development. The E-MALL system will be used to coordinate the expanded data access with additional resources, evaluation information, and the availability of customized reports.

The professional development plan does not appear to be a complete plan to support continuous improvement. It provides only for the very first, initial steps.

(iii) The applicant does not address how they will make the data accessible to researchers other than describing how additional fields will be added and an example of a current program evaluation. The form included in the appendix does indicate that the state has a process.

Total	47	32

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

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

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

(i) NV appears to have limited alternative routes to certification for teachers and recent regulations to support alternative routes for principals. Based on the data in the application, the current routes for teachers only meet three of the five criteria. The current routes do not operate outside Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs). The new route for principals is only for teachers with 3 years of experience and will not be implemented until July 2011..

(ii) 11% of NV's first year teachers were certified through an alternative route in 2009-10. No principals were certified. Almost all of the alternative route teachers are in the largest district - Clark County. NV does intend to pursue additional alternative routes and have them operational by the middle of the 2010-2011 school year.

(iii) The state claims that it has a process for monitoring, evaluating, and identifying teacher shortage areas at the school, district, and state level. However, the application does not describe the process, the responsible agency, nor what becomes of the data. No data are provided on current critical shortage areas. Principals are not included in this process. The current plan for filling positions appears to be Teach for America in Clark County.

The state proposes to work with its Professional Standards Commission to increase the alternative routes for teachers and principals and link teacher and principal effectiveness back to preparation programs.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	**58**	**37**
(i) Measuring student growth	5	4
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	11
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	7
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	15

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

(i) NV intends to begin work on calculating student growth measures in Spring 2012 and have them operational by the 2013-14 school year using existing statewide assessments. The SEA's Assessment, Program Accountability, and Curriculum Office will be responsible for this activity. The Standards and Assessment Council (RTT Council) will provide guidelines to LEAs for calculating student growth on locally or regionally developed assessments. The application does not provide a complete description of how the state will integrate these different systems with the new summative assessment developed by SMARTER nor how local or regional developed assessments may (or may not) be phased in and out of the system.

(ii) NV passed legislation in February 2010 to include student achievement as part of the evaluation of teachers and principals. Additional legislation will be introduced to fully implement the system. The system will be field tested in 2012-13 and adopted statewide in 2013-14. The system will be designed by the RTT Reform office and the Teacher and Leaders Council. The evaluation system will include five level of effectiveness and student growth will account for 50% of the rating. Stakeholders will be involved throughout the process including teachers, principals, students, parents, and assessment experts.

Preliminary agreement has been reached on the following parameters:

- student achievement will be measured by 33% of the summative growth and 17% on local measures of growth,
- 50% of the evaluation will be determined by each LEA (such as classroom observations),
- previous evaluations will be considered, and
- performance discussions will include strengths, growth, and performance for the next year.

The application also includes a series of considerations that will be collected at the district level and included in the accountability system but the rating, ranking, or use of the additional criteria are not clarified. For example, it is difficult to know how an analysis of working conditions would be conducted, reported, or used in a meaningful way.

NV has the framework for a reliable system that will require additional legislation before it is fully implemented. The one concern will be the 17% of local measures of growth and how the state will ensure the reliability, validity, and comparability of those measures.

(iii) The annual evaluation system will be built by the RTT Teacher and Leaders Council. The application does not specify exactly what they will be tasked with creating. The application implies that the frequency of the evaluations may be determined by the educator's "experience, placement, and/or effectiveness indicators from the previous year's evaluation." This statement could mean annual evaluations, semi-annual, or less frequently.

(iv) NV intends to create a system in consultation with teacher and principal professional associations that rewards performance through compensation reform rather than length of employment. The Teacher and Leaders Council will lead the effort to develop this new system. It is unclear in the application exactly how much authority the Council has to develop a system or a set of recommendations. In addition, some of the language indicates that the state will engage in discussions rather than implementing policies.

This area of the application proposes to look at all the appropriate areas as well as pursue policies in support of using the evaluation system to reward and retain the most effective teachers and principals. However, the language in the application may not commit the state to a course of action that would definitively lead to the implementation of these policies. For example, determining how to approach tenure so that retention is incentivized is not the same as basing tenure decisions on effectiveness ratings.

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

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

(i) NV articulates 10 activities that it will undertake to ensure the equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals in high-poverty or high-minority schools. The state will base its analysis on the teacher and principal evaluation system. The solution activities range from increasing alternative route programs, providing relocation incentives, and partnering with effective teacher preparation programs. While not described in the narrative, the budget includes a sub-grant of $1,000,000 to expand alternative routes for high-poverty, high-need subjects.

The applicant did not provide data on the current distribution of effective teachers and principals. The performance measures indicate that by the 2013-2014 school year the state expects 50% of its teachers and principals in high poverty/high minority and low poverty/low minority schools to be effective. In addition, the state did not provide a description of any current activities it is undertaking or any success it has had in increasing the caliber of its workforce.

(ii) NV articulates a plan to use its effectiveness data to identify teachers for additional professional development opportunities as well as STEM activities to provide training to teach mathematics or science.

The state will also scale-up the Regional Professional Development programs to provide additional training in mathematics. The state will also examine a regulatory barrier to increase the opportunities for STEM subjects.

The state did not address special education teachers or teaching in language instruction nor did it identify any additional areas of need. It is unclear if the state needs teachers in areas outside of STEM.

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	**14**	**6**
(i) Linking student data to credentialing programs and reporting publicly	7	3
(ii) Expanding effective programs	7	3

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

(i) The RTT Teacher and Leaders Council will develop an evaluation system for both in-state and out-of-state preparation programs that will link teacher and principal performance to their pre-service training institution. The data will be publicly reported and used to determine recruitment strategies and licensure systems where applicable. It should be noted that 60% of the state's teachers are trained outside Nevada. The plan lacks specificity and distinct tasks. The work of the Teacher and Leader Council will need to be augmented to achieve the development of this evaluation system. The state does not mention how it will share the information with national accrediting organizations.

(ii) The only specific expansion programs mentioned in the application is Teach for America and the Aspiring Leaders Academy. The applicant does not address working with in-state IHEs or national teacher preparation organizations to increase the quality of pre-service programs. It should be noted that the performance measures include the Professional Standards Commission but no details on its role are provided in the application itself.

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	**20**	**14**
(i) Providing effective support	10	9
(ii) Continuously improving the effectiveness of the support	10	5

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

(i) NV currently has a set of professional development principles that will be used as the foundation for teacher and principal development. The standards articulate what effective professional development looks like and how it should operate. The state database - COMPASS - will be used to track professional development for the required individual development plans. The state will implement peer-to-peer collaboration and a system of reflective coaching. The professional development activities are focused on improving student achievement and include data use, instructional improvements, and modeling.

NV has proposed a positive approach to provide additional compensation to highly effective teachers to serve as coaches for other teachers. Highly effective teachers will also be given the opportunity to develop instructional materials to be shared across the state. It was not clear if common planning time is part of the principles or the state's plans.

(ii) NV provides the questions currently being used by the Regional Professional Development Program to evaluate professional development. The results of these very basic questions will be incorporated into the COMPASS system. The application does not indicate what might happen to these evaluations and whether or not anyone at the state, district, or school level will use them. In addition, the questions are so basic that it is doubtful if any type of "actionable" data will be gathered as a result of this evaluation of professional development.

Total	138	74

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1
(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	**10**	**10**
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) NV has the authority to intervene in persistently lowest performing schools and in all districts designated as being in the third year or beyond of needing improvement.		
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	**40**	**35**
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	30
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) (i) NV identifies its lowest performing schools in an approved manner. (ii) NV has designed a system to turn around its lowest performing schools that begins with a thorough audit of the school and district then provides a decision tool to select which of the four turn around models is the best fit. At that point the state and the district negotiate with partners and/or programs to support the implementation of the model. At this time, NV anticipates serving Priority 1 & 2 schools - 10 in 2010 -11, 5 in 2011-12 and five more in 2013-14. It appears as if RTT funds will be used for some sub-section of these schools. NV's plan requires a three year plan with "radical change" demanded by year 2. The state will provide extensive professional development to these schools during the planning and implementation phases. The state also proposes a series of interventions in the next set of schools (Priority 3 & 4) to keep them from failing further behind. These interventions include extended day options, math and reading coaches, targeted professional development, instructional improvements based on the E-MALL system, high school supports, as well as assistance to feeder schools. The RTT Turn-Around Schools Council will develop comprehensive technical assistance tools, including on-line resources. The Regional Professional Development Programs will be a central source for professional development, the RTT funded parent involvement specialist will assist the schools, and the results will be monitored and evaluated by the RTT Reform Office. The state plan is comprehensive but lacks details to judge its cohesion.		
Total	50	**45**

F. General

	Available	Tier 1
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	**10**	**6**
(i) Allocating a consistent percentage of State revenue to education	5	3
(ii) Equitably funding high-poverty schools	5	3
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) (i) State funds for education dipped slightly from 08 to 09 but it remained close to the same funding. (ii) Nevada states that funds are equalized across districts, but it is unclear if the same equalization process is issued within districts to ensure equitable funding across schools.		

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	**40**	**31**
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	8
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	5
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	8
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	2
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	8

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

(i) Nevada has no restrictions on the number of charter schools but they do not allow public schools to convert to charter schools which is a cap.

(ii) The state statute authorizing charter schools specifies all the required steps to form charters, hold them accountable, provide for revocation, and management requirements. NV sets achievement goals as part of the original charter process. However, student achievement is not a mandatory requirement.

(iii) Charter schools receive equitable funding using the same formula as the public schools. NV fully meets this requirement to provide equitable funding. In addition, the RTT plan budgets additional funds for charter schools.

(iv) NV makes facilities available to charter schools within the school district with the approval of the local school board and not during school hours. NV does not provide funding for facilities.

(v) NV has a program of Empowerment Schools authorized by the legislature that provides a school with:

- control over 90% of its budget,
- is allowed to serve students outside its area, and
- provides incentive pay.

At this time, Clark County has 17 schools and plans for an additional 12 if funding becomes available.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	**5**	**5**

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

NV lists six statutes that represent additional reform activities. One program appears to no longer be funded even though there was an evaluation indicating that it improved achievement for high need students. The other statutes range from mandatory class size reduction at the early elementary level, expansion of technology programs, Parental Advisory Council, School-Based decision councils, and college scholarships.

Total	55	42

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

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

Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Nevada presents a wide-ranging approach to incorporating STEM activities throughout its P-20 system. The plan includes increasing professional development opportunities and expanding teacher preparation programs. At the school level, NV will develop end-of-course tests in new subjects, increase AP courses,

and support additional STEM classes at the K-8 level.

The application addresses the need to focus on underrepresented groups but does not specifically address the issue of women and girls in any meaningful fashion.

Total	15	0

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

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

Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

NV articulates a reform plan for the state that addresses all the elements of RTT. The state has 100% participation of its LEAs. While the plan covers all the elements, there are aspects that may require further planning to understand the depth of the state's goals and objectives

Total		0

Grand Total	500	342

Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 1

Nevada Application #3450NV-8

A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	**65**	**59**
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	4
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	40
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	15

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

The state has created a new vision for transforming education that aligns with the goals of Race to the Top, and, equally important, the plan is strongly supported by the Governor's Office and backed by the state legislature. Further, the state sets its education vision in the larger context of its economic need and urgent desire to transform the "Battle Born State" into the "new green economy." This is a smart approach, situating education reform in the broader context of economic and workforce development.

While the State writes a clear and compelling narrative regarding what it wants to accomplish going forward and how this vision integrates with and advances its economic agenda, the plan is vague on what factors led up to the state's decision to implement Nevada's Promise and, to a lesser extent, what the plan desires of state, district, school, and community stakeholders. The application states that a diverse group of stakeholders came together and developed a strong vision (i.e, Nevada's Promise) for education. This is true, yet after reading the entire application, it seems the state emphasized consensus at the expense of bold meaningful reform. This is reflected throughout the evaluation by way of the state's lack of ambitious yet achievable performance measures and/or high-quality implementation plans.

Nevada notes in its application that it ranks last in students transitioning directly from high school to college and last among states in the number of young people graduating from high school. Thus, it is affirming to see the state then address these interdependent challenges as specifically targeted objectives. The state understands that to respond to its economic needs it must be honest about its shortcomings and set clear, measurable benchmarks for improvement. However, in terms of determining if the state has a clear and credible path to achieving these goals, the State fails to clearly articulate why it has done a poor job educating students, graduating students, and enrolling students in college. In fact, this section (and the entire application) lacks a real sense of self-awareness. That is, the state does not incorporate past learnings, which could then be used to determine to what extent the state demonstrates an understanding as to what led to its previous reform shortcomings and ultimately how past reforms inform present and future reform goals. Specific to this section, the only indication that the state is thinking along these lines is one sentence it includes that explains "there has been no singular focus of purpose to change the current status." The state's poor education outcomes, however, cannot plausibly be solely attributed to a lack of focus, yet this is the state's rationale. As a result, the state's desire to build on what works without addressing what didn't work (and why) limits confidence that Nevada's Promise will transform the lives of its 436,000 students.

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The State's three principles align with Race to the Top's four education areas as the state describes, for example, a well-defined plan for improving its low-achieving schools. The narrative articulates a beautiful vision for the state, which seems to originate from and flow through its commitment to teachers. While this has clear benefits as seen throughout the application, it also seems to prohibit the state from effectively addressing high

point value sections, such as (D)(2). Additionally, the state touts 100% participation in support of Nevada's Promise and attributes this to its unique ability to quickly mobilize a small number of districts around a common broad agenda. After reading the application, it seems the state is either underutilizing its strength or overstating its ability.

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The state has developed a strong memorandum of understanding as evidenced by its similarity to the sample MOU provided by the United States Department of Education.

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The state has secured overwhelming participation for its reform plan. Every element except for three elements receives 100% participation from participating LEAs, and the aforementioned three elements are not supported by one small school district.

....

Not considering yes/conditionals, the state's plan received unanimous support from LEA superintendents, local school board presidents, and 76% support from local teacher's unions. This is significant comprehensive support that should go a long way in the state's effort to implement Nevada's Promise. The state has assured signatories that:

Nothing in the Memorandum of Understanding shall be construed to alter or otherwise affect the rights, remedies, and procedures afforded school or school district employees under federal, state, or local laws (including applicable regulations or court orders) or under the terms of collective bargaining agreements, memoranda of understanding, or other agreements between such employers and their employees.

This clause is verbatim a paragraph in the Nevada State Education Association's letter of support. The inclusion of the clause in the MOU may mean all parties are playing a type of kabuki dance that's big on talk while maintaining the status-quo. On the other hand, the state could have been laser focused on implementing Nevada's Promise, it decided to embed the language in the MOU as a way to build consensus and support for its plan and acknowledge the necessity of union involvement.

....

Nevada's Promise includes five specifically-targeted objectives for increasing student achievement in reading/language arts and mathematics; decreasing achievement gaps between subgroups in reading/language arts and mathematics; and increasing college enrollment and increasing the number of students who complete at least a year's worth of college credit by 2014. These objectives, such as sprinting from last in the nation in high school graduation to having an 80% cohort graduation rate, are ambitious. Because every district in Nevada has signed onto the state's plan, the successful implementation of the plan will have a positive and meaningful impact on its students, its schools, its community, and its economy.

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

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

Nevada describes a clear structure for managing its Race to the Top plan. The state's decision to have a task force conduct external monitoring should help ensure that the plan is implemented effectively; however, the goals of the monitoring group may be compromised if the legislators, who are part of the group, are viewed as politicizing the program or its results.

The creation of the Nevada Education Reform Office, in particular its role as a project management office, should help establish program ownership and a sense of accountability. What the plan does not address is how the newly created office will operate in collaboration with and/or independent of the Nevada Department of Education. An attempt to better understand the department and the roles of staff is severely limited because Appendix

A(2)(i)-1, which the state references in their application as the place to go for descriptions of key staff members' roles and responsibilities, is not included.

The to-be-created Council aligns with every section of the Race to the Top reform area. The Council should help the state navigate away from a compliance driven approach to providing support and guidance to LEAs. This approach is consistent with and supported by the state's new theory of change. To this end, it is smart policy for the state to embed a staff member in its largest school districts, rural districts, and charter entities to facilitate effective implementation.

The state plans to build upon the central systems already in place to advance its agenda, but two of the four organizations listed did not submit a letter of support for the program, the P-20 Council and Nevada Public Education Foundation.

The state's plan for supporting its LEAs is centered around its theory of action, Managed Performance/Empowerment model. While it's clear that the state will set "clear goals" and rely on "solid accountability," the plan does not describe how it will actually help districts meet their targets. The plan also does not describe what has worked to date or how previous efforts informed the state's current course of action.

While the proposal explains that its theory is rooted in "solid accountability," the proposal is agnostic about how LEAs have to track progress. The state merely set expectations, which seems too weak to ensure that every LEA will track and report progress - not just in a way that makes sense for the district, but - in a way that is conducive for the State and its evaluators.

The plan rightly understands the serious need to provide technical assistance to help its LEAs transition to the new "outcome-driven culture." The challenge is the plan does not identify nor discuss the anticipated hurdles associated with implementing the Managed Performance/Empowerment model. Since the state is implementing a new management model that will transform the Department of Education, it seems reasonable to expect the state to articulate anticipated barriers to successful implementation, which could be based on its own experience and/or the experiences of those states it mentions having implemented the model. The lack of detail is disconcerting because it may mean that the state has not fully thought through the implementation of its theory of action.

The state makes the same misstep while describing how it will use an existing conference to highlight best practices turning around schools. The state does not discuss the process for identifying "best practices" and worse the state seems to conflate a venue popular for "highlighting successful schools" with one that ensures schools adopt/test effective turnaround practices. Lastly, the state's narrative does not discuss its plan for ceasing ineffective practices.

The state has a clear and tested process in place for managing its Race to the Top grant. The state's narrative demonstrates an understanding of the process and resources needed to successfully administrator the grant.

The size of the grant seems in line with what the state is trying to do. Since the majority of dollars will be divided between 3 LEAs, it is very positive that the state is giving each district, regardless of size, a $100,000 sub-grant. This should go a long way in having smaller districts implement Race to the Top related reform efforts. The state does not seem to be making the same concessions to charter schools. The state is directly supporting state-sponsored charter ($25,000 per school), and charters sponsored by LEAs may receive funding through their district, but it is unclear how charters supported by the Nevada System of Higher Education receive Race to the Top funds, if at all. The proposed role of consultants is understandably wide-ranging although it's unclear why a consultant would be hired to "interpret state and federal regulations and statutes in order to determine the legal basis, authority, and requirements for new or revised projects." This seems like a responsibility suited for a full-time staff person, possibly a member of the Department's general counsel.

Although the following information was not used to award points in this section, it would seem that a better alignment of resources and stakeholder support would be to contract with an in-state research institution to handle the program's external evaluation instead of spending $2 million to contract with a "national expert," who may not be in-state.

The state has demonstrated that it has the political capital to continue implementing Nevada's Promise through The Blue Ribbon Task Force and Accountability Task Force. Throughout the application, the state describes how it will continue to "collaborate with stakeholders and legislators after the implementation of Nevada's Promise" towards codifying laws and practices. This seems to reflect a serious attempt by the state to make reforms permanent.

The state's plan has received broad stakeholder support. The state's teachers and principals support this application as evidenced by signatures on the MOU as well as support letters. Of note, Nevada makes reference to its "two largest local education associations" strongly supporting the plan; however, there is not a letter of support from Washoe County Education Association or Clark County Education Association.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	**30**	**19**
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	4
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	15

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

The state's application clearly highlights how their efforts over the past several years have supported and advanced the four education reform areas. These efforts have been mostly impressive, such as the development of their data systems and efforts improving poorly performing schools. The state seems to have been less aggressive regarding the development of teachers and leaders, relying more on a desire to improve than tangible deliverables. In fact, Nevada does not discuss how it has improved leaders in this section.

The state provides sufficient data in determining if they have increased student achievement in core subjects; however, the state constructs a minimal narrative that "explains the connection between the data and the actions that have contributed to" gains or lack thereof. Consequently, it is unclear if the state knows what works and if they will continue those practices. The state's new education vision seems detached from the history of the state's previous reform efforts as previously stated.

Grade 4 Reading on NEAP have seen a narrowing of the achievement gap between students of color and white students. Grade 4 Math on NEAP saw the overall gap narrow by 5 percentage points from 2003 to 2009; however, the gap between African American students and their white counterparts expanded by six percentage points. Grade 8 Reading on NEAP between black and white students trounced the national average, closing the gap by 14 percentage points. The fluctuations in Grade 8 Math were nominal whereas the state is essentially in the same boat it was in 2003, possibly a better boat since overall scores are increasing. In short, progress has been a mixed bag.

Nevada ranks last among states in high school graduation. The gains the state highlights are insignificant, insofar as the results do not demonstrate a serious commitment to ensuring every student that enters the ninth grade graduates with a high school diploma four years later. The state readily admits its gains have been "modest." Yet, the state only says what it will do going forward, while the question asks the state to look backwards at previous actions. The narrative lacks any concept of honest self-reflection. In other words, it is never clear that the state actually tried to understand why its gains have been modest and attempted to extract lessons that could prove beneficial going forward.

Total	125	104

B. Standards and Assessments

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

(ii) Adopting standards	20	20

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

The state's participation in the Common Core State Standard for English language arts and mathematics is evidence that Nevada is working toward jointly developing and adopting a common set of K-12 standards.

The state does not say how many states are participating in the consortium. According to the Introduction to the Draft Common Core Standards dated March 9, 2010 in Appendix B, 48 states, two territories, and the District of Columbia participate in Kindergarten-12 grade level Common Core State Standards.

The state's application and its actions demonstrate a commitment to adopting common standards in ELA, math, and science that aligns with Nevada's Promise. The state's narrative articulates a track record of engaging staff within CCSSO and NGA towards strengthening and adopting common state standards. Given this context and Nevada's adoption process outlined in NRS 389.520, it is likely that the state will adopt CCSS on or before August 2, 2010.

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

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

The state's participation in the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium is evidence that Nevada is working toward jointly developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments. Of note, since the state has only signed up for one consortia as a Member state and did not take a significant role i.e., join the steering committee or proposal design team, it is unclear the state's level of commitment to using the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium.

The application states that 45 states make up the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium.

(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	**20**	**14**

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

Nevada has outlined a comprehensive thoughtful approach towards implementing and using high quality assessment on a state and district level. The state's decision to begin its activities during the 2010-2011 academic school year seem to reflect a serious commitment on its part to leverage the good will around developing Nevada's Promise in pursuit of meaningful and measurable reforms. The state's strategy for rolling out its Nevada Growth Model seems particularly strategic as it builds on 1) the state's pilot and 2) implementation lessons learned from Massachusetts and Colorado. The state references Massachusetts and Colorado in its application. Further, there is clear alignment between the State's plan of action and its organizational structure.

Interim/Benchmark Assessments

The state does not say which two districts do not have benchmark assessments in place, and its omission may likely mean they are not small districts. It's laudable that the state plans to allow LEAs to create interim assessments that are customized and well-suited for each district's individualized need. It is also smart policy by the State to have its implementation of a new system be informed by an analysis of what works i.e., the pilot program. What is not clear is after the council makes its recommendations, who owns the reform and how does the state ensure that the recommendations are implemented throughout the state with fidelity.

Formative Assessment

It's clear that the state will have the tools available in 2013-2014, yet what is not clear is how the state ensures that said tools are put to use. This is similar to its challenge with interim assessments; the state may be creating a great system that educators either 1) do not use or 2), more likely, do not maximize. It is affirming to see the state tie professional development to the "perceived deficiency" expressed by educators - data informing practice.

Professional Development

The state provides concrete numbers as to how many teachers and leaders will be trained each year on CCSS. The state will use the Regional Professional Development Program because of their long standing relationship; this is beyond smart given the Program's track record and national profile as an expert on implementing professional development.

College and Career Readiness

Nevada's department of education will work with higher education to set college readiness expectations. This should help better align K-12 efforts with higher education needs. It is unclear how, if at all, the state's efforts regarding College Readiness Expectations link back to the state's high school End of Course in core subjects. The state's only other focus in on Career and Technical Education. This is very good for the many students who are pouring into community colleges across the state (and nation), but it's unclear how the state will address students who transition from high school to a four year college.

Total	70	63

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

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

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

The state's statewide longitudinal data system includes 11 of the 12 America COMPETES Act elements.

(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	**5**	**3**

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

The state has established three targeted outcomes that map to its narrative, and its performance measures are clear and measurable. The challenge is the performance measures are too few and too broad.

The state would like to "increase the number of dashboard users from 200 to 20,700" by the end of the grant period. The state expects this massive surge in usership to come from "including teachers, parents, and community." The plan does not take the next step and explain user targets levels for each group. This is important because it's clear that each user is important and will use the dashboard for a distinct reason. It is also unclear what the state hopes to accomplish by increasing portal visits.

The state plans to make its E-MALL system more robust by making video modules available. This seems to be a smart cost-effective approach that gives educators access to high quality matter at their pace and convenience.

The state mentions that the new E-MALL system will be integrated into its current technology structure and utilize an open-source platform. It is strategic that the state is thinking about how to maximize its resources and even novel to see a large organization utilizing open source technology. Hence, it would be helpful to get more detail into how this will work. There are certainly limits and challenges to certain open-source technology, so information that illuminates implementation though lacking would be helpful in determining if the state's plan is high-quality.

The state does excel in demonstrating how COMPASS will be used to monitor teacher performance. The narrative does not describe a system to monitor principal performance. It is equally important to see how the state is thinking through using its Reform Office and Councils. It seems the proposed Data Council will provide training and technical support to staff on implementation; this should be useful.

The state's timeline is clear and plausible. Unfortunately, the state does not include in its performance measures many of the activities it describes in the narrative. For example, the state plans to "enhance and expand the statewide longitudinal data system to include student achievement growth data, indicators of teacher and principal effectiveness, and links to teacher preparation programs from postsecondary institutions," but does not

explain when this will happen. Also, given the state's push for college readiness and low college enrollment scores, the state does not describe how it will build into its system student level college readiness scores.

Of note, the state plans to "provide access to integrated higher education data that will allow districts and higher education officials to evaluate the quality of teacher preparation programs" and earlier in the application the state describes the process for sharing data with higher education as being "accomplished manually through physical exchange of a compact disc." This is unsecure and unwise. The state it seems will continue this unsafe process instead of developing a secure method.

(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	**18**	**12**
(i) Increasing the use of instructional improvement systems	6	5
(ii) Supporting LEAs, schools, and teachers in using instructional improvement systems	6	4
(iii) Making the data from instructional improvement systems available to researchers	6	3

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

The state benefits from having a robust data system and it is meeting the challenge of increasing usage of its instructional improvement systems through a well-thought out three-legged approach. The state plans to assign every teacher and principal an identifiable number to measure their system usage as well as track their individualized progress should certainly ensure more educators use the system which should ultimately lead to improved instruction and effective educators.

Nevada has a clear process for providing professional development to its rural and frontier districts. The state mandates that these districts work with the Regional Professional Development Program. The inclusion of professional development in urban districts is not as straightforward. For these districts, educators will be able to utilize a professional development series through E-MALL although it's not stated if these trainings will be mandatory or even strongly encouraged. Also, the state makes no mention of how parents and students will be trained, even though they are included in their usage performance measures.

The state as of March 2009 established a standard protocol for handling data requests and to date has received more external requests than internal requests (41/17). According to the state's system, every request is not granted and it seems NDE can reject a request for information if the data is not available and if the request is a low priority. Again, the process is not clearly described; consequently, it's difficult to ascertain if the data is fully available and accessible to researchers.

Total	47	37

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	**21**	**9**
(i) Allowing alternative routes to certification	7	3
(ii) Using alternative routes to certification	7	2
(iii) Preparing teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage	7	4

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

Nevada currently provides three alternative routes to certification. These routes do not allow providers to operate independently of higher education, and until this upcoming fall will not include alternative routes for principals. Additionally, the states asserts that its three alternative routes, which operate under the general auspice of Alternative Route to Licensure, are selective in acceptance and provide supervised, school based coaching; however, the narrative does not explain how each route meets the elements listed in the alternative routes to certification definition in this notice.

The application asks states to describe the alternative routes to certification that are in use. This requires a looking back by the state of what has done, yet Nevada's application cast a vision about what it plans to do. While the narrative is compelling, it does not fully address the question. According to the application, zero principals were certified through ARL because an alternative route to certification for principals was not in place, and a little more than 10% of last year's first year teachers came through ARL. It would seem the teacher program is underutilized, given the teacher shortage needs in the state. The state's activity timeline describes how it will approve programs for accelerated routes and fails to discuss what providers may be in the pipeline (not associated with higher education) for implementation or/and scaling.

The state has a clear process that it has used previously for monitoring, evaluating, and identifying areas of teacher shortage. Importantly, the process examines the number of unlicensed teachers, which is assumed means any teacher that is not fully licensed. The state does not discuss in great detail how it addresses shortages for principals. The state's plan for preparing teachers and leaders is hinged on the state passing its Accelerated Alternative Route to Licensure. It's important that the state is thinking about codifying its new route to licensure. Since this is the state's only strategy, however, it would have been helpful to understand the state's opinion on the likelihood of passage and its plan if passage does not happen within the proposed timeline.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	**58**	**29**
(i) Measuring student growth	5	5
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	10
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	6
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	8

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

The state's narrative describes a thoughtful approach and process for measuring student growth. The state's decision to pilot the Nevada Growth Model of Achievement is a smart approach that allows the state to gather data from the field that will inform its full rollout. Another highlight of the state's approach is NGMA's ability to be integrated into the state's longitudinal data system.

The state's use of Betebenner's Student Growth Percentile is a rather thoughtful approach to student growth as it allows LEAs and schools to determine, not so much how much a teacher contributed to the achievement of a students, but rather if and to what extent did the student demonstrate an increase in student achievement. This approach is clear, and the state's decision to expand its use to high school in the 2010-2011 school year may reflect a commitment on the state's part to measure student growth and achievement on a student-level and use said data to inform its principal and teacher effectiveness discussions.

The state's plan for implementing differentiated effectiveness using multiple rating categories will not be fully implemented until the last year of the grant period and field tested in 2012-2013. The state's decision to field test its effectiveness rating with only 33% of its districts (or about 6 districts) does not seem ambitious, especially without information as to which districts are participating in the pilot. The proposed evaluation system does consider student growth as a significant factor, 50% of the evaluation. However, this may be watered down by the state's decision to have the other 50% based on data and information determined by each LEA. While this is not inherently a problem, the state through its narrative only highlights classroom observation as the other piece to the evaluation puzzle. This is troubling because the state offers only minimal guidance for observation standards; hence, this may have the adverse affect of a teacher being misevaluated. The evaluation for principal, on the other hand, is more robust and based on measurable objective data, such as college enrollment rates, grad rates, and employee attrition.

According to the Table (D)(2)(ii)-1, the state will engage its Principal and Teachers Association in establishing levels of teacher and principal effectiveness. The state expects to introduce legislation that establishes four differentiated designations in teacher and principal evaluation. The state, however, does not explain the ratings or its strategy for introducing legislation. Given the lack of detail on, for example, the state's definition of a minimally effective teacher is it is extremely difficult to have confidence that the legislation if introduced a) will be ambitious and b) be codified.

The application states that evaluations will be "designed with flexibility so that the frequency of evaluations may

be determined in response to an educator's experience, placement, and/or effectiveness indicators from the previous year's evaluation." Since the state has not developed its evaluation process nor included in its narrative a course of actions, it is unclear if the evaluations will happen annually, provide timely and constructive feedback, and include student growth for a teacher's students, class, and school. The section is big on vision and light on specifics. LEAs are not held accountable for conducting annual evaluations until the last year of the grant.

The state has a strong plan for ensuring teacher and principals receive appropriate professional development. By ensuring each educator receives an individualized development plan, the state is ensuring that LEAs and educators have a clear road map of their strengths and weaknesses. In addition, the state's decision to hold educators accountable for seeking professional development is another clear step that makes sure educators understand their performance and get the support they need. It is smart of the state to utilize outstanding educators in providing professional development. What is not clear is the state's decision to link professional development effectiveness to user evaluations instead of measurable outcomes (i.e., an educator's improvement re: student growth). Further, the state merely "request" LEAs use said data on professional development effectiveness to make decision, but does not actually mandate a link between development and outcomes. This may lead to the growth and/or continuation of ineffective programs.

The state lacks a high quality plan for addressing compensation, promotion, and retention of teachers and principals as well as granting tenure. The state punts on this issue, resolving to allow the to-be-created Teachers and Leaders Council take it up.

In reference to removing ineffective tenured and untenured teachers and principals after they have had ample opportunities to improve, and ensuring that such decisions are made using rigorous standards and streamlined, transparent, and fair procedures, the state once again punts on the issue. The state's plan lacks depth and detail on its process for removing ineffective tenured and untenured teachers and principals. This is understandable, since the state plans to wait for its Teachers and Leaders Council to set guidelines for granting tenure; it does not, however, reflect a high quality plan. It is also unclear how the state will incorporate the Race to the Top definition of effective teachers into its benchmarking for ineffective teachers and principals.

The state's performance measures explain that it will rollout its evaluation system by piloting the program in 6 districts the first year and ramping up to 17 in the second year. Since the state does not identify which districts will be included in the pilot it is difficult to ascertain if the plan is ambitious and achievable. The state does not explain if Clark County, Esmeralda County, or both will be included in the pilot. For a state that touts as a strength its ability to quickly mobilize its small number of LEAs and build consensus, it's inconsistent that the state plans to limit its pilot to 6 to-be-named districts and tasked many elements in this section to a future committee.

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

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

The state's plan for ensuring the equitable distributions of teachers and principals is a hodgepodge of activities that will take place within other workstreams. While the activities all say the right things, they are not supported by measurable timelines. A strength is that the LEAs will report via their Accountability Report Card their performance ensuring the equitable distributions of teachers and principals. The lack of performance measures makes it difficult to determine how aggressive the state intends to be implementing a very solid plan.

The state has a clear plan for increasing the number and percentage of effective teachers teaching in hard-to-staff subjects. The plan smartly attempts to increase the number of effective teachers in hard-to-staff subjects by 1) improving the quality of instructions (providing poor teachers with professional development) and 2) creating incentives for highly effective teachers. This should allow the state to build the capacity of its teaching corps, while it also examines expanding its credentialing programs. Curiously, the state's narrative does not discuss teaching in language instruction educational programs although it's included in its performance measures. This is a glaring omission in the narrative given the challenges the state faces, as mentioned in its narrative, with English language learners.

Also, the state's performance measures seem arbitrary at best. For example, the state expects throughout the life of the grant to have zero ineffective teachers in any school. As a goal this seems statistically impossible and inconsistent with the state's narrative that 1) all teachers can be effective and 2) ineffective teachers will receive professional development (not, I presume, be terminated).

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	**14**	**6**
(i) Linking student data to credentialing programs and reporting publicly	7	4
(ii) Expanding effective programs	7	2

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

The state's plan to give every teacher and principal a code that tells the data system the preparation program he or she attended seems like a simple cost-effective way to link the outcomes of educators to their pre-service training within its data system. Given the reality that most of its teachers and principals were trained out of state, the state model is smart as it allows them to capture data on educators' preparation program regardless of the school they attended. Nevada states that it will publicly disseminate the information; however, the plan does not include detail on how or when this will happen.

The state's plan for expanding high quality paths to licensure is underdeveloped. The section does not put forth a clear vision for expanding credentialing options that are successful, possibly due to a lack of quality data on the subject. In fact, it seems the state cannot identify which programs are effective and ineffective. For instance, the state, it seems, lacks the ability to say if University X's College of Education is more effective than its peers in producing math teachers. The state's vision for expanding preparation programs is equally vague. And, what information that state does provide (i.e., a desire to expand Teach for America Las Vegas Valley corps in high poverty schools) seems in tension with its desire to reduce the number of teachers "with less than three years experience in high-poverty and/or high-minority schools."

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

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

The state and its partner, Regional Professional Development Program, have demonstrated the knowledge and capacity to provide high quality effective professional develop to educators across the state. The building up of COMPASS, its data system, and E-MALL, online professional development resource center, should allow the state to expand its impact in this area. Its timeline for implementation explains a thoughtful course of action for getting there.

Because the state is expanding the capability of its data system and requiring all professional development opportunities to be evaluated through its data system, Nevada has the potential to see how its professional development has impacted student achievement in the classroom. The state, however, takes a lighter approach by using these systems to measure for "actual behavior change" instead of student outcomes. Nonetheless, the formative surveys should allow the state to assess and improve the quality and effectiveness of its professional development offerings.

Total	138	72

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

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

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

Nevada has the full legal authority to intervene directly in the State's persistently lowest-achieving schools and LEAs in corrective action..

(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	**40**	**30**
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	25

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

The state seems to have a high-quality plan for identifying its lowest-achieving school and its dropout factories. The state will apply its turnaround model to 23 school over three years.

The state clearly demonstrates that it has been exploring way to strengthen its school improvement process. It is curious that the state will be celebrating "successful turnaround schools" in 2010-11, when it does not expect to apply one of the four turnaround models until 2011-12.

The state does have a very smart approach to using turnaround intervention models: the state first does due diligence regarding a list of school-base factors then uses that information to inform the selection of a turnaround strategy. This approach ensures that the intervention model is a part of a thoughtful approach to transforming failing schools. The state's timeline seems appropriate as they are starting a year in advance to identify and engage poor performing schools and districts. However, it would seem that the state could have identified by time of submission their Priority 1 and 2 schools (bottom 5% of failing schools and poorly performing high schools). The absence of knowing which schools are Priority 1 and 2 and where they are located makes it difficult to understand how the plan will be implemented. For example, are the failing schools clustered in the largest school district or are they dispersed across the state's rural communities? This is important and a critical oversight.

The state does continue to explain the role of its to-be created Nevada Reform Office which will be providing TA to LEAs, partnering with RPDP for professional development, similar to their model for rural districts, and adding a parental and family engagement contractor as well as other supplemental services. This is smart and illustrates a model that is not compliance driven, but provides meaningful support to LEAs.

The state mentions that it gives turnaround schools additional autonomy based on the school's ability to meet its goals. However, since the state desires to turnaround schools in two years this strategy may not be effective as, depending on the model, greater autonomy after the first year may cause schools to backtrack.

Total	50	40

F. General

	Available	Tier 1
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	**10**	**6**
(i) Allocating a consistent percentage of State revenue to education	5	3
(ii) Equitably funding high-poverty schools	5	3

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

Nevada's total general fund support for education in terms of a percentage of the state's total appropriation and absolute terms have remained the same from FY'2008 to FY'2009.

The state has a unique statute that mandates that "the education budget must be approved before any other budgets can be presented." This seems to ensure that education is the number one priority for the state. The state provides equitable funding within LEAs as evidenced by its legislatively commission study, which concluded Nevada's "school finance system that is highly equitable in terms of inter-district spending." The state's assertion that funding is equitable between high-need LEAs and other LEAs is far less clear. The state

mentions that its statewide cost accounting system equalizes funding and allows the state to reallocate resources; however, the narrative does not say if the state has actually done this before to maintain parity or equity. While the plan may compel equitable distribution, it is not clear if it actually happens.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	**40**	**26**
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	5
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	4
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	7
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	2
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	8

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

At first glance, the state does have a charter school law that does not prohibit the number of charter schools that can operate in the state, quality notwithstanding. After examining the state's charter law, it is clear that the state's prohibition on converting public schools - even failing ones - to charter schools is a barrier. NRS 386.505, NRS 386.506

The state has statutes on how charter schools authorizers approve, monitor, hold accountable, reauthorize, and close charter schools. These statutes do not explicitly embed student achievement as a significant factor; in fact, according to the charter law the proposed charter school does not have to focus on student achievement. Every charter school is managed according to its charter, and a school could, for example, focus on "creating new professional opportunities for teachers." The law also seems to be silent on encouraging charter schools to serve student populations that are similar to local district student populations. The narrative mentions that since 2006 3 schools have closed; however, the narrative does not give the reason, so it's difficult to conclude if the closed schools were ineffective. What is striking is that in the past two years (2008-2009), 15 of the 16 applications were denied due to being incomplete and/or noncompliant. The statute states:

> If the Department denies an application, the Department shall include in the written notice the reason for the denial and the deficiencies in the application. The applicant must be granted 30 days after receipt of the written notice to correct any deficiencies identified in the written notice and resubmit the application.

The application does not address if the denied applications were re-submitted; this is important since it is possible that the state uses this filter to limit the number of charter schools in the state, especially given the fact there has been a 90% drop in applications for charters from 2009 to 2010.

The state's charter schools are treated and funded like traditional public schools. It can be inferred that they receive equitable funding compared to traditional public schools.

The state does not make any special provisions for charter schools to access public facilities or assist with leasing facilities. This has caused at least one charter school applicant to rescind its application and may have the affect of prohibiting potential applicants.

The state through its Empower School legislation enable LEAs to create or convert tradition public schools into autonomous innovative schools that control the majority of their budget, held accountable for student achievement, and, even, explore innovative pay structures.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	**5**	**5**

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

Nevada clearly articulates a record of support for education reform that will help advance its Nevada's Promise plan.

Total	55	37

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

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

Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Reviewer guidance for this section asks evaluators to "evaluate [this section] in the context of the State's entire application." The criteria also advises that "to meet this priority, the state's application must have a high-quality plan to address the need" outlined in romanettes (i), (ii), and (iii).

The state lists numerous activities and undertakings, such as the:

- expansion of the Pathways to Nevada's Future project to include additional schools across the state
- support of the development of infrastructure and professional development for increased use of hand-held technology for classroom instruction and assessment
- expansion of the Silver State Summer AP Institute to train more teachers to be ready to teach AP courses in Nevada.

Evaluated individually, each activity listed is important, yet these initiatives do not collectively reflect a broad comprehensive STEM agenda. Consequently, the narrative evaluated in the context of the application does not meet the standard of a high quality plan. It is as if, the state included all initiatives related to STEM instead of a plan for STEM.

Like other parts of the state's application, it plans to create a statewide coordinating board (e.g., Great Teaches and Leaders Council) to presumably put together a STEM agenda. Like in other parts of the review, comments describe how creating a council without providing detail on at a minimum the groups composition is not high quality, and they also describe how the lack of performance clear goals significantly prevent a plan from being high quality. Regarding Competitive Preference Priority 2, these two challenges work in tandem, stopping a list of quality activities from being a high-quality plan. In sum, it is clear that the state is addressing STEM; however, it is also evident that such activities have not been knitted together under a comprehensive and coherent plan of action for the state.

No points are awarded.

Total	15	0

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

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

Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

After review and reflection, it is clear that the state's application addresses all of the four education reform areas specified in the ARRA, albeit with varying degrees of success, as well as the State Success Factors Criteria. The state's theory of change, embrace of Common Core State Standards, success developing a robust longitudinal data system to name a few collectively work to affirm that the State and its participating LEAs are taking a systemic approach to education reform.

The State demonstrates in its application significant LEA participation and commitment to successfully implement and achieve the goals in its plans. The state clearly describes how it, in collaboration with its participating LEAs, will use Race to the Top and other funds to increase student achievement, decrease the achievement gaps across student subgroups, and increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers.

In sum, the state meets this priority.

Total		0

Grand Total	500	353

Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 1

Nevada Application #3450NV-6

A. State Success Factors

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

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

(i) Nevada provided a comprehensive, coherent agenda for implementing its *Nevada's Promise* reforms that would be supported through an RTT grant. The State clearly described its theory of action--Managed Performance/Empowerment (MPE)--which has shown success in increasing student achievement across the country. The applicant makes a compelling case that educational reform is key to rebuilding Nevada's shattered economy. Nevada's approach is powerful in its simplicity. All reforms are governed by three principles:

1. Every class will be taught by an effective teacher,
2. Every school will be led by an effective principal, and
3. Every student will graduate.

The applicant demonstrates how these three goals will translate into improved student achievement and readiness for college. Building on a history of recent reforms in each of the RTT reform areas, Nevada is positioned to move forward in implementing the aggressive goals of the RTT progam.

(ii) All 17 of the State's school districts demonstrated a commitment to the RTT effort. Nevada provided a detailed statement of work with the roles and responsibilities of the State and for participating districts. The State received universal support from superintendents and presidents of local school boards. All but two union leaders signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The union leadership of the remaining two districts indicated that support would be conditional on bargaining provisions. While many of the human capital provisions of the RTT reforms may need to be bargained, the number of union signatures obtained on the MOUs and the letter of support submitted by the Nevada State Education Association suggests that these provisions will be bargained in good faith. Clark County, which enrolls 73% of the State's students, provided signatures from all three entities.

(iii) With universal support from its 17 LEAs and a strong commitment to the work outlined in the MOU, Nevada's reforms have the potential of reaching and increasing achievement for all students in the State raising. In addition, the State is committed to providing intensive supports to those students most at risk of academic failure to ensure they will succeed.

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	29
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	19

(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	10

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

(i) Nevada demonstrated that it has the capacity to implement the RTT reforms and manage the requirements of the grant. The Nevada Department of Education (NDE) will be restructured to support the RTT reform agenda. The NDE will establish the Nevada Educational Reform Office to oversee the program with the support of 5 councils: (1) Standards and Assessment, (2) Data, (3) Teachers and Leaders, (4) Turn Around Schools, and (5) STEM. The management structure is strengthened by oversight from the Accountability Task Force which will provide external monitoring and reporting of NDE's progress in implementing the RTT reforms. Furthermore, the State has included funds in its RTT budget for one person in each of the 17 districts and one person to represent the 10 State-sponsored charter schools to serve as district implementation leaders. This will ensure that district leadership has input into policy decisions, and provides a direct channel of communication between the State and educators. The State also will hold an annual Nevada Reform Education Summit on Best Practices to share proven practices with the field.

The application provided evidence that it will use sound grants management procedures to monitor district expenditures and to ensure it is drawing down funds in a timely manner. The narrative provided a detailed discussion of its on-line grants management systems and identified the offices responsible for all fiscal activities. In addition to fiscal reporting LEAs will be required to submit quarterly progress reports to the State Board of Education, the Accountability Task Force and the State Legislature. This level of fiscal and program reporting will ensure accountability and transparency in how the grant is managed.

In reviewing Nevada's budget, it is clear that the State is proposing to use the majority of its RTT funds to make a one-time investment in building its infrastructure and capacity to support long-term reforms. Only 10% of the proposed budget will be used to support the salaries and fringe benefits of SEA staff. The State should be able to sustain this level of staff growth after the grant period ends. Leaders for the initiative will be placed both in Clark county, where 73% of the State's students are enrolled, and in Carson City where the SEA is located. The application describes clear lines of communications for all staff and how key staff will be organized. The applicant notes that detailed roles and responsibilities of key personnel were provided in the appendix, but this information could not be located; this resulted in a lower score on the criterion.

(ii) Nevada's application demonstrates that a broad group of stakeholders participated in developing the RTT reform program through the Blue Ribbon Task force and that there is genuine stakeholder support for implementing all elements of *Nevada's Promise*. The legislature recently passed a reform package giving the State the authority to implement several of the RTT provisions. Members of the legislature also will serve on the Accountability Task force. As mentioned above, a representative from each district plus a representative of the State's charter schools will serve on the leadership team. The councils that will support each of the reform areas will include policymakers, representatives from urban and rural districts, professional development leaders, members of the higher education community, teacher and administrator organizations, and state charter schools. Nevada received letters of support from teacher and administrator associations, schools boards, higher education systems and institutions, parents, and the business community including those who support the STEM initiative.

Nevada's budget details how it is leveraging State funds as well as other Federal funds to support its long-term reform goals. Additionally, the Blue Ribbon Task Force is charged with proactively securing additional funding to support systemic change. It appears that the State is committed to sustainability after the end of RTT grant period.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	28
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5

(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	23

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

(i) Nevada has demonstrated that it has a long history of reform in each of the RTT areas. Specifically, the State has made progress in the following areas:

- Ongoing review and revision of State standards and assessments to increase their rigor,
- The development of a State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) that now contains 11 of the 12 America COMPETES Act elements; the State has recently applied for funding to link the SLDS with the Nevada Department of Employment, Training, and Rehabilitation and the Nevada System of Higher Education to connect systems across the agencies,
- An initiative to reform the State's teacher and leader preparation programs as well as legislation to support performance-based compensation systems in high-needs schools. The State also used ARRA funds to strengthen its professional development outreach efforts, and
- Using ARRA funds to keep teachers in the classroom and provide instructional support for students. Additionally, the State used ARRA funds to convert more than 60 schools to Title I status.

The application details how RTT funds will allow the State to move beyond its current reforms in each of the four areas.

(ii) Nevada provided a thorough overview of how its students are performing on assessments and their rates of graduation, however, the results are mixed. While Nevada's students have shown growth on NAEP and state assessments across grades, they still score below national averages. Nevada has seen the achievement gap decline between some subpopulations such as between high and low poverty students. But gaps have widened between other subgroups including Black and White Students. Modest positive trends have been seen on the graduation rate which has increased by 2 percentage points from 2003 and 2008 with the gap narrowing between Black and White students and Hispanic and White students. Nevada attributes these modest gains in achievement and the graduation rate to such initiatives as increased rigor on state standards for all students, higher standards for Career and Technical Education programs, improved interventions for students with Limited English Proficiency, and improved school accountability measures and reporting. These are the areas the State intends to build upon in moving forward with its RTT reforms.

Total	**125**	**122**

B. Standards and Assessments

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

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

Nevada provided a copy of its Memorandum of Agreement as evidence that it is participating in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) consortium, which includes 51 States and territories. The application provides a detailed timeline showing that the State is on track for adopting the standards by August 2, 2010, including Nevada State Board of Education approval.

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

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

Nevada provided a copy of the Document of Commitment to participate in the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium which includes 45 states (as of May 18, 2010).

(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	20

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

The State provided a detailed timeline and plan for transitioning both to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments. The plan includes frequent meetings with various stakeholder groups to begin the roll out. The State intends to align the summative assessments with the CCSS standards by the 2012-13 school year. The State also will facilitate the development of formative assessments by the 2013-14 school year and develop State assessments for science and social studies.

The applicant acknowledges that teachers may not understand how to use assessments to inform their practice. Therefore, the State has proposed an aggressive professional development (PD) plan to help teachers understand the alignment across standards, assessments, curriculum, and instruction. The plan includes a range of PD supports including in-person workshops on on-line supports that will provide educators with hands-on training. The State will work closely with the Regional Professional Development Programs; the application includes details on how the two entities will collaborate and communicate on developing a cohesive PD program for educators. The Nevada Education Reform Office will develop the Nevada Curriculum Frameworks for the CCSS and science standards. These frameworks will ensure that teachers will understand what students need to know and when. The frameworks also will ensure that students who move or transfer will not be missing credit or repeating instruction. The plan for developing the Frameworks is strengthened by including classroom teachers in their design.

The State is applauded for its plan to develop coursework for its teacher preparation programs around the standards and for aligning certification standards to the academic content standards. This will allow new teachers to begin their practice understanding and incorporating the standards into their instruction.

Total	70	70

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

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

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

Nevada provided evidence that it has completed 11 of the 12 America COMPETES Act elements in its State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS).

(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	3

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

The State provided a detailed plan on how it intends to expand access to its various IT instructional systems to the educator workforce, but it is not clear how the various systems will interface. The narrative describes the Bighorn system that will be expanded to include the Electronic Media Access to Learning (E-MALL) and Comprehensive Oversight for Managing Performance to Achieve Student Success (CLASS). It is not clear whether these systems are redundant or if they contain different data elements. It is also unclear why the State would not invest in a single portal to make accessing educational data easier on the end user. The goals for increasing access to the various systems and portals may not be ambitious enough to ensure that all teachers have access to the data they need to inform their practice. The State

notes that there are 27,631 licensed, instructional support, administrative positions in 2009-10, yet it is striving to create 20,700 unique user accounts by 2013-14 with only 50,000 portal visits a year; this would translate into 2.4 portal visits per year. It also is not clear for which IT system(s) these goal are set.

(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	**18**	**8**
(i) Increasing the use of instructional improvement systems	6	2
(ii) Supporting LEAs, schools, and teachers in using instructional improvement systems	6	2
(iii) Making the data from instructional improvement systems available to researchers	6	4

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

(i) The State notes that its goal is to assign a unique user account and password so that every educator in Nevada can access instructional improvement systems. However, the application does not detail a plan and timeline for accomplishing this goal.

(ii) Nevada's discussion on how it will support educators for instructional improvement lacked cohesiveness and clarity. As with its other PD efforts, Nevada will work with the Regional Professional Development Program to deliver PD on how teachers and principals can use student assessments to inform instructional practices. In addition, the State will develop a series of PD modules to be delivered through E-MALL. The State also will upload data into E-MALL from a Clark County initiative that will provide "a one-stop-shop" for access to summative and formative data. Again, it is not clear how these efforts will be coordinated or if they are redundant.

(iii) Nevada has procedures in place to make data files available to researchers and provides a discussion on the types of research that have been conducted. The State plans to release growth data to the research community which will help evaluate the affects of programs and instructional materials on student learning. However, it is not clear if independent researchers can propose their own analyses, or if they must adhere to Nevada's research agenda. Independent research would be desired to facilitate an open and transparent evaluation of Nevada's educational policies, practices and strategies. It appears from the data request form that individual-level data files for students and teachers will not be released. This could significantly hamper the ability to conduct impact evaluations.

Total	**47**	**33**

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	**21**	**10**
(i) Allowing alternative routes to certification	7	2
(ii) Using alternative routes to certification	7	3
(iii) Preparing teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage	7	5

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

(i) Nevada provided a detailed plan and timeline for changing its alternative route regulations to incorporate all of the elements contained in the RTT alternative route definition. However, the criterion specifically addresses the legal, statutory, or regulatory provisions currently in place. Because only IHEs can currently operate alternative routes, high points could not be awarded. However, mid-range points were

awarded because Nevada's alternative route regulations contain 3 of the 4 remaining elements were in line with the RTT definition. There was no discussion on the criteria for alternative routes for principals; additional points were withheld.

(ii and iii) Nevada earns medium points for preparing teachers through alternative routes and high points for using alternative routes to address shortage areas. The State reported that 11% of new teachers in 2009-10 were certified through alternative routes and that 90% of those teachers were hired in Clark County. Until recently, Clark County was the nation's fastest growing school district making it difficult to keep up with staffing demands. In addition to its IHE-based alternative route program, Nevada contracts with Teach for America to assign quality teachers to high-need schools in Clark County. The State is not using alternative routes to grow its pipeline of administrators, therefore, points were withheld.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	**58**	**33**
(i) Measuring student growth	5	4
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	14
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	6
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	9

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

(i) Nevada provided evidence that it is on track in developing a measure of student growth. The growth measure, which has been piloted, includes both statewide assessments and local formative assessments. The State anticipates that the model will be revised as new tests become available. For example, the State currently does not have assessments in grades K-2, but is in the process of developing them for use during the 2013-14 school year. These assessments will be rolled into the growth model as LEAs begin using them.

(ii) The State is moving forward in developing an educator evaluation system in which 50% will include student growth (33% on summative and 17% on local measures of growth). In February 2010, the Nevada legislature paved the way to remove any legal barriers to linking teacher effectiveness to student achievement. The State is moving away from a binary rating of teacher effectiveness (satisfactory/unsatisfactory) to a system with multiple ratings of highly effective, effective, minimally effective, and ineffective educators. The planned framework for the evaluation includes multiple measures of effectiveness in addition to student growth including observations and previous evaluations. It is not clear from the narrative how the information will be used from previous evaluations. There would be concern if a poor current evaluation could be discounted if the previous evaluations were more positive. In addition to the elements contained in the teacher evaluations, principals evaluations will include indicators related to working conditions, teacher retention, and access to PD. The State details the avenues of participation for educators in developing and designing the system; both teachers and principals will serve on the Teacher and Leader Council which will collaborate with the NDE in creating the educator system.

(iii) The State indicates it is committed to conducting annual evaluations of its educator workforce, yet there are some concerns as to whether it is committed to rigorous annual evaluations for *all* educators. For example, the application states that "evaluations may be determined in response to educator's experience, placement, and/or effectiveness indicators from the previous year's evaluation." It is unclear from this statement whether educators might receive different or less frequent evaluations based on these criteria. This would be a concern if, for example, more experienced educators received a waiver from annual reviews. Educators will be able to access their evaluation information through COMPASS.

(iv) Nevada has detailed a plan to develop its evaluation system to assess educator performance and use the results to inform key personnel decisions. The State and LEAs will use the evaluation system for developing, compensating, promoting, and retaining educators. State laws will need to be changed to allow tenure and removal decisions based on the evaluations. However, there is a concern

about the targets the State has set to use the evaluations to inform key personnel decisions. Universal adoption of the evaluations by LEAs will not occur until the 2013-14 school year. With the exception of using the evaluations to inform PD decisions, only 33% of participating districts will be using evaluations to inform all key personnel decision by 2013-14. These targets seem low given RTT's push for aggressive implementation of the human capital reforms. Further, the State does not indicate if Clark County will be included in the 2013-14 field tests; without Clark County's participation, the majority of the State's educator workforce will be unaffected by the new evaluation system.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	**25**	**6**
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	4
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	2

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

The State did not adequately address the nature of its equitable distribution of educators between high/low poverty schools or in hard-to-staff subjects. In other sections of the application, the State refers to challenges in hiring qualified staff in Clark County as well as in the more rural communities of the State, but did not provide data to illustrate these inequities. At a minimum, the State could have provided data documenting its hiring challenges even if it currently does not have a measure of effectiveness. It is not clear whether the State explored--or has the capacity to explore--staffing inequities within districts. While the State provided an overview of its findings from its NCLB equity plan which revealed inequities between high and low poverty districts on teacher experience, it does not address other measures or data sources that might help pinpoint staffing inequities. The targets for ensuring equity seem low. For example, the percentage of teachers in schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both who are highly effective is set at 50% by the end of 2013-14. As with the previous section, the timeline does not seem aggressive enough to meet the spirit of the RTT reform drive. The State indicates that it cannot fully address equity based on effectiveness until the evaluation system is completed in 2013-14. However this is such a critical issue it is not clear why the State cannot develop interim measures to help it examine equity issues until the evaluation system is in place.

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	**14**	**5**
(i) Linking student data to credentialing programs and reporting publicly	7	2
(ii) Expanding effective programs	7	3

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

(i) The State did not provide a quality plan on how it intends to link student achievement and growth data to the students' teachers and principals, then link this information back to the programs in which the educators were prepared. As other sections of the application have demonstrated, Nevada is moving forward in developing a student growth model. However, it is not clear if the IHEs are collecting the necessary data to connect their systems with the NDE data files. The application does not discuss how IT staff from the NDE and the higher education system will collaborate to link the systems. The application also notes that it will be able to link to out-of-state institutions. This does not seem feasible given that few (if any) state systems interface with one another and because national student and teacher identifiers do not exist. Nevada may be able to provide general descriptive information on the out-of-state institutions, but it is highly doubtful that it will be able to link the student growth data to an IHE in another State. The State notes that it will make data available to the public, but does not say when they will be disseminated or in what format.

(ii) Nevada stated its intention to expand two programs that it has deemed "effective": 1) Teach for America (TFA) Las Vegas Valley Corps and the Aspiring Leaders Academy. The State noted that the TFA program was effective based on studies conducted by Mathematica Policy Research and the Broad

Foundation. The State did not provide evidence on how it measures effectiveness for the Aspiring Leaders Academy. The application also states that it will partner with effective teacher and principal preparation programs to serve as talent pipelines for turnaround schools, but does not provide examples of these programs or discuss how they will be evaluated to determine their effectiveness in working with this population of students.

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	**20**	**10**
(i) Providing effective support	10	8
(ii) Continuously improving the effectiveness of the support	10	2

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

(i) Nevada provided evidence that it has a long history of providing meaningful, standards-based professional development supports to educators. The State detailed a comprehensive plan to issue revised standards to which all PD must be held accountable, as well as shift the PD culture to one of job-embedded, peer-to-peer collaboration. In the future, the State's goal is to tie the new educator evaluation system to the creation of individual professional development plans. This approach will provide educators with the data they need to identify professional development that facilitates changes in their practice that will lead to improved student learning. The State plans to use RTT funds to support peer-to-peer collaboration in analyzing student data to make instructional decisions based on student needs. The State's application requests RTT funds to support increased mentoring and coaching to teachers across the State. The State also notes that it will align PD supports in the COMPASS and E-MALL portals with the Regional Professional Development Program's website. Again, it is not clear how these various websites and portals will interface.

(ii) Nevada does not provide a concrete plan on how it plans to measure, evaluate, and continuously improve PD supports in order to improve student achievement. The State plans to assess PD effectiveness through surveys of program participants. While these self-reports can contain valuable information to help improve trainings or workshops, they do not address the effect of the supports on student achievement. Furthermore, it is not clear how (or if) teachers will be observed in using PD supports in the classroom.

Total	138	64

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

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

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

Nevada provided a copy of its legislative statutes as evidence that the State the authority to intervene in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs.

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

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

(i) The State provided evidence that it has a method for identifying its persistently lowest-achieving schools. The method has been approved by the U.S. Department of Education. The State identified 10 schools that meet the persistently lowest-achieving definition and is estimating that between 5 and 10

schools annually will use one of the four intervention models specified by RTT.

(ii) The State has demonstrated that it has made a sustained commitment to turning around low achieving schools and will use lessons learned to improve intervention strategies using RTT funds. Nevada provided data on the number of schools that received interventions through School Support Teams, Restructuring, and Empowerment. While the State did not provide information on how successful these models were in improving student achievement, the State did describe some lessons learned. In addition, the State contracted with an independent evaluator to help determine what worked and what did not. Based on the lessons learned and outcomes of this study, the Nevada legislature passed legislation requiring specific strategies for turning around the State's lowest performing schools including a differentiated statewide system of support, the selective assignment of School Support Teams based on school need, training for all stakeholders participating in the school improvement plan, and improved reporting and monitoring to measure the success of the interventions. Using RTT and SIG funds, Nevada will continue to strengthen its turnaround interventions.

Nevada's plan is strengthened by the level of support and monitoring by the NDE to ensure that the schools are making substantial and rapid progress in meeting its performance targets. The State will be directly involved in helping the district leaders determine the best intervention model and negotiate an MOU between the State, district, and Regional Professional Development Programs outlining the roles and responsibilities for each party. Schools will be required to use a turnaround, restart, school closing, or transformational model. The State is committed to replacing the principal even in rural communities where finding qualified leadership can be a challenge. While the State will have oversight of the turnaround process, schools will be able to select strategies that best meet their needs based on a data profile. These strategies include extended day options, math and reading coaches, credit recovery for students, and dropout prevention programs. The interventions deal with the needs of the whole child and include parent and family engagement as well as behavioral and health supports.

Total	**50**	**49**

F. General

	Available	Tier 1
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	4
(i) Allocating a consistent percentage of State revenue to education	5	4
(ii) Equitably funding high-poverty schools	5	0

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

(i) The narrative indicates that the percentage of State funding available for education increased from 55% to 56% percent from FY2008 to FY2009. High points were awarded. It should be noted that Table F(1) indicates that the percentage of total State appropriations available to support elementary, secondary, and public higher education declined slightly from 56% in FY2008 to 55% in FY2009. It is believed that this table is in error.

(ii) While Nevada assures adequacy in district funding, evidence could not be located that it specifically addresses equity between high and low poverty schools and districts. For example, it does not appear that Nevada's school funding formula contains any weighting of allocations based on income or student poverty.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	22
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	5

(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	1
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	8
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	0
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	8

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

(i) Nevada provided legislative citations that demonstrate that there are no caps on the number of charter schools that can operate in the State or on the number of students who can be enrolled in charter schools. There is concern that State law prohibits the conversion of regular public schools to charter schools. This constitutes a barrier; therefore, medium points were awarded.

(ii) While the State indicated that a charter may be revoked for not meeting academic or educational results, it did not provide adequate information on how charters are held accountable for outcomes. The application does not detail: 1) the degree of oversight the SEA or charter school authorizers have in monitoring student outcomes in charter schools, 2) the renewal period, or 3) how charters are serving disadvantaged populations. Few charters have been closed since 2006 and the reasons for closure were not given. Charter school authorizer have rejected the majority of charter school applications mainly because of incomplete or late applications.

(iii) It appears that charter schools receive the same per pupil revenues as traditional schools. The State has developed a funding model where the funds follow the student from his/her home district to the charter school. In addition, the State provides a supplemental payment to make up for the lack of tax revenue.

(iv) The State does not provide funding for charter school facilities. While the narrative indicates that the legislature has the authority to help charter schools access funding for facilities, funds have never been appropriated for this effort.

(vi) Nevada has allowed districts to operate Empowerment Schools that enroll students not zoned to attend that school. Empowerment Schools can control 90% of its State and local resources and create incentive pay for all school personnel. In return for this flexibility, Empowerment Schools are held accountable for student achievement. Clark County currently is operating 17 Empowerment Schools and will open an additional 11 in 2011.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	**5**	**5**

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

Throughout its application, Nevada had detailed laws, policies, and regulations that demonstrate the that State has an environment that fosters and stimulates reform and innovation. While Nevada has a fairly small student enrollment compared to other states, until recently it was home to the fastest growing school district in the country. The State has been responsive to meeting Clark County's rapid growth in enrollment and critical need for teachers and leaders by opening alternative routes to teacher certification as well as growing charter schools and other autonomous schools. In addition to the ongoing reforms in each of the RTT areas described in Section (A), the State legislature has furthered reforms in the areas of parental involvement, class size reduction in the early grades, school-based decision councils, and scholarships for Nevada students who meet certain academic requirements to attend any college or university in the State.

Total	**55**	**31**

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	0

Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Nevada provides a list of STEM-related initiative across the State and across agencies, but indicates that STEM activities have not been well-coordinated. The State intends to use RTT funds to develop a concerted effort to increase the number of STEM majors in Nevada's colleges and universities. However, the application does not provide a quality plan on how it intends to achieve this goal. The applicant simply provides a list of all STEM initiatives across the State and says the State will establish a coordinating body devoted to STEM. The State does not address the make-up of the proposed coordinating body or demonstrate that it has the cooperation of industry experts, museums, universities, research centers or other members of the STEM community. There is no discussion of who might lead the body or a schedule for convening it. The application does not set goals or targets on increasing the number of students going into STEM-related field. The list of STEM initiatives mentions a Girls Math Camp, but does not provide evidence that it is meaningfully trying to increase the number of girls and women as well as other underrepresented populations in STEM-related educational programs and careers. The application does not define its underrepresented populations in STEM education or careers. The introduction of the application discusses Nevada's new vision for becoming the renewable/green capital of West, yet the State does not discuss the role of the STEM community making this vision a reality.

Total	15	0

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

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

Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Throughout its application, Nevada has demonstrated a clear vision of reform and a roadmap to achieve its goals. Nevada has articulated its theory of change and has demonstrated how it will be used to move the needle in each reform area. The State already has started implementing reforms in each of the four RTT areas and identified how it will expand these initiatives, who will be responsible for implementing them, and how they will be funded. Nevada has set ambitious goals, many of which can be achieved during the RTT grant period. Rather than growing the SEA, Nevada is focusing RTT funds on activities that will build its infrastructure and capacity to support long-term and sustainable systemwide change.

With universal participation from its 17 LEAs and strong support from a diverse range of stakeholders such as teachers and principal organizations, parents, the higher education community, and the private business sector, Nevada has an opportunity to move quickly in implementing the RTT reforms, In addition, the State has provided for authentic collaboration and communication among the NDE, districts, policymakers, and other stakeholders to ensure there is input and feedback throughout the system on policy decisions, as well as clear channels for disseminating information from the SEA to educators. The State has restructured the NDE around each of the key RTT reform areas but also has mechanisms in place to coordinate activities across the areas. Nevada has also provided evidence that it has the capacity and means to manage a grant of this size. Nevada is well-positioned to begin its Race to the Top.

Total		0

Grand Total	500	369

Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 1

Nevada Application #3450NV-7

A. State Success Factors

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

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

(A)(1)(i) The overarching goal for education in Nevada is governed by three core principals: every class will be taught by an effective teacher; every school will be led by an effective principal, and every student will graduate. Nevada's application asserts the state's commitment to renewing their pre-K-12 and post-secondary education systems and aligning efforts with economic development and industry.

Nevada sets forth the following education goals:

- Nevada's pre-K-12 education system will produce outstanding graduates with demonstrated mastery in reading, writing, mathematics, and science.
- Nevada's students who speak a language other than English at home will be prepared to compete in English-speaking workplaces.
- Nevada's graduates will know that they can compete for careers, which will benefit Nevada and the nation.

Nevada also commits to achieve five specifically targeted objectives of *Nevada's Promise* by 2014.

- Increase the graduation rate to 85% using the longitudinal cohort model.
- Reduce the achievement gap by 50% for the groups of African American-white and Hispanic-white on NAEP.
- Increase the number of graduates enrolling in post-secondary institutions both in-state or out-of-state by 50%.
- Increase the percentage of students proficient or advanced on the NAEP 4th grade mathematics (from 32%-50%) and 8th grade mathematics (from 25% to 50%).
- Increase the percentage of students proficient or advanced on the NAEP 4th grade reading (from 24% to 50%) and 8th grade reading (from 22% to 50%).

It does not appear to be explained in the narrative why Nevada has chosen to use NAEP exclusively rather than also its state ESEA assessment to provide data for its measurable achievement goals. It's possible the reason is that the state's assessments will change with the adoption of the Common Core State Standards, a reality that is discussed in the application.

To achieve the five targeted objectives (discussed above), the state presents four key strategies:

- Improve student performance through collaboration with key stakeholders such as parents, teachers, principals, employee associations, district administrators, state officials, community leaders, and legislators.
- Improve classroom instruction on rigorous and relevant content, including an emphasis on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).
- Improve classroom instruction and student performance using data at all levels - student, classroom, school district, state - to support the improvement planning process, evaluate the effectiveness of planned programs, and drive instructional decisions focused on increased student achievement.
- Improve achievement through the best practices that have been proven effective in Nevada.

Nevada's plan for school reform, *Nevada's Promise,* is based on a continuous improvement cycle designed to leverage multiple opportunities, including the Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems Grant, the School Improvement Grants, and RTTT. These elements guide the reform agenda in Nevada which builds upon the state's existing foundation of ADAPT: Alignment of systems, use of Data to inform instruction that will result in optimal student Achievement supported through Professional development to reach Targeted outcomes. ADAPT guides Nevada's state improvement plan.

Nevada's application declares that the education system will transform from a compliance-driven system to an outcome-oriented system. Their reform agenda is comprehensive and coherent. Its goals are clearly articulated and address the four reform areas from the ARRA. Nevada sets forth a clear path to achieve its goals.

(A)(1)(ii) (a) The MOU requires all participating LEAs to be supportive and participate in 100% of the activities detailed in the scope of work. The MOU is strong but does contain an "out clause" giving precedence to collective bargaining agreements and the process of bargaining. This slightly weakens the power of an otherwise impressive, broad-based commitment.

(b) Scope of Work - The scope of work is very basic and lacks any level of detail beyond the criterion title, but is adequate to making the key points and set the overarching expectations for districts. The narrative states that all LEAs have agreed to implement the entire scope of work, but Table (A)(1)(ii)(b) indicates that some elements have only 16 of the 17 LEAs participating.

Two critical elements of the scope of work now required by state law are linking student achievement to evaluation and the procedures and requirements for turning around persistently lowest-achieving schools.

(c) Signatures - All superintendents, school board presidents, teachers' association leaders, and charter school leaders signed the MOU and agreed to participate in the scope of work showing unanimous commitment to statewide reform. Two of the 17 union leaders signed conditionally, but the 15 that signed unconditionally (while acknowledging the MOU "out clause" discussed above) represent 97% of Nevada's teaching force.

Letters of support are generally strong, including those from unions. However, the letter from the Nevada State Education Association reiterates the "out clause" of the MOU discussed above. There are many letters from leaders of business and industry desperate for an educated workforce and many from elected officials pledging support. The narrative states the letters included are a mere sampling.

Overall, Nevada has demonstrated wide and deep support for and commitment to its application.

(A)(1)(iii) With 100% of LEAs participating, impacting 100% of students in poverty, the possibility for broad statewide impact is clear. Additionally, the low number of districts in the state will allow for more intensive communication, collaboration, and support. These factors combined put Nevada in an excellent position to achieve its goals related to increasing student achievement, decreasing the achievement gap,

increasing high school graduation rates, and increasing college enrollment.

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

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

(A)(2)(i) As Nevada's application describes, some infrastructure is in place, but it must be expanded to support the state's comprehensive reform agenda. Guiding the work is a theory of action called Managed Performance/Empowerment (MPE) of which managed instruction and earned autonomy are the guiding principles.

(A)(2)(i)(a) Nevada's application presents a strong stabilizing implementation infrastructure to organize and implement the plan. The Nevada Department of Education will provide the primary leadership with support and guidance from, first, the Blue Ribbon Task Force and, subsequently, the Accountability Task Force, which will serve as the external monitor of reform and will report to the public on the state's efforts.

The Nevada Education Report Office is the next line of organization followed by five councils (STEM, Data, Teachers and Leaders, Standards and Assessment, and Turn Around Schools). The Nevada Education Reform Office will supervise and manage all activities associated with implementation of the reform plan. The staffing of this office appears to be well thought out in terms of the numbers and specific skills necessary to provide a sufficient level of implementation support to LEAs. The five councils will develop guidelines and policy recommendations

Six identified offices in the Nevada Department of Education will serve substantial support roles. These are Assessment, Program Accountability, and Curriculum; Charter School; Special Education, Elementary and Secondary Education, and School Improvement Programs; Teacher Licensure; Information Technology; and Career, Technical, and Adult Education. Cross-district partnerships are already in place, and the application states these will be leveraged to further support the collaborative project structure. The application describes a strong organizational structure with sufficient cross-walking to ensure strong communication both internally and externally. It is noted, however, that Appendix (A)(2)(i)-1 referenced on page 29 appears to be missing.

The plan thoughtfully allows for additional *Nevada's Promise* leadership staff to be put in place in the two largest districts in Nevada, representing 88% of the state's student population. There will also be a coordinating staff position added for the newly formed Rural Coalition, a group to provide additional support and leadership for Nevada's fifteen rural school districts. Funds will be allocated from the state portion of the budget for one staff person for each of the 17 school districts to serve as the district's implementation leader for Nevada's Promise and an additional person to serve as the implementation leader for the 10 state-sponsored charter schools in Nevada. This allocation of staff from the state's budget demonstrates a respect for the amount of administrative work required to implement a plan of this scope.

(A)(2)(i)(b) As described above, the state's plan recognizes the support districts will need at the top levels of district management. In addition, the application describes how the Nevada Education Reform Office will provide leadership and management for the implementation of all project activities. It will also provide oversight for project deliverables and timelines. The reform initiative leaders in the Nevada Education Reform Office will comprise the Managed Performance/Empowerment (MPE) team. MPE is the theory of action Nevada is employing. One of the MPE's initial tasks will be assisting participating LEAs to refine their scopes of work to ensure 100% alignment with project goals and desired outcomes. Required

quarterly reports will maintain focus and allow for adjustments as necessary to keep districts on track to meet the plan's overarching goal.

Additionally, the application details plans for an annual Nevada Reform Education Summit on Effective Practices to support districts in their continued growth. Best practices will also be promoted electronically via E-MALL (Electronic Media Access to Leverage Learning). Financial incentives will be provided to encourage district partners to adopt and sustain best practices. This effort will be balanced by direct intervention support in districts not performing to the standards set in the scope of work.

Nevada's application presents a promising plan to support participating LEAs throughout the implementation process and to hold them accountable for results.

(A)(2)(i)(c) Nevada regularly administers grants in accordance with federal and state mandates. The narrative explains processes for executing expenditures and drawing down funds, providing fiscal supervision and guidance to LEAs regarding grant expenditures, reviewing and approving grant sub-awards to ensure the grant meets the award requirements, and providing technical assistance. The RTTT expenditures will be monitored by Nevada Department of Education program and finance managers and will be subject to review by outside and state auditors.

(A)(2)(i)(d) The application states Nevada's commitment to coordinating, reallocating, and repurposing education funds from other federal, state, and local sources so they align with the overarching goal of Nevada's Promise. The narrative throughout the application does not provide many specific examples illustrating this commitment going forward, but one example provided in a later section describes how School Improvement Grant 1003(g) funds will be used to promote Priority 1 schools. The project budgets do reflect activities designed to move the state forward in meeting its established goals.

(A)(2)(i)(e) The application states that the Blue Ribbon Task Force established by the governor to work on the key ideas for this grant application will continue to collaborate with stakeholders and legislators after the implementation of Nevada's Promise and will work with the state to procure ongoing funding to ensure systemic change. No other plans or processes for sustainability are discussed.

(A)(2)(ii) The application states that Nevada's alliance represents commitments and support from a broad array of engaged stakeholders in the public, private, and non-profit sectors. Their letters of support align with that assertion.

(A)(2)(ii)(a)Given the broad diversity of the state's various regions, it is noteworthy, as the application states, that teachers' and administrators' associations have collaborated in developing the state's RTTT application and reform plans and have encouraged the LEAs to actively participate in the state's efforts. The application states that the Nevada State Education Association as well as the two largest local teachers' unions strongly support the state's application. The letter from the Nevada State Education Association does, however, reiterate the "out clause" of the MOU previously discussed. In general, it appears that union support throughout the state is high based on the number of unconditional signatures.

(A)(2)(ii)(b)The application describes the strong support of the state's elected officials, leaders of business and industry, higher education, various education-related associations, and non-profit organizations.

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

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

(A)(3)(i) The application details previous Nevada legislation designed to reform and improve education in the state. The Nevada Educational Reform Act (NERA) of 1997, and amended in 1999, began the era of standards-based instruction, assessment, accountability, and aligned professional development in the state. The 1999 amendment created the Regional Professional Development Programs, which have become the core systems for providing training and technical assistance on content standards and instruction as well as administrative professional development. Also in 1997, legislation created the state's comprehensive data system known as the System for Accountability Information for Nevada (SAIN).

Standards and Assessments - The High School Proficiency Exam was established in the late 1970's. In 2009, the state legislature required the development of a growth model approach to measuring student achievement (implementation mandated no later that January 2011). Prior to the commitment to adopt the Common Core State Standards, Nevada was working to reform and increase the rigor of their standards, which speaks well of the dedication of the state's education population to continue quality work in this area. The application also describes how educators are working to increase the cognitive complexity assessed in the state's summative assessments which suggests a similar dedication in this area. The state's assessment system includes the Nevada Proficiency Examination Program for grades 3-8 in reading and math, science and writing at grades 5 and 8, the High School Proficiency Exam in grades 10 and 11, and NAEP. Most districts also have formative and interim assessment systems to guide instructional decision-making which will be an integral part of the state's success in meeting individual student needs. Graduation with a standard or advanced diploma is based on credit attainment as well as passage of proficiency exams in reading, writing, science, and mathematics. Nevada's application states that it has historically funded roughly half of the costs that pay for federal and state mandated testing and support, with federal funds covering the rest.

Data Systems to Support Instruction - As noted above, in 1997 legislation created the state's comprehensive data system known as the System for Accountability Information for Nevada. The state's data system has been improved over the years and now contains 11 of the 12 America COMPETES requirements. Nevada contributes approximately $350,000 annually to support and enhance SAIN. The state was awarded $6 million in 2007 to continue work on development of the longitudinal data system and has applied for $9 million for use over a three-year period from the Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems Recovery Act Grants. The state's work in this area is diligent.

Great Teachers and Leaders - The Nevada Teacher Quality Task Force was created in the mid-2000's. The task force made recommendations related to pre-service preparation, licensure, and ongoing professional development. The RTTT funds will provide the opportunity to develop and implement those recommendations and a new system that can then be maintained with existing resources. Legislation has been passed to support pay-for-performance and to provide incentives for teachers to work in schools with high percentages of students living in poverty. In 2005 and continued in 2007, the Nevada State Legislature funded $92 million to support school reform targeted at "Innovation and the Prevention of Remediation." Many districts used this opportunity to create mentoring and instructional coach programs for teachers. ARRA funds have been used to expand professional development for teachers. Much of the groundwork appears to have been done in this area to prepare the state to take the next vital steps.

Turning Around Lowest Achieving Schools - The application states that the state's laws align with ESEA requirements. In addition, a 2009 law made significant changes to the statewide system of support for the state's schools identified as needing improvement. The new statute called for a differentiated system of support and consequences. Since 2003, state and federal funds have supported the assignment of a School Support Team to every school deemed in need of improvement at year three or greater. State funds have also been set aside to support school and district improvement through teacher mentoring, coaching, formative and interim assessment development and use, and funds for making data available to

teachers and principals for instructional decision-making. The application notes the timeliness of the ARRA funds in Nevada to save teacher jobs given the horrific decline of the state's economy. The application does not note how it plans to compensate when ARRA funds are depleted, which is a concern given the number of staff that will be necessary to implement the state's RTTT plans.

Nevada's application does an excellent job of describing the progress the state has made in each of the four education reform areas and how it has used its funding to pursue reforms.

(A)(3)(ii)(a) According to information provided in the application, a recent Education Trust article identified Nevada as one of eight states and the District of Columbia that is a leader in making significant improvement across groups on NAEP. Nevada was one of four states and the District of Columbia to show gains in both fourth and eighth grade mathematics in 2009 as reported in the *Nation's Report Card.* Nevada increased fourth and eighth grade NAEP scores in mathematics from 2003-2009 and in reading from 2003-2007 at a rate greater than the national average. Even with these improvements, as Nevada notes in its application, the state continues to perform lower than the national average. On the state ESEA assessments, data shows the trajectory is upward in nearly every area except, notably, in high school math.

(A)(3)(ii)(b) The data provided in the application notes some improvement in the high to low poverty gap, with mixed results in other areas. A uniform system of school improvement analysis and planning has been in place since 2003 under the auspices of the Nevada Student Achievement Gap Elimination program (SAGE).

(A)(3)(ii)(c) The data presented shows that the graduation rate increased slightly by two percentage points from 2003 to 2008 with a slight narrowing of the gap. The application notes that the state is changing its graduation rate calculation method this year to a cohort rate.

Nevada attributes its gains to the very systems that will be enhanced and expanded through RTTT funding. Specifically, the application notes the state's focus on rigorous standards and content, the delivery of quality professional development, course alignment, support teams, data-driven decision making, and early childhood programs.

Total	125	113

B. Standards and Assessments

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

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

(B)(1)(i) Nevada signed an MOA with CCSSO and NGA on committing to support the development of the Common Core State Standards with a consortium of 47 states, two territories, and the District of Columbia. Nevada will also participate in the review and development of the proposed national science standards framework in the summer of 2010.

(B)(1)(ii) The timeline provided in Table (B)(1)(ii)-1 illustrates Nevada's adoption of the Common Core State Standards on August 2, 2010.

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

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

(B)(2)(i) Nevada signed the Document of Commitment to participate in the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) on April 15, 2010. This consortium of states is developing a high-quality balanced assessment system including summative, benchmark/interim, and formative assessments.

(B)(2)(ii) As of May 18, 2010, the consortium consists of 45 states.

(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	**20**	**20**

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

(B)(3) Nevada presents a coherent plan for implementation of the common core standards, common assessments, and data-informed decision-making tied to the various forms of assessment on progress toward meeting those standards. The state will employ its RTTT management structure to include The Teachers and Leaders Council, the Nevada Education Reform Office, Standards and Assessment Council, and the Regional Professional Development Programs.

The Nevada Department of Education will track individual educators in all professional development activities to study the impact of training on student achievement. Professional development will be provided in interpreting and evaluating data to inform instructional decisions to empower educators. Professional development will be research-based and job-embedded as per the Managed Performance/Empowerment Theory of Action.

Nevada will wisely develop a statewide course of study for pre-service teacher instruction to ensure alignment to the CCSS and assessments. In coordination with the Nevada Commission on Professional Standards in Education, knowledge of CCSS and the components of a balanced assessment system will be embedded in the teaching and principal standards and will be reinforced through the licensure system.

The Nevada Education Reform Office, with support from the Standards and Assessment Council, will develop the Nevada Curricular Frameworks aligned to the Common Core Standards for use by classroom teachers to ensure that mobile students within the state will not be disadvantaged. Nevada will draw upon its most effective teachers (P-20) to design the frameworks and accompanying classroom assessments, which should be a significant help to Nevada's teaching corps.

In addition to the job-embedded method mentioned above, professional development trainings will be conducted through technology, workshops, video/teleconferences, summer academies, and the creation of Electronic Media Access to Leverage Learning (E-MALL), a web-based portal of instructional resources. A professional development plan is being developed next school year to ensure that special education staff in particular are trained in the instruction of the Nevada standards, especially for those students who

participate in alternate assessments.

Nevada has thoughtfully addressed the needs of teachers and administrators at all levels in developing its transition plan.

Total	70	70

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

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

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

(C)(1) The application describes that Nevada has 11 of the 12 required elements in place. They do not yet have the ability to track college readiness test scores in their statewide longitudinal data system. Other elements are not as streamlined as would be ideal, but they are in place. An example is the connection with the higher education systems that requires a physical exchange of a compact disc with information rather than a seamless upload of data.

(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	4

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

(C)(2) Nevada plans to expand the number of users of its system's reports by including teachers, parents, and the community. With the expansion of the state's internal and external systems to access data, Nevada's plans include a focus on using student achievement data to drive decisions in regard to teacher pay, promotion, dismissal, teacher and school effectiveness, and the quality of teacher preparation programs. The internal access system, called Bighorn, will be expanded to include the Electronic Media Access to Leverage Learning (E-Mall), which is a web-portal to instructional resources, and Comprehensive Oversight for Managing Performance to Achieve Student Success (COMPASS), which is a web-based system to link student achievement to teacher and principal performance. The external access system through which parents and the community can access data (ARC) will also be expanded to provide the ability to view more meaningful data aggregates, such as effective schools, with the use of student growth data. All schools in Nevada have the necessary bandwidth to support these systems. The state's plans to expand both these systems seem well-considered and adequately staffed for success; however, the interactions among these systems are unclear from the description provided. Additionally, there is not a great deal of specificity in the discussion related to scale-up, though goals are stated.

(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	17
(i) Increasing the use of instructional improvement systems	6	6
(ii) Supporting LEAs, schools, and teachers in using instructional improvement systems	6	6
(iii) Making the data from instructional improvement systems available to	6	5

researchers		

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

(C)(3)(i) Nevada's plan to increase the use of data to inform instructional decisions has three strategies.

- Assignment of a unique user account and password for every teacher and principal in the state
- Professional development for all teachers and principals on accessing SAIN and using data in the classroom.
- Creation of a longitudinal data system access for research to identify best practices and program evaluation for post-secondary early warning systems to reduce remediation.

The state's Data Council will provide support for the implementation and expansion of SAIN, COMPASS, and E-MALL (all defined above). Throughout the application, the planned use of and training on these systems appears to be strong and adequately staffed.

(C)(3)(ii) Professional development on data use and practice will be delivered by the Regional Professional Development Program to rural districts throughout Nevada. Larger districts will deliver their own professional development with assistance from the Regional Professional Development Program if requested. Professional development will also be made available in myriad forms on E-MALL. The Instructional Data Management System currently being used in Clark County will be incorporated into E-MALL, providing teachers and administrators with a single portal to access formative and interim assessment data. The state appears to have considered the needs of its extremely diverse districts in planning for LEA and school support. They appear also to have, wherever possible, built on the strengths of existing systems and processes, acknowledging what works.

(C)(3)(iii) E-MALL will allow users to extract student achievement data based on social demographic profile as well as by instructional program, which will expand the ability for evaluation. The internal access data system (Bighorn) allows for more advanced searches. Additional fields to flag will be added to the system to provide even more information on students, such as tutoring, reading intervention, etc. to further aid evaluation. This use of additional fields to flag will make the information housed even more valuable to all analysts and researchers. Protocols and details of access are not well delineated.

Total	47	43

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	**21**	**11**
(i) Allowing alternative routes to certification	7	3
(ii) Using alternative routes to certification	7	4
(iii) Preparing teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage	7	4

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

(D)(1)(i) Nevada commits to revising and augmenting the state's current alternative paths to educator licensing which will also drive the redesign of traditional pathways within the state.

The Alternative Route to Licensure (ARL) participants must engage in prescribed coursework (number of credit hours and course content is specified under Nevada Administrative Code), and pass a national subject area exam. ARL participants are issued a conditional license and have three years to finish coursework and complete all requirements for licensure with a mentor's support. State regulations were adopted in the spring of 2010 for an alternate route to administrative certification.

Three alternate routes currently exist in Nevada.

- Special Qualifications License – for people with aligned work experience and a degree in the area in which certification is sought
- Higher Education-Based Alternative Route to Certification – higher education program that enrolls students in a post-baccalaureate teacher preparation program while concurrently employed as a teacher in a local school district
- Principal Pathway – certification through an alternative route that will enable teachers with three years of experience to pursue education leadership coursework and receive a full administrator's license upon completion of all requirements.

Table (D)(1)(i)-1 delineates how Nevada's ARLs meet three of the five elements of the definition of alternate route to certification under RTTT. All current alternative routes require providers to be institutes of higher education, though Nevada commits to creating additional routes in the future that can be provided independently.

(D)(1)(ii)Nevada's three existing routes are listed. One hundred thirty two teachers successfully completed an alternative program in 2008-2009. This number represents 11% of teachers certified in the state. No principals completed a program as it was just recently established in law. In addition to the existing programs, Nevada commits to develop an accelerated pathway for candidates to receive full teacher or administrative credentials within two years. The new programs will meet all five of the features of exemplary alternate routes to licensure defined in RTTT.

(D)(1)(iii) Nevada's critical shortage areas are special education, STEM areas, and for under-performing schools. Critical shortages are determined by the following data:

- The number of teaching positions that are vacant
- Teaching positions that are filled by teachers who are on a provisional license
- Teaching positions that are filled by teachers who are licensed but who are teaching in academic subject areas other than their area of preparation
- Teaching positions filled by long-term substitutes.

Nevada has worked with Teach for America to help fill the gap. Nevada will make a proposal to the Professional Standards Commission next school year (and seek statutory changes during the next legislative session if necessary) to authorize the new Accelerated Alternative Route to Licensure, create a list of criteria for providers, collect data on the effectiveness of teachers and principals and link data to the programs of preparation, and invest resources and expand participation in the most effective preparation programs that demonstrate the strongest results in student achievement. Though Nevada is moving strongly in a positive direction in this proposal, the fact that the application states statutory changes will be sought "if necessary" is concerning. This would be a rather significant part of the process, and though the Nevada Legislature has shown a strong support for educational reform, the timelines would be crucial to know going in to the process. The narrative does not explain why something so significant would not be known at this time.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	38
(i) Measuring student growth	5	4
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	12
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	8
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	14

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

(D)(2)(i) Nevada's application states: "By the spring of 2012, the NDE's Assessment, Program Accountability, and Curriculum (APAC) office will undertake leadership for calculating student growth on existing statewide assessments (annual and interim) as it pertains to measuring effectiveness of teachers and principals." It is not clear from this statement whether the office will begin work on the initiative in 2012, or if the effort will become operational at that time.

The Standards and Assessment Council will also provide guidelines to participating LEAs for calculating student growth on locally- or regionally-developed assessments. To assure comparability across districts, the state department of education will develop the assessments for calculating student growth, and the results will be available to all through COMPASS. No timeline is provided for this work, and it is not clear from the narrative what the difference is between the locally- and the state-developed assessments from which student growth will be calculated.

As part of the SMARTER Balanced Consortium, Nevada plans to replace its current summative assessment with a new one aligned with the Common Core State Standards.

Nevada piloted the Growth Model of Achievement during the 2009-2010 school year. This method became law in Nevada in 2009. The law requires Nevada to have a clear approach to measuring the achievement of students that can be tracked from year to year to determine school progress. The growth model currently provides information on students in grades 4-8 and links that data to teachers and principals, and the state plans to expand into high school grades next year.

By 2013, Nevada commits to develop additional measures to assess growth and progress across grades and subjects for every school, including those not assessed through the state's accountability system, taking into consideration both lower elementary grades and the mastery of content in high school. The plan narrative does not go into great detail about what these additional measures may be.

(D)(2)(ii) Legislation passed in Nevada in February 2010 requires student achievement to be part of the evaluation of teachers and principals. The plan states that in 2012-13 the Nevada Education Reform Office and the Teachers and Leaders Council will field test a system that differentiates effectiveness using multiple measures of student growth, for statewide adoption in 2013-14. This system will include the evaluation tools, training materials, and rubrics that will measure and report overall teacher and principal effectiveness. Nevada will also create standards for measuring teachers and principals.

Six principles will guide the work:

- The system will be fair, reliable, accurate, collaborative, and ongoing.
- The system will be grounded in student growth and achievement data.
- Principal effectiveness will include an analysis of retention and enhancement of faculty members' teaching skills through professional development.
- Evaluation will occur annually.

- Tools and training will be provided to ensure inter-rater reliability through the use of rubrics that measure performance.
- The system will differentiate effectiveness: highly effective, effective, minimally effective, and ineffective.

The system will be developed with teacher and principal involvement as well as from assessment experts, parents, and students. Given the starting point, the timeline provided is thorough and realistic, though, unfortunately, doesn't result in an operational system until 2013-14.

(D)(2)(iii) The application states that LEAs and Nevada charter schools will set annual goals to increase teacher and principal effectiveness each year. Both summative and formative evaluations will be conducted to provide educators with opportunities to course correct, recognize progress, reflect, and make informed decisions leading to increased student achievement throughout the year. The application does not appear to directly address the issue of ensuring that teachers are provided with the student growth data as part of the evaluation process, though that is implied elsewhere, so points are awarded.

(D)(2)(iv)(a) According to the application narrative, Nevada's process will be a collaborative partnership between teachers, content specialists, principals, and external reviewers trained in the evaluation protocols.

Five outcomes are expected:

- Educators will receive feedback on performance from frequent formative and a summative formal end-of-year review (which will include growth data when available).
- Educators will receive an individualized development plan following a summative review.
- Professional development will be provided as needed. Teachers and principals will be held accountable for accessing professional development. (Note: As phrased, this sounds like professional development is a consequence of a less than stellar evaluation. Even the best educator can use professional development to enhance existing skills or knowledge bases.)
- Effective educators will be identified. LEAs and the state department of education will then determine how to maximize their talent through opportunities at the school, district, and state level as part of a career ladder. (Note: No specific ideas for how are presented here, or even a plan to determine how.)
- Evidence will be provided for licensure renewal, career trajectory decisions, and tenure decisions.

Nevada plans for the system to become fully operational in 2013-14. Table (D(2)(ii)-2 indicates that coaches will be assigned to ineffective personnel.

(D)(2)(iv)(b) Currently, teacher compensation, promotion, and retention are based on tenure and collective bargaining agreements. The application states that Nevada will partner with local and state teacher associations and administrative leaders to transition the system from a tenure-value approach to a performance-value approach. The state department will also engage with districts and teacher association leaders to use educator effectiveness as the key factor when making promotion and retention decisions, including surplus and reduction-in-force situations.

Research for the new system will begin in 2011-12 with the goal being to create a compensation program that links salary increases to effectiveness, transitioning away from the current time-based step system. No timelines or firm commitments are provided for implementation of these systems beyond the plans that highly effective teachers will be given extra compensation to serve as coaches and to develop and vet high-quality instructional support tools. Also, a model is established through the New Teacher Center for science and math teachers and is currently being piloted for special education teachers across the state.

(D)(2)(iv)(c) Currently in Nevada, teachers receive tenure after a probationary period of one year with a

rating of satisfactory on three appraisals. The Nevada Teachers and Leaders Council will work over 2011-12 to determine how Nevada should approach tenure so that retention is incentivized, and the value of effective/highly effective teachers is demonstrated. This is a fairly ambiguous plan. The application lacks specifics or compelling direction in this area.

(D)(2)(iv)(d) Current statute does not support removal based on effectiveness determinations. The current system's "unsatisfactory" would equate to a rating of "ineffective" in the new system, so that determination of benchmark will come first in the planning for the new system. The termination statute will be reformulated for introduction in the 2011 legislative session.

The timelines for development and implementation of the new evaluation systems are reasonable but not aggressive and do not provide for full implementation during the life of the RTTT grant.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	**25**	**12**
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	6
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	6

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

(D)(3)(i) In terms of equitable distribution, the application states that only a 1% gap exists between high and low poverty schools related to the hiring of teachers with highly qualified designations, but a 14% gap exists between high and low poverty schools in terms of teachers with fewer than three years of experience.

Nevada presents ten activities designed to increase the number and percentage of effective teachers in high-poverty and/or high-minority schools:

- Put in place a comprehensive evaluation system that determines teacher effectiveness with 50% based on measures of student achievement.
- Collect evaluation data to determine which schools have inequitable distribution of effective or highly effective teachers.
- Increase the supply and geographical reach of effective national educator preparation programs to recruit, train, and support more effective educators.
- Create more selective and accelerated alternative route programs.
- Provide professional development to ensure what is offered is effective.
- Provide principals with summative evaluation data for every teacher.
- Include in principal evaluations an incentive for increasing the number of teachers who are highly effective, retaining effective and highly effective teachers, and improving teachers' effectiveness through their leadership.
- Incentivize highly effective and effective teachers to relocate from affluent schools to high-poverty/high-minority urban and rural schools.
- Partner with effective teacher preparation programs to increase the number of graduates in high-need areas and provide financial incentives for high-need schools.
- Incentivize National Board Teaching Certification for teachers and principals at high-need schools.

There is no discussion about reviewing prior actions to build the plan going forward, though some data is provided. The ten activities listed in Nevada's application lack teeth in terms of ensuring an equitable distribution.

The performance measures provided for this criterion indicate there will not be an ineffective teacher or principal in any high-poverty or high-minority school during the life of this grant (or in any low-poverty or low-minority school), but 50% of teachers and principals will be highly effective by 2013-14 when the system becomes operational. The application does not suggest where the ineffective teachers and

principals might go.

(D)(3)(ii) Nevada's application discusses plans to analyze effectiveness data for STEM and special education teachers to increase the state's understanding of the distribution of effective teachers in those areas. Additionally, Nevada will incentivize the opportunity for effective and highly effective elementary teachers to pursue an additional path to teach mathematics or science. The Regional Professional Development Programs offer an 18-credit certificate program in mathematics for licensed teachers in other areas. Those that complete the program are eligible to teach algebra for high school credit. This program will be scaled-up. Nevada will also work to re-evaluate the current coursework barrier in state licensure code for STEM subjects while maintaining the subject-area test requirement as the demonstration of content knowledge. Thus, the application discusses Nevada's identified hard-to-fill subjects, but it does not address other specialty areas like teachers of English Language Learners.

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

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

(D)(4)(i) The application states that Nevada will hold educator preparation programs accountable for the students they produce by measuring the effectiveness of program graduates and publicly reporting the data. Nevada's system will include coding for the 60% of teachers prepared in out-of-state institutions as well as those prepared in state. Nevada will use the resulting data to hold these institutions accountable by publishing the data on overall trends related to teacher and principal strengths/areas of growth. Data will also be used to shape decisions on possible attendees, recruitment strategies, and licensure/re-licensure systems. The plan for how this will be achieved is not delineated, nor is the critical link to student data emphasized.

(D)(4)(ii) Nevada plans for an expansion of both Teach for America and the Aspiring Leaders Academy provided by the Regional Professional Development programs. Nevada will partner with and provide expansion grants to programs that recruit and train effective teachers and principals. TFA will be one of those programs. Priority will be given to those programs that commit to preparing effective teachers for high-poverty schools, low-achieving schools, and schools in the rural counties. No timeline is provided for this effort in Table (D)(4)(i)-1, nor is the plan well defined.

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	**20**	**16**
(i) Providing effective support	10	8
(ii) Continuously improving the effectiveness of the support	10	8

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

(D)(5)(i) In its application, Nevada commits to professional development that is high-quality, data-driven, and job-embedded. Professional development will be responsive to student data and center around the alignment of standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

The timeline in Table (D)(5)(i)-1 lists coaching and mentoring as activities to be developed. Coaches will be assigned to teachers and principals whose evaluation data indicates needed improvement.

Regional Professional Development Programs developed standards for professional development in 2003, and those will provide the guidance for future professional development. Key Professional Development Strategies include (in addition to using the established Regional Professional Development Programs), using COMPASS to track professional development, implementation of active peer-to-peer collaboration, and coordination and enhancement of ongoing professional development systems.

Twelve rural school districts are currently implementing the Instructional Consultation Teams Model, which targets shoulder-to-shoulder skills development regarding the assessment of student need and the differentiation of instruction to meet individual student needs. This model will be scaled-up as well as others that focus on peer-supported, job-embedded professional development.

Nevada has an Urban Teacher Mentoring Program and will move forward to measure the program's effectiveness for possible future expansion.

Standards will be developed for Professional Learning Communities for teachers and principals as well as Structured Teacher Planning Time teams. The Regional Professional Development Programs will create a framework for a leadership mentor program for principals in high-poverty/high-minority schools and/or persistently low-achieving schools.

One weakness of the plan in terms of implementation timelines is that the plan centers around what will be built in the future based on data yet to come rather than on what they now know from existing data. Overall, however, the plan is thorough and consistent with the rest of the application, and the application taken in total demonstrates a strong commitment to support for teachers and principals.

(D)(5)(ii) The current and proposed system to evaluate professional development is based on surveys. No mention is made in this section of tying specific types of professional development to the teachers receiving it for effectiveness data, but that plan is asserted earlier in the application, so points are awarded. The plan is not well developed.

Total	138	86

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

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

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

(E)(1) State law gives the Nevada Department of Education full authority to intervene in all of the state's persistently lowest-achieving schools and in all districts designated as being in the third year or beyond of needing improvement.

Schools in year three of needing improvement must administer the Nevada Comprehensive Curriculum Audit Tool for Schools. Over the past six years, Nevada has had only one district reach the status of being in need of improvement for three years. The state department of education worked with that district which then made AYP for two consecutive years and was removed from the status of needing improvement.

Nevada developed the Student Achievement Gap Elimination (SAGE) school improvement process which is

the required process for Title I schools designated as in need of improvement. SAGE has also become the framework for school improvement for all other schools. SAGE is designed to help external facilitators, administrators, teachers, parents, and community members participate in a continuous improvement cycle that identifies potential barriers, reveals inherent strengths, and outlines a way to move the school forward.

(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	**40**	**31**
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	26

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

(E)(2)(i) Nevada identifies its lowest achieving schools in accordance with the state's federally approved definition, which considers both the growth and proficiency status of every student in each school across Nevada. In addition to the rank values schools receive, high schools with a graduation rate less than 60% over the past four years are also identified as persistently low-achieving.

(E)(2)(ii) Since NCLB was enacted, Nevada law has required the establishment of a School Support Team for every school designated In Need of Improvement Year 3 or beyond. Nevada partnered with the American Institutes for Research to conduct a study of the school improvement process, which resulted in a number of recommendations for the system's improvement. Based on the study, the state department of education and the state legislature responded by developing the following key strategies to transform the lowest-achieving schools into high-performing schools:

- A differentiated system of support is now in place.
- School Support Teams are now selectively assigned.
- A system is being formalized for school and district feedback on the impact of the differentiated system of support.
- Training must be provided to all stakeholders participating in the school improvement system.
- Reporting requirements in the school improvement process will be reduced and revised.
- There will be improved monitoring of School Improvement Plan quality and implementation.
- Timing issues around the improvement process will be systemically addressed.

The narrative indicates that *Nevada's Promise* will focus on building capacity at the state, district, and regional level to turnaround schools that otherwise might decline into needs improvement status. Each school will have specific targeted outcomes.

Through partnerships with industry, community, and legislative leaders, Nevada will look to identify new resources and revise policies to ensure that existing resources can be reallocated to impact high-needs schools to ensure equity.

Using the *Decision-Making and Planning Tool* developed by the Center on Innovation and Improvement in concert with the state's curriculum audit tool, the Nevada Education Reform Office will assist districts in their efforts to select the most appropriate of the four intervention models. A Memorandum of Understanding will be created with the state department of education, the school district, and the Regional Professional Development Programs describing expectations for data collection, reporting, and continuous monitoring and evaluation practices. Nevada's plans and procedures for selecting the best-fit intervention model appear thorough and designed to focus efforts where they are most needed. Since the application later discusses the models chosen by the currently-eligible schools/districts, it is assumed

these processes have already occurred.

Nevada will have four levels of priority for its low-achieving schools. For the 2010-11 school year, Nevada anticipates that ten Priority 1 schools will be served through the School Improvement Grant 1003(g) funds. Three of four eligible districts are competing for those funds with plans to implement the Turnaround Model in two schools and the Transformation Model in nine schools. In 2011-12, three additional schools are anticipated to be served with School Improvement Grant 1003(g) dollars. In 2010-11, five Priority 2 schools will be identified and will begin planning for implementation of the intervention model during the 2012-13 school year. Five more schools will be identified in 2012-13. Funds will be RTTT dollars.

All priority 1 and 2 schools identified will sustain implementation of the selected intervention model for a period of three years, with radical change demanded within two years. Close monitoring will occur with increasing levels of direct intervention when data suggest that such support/consequences are needed. Professional development will be prioritized for these schools with staff being held accountable for demonstrating mastery of concepts addressed in the professional development. Fiscal resources will be targeted to areas of need based on various forms of data, and direct support will be provided to building administrators to ensure that the schools deliver on promises made to stakeholders.

Priority 3 and 4 schools will receive scaffolded support in keeping with Nevada's managed performance approach. RTTT funds will be used to support these schools with a targeted focus on using funds to extend the school day or year and to embrace early childhood opportunities.

Nevada will provide comprehensive technical assistance using their structures of the Nevada Education Reform Office and the Turn-Around Schools Council. Nevada will broker professional development in the areas of common core standards and formative assessment; continuous support and constructive feedback; mentorship; curriculum and instruction; and access to expertise, resources, and effective practices. The Regional Professional Development Programs will be the central source of support for these efforts.

A Parent Engagement Specialist will be added to the staff of the Nevada Education Reform Office to assist schools and districts in developing plans that fully utilize what parents can bring to the education of their children. The application does not discuss how this individual will interact with the state's expanded education infrastructure.

Recognizing the importance of the health and wellness of the family to a child's school success, the *Nevada's Promise Office* will connect schools and districts with comprehensive support programs (such as health, mental health, nutrition, family support services, and supplemental educational services) to meet the needs of students. The application does not fully delineate how this will occur, but acknowledging and planning for this vital element is key.

Nevada's decision to use School Improvement Grant funds to support priority 1 schools and RTTT funds to support priority 2, 3, and 4 schools shows a responsible approach and focus on the priority 1 schools since RTTT funds are not guaranteed. The various tools provided to assist schools in self-analysis and in the selection of intervention models are strong.

In terms of the requested evidence for this criterion, Table (E)(1)(i)-1 provides some of this information in terms of approaches used and the numbers of schools impacted, but no results data appear in that table or elsewhere in the application. No schools have been turned around using one of the four intervention models in RTTT, however, 139 have had some element of intervention under Nevada's laws and regulations.

Total	50	41

F. General

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

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

(F)(1)(i) The narrative indicates that the percentage of state revenues allocated to education have remained stable despite the economic hard times in the state. According to the narrative, though actual dollars were less in 2009 than in 2008, the percentage of available funds was actually slightly higher. Unfortunately, the data provided in Table (F)(1)-1 shows exactly the opposite. I am hopeful that the table contains the mistake, and in the interest of erring on the side of the state, I am awarding full points. If Nevada makes it into Tier II, this issue can be resolved at panel.

(F)(1)(ii) Nevada law requires that the education budget be passed before any other budgets for the state can be presented. The "Nevada Plan" is the state's guarantee and legislative declaration "that the proper objective of state financial aid to public education is to ensure each Nevada child a reasonably equal educational opportunity." The Nevada Plan established the Distributive School Account to "supplement local financial ability to whatever extent necessary" and to provide the means by which Nevada meets its guaranteed financial support to school districts.

An adequacy study was performed on the Nevada Plan by a private firm to verify that it provides adequate education opportunities for Nevada's students. The firm found that the plan provides a school finance system that is highly equitable in terms of inter-district spending, and made no recommendations to alter the plan for equity purposes. Intra-district spending, however, is not discussed.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	**40**	**22**
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	5
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	3
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	5
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	2
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	7

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

(F)(2)(i) Nevada has no cap on the number of charter schools in the state and no restriction on the number of students who may enroll in charters. Twenty-eight charter schools are currently operating, representing 2.86% of students enrolled in public schools. The application states that in 2011, a Senate Bill will be presented in the state legislature to establish a Nevada Charter School Institute, creating an 18th LEA to further expand charter schools. Once established, all charters sponsored by the state board will transfer to the sponsorship of the Institute. Charters sponsored by districts or higher education will have their choice. Examining the state charter law provided, however, reveals a potentially significant barrier in that existing public schools cannot be converted to charter schools.

(F)(2)(ii) In Nevada, a charter school application includes a statement of goals including "the time by which certain academic or educational results will be achieved." If the academic or education results identified in a charter school's application are not met by the time identified in the application, the charter can be revoked. The charter may also be revoked with terms or conditions of the charter or fiscal mismanagement. The narrative indicates that five ineffective charter schools have had their charters revoked, but apparently not just in the past five years, as that data does not match that provided in the table. The application does not appear to discuss the process by which charters are monitored or reauthorized.

(F)(2)(iii) The application notes that charter schools are public schools and, therefore, come under the funding obligation of the Nevada Plan guarantee. It is not clear from the discussion how state-sponsored charter schools fare in relationship to locally-sponsored charter schools due to the impact of local taxes in support of schools.

(F)(2)(iv) The law allows for certain types of charter schools that are performing effectively to access facilities funding, but the legislature has not yet appropriated funding for this purpose. Charter schools may use any public facility located within the district where the charter is located and may use school buildings owned by the district upon approval of the board (but not during regular school hours). In sum, the state provides no assistance for charter schools in terms of funding for facilities, facilities acquisition, or the ability to share in bonds.

(F)(2)(v) State law in Nevada has established a Program of Empowerment Schools for public schools within the state. Also, the law allows that the "board of trustees of a school district may prescribe rules relating to the creation and administration of a program of school-based decision making for public schools within the district." The State of Nevada's Empowerment Schools provide a framework for the control that school personnel exercise over school resources. An empowerment school may control 90% of its apportionment from state and local resources, enroll students who are not zoned to attend the school, and create an incentive pay structure for all school personnel. Though the law still exists, state funding for these schools has been suspended due to budget constraints.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	**5**	**5**

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

(F)(3) The application offers several examples of laws, regulations, policies, or other conditions favorable to education reform in the state.

- Nevada law creates the account for Programs for Innovation and Prevention of Remediation. When funded, these programs improved student achievement, particularly for students in poverty, English Language Learners, and students with disabilities, according to an external evaluator.
- Class size reduction legislation exists for the early grades.
- The Commission on Educational Technology awards appropriated funds to expand educational technology.
- State law established the Parental Involvement Advisory Council to work with the State PTA and advise the state department of education and the legislature on strategies for expansion of meaningful parent involvement to support improved student achievement.
- State law provides for School-Based Decision Councils for public schools within districts and allows

the State Board of Education to waive specific regulatory requirements.
- State law provides for the availability of Millennium Scholarships for use in any Nevada State college or university for Nevada high school graduates who meet certain academic and residency requirements.

Total	55	35

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

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

Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

STEM initiatives and supports run throughout Nevada's application and encompass the full range of the education system from early elementary through higher education, provide the necessary supports in terms of infrastructure and professional development, and involve Nevada's already vast STEM community.

Total	15	15

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

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

Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Nevada's application comprehensively and coherently addresses all of the four education reform areas specified in the ARRA as well as the State Success Factors Criteria. The state's application demonstrates that it and its participating LEAs are taking a systemic approach to education reform.

Nevada demonstrates in its application sufficient LEA participation and commitment to successfully implement and achieve the goals in its plans. The application makes clear how the state, in collaboration with its participating LEAs, plans to use Race to the Top and other funds to increase student achievement, decrease the achievement gaps across student subgroups, and increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers.

Total		0

Grand Total	500	403

Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 1

Nevada Application #3450NV-5

A. State Success Factors

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

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

(A)(1)(i) Nevada has set forth a comprehensive and coherent reform agenda that clearly articulates its goals for implementing reforms in the four education areas described in the ARRA and improving student outcomes statewide. The state has established a clear and credible path to achieving these goals, which are consistent with the specific reform plans that the state has proposed throughout its application. For example, Nevada's Promise, a wide ranging reform agenda developed with broad stakeholder support.

(A)(1)(ii) - Participating LEAs (100%) are strongly committed to the state's plan and for effective implementation of reform in the four education areas, as evidenced by the Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs). The MOU outlines: (a) Terms and conditions that reflect a strong commitment by the participating LEAs to the state's plans; (b) Scope of work descriptions that require participating LEAs to implement all or significant portions of the State's Race to the Top plans; and (c) Signatures from LEA superintendents (100%), presidents of the local school board (100%), and the local teachers' union leaders (88%).

(A)(1)(iii) One hundred percent of the LEAs are participating in the state's Race to the Top plans, this includes: all schools,all K-12 students, and all students in poverty. This rate of participation will translate into broad statewide impact, allowing the state to reach its ambitious yet achievable goals, overall, and by student subgroup, for— (a) Increasing student achievement in reading/language arts and mathematics, as reported by the NAEP and the assessments required under the ESEA; (b) Decreasing achievement gaps between subgroups in reading/language arts and mathematics, as reported by the NAEP and the assessments required under the ESEA; (c) Increasing high school graduation rates and (d) Increasing college enrollment and increasing the number of students who complete at least a year's worth of college credit that is applicable to a degree within two years of enrollment in an institution of higher education.

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

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

(A)(2)(i) The state has articulated a comprehensive structure to ensure that it has the capacity required to implement its proposed plans by— (a) Providing strong leadership and dedicated teams to implement the statewide education reform plans the state has proposed, for example, a Blue Ribbon Taskforce with reporting sub councils for Standards and Assessment, Data, Teachers and Leaders, and Turnaround Schools.

(b) Plans are in place to support participating LEAs in successfully implementing the education reform plans the state has proposed, such as identify promising practices, evaluating these practices' effectiveness, ceasing ineffective practices, widely disseminating and replicating the effective practices statewide, holding participating LEAs accountable for progress and performance, and intervening where necessary. This will be accomplished in part by leadership activities emanating from various offices within the SEA and through stakeholder groups designed for this purpose.

(c) The state will provide effective and efficient operations and processes for implementing its Race to the Top grant in such areas as grant administration and oversight, budget reporting and monitoring, performance measure tracking and reporting, and fund disbursement.

(d) The state presents a reasonable plan for using the funds from this grant, as described in the state's budget and accompanying budget narrative, to accomplish the state's plans and meet its targets, including, where feasible, by coordinating, reallocating, or redirecting education funds from other Federal, State, and local sources so that they align with the State's Race to the Top goals.

(e) The state addresses in its plan how it will use the fiscal, political, and human capital resources of the state to continue, after the period of funding has ended, those reforms funded under the grant for which there is evidence of success.

(A)(2)(ii) The state presents extensive evidence of support from a broad group of stakeholders to better implement its plans, as evidenced by the strength of statements or actions of support from: (a) The state's teachers and principals, which include the state's teachers' unions or statewide teacher associations; and (b) Other critical stakeholders, such as the state's legislative leadership; charter school authorizers and state charter school membership associations, other state and local leaders., the business, community, civil rights, and education association leaders, community organizations, parent and teacher associations, nonprofit organizations, local education foundations, and community based organizations and institutions of higher education.

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

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

(A)(3)(i) The state has made modest progress over the past several years in each of the four education reform areas, and used its ARRA and other Federal and State funding to pursue such reforms. Clear evidence is presented in the application regarding the efforts made to target ARRA funding to priority reform areas.

(A)(3)(ii) The state has made some improvement in student outcomes overall and by student subgroup since at least 2003. Furthermore, the application explains the connections between the data and the actions that have contributed to:

(a) Increasing student achievement in reading/language arts and mathematics, both on the NAEP and on the assessments required under the ESEA. For example, gains in 4th and 8th grade 2009 NAEP in reading and math, and a two percent improvement in the graduation rate.

(b) Decreasing achievement gaps between subgroups in reading/language arts and mathematics, both on the NAEP and on the assessments required under the ESEA. Here, for example, the state reports overall positive progress for all groups, but a persistent achievement gap, with the exception of a small improvement in the white/Hispanic gap from 2004 to 2008.

(c) Increasing high school graduation rates. Again, modest (2%) positive increases are reported by the state.

Total	125	115

B. Standards and Assessments

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

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

(B)(1)(i) The state has been a participant in the Common Core State Standards since 2009. These standards are being developed by a consortium of states that— (a) is working toward jointly developing and adopting a common set of K-12 standards that are supported by evidence that they are internationally benchmarked and build toward college and career readiness by the time of high school graduation; and (b) includes a significant number of states.

(B)(1)(ii) The state indicates in its application that plans to adopt the Common Core State Standards by August 2010.

(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	10
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality assessments	5	5
(ii) Including a significant number of States	5	5
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)		
(B)(2)(i) Nevada is an active member of the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium and is working toward jointly developing and implementing common, high quality assessments aligned with the consortium's common set of K-12 standards. (B)(2)(ii) The SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium includes a significant number of states.		
(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	20
(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)		
(B)(3) Nevada has a well developed plan to transition to enhanced standards and high quality assessments. The state presents a compelling history of its long standing efforts in this area. These efforts have been undertaken in collaboration with its participating LEAs. A high quality plan for supporting a statewide transition to and implementation of internationally benchmarked K-12 standards that build toward college and career readiness by the time of high school graduation, and high quality assessments tied to these standards is outlined in the application. These plans include state and LEA activities that envision: developing an implementation plan for the standards together with all of their supporting components; in cooperation with the state's institutions of higher education, aligning high school exit criteria and college entrance requirements with the new standards and assessments; developing or acquiring, disseminating, and implementing high quality instructional materials and assessments including, for example, formative and interim assessments; developing or acquiring and delivering high quality professional development to support the transition to new standards and assessments; and engaging in a variety of strategies that translate the standards and information from assessments into classroom practice for all students, including high need students. These plans include the involvement of the several Councils and Task Forces established by the state for this purpose. The necessary broad support and infrastructure are planned or in place to make the transition, for example, E-MALL, COMPASS, Regional Professional Centers.		
Total	70	70

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	22
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)		
(C)(1) The state is well on its way to fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system that includes all of the America COMPETES Act elements. Yet to be accomplished is the student level college readiness test scores.		
(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	5
(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)		
(C)(2) Accessing and using State data - The State has a high quality plan to ensure that data from the state's statewide longitudinal data system are accessible to, and used to inform and engage, as appropriate, key stakeholders, such as, parents, students, teachers, principals, LEA leaders, community members, unions, researchers, and policymakers; and that the data support decision makers in the continuous improvement of efforts in such areas as policy, instruction, operations, management, resource allocation, and overall effectiveness. The plan calls for expanding access from the current 200 users to over 20,000. Training in the use of the dashboard system and security issues related to personally identifiable student and teacher information are also planned.		
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	18
(i) Increasing the use of instructional improvement systems	6	6
(ii) Supporting LEAs, schools, and teachers in using instructional improvement systems	6	6
(iii) Making the data from instructional improvement systems available to researchers	6	6

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

(C)(3)(i) - The applicant already has a record of using data systems for instructional improvement. Its largest school district already has such a system in place that provides teachers, principals, and administrators with the information and resources they need to inform and improve their instructional practices, decision making, and overall effectiveness. The state plan anticipates expanding the already existing COMPASS system to accomplish the objectives of this requirement throughout the state as well.

(C)(3)(ii) - Detailed and credible plans are outlined in the application relative to providing support to participating LEAs and schools. This support will helps LEAs and schools use the instructional improvement systems, and provide professional development to teachers, principals, and administrators on how to use these systems, and the use of resulting data to support continuous instructional improvement.

(C)(3)(iii) The state expects to make the data from instructional improvement systems together with statewide longitudinal data system data, available and accessible to researchers so that they have detailed information with which to evaluate the effectiveness of instructional materials, strategies, and approaches for educating different types of students, such as, students with disabilities, English language learners, students whose achievement is well below or above grade level.

Total	47	45

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	13
(i) Allowing alternative routes to certification	7	2
(ii) Using alternative routes to certification	7	4
(iii) Preparing teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage	7	7

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

(D)(1)(i) The state has regulatory provisions (Alternative Routes to Licensure) that allow alternative routes to certification for teachers. However, no alternatives for exist for aspiring principals. There are no provisions listed in the application that allow for providers in addition to institutions of higher education to participate in the licensure process. The state is also a participant in Teach for America.

(D)(1)(ii) Alternative routes to certification are in use for teachers, but not for principals.

(D)(1)(iii) The state has a well established process for monitoring, evaluating, and identifying areas of teacher and principal shortage and for preparing teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage.

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

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

(D)(2)(i) Nevada has established an approach for measuring student growth and measure it for each individual student. Plans are enumerated in the application for revising its methods by 2012 through its Standards and Assessment Council in conjunction with its efforts with the Smarter Balance Assessment program. The state uses the Nevada Growth Model of Achievement to track school, district and individual student achievement.

(D)(2)(ii) The state has enacted legislation that has set in motion the goal of designing and implementing a rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation systems for teachers and principals that (a) differentiate effectiveness using multiple rating categories that take into account data on student growth as a significant factor, and (b) are designed and developed with teacher and principal involvement.

(D)(2)(iii) Nevada's system for the evaluations of teachers and principals includes timely and constructive feedback using both formative and summative assessments. The timeliness of evaluations is dependent on the individual educator's needs and experience. A part of such evaluations, provide teachers and principals with data on student growth for their students, classes, and schools.

(D)(2)(iv) The state's application outlines a detailed and compelling plan for the development of an evaluation system that will be used to inform decisions regarding—

(a) Developing teachers and principals, including by providing relevant coaching, induction support, and/or professional development through its Management Performance/Empowerment Theory of Action and the use of Individualized Development Plans ;

(b) Compensating, promoting, and retaining teachers and principals, including by providing opportunities for highly effective teachers and principals to obtain additional compensation and be given additional responsibilities;

(c) Whether to grant tenure and/or full certification to teachers and principals using rigorous standards and streamlined, transparent, and fair procedures; and

(d) Removing ineffective tenured and untenured teachers and principals after they have had ample opportunities to improve, and ensuring that such decisions are made using rigorous standards and streamlined, transparent, and fair procedures.

A thoughtful development plan is envisioned for this area with several approaches to be piloted in one-third of the school districts.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	22
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	12
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	10

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

(D)(3)(i) Nevada has a clear perspective on the current distribution of its highly qualified teachers and principals. The state will strive to ensure the equitable distribution of teachers and principals, informed by reviews of prior actions and data, to ensure that students in high poverty and/or high minority schools have equitable access to highly effective teachers and principals and are not served by ineffective teachers and principals at higher rates than other students. However, the application is not clear about provisions for the distribution of highly qualified teachers and principals through a process of assignment within LEAs. The plan presented in the application focuses on improving existing staff, encouraging new hires to staff high need schools, and providing incentives to highly effective teachers and principals to voluntarily transfer to high need schools.

(D)(3)(ii) Through the use of enhanced preservice education, professional development and incentives, the state presents a reasonable plan to increase the number and percentage of effective teachers teaching hard to staff subjects and specialty areas including mathematics, science, and special education; teaching in language instruction educational programs and, teaching in other areas as identified by the state or LEA.

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

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

(D)(4)(i) The state has a viable plan to use its Teacher and Leader Council to link student achievement and student growth data to the students, teachers and principals, to link this information to the in state programs where those teachers and principals were prepared for credentialing, and to publicly report the data for each credentialing program in the state. Note that 60% of the state's teachers are prepared out of state.

(D)(4)(ii) Through such programs as Teach for America Nevada and the use of grants the state plans to expand preparation and credentialing options and programs that are successful at producing effective teachers and principals.

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

(D)(5)(i) The state outlines a well conceived plan regarding how it will support teachers and principals through the use of its COMPASS data program and its Regional Professional Development Program a comprehensive, data informed professional development, coaching, mentoring, induction, and common planning and collaboration time for teachers and principals that are, where appropriate, ongoing and job embedded. It also plans to use its E-MALL program for an online professional development system.

(D)(5)(ii) Using the systems mentioned above, the state plans to measure, evaluate, and continuously improve the effectiveness of teacher and principal supports in order to improve student achievement.

Total	138	127

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

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

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

(E)(1) The State has statutory authority to intervene directly in the State's persistently lowest achieving schools and in LEAs that are in need of improvement or corrective action. This authority has existed since 1997 and has subsequently been expanded in recent years. Furthermore, the application outlines future steps to be taken to align more closely with the purposes of the RTT initiative in this area.

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

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

(E)(2)(i) The state presents a detailed explanation of its existing mechanisms for identify the persistently lowest achieving schools, which includes non-Title I eligible secondary schools that would be considered persistently lowest achieving schools if they were eligible to receive Title I funds.

(E)(2)(ii) Nevada supports its LEAs in turning around identified schools through its current system of intervention. Additionally, the applicant puts forth a plan that calls for implementing one of the four school intervention models: turnaround model, restart model, school closure, or transformation model, with the proviso that an LEA with more than nine persistently lowest achieving schools may not use the transformation model for more than 50 percent of its schools.

Total	50	50

F. General

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

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

(F)(1)(i) Total revenues for elementary, secondary, and public higher education are reported as increasing by 1.8% from FY 2008 to 2009. However, the percentage of the total revenues available to the state that were used to support elementary, secondary, and public higher education for FY 2009 was less, by 1.8%, than the total revenues available to the state that were used to support elementary, secondary, and public higher education for FY 2008. Furthermore, the data from the table seem inconsistent with the narrative associated with this subsection of the application.

(F)(1)(ii) Nevada uses a foundation method to fund its school districts, which equalizes revenue among its school districts in consideration of local revenue wealth. Thus the state's policies lead to equitable funding between high need LEAs and other LEAs. In addition within LEAs districts are compelled to distribute resources equitably between high poverty schools and other schools. .

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	34
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	5
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	8
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	8
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	5
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	8

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

(F)(2)(i) According to the application Nevada states that it has a charter school law that does not prohibit or effectively inhibit increasing the number of high performing charter schools in the state nor does it restrict student enrollment in charter schools. However, the statute (NRS 386.505) referenced in the appendix explicitly states that existing public schools cannot be converted into charter schools. This raises questions about whether restrictions do in fact exist. The state plans new legislation for 2011 to create an umbrella LEA under which all charter schools will exist.

(F)(2)(ii) The state has statutes and regulations regarding how charter school authorizers approve, monitor, hold accountable, reauthorize, and close charter schools. These provisions include that authorizers require that student achievement be one significant factor, among others, in authorization or renewal process. Charter schools are encouraged to serve student populations that are similar to local district student populations, especially relative to high need students. Furthermore, the state has closed or not renewed ineffective charter schools.

(F)(2)(iii) The State's charter schools receive equitable funding compared to traditional public schools, and a commensurate share of local, State, and Federal revenues. Funding is based on the student's school district of residence, which is funded through the state's foundation program.

(F)(2)(iv) The state has a program that provides charter schools with funding for facilities, however no appropriations have been made for this program to date. Charter schools may use existing public school facilities and have the ability to share in bonds and mill levies, or other supports. The state does not impose any facility related requirements on charter schools that are stricter than those applied to traditional public schools.

(F)(2)(v) The state has a program called Empowerment Schools, which enables LEAs to operate innovative, autonomous public schools other than charter schools. One school district is reported to have already exercised this option.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	5

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

(F)(3) The state has created, through law, regulation, and policy, other conditions favorable to education reform or innovation, that have increased student achievement or graduation rates, narrowed achievement gaps, and resulted in other important outcomes. An array of innovative programs, many initiated through statute, are presented in the application. These include such programs as class size reduction, technology and parent training.

Total	55	47

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

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

Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The state's application has a high quality plan to address the need to:

(i) offer a rigorous course of study in mathematics, the sciences, technology, and engineering. Existing efforts will be expanded based on future funding increases.

(ii) cooperate with industry experts, museums, universities, research centers, or other STEM capable community partners to prepare and assist teachers in integrating STEM content across grades and disciplines, in promoting effective and relevant instruction, and in offering applied learning opportunities for students. The state's high tech industry are enthusiastic participants and supporters of the state's STEM initiatives.

(iii) prepare more students for advanced study and careers in the sciences, technology, engineering, and mathematics, including by addressing the needs of underrepresented groups and of women and girls in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Expansion is planned across the state to include all students, which will include historically under represented groups in STEM such as women and girls.

Total	15	15

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

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

Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The state's application clearly, comprehensively and coherently addresses all of the four education reform areas specified in the ARRA as well as the State Success Factors Criteria and demonstrates that the state and its participating LEAs are taking a systemic approach to education reform. The state also demonstrates in its application sufficient LEA participation and commitment to successfully implement and achieve the goals in its plans. It describes how it, in collaboration with its participating LEAs, will use Race to the Top and other funds to increase student achievement, decrease the achievement gaps across student subgroups, and increase the rates at which students graduate from high school and are prepared for college and careers. These goals are presented in the application through plans to build on existing systems, create new systems, and the broad support from LEAs and key stakeholders.

Total		0

Grand Total	500	469