Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2

Rhode Island Application #4150RI-6

A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	**65**	**47**	**47**	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	32	32	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	10	10	

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

The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) has recently competed a substantial planning activity resulting in the RIDE Strategic Plan. That plan in conjunction with the Race to the Top (RTTT) planned activity provides a comprehensive, ambitious and realistic effort for the state to meet important education reform goals. The state also builds on a productive history in reform efforts with key legislative directives and leadership at RIDE. Of particular significance are the ambitious goals of reducing a persistent achievement gap for poor and minority students in the state by 50%-- clearly important to a large number of students in the state when accomplished.

The LEA commitment to the RTTT plan is impressive with 96% of districts signing on including 99% of the state's students in poverty. The MOU with the participating districts directly commits them to participating in all elements of the plan. A large number of teacher associations in LEAs with collective bargaining units did not sign the MOU, some 70%. This low level of support may inhibit implementation at the LEA level in significant ways.

This lack of support at the teacher level could minimize statewide impact. Although ambitious but achievable goals are directly addressed that would make a difference in overall enhancement of student achievement, the absence of formal teacher support is problematic in achieving those goals.

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

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

The proposal provides detailed aspects of the management and implementation plan that allows a clear understanding of what goals are to be achieved and how they will be achieved with clear roles for all participants. RTTT will reside in the Office of the Education Commissioner. This is a clear leadership responsibility in an office that oversees all state education programs—a distinct positive for integration of all state programs with RTTT. Other full time leadership officers are identified. The RTTT goals are very much aligned with the RIDE Strategic Plan, giving the positive impression that the link will be significant. In addition, team leaders in specific focus areas will be developed or be expanded to meet the goals. It is

possible to determine budget allocations and their alignment to specific goals and objectives. Support from a broad array of stakeholders is evident in the appendix, particularly for private sector partners, other non-K/12 education sectors (higher education and early childhood). Specific "partnering" agreements were not always clear although support was positively expressed.

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

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

The state has a clear record of legislative education policy reform in all areas specified for RTTT. It has addressed the establishment of high standards, student assessments and data systems development/implementation. This is an impressive policy accomplishment and sets the stage for further reform efforts. The state does demonstrate enhancement in student progress on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and state testing for all students and for ESEA related subgroups. However, there is little evidence of achievement gap reduction with regard to these subgroups, particularly for Limited English Proficient (LEP) and African American students. Graduation rates have shown slight increases for all students, but the gaps have been steady.

Total	125	99	99	

B. Standards and Assessments

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

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

The state is participating in the Common Core state consortium as well as the WIDA state consortium, a consortium addressing ELL students. In addition, the state is a member of a 15 state consortium related to Algebra standards.

The state indicates in the proposal that it will adopt the Common Core standards on July 1, 2010.

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

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

Rhode Island is participating in several consortia related to assessment development. Those include NECAP, a New England state consortium, PARCC, a 26 state consortium related to developing college-

going assessments, and, the State Board Exam Consortium, an 8 state consortium related to alternative assessments applicable to early college credits.

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

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

The state will roll out the new standards and assessment by employing teams of educators that will provide professional development and oversight. The effort will begin with a subset of LEAs then scaled statewide. A very detailed plan that provides a timetable, mechanism for the roll out and statewide impact is provided in the proposal. The state builds on indicated successful efforts to roll out other state related reform activities in this same manner. Overall, this plan will address the issues in statewide utilization of new standards and assessments.

Total	70	70	70	

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

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

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

The state now has a data system that includes all 12 of the 12 elements of the COMPETES Act. These reform prerequisites are well articulated and aligned with the specific elements of the Act.

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

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

The state has developed a comprehensive system to access data identified as the "Data Works System" that is designed as a one-stop center for student assessment information. This system, when fully developed, can lead to a high quality plan for increased adoption and use of local instructional improvement systems. These systems will allow access of data broadly to parents, teachers, principals and the general public. This is a well designed effort to make available education data in the state to all, including families whose primary language is not English.

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

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

A specific high quality plan is described that will provide comprehensive educator access to the data. In addition, there will be specific and designated efforts in the RIDE to provide support for training on data access and use by educators. Web based tools will also be developed to support this effort. By

sequentially delivering this support to LEAs, the success of the support is more plausible—100% inclusion of LEAs is the goal.

With regard to the access and utilization of the data, the plan calls for specific availability of the data to a newly formed Rhode Island Research Collaboration designed directly to provide data access to researchers and evaluators for purposes related to attainment of the projected RTTT goals.

Total	47	47	47	

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	**21**	**18**	**18**	
(i) Allowing alternative routes to certification	7	6	6	
(ii) Using alternative routes to certification	7	5	5	
(iii) Preparing teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage	7	7	7	

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

There is substantive new (2008) legislation and related educational policy to develop and expand alternative pathways for teachers--it is not clear whether a similar alternative is available for principals. Therefore, the state does allow alternative routes that operate independently of Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs). Alternative programs have been actively recruited to develop and deploy the new pathways. The legal option for these programs coupled with the recruitment are positives in this scoring domain.

Less than 100 teachers and principals are in such programs at present, but plans to grow the programs seem viable. With regard to the assessment of teacher shortages/needs, "emergency authorization" requests and tracking LEA hiring in specific areas are the present primary data sources for measuring shortages/needs. These forms of identifying shortages rely on an existent data base that was developed for this purpose. The state indicates it will become more proactive with regard to gathering these data next year by doing specific LEA surveys related to shortages Using these data they will recruit teachers to meet these needs, including teachers from out of the state through a program entitled TEACH Rhode Island.

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

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

The plan for improving teacher and principal effectiveness is well articulated, highly ambitious, with a timetable that identifies the overall implementation schedule. It is highly ambitious with state implementation in 2011-12. Evaluation of educators is anchored by a robust and accessible student data system that provides data on student growth. These systems will be developed with the involvement of teachers and principals.

The state has adopted in 2009 the professional standards that guide the development of an educators evaluation system. LEAs will have the opportunity to develop local systems that meet the state standards or adopt the use of the state evaluation tool, Rhode Island Educator Evaluation Model System. This attempt to address local variations in generating a tool driven by common standards could lead to delay in development and implementing statewide. It is clear that the state plan calls for yearly evaluations of all teachers and principals. It is significant that standards have been developed and adopted, yet turning standards into specific evaluations may be require more time so as to ensure reliability and validity. Therefore, there is some risk of delay in the final implementation.

The evaluation will require 51% or more of the evaluation related to student achievement growth—a definite plus in success of the RTTT activities overall. The state makes clear in its plan the provision of initial and ongoing technical support for the implementation of the yearly evaluations. The evaluations will be utilized to support individual educator development, requiring a professional development plan for all educators.

The state makes it clear that these plans will be utilized for decision related to compensation, promotion, retention, granting tenure, full certification and removal.

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

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

To ensure equitable distribution of effective educators, the state will closely, through its comprehensive data system and educator evaluation system, review the placement of teachers statewide. Such tracking of teachers is intended to expose the issues related to the distribution of effective teachers and principals. Besides continuous review, the state will also promulgate regulations that prohibit the placement of ineffective teachers and principals in low achieving schools,and, the removal of ineffective educators from those schools after two years. This public articulation can be helpful in identifying, statewide, the significant areas for distribution of effective educators. Combined, these actions should move the state forward in placing more effective teachers and principals in low achieving schools.

The state has begun new efforts to attract teachers from out of the state in hard to staff areas--TEACH Rhode Island-- and to work with teacher preparation programs to expand preparation in these domains. The goal is to have these areas staffed at an 85% level in the next few years--an ambitious goal tied to a set of articulated strategies to achieve that goal.

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

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

The state will utilize its policy and data capabilities to link and report on the effectiveness of educator preparation programs utilizing student achievement. The RTTT plan calls for the publication of this link and the development of a "report card" for each preparation program. This will give the state a new and potentially useful understanding of preparation effectiveness. Using this linkage, differential resource allocations can be made to those programs demonstrating effectiveness--no specifics are offered to

described how this might be done. There is no indication in the plan related to assisting programs that may be identified as "ineffective."

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

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

The state will utilize the public "Data Works" system and the educator evaluation system(s) to identify needed areas of educator support and enlist entities such as the Turnaround Principals Academy, the Dana Center, and other professional service providers along with LEA efforts to strategically deploy support to educators. The timetable and explicit roll out plan provided in the proposal is a rich and important support system for educators. Allowing the flexibility for LEAs to develop their own professional development systems may lead to delays identifying and in providing the professional development that is needed.

The state will track individual participation in the support efforts and will identify effective educators that can assist in the delivery of support. The RTTT plan calls for the "vetting" of professional development activities as related to enhancement of student performance to determine effectiveness, and, to make decisions regarding expansion or elimination of those activities based on this stringent criterion. This policy will drive continuous improvement.

Total	138	124	124	

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

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

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

The state has a law related to the state role in addressing turning around persistently low achieving schools and LEAs. The law focuses on providing reliable data regarding performance and support to the persistently low achieving schools with a timeline and related steps the state must take for direct intervention.

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

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

With the "Data Works" system, the persistent low-achieving schools can be readily identified--10 schools have been presently identified for inclusion in efforts related to RTTT. The state plans to implement a turn around model with these schools, deploying state and LEA constructed teams that will focus on policy evaluation and modification, personnel assessment and development/removal, data based decision making and instructional improvement. If this turn around effort fails, a charter school "re-start" option will follow. A well developed timeline, highly ambitious but very specific, is provided in the plan for turnaround activity.

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

It was made clear during the Tier 2 interaction with state representatives that the state had some degree of success in turning around low performing schools. However, there was no such successful history for the lowest and most persistent, low-achieving schools.

Total	50	50	45	

F. General

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

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

Revenues for education have increased.

Rhode Island, in its funding package related to LEAs, makes designation of funding directly related to issues of equity by adjusting the state per pupil funding formula to add more resources for poor and students with disabilities. That funding formula recognizes equity issues.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	**40**	**40**	**38**	
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	8	8	
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	8	8	
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	8	8	
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	8	6	[redacted]
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	8	8	

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

There are no significant limits placed on the number of charter schools in the state. State laws exist articulating clearly the development, implementation and evaluation of charter schools and funding for charters is the same as for non-charters. There are various state and state-partnerships available to charters for capital and related infrastructure development. The state has a policy mechanism available for LEAs to develop and implement "innovative" schools within the jurisdiction of the LEA. In doing so, the state meets the highest requirements of the RTTT application.

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

In response to Tier 2 question regarding the access of charters to equitable facility related resources, it was clarified that charters at the district level may have up to 50% less access to facility related resources compared to similar schools within the district.

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

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

The state has taken both legislative and executive actions leading to policies and practices related to education reform, including a robust accessible student data system, accountability processes and charter school development. Very specific efforts in middle school re-design, preschool investments and initiatives in after school programming to enhance opportunities to learn have been undertaken in the state. The achievement gains indicated earlier in the proposal indicate that these have produced positive student outcomes. The P-16 Council of the state has made efforts to coordinate the full education continuum. This platform for education reform is quite extensive and bodes well for the success of the proposed RTTT augmentation.

Total	55	55	53	

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

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

Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The state has directly addressed a STEM development effort in its overall plans to enhance the educational opportunities of Rhode Island students. As described in the proposal, new and more rigorous standards specific to science, math and engineering are adopted or ready for adoption--this generates a more rigorous course of study for Rhode Island students in STEM. The specific efforts to work with universities, science centers along with the establishment of the Rhode Island Center for Excellence in Stem Education and the more localized Education Leadership Councils in STEM indicate a statewide effort that can enhance STEM educational quality and the development of students ready to enter into a STEM careers. A particular focus on recruiting and preparing girls and women is also provided in the plan, however, other underrepresented student augmentation efforts in STEM are not addressed. Even so, the state provides a convincing and overall solid description of STEM education enhancement.

Total	15	15	15	

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

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

Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

This state puts forward a comprehensive and well articulated RTTT plan covering all aspects of the application. Movement to high standards, enhancing student assessments and data systems along with the development and deployment of educator evaluation and support systems are clear evidence of this state's efforts to reform its educational endeavors. The state is moving forward in providing alternatives to educator preparation and charter school development with appropriate policies and practices in place. Its efforts to systematically turnaround the lowest performing school can directly benefit the state's educational success portfolio. Overall, the RTTT plan is aligned with the overall state reform activities and should generate positive results for the students of Rhode Island.

Total			0	0	
Grand Total	500	460	453		

Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2

Rhode Island Application #4150RI-11

A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	**65**	**51**	**51**	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	35	35	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	11	11	

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

i) Overall the reform agenda articulated in the plan, with supporting documentation and budget, is comprehensive, coherent and ambitious. The theory of action is straightforward and logical. Each component is well-thought out and is based on existing efforts that are consistent with the reform agenda.

ii) The MOU for participating districts is substantially the same as the model MOU and the terms and conditions reflect strong commitment to the State's plans and the Scope of Work described will require LEAs to implement significant elements of the plan. A strong aspect of the plan is buy-in of almost all LEAs in the state and very high percentage of signatures of superintendents and board presidents. An area of weakness is that only 30% of local union leaders signed on.

iii) Given that almost 100% of districts have indicated a commitment to participate, the likelihood of broad statewide impact is high, with the caveat that a low number of local union leaders signed on. The plan clearly articulates ambitious goals for increased student achievement and decreasing achievement gaps between subgroups in reading/language arts and mathematics (both based on past success in increasing achievement as reported on the NAEP as well as the state assessments). Additionally, the stated goals for increasing high school graduation rates and increased college enrollment and success are ambitious, though not as clearly based on success of prior efforts.

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

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

i) The application articulates a thorough and detailed plan of implementation that identifies individuals responsible throughout. The SEA structure has been modified to better align to the RTTT priorities and ensure sustainability after the grant. New positions have been added to the organization with specific job descriptions included. Additionally, project management functions are described to ensure that activities are implemented on the specified timelines. SEA responsibilities and corresponding LEA responsibilities and supports are clearly identified - and as described would comprehensively address the major areas of the grant implementation. The application describes a system with specific individuals responsible for the administration of the grant funds that is plausible and reallocates funds from other Federal, State and local

sources to align with the RTTT goals. The expenditures outlined in the budget support the idea that the SEA will be investing in building a systems approach to sustain the momentum of the reform effort after the grant funding ends.

ii) The application includes indications of strong support from the State's legislative leadership, the governor, Board of Regents, state teacher's and administrative associations, students, parents, charter schools and various aspects of the community. The proposal would have been stronger if letters of support from charter organizations and parents had been included.

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

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

i) The state has made progress over the last several years in each of the four education reform areas and the application specifically described progress in the use of high standards and assessments (NECAP) including ELL standards, implementing a statewide longitudinal data system, a multifaceted effort to develop teachers and leaders, and creating a new position of Chief Transformation Officer to manage the improvement and turnaround efforts statewide.

ii) The state presented clear and comprehensive data which indicates that they are closely monitoring student achievement growth. Over the last three years the state has demonstrated gains in NAEP scores in ELA and mathematics, and shows indications of closing the achievement gaps in some areas although the gap actually increased for some subgroups. The state assessments also indicate some achievement gains. Finally, the graduation rate has increased. The area that hasn't shown improvement is closing the achievement gap on state assessments. Overall, the state's achievement trends are headed in the right direction.

Total	125	103	103	

B. Standards and Assessments

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

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

i) The State is participating in the Common Core initiative, which has 48 participating states. The state signed agreement and list of participating states is included in the appendix.

ii) The State Board of Regents approved the adoption of the Common Core Standards at the July 1, 2010 meeting.

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

(ii) Including a significant number of States	5	5	5	

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

i and ii) The State is participating in the Achieve assessment initiative, which has 26 participating states. The signed agreement between the State and the consortium, as well as a list of participating states, is included in the appendix.

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

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

The application articulates an extensively detailed, quality plan for supporting the transition to new standards and high-quality assessments that includes:

- a partnership with an organization that has significant experience in accomplishing this work and a letter of support from this organization which described the SEA capacity to implement the activities
- a description of SEA responsibilities in the areas of dissemination, study, training and leadership training
- sustainability through building capacity of Intermediate Service Providers
- targeted intensive training for identified LEAs
- indication of SEA responsibility for developing high-quality interim and formative assessments for statewide use
- an implementation framework with outcomes, actions, timelines and responsible parties specified
- alignment of college/career readiness standards
- the identification and integration of STEM standards

The plan is comprehensive and logical and includes a level of detail that implies a high likelihood that the work can be completed successfully.

Total	70	70	70	

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

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

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

The application indicates that the state has a longitudinal data system that includes all 12 of the America COMPETES Act elements.

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

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

The application describes a comprehensive data system that includes aspects that would be valuable information for each stakeholder group in decision making. It also clearly describes data elements collected from various longitudinal databases that are needed to support each aspect of the proposal and include:

- student achievement
- post-secondary expectations

- teacher evaluation
- professional development
- teacher preparation

Additionally, the plan includes a logical, detailed and ambitious implementation plan for building and integrating the databases, providing professional development, and continuously assessing the satisfaction of the users to improve the system.

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

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

i) The plan articulates a clear implementation plan including SEA supports and LEA responsibilities for ensuring the use of data to improve instruction. The appendix includes an explicit agreement between the SEA and higher education for the exchange of data necessary for monitoring both student success and the quality of teachers prepared at various institutions; this agreement is evidence that the State has laid the appropriate groundwork for implementing the plan if funding is awarded.

ii) The application includes a clear plan for the SEA to provide a comprehensive variety of supports to LEAs, schools, administrators and teachers in using these systems which includes professional development, ongoing coaching and onsite support.

iii) The application describes multiple efforts of the SEA to collaborate with various research organizations and provide each with state data. The appendix includes a document that specifies the SEA and higher education collaborative research agenda with a matrix that indicates the alignment of the research agenda with the RTTT proposal elements, objectives and strategies, as well as which stakeholders will have access to the various data systems (researchers being one of the stakeholders).

Total	47	47	47	

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	**21**	**16**	**16**	
(i) Allowing alternative routes to certification	7	5	5	
(ii) Using alternative routes to certification	7	5	5	
(iii) Preparing teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage	7	6	6	

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

i) The application indicates that alternative routes to certification for teachers are allowed and specifically ones that include entities other than IHEs, are selective, provide school-based experiences and award the same level of certification. The alternative certification routes for principals is much less clear in the narrative.

ii) The application includes a description of the Board of Regents standards for defining alternative routes to certification and the numbers of teachers and leaders who were certified in each. The application describes various programs that target preparing teachers and leaders to fill areas of shortage and include:

- the New Teacher Project and,
- the Principal Residency Network

While the programs are new and have produced few teachers and administrators, expansion of these program is planned and all of the alternatively certified teachers were placed in high-needs schools.

iii) The application describes several ways that the state has identified, monitored, and evaluated areas of teacher and principal shortage, as well as recruited qualified teachers and principals to meet these needs. It further describes realistic plans for enhancing these efforts with RTTT funds.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	53	48	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	5	4	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	11	10	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	10	10	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	27	24	

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

The State has developed Educator Evaluation Standards that address all of the criteria of D2.

i and ii) Included in the application is a well-articulated plan to contract with an outside expert to develop the components of the teacher evaluation system, that includes 51% of the evaluation based on student achievement growth (which makes it a significant factor). Also described is a collaborative process for developing the evaluation system which includes teachers, principals and union representation. The details of how this will be implemented with principals is not as clearly described.

iii) Annual evaluations are described for all teachers and principals that include all required components including student achievement growth data reports.

iv) Various standards describe the use of evaluations to determine each of the types of decisions regarding:

- relevant coaching and professional development
- compensating, promoting and retaining teachers and principals
- granting tenure and awarding and revoking certification
- removing ineffective teachers principals after providing opportunities to improve.

In addition, as part of new State procedures, once the determination of teacher effectiveness can be made, the State will implement a procedure by which no child will have an ineffective teacher two years in a row. While a few of the details of implementation are not described, overall this is a comprehensive and ambitious approach to developing and implementing a new evaluation system that incorporates student achievement growth in a significant way.

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

i) and ii) The panelists' definition of measures of student growth and value-added were not clear and the plan seemed to be in more flux than described in the application.

iv) The interview made clear that the collective bargaining agreement currently in place does not allow the state to provide differential compensation based performance which is a limitation. However, one of the panelists described that the state has thought about their strategy for changing this, which is positive.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	**25**	**25**	**20**	
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	15	10	
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	10	10	

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

The application describes several innovative strategies to fill positions both in high-needs schools and in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas (these areas are defined as in the notice, and blended in the application narrative) for teachers and principals. Both Teach for America and the New Teacher Project Plan focus on preparing teachers to serve in the critical shortage subject areas and all teachers certified through these programs were placed in high needs schools. The Principal Residency Network is described as a program of similar purposes for principals. The application describes the intent to incorporate student achievement growth data into the evaluation system as a significant factor as part of the state's plan.

A major change in Rhode Island to help ensure the most highly qualified teachers are teaching the highest need students is the elimination of seniority-based hiring and classroom assignment of teachers. By the end of 2013, all schools will use a mutually agreed upon criteria for hiring and placement decisions, which will greatly increase the flexibility of principals to hire the most qualified teachers to teach the highest need students. The application also describes several efforts such as a recruitment campaign that could be effective in building the supply of highly effective teachers in high-need subject areas.

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

In the interview the panelists described their theory that developing the systems of support for leaders would attract more principals to high-poverty or high-minority schools, but they did not provide any concrete or specific incentives to attract or assign principals to these schools, which limits the ability of the state to *ensure* equitable distribution of leaders.

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

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

i) The application clearly articulates an ambitious, but logical plan for integrating the teacher evaluation system and the teacher certification database with the state's longitudinal data system to link data on each teacher's and principal's impact on student growth back to the in-state teacher or principal preparation program. Given that educator preparation programs in the State are subject to a re-approval process every year, the effectiveness data will be incorporated into the approval-renewal process. This process is described as a collaboration between the SEA, the Office of Higher Education, alternative pathway providers and the Association of Independent Colleges, which should increase the likelihood that this plan will improve the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs in the state.

ii) The plan indicates that as part of the process described in D4i, preparation programs that are producing effective educators will be supported and expanded, particularly by partnering with other organizations and building on existing successful efforts. Specific programs are identified but an actual plan for implementation is not articulated.

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

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

i) The application describes in detail a logical, multi-faceted, comprehensive system for providing support and professional development for teachers and leaders that includes:

- multiple sessions focused on understanding and unpacking the new standards and assessments
- data-driven decision making
- understanding and implementing the evaluation system
- on-site support for leaders in understanding and using data and the evaluation system
- a coaching program for all year 1 teachers and targeted coaching for year 2 teachers in low performing schools. The mentoring/coaching program guidelines with evaluation criteria are included. Additionally there is a focus on STEM throughout.
- turnaround leadership training for principals who will be placed in high-needs schools.

A plan for ensuring common planning and collaboration time for teachers and principals was not as clearly described.

ii) The State proposes to implement what appears to be an effective system of linking teacher and leader evaluations to professional development and monitor and adjust professional development as needed. RTTT funds will only be able to be used for SEA-approved training/providers. The application also describes a system for intermediary service providers in which the skills and capacity of statewide individuals will be built to provide consistent, high-quality professional development and supports to schools, especially after grant funding ends. A detailed implementation table is included.

Total	138	124	114	

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

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

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

The application clearly describes the State's authority to intervene in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs in a 'Protocol for Interventions' and includes the authority of the Commissioner to order reconstitution of the school.

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

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

i) The application clearly articulates how the State identifies the persistently lowest-achieving schools and is consistent with the definition in the notice.

ii) The application clearly defines:

- four models of reform that conform to the application guidelines
- the roles of the SEA and the LEA in each process of reform
- accountability measures such as withholding funding, disallowing costs, or requiring reimbursements
- State-ordered reconstitution

The plan describes past efforts to turn around persistently low-achieving schools and lessons learned through those efforts; and indicates some level of success in improving student outcomes in the identified schools. The articulated plan is credible.

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

In the interview the panelists described that the state and LEAs have had some success in turning around low-achieving schools "at the margins" but not the *chronically* lowest-performing schools.

Total	50	50	45	

F. General

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

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

i) The percentage of state revenue to education as defined by the notice increased from 32.7% in 2008 to 33.24% in 2009.

ii) The Board of Regents Guiding Principals for Education Aid Foundation Formula provide for allocations to reasonably take into consideration various high-needs student categories with appropriate weighting.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	**40**	**40**	**38**	
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	8	8	
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	8	8	
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	8	6	
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	8	8	
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	8	8	

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

i) State legislation sets no limits on the number of charter school students. It does have caps on the number of new charters at 35 per year, but that is more than 10% of the total number of schools in the state (308). Thirteen charter schools currently operate and two new ones opened in 2009-10. The SEA is seeking partnerships with successful charter organizations and included letters of intent to apply in the next two years.

ii) The regulations described for authorizing, monitoring and evaluating (including renewing) charter schools includes a provision for student outcomes as a significant factor.

iii) The application describes a funding policy for charter schools that appears to provide almost equal funding to charter schools (95%) when compared to traditional public schools.

iv) As described in the application, the State policies and procedures related to charter access to facilities appear provide access to those afforded traditional districts and schools, and do not impose any restrictions that appear to be more strict than for other public schools.

v) The application does include a clearly described provision for LEAs to operate other innovative autonomous public schools and also described several examples of innovative public schools and programs in the state.

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

iv) As described by the panelists charter schools do *not* have equitable access to funding for facilities.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	**5**	**4**	**4**	

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

The application describes several significant reform conditions established recently in the state including:

- middle and high school redesign
- New England Secondary Schools Consortium focused on improving graduation rates
- several pre-school initiatives
- expanded out-of-school time programs
- research collaborative focused on urban schools
- various data-linking initiatives

Each of these initiatives indicates a climate for innovation that would be an asset in implementing the RTTT grant; however, student outcomes linked to each of these initiatives was not clearly described.

Total	55	54	52	

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

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

Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The STEM priorities are integrated throughout the proposal and represent a comprehensive emphasis on STEM. Examples include:

- STEM alignment in the core standards
- STEM emphasis in the development of curriculum materials
- STEM emphasis in professional development and support

The application specifically describes efforts that leverage partnerships with industry/university/community resources with a STEM emphasis. Additionally, specific programs focused on addressing the needs of underrepresented groups, including women, are described.

Total	15	15	15	

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

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

Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The application is a detailed and comprehensive plan for implementing a significant reform agenda and competently addresses each of the RTTT essential components. The level of detail described indicates that the State has created the existing capacity and structure to implement a significant effort to improve student outcomes if funded.

Total		0	0	

Grand Total	500	463	446	

Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2

Rhode Island Application #4150RI-5

A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	**65**	**53**	**53**	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	35	35	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	13	13	

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

(A)(1)(i) The Rhode Island Strategic Plan consistently addresses reform across the RTTT educational areas to improve student outcomes statewide. The Strategic Plan aligns with RTTT and established credibility to implement reform. Two examples in place already are: rewriting special education regulations into the statewide Response to Intervention (RTI) model; and abolishing lifetime teacher certification to move toward educator effectiveness.

The State presents a clear path to achieve ambitious reform including how it will build partnerships of expertise through service providers, and how teacher-union support dramatically increased to a majority of the high need LEAs since last December 2009, providing the State more leverage with key stakeholders. In addition, the Basic Education Program (BEP) gives authority to the LEAs to establish policy and procedures in the evaluation of personnel performance while the State provides the leadership to standardize the models and develop and support implementation of student growth in the evaluation of teachers and principals. Therefore, a high score was allotted to this section for meeting criteria concerning student outcomes, a credible path, and a consistent reform plan throughout the application.

(A)(1)(ii) The State has documented a significant level of participation with only two non-participating LEAS. The two LEAs enroll 715 students in poverty, and makes this application less than 100% serviceable to students in poverty.

The scope of work indicates substantial participation rates despite the lowest rate of 83% on *evaluations to inform compensation*. Examining the participation responses by LEA (Table A-4) shows a substantial base of commitment. However, not *all* districts agreed to participate as required for a fully cohesive implementation process.

For instance, in the participation detail of Table A-4, there are three districts, together representing less than 3,000 students, which do not agree to 5 various subsections in D. What is more, there is one district of over 5,000 students that does not agree to use data to improve instruction (C)(3)(i) and to measure student growth and conduct annual evaluations (D)(2)(i & iii).

To their credit, even though only 30% or 11 local teacher union signatures were received from participating LEAS, the State has made progress to increase union support, documented by a positive letter from the Federation of Teachers and Health Professions. In addition, the MOUs were signed by 100% of the participating LEA school board presidents and superintendents; with close to 100 letters supporting the application, and in this respect the State achieved full leadership support.

The inconsistent commitment to the reform plan as described here, and the less than full participation rates resulted in a score at the low end of the high range.

(A)(1)(iii) Overall and by sub-group, the State set ambitious goals on state assessments in math (NECAP, 75% proficient at the middle and high school levels) in reading (NECAP, 90% meet standards) and on NAEP in reading and math (55% proficient). In addition, a 50% reduction in the academic achievement gap by race and by low income is targeted. What is more, the high school graduation, college attendance, and retention rates appear ambitious and are high goals.

One issue of concern was that the narrative did not provide baseline scores in two of the three student growth and gap targets. The data did not provide the most relevant reference points to evaluate the scale of the goals (for instance, where they are now). The lack of baseline data in three student growth measures and gap targets resulted in a high score at the middle level for this section.

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	**30**	**26**	**26**	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	18	18	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	8	8	

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

(A)(2)(i) The State will use a political and organizational structure for accountability and quality control vested in its Executive Leadership Team to oversee RTTT implementation. The State has a monitoring system with progress indicators and opportunities to intervene as needed. The State disseminates best practices, but makes little to no mention of evaluating the programs which are selected for dissemination through webinars, media, conferences, and LEA-to-LEA visitations.

Grant management is substantial. There is central compliance and oversight of LEA progress as a funding mechanism. In regard to aligning State budgets with RTTT, there is a sound commitment to reform. For instance, the state budget already has redirected or saved 1.3 million reform dollars. In addition, state education savings and efficiency are underway across LEA services, through legislation, and by school committees. Overall, it is apparent that the State plans are supported by budgets well positioned to meet its targets, should RTTT be funded, and currently there is clear alignment of Federal funds with RTTT initiatives.

In order to continue reform after RTTT funding, the State will keep 7 of the 21 staff described in RTTT, including two coaches from the Academy of Transformative leadership. In addition, political support of reform will continue after the life of the grant based on the level of commitment shown by the legislature, the Regents, and the Commissioner. Most importantly, the State capacity is built through teaming with expert providers (a procedure that has worked well before), and LEA capacity, a bit more complex, is built through expert providers that train specialists who in turn provide professional development and training at the LEA level. These are the design features that sustain the program after the life of the grant.

One final issue involved the condition of achievement without funding from RTTT. Although achievement without funding from RTTT is referred to, and there is a description of the successful initiatives that the State has developed so far, the State did not describe their goals without RTTT over the next four years. For this reason, and also for the sparse attention to evaluate dissemination units, this sub-section was scored at the middle of the high range.

(A)(2)(ii) The letters of support from teachers and principals are substantial; but, there was not even *one* letter of support from a local LEA teacher union. There was a letter from the State level union organization. The State did provide a broad base of support with strong letters from other key stakeholders including charter schools, legislators, community organizations, and businesses. This section was rated at the low end of the high range for lacking local LEA union support.

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

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

(A)(3)(i) Progress over the past several years using ARRA and other Federal and State funding to pursue reform in the four areas was described through recent efforts in state standards tests, leadership in standards consortium work, and end-of course assessments in Algebra. The STEM field includes a 1.5 million dollar initiative in 2007 and systems are in place so that a Data Warehouse will track and help to monitor improvement in performance.

Another key element of core reform is the State's commitment to the effectiveness of teachers, school leaders, and equity in placing them where they are needed most. In addition, the inception ten years ago of Turning-Around-Schools continues to date as a model for dramatic improvement, including the Transformation Office already in place as of January 2010. This is clear evidence that the State reaps benefits in reform, and ARRA funding is enhancing services in Title I and IDEA eligible student programs to sustain a reform agenda. Full points were allotted for this sub-section.

(A)(3)(ii) Since 2003, student subgroups and all students overall have demonstrated some progress, but the achievement gap has *not* narrowed for students in poverty, students by race, nor for students by English language learner status. The data show that the State has not had uniform and positive outcomes in academic achievement. However, some areas are notable as follows:

1. The State described increasing student achievement in reading and language arts and mathematics across national (NAEP) and state (ESEA) assessments.
2. The State reported trends in gap reduction without solid improvement, but provided robust achievement data indicating the State has a reputable system to keep a vigilant eye on student achievement through test scores and attending to important sub-groups.
3. The State reported significant and incremental increases in the graduation rate.

Therefore, a score at the lower end of the high range was allotted, reflecting the uneven results across sub-groups and gap reduction results.

Total	125	104	104	

B. Standards and Assessments

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

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

(B)(1)(i) Conditions are established to ensure that the State is working toward jointly developing and adopting a common set of K-12 standards. The standards are internationally benchmarked in English Language Arts (K-5 and 6-12) and in Mathematics (K-12). The State's NECAP assessment framework, released in 2003, is internationally benchmarked. There is a State Board Exam beginning fall 2010 and there is a binding commitment in place to add science to the common standards by 2012. College and career readiness are articulated as part of the high school graduation requirements.

The work is supported through a majority of the States as a coalition. The K-12 standards document is the result of the work of The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Initiative and includes 48 states, in addition to two territories and DC. In addition, the state spearheaded work as an early partner of the WIDA Consortium and also supported regional communities of the New England states to adopt core standards. Full points were allotted this section.

(B)(1)(ii) The State Plan includes adopting K-12 standards before August 2, 2010. This is based on the fact that the Common Core Standards document was released in mid-March with the final draft due June 2010. The State has made significant progress as indicated by the standards and by the list of States participating in the CCSS Initiative Consortium.

Its commitment to progress is well-planned thereafter, including appendix documentation of CCSS in English language arts and mathematics for grades 3-8 and high school assessment through a Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career or PARCC. The State's work is notable for spearheading STEM Grade Span Expectations, grades K-12. Full points were assigned.

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

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

(B)(2)(i) The State is working toward jointly developing and implementing common high quality assessments for English language arts and mathematics for grades 3-8 and assessments for high school through the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC).

(ii) PARCC includes 26 states which is a significant number and member state names are listed in the Appendix on page B-4. Full points were allotted.

(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	**20**	**16**	**20**	[redacted]

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

(B)(3) The State plan is in collaboration with participating LEAs and is a high-quality plan because of the benchmarked K-12 standards that build toward college and career readiness by the time of high school graduation; the data system includes high quality assessments tied to the standards through the use of interim assessments prepared by the State and disseminated state-wide; and there is a detailed roll-out plan including collaboration with institutions of higher education (IHEs). There is a plan to align exit criteria and college entrance requirements in standards and in assessments, and to disseminate formative and interim materials. The plan is backed up in the Instructional Management System and in the Standards Curriculum budget narrative.

The professional development to support a transitional phase includes clear strengths to affect practice in the classroom by utilizing Intermediate Service Providers(ISPs) from the Dana Center to provide a *study of the standards* approach in math, science, and school leadership. The *study of the standards* includes a STEM emphasis and will be implemented with 2,500 teachers a year (for two years) as supported in the letter from the Dana Center.

There appears to be a disconnect with the reading/language arts and social science content area standards in that the Dana Center provides STEM focus only, and will have to gear up to provide English Language Arts (ELA) and Social Studies, which it has not provided before. The timeline for the roll-out of the standards and assessments in the budget shows that the Study of the Standards for ELA begins in year three, and Social Studies begins in year four. In addition, the letter from the Dana Center does not mention that it will scale up for these intended purposes. Therefore, the State plan is *not* ambitious in implementing

reading and language arts. In addition, the Dana Center does not seem to provide English Learner Proficiency Standards (ELPs) in math and science, and therefore, the State identifies using the WIDA ELPs and its own staff to train teachers of English language learners (ELLs). It is not clear how many ELL teachers will be trained this way. Therefore, this sub-section was scored at the low end of the high range for addressing professional development in English language arts and social studies content area standards and assessments so late, and for providing less than clear consideration for teachers of ELLs.

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

Based on the State's presentation, The State supports the transition to enhanced standards equally focused on English Language Arts and Math, and full points were awarded this section.

Total	70	66	70	

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

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

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

1. A unique numbering system is in place since 2003 as described.

2. Student level enrollment elements are on an in-house Information Services portal called eRIDE. The eRIDE stores program-based data with state and local assessments.

3. Student-level pre-K data is collected by RIDE. The required data points (exit, transfers, drop-outs and completers) for P-12 students are contained in a data warehouse. In addition, the State has a contract to procure institutions of higher education (IHEs) data for out-of-state conditions collected by the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC). All components of this element are in place.

4. The capacity to communicate with higher education data systems is supported by a Data Exchange Agreement.

5. The State has a data audit system that regularly checks the RIDE systems. The State describes the use of data standards and error checking.

6. The State has annual test records of individual students with respect to assessments as defined under section 1111 (b) of ESEA (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)) as indicated to meet compliance for SEAs under ESEA and in force since 2005, referred to as NECAP.

7. The State has a system in place to record information on students not tested by grade and by subject.

8. The State has a teacher-identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students through student enrollment lists.

9. The State has transcript information at the student level including courses completed and grades earned through the RIDE Network and Information Services in conjunction with the LEAs' technology directors.

10. The State has student-level college readiness test scores including the SAT and AP for high school students.

11. The State has in place information on the extent to which transitions to post-secondary levels occur; the status of remedial work through the annual reports prepared by Northeastern University on college readiness; and the first-year of success of all recent Rhode Island high school graduates who advance into the public higher education system.

12. The State has other information to address alignment and adequate preparation for success in post-secondary education.

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

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

The State has a plan to build a system to provide data access to key stakeholders including parents, students, researchers, community members, policy makers, educators, and anyone with a computer or the proximity to use public library computers. Access is evident because the information will be available in multiple languages; the State utilizes focus groups to determine parental needs to use the data system; and the State responds to multiple interest groups by partnering with the Providence Plan, a multiple state agency with database capacity. These are a few of the ways that the State describes a clear approach to high level access of its longitudinal data system for all stakeholders.

In addition, the system promises to be useful for informing and engaging policy makers and researchers, for instance, by providing regional level information and including data points on educational funding, community, and culture. These data are in addition to the student/teacher/administrator data, which are designed to engage educators, families, and school personnel. The State specifies the data points that will be made available for each key stakeholder, including researchers, in the Matrix Research Agenda. The State provides strong evidence of its ability to serve stakeholders with applicable and extensive data sources, analytical tools, and user friendly graphics as shown in the mock up of the planned Weave program and Data Hub in the Appendix.

In addition, the State's plan is high quality including measures of effectiveness, a timeline, and performance indicators. Therefore, this section was allotted full points for its well articulated plan to provide access to its statewide longitudinal data system to inform and engage the larger education community.

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

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

(C)(3)(i) The State has a plan to increase the acquisition, adoption, and use of local instructional improvement systems. It includes a dashboard with student level data, expert vendors to design professional development, and LEA input in the dashboard design. It is a high quality plan because it includes professional development, on-going technical support, a timeline for three year implementation starting in the second year of the grant, and performance measures that indicate 100% of the schools will be using the system by 2014. Full points were allotted for this sub-section.

(C)(3)(ii) The State has in place a quality plan to support participating LEAs and schools in effective PD for teachers, principals, and administrators about how to use instructional improvement systems and the resulting data. The plan includes a timeline, key goals to develop district and school leadership in using the system, and annual targets. The dashboard is complete by the end of year-one, and years two, three and four will provide training for site principal-leadership teams, rotating different LEAs each year. The teams receive one day of professional development following each of the interim assessments that the State provides to the LEAs, three times a year. Each of the three professional development sessions is followed-up with one day of on-site coaching for principal-teams. An additional on-site day is planned at the end of the year. This type of intensive training to school-leadership teams provides information to teachers, principals, and administrators to inform and improve their instructional practices, decision making, and overall effectiveness. Less than full points were allotted because there was a question concerning why the

narrative indicates 10-schools are trained, and the Table C7 indicates 50 schools, not 10 are trained. The 50 schools is ambitious, the 10 schools would cause a decrease in points as less ambitious.

(C)(3)(iii) Data from instructional improvement systems are used with statewide longitudinal data systems and are available and accessible to researchers whereby the Wisconsin Center for Education Research has access to the State's English language learner levels by age and proficiency. The Northwest Lab also has access to State data about Special Education requirements for teacher preparation research. In addition, KIDS COUNT data reports on children of incarcerated parents. Last of all, the table lists a grant with Brown University that will report on student data in mathematics and science. Full points were given this sub-section for providing access to researchers for different types of students.

Total	47	46	46	

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

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

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

(D)(1)(i) There are regulatory provisions that allow for alternative routes to certification for teachers and principals through non-IHE providers, and the State requires alternative credential programs to use all five of the elements that define alternative routes. In addition, the State describes two initiatives which demonstrate its effort to support and encourage high-quality pathways for alternative routes. One, in 2004 the Teacher Quality Enhancement grant provided alternative routes with the local college; and two, in 2008, the State adopted flexible regulations for alternative routes which were successful in establishing high-quality pathways with such programs as the Rhode Island Teaching Fellows (RITF), Teach for America (TFA), and The New Teach Project (TNTP). Because the State requires all five elements of a high-quality pathway, and because the State has a history of strong and successful support of alternative routes, full points were allotted to this section.

(D)(1)(ii) Alternative routes to certification are in use for credentialing new teachers, and the State has significantly increased the number of new alternative-credentialed positions in high need schools. The State describes that each of the three alternative teacher credential programs will produce up to 30 teachers each year, and will continue at that rate over the next three years.

As for the principals, the State reported that they are not in demand because there are more principals than positions; however, the State is still adding (1) a credential program for principals as a residency program, and (2) expanding an alternative certification program through the *Academy of Transformative Leadership*. This section was allotted a high score at the lower end for only being at a planning stage and not having in place the means to expand alternative principal programs.

(D)(1)(iii) A process is in place for monitoring, evaluating, and identifying areas of teacher and principal shortage, and for preparing teachers and principals to fill these shortages. The State has begun to build a system to monitor and report shortages in the supply of teachers, especially in hard to staff, high-need schools. The State is underway to launch a recruitment web-site, to track emergency permits, and collect data on newly hired teachers, their routes, and employment status.

As for the principals, the State is reporting predictive trends in principal supply and demand. It monitors LEA hiring results and follows principal retirements using surveys. For principals and for teachers, therefore, the State is building a strong infrastructure to respond to personnel needs, and to provide a solid base of alternative and streamlined certification and preparation programs. Therefore, this sub-section was given full points for providing a high-quality pathway for aspiring teachers and principals and for building a multifaceted process that will adequately address how it will fill areas of shortages.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	**58**	**49**	**49**	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	4	4	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	10	10	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	10	10	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	25	25	

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

(D)(2)(i) The State, in collaboration with participating LEAs, has a plan to measure individualized student growth. However, the State may be using raw student achievement or proficiency data instead of student growth measures. The State makes general references to using student growth and student achievement data together. In addition, in the Appendix, two tables reference that student growth will be used, but without clear indication that it considers change in achievement across two points in time. Although the State clearly defined student achievement based on this notice, and it addresses data comparability across classrooms, it did not match student growth measures clearly with the definition provided in this notice and, therefore, less than full points were allotted.

(D)(2)(ii) The State has a plan to design and implement rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation systems that (a) differentiate effectiveness using multiple rating categories; take into account data on student growth, and (b) include in its design and development, teacher and principal involvement through standing evaluation committees including: The RI Standards, The Rhode Island Advisory Committee for Educator Evaluation Systems (ACEES) and LEA committees to provide feedback. The evaluation system is developed by the State as the RI Model and also ensures fair and transparent processes designed with teacher and principal input. There is differentiation based on teacher effectiveness categories. In addition, there are grant monies from a union organization to evaluate implementation of the system. This is designed to provide additional research-based feedback.

There are two plans and two evaluation systems. One is the RI Model which involves evaluating teacher/principal effectiveness of new hires, for decisions about PD, induction, and teacher preparation programs. The second plan is designed to create a new system for compensation and tenure of teachers/principals and it occurs in years four and five of the grant program. It involves LEAs in a competitive grant to (1) study compensation systems on evidence of teacher effectiveness, and (2) to develop a system based on whole school rewards. The timeline pursuant the *RI Standards* is to have research done by 2015 and the compensation systems are designed *by* the districts, and hence do not provide input as stipulated herein. Therefore, there is not a system in place until the last year of the grant to use student growth for decisions to compensate and provide tenure for teachers and principals. This system is designed by the LEA instead of through input from the LEA.

This section received a medium score at the higher end for being unclear as to how the State will provide control in the design of the compensation-tenure system, and for the less than ambitious timeline for the systems that will be used to inform decisions about tenure and compensation.

(D)(2)(iii) The State has developed a plan that requires LEAs to conduct annual evaluations of teachers and principals using the RI Model. The RI Model includes feedback and provides data on growth by students, classes, and schools. This sub-section was scored with full points because the State provided an ambitious

plan to develop the RI Model by 2012, included numerous areas of input from stakeholders such as teachers and principals, set achievable targets, and is manageable based on the budget plan .

(D)(2)(iv)The State plan includes LEAs using student data as a significant factor to inform decisions regarding the following a – d elements

(a) The State will use student growth as a significant factor in the evaluation of teacher induction programs, for teacher preparation programs, and for professional development.

(b) The State has a system that LEAs can use to promote and retain teachers and principals based on differentiated categories of effectiveness so that principal-, teacher-, and state positions are not open to an employee-applicant rated as ineffective.

(c) The State will help LEAs use student growth measures for decisions about certification for teachers, however, this same system does not apply to decisions about tenure.

(d) The State has a plan with annual targets and performance measures for using evaluation with student growth to inform decisions about removing ineffective, tenured teachers, and principals. The plan for compensation and tenure decisions is different than the RI Model which was referenced in section (D)(2)(ii). The RI Model involves evaluating teacher/principal effectiveness of new hires, and for decisions about PD, induction, and teacher preparation programs. The plan for a system of compensation and tenure of teachers (principals) occurs late in the grant program with research done by 2015. Therefore, there is not a system in place to compensate and provide tenure for teachers and principals until the last year of the grant. This represents a less than ambitious approach to reform.

For addressing sections a-d, noting the lack of clarity in section (c) and the less than ambitious timeline for section (d) resulted in a high range score at the middle level.

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

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

(D)(3)(i) The State plan ensures equitable distribution of teachers and principals and reviews prior actions and data in its narrative. The State's prior actions focused on The New Teacher Project (TNTP) grant that trained principals on screening and hiring teachers to support quality teacher placement in high need schools. In addition, there is discussion about a 9% gap in the core curriculum areas across high to low poverty LEAs used to inform progress targets. The State reflected on its past practices to inform its plan for building equitable distribution of effective teachers so they know where they are going based on where they have been.

It is notable that the plan under RTTT funding is ambitious and achievable. It provides a plan to compare data on effectiveness of teachers and on principals for its schools and districts to ensure equity for high need LEAs and schools. Additionally, it provides for releasing educators based on two years of ineffective performance as part of the Board of Regents approved Basic Education Plan and the RI Standards. High-need schools do not continue to employ ineffective teachers and principals. This plan is described to be strongly supported through State regulation and past actions, and the performance indicators show significant strides in equity over the four years of the program, and therefore, this sub-section received full points.

(D)(3)(ii) The State path to increase the number and percentage of effective teachers in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas was well defined through several broad and particular approaches. For instance, it supports alternative teacher pathways using programs that are known to move mid-career

science and math professionals into the teaching profession. These same programs are known to provide special education and English learner specialty area teachers, mainly through The New Teacher Project and the Teach for America program. Other activities are monitoring the human resources process at the LEAs using the new evaluation system, providing professional development to better screen and hire, and publishing reports on LEA progress. The performance indicators or annual benchmarks result in 85% of the special area teachers to be highly effective in four years time. The narrative, the timelines, and the State activities indicate an ambitious and achievable plan, and therefore, full points were awarded.

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

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

(D)(4)(i) The State has a plan that will link student achievement and student growth to individual students, teachers, and principals and to the in-state programs where those teachers and principals are credentialed. The State will work with other institutions of higher education (IHEs) to hold back certification for candidates who are not effective. The State will use report cards to inform the public of the status of the credentialing programs. The State describes ambitious activities, an achievable timeline, and high level performance objectives, and therefore this sub-section received full points.

(D)(4)(ii) The State has a plan to expand preparation and credentialing options through the Academy of Transformative Leadership that will also serve to scale up principal effectiveness in high need schools. The appendix provides overviews for two alternative teaching credentialing organizations including Teach for America and The New Teacher Project (TNTP). The State describes a coherent approach, sets ambitious goals, and an achievable timeline, and therefore was given full points for this sub-section.

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

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

The State provides a high quality plan for its participating LEAs to

(D)(5)(i) Provide effective, data-informed PD at three levels:

1. A *Study of the Standards* is provided by the Dana Center to assist teachers and principals with implementing the new core standards and assessments for informing instruction in the classroom.

2. Leadership Teams- Based on the budget, there are 79 leadership teams for 1,598 participating educators in professional development. The State plans to hire three full-time trainers for a trainer-of-trainer model for the 5 days with teachers in years two and four. This supports the narrative.

3. Evaluation Teams- Based on the budget, the Intermediate Service Providers (ISPs) are contracted for 100 days for the first two years and trained by expert vendors.

Ongoing job-embedded strategies, differentiating instruction, data informed decisions, high need students' alignment systems and removing barriers are all addressed in the three Professional Development plans. There was some reason to question the effectiveness of the support, however, and in particular to a discrepancy between the budget and the Intermediate Service Providers (ISPs). It looks like the budget provides for a number of ISPs for 100 hours of contract work at the beginning months of the year for the

first two years. However, the narrative indicates that the ISPs provide coaching support for the induction program, training for mathematics teachers in the Standards (the Dana Center), and earlier in the narrative, they provided calibration coaching for the principal teams. Therefore, it seems the ISPs are doing more than the budget allows. In addition, the professional development table, D11, does not specify dates for the timeline. Therefore, the over-reliance on the ISPs and the lack of a clear timeline resulted in a middle score, at the upper level.

(D)(5)(ii) The State has a plan to develop the database platform which will provide tools to monitor PD providers by ranking and disseminating data so LEAs are informed consumers. In addition, the State provides a report card or reporting system to the commission about providers. This section appeared to provide a number of effective activities, an achievable timeline, and ambitious annual benchmarks and goals so that full points were given this sub-section.

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

Based on the State's presentation, there is effective state support utilizing the Intermediate Service Providers (ISPs), Study of Standards, Leadership and Evaluation Teams for data-informed professional development for teachers and principals. The details provided by the State's presentation indicated that ISPs have specific roles with adequate time allotments for the roles they provide. Full points were allotted this section.

Total	138	124	127	

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

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

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

The State has regulatory authority to directly intervene in the state's persistently lowest-achieving schools and in LEAs that are in improvement or corrective action status. This is based on the General Laws delegating the Board of Regents to restructure governance, budgets, programs, and personnel, and to make decisions about continued school operations for low achieving schools. Full points were allotted.

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

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

(E)(2)(i) The State identified the persistently lowest achieving schools based on the academic achievement of the "all students" group on the State assessments in reading, language arts, and math; and based on a lack of progress over a number of years by the "all students" group. According to the State, five percent of the schools is equal to 2.8 schools, so the State selected five schools instead of 5%. Full points were allotted.

(E)(2)(ii) The State supports its LEAs in turning around schools by implementing one of the four school intervention models. The process under the RI Intervention Protocol allows school reform models, and the narrative states that LEAs will choose a reform option and will develop a detailed School Reform Plan (to be approved by the Commissioner) for a three-year period. The State has the authority to reconstitute the

school, should the school fail to meet annual progress goals. This sub-section received full points for providing a coherent plan and detailed activities, an ambitious timeline, and achievable goals.

Total	50	50	50	

F. General

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

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

(F)(1)(i) The percentage of the total revenues available to the State that was used to support elementary, secondary, and public higher education for FY 2009 was greater than the percentage of the total revenues available to the State for that same purpose in FY 2008, and this occurred during a severe economic crisis. Full points were allotted.

(F)(1)(ii) The State's policies lead to equitable funding between high-need LEAs and other LEAs based on the state's Student Equity Investment, the Targeted Aid funds, and including poverty in the formula for LEA funding. In regard to "within" LEA funding, particular to poor schools, the narrative indicated there are policies in place such as fiscal and human resource oversight and that the Regents can assess the LEAs' capacity and may recommend additional provisions. Full points were allotted.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	**40**	**38**	**38**	
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	8	8	
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	8	8	
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	8	8	
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	6	6	
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	8	8	

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

(F)(2)(i) The State has a charter school law that does not prohibit increasing the number of high-performing charter schools, and there is a 10% cap (35 per year) on the number of charter schools that may be created statewide. Full points were allotted.

(F)(2)(ii) The State has laws, statutes, regulations, or guidelines regarding how charter school authorizers approve, monitor, hold accountable, reauthorize, and close charter schools. Detail of this criterion indicates that:

Student achievement is a significant factor for authorization, monitoring, re-authorizing and closing charter schools. For example, beginning in 2010, the State will base all annual charter school performance evaluations on the Performance Contract Requirements; it will identify charter schools that consistently fall short of high-quality standards; and revoke a charter at any time if the school fails to achieve student performance targets.

The State requires that charter schools serve student populations similar to the local district's demographics. It does this by placing an important restriction on student enrollment. Charter schools must enroll the same percentage of low-income, limited English speaking students, and special education students combined as a percentage and equal to the school district as a whole. Although the RTTT provides a criterion for closing and not renewing ineffective charter schools, there has been no call for closures of charter schools. This was not considered a problem because it appears that the State has in place all the regulations that would cause a closure at the point a charter becomes ineffective. Therefore, with all these elements defined and supported by statute and policy, this section received full points.

(F)(2)(iii) The State's charter schools receive equitable funding compared to traditional public schools. The per-pupil funding is 95% of that provided to traditional public schools. In addition, a commensurate share of Federal revenues is available, recognizing the State as one of the six highest of all states funding charter schools. All points for this criterion were allotted.

(F)(2)(iv) The State's charter schools receive funding for facilities, assistance with facilities acquisition, access to public facilities, and the ability to share in bonds and mill levies. However, charter schools *outside* the district are only entitled to a minimum of 30% for state reimbursements, and charter schools *within* districts are entitled to the district's share. In addition, charter schools can obtain tax-exempt bond financing. The State sets a minimum of 30% for reimbursements for facilities for charters outside the district, and so this criterion received a high range score at the low end.

(F)(2)(v) The State enables LEAs to operate innovative, autonomous public schools including the Metropolitan Regional Career and Technological Center, innovative e-learning, and virtual high schools. Three other novel public schools were described, and considering the state size, full points were allotted for providing a variety of at least six different examples.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	**5**	**4**	**4**	

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

(F)(3) The narrative described initiatives, consortia, and regulations for the State's forward looking reform agenda. A few are noted here for reference: 21st Century Learning Communities and many other after-school programs which attracted the likes of The Wallace Foundation to select the state as a model program; Gates and Nellie Mae Education Foundations committed to increasing graduation rates, decreasing dropout rates, increasing college rates and reducing remedial courses. It was not clear whether any of these programs improved student achievement, and therefore, a little less than full points were allotted this sub-section.

Total	55	52	52	

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

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

Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The competitive preference priority was provided based on the consistent development of STEM components across the entire application as follows:

1. There is a rigorous course of study in STEM in three schools; the State already has K-12 Grade Span Expectations in Engineering and Technology ready for Board adoption in July 2010; the end-of-the year algebra requirements are in place; and the technology literacy initiative has received State support in the amount of 41.5 million dollars related to STEM education. Also, the State is recognized for developing

schools which focus on mathematics and literacy STEM data workshops, and for providing business community connections through STEM via the Teacher Externship Program.

2. There is cooperation with universities (such as the Dana Center) to assist teachers in integrating STEM content across grades and disciplines; in promoting effective and relevant instruction piloted at three schools using Project Based Learning with English language learners (Dana Center); and developing academic vocabulary lists particular to STEM concepts for English learner (EL) students and students in poverty. It is noted that the RTTT grant includes science and mathematics Intermediate Service Providers (ISPs).

3. The State addresses preparing more students for advanced study and careers in STEM including meeting the needs of under-represented groups and of women and girls; this is provided through increasing visible advertising and promoting vacancies through the web-based educator's job search engine to increase opportunities for women to apply for STEM positions, and for setting the goal to reduce the achievement gap for African American students and students in poverty; and for the Education Leadership Council in Science, Mathematics, and Information Technology to promote awareness and motivation in STEM achievement. Also, it is important to note that the State has two NSF funded programs and within these two programs an advisory analyzes gap reduction needs.

The State provides a high quality plan for the STEM preference priority by providing (across the application) many goals for STEM programs, identifying key activities and the rationale, often identifying the parties responsible, and for providing performance measures as needed.

For all the above reasons, this application received the points for the STEM emphasis.

Total	15	15	15	

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

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

Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

This application meets the priority for comprehensively and coherently addressing all of the four education reform areas and the State Success Factors Criteria. The application makes a clear commitment to ambitious and achievable reform programs that will improve student outcomes as defined by RTTT.

Total		0	0	

Grand Total	500	457	464	

Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2

Rhode Island Application #4150RI-8

A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	**65**	**46**	**46**	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	4	4	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	30	30	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	12	12	

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

A 1 (i)

Rhode Island (RI) has its reform program, the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (RIDE), which will merge with RTTT to accomplish state goals. RI has a comprehensive plan to accomplish its goals, see below.

• Rhode Island 4th and 8th graders will achieve proficiency on the NAEP in reading and math at rates comparable to the currently highest-performing states.

• Eliminate in half the achievement gaps by race (black/white and Hispanic/white) and income (low-income/high-income) on both NAEP and NECAP.

• 90% of Rhode Island students will meet standards on the NECAP tests in reading.

90% of elementary school students and 75% of middle and high school students will achieve proficiency in math.

• 85% of Rhode Island students in the class of 2015 will graduate within four years of starting high school.

• 77% of the Rhode Island high school class of 2015 will enroll in college.

• 90% of Rhode Island high school graduates who enroll in college will complete at least one year of college credits within two years of high school graduation.

A 1 (ii)

The 48 LEAs that have signed MOUs to participate in Race to the Top account for 97% of all schools in Rhode Island, 97% of all students, and 99% of students in poverty. With 97% of its students—and virtually all of RI's low-income students—in LEAs participating in Race to the Top, Rhode Island expects to translate the reforms outlined in this proposal to broad impact for nearly every student in the state.

The fact that only 11 of 37 applicable local teachers' union leaders (30 percent) support RTTT may impact local school district success in implementing the state's reform efforts.

The signed MOUs provide evidence of strong support. However, the lack of local teacher union support combined with several districts' negative responses, one of which recorded as many as six Ns (for "No) on specific policies on the MOUs raises concern about how well the RTTT priorities will be implemented at the local level.

A 1 (iii)

Rhode Island has a comprehensive plans for implementing its RTTT goals. Rhode Island describes how it will address each of its goals.

With only 30% of the LEA union leaders willing to sign MOUs, RI may have difficulty in fully implementing its reform goals.

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	**30**	**27**	**27**	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	20	20	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	7	7	

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

A 2: (i)

Rhode Island has positive support from its legislative leaders and its Commissioner of Education. Since assuming responsibility on July 1, 2009, Commissioner Gist has:

• Created, with significant input from all relevant stakeholder groups (parents, teachers, students, community leaders), the RIDE Strategic Plan;

• Issued directives to LEAs to end seniority-based teacher hiring and assignment and require the implementation of evaluation systems for educator effectiveness based "primarily on evidence of impact on student growth and academic achievement;" and

• Raised entry requirements for all teacher preparation programs in the state—in two years, the entry requirements in Rhode Island will be the highest in the nation.

Commissioner Gist has established an Executive Leadership team to reorganize the RI state agency to implement both the RI and RTTT reform plans (an organizational chart is included).

In June 2010, the Commissioner plans to implement "EdStat," an agency accountability and performance improvement model that is designed to
move RIDE toward a system of managing from data for results. EdStat will be RIDE's primary method for holding itself, its divisions, and the office itself accountable for Race to the Top, by supporting a system-wide emphasis on results for students. The budget also includes a project management position to oversee the implementation of Race to the Top.

RI will hire a Federal Grants Officer to oversee the RTTT funds.

RI provides additional information supporting a conclusion that RI has built a strong capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans.

A2 (ii)
Rhode Island includes a significant number of letters of support from a wide range of organization representatives.

While Rhode Island will have broad stakeholder support, the fact that 70 percent of the local teacher union leaders do not support Rhode Island's RTTT proposal, raises issues abut how broad the stakeholder support will be.

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

(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	20	20

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

A 3 (i)

Rhode Island provides evidence of academic progress made in addressing RTTT's reform areas since 2003. For example:

Rhode Island is a member, along with Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine, of the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP), the only operational multi-state consortium that shares both common content standards and an operational common assessment in the multiple grades required by NCLB.

Rhode Island planned and implemented the standards and assessments using $2.9 million in state funds annually and $2 million from a Federal Enhanced Assessment grant. The multi-state consortium procured services from a national vendor to assist in the development of the standards and assessments, which resulted in more than $5 million in savings for Rhode Island to date due to greater economies of scale.

Rhode Island is also a leading member of the World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Consortium, which is dedicated to the design and implementation of high standards and equitable educational opportunities for English language learners. As an early member of this consortium, Rhode Island was the fiscal agent for WIDA and used $2 million since 2006 to develop the English language acquisition standards that support the academic language that students need to engage successfully in its content standards in reading, writing, mathematics, and science.

In addition, Rhode Island was a founding member and leader in 2005 of the Achieve Algebra II end-of-course consortium, which now includes 14 states using the common Algebra II assessment. RIDE has been working with a group of teachers and principals to create Rhode Island K-12 Grade Span Expectations (GSEs) in Engineering and Technology. Benchmarked to the International Technology Educators Association's Standards for Technology Literacy and other publications, these GSEs were developed as a means to identify the concepts and skills in technology, design, problem solving, and engineering expected of all students. The creation of these expectations represents an important first step in the integration of the missing "T & E" in STEM education in Rhode Island. The STEM work has been a high priority for the Governor, and the General Assembly has invested $1.5 million in state funds since 2007 for STEM planning and implementation initiatives.

Rhode Island aggressively engaged in a multi-year effort to transform secondary education in the state. The state used $2.4 million in state funds to provide intensive services and supports to all Rhode Island high schools, including career and technical centers, to meet proficiency-based graduation requirements and prepare for college and careers.

A 3 (ii)

Rhode Island provides evidence of increasing student achievement as measured by NAEP and examinations under ESEA, reducing the gaps between subgroups, and increasing graduation rates which have revealed increases and decreases.

Rhode Island is one of only seven states where both 4th and 8th grade students improved their performance in both reading and mathematics on the recently released 2009 NAEP assessment.

Since 2003, the percentage of Rhode Island students achieving at or above the basic level on the 4th grade NAEP assessment in reading has risen from 62% to 69%. Rhode Island students have made even greater progress on the NAEP assessment in mathematics. The percentage of 4th grade students achieving at or above the basic level has risen from 72% in 2003 to 81% in 2009. The low-income, Black, Hispanic, and English language learner students have made even greater gains, narrowing the achievement gap.

Additional evidence is presented. Rhode Island has met this criterion at a high level.

Total	125	98	98	

B. Standards and Assessments

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

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

B 1 (i)

Rhode Island has been involved with other states in developing standards and now anticipates approving the common core standards at its Board of Regents meeting on July 1, 2010. The State of Rhode Island is a member of the Common Core Standards Initiative, a project directed by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association (NGA) and supported by a coalition of 48 states, two territories, and the District of Columbia.

The Common Core Standards are being internationally benchmarked.

B 1 (ii)
As stated in the comment on B 1 (i) Rhode Island is vigorously addressing this criterion. Of particular note is its work on standards for STEM with an emphasis on technology and engineering.

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

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

B 2 (i)

RI's commitment to developing a high-quality comprehensive assessment system is evident in its participation in the NECAP Consortium since 2002. The NECAP Consortium has developed two sets of content standards in mathematics and English language arts, Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) for students in grades 3-8 and Grade Span Expectations (GSEs) for students in grades 9-12, to provide instructionally relevant information to school administrators, teachers, and parents to help them make informed decisions about student instructional needs. The NECAP assessment framework, released in 2003, is based on a common set of K-12 standards that are internationally benchmarked and designed to propel students to college and career success.

B 2 (ii)
Rhode Island has been involved with other states in developing assessments aligned with the common core standards. 26 states participate in this consortium. In addition, Rhode Island has joined and is a governing state for the State Board Exam Consortium. Through the State Board Exam Consortium, eight states (Connecticut, Kentucky, Maine, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and

Vermont) have signed a memorandum of understanding to increase the proportion of high-school students who leave high school ready for college or careers by adopting multiple pathways based on best practice. Board Examinations are embedded in aligned instructional systems including: syllabi, courses, formative and summative assessments, professional development, and externally scored examinations that meet or exceed the Common Core Standards.

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

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

B 3

Rhode Island has been involved with other states to support the transition to enhanced standards and in the development of high quality assessments aligned with the common core standards. Table B2 provides a list of activities RI will undertake to implement the Common Core Assessments and assessments. It includes activities under the following categories:
Dissemination of the Standards
Study of the Standards
Intensive Curriculum Alignment
College and Career Readiness Alignment
Project-Based Learning
High-Quality Interim Assessments
Formative Assessment

Rhode Island has a high quality plan including STEM activities tied to its standards and assessments for implementation.

Total	70	70	70	

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

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

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

C 1

Rhode Island provides evidence in Table C 1 that its data system includes each of the 12 required categories.

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

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

C 2

The RIDE comprehensive statewide Educator Performance Management System for collecting data from the evaluations of educator effectiveness will, when completed:

- Link educator preparation, assignment, compensation, advancement and tenure;
- Link performance-management with program approvals; and

• Support assessment of teacher effectiveness, educator-certification program effectiveness, professional development effectiveness, and the educator-evaluation system itself.

Of particular note is the State's tying the education data into other data sources, such as data from the Department of Health.

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

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

C 3 (i)

Rhode Island will build on its existing Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (RIDE) data to increase the use of instructional improvement systems.

The RI Instructional Improvement System will enable educators to access and analyze data showing how their students are performing against state standards and to use this knowledge to provide students with appropriate instructional supports. The system will also enable school leaders to access, analyze, and act on the differentiated strengths and needs of their teachers and to provide teachers with appropriate professional development, resources and assistance.

Educators will be able to use customized data dashboards to access instructional improvement systems that connect them to a rich array of tools and instructional resources. Teachers will be able to use these materials to match instructional strategies and interventions to gaps in student learning identified by data analysis

C 3 (ii).

RIDE and its local partners have extensive experience providing data-use training to teachers, principals, administrators, and communities. RIDE will build on these experiences to provide personalized training that is differentiated to reflect user needs and abilities. Through multiple delivery mechanisms, RI will provide personalized training to account for differences in how adults learn. RI's training experience includes on-site professional development, train-the-trainer groups, webinars, online tutorials, training retreats, intensive one-on-one training, computer-assisted training, and training forums.Teams of leaders will learn how to implement a full-year planning, assessment, review/analysis, and response cycle to move every educator in their building to use data effectively on a daily basis to improve instruction and student outcomes.

Rhode Island has a high-quality plan that builds skills by providing continuing education and support and fosters a culture of data inquiry and collaboration.

C 3 (iii)

Rhode Island is working with a series of educational research organizations, including: the Northeast Regional Laboratory, Kids Count, The Education Alliance at Brown University, and the Wisconsin Center for Education Research.

RIDE has partnered with the Research Collaborative of Rhode Island to implement the Rhode Island Education Research Agenda, including an Early Warning Indicators system for predicting college readiness and post-high school success. Established in 2008, the Research Collaborative is a broad and established

group of social scientists and policy researchers across the state that was created as a part of the Urban Education Task Force to pursue a statewide research agenda in the service of effective education programs, policy and practice. Completed analyses by the Collaborative include student-level mobility studies in RI urban districts and analyses of RIDE's persistently lowest-achieving schools. These analyses informed development of LEA improvement plans.

RI has a high quality plan, which should be successful since RI is building on efforts and successes already underway. The RTTT funds should allow them to continue these positive results.

Total	47	47	47	

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	**21**	**15**	**15**	
(i) Allowing alternative routes to certification	7	4	4	
(ii) Using alternative routes to certification	7	7	7	
(iii) Preparing teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage	7	4	4	

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

D 1 (i)

Rhode Island law gives the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Board of Regents authority over teacher certification in Rhode Island (RIGL §§16-1-5(2), 16-11-1, 16-60-4(a), 16-60-6 (9)(ii)).

These regulations create the opportunity for providers outside of institutions of higher education to provide training leading to state certification as a professional educator. Alternative pathway providers must meet the same stringent Program Approval Standards. Rhode Island has adopted regulations that provide for all five of the features of alternative routes, as defined by Race to the Top:

The 2008 Alternative Certification Regulations allow a variety of entities, including "an institution of higher education, a professional organization, or a private service provider," to operate alternative pathways to certification. Nonprofit, private providers and LEAs may operate educator preparation programs independent of an institution of higher education.

While the proposal mentions "principals" in this section, the descriptions of program elements only address teacher preparation and certification.

D 1. (ii)

Rhode Island began its alternative programs for teachers two years ago. Nineteen candidates will complete this program this year. Seventy-five principal candidates have completed programs.

Alternative certification programs exist and are being used.

D 1 (iii)

Rhode Island tracks teacher needs by survey and beginning in 2009 by collecting data on teachers certified and teachers hired. The State, also, tracks emergency certificates issued and the Title II Higher Education program completer data. These approaches should provide excellent data on teachers.

Rhode Island has an excess of persons holding principal certificates who are available for hire, resulting in an emphasis on teacher shortage, not principal shortages.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	**58**	**51**	**51**	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	3	3	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	12	12	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	8	8	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	28	28	

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

D 2 (i)

Rhode Island looks to establish a "statewide model to measure value added and growth for each individual student." The focus in this criterion is on "student growth." Value added is more appropriately used to measure teacher effectiveness not student growth. Rhode Island will rely on consultants and state educators to develop its evaluation system. No details are discussed, such as minimum criteria that must be included in its system to measure student growth.

D 2 (ii)

The Rhode Island Board of Regents adopted RI Evaluation Education Standards in December 2009 that will be the basis for all state and local human resource management decisions— including certification, selection, tenure, professional development, and support for both individual and groups of educators, placement, compensation, promotion, and retention. The to-be-developed Rhode Island evaluation system will be phased in, by 2013-14, 51% of the evaluation system will be based on student growth.

To meet the RI Standards, each LEA's evaluation system must:

• Base evaluation of educator effectiveness "primarily on evidence of impact on student growth and academic achievement," (The Rhode Island system will categorize teachers and principals into one of these four categories of effectiveness.)

• Differentiate educators into four levels of effectiveness (highly effective, effective, minimally effective, and ineffective)

• Annually evaluate effectiveness of all educators, including teachers, principals, and professional support staff;

• Ensure a transparent, fair evaluation process.

The evaluation systems in local LEAs will be developed with teacher and principal involvement.

RI describes a high quality evaluation system.

D 2 (iii)

Rhode Island is developing a model state evaluation system that will provide teachers and principals with student growth data for their students, classes, and schools. While developing and implementing this annual statewide evaluation system will be challenging, the Rhode Island high quality plan should meet this challenge.

D 2 (iv)

Rhode Island plans to have in place processes to utilize evaluation results for the following purposes:

• Providing individualized feedback on performance to all teachers, principals, and support professionals, including detailed analysis of their performance (based on student growth and achievement, and recommendations for professional growth and development;

• Supporting continuous professional development and improvement;

• Creating incentives for highly effective educators, including establishing a process to identify individuals or groups of educators who demonstrate exemplary effectiveness and recognize and capitalize on their talents through differentiated roles and responsibilities, formal recognition, and/or other incentives;

• Providing objective information to support meaningful renewal and tenure decisions; and

• Improving performance of ineffective educators by providing intensive support and evaluation specifically designed to improve their performance and dismissing those who are unable or unwilling improve in a timely manner.

Rhode Island LEAs will be using educator evaluation data captured from LEA evaluation systems in 2011-12 to develop, promote, recognize and reward, renew/retain, assign, and terminate teachers and principals by the 2012-13 school year.

Rhode Island will provide professional development using the information generated from the evaluation system. This data will enable LEAs,principals, and teachers to make better-informed decisions about the specific, most appropriate types of professional development needed by individual educators. In addition, the integration of teacher evaluation data and the state certification database into the state's longitudinal data system will allow the state and its LEAs to track what professional development each teacher and principal receives every year and to link that professional development with educators' effectiveness ratings.

Rhode Island will, also, address compensation issues. The RIDE Strategic Plan indicates that RIDE will lead a collaborative effort to review and analyze research regarding the successful implementation of performance-based compensation systems that districts can adopt by 2015. Race to the Top funding will accelerate this transition by providing resources to LEAs to develop innovative approaches to compensating educators in a manner that recognizes growth and student achievement.

Rhode Island's high quality approach to developing and implementing an evaluation system is excellent.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	**25**	**24**	**24**	
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	15	15	
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	9	9	

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

D 3 (i)

Rhode Island has in place a number of appropriate policies, see below, that will assure that effective teachers are assigned to all students.

The Commissioner Notice on Seniority Hiring: After July 1, 2010, all teacher assignments in Rhode Island must further the goal of matching highly effective educators with classrooms of students who have significant achievement gaps. Given that teacher and principal assignments must be based on student need, districts must develop and implement criterion-based hiring and assignment.

All LEAs must be in compliance with this policy no later than August 31, 2013.

The state plans to use its new educator evaluation system standards, described in D (2), to monitor and encourage efforts to improve the equitable distribution of teachers and principals.

RIDE will publish annual reports on the numbers of highly effective, effective, minimally effective, and ineffective teachers and principals at each school in the state; differences between high- and low-poverty and high- and low-minority schools statewide and within each LEA; and differences across different types of teaching assignments (for example, general and AP courses) both statewide and in each LEA and school.

RIDE will monitor the assignments of all educators, as required through the Equitable Distribution Plan. RIDE will disseminate these reports to all LEAs in the state, to parents, to civil rights and children's advocacy groups, to the media, and to the public.

Under the RI Standards, LEAs must ensure that any student who is taught by an ineffective teacher in one year is assigned to an effective or highly effective teacher in the next. Every superintendent will receive a list, generated by RIDE's data management system, of such students' ID numbers and must report to the state each September that these students are not assigned to ineffective teachers in consecutive years.

By 2012-13, in order to comply with the new RI Standards, LEAs cannot assign or transfer any teachers who are not effective to high-poverty, high minority, or low-performing schools.

LEAs will dismiss teachers and principals after two years of ineffective performance.

RI has developed a high quality plan to address the RTTT evaluation priorities.

D 3 (ii)
Rhode Island will use several approaches to recruiting teachers for hard-to-staff subjects:

Working with providers who prepare alternatively certified teachers;

Creating partnerships with state organizations, and;

Launching TEACH Rhode Island, a statewide educator recruitment campaign and screening platform that will assist all LEAs, especially high-need LEAs, in recruiting and screening effective teachers and principals to create a statewide pool of qualified candidates.

These varying approaches are illustrative of RI's high quality plan.

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

(ii) Expanding effective programs	7	5	5	

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

D 4 (i)
Rhode Island's programs whose graduates consistently produce student achievement gains will be continued and supported. Those that do not will be required to improve their performance on a set timeline or lose their approval to operate educator preparation programs. RIDE, the Rhode Island Office of Higher Education (RIOHE), alternative pathway providers, and the Rhode Island Association of Independent Colleges will work together to ensure that candidates who are not effective during preparation do not graduate and obtain certification.

Rhode Island has moved aggressively to close programs that do not meet its current rigorous standards and has closed two programs, including a principal preparation program, in the last five years. The state will be equally aggressive in holding teacher preparation programs accountable for the effectiveness of their graduates.

"RIDE will use Race to the Top funds to create new educator preparation program report cards that include information on:

• The impact of the program's graduates on student growth and academic achievement, as compared with all other teacher or principal (as appropriate) preparation programs in the state;
• The rate at which each program's graduates earn full Professional Certification, which under the new certification system will require evidence of effectiveness, by the end of their first three years of teaching; and
• The number of preparation programs' graduates working in Rhode Island schools disaggregated by LEA and high/low-poverty and high/low-minority schools."

D 4 (ii)
Working with high-quality schools, Rhode Island will expand its efforts to recruit teachers and principals for these schools, and seek partnerships to improve recruiting.

RI has a high quality plan for monitoring the quality of the preparation of its teachers and principals and will publicly report the data it collects.

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	**20**	**14**	**14**	
(i) Providing effective support	10	8	8	
(ii) Continuously improving the effectiveness of the support	10	6	6	

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

D 5 (i)

Rhode Island's high quality plan and effective support to teachers and principals in various ways including both preservice and inservice professional development. Examples include:

Rhode Island's rules and regulations respectively address curriculum, instruction, and assessment and accountable management. Together, these chapters outline the expectations that LEAs will ensure effective teaching in all Rhode Island classrooms through the implementation of high quality, data-driven, job-embedded professional development for teachers and principals.

Rhode Island will launch an Academy for Transformative Leadership (the Academy) that will build on partnerships and best practices currently in place statewide. Through the Academy, Rhode Island will identify best practices from the field and research-based expertise, both in Rhode Island and nationally, in

order to provide the best-in-class supports and training to school leadership teams. The Academy will prepare and better develop current principals, aspiring principals, and leadership teams for the state's schools—with an emphasis on improvements needed in chronically low-achieving schools.

The Academy for Transformative Leadership's work will establish the Turnaround Principals Program: This program will be a year long, intensive training program that will develop cohorts of new and existing principals each year for the lowest-achieving schools.

The Academy will also offer intensive professional development to teams of superintendents, school committee chairs, principals, teacher-leaders, and other instructional leaders from all participating LEAs.

Using Race to the Top funding, Rhode Island will develop a coaching program for all first- and second year teachers that will launch in 2011-12. This approach is modeled on the New Teacher Center, a 12-year-old program that has been cited by the U.S. Department of Education as an "exemplary program."

D 5 (ii)
By 2012-13, Rhode Island will be able to link records of professional development received by teachers to impacts on educator effectiveness and student achievement and to invest in only those providers that improve educator effectiveness. RIDE will define effective professional development programs as those that elevate minimally effective teachers and principals to be effective, and effective teachers and principals to be highly effective.

The Leadership Academy will coordinate with RIDE to play a critical role in coordinating and organizing professional development offerings to principals and leaders so that they are equipped with relevant and effective professional development statewide.

Rhode Island, also, describes a series of programs designed for STEM.

While RI proposes ways to improve the effectiveness of its professional development, the criterion for D 5 (ii) begins, "Measure, evaluate..." The examples Rhode Island provides in its plan do not consistently address "measure or evaluate."

Total	138	116	116	

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

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

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

E 1

Rhode Island has both a high quality plan and a past record of intervening in the lowest achieving schools and LEAs, as described below:

RIDE has significant legal, statutory, and regulatory authority to intervene directly both in schools and LEAs that have failed to meet performance targets established by the Board of Regents for three consecutive years. Rhode Island has aligned a number of regulations and statutes in recent years to position the state to effectively implement the comprehensive intervention models identified in this application. Rhode Island General Laws give RIDE and the Board of Regents authority to reconstitute low achieving schools. The statute reads, in part: "If further needed, the school shall be reconstituted. Reconstitution responsibility is delegated to the board of regents and may range from restructuring the school's governance, budget, program personnel, and/or may include decisions regarding the continued

operation of the school....Failure to increase student performance to target levels at the school level shall result in increased LEA oversight responsibility on a year-to-year basis. Consecutive years without demonstrated improvement shall result in state intervention and decreased local authority."

Rhode Island has a history of exercising that authority through Commissioner's Orders to remove barriers to improving student learning in the lowest- performing LEAs. Commissioner's Orders have resulted in the reconstitution of a persistently low-achieving high school and the establishment of criterion-based hiring in two urban districts.

The Board of Regents affirmatively voted to adopt the Protocol as a regulation at its May 6, 2010, meeting; a full vote for the RI Intervention Protocol is scheduled for July 2010, following the required period of public comment and public hearing.

The RI Intervention Protocol includes:

• The method for the identification of Persistently Lowest-Achieving Schools;

• LEA duties and responsibilities (management of school transformation, community outreach requirements, LEA selection of school reform option, LEA development and effective implementation of School Reform Plan(s), development of an effective internal accountability framework that generates and focuses attention on data-based information and allocates resources where they are most needed);

• RIDE's role (establish the standards and expectations for school performance and categorize schools based on that performance, approve School Reform Plan(s) only when they are sufficient, provide assistance to those LEAs with identified schools in order to ensure that conditions at the school allow for meaningful reform.

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

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

E 2 (i)

As noted previously, Rhode Island has the regulatory authority to intervene in its lowest-achieving schools.

Rhode Island has 43 Persistently Lowest-Achieving (PLA) schools, organized in three tiers of descending priority. Sixteen of the PLA schools are high schools, five are middle schools, and 22 are elementary schools.

E 2 (ii)

Rhode Island has a high quality plan and is prepared to implement all four of the recommended interventions, as appropriate.

The RI Intervention Protocol requires LEAs to clearly articulate all of the following reform elements in a School Reform Plan that is developed from a comprehensive needs assessment of the school, with wide representation from the school community:

• standards-based curriculum, instruction, and assessments;

• data-based accountability and evaluation;

• improved leadership and governance;

• professional development targeted to individual teachers' needs;

• development of a culture and climate focused on student success;

• an expansion of external resources and supports that align with school improvement goals;

• ongoing parental and community involvement;

• opportunities for extended learning activities;

• structural reform strategies; and

• unwavering commitment to ensure that our PLA schools are staffed with highly effective teachers and leaders.

Rhode Island will place priorities on providing/training the leadership needed to work with these lowest-achieving schools, as well as joining with community organizations and developing additional charter schools and taking enforcement action if the state determines that the LEA is not meeting its goals or fulfilling other applicable requirements and ultimately begin reconstitution; and

• Allowable school reform models (These models directly adopt those outlined in the documents published by the U.S. Department of Education: Guidance on School Improvement Grants Under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (January 21,2010); and Overview Information: Race to the Top Fund.

Rhode Island provides a consistent percentage of State revenue to education and equitably funds high-poverty schools, as noted below.

Total	50	47	47	

F. General

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

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

F 1 (i)

Rhode Island increased the percentage of the state budget going to education in FY 2009 to 33.24 percent from 32.27 percent in FY 2008.

F 1 (ii)

The Paul W. Crowley Rhode Island Student Investment Initiative, the landmark education reform act passed by the legislature in 1997, was designed specifically to close inequitable gaps in both funding and achievement that previously existed among local education agencies (LEAs) and schools in Rhode Island. Under this funding system, the state distributes education funding aid to LEAs through eleven different categories. This funding formula is built on four fundamental principles that place a strong emphasis on equity: closing inequitable resource gaps among LEAs and schools; closing inequitable gaps in performance and achievement among different groups of students, especially those correlated with poverty, gender, and language background; targeting investments to improve student and school performance; and establishing a predictable method of distributing state education aid in a manner that addresses the over-reliance on the property tax to finance education.

The state's Student Equity Investment and Targeted Aid funds, which account for 15 percent of state education aid, provide additional resources to LEAs with the greatest percentage of students living in

poverty. On average, Rhode Island provides approximately $2,850 more per pupil in state funding to the highest-need LEAs.

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

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

F 2 (i)

Rhode Island's legislature eliminated the cap on charter school students and raised the number of possible charter schools to 35, representing more than 10% of the 308 schools in Rhode Island.

F2 (ii)

Rhode Island has a rigorous set of requirements that charter schools must meet before being authorized. The Board of Regents has approved only 13 the 37 applications it has received since the 1995 passage of the Charter Public School Act of Rhode Island. The Board of Regents has rejected 17 applications, nearly half of those it has received, because it found their plans were financially or programmatically unsustainable.

Under state law, half of the state's 35 charters are reserved for schools designed to serve at-risk pupils. State policy is clear, "the Board of Regents and RIDE shall give priority to projects that are designed to target and serve students from disadvantaged backgrounds. In particular, projects designed to serve students from districts under state intervention and/or under corrective action will be given priority."

Charter schools in Rhode Island serve a higher percentage of low-income students than the state's public schools as a whole; 49 percent of charter school students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, compared with 38 percent of students statewide.

State law allows the Board of Regents to revoke a charter at any time if the school fails to achieve student performance targets.

F 2 (iii)

The Rhode Island charter law guarantees each charter school 95 percent of the state and local funding a traditional public school district would receive for each student enrolled. The remaining 5 percent is distributed to each charter student's district of residence to pay for administrative costs.

Rhode Island reports that the Center for Education Reform provides more equitable funding for charter schools than all but five states (Idaho, Minnesota, Missouri, North Carolina, and Tennessee).

F 2 (iv)

Charter schools in Rhode Island receive substantial facilities grant funds, through a state reimbursement program. The reimbursement program provides generous support for school facilities, allowing schools to receive reimbursement for facility purchasing, renovation, and maintenance. For charter schools within districts, the sponsoring school district may access state aid for facilities in the same manner as it would for a traditional public school. Both startup charter schools and Mayoral Academies are entitled to a minimum 30 percent reimbursement of school housing costs directly from the state.

Charter schools that are formed within an LEA are entitled to the district share for state reimbursement, which is currently 79 percent in Providence, which has two such charters. Between 2005 and 2007, the state provided well over $22 million in facilities reimbursements to six charter schools. In addition, charter schools in Rhode Island can obtain tax-exempt bond financing via the Rhode Island Health and Educational Building Corporation (RIHEBC). Between 2002 and 2007, RIHEBC completed five charter school bond offerings amounting to $27 million.

The existence of Rhode Island Mayoral Academies ((RIMA) further reduces the burden of locating and acquiring charter school facilities. RIMA provides ready-to-use facilities with rents based on enrollment, aiming to limit rent to five percent of the school's per-pupil funding.

F 2 (v)

Rhode Island supports and has established innovative, autonomous public schools, including but not limited to, policies and examples below:

Rhode Island codifies existing practice to provide opportunities for innovative programs of study—including the creation of autonomous public schools. LEAs have historically used this authority in many ways, such as Providence's conversion of Hope High School into three small, autonomous high schools. The Jacqueline M. Walsh School for the Arts in Pawtucket, a high-performing Regents Commended school, is a similar example of an autonomous school created to serve high-poverty urban students.

Virtually every LEA in the state has created regional collaboratives, in which several school districts join together to develop innovative school programs for a variety of student populations. Working in concert, Rhode Island LEAs have created cost-effective and innovative programs and entire schools to meet the needs of students with special education needs, over-age and under-credited students, and students on long-term suspensions.

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

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

F 3

Rhode Island has established a series of reform efforts, as noted below:

Rhode Island launched a high quality Pre-K Demonstration Program in 2009, which is now up and running in four urban communities. Work is underway to expand this program so that it can be offered to more children, especially high need students. The Pre-K Demonstration Program will continue through 2010-11, and the National Institute for Early Education Research is evaluating the Pre-K Demonstration Program through a randomized control trial design.

Under the Secondary School Regulations promulgated by the Board of Regents in 2008, all Rhode Island secondary schools are undergoing systemic redesign to provide every student with multiple opportunities to demonstrate proficiency in six core academic areas within a personalized learning environment that focuses on literacy and numeracy. Each school has developed systems to fully align all courses and assessments across all disciplines with grade span expectations in reading, writing, oral communication, and mathematics.

Every secondary school in the state has implemented a minimum of two locally developed performance-based diploma assessments:

Graduation Portfolio, Exhibition, and Comprehensive Course Assessments.

All students in Rhode Island know that they are measured as fully prepared for college and career based not only on their success in courses, but also on both performance-based assessment systems and the NECAP state assessment. Every Rhode Island student in grades 6-12 has an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) to support particularized choices and options regarding their individualized course of study. ILPs are active tools that help all students develop goal-setting and decision-making skills. The Rhode Island Diploma System has been studied and acclaimed nationally for leveraging state laws and policies in

support of all students being able to defend their preparedness to graduate based on performance and proficiency. In an era of high stakes testing, Rhode Island is proving by example that students can demonstrate proficiency in myriad ways and deserve the chance to do so.<!--[if !supportEmptyParas]-->

Total	55	55	55	

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

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

Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Rhode Island has included descriptions of STEM activities throughout the proposal. Additional activities are noted below:

Girls Reaching Remarkable Levels-TECH and Brown's Women in Science and Engineering, specifically target middle-and-high STEM-1 school girls to encourage them to pursue STEM courses and careers;

RIDE and the Board of Regents have prioritized the creation of systems, policies, and resources that support these STEM initiatives. Working with educators and experts, RIDE has developed the Rhode Island K-12 Grade Span Expectations (GSEs) in Engineering and Technology, which the Board of Regents is scheduled to adopt in July 2010. These GSEs, which complement the standards in mathematics and science, are benchmarked to the International Technology and Engineering Educators Association's Standards for Technological Literacy.

This effort will create the framework to drive the "T" and "E" of STEM into every mathematics and science classroom across the state. As a result, all students in Rhode Island will benefit from a rigorous course of study in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

Rhode Island is expanding its partnership with the Dana Center to implement a series of Study of Standards workshops in the summer of 2010 to ensure Rhode Island teachers' understanding of the purpose, intent, rigor, and complexity of the mathematics and science standards and the technology and engineering grade-span expectations.

Rhode Island is, also, offering professional development for experienced teachers and revisions in its programs for future teachers while drawing on the corporate knowledge of its citizens.

Total	15	15	15	

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

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

Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Rhode Island has submitted an excellent proposal addressing the four education reform areas (adopting internationally benchmarked standards... , building data systems... , increasing teacher effectiveness... , and turning around its lowest achieving schools) and the State Success Factors criteria (articulating the State's reform agenda and LEAs participation in it, building strong statewide capacity to implement, scaling up and sustaining proposed plans, and demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps).

The only major weakness in the proposal is the lack of more support from teacher leader unions at the local level. Nonetheless, Rhode Island should achieve its goals and successfully implement its proposal. The fact that Rhode Island has been involved in reform activities prior to this proposal will facilitate its success. Almost all of its reform efforts build upon existing, successful efforts.				
Total		0	0	
Grand Total	500	448	448	

Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2

Rhode Island Application #4150RI-10

A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	53	53	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	3	3	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	38	38	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	12	12	

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

The state has proposed a comprehensive and coherent agenda that focuses on the four education reform areas with a commitment to improved student achievement. The Theory of Action is a strategic plan that focuses specifically on achievement growth for students and educators. The theory is supported by a clear and coherent path to achieving this goal, including:

- Ambitious goals for achievement and graduation
- Action currently underway to achieve the strategic plan
- The alignment strategy for usage of the RttT funds
- The commitment and capacity of the state to achieve the reforms

(ii) The MOU provided in the proposal is appropriate and includes 16 activities related to the Scope of Work. The MOU, found in the Appendix, covers all four of the elements of the state reform requirements. Table A-1 list the elements of the state reform plan by the four categories of reform elements (eg great teachers and leaders), the number of participating LEAs and the percent of total LEA support by element. Lack of support from teachers is a cause for concern, in terms of overall LEA commitment.

(iii) The applicant has increased the level of LEA participation from 48 to 50 LEAs, as evidenced by all 50 signing the MOU. Also included in the MOU are state-operated schools and ten independent charter schools. The strong involvement of LEAs, in terms of superintendents and school board chairs, is a positive indicator of the potential state-wide impact on increasing student achievement, decreasing achievement gaps, and better high school results.

The goals set for student achievement are ambitious, including overall performance improvement and reducing student achievement gaps. The state has a history of recognizing weaknesses in student performance and it appears there is a serious effort to make improvements.

While the number of school systems participating in the MOU has increased, with 100% of signatures from LEA superintendents and school board presidents, there is a stark differentiation of support from local teacher unions, with only 30% of union leaders signing the MOU. The applicant points out that this is an improvement from the Phase I application, but nevertheless, the lack of stronger participation by teacher unions raises serious concerns about the potential for successful implementation of the proposal.

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	**30**	**26**	**26**	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	19	19	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	7	7	

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

(i)(a) The Executive Leadership Team, as described in the proposal, will have primary implementation and monitoring responsibility for the proposal. This Team will also coordinate the new strategic plan with the four reform requirements as outlined. The new Commissioner appears to have been aggressive and straightforward in the significant changes made in the SEA and the strategic plan. This strong leadership appears to be present in the state.

(b) The state strategic plan clarifies the role of the state into four key responsibilities, and LEAs have four corresponding responsibilities. This clarification of roles and responsibilities provides an avenue for successfully implementing the reform plans proposed. The duality of the SEA to provide leadership and monitoring of performance is outlined in this section of the proposal- this information satisfactorily provides evidence required to meet (A)(2)(b).

(c) The state has clear policies and procedures to operate the the RttT grant, as evidenced by federal grants processes currently in place. In addition, a description of web-based tools around grants management was described. The overall policies and procedures for implementation of an effective and efficient grant is documented as evidenced by past performance and strong statewide regulatory provisions.

(d) RttT funds will be used for support and implementation of six statewide areas; these six are clear examples of the areas needed to meet the state's targets. Funds will be used to create a foundation for future growth and expansion. Funds from RttT will also be used to leverage national and regional partners with strong track records to assist with implementation while at the same time the state will re-purpose current funds to align with RttT priorities. The use of state dollars, in combination with RttT funds, provides evidence of a commitment to alignment of funds to support the RttT plan.

(e) The strategy for sustainability is to invest heavily in building human LEA capacity to implement reform strategies and improve performance. External providers will help in building this capacity, ostensibly with the result being ongoing reform after the funding from RttT is completed.

The reallocation of resources is mentioned briefly in this section; however there is no additional information provided about what is actually being reallocated and for what purpose. The support of the Board of Regents, Governor, House/Senate leaders and other non-profit and philanthropic is cited as evidence of support. Finally, a description of the the education focus of candidates for Governor, and their demonstrated support of the proposal, is critically important to long-term commitment.

A(2)(ii)(a)- The support of the teacher's union is a source of concern at the LEA level. The level of support from state teacher leaders appears to be mixed-- there is a letter of support from the state AFT president and no letter of support from the NEA state affiliate.

(b) Ample evidence is provided from a broad-based coalition of state community and education supporters. The quotes found in this section are impressive and provide anecdotal evidence of support. Mention has previously been made of the strength of the legislative and gubernatorial support.

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

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

(A)(3)(i)- The state has made significant progress in the standards and assessment reform area, with extensive evidence provided about the New England Compact, the Instructional Design and Assessment Consortium and the Achieve-sponsored Algebra II consortium. In the area of data systems, information is provided about the state funding of an information system that clearly demonstrates progress in this area.

In the Great Teachers and Leaders category the body of work to show progress is supported by the activities and funds outlined in the application. A great deal of discussion focused on revising teacher standards, with the statement mentioned that the state has focused on pre-service preparation programs over the past ten years, including an appropriation of $2 million in state funds.

The fourth reform area, Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools, is the weakest of the four based on the information provided in this section of the application. The state has hired a Chief Transformation Officer recently, works in partnerships with LEAs, and has been a 'reflective facilitator' of reform in this area. The state has invested state funds and has initiated a number of strategies, which supports demonstrated progress in this reform area.

(ii)The data provided in this section provides evidence of student achievement growth on 4th grade NAEP in both reading and mathematics- graphs were provided to showcase these results. 8th grade student performance shows minor gains in reading and mathematics. Reducing student achievement gaps is mixed, with the state recognizing the need for improvement

State assessment data for all grades showed improvement in reading and math and a narrowing of the achievement gap. The high school assessment results for the new assessment begun in 2007 do not allow for specific trend data.

State four year graduation rates appear mixed for subgroups, with the general trend improving from 2007-2009. Data going back to 2003 is not provided. One of the subgroups appears to show a negative rate from 2007-2009.

Student achievement and subgroup performance is stable and improving. High school data is not analyzed due to new testing programs. Graduation rates are a cause for concern.

Total	125	104	104	

B. Standards and Assessments

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

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

(B)(1)(i) The state has provided clear documentation of being a member of the Common Core Standards Initiative, along with the New England Assessment Program, the World-Class Design and Assessment Consortium, and the Achieve Algebra II Exam (American Diploma Project).

(ii) The state lays out a step by step timeline to adopt the K-12 standards by August of 2010. The table of activities is the evidence to support the adoption process.

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

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

The application provides evidence of working towards high-quality assessments through the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and the New England Consortium. This Consortium involves over 1/2 of all states. Full points are awarded.

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

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

A Framework For Implementation is provided, which list the outcomes by implementation category (e.g. Understanding Standards), with outcomes, action strategies, implementation and responsible parties. This plan is comprehensive, coherent and specific and outcome driven. The evidence provided by the Framework for Implementation meets the requirements of (B)(3). Full points are awarded.

Total	70	70	70	

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

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

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

The proposal provides a synopsis of each of the America COMPETES' twelve elements. All twelve of the elements appear to have been implemented in the state. The state's longitudinal data system, as described in (C)(1), appears to be a robust system that meets the criteria for this category.

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

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

The plan as outlined in this section is comprehensive, well laid out, and provides information regarding a robust Data Tool Timeline. Included are expected outcomes, activities to achieve those outcomes, a timeline and responsible parties. The Data Governance Board is especially positive and will include a 'Knowledge Officer' to lead this group. Also impressive is the Early Warning Indicators Tool to identify students in trouble and proactively address the needs of these students before they drop out of school

(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	**18**	**18**	**18**	

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

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

(i) The customized data dashboards described in Section (C)(2) will be especially beneficial to increase the adoption and use of local instructional improvement systems at the LEA and school levels. These dashboards, to include "a rich array of tools and instructional resources", will assist in the integration of standards- aligned units of study that LEAs are developing. The Rhode Island plan for statewide instructional improvement appears to be exceptionally appropriate based on the expected outcomes, activities, timelines and responsible parties.

(ii) The application provides evidence of past support through professional development for instructional improvement systems, namely related to professional development. The state's historical support in this area is outlined through a series of bullet points based on past programs.

The plan for the future in this area is well laid out via the required plan elements and appears to support a strong commitment, knowledge and implementation plan moving forward in the future.

(iii) The state's research consortium supports the concept of partnering with K-16 institutions and there is a strong commitment and foundation, in terms of providing information and data for research purposes.

Total	47	47	47	

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	**21**	**16**	**16**	
(i) Allowing alternative routes to certification	7	6	6	
(ii) Using alternative routes to certification	7	5	5	
(iii) Preparing teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage	7	5	5	

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

The state has very clear legal and regulatory provisions to allow alternative routes to certification. Of note is the description of the 2004 regulatory provisions that resulted in only four candidates using the alternative approach. The Board of Regents significantly changed this in 2008 and adopted the RttT five features of alternative routes.

The state appears to have a very limited alternative certification program for principals in place at this time. While there is a reference to alternative principal programs, the description in this section of the proposal focuses on teacher alternative certification efforts.

The regulations clearly permit providers who operate independently of higher education institutions, with Teach for America and the New Teacher Project cited as examples. Five points are awarded due to the limited availability of principal alternatives at this time.

(ii) The teacher alternative certification effort appears to be robust, with numerous examples cited of current programs in use, including Teach for America, and the New Teacher Project. The number of

teachers having gone through these alternative efforts appears to be low, but the plan to expand these efforts is a focus of the RttT reform plan.

The principal alternative certification program is apparently limited, with only one program being offered by an institution of higher education.

Five points are awarded due to the limited numbers of teachers and the limited alternatives for principals.

(iii) The process for monitoring, evaluating and identifying shortages and preparing educators to fill these shortages is in place, as evidenced by a grant in place to address these issues, the collection of data to implement the 'Teach Rhode Island' initiative and the Teach for America effort in place. The applicant did not present enough information to adequately describe a comprehensive plan for monitoring, evaluating and identifying shortages in the area of the principalship. The information specifically for principal programs was very limited.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	**58**	**50**	**50**	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	4	4	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	11	11	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	10	10	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	25	25	

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

(i) The plan to move forward with creating a student growth measurement system involves working with national experts around value-added models. Further plans with RttT funds are to develop additional measures of student achievement. No additional information on these new measures is provided. The approach states that the applicant is committed to adopting multiple measures but does not explain either current measures, ESEA- required measures or any other specific measures for each individual students. The overall plan presented in this section contains a set of activities, timelines and persons responsible- the plan is clear and coherent, and appears to meet the requirements of this subsection.

(ii) The state's plan to design and implement the appropriate evaluation systems for teachers appears to be very strong, as evidenced by:

* The Board of Regents adoption of evaluation standards (already in place).
* Evaluations based on student growth/achievement. (51% of the evaluation).
* State mandated requirements with LEA responsibility for development and implementation.
* Strong involvement throughout the development process of teacher unions and LEA personnel.

Taken collectively, these steps indicate a new evaluation system that is transparent, rigorous, and based in part on student achievement.

The system for evaluation of principals is lacking in specificity and depth. A description of the proposed evaluation system for teachers is provided, yet the level of depth for principal evaluation systems is clearly lacking. Throughout the rest of the description, the focus is on teachers, with references made to principals without clear explanation.

High points are awarded although concerns remain related to the apparent lack of a clear plan involving principals.

(iii) The annual plan proposed for educators requires annual evaluations, with additional evaluations as needed. Feedback is to be provided based on data collection and review of student growth/achievement. Principals are provided with school-wide data as feedback. The discussion of educator annual evaluations

and data is in-depth, clear and provides evidence the state requires annual evaluations for all educators, including teachers and principals.

(iv) The state has provided detailed information on the use of evaluations to inform key decisions for educators. Based on the RI Standards, the state has provided a plan with outcomes, activities, timelines and responsible parties. This plan includes specific information as follow:

* Removal of ineffective teachers after two years.

* Use of high standards to guide and inform key decisions at the LEA and school levels.

* A set of performance measures that call for 100% of criteria being implemented by 2012-2013.

* Setting new standards and requirements to grant tenure and full certification.

One area that is not clear relates to compensation. The term 'models' is used to describe future development, but there is no clear connection between compensation and achievement of student performance. This is to be addressed through RttT funding and the plan being developed.

The primary plan for promotion relates to moving principals to the central office as the primary means of advancement. This appears to be a limited promotion system, with other options apparently not a part of the promotion system for principals.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	**25**	**20**	**20**	
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	10	10	
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	10	10	

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

(i) The state is working on a plan to ensure equitable distribution of teachers based in part on data. The plan's strength is the reliance on SEA directives and the new standards of the state. Many of the strategies are traditional in nature, such as providing data on effectiveness, removing ineffective teachers, and training of principals in hiring practices. There is a lack of specificity about professional development that needs further clarification. Overall the plan for teachers appears appropriate but the plan for principals only addresses developing capacity for strategic staffing. Little reference is made in the plan for equitable distribution of principals.

(ii) The applicant's description of a high quality plan for increasing the number and percentage of effective teachers in hard-to-staff subjects is provided in this section, and the goals appear to be ambitious based on their plan. The applicant describes a series of generic strategies to demonstrate the commitment to staffing hard to fill subject positions. Overall the expected outcomes are ambitious, the activities appear to be appropriate to achieve the expected outcomes, and the timelines appear to be ambitious but achievable.

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

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

(i) The state has a robust system for linking achievement to the performance of institutions of higher education and other alternative route programs. The formal reevaluation process for institutional certification provides data collection on recruitment, admissions, graduation rate and other indicators. With the integration of the state's longitudinal database and the teacher certification database, this link will formally hold preparation programs accountable. What is missing is a definition of 'accountable' and the outcomes of institutions tied to the teacher and principal performance. While further information is needed to fully understand the state's plan to link growth to credentialing programs, the overall plan appears to meet the requirements of this criteria.

(ii) The plan assumes that a variety of current strategies, including the Academy of Transformative Leadership, turnaround training, and coordination with charter schools, will result in better prepared teachers and principals. There is limited information in the plan to expand credentialing options for principals. Additional details of the plan are needed to award full points in (D)(4)(ii).

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

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

(i) The state has provided details of a comprehensive plan to continuously improve effectiveness of support to teachers and principals. The major components of this plan include:

* Current regulatory authority on continuous improvement and support that is already in place.
* High quality induction for novice teachers.
* Support for school leadership teams.
* New tools to help improve instruction.

(ii) The plan is coherent, comprehensive and ambitious, as evidenced by the plan's overall use of data to inform decisions on improving the effectiveness of supports for educators.

The plan's comprehensiveness is evidenced by the activities, timelines, and responsibilities for this category found in the numerous tables in this section of the grant narrative. The efforts to continuously improve the effectiveness of support is clearly articulated in the plan mentioned previously.

Total	138	117	117	

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

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

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

The state has clear legal and statutory authority to intervene directly in both LEAs and the persistently lowest achieving schools. The number of schools identified as persistently low achieving is very small-currently five schools are in corrective action, with RttT funds proposed to be used to expand this number to ten using the current model.

The support for LEAs in implementing one of the four school intervention models is well documented.

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

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

(i) The SEA's plan builds on current practices and needs further details to be a high quality plan. It is adequate but not of the highest quality, as the details of the plan in the tables found in the narrative of this do not address new strategies or activities other than what appears to be in place currently. The RttT funds will be used to expand current work and expand to other schools in need. The state has a clear methodology to identify the persistently low performing schools, using a Tier 1 through Tier 2 structure to identify levels of intervention.

(ii) The state's plan, built on current efforts, supports the LEAs in turning around persistently low performing schools.

What appears to be missing is information of the total number of schools during the past five years who have been subject to intervention support and whether or not they have exited Tier status.

Total	50	44	44	

F. General

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

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

(i) The percentage of the state's revenue going to education increased from 32.7% in FY 2008 to 33.24% in FY 2009. This small percentage increase meets the requirements of (F)(i).

(ii) Equitable funding is provided by both statute and the regulations of the Board of Regents.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	**40**	**34**	**34**	
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	8	8	
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	4	4	
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	8	8	
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	6	6	
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	8	8	

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

(i) The state's statutory provisions include a cap on charter schools to a clearly defined maximum number of schools (35). Efforts appear to be underway to loosen this restriction but currently there is a cap. However, the number of charters exceeds 10% of the total number of schools in the state.

(ii) The state's charter school laws and regulation speak clearly to authorization, monitoring, accountability and the reauthorization and closing process. The use of student achievement (as defined in this notice) is not clearly spelled out as a criterion for authorization or renewal.

(iii) Equitable funding is a clear statutory requirement for the use of state and local funds.

(iv) The state appears to provide approximately 30% of appropriated dollars for charter facilities. Other funding appears to come from other sources, but there does not appear to be a requirement for these other funds for charter facilities.

(v) The state appears to allow an LEA to operate an innovative or autonomous school. Plans are being made for expansion in this area but the details are limited.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	**5**	**4**	**4**	

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

The applicant outlines a series of reform efforts that demonstrate a reform-minded leadership team in the state. From secondary school redesign to the New England Consortium, school reform appears to be a high priority. What is missing is a connection of these reform conditions to increased student achievement or graduation rates or other important outcomes.

Total	55	48	48	

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

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

Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The STEM initiative in this state is impressive. After many sections of the rubric, a one-page fact sheet of STEM initiatives is provided that is directly related to the application being reviewed. From standards to alignment of curriculum resources, and from professional development to reform-minded STEM Models (e.g. Denver School of Science and Technology), the plan, implementation and future discussions all provide clear indication that the STEM priority is very strong in this state.

Total	15	15	15	

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

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

Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

This state application is a strong one that addresses each of the criterion of the review rubric. The direction and leadership of the new Commissioner is an indication of new leadership and a commitment to higher

standards and reform conditions. The impetus for many categories focused on either the new Commissioner's driving leadership or the Board of Regents. The need for a strong partnership did not come through as much as perhaps is needed for reform to be successful, and this was especially noteworthy given the percentage of union leaders who signed the MOU. At the same time, the plan is a strong one and clearly addresses the reform criteria of RttT.

The applicant clearly addressed each of the reform areas, with substantial evidence of both the legislature and the Board of Regents being actively involved. In addition, the letters of support from the gubernatorial candidates is a recognition that new state leadership will impact implementation.

Overall the state has crafted a set of ideas that cut across all reform conditions, and this Absolute Priority is met.

Total			0	0

Grand Total	500	445	445	