Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2

South Carolina Application #4200SC-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**	**65**	**65**	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	45	45	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	15	15	

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

(A)(1)(i)

The state's reform agenda, supported by key legislation, includes the reform areas of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act – adopting enhanced standards and assessments, equitably distributing effective educators, turning around struggling schools, and using data to support instruction and decision making. In addition, it keeps a laser-sharp focus in all efforts and initiatives on the following overarching goal:

Graduating all students with the knowledge, skills, abilities, and dispositions to succeed in college and career.

The state's path to these goals involves five major initiatives that match those of ARRA and will most likely enable it to reach its education reform goal:

1. Transitioning to rigorous standards and assessments
2. Using targeted programs aligned to new standards and assessments
3. Acquiring, using, and understanding data
4. Developing and distributing effective teachers and school leaders
5. Transforming the lowest achieving schools into successful schools.

As a result, full points are awarded.

(A)(1)(ii)

The state has secured 100 percent, unanimous commitment from every LEA in the state. The state's MOU is based on the U.S. Department of Education model, but includes some modifications such as the addition of exhibits, procedures for project administration, and the elimination of opt out language. The Scope of the

Work is also based on the U.S. Department of Education model, but contains some components specific contained in the plan for SC INSPIRED.

The state does not have teachers unions, however teachers endorsement for SC INSPIRED is evidenced by letters of support in the Appendix from The Palmetto State Teachers Association, the South Carolina Education Association, and South Carolina teachers designated as teachers of excellence. None of the letters contain qualifications or caveats and the organizations pledge to work collaboratively with the state on the plan.

Several LEAs obtained signatures from School Improvement Councils and parent organizations.

In addition, the MOU requires that every one of the state's LEAs create local plans for implementing the state's four key education reforms in their applications for State Fiscal Stabilization Funds.

As a result, full points are awarded for this section of the criterion.

(A)(1)(iii)

Since every LEA in the state has signed on, the state's reform plan will affect every school, every student, and all students living in poverty. The actual numbers, according to the application narrative are: 737,747 students in 1189 schools in 88 LEAs. Since 67 percent of the state's students live in poverty and 56 percent are eligible for the federal free and reduced-price lunch program, the state plan using Race to the Top funds will affect and reach the state's neediest students.

As a result, if successful, the reform efforts will translate into broad statewide impact.

Full points were awarded for this part of the criterion.

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	**30**	**28**	**28**	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	18	18	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	10	10	

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

(A)(2)(i)

The state's plan indicates that it has the capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain the reform agenda. Some components of the implementation plan include:

(a) Leadership and Dedicated Teams

Oversight- To guide the reform agenda outlined in this application, the state will appoint a State Level Advisory Team for oversight and broad stakeholder involvement. Members will include a representative from the Governor's office, South Carolina Department of Education officials, members of the South Carolina Board of Education, higher education officials, members of professional organizations including teacher and principal associations, representatives of businesses, community groups, parent groups, and school improvement councils.

Implementation– The South Carolina Department of Education will implement the components of the reform agenda. The department will be organized into five implementation teams corresponding to the five components of the plan. Existing department of education staff will be redeployed under the direction of the Deputy Superintendent and a Project Leader will be hired to manage the project. An accompanying organization chart lists persons responsible for implementation areas and their credentials and qualifications.

Local Implementation– The department of education will organize a Regional Support System in six regions of the state to provide decentralized support to LEAs.

(b) Support for LEAs

To support LEAs, the state will use a Regional Support System to provide technical assistance, effective services, and expertise to LEAs directly and with partners and external providers. Each of six regions in the state will be staffed with a Regional Facilitator who will coordinate the services of a Regional Response Team. Since the main intent of the plan is to build local capacity, the Regional Facilitator will monitor progress in each LEA and will recommend strategies for sustainability after the grant period is over. A graphic contained in the application narrative illustrates this system. Of concern is the fact that the Timeline of Activities Chart in the application narrative indicates that the Regional Support System will not ***begin*** until after January 2011 and will not be operational until the start of the 2012 school year. Since the Regional Support System is such an important element in the state's plan to provide services to LEAs and manage the actual day-to-day support of the state's reform agenda, the timeline for implementing this key structure may need acceleration.

(c) Efficient Operations and Processes

The department of education has experienced financial, legal, and grants management staff to assist LEAs by providing grant administration and oversight, budget reporting and monitoring, performance measure tracking and reporting, and fund disbursement.

(d) Coordination of Funds

An all-funds approach, illustrated in the budget and budget narrative, as well as a focus on creating an infrastructure, building internal capacity, and implementing expert systems will insure that adequate funding will be available for implementing the reforms.

(e) Sustainability

The thrust of SC INSPIRED is to develop processes, procedures, and protocols for identifying and addressing needs, aided by a Regional Support System and professional development to build capacity and sustainability. The applicant also views dissemination as a vehicle for sustainability and plans to build a coordinated system for the dissemination and replication of effective programs as well as a system for terminating ineffective programs.

(A)(2)(ii)

A 2010 state survey conducted with superintendents, teachers, parents, business liaisons, principals, students, and school board members representing every LEA in the state as well as numerous letters of support in the APPENDIX indicate broad and current support for and commitment to the reforms proposed by the state. Since all the components of the state's plan rely on stakeholder input and acceptance, this is a significant factor in gauging whether the state can accomplish its ambitious goals for education reform.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	**30**	**21**	**12**	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5	5	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	16	7	[redacted]

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

(A)(3)(i)

The state's current reform agenda springs from previous efforts to improve standards and assessments, expand public school choice, improve teacher quality, promote equitable school funding, and improve state

accountability systems. According to the project narrative and documents in the Appendix, American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) funds were used by the state for fiscal stabilization efforts. However, in exchange for an allocation from the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund, LEAs were required to specify which elements of the ARRA education reform agenda they would use the funds to support and expand. In addition to ARRA funds, the state used an AMERICA Competes grant to build its statewide longitudinal data system, Title IIA funds for professional developments efforts, and a Gear Up grant to enhance the STEM initiative.

As a result of these considerable efforts, full points are awarded.

(A)(3)(ii)

The state's track record for improving student achievement on standards-based tests of reading and math and the National Assessment of Educational Progress(NAEP) tests of reading and math at grade 4 and grade 8, narrowing achievement gaps among groups of students, and increasing graduation rates does not demonstrate significant progress.

Standards-Based Tests

Gains in performance on state standards-based tests in mathematics and English language arts have been modest. Student achievement in grades 3 – 8 increased an average of 2 points per year in mathematics since 1999 and an average of 1.3 points per year in English language arts.

NAEP

NAEP scores indicate flat performance in reading at grades 4 and 8, but gains in math for grades 4 and 8.

Achievement Gap

Gaps still exist in between African-American and White students, particularly in math, on state standards-based tests, NAEP reading results for grade 4 and grade 8, and NAEP math results for grade 4. Some narrowing has occurred for grade 8. In addition, performance on high school exit exams indicates a shrinking gap between African-American and White students.

High School Graduation Rates

Using current federal guidelines for calculating on-time graduation rates, the state's current 74.9 percent rate compares favorably with that of other states.

As a result of these mixed results, points in the mid-range are awarded.

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

(A)(3)(ii)

The state's presentation with respect to this criterion acknowledged that student performance on standards-based tests and NAEP has remained flat. These results were attributed to the test itself. No connection was made between these outcomes and the sufficiency or insufficiency of the state's efforts to improve results. Because of this, the explanation provided by the presentation team did not satisfy the requirement of this criterion - to consider the connection between results and actions.

As a result, the score was lowered.

Total	**125**	**114**	**105**	

B. Standards and Assessments

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

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

(B)(1)(i)

(a) The state is an active member of the Common Core State Standards Initiative sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association to develop Common Core State Standards in English language arts and mathematics. The signatures of the Governor and the State Superintendent on a Memorandum of Agreement from the sponsoring organizations indicate the state's commitment to working with other states on a set of Common Core State Standards. The MOA indicates that the standards are internationally benchmarked and are aligned with college and work expectations to insure graduating high school students are college and career ready. An additional document in the Appendix – Evidence of International Benchmark - International Benchmarking and the Common Core describes the international benchmarking process used.

(b) The consortium involves 48 states, two territories, and the District of Columbia.

As a result, full points were awarded.

(B) (1) (ii)

According to the application narrative and timeline, the state plans to adopt the Common Core State Standards in July 2010.

As a result, full points were awarded for this criterion as well.

(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 currently working with two consortia to develop and implement high-quality systems that will include formative components, interim/benchmark assessments, and summative assessments aligned with the Common Core State Standards in English language arts and mathematics for grades 3 – 8 and high school. These consortia are the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers and the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium. A Memorandum of Understanding with PARCC and a

Document of Commitment with SMARTER, both signed by the State Superintendent, confirm that the state is working collaboratively with other states to develop and implement these common assessments.

As a result, full points were awarded.

(B)(2)(ii)

The Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers of which the state is a member involves 27 states and the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium includes 33 states.

As a result, full points were awarded.

(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	**20**	**15**	**15**	

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

(B)(3)

The state's overall plan, as outlined in four objectives and multiple initiatives, is comprehensive and well-thought out. Along with strengths, there are some weaknesses.

Strengths include:

- Use of a regional model consisting of a regional facilitator, regional consortia, and a regional response team for each region in the state to provide more localized assistance to districts and schools as well as more consistent monitoring and oversight.
- Memoranda of Understanding with districts to insure support and follow-up.
- Establishment of a transition team consisting of educators, business representatives, liaisons from institutions of higher education, parents, and community leaders to guide and oversee the transition to new standards and assessments.
- Use of a rubric methodology for evaluating the progress and accomplishments of the transition plan.
- Development of a wide range of instructional materials geared to the Common Core State Standards including learning guides for teachers, pacing guides, model lessons, curriculum resources, and formative and interim assessments.
- Support programs such as Standards Support System (S^3) for teachers to link Common Core State Standards, new instructional materials and professional development, iCoach SC to provide instructional coaches for high need schools, and S^2MART to focus on ongoing professional development in mathematics, science, and the other STEM disciplines. S^3 is a professional development effort providing direct support for teachers to deliver standards-based instruction. Support consists of job-embedded professional development, resources aligned to standards, and participation in instructionally focused Communities Advancing Professional Practice with other colleagues.
- Reorganization of existing secondary school programs, such as high school career clusters to align with and extend the Common Core State Standards coupled with ongoing work with institutions of higher education to insure college entry requirements are also aligned with new standards.
- Professional development for teachers provided through coaches, summer institutes, and regional standards implementation meetings.

Weaknesses include:

- Long time lags prior to actual implementation of the transition plan could slow down the pace of the transition effort. For example, the department of education staff will be trained for a year by a consultant to develop rubrics to determine progress for managing transition activities as a project. In addition, the state plans to spend an entire year as a planning year before the transition plan is rolled out. A time span of three years is proposed for alignment activities so that transition to full

implementation of the Common Core State Standards will not occur until the 2012-2013 school year even though the standards will be adopted this year (2010). The realignment of the existing state testing system including the development of new test items and the possible addition of performance -based measures will not be available for use until the 2013-2014 school year. A more ambitious timeline would accelerate this component of the state's reform agenda.

- The tiered support plan for schools identified as "Below Average and Unsatisfactory" does not specify the frequency of professional development teachers will receive in the 80 schools. In addition, for schools designated as "Average," an outline of the targeted professional development teachers will receive is not provided. Since 173 schools will be involved in Tier 2 services, this information would be helpful in gauging the adequacy of the professional development the state is providing through its transition plan.

As a result, 15 points were awarded.

Total	**70**	**65**	**65**	

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	**24**	**22**	**22**	

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

(C)(1)

Although the application narrative indicates that the state has all twelve of the elements outlined in the America COMPETES Act in place in its State Longitudinal Center for Education (SLICE) system, a document in the Appendix indicates that Element #11 – *data that provide information regarding the extent to which students transition successfully from secondary to post-secondary education, including whether students enroll in remedial coursework* – is not currently in the system.

As a result, two points for each of eleven America COMPETES Act element were awarded for a total of 22 points.

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

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

(C)(2)

The state's plan to insure data from its longitudinal data system, SLICE, are accessible to key stakeholders, are used for information, and support decision-makers is comprehensive and thorough. Goals and objectives are delineated, a timeline of quarterly activities is outlined with assigned responsibilities, annual performance measures and beginning baseline data are provided. A budget and accompanying narrative support the key components of the plan.

Strengths

- The state's plan will integrate data in Power School, a comprehensive student information system to be used statewide during the 2010-2011 school year with SLICE several times during the school year to maintain updated information on student demographics. In addition, student assessment

results, including SAT and ACT scores, Individual Graduation Plans for students in grades 8 – 12, high school grades and courses, and teacher information will be maintained in the SLICE system.

- To insure accessibility for key stakeholders, including students, parents, teachers, schools, districts, state agencies, institutions of higher education, businesses, and the community, the state will develop a data structure for information integration, user friendly interfaces, and training for users.
- To develop regulations and standards for use that maintain privacy, security, and confidentiality, the state will form a Data Governance Committee of key stakeholders.
- Data about educators for potential use in relation to student performance for evaluation purposes and for decision-making will be integrated into a data warehouse beginning in Year 3.

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

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

(C)(3)(i)

To increase the use of instructional improvement systems by teachers and principals, the state proposes the development of a curriculum management system (SLICE) containing curriculum standards, instructional resources and materials linked to standards, student test results, and teacher information. The expectation is that teachers in the state will use the system to identify instructional materials and strategies that worked with learners having learning needs similar to those of their own students. The state's plan to implement the system includes goals and objectives, activities, performance measures, a timeline with yearly benchmarks and quarterly targets, and persons responsible. The plan also integrates all aspects of the work needed to fully utilize data systems to support instruction. As a result of the quality of the project plan, full points are awarded.

(C)(3)(ii)

While the content of training for teachers and principals in using SLICE is outlined in the state's plan and the responsibility for conducting professional development is assigned to the six Regional Response Teams , the mode, format, frequency, and follow-up of professional development activities are not clearly indicated in the plan. Since effective professional development is an element of the criterion for gauging whether the state's plan will accomplish its goals, more detail about teacher professional development is needed to determine the likelihood that the system will be fully utilized to meet the intent of the criterion - providing effective professional development for teachers, principals, and administrators to use SLICE to support continuous instructional improvement.

As a result, since some information appears to be missing, points in the mid-range are awarded.

(C)(3)(iii)

The state's plan includes providing dedicated interfaces and portals for researchers with access to de-identified student data regulated by policies developed by the Data Governance Committee. To maintain security, student and teacher data available to researchers will: 1) have all identifiers removed from the records; and 2) eliminate data sets with small group size from which identity might be able to be inferred. These two processes will be automated to enable researchers to have quick and easy access to data for many kinds of research. The application narrative and accompanying project plan indicate the state has included these activities in its plan.

As a result, full points are awarded.

Total	**47**	**41**	**41**	

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	**21**	**12**	**12**	
(i) Allowing alternative routes to certification	7	4	4	
(ii) Using alternative routes to certification	7	4	4	
(iii) Preparing teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage	7	4	4	

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

(D)(1)(i)

In the application narrative, the state provided evidence for provisions under existing state law and new regulations for three alternative routes to certification for ***teachers:***

1. Program of Alternative Certification for Educators (PACE) through which the department of education provides training and issues certification.
2. American Board for the Certification of Teaching Excellence (ABCTE) which requires a passing score on the ABCTE examination and applies only to teachers of English, mathematics, and science.
3. Adjunct Teaching Certification for teachers with credentials in teaching according to the Montessori method. This has been recently approved and is not yet in use.

Under state law, for ***principals,*** the alternative certification program operates through the traditional system of institutions of higher education. A program outside the system of institutions of higher education has been proposed, but has not yet been authorized or funded.

As a result, since the state has legal provisions for alternative routes to certification for teachers, points in the mid-range are awarded.

(D)(1)(ii)

The Adjunct Teaching Certification for Montessori teachers is not yet in use. A proposed program for alternative certification for principals independent of the system of institutions of higher education has not yet been authorized or funded. The ABCTE program, to date, has been in use for three years and has

prepared 50 teachers. The PACE program which has prepared over 4,000 of the state's teachers has been in operation for the last ten years.

As a result, since two programs for alternative certification for teachers are in use, but none for principals, points in the mid-range are awarded.

(D)(1)(iii)

The state has a process for identifying areas of teacher shortage and surplus. An annual supply and demand survey is completed by each LEA and the department of education uses survey results to target recruitment efforts. Survey results are also shared with the South Carolina Deans Alliance, consisting of liaisons from every college and university in the state, so that information can be used by institutions of higher education to recruit candidates. One program that has been developed by the department of education in response to the survey is CREATE, a program that provides specialized training and tuition support for teachers to gain additional certification in teaching special needs learners. However, in spite of this program, there is no compelling evidence to indicate that the state has mounted a robust enough effort to fill areas of teacher shortage.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	**58**	**54**	**56**	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	3	5	[redacted]
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	15	15	
(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)

Currently only a small percentage (2.3%) of LEAs in the state measure student growth in relation to individual teachers according to baseline data presented in the performance measures for this criterion. Those LEAs have schools using a pilot version of the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) value added model. The state's plan is to increase the percentage to 63.6 percent by the end of the 2013-2014 school year. This is achievable given systems already in place, but not ambitious enough given the multiple efforts the state is undertaking and the fact that all LEAs in the state are Participating LEAs involved in the state's overall reform plan.

(D)(2)(i)

Strengths

- The state's plan is to develop at least two measures of student growth to be used in its evaluation of teachers and principals in relation to student performance – standardized assessments and performance-based learning assessments. The use of more than one measure of student progress, according to the application narrative, is included in the state's plan to address the challenge of determining student growth over time and in multiple subject areas.
- Multiple models of value added assessment, based on the methodology of Dr. William Sanders, are currently being piloted on a small scale. This provides opportunities for simulations, according to the application narrative, before a system for incorporating student growth data in teachers' and principals' evaluations is finalized. A description of the methodology is included in the Appendix.

- Although assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards will not be completed until Year 4 according to the state's plan for transitioning to enhanced standards and assessments, current tests will be used. According to the project narrative, this will provide continuity during the transition period.
- To address the issue of assessing student progress in subjects not tested with standardized measures, the state's plan includes enlisting teachers and content specialists to develop performance-based learning assessments and rubrics for scoring them.

While a description of the system planned for measuring student growth by individual student is presented in the project narrative and in the Appendix, it is not included in the accompanying project plan as a goal or objective. Since the approach to measuring student growth for each individual student is a key factor in the state's effort to improve teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance, it is an omission of important data. As a result, points in the medium range are awarded.

(D)(2)(ii)

Teachers

The state's current teacher evaluation system, ADEPT, was developed with the involvement of teachers, principals, and other stakeholders and establishes clear expectations for teacher performance. Standards for teachers were derived from standards developed by professional organizations including the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. To insure a fair process of evaluation, teachers are evaluated by two trained evaluators – an administrator and a content specialist. The current teacher evaluation system uses a rating scale that indicates levels of teacher quality, but does not as yet include consideration of teacher effectiveness based on student performance. The state is in the process of developing a teacher effectiveness rating to add to the system based on students' achievement of acceptable rates of growth. Three quarters of a teacher's rating will be based on a system that includes a classroom level value added score, a project-based learning assessment value added score, and a school level value added score. The revised ADEPT system will also include separate factor weightings for teachers in tested grades and subjects and teachers in non-tested grades and subjects. According to the state plan, the revised ADEPT system which will include ratings based on student growth data will be used for all teachers during the 2013 -2014 school year.

Principals

The performance evaluation system for principals, based on standards developed by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), rates principals on standards of principal quality rather than on effectiveness as defined by the Race to the Top criterion. Although a principal can earn multiple ratings on each item, none are based on student growth. Principals, appointed by the department of education, will be involved in the process of revising the performance evaluation system by serving on a work committee which will also include teachers, district leaders, liaisons from institutions of higher education, and representatives from professional organizations. In the revised principal evaluation system, principals will receive effectiveness rating two-thirds of which will be based on a school level value added score and a school level value added score for project-based learning assessments. According to the state's plan, the revised principal evaluation system will be in use for all principals during the 2012-2013 school year.

As a result, teacher and principal performance evaluation systems, as proposed by the state, will meet the Race to the Top requirements of being transparent and fair, using rating categories that take into account data about student growth, and are designed and developed with principal and teacher input.

Full points are awarded.

(D)(2)(iii)

Currently teachers are evaluated annually and principals are evaluated every three years. The revised performance evaluation system for principals will require annual principal evaluations. Principals, however, are not yet evaluated annually.

Formalized feedback sessions are included in the process of evaluating teachers and principals. Student growth data are expected to be reviewed by each teacher and principal once a year during the feedback session and by each principal with his/her superintendent every year to develop personal professional development goals as well as school goals aimed at improving student achievement.

The Race to the Top standard of "timely and constructive feedback" and of providing data about student growth for students has been met.

As a result, points in the high range are awarded.

(D)(2)(iv)

The state's plan for implementing performance evaluation systems for teachers and principals based in significant part on student growth data meets the Race to the Top criteria for the following reasons:

1. Induction and mentoring are already part of the performance evaluation system systems for new principals and teachers. Individual professional development plans, drawn up annually, are based on individual and school needs.
2. The state will revise its mandatory salary schedule to develop a compensation model that will provide financial incentives for teachers based on teacher effectiveness as determined by student growth data.
3. Since South Carolina is a right-to-work state, it does not grant tenure to teachers and principals. However, teacher effectiveness ratings will be used for advancing teachers through levels of certification as well as for awarding or non-renewing contracts and making employment and dismissal decisions. Effectiveness ratings from the PADEPP principal evaluation system will be used for advancing principals through levels of certification and in making decisions about employment and dismissal of principals.

As a result, since the performance evaluation systems for teachers and principals, according to the state's plan, will inform decisions in all of the above areas, full points are awarded.

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

(D)(2)

The state presentation provided a logical reason for setting a goal of only 63.6 percent in the number of teachers whose performance will be measured in relation to student goals by the end of the grant cycle - the 2013-2014 school year. One third of the state's teachers are teaching in subject areas that are not tested by standards-based tests. As a result, performance based learning assessments must be developed by the state which require a longer time to develop. This consideration makes the goal reasonable rather than not ambitious enough.

Because of this clarification, full points are awarded.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	**25**	**24**	**24**	

(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	14	14	
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	10	10	

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

(D)(3)(i)

The state's plan to ensure the equitable distribution of highly effective teachers and principals in high poverty and/or high minority schools involves six components. These include:

- Teacher housing initiatives that make apartment units, low interest loans for homes, a Teacher Village housing community, and a loan forgiveness program available to teachers who work in high poverty and/or high minority areas in the state;
- A compensation incentive system providing additional compensation linked to student growth for highly effective teachers who teach in high poverty and/or high minority schools;
- Increased professional development opportunities for teachers in high poverty and/or high minority schools;
- Increased leadership opportunities, such as priority admission to the School Transformation Leadership Academy run by the department of education and modeled on the Broad Superintendents Academy, as well as other leadership initiatives sponsored by the department of education;
- Scale up of value added models, such as the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP), in cohorts of high poverty and/or high minority schools;
- Online professional support for teachers provided by the district.

There is evidence in the application narrative that the components of the state's plan were derived from reviews of past efforts and lessons learned. For example, an analysis of the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) led to the idea of a compensation incentive system for attracting educators to work in high poverty and/or high minority school.

An omission in the state's plan is baseline data on current status and numerical targets by year for each program component as part of the goals and objectives of the state's plan for gauging program effectiveness.

As a result, points in the high range are awarded.

(D)(3)(ii)

The state's plan for increasing the number and percentage of effective teachers teaching hard to staff subjects has four overarching goals – recruiting, training, adding to, and retaining the number of highly effective teachers teaching hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas. A number of strategies are presented in the state's plan. These include:

- Special Education– Project CREATE which provides tuition costs and books for already certified teachers who seek additional certification as teachers of students with special needs.
- Math and Science– U-TEACH housed at two institutions of higher education in the state which focuses on math and science and provides scholarships to candidates who commit to work in the state.

- Math, Science, Special Education, and English- Targeting the state's Program of Alternative Certification for Educators (PACE) toward the development and training of mid-career professionals seeking second careers as teachers of English, math, science, and special education.
- Principals - A proposed program for alternative certification of principals outside the system of institutions of higher education has been proposed, but has not yet been authorized or funded.

Through performance measures accompanying the application narrative, the state set ambitious annual targets from gauging progress in this area.

As a result, full points are awarded.

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

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

(D)(4)(i)

The state already provides written reports to the state's 31 teacher preparation programs on the performance evaluations of graduates, disaggregated by teacher. In addition, the department of education publishes aggregated teacher evaluation results for each institution of higher education annually as well as principal evaluation results by preparation program. The state's plan is to compile data from the revised ADEPT teacher evaluation system and the PADEPP principal evaluation system which will include value added ratings for teachers and principals based in significant part on student growth and to provide the data to each preparation program. In addition, the board of education will amend its accreditation process for teacher and principal preparation and credentialing programs. However, the process and means for making information compiled by the state available to the public has not yet been determined.

As a result, medium points are awarded.

(D)(4)(ii)

The state has a plan to spotlight educator preparation programs that demonstrate they produce highly effective educators. However, the state's plan does not yet include a strategy for expanding or scaling up preparation and credentialing programs that are successful in training educators to be highly effective.

As a result, medium points are awarded.

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	**20**	**4**	**4**	
(i) Providing effective support	10	2	2	
(ii) Continuously improving the effectiveness of the support	10	2	2	

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

(D)(5)(i)

The state's plan to provide effective professional development support to teachers and principals is outlined in the state's goals and objectives and project plan. A key component of the state's system is the formation of professional learning communities in districts and schools called Communities Advancing Professional Practice (CAPPs) organized through the state's Regional Support System. This information is in the application, the project plan, and the Appendix. The application narrative defines CAPPs as organized groups of practitioners dedicated to learning with and from one another to support student learning. A structured, continuous improvement process, outlined in the application narrative, is used in CAPPs consisting of identifying a learning problem, developing a plan to address it, implementing the plan, measuring and analyzing its effectiveness through data, and sharing findings. A train-the-trainer model, organized through by the Regional Response Teams in each region, will be used to train principals and teachers to implement CAPPs at the school level. The Regional Support System will be used as the vehicle for channeling professional development resources to districts and schools and for supporting CAPPs. The state's plan focuses on closely linking professional development for teachers with performance evaluation ratings and needs identified through the ADEPT performance evaluation system. Professional development for principals is closely linked, in the state's plan, to the corresponding performance evaluation system for principals, PADEPP.

Teachers and principals will be required to implement enhanced standards and assessments, new performance evaluation systems and requirements, new curriculum, complex data systems, new school turnaround models, STEM disciplines, literacy and math initiatives, data use and analysis, new forms of instructional planning, new high school courses and career clusters, new pacing guides, and many more initiatives under the state's reform agenda. The plan for insuring educators have the knowledge, skill, and competence they need to do the new work is a key determining factor in whether or not the state's comprehensive plan will succeed.

As a result, low points are awarded.

(D)(5)(ii)

The process the state will use to evaluate and continuously improve professional development efforts is vague and ill-defined. For example, details about how improvements in test scores and graduation rates will be linked directly in a causal way to specific professional development activities and not others is not clear.

As a result, low points are awarded.

Total	**138**	**101**	**103**	

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)

By state statute, the state superintendent of education has authority, with state board of education approval, to intervene directly in low performing schools and in LEAs that consistently do not meet state board of education-set benchmarks for expected progress. The state superintendent of education, with board authorization, can take actions that include furnishing technical assistance, replacing the principal, and assume management of the school. A recently passed proviso extends the state superintendent of education's authority by giving him the power to reconstitute persistently low performing schools.

As a result, full points are awarded.

(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 has a U.S. Department of Education-approved plan for identifying its persistently lowest achieving schools based on a tiered approach and data collected over a period of three years or more. Evidence of this plan consists of criteria, outlined in the project narrative, for designating Tier I and Tier II schools.

Because the state has defined a system that includes both Title I eligible schools and non-Title I eligible secondary schools that would be considered persistently lowest achieving if they were Title I eligible schools, full points are awarded.

(E)(2)(ii)

The state's plan to support its LEAs in turning around its persistently lowest achieving schools has clear goals and objectives, a timeline, and persons or positions responsible for project deliverable. Job descriptions in the Appendix for personnel who will manage the project indicate candidates require experience with managing complex educational projects. Annual targets for the number of schools using one of the four reform models are ambitious but achievable – from a baseline of 3 schools currently to 28 schools in Year 1 and 35 schools each succeeding year from Year 2 – Year 4. The specificity and detail of the project plan increases the likelihood that it will be successfully implemented.

Strengths

- Including in the turnaround effort Title I schools in school improvement, corrective action, and/or restructuring status (but not in Tier I or Tier II) that are feeder schools for the persistently lowest achieving schools. According to the application narrative,this creates articulation of effort at elementary, middle school, and high school transition grades and enables the state to channel some Title I funds, as well as Race to the Top funds, to feeder schools thus increasing and expanding the potential impact of the overall reform effort.
- Making organizational changes at the state and regional levels to support school turnarounds by creating a three-person Turnaround Team, under the direction of the state's Title I director, to manage the effort with links to the Regional Support System and Regional Turnaround Specialists. Job descriptions, provided in the Appendix, indicate that candidates will be required to have experience managing large scale projects.

- Developing a consistent way to calculate the annual graduation rate for high schools by the end of Year 1. Since a variety of methods can be used, each yielding different results, information that the same methodology will be used in each of the school years covered by the grant will enable the state to determine the true rate of progress the turnaround schools are making each funding year.

As a result, full points are awarded.

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)(ii)

Although a chart included by the state in the application narrative is difficult to read, it appears that overall the state increased the total percentage of revenues available to support elementary, secondary, and public higher education from 2008 to 2009. As a result, full points were awarded.

(F) (1) (ii)

The state has laws and policies to distribute state funding equitably between high-need LEAs and other LEAs. On average, seventy percent of funding for LEAs comes from the state and thirty percent is based on local taxes. However, state laws and policies take into account an LEAs relative ability to raise revenues so that actual state funding is based on the tax paying ability of each LEA and weighted formulas that are applied for students based on their educational needs. The state followed these policies in its distribution of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds for school construction by allocating the funds to capital improvement projects in districts with the lowest tax base.

Laws and policies are also in place to insure that state funding within LEAs is allocated to high need schools. Within LEAs, a recently updated state education finance law, as well as state policies and practices, direct LEAs to distribute funds to schools under their jurisdiction on the basis of need. State law also directs LEAs to allocate state technical assistance funds to at-risk schools based on annual school report cards detailing student academic achievement and other factors. As a result of these factors, full points were awarded.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	**40**	**33**	**33**	
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	8	8	

(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	8	8	
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	5	5	
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	4	4	
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	8	8	

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

(F)(2)(i)

The state's charter school law applies no limits to the numbers, types, or enrollments of charter public schools that can operate in the state. As of August 2010, forty-six charter public schools will be in operation in sixteen of the state's 88 LEAs. Charter public schools in the state include five virtual schools serving over 6,000 students. The state also has a state-run Charter School District. Seventy-five percent of the state's charter public schools have been in operation for three or more years.

(F)(2)(ii)

The state has a two-stage system, outlined in statutory requirements and state board of education regulations, for approving, monitoring, holding accountable, reauthorizing, and closing charter schools. A major factor in approval is the inclusion of goals, objectives, and student achievement standards in the application, as well as a comprehensive plan for reaching them. Failure to meet student achievement standards and attain Adequate Yearly Progress over several years, as defined in the No Child Left Behind Act, can trigger revocation of a charter school's license to operate. The students enrolled in charter schools in the state share demographic and socio-economic characteristics with students in traditional schools in the rest of the state. The state has closed seventeen ineffective charter schools for reasons ranging from inadequate academic progress to unstable finances.

As a result, full points are awarded.

(F)(2)(iii)

While the state has taken steps to improve equitable funding between charter schools and traditional public schools, discrepancies in financing exist. In general, charter schools sponsored by LEAs receive equitable funding compared to other schools in the LEA, but charter schools in the state's charter school district do not. State-sponsored charter schools receive only the state's per pupil allocation plus whatever categorical funds the schools is eligible for based on its student enrollment, but no share of tax revenue since there is no tax base. A recently approved state appropriation of $700 per pupil per year for two years will add funds, which will result in more equitable funding for charter schools.

As a result, points in the medium range are awarded..

(F)(2)(iv)

While the state makes resources available to charter schools, such as a listing of vacant and unused buildings owned by school districts, no funding for facilities for charter schools is provided by the state. Facilities-related requirements for charter schools are marginally less restrictive than for traditional public schools. For example, charter schools do not have to appear before the state board of education to seek a waiver of building requirements, but may send a design professional to present their case instead.

However, this is only slightly less restrictive than the process for traditional public schools. As a result, points in the mid-range are awarded.

(F)(2)(v)

A state law, included in the Appendix, indicates the state allows flexibility for operating innovative schools, within the LEAs in which they are located. The state also maintains a waiver process for LEAs to seek exemptions from state regulations and policies for some of their schools. As a result, full points are awarded.

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

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

(F)(3)

The state implemented initiatives over the past five years that created conditions conducive to education reform. Some are supported by legislation and have resulted in student gains in key reform area outcomes. For example, the Education and Economic Development Act (EEDA), enacted in 2005, channeled significant resources to high schools in the state, increased high school staffing, and required high schools to adopt whole school reform models, create Individual Graduation Plans for and with students and their families, and enroll students in career clusters. The state's high school dropout rate, a factor associated with improved graduation rates, declined by 11.9 percent from the 2007-2008 school year to the 2008-2009 school year. The state also used its Charter Schools Act to establish a network of five virtual schools across the state that offer 80 courses, enroll over 7,000 students and have waiting lists of over 2,000 students. As a result, full points are awarded.

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 state's application demonstrates a strong commitment to providing excellent instruction in the STEM disciplines.

The state's plan for enhancing STEM includes a continuum of rigorous standards for students from pre-school to grade 12. designed to integrate the concepts, skills, facts, understandings, and habits of thought that constitute the STEM disciplines. Using a National Science Foundation grant, the state purchased science kits for elementary school science instruction recommended by the National Academy of Sciences. STEM courses at the high school level were developed by the department of education to expand career clusters for secondary school students, particularly underrepresented groups and women and girls. In addition, the state has a Governor's School for Science and Mathematics that enrolls over 1000 students per year.

To address teacher shortages in the fields of math and science, a recently established Committee to Increase the Math and Science Teaching Force was formed in the state and leading universities in the state have joined the Science and Mathematics Teacher Imperative, a national effort to identify and address key constraints that impede the formation of effective STEM teacher preparation programs.

To strengthen the content knowledge and pedagogical skills of teachers currently in the classroom, the state has eight regional centers that provide a team of math and science coaches for elementary and middle schools in the state. In collaboration with institutions of higher education, the state will implement summer learning institutes in math and science.

Partnerships with industry experts, universities, research centers, and community partners offer a range of resources and services, including professional development, equipment, science curriculum materials, and programs for students.

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 state's application presents a coherent plan that is comprehensive and ambitious. Goals, objectives, timelines, persons responsible and deliverables are outlined in enough detail to indicate the state will provide good management for the overall reform agenda and has the capacity to accomplish its goals. Attention is paid to building capacity and scaling up the work of education reform as well as to sustainability. A credible plan for intervening in the state's lowest performing schools provides support and flexibility. The state's history with school choice and charter school implementation is strong. The state's performance measures and timelines are ambitious but achievable. New state statutes that support reform, a statewide data system and instructional information system, performance evaluation systems for improving the effectiveness of teachers and principals, and piloting of value added models for measuring student growth enhance conditions that the state will attain the goals of its reform agenda.

Total		**0**	**0**	

Grand Total	**500**	**434**	**427**	

Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2

South Carolina Application #4200SC-7

A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	61	61	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	43	43	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	13	13	

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

(A)(1)(i) The applicant, South Carolina, has clearly articulated a plan that presents a reform agenda that is supported by State legislation, has been ongoing, and has as its overarching goal: "By 2020, all of South Carolina's students will graduate from high school ready for college and careers leading to meaningful and purposeful citizenship." Each of the four ARRA reform areas are addressed with clearly articulated goals within. The South Carolina Department of Education (Department) also refers to various sections of the proposal as appropriate. All of the State's goals and objectives for sections B through E are listed in Appendix A1J. This thorough overview presents a coherent planned and understandable path for accomplishing the stated goals.

(A)(1)(ii) All 88 of South Carolina's LEAs which include 85 geographic public school districts, one statewide charter school district (the South Carolina Public Charter School District), and two specialized school districts serving students who are incarcerated, signed the modified MOU which is based on the USDOE's model MOU. Some of the model MOU terms and conditions are revised and strengthened in South Carolina's MOU. For example, the duration of participation and the conditions for termination of participation are defined and there is no opt-out wording after May 21, 2010. There is a substantial, 13 task addition to the scope-of-work requirements, to be collaboratively implemented by the State Department of Education and the participating LEAs, identified in Exhibit III, found in Appendix A1E. Signatures of superintendents and LEA school board representatives of all 88 participating LEAs were obtained.

Due to the strength and extensive added components of South Carolina's MOU, the applicant has earned very high points for this sub-criterion.

(A)(1)(iii) The fact that all (100%) of the applicant's LEAs are participating LEAs having signed on to the State's MOU and broader statewide educational reforms, ensures the greatest possible impact of these reforms. In addition to setting student achievement goals for the NAEP in grades 4 and 8, PASS, South Carolina's statewide assessment for Grades 3–8, and the High School Assessment Program (HSAP), the Department included details of the planned "path" of strategies designed to bring about the increases in student achievement. These strategies focus on curriculum and assessments and effective teachers and leaders.

The applicant states, "Long-standing disparities between black and white students, disabled and non-disabled, and those receiving subsidized meals and those who do not, are unacceptable." This statement represents a consequential starting point for a substantive discussion on closing achievement gaps between subgroups. The State has set ambitious yet achievable goals for closing gaps on the NAEP (halve the gaps, with a focus on students with disabilities in spite of accommodation differences), ESEA/PASS (totally eliminate gaps in grade 4) and HSAP (gender gap eliminated in 3 years). Again, they provide some of the strategies they believe will help accomplish this difficult task. One interesting strategy is the enhanced curriculum management system (CMS). It appears to have the potential to help teachers individualize learning for students based on the analyzed data it provides on each student.

In order for the State to reach its goal of raising its high school graduation rate from 74.9% to 88.3% at the end of the 2013-2014 school year, South Carolina's graduation rate will have to improve by 3.4 percentage points for each of the school years 2010-11, and 2013-14. The (A)(1)(iii) summary table is completed as required.

In essence, it appears that South Carolina is setting its sights on high achievement for its students. They have developed plausible, thoughtful, and in some cases, innovative plans to guide them in the process.

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

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

(A)(2) In the introductory paragraph for this criterion, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDOE) aptly acknowledges, "Implementation will require changes in support infrastructures to deliver best services and practices to LEAs, schools, leaders, teachers, students, and their families. Research supports the fact that changes in the way middle management (i.e. LEAs) operate is vital to the successful implementation of any reform effort. Legislative and business support along with political will are critical factors as are key constituents, including parents, communities and the students themselves.

(A)(2)(i) Strong leadership will be provided by a broad-based (19 organization) State-Level Advisory Team to ensure oversight and broad stakeholder investment, (the state teachers association was not listed as a member; this may be an oversight.). Teams dedicated to this initiative are: 1) the reorganized (in 2007) Department staff comprised of experienced staff and new positions (extensive listing of qualifications and credentials are found in Appendix A2A); and 2) a Regional Support System: a new approach in the State to providing technical assistance and capacity building to LEAs and schools, in which the state is divided into six regions with corresponding Regional Response Teams providing a range of services. A State management team organizational chart is also included.

The Regional Support System Teams will support participating LEAs by providing the following resources: data gathering and analysis, diagnosis and risk assessment, take actions indicated, provide professional development, build sustainable capacity, and identify, scale up, and share best practices.

The State indicates that its programs have received favorable audit reports on its systems of grant administration, grant oversight, budget reporting, financial monitoring, performance tracking, and funds disbursement, and in the past year successfully administered $1,250,938,874 in grant funds (noted in Appendix A2C). In addition, the State Deputy Superintendent for the Division of Finance and Operations, John Cooley, has an MBA.

South Carolina is requesting $175 million in this RTTT proposal. The total plan allocates $237 per student over four years and focuses on transitioning to revised systems that, by the end of the grant term, along with re-purposed state dollars, will allow the State to sustain the programs created under this grant.

(A)2)(ii) Letters of support from the State's teachers' and principals' associations, Palmetto State Teachers Association (PSTA) and the South Carolina Education Association (SCEA) are included in Appendices A205 and A205. The SCEA expresses "overall general support" and the PSTA "endorses" the grant proposal. Neither letter address the 'elephant in the room', which is the requirement that evaluation systems for teachers and principals differentiate effectiveness using multiple rating categories that take into account data on student growth as a significant factor. On the other hand, the Executive Director of the South Carolina Association of School Administrators lends the organization's "full support" and further, the organization's Superintendent's Executive Committee provided unanimous support for the proposal, which in turn, assisted LEAs in making decisions regarding the MOU (Appendix A-323). The organizations seem to overlap constituencies, so cross-organizational communication should prove valuable.

South Carolina has a unique and impressive study on public education released in 2005 by the Riley Institute at Furman University. Representing every South Carolina school LEA, close to 800 stakeholders participated in 106 4.5-hour research sessions at 16 sites. Stakeholders included superintendents, teachers at each level, parents, businessmen and women, students, principals, and school board members. Consensus (75% of participants) emerged around nine broad areas, and an even higher consensus (90% of participants) emerged around three areas: Early

Childhood Education, Schools as Community Centers, and Recruitment and Retention of High Quality Teachers. All of the areas identified as vitally important statewide, as well as, the nine more broad areas of concern, are addressed in this application. (A full copy of the findings is located in Appendix A2D.) These stakeholder objectives are supported by an extensive compilation of support letters for this initiative.

In addition, an organization called South Carolina Future Minds conducted online and direct petitions resulting in over 1900 signatures of South Carolinians who support this RTTT proposal.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	**30**	**17**	**17**	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5	5	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	12	12	

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

(A)(3)(i) It appears that when State Superintendent Jim Rex came into office in 2007, he was able to mobilize state officials and stakeholders to commit to education reforms like statewide public school choice, creating an Office of Public School Choice. School accountability reforms were passed by the General Assembly in 2008 and the new statewide assessment system, the Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (PASS) was implemented in 2009. As a result, South Carolina has been able to put programs in place in all four education reform areas. In January 2010, "Quality Counts" issued by *Education Week* ranked South Carolina 11th in the nation for overall quality.

(A)(3)(ii)(a) While South Carolina's Grade 4 and 8 NAEP reading and mathematics scores are relatively flat, as are the nation's, South Carolina's 4th and 8th graders scores place the state at 49th and 36th place respectively (at or above proficient) on the NAEP math assessment . On the State's ESEA exams, PACT, and PASS, the percentage of students scoring basic or above in math has increased by an average of 22 points since 1999 in Grades 3–8; while the percentage of students scoring basic or above in English/Language Arts has increased by an average of 13 points since 1999 in grades 3–8. Considering the number of years (eleven) the State is including, the gains on the state's exams are modest.

In response to this sub-criterion, decreasing achievement gaps between subgroups, in the narrative the State relies on data from a think tank's 2008 report that does not report on achievement gaps, but on movement from below basic to basic. This is an inadequate response to the sub-criterion. A close look directly at the scores, shows that the in mathematics, the black-white gap actually increased 1.76% in grade 4 and increased 3.61% in grade 8. The gap for students with disabilities is even greater, increasing 10.89% in grade 4 math and increasing 7.83% in reading. The gaps also increased for students who are free/reduced lunch eligible, but are smaller.

Regarding graduation rates, The State reports the highest percentage increase in graduation rates in the nation, from 53.2% (1996) to 66.3% (2006). The State's 2009 on-time graduation rate, calculated using the federally-required method, was 74.9%, and can be attributed to focusing on dropout prevention, dual enrollment, Advanced Placement, early/middle college programs and their Virtual School Program.

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)(a) The Governor and State Superintendent of Education of South Carolina have signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association's (NGA) Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Initiative and a copy of the MOU is found in Appendix B1A. Also in the Appendix are a copy of the draft standards for ELA and mathematics (Appendix B1B) and the international benchmarking of CCSS (Appendix B1C).

(B)(1)(i)(b) The Common Core State Standards Consortium is made up of 49 states, two territories and the District of Columbia. The list is found in Appendix B1E.

(B)(1)(ii) The applicant produced a detailed timeline of the Comparative Review Process that is being followed for the review, alignment, adoption, and implementation of the CCSS for ELA and mathematics from July 2009 through July 2010. They expect the the State Board of Education to adopt the Common Core State Standards by July 2010. Interestingly, in March 2010, the Department of Education Reported to State Board the results of the alignment process and provided recommendations related to adoption feasibility based on current instructional practices, student learning expectations and assessment implications (P-12 Common Core Comparative Review Report). This previewing step offers a good example of the detailed process that the Department has undertaken to ensure the adoption of the Common Core State Standards.

Appendix B1F provides a description of the formal, legal process for adopting standards as required sub-criterion evidence.

(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)(ii) South Carolina is working with two consortia that are developing and implementing common, high-quality assessment systems. They are the SMARTER Balanced consortium (33 states) and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) (27 members). Both consortia plan to develop common, online summative assessments; interim/benchmark assessments; and formative components. Memoranda of Understanding with these consortia are included in Appendix B2A. When sufficient information is available, the Department will choose the consortium that best suits the needs of the South Carolina assessment system. Lists of the states and members of each consortium are included (as required) within the response to this sub-criterion.

(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	**20**	**17**	**17**	

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

(B)(3) South Carolina has a comprehensive plan for meeting the four objectives they developed for this criterion. The State identified numerous initiatives and strategies that, if fully implemented, will result in a successful transition to the Common Core State Standards and aligned curriculum and assessments. The components listed comprise a high quality plan, and the State has provided the required performance measures, as well as a quarterly timeline for development and implementation of strategies and activities.

Total	70	67	67	

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init

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

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

(C)(1) While the applicant reports that its statewide longitudinal data system (SLDS), the South Carolina Longitudinal Center for Education (SLICE) meets all 12 of the America COMPETES Act requirements, it appears that Element Eight (8), 'A teacher identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students', is not fully in place according to the information provided in Appendix C1A. Their explanation states, "SLICE will generate a statewide unique educator identifier that will follow educators across districts". There is no mention of connecting teachers to students.

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

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

(C)(2) South Carolina's high quality plan for improving access to SLICE includes the following steps: 1) establishing data governance structures to facilitate the integration of data from other sources, 2) providing user friendly interfaces to all educational stakeholders, and 3) creating meaningful and accessible training for all users. The plan has three goals with appropriate accompanying objectives. There are two specific points in the State's response to this criterion that stand out to the peer reviewer. The first is a conflict between Goal C1 and Objective C1.1. The goal states: SLICE will be governed collaboratively by key stakeholders, to include students, parents, teachers, schools, districts, state agencies, institutions of higher education, the business community, and the community. However, the list of organizations to be invited to send representatives for the Data Governance Committee has no parent, teacher or student organizations on it.

The second, Objective C2.5: "The Department, with local districts and schools, will enhance data quality and validation controls with the student information system so data entries are complete, correct at entry, and meaningful for analyses", stands out because it bears the voice of experience. Many errors are made in data entry, particularly at the school level. Therefore, data quality and validation controls are necessary and should be included as an objective in the State's plan as it has done.

South Carolina has produced annual performance measures for each goal in its data plan. It also provides a quarterly timeline through 2015, by goal and objective, with responsible personnel identified.

(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) The State plans to put into place a curriculum management system (CMS) that will make teachers' work easier and increase the overall effectiveness of teachers, principals and local administrators. Information on how the CMS will work is presented in great detail, including a sample screen showing what the page might possibly look like. This CMS appears very interesting, with many component parts and interfaces. It should prove to be a valuable tool for teachers and administrators to use. The timeline for this goal and its five objectives is sufficiently detailed to provide the appropriate and required guidance for this project.

(C)(3)(ii) Again, the State has a very specific plan to provide professional development at all stakeholder levels and importantly, will be coordinated with other professional development for the implementation of all reform components. It has identified seven critical levels of data competence that must be included in all data training, referred to as the 7 A's.

This sub-criterion response also has its own goal and five objectives as part of this overall, high quality plan for data systems to support instruction.

(C)(3)(iii) This sub-criterion has its own goal: C6: SLICE will provide researchers and policymakers with access to student level, educator-level, and program-level data to evaluate and research the effectiveness of educational strategies and programs based on student performance and other factors. Goal C6 has two objectives: C6.1: Based on their roles, researchers or policymakers will gain access and receive training in the use of the researcher interface and the data to which that interface opens. That role will be defined by the policies established by the Data Governance Committee, and C6.2: The researcher or policymaker will have access to student-level or teacher-level data that are de -identified.

South Carolina has produced annual performance measures for each goal in its data plan. It also provides a quarterly timeline through 2015, by goal and objective, with responsible personnel identified. Overall, the responses to criterion C: Data Systems to Support Instruction combine into an integrated data system that represents a high quality plan.

Total	47	44	44	

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	**21**	14	14	
(i) Allowing alternative routes to certification	7	2	2	
(ii) Using alternative routes to certification	7	7	7	
(iii) Preparing teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage	7	5	5	

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

(D)(1)(i) By state statute South Carolina has a number of approved alternate routes to certification for teachers. While currently there is an alternate route to the principalship for certified teachers, it still requires coursework from a regionally accredited institution of higher education. The Department of Education has proposed an alternative route for career changers to become principals that will allow for providers other than institutions of higher education. Since this criterion is to be judged for both teachers and principals, the applicant has earned a low score.

(D)(1)(ii) The applicant provides evidence of alternate routes to certification currently in use for teachers, principals and superintendents. An example of high standards within the alternative route for teachers: "In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the state allowed participants to become certified in elementary and early childhood through the alternative route. However, the State discontinued these areas of alternative certification because of concerns about insufficient preparation in reading and diagnostic instruction." In addition, South Carolina has created a certification for the Montessori Method, currently in use, which provides a new alternative route for individuals who are not fully certified as teachers to earn a credential to teach in Montessori classrooms. These examples show that the State recognizes the value of alternative routes to certification as a method of adding qualified certificated staff to their teaching rolls.

(D)(1)(iii) The State utilizes the services and programs at the Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA) at Winthrop University for monitoring, evaluating, and identifying areas of teacher and principal shortage. CERRA conducts an annual Supply and Demand Survey to determine areas of shortage and surplus in the education profession in the state. The data is analyzed and shortage areas, critical needs subjects and geographic listings are areas of focus. They do not, however, address preparing staff to fill the shortage areas after identification.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	**58**	**55**	**55**	

(i) Measuring student growth	5	5	5	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	15	15	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	10	10	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	25	25	

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

(D)(2)(i) The applicant has developed a specific objective in response to this sub-criterion: 'Objective D2.1- South Carolina will develop, pilot, and select growth models, will use these models to analyze the standardized assessment data for every student who is in a tested grade or subject at two or more points in time, as well as other assessment measures, and will include these models as a significant part of the State's systems for assisting, developing, and evaluating teacher (ADEPT) and principal (PADEPP) performance.' It appears the State understands it must establish valid and reliable ways of measuring the growth of each individual student and to determine the contribution of each teacher and leader in promoting this growth. Required performance measures are provided (D2).

(D)(2)(ii)(iii) South Carolina's periodically updated and improved Assisting, Developing, and Evaluating Professional Teaching (ADEPT) program addresses teacher performance through three primary processes: assisting, developing, and evaluating. Since these processes are interrelated, all of them occur throughout each phase of a teacher's career continuum. For teachers, a major component of ADEPT is the Summative ADEPT Formal Evaluation of Teachers (SAFE-T), when consequential decisions are made on the basis of teaching performance. It is detailed and the 67 page guidelines can be found in Appendix D2D. For principals, the current review, the Program for Assisting, Developing, and Evaluating Principal Performance (PADEPP), while extensive, will undergo a comprehensive review to establish the process and criteria for determining a principal effectiveness rating for each principal for both the comprehensive formal (summative) evaluations and the yearly evaluations. The Department will appoint a representative work committee of at least 25 key stakeholders that includes teachers, school and district leaders, and representatives from IHEs and related professional organizations.

(D)(2)(iv)(a) Both the ADEPT and PADEPP programs for teachers and principals currently and in their new interactions will have specific professional development components, including individualized professional development plans.

(D)(2)(iv)(b) The State currently has a mandated salary schedule for teachers. The new compensation model will include incentives for effective and highly effective teachers and principals.

(D)(2)(iv)(c)(d) South Carolina is a right-to work-state and does not grant tenure to teachers or principals. The newly designed teacher and principal effectiveness ratings will provide tiered levels of certification, and will inform any dismissal decisions.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	**25**	**23**	**23**	
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	13	13	
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	10	10	

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

(D)(3)(i) The State has three objectives under Goal D3: "To ensure that students in high poverty and high minority schools have access to highly effective principals and teachers in all areas, South Carolina will develop and implement strategies to attract, distribute, retain, and reward educators for work in hard-to-staff areas." There are a number of strategies the State intends to utilize such as specialty housing, loan forgiveness, low-interest down payments for home purchase. The School Transformation Leaders Academy is another interesting initiative that is planned. This academy proposes a shift from on-the-job training for new principals in difficult schools, to preparation-for-the-job training where prospective individuals will participate in a year-long academy, where they will learn, among other things, how to inspire and develop teachers and build a culture of learning in the State's lowest-performing schools.

(D)(3)(ii) The State has a number of ideas that are both ambitious and achievable to increase the number of teachers in hard-to-staff and specialty areas. They include: Project Create, a project that underwrites course tuition and textbook costs for qualified individuals to obtain add-on, alternative, or initial certification in special education; a U-TEACH program (a successful method focused on preparing math and science teachers that is used by 18 universities nationwide) which will be established at two institutions of higher education in the state. Another is the design and implementation of an alternative principal certification program for career-changers with the potential to be school leaders, subject to approval by the State Board. The CERRA program will also be tapped to focus on the problem of retaining staff in hard-to-staff subjects and geographic areas.

The Department has included completed required tables (with quarterly timelines) and performance measures for both sub-criteria.

(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) In response to this sub-criterion, the applicant's Goal D4: 'South Carolina will enhance and continuously improve the State's educator preparation programs by linking to and using data that indicates their graduates' impact on student growth and achievement' has four objectives. The objectives range from convening a stakeholder workgroup, to initiating a statewide web-based data system, to amending the current publicly-reported educator preparation program "Fact Sheets" to include information on effectiveness of program completers. A fourth objective is very promising. Project HEAT (Higher Education Assessment of Teaching), a program piloted with Clemson University, is a project to link student achievement and teacher performance to educator preparation programs. Eventually, Project HEAT will be taken to scale across the state to link all teacher preparation programs.

(D)(4)(ii) The State has two objectives in their plan that respond to this sub-criterion. Objective D4.5 states: 'South Carolina will amend its accreditation guidelines for educator preparation programs, subject to approval by the State Board, to incorporate the revised reporting, outline steps and timelines for improving programs that are categorized as "lowperforming" or "at-risk," and revoke state approval of programs that do not improve despite adequate opportunity and support'. Objective D4.6 states: 'South Carolina will reward educator preparation programs that produce high numbers of teachers and leaders that are found to be effective using the revised teacher and principal support and evaluation systems'.

The Department has included completed required tables (with quarterly timelines) and performance measures for both sub-criteria.

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	**20**	**13**	**13**	
(i) Providing effective support	10	7	7	
(ii) Continuously improving the effectiveness of the support	10	6	6	

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

(D)(5)(i)(ii) The Department seeks to encourage school and LEA staff to engage in a collaborative and collegial manner that will result in the kind of change that comes from educators supporting educators. To this end, the State plans to enhance the "assisting" and "developing" components of the State's teacher (ADEPT) and principal (PADEPP) evaluation and support systems, making professional development (PD) truly 'professional' and really serving the development need of teachers and principals. They envision Communities Advancing Professional Practices (CAPPs) that will (at the individual or systemic level) follow the same process: (1) identifying the specific need or problem; (2) developing a plan to address the need or problem; (3) implementing the plan; (4) collecting and analyzing the data, and

modifying the plan, as needed; and (5) sharing the findings and sustaining the improvements. The State will utilize the Regional Support System Teams to provide train-the -trainer model PD at the LEA and school levels. They plan to measure, evaluate and improve these educator support systems as well as provide an online Professional Practices Network.

The face-to-face involvement required for successful implementation of this type of professional development is missing from this otherwise solid response to this sub-criterion, resulting in a mid-range score.

Total	138	119	119	

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	**10**	**5**	**10**	[redacted]

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

(E)(1) The State Superintendent has the authority to intervene directly in low-performing schools under certain circumstances as well as the authority to reconstitute schools. Since some of South Carolina's at risk designations predate the reauthorization of ESEA in 2002, the State's definitions and persistently lowest-achieving schools as defined in this notice are not perfectly aligned. Although in May 2010, the State Board adopted a revised definition of expected progress to allow the Department to continue to identify those schools that were not improving at a sufficient rate or that had not achieved a minimum threshold of achievement, this change brings the definitions closer, but they still are not perfectly aligned, as defined in this notice. (The definition of "expected progress." is found in Appendix EIB.) However, there is no indication that the State Superintendent has authority to intervene directly in LEAs.

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

The South Carolina team presented information verifying the state's ability to intervene in low-performing LEAs. This clarification has resulted in an increase in the score for this sub-criterion.

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

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

(E)(2)(i) On April 1, 2010, the State Department of Education received approval from the United States Department of Education (DOE) to use the State's own method to determine the lowest 5% persistently lowest-achieving schools (PLAS) based on a tiered (Tier I and Tier II schools) approach as defined in DOE guidance. This allowance sufficiently brings the State's designations into alignment with the DOE and allows South Carolina to utilize recently approved School Improvement Grant funds (Project 180) to support these schools along with other funding. A total of 28 schools were identified as the state's PLAS (located in Appendix E2B).

(E)(2)(ii) The applicant has developed a high quality plan with goals, objectives and annual achievable targets; has completed all required tables for the criterion and additional explanatory tables.

The required evidence table, historic performance in school turnaround, is particularly detailed, informative, and contains frank answers; particularly when strategies did not work as planned, such as, "Better use of Technical Assistance and redirection of other funding sources is needed to help PPS implement their agreed-upon plans of action". Another informative and frank response is: "Turnaround designation was met with some negative response within designated schools' local communities. Public relations efforts must be launched in each Turnaround

school's community to build positive community response to Turnaround designation." Responses such as these lend credibility to the State's plan as they show a real desire to learn from the turnaround schools' experiences and not to repeat errors in planning or implementation.

As part of a well-designed plan, the results and lessons learned section informed the programs, strategies, activities and evaluation procedures chosen for the current plans for turning around PLAS and other identified (feeder) schools. Funding from this proposal will be supplemented by School Improvement Grant (SIG) funds - referred to as Project 180 in South Carolina.

The two ambitious, yet achievable goals with five objectives each are presented with a quarterly timetable along with persons responsible for the actions. The Department has utilized its combined collective knowledge, understanding and experience to develop a high quality plan for turning around its PLAS schools (and their feeder schools) with ambitious yet achievable annual targets as required by this criterion.

The lack of guidance by the State to PLAS in determining which turnaround model would best suit there needs is reflected in a less than perfect score.

Total	50	40	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)

(F)(1)(i) The state of South Carolina was able to appropriate a small increase in the percentage of total revenues to public education despite a decrease in overall state revenues in 2009 from 2008.

(F)(1)(ii)(a) South Carolina's legislative intent for the Education Finance Act (EFA) is to distribute funds equitably regardless of whether the student resides in a high need or other LEA. On average, the State supplies state funding of 70% to a local share of 30%, depending upon the localities' tax base. For example, in 2009, State EFA funding to LEAs ranged from 0% of the state's student allocation (Beaufort County School District, the wealthiest LEA) to 94% (Clarendon 3, the LEA with the lowest local tax base) to 100% plus $700 per pupil for the statewide public charter school district (which, as a statewide entity, has no local tax base).

(F)(1)(ii)(b) Although LEAs distribute funds as allocated by their local school board, the State ensures certain categories of funding for programmatic needs are met, such as funding for Special Education or technical assistance funds for "at-risk" schools.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	**40**	**32**	**32**	
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	8	8	
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	6	6	
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	6	6	
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	4	4	

(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	8	8	

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

(F)(2)(i) The State's charter school law, (South Carolina Charter School Act, S.C. Code Ann. § 59-40-10 *et seq.*) has no limits on charter school numbers, types, or enrollments. As of May 2010, there are 37 public charter schools in 16 LEAs; 35 are regular start-up schools and two are conversion schools. A list of the State's charter schools is found in Appendix F2C. Applicable required evidence has been provided.

(F)(2)(ii) This sub-criterion states in part, "...encourage charter schools that serve student populations that are similar to local district student populations, especially relative to high-need students...". The applicant earned a score at the low end of designated "high points" because there is no reference made to the student selection process for its charter schools.

(F)(2)(iii) There are two chartering agencies in South Carolina: the geographic LEAs and the statewide authorizer, the South Carolina Public Charter School District. The State reports that the geographic charter schools receive an equitable share of the local LEA funding. Because the statewide Public Charter School District does not have a tax base, the State Assembly authorized "$700 per weighted pupil unit enrolled in the state charter district, above the State per pupil amount that is the basis for the EFA formula for other districts". It is not clear if the Charter School District's funding, even with the $700 increased allocation is equitable to that of the traditional public schools. Applicable required evidence has been provided.

(F)(2)(iv) The applicant states that it views facilities as a local matter, and does not provide funds for charter- nor district-governed. However, the State does maintain a facilities inventory and annually provides to charter schools a listing of vacant and unused buildings and vacant and unused portions of buildings that are owned by school districts that may be suitable for the operation of a charter school. In addition, all middle/early colleges are on college campuses, including the four that are charter schools.

(F)(2)(v) The applicant reports, "The South Carolina Education Accountability Act (S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1100, Appendix A1A), provides a mechanism for schools to achieve flexibility from regulations and statutory provisions". The State has an unusual provision in its regulation involving strategic planning, which grants all schools the opportunity to be free from all regulations. Regulation 43-261(c) gives any school district the right to request a waiver of any regulations that would "impede the implementation of an approved district strategic plan or school renewal plan." Every school district is required to complete a school renewal/strategic plan. It is not stated how many and in what manner LEAs have utilized this unique state regulation.

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

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

(F)(3) - South Carolina listed a number of regulations, policies, programs that have resulted in having positive impacts on students' health, achievement, graduation rates, or other important outcomes. A few are noted here:

- The State has funded financial incentives have encouraged teachers to earn National Board Certification, resulting in 7,297 teachers certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. In a 2008 report released by the National Research Council of the National Academies, this certification was found to have a positive impact on student achievement and educator retention.
- Ten years after funding full-day kindergarten for all five-year-old-children, which was the catalyst for immediate and dramatic improvements in first-grade readiness, the General Assembly expanded funding to include 23,000 at-risk four year olds. Numerous research studies support increased student achievement for children who attend kindergarten versus those who do not.
- With the help of private foundations, the Department created a free dental clinic in the state's poorest county. More than 800 children visited the clinic during its first year of operation, with most of those children seeing a dentist for the very first time. A majority of the children came back to the clinic six or seven times, mostly to fill numerous cavities. Improved overall health, including dental health impacts a student's ability to learn, leading to increased student achievement.
- South Carolina had the nation's best improvement—a 13.1% increase—in on-time high school graduation rates between 1996 and 2006.

Total	55	47	47	

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)

While South Carolina's STEM plan primarily focuses on mathematics and science, the State includes few aspects of technology and engineering, for students or teachers. There appears to be one program to focus on engineering, nothing specifically noted on technology. Expanding "outreach programs to minorities and female students" is not the same as addressing the needs of of underrepresented groups and of women and girls in STEM, as requested in the criterion. Other than these omissions, the balance of the State's STEM plan is strong and full of strategies and programs that will increase subject rigor as well as prepare more students for STEM careers.

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)

South Carolina has developed a comprehensive, overall high quality plan for this RTTT proposal application. It builds on previous and existing improvements and reforms and really appears to have broad-based stakeholder support which is vital to its successful execution. Details of the plan 1) show considerable thought and long-term planning, and, 2) provide a clear roadmap for implementing reforms in the four ARRA areas and beyond. If this proposal is funded, South Carolina will have the opportunity to move the state to a level of prominence in school reform nationally, and more importantly, change the lives of all South Carolinians for the better for decades to come.

Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)

The South Carolina team conducted a good presentation on their RTTT reform plan. While a few questions regarding "on the ground" professional development for teachers still remains as well as the issue of achievement gaps actually increasing rather than decreasing, overall, their plan is sound and will move the state forward towards its goals.

Total		0	0	

Grand Total	500	436	441	

Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2

South Carolina Application #4200SC-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**	**65**	**65**	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	45	45	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	15	15	

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

A 1 i

Because of prior supportive legislation, the building of a strong infrastructure designed to foster accountability, a clear understanding of the elements required to successfully educate students and that all the elements must be effectively integrated, South Carolina has crafted an exceptionally comprehensive and coherent reform agenda to improve student achievement that aligns well with ARRA areas. It is also strengthened by several collaborations of supportive stakeholders.

A 1 ii

South Carolina's LEAs are strongly committed to their state's plan as every one of them accepted the terms and conditions of the state's MOU that is very similar to the USDOE's. Further, 100% of LEA superintendents and board presidents signed an MOU and agreed to implement every portion of the plan. Since there are no teachers' unions in the state, several districts obtained signatures from local School Improvement Councils to demonstrate teacher support.

A 1 iii

All of South Carolina's LEAs agreed to participate - meaning that 100% of the districts, schools and students in poverty will be participating. In addition, there are several state-level systems that are supportive. The state has set a goal of increasing student achievement in grade 4 by 10 percentage points over the four-year period of the grant. This goal will be met by:

- improving teacher and principal effectiveness through better evaluations that will include student growth factors;
- increasing math, science and special education teaching forces;
- adopting more rigorous curricula and assessments; and
- investing in early learning initiatives including loan forgiveness for teachers who obtain Montessori credentials.

South Carolina also plans to cut its achievement gaps for poor and minority students in half by 2019 - reducing the gap by two percentage points per year, an ambitious goal given the long-entrenched gap yet a reasonable one. Similar goals have been set for other sub groups. Steps to close the gap include: School Achievement Pilots to target language deficiencies, increasing STEM subjects and teachers' content knowledge of them; an initiative to identify seventh graders who need help in STEM subjects and providing them intensive yearlong and summer intervention until graduation; relying on an enhanced curriculum

management system to identify at-risk students' needs and then identifying and making available programs that proved successful with students having similar characteristics.

South Carolina reasons that since it is one of only six states to require 24 credits plus passage of an exit exam for graduation, improving its graduation rate may be more challenging for them than for some other states. Nevertheless, the state has carefully analyzed its record, projected reasonable goals to increase its graduation rate and presented some feasible ways to reach them by targeting the ARRA reform areas. Included in the efforts will be competitive sub grants for participation in a drop-out prevention program, Jobs for America's Graduates for schools with less than 60% graduation rate as well as identifying those schools as persistently lowest-achieving schools.

South Carolina was above the national average in college completion in 2005 even with large increases in subgroups attending post secondary institutions. (Many subgroups have traditionally finished college at a lower rate than the general population.) It plans to improve its data system to track relevant indicators so that it can set sensible specific targets for increased college enrollment. In the meantime, it will make sure that every high school offers at least three of 16 national career clusters, have all students complete a career assessment during middle or high school and insure a student-to-guidance ratio of 300: I or less. Most notably, the state is setting up a course alignment project (SC CAP), the nation's first effort to align exit-level high school courses with entry-level college courses. It is also making a variety of interactive Virtual Job Shadowing modules available 24/7 online for students to gain an understanding of available career options.

(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)

A 2 i

South Carolina has presented rich evidence that it will be able to carry out and sustain its proposed plans. It has set up an elaborate network to ascertain what will be needed and then to provide, evaluate and improve the identified services - all with especially three goals in mind: building local capacity, expending funds in a fiscally responsible manner and determining what works and implementing that. In so doing, it will:

- establish a broad-based, state-level advisory team;
- use a combination of existing, experienced staff and new skilled personnel;
- use the state's procurement processes to monitor progress and manage contracts;
- use a new Regional Support System with regional facilitators set up as a result of a 2007 review showing state-level support services for LEAs were not coordinated or focused;
- hold appropriate state department staff accountable for improvements;
- use its uniform statewide evaluation system for teachers and principals (one of the few states to have one) to identify effective educators and incorporate a value-added component for assessing teacher and principal effectiveness;
- rely on its South Carolina Longitudinal Information Center for Education to improve and expand use of analyzed data (including the use of it to tie teacher and principal performance to preparation programs), as it believes strongly that without quality data, informed decisions are not possible (South Carolina was one of 20 IES grant recipients selected for design and implementation of a statewide longitudinal data system.);
- launch a comprehensive professional development concept;
- administer the grant in a fiscally responsible manner as it has administered over 1$ billion in grant funds this past year and received favorable audit reports. It will also do so in a cost-effective manner - determining the total plan to cost $237 per student;

- focus upon creating infrastructure, building local capacity and creating expert systems and knowledge, that combined with other funds, e.g.,Title 1, E2T2 grants and state technical assistance, will result in having sufficient resources to carry out the State's plan, meet its targets and with re-purposed state dollars, sustain successful reforms after the RTT period of funding has ended; and
- weave all the above together in a coherent, constantly improving cycle.

A 2 ii.

South Carolina, drawing upon a huge study done in 2005 that involved a broad base of 800 stakeholders in 106 sessions at 16 sites plus a follow-up survey, demonstrates how this feedback shaped the reform initiatives included in its plan. Reform initiatives continue to draw upon various stakeholder groups. South Carolina does not have teachers' unions, but support letters from individual teachers and groups with teacher representation were included. Also strong support of influential policy makers and citizens is evident. The combination of stakeholders supports implementation of the State's plan. Still it should be noted that there seems to be a paucity of evidence that teachers and principals, by and large, enthusiastically endorse the plan so high, but not full points are awarded.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	**30**	**10**	**10**	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	3	3	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	7	7	

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

A 3 i

Using ESEA and School Improvement funds, and funding from Transition to Teaching and Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems grants, South Carolina points with pride to many achievements and standings. But given that it is more difficult to show improvement if already doing well, evidence that the state has shown *improvement* in all *four* ARRA areas seems to be lacking. It has definitely improved its data system that it believes all else hinges on and it provides ample evidence that its academic standards and assessments rank high. Also, the state has received impressive accolades for developing teachers and it does have a center that includes recruitment, but no results of its efforts were presented. The evidence of progress in recruiting and rewarding teachers and principals and successfully turning around lowest achieving schools was sparse. Medium points were awarded.

A 3 ii

South Carolina can cite some impressive accolades for gains in student achievement. According to its narrative, 8th graders have the nation's top improvement rate on the NAEP math assessment and 4th graders, the top improvement rate in science. In 2008, Education Trust found that South Carolina tied for second place in overall scale score gains in Grade 8 mathematics from 2000 to 2007. On statewide assessments, the percentage of students scoring basic or above in math in grades 3-8 increased by an average of 22 points since 1999; in language arts, 13 points. Education Trust also reported that South Carolina, with a 20-point gain, ranked first in the movement out of Below Basic for low -income students (the national average gain was 12) and third in scale score gains on Grade 8 math for low-income students. In addition, South Carolina was one of the top eight states in Grade 8 math and one of the top four states in Grade 4 math in movement out of Below Basic for African American students. All of these accolades not withstanding, the charts and graphs showing actual progress or lack thereof for all the state's students and for the sub groups in the appendix give a different perspective. For example, scores on the NAEP 4^{th-} and 8^{th-} grade assessments in reading have been flat since 2003 for both black and white students and the gap has barely closed; on ESEA assessments for 4th-grade language arts, the scores for white students have fluctuated, for blacks and students with disabilities, the scores have actually declined and the gap has not closed, increasing for the last year given. For 4th-grade math, ESEA scores for students with disabilities declined as they did for both black and white students and the gap did not

decrease. For 8th-grade math, the scores for black and white and the gap fluctuated and scores declined for students with disabilities. The gaps are particularly worrisome for this state, given the high percentage of black students. In addition, the appendix candidly shows South Carolina ranking 49th in the states in at/above proficient in 4th-grade math, 36th in 8th-grade math, 25th in 4th-grade reading and 23rd in 8th-grade reading – below the national average in all. The narrative cites various related laudable initiatives, but the evidence calls for proof of actual progress and the actual progress appears to be poor.

In regard to graduation rates, the narrative reports South Carolina had the highest percentage increase in graduation rates of any state between 1996 and 2006, that its on-time graduation rate increased from 53.2% to 66.3% and that it was one of only three states to register double-digit gains in graduation rates even though the appendix shows performance on the high school math and language arts exams remaining relatively the same. Perhaps the gains in graduation rate can be attributed to South Carolina's establishing credit acquisition through competency and content mastery rather than through seat time and making available equitable access to Advanced Placement courses and SAT preparation to all the state's students. Also, South Carolina's emphasis on dropout prevention resulted in its drop out rate declining from 4% to 3.4% from 2005 to 2009. Only low points could be awarded – those for graduation rates.

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)

i.

South Carolina provides detailed evidence of its participation in a 48-member consortium that meets all the requirements.

ii.

The State describes its process for adoption and presents a timeline demonstrating that it will adopt the common set of standards prior to the August 2, 1010 deadline.

(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)

South Carolina is involved with two consortia to develop and implement common assessments that will include formative and summative components and interim/benchmark assessments: SMARTER that is comprised of 33 states and PARCC that includes 27 states.

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

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

B 3

South Carolina's history of developing and rolling out new standards every 7 years since 1998 has prepared them to transition to the new called-for standards. Their efforts this time will be more directed to bringing about transformational changes in teacher classroom practices and improvements in student growth. The plan for implementing the Common Core State Standards includes:

- Setting up a transition team;
- Developing a communications plan;
- Aligning current standards that are only minimally different from CCSS;
- Developing instructional materials and resources including some that will also engage students outside the classroom;
- Providing professional development in partnership with LEAs;
- Establishing a rubric methodology to examine *how* the program is being implemented in addition to what the outcomes are so that the implementation process can be adjusted as needed and effective policy decisions can be made; and
- Several additional initiatives.

Particular attention will be paid to transitioning the state's longitudinal data system and enhanced curriculum management system with special attention paid to adopting assessments tied to CCSS. South Carolina will participate in international studies (TIMMS) on a regular basis.

Throughout, LEA and broad stakeholder involvement are emphasized.

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)

South Carolina has met all 12 of America COMPETES Act Requirements although there is some lack of clarity about Element 7. The appendix did not specifically state that teacher and student identifiers could be linked.

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

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

South Carolina has maintained a state-wide student information system since 1985-86. Building upon that experience and with an additional $15 million granted by the education department, the state is putting into place a data system that will not only be accessible to a broad range of stakeholders, but also will provide them with an amazing amount of information on which to base myriad decisions involved in educating students. Outstanding features of this system are that it will be governed collaboratively by a Data Governance Committee made up of the entire gambit of users from students to the business community and that the data will be shared across agencies' disparate databases.

(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.

South Carolina's data system will be quite robust, enabling teachers to identify at-risk students and to determine the specific needs of individual students. It will further enable them to identify other students who had similar needs and learn what methods their teachers used to improve their achievement to the extent that they could pass state assessments. Principals will be able to better determine professional development needs based on more discernable and detailed teacher results and superintendents will have access to better information on the progress of a district's schools and able to make decisions about equitable distribution of educators.

ii.

The State has built an application, e-Portfolio, to measure student and teacher technology proficiencies. It will be adapted to manage and report educator professional development opportunities, objectives, participation, completion and mastery of skills and strategies. Professional development will be delivered by the Regional Support System in face-to-face settings and online in text, audio and/or video formats. It will be provided to Department, district and school personnel, partners and stakeholders and focused on seven areas: acquisition, awareness, access, analysis, application, assessment and advancement. Stakeholders will include not just educators but community members, policy makers, researchers and others. While full points are being awarded, more detail about the responsibility for the implementation of e-Portfolio would have strengthened the proposal.

iii

Researchers will not only gain access to student-level, educator-level and program-level data to evaluate and research the effectiveness of educational strategies and programs based on student performance and other factors but also will receive training in the use of the researcher interface.

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

South Carolina has provisions for alternative routes to certification for both teachers and principals that include the elements required, albeit not all five elements for all of both categories. For example, South Carolina has alternative certification for teachers, but only for grades 7-12. It allows for providers outside of Institutions of Higher Learning, but permanent certificates are awarded only by IHLs. It allows an

alternative route for principals, but only for teachers who have had to be credentialed in the traditional manner. It had out-of-field permits for administrators in 1970, passed its first legislation recognizing alternative certification for teachers in 1984 and has had subsequent legislation supporting alternative routes for principals and superintendents. Medium points are awarded.

ii.
The following alternative routes are in place:
•The PACE program limits certification to middle and high school teachers (with the exception of specials who can be certified for all levels) and candidates must gain employment before being admitted to the program. Seasoned classroom teachers are permitted to instruct classes for these program applicants - similar to adjunct professors. Last year, 264 teachers completed PACE vs. 3,677 who were prepared through traditional routes. Altogether, since 2,000, 16,000 have applied but only one-fourth of them received a professional certification. In the content areas permitted in PACE, the percentage of LEA new hires ranges from 0 -12%. The 3-year retention rate for these teachers is 74% vs. 72.5% for traditionally certified hires.
•The ABCTE program allows individuals who pass the ABCTE to become teachers of mathematics, science or English and has produced 50 teachers.
•An adjunct teacher certification is available for Montessori teachers, but it does not lead to a permanent credential.
•The principal alternative certification is open only to current teachers, certifying 30 principals last year vs. 203 certified through traditional routes.
•Superintendent certification can be offered to professionals outside education who hold masters' degrees, have 10 years successful experience in a senior position and the recommendation of a local school board. Even then, only a one-year certificate is renewable for only three years and the candidate must complete a specified program of study (determined by a gap analysis of his skills and knowledge) to receive professional certification. Since 2003, two individuals have taken this route.

iii

Several methods are used to monitor, identify and evaluate areas of shortage, but it seems mainly or only for teachers. Principals are not addressed. Also, this reviewer could not find any evidence of how the State plans to fill areas of shortage. The criterion was not fully met.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	**58**	**50**	**54**	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	3	3	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	9	13	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	10	10	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	28	28	

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

D 2 i

South Carolina plans to determine student growth by comparing each student's current test data to his or her scores on previous standardized assessments. The state also plans project-based learning assessments at two or more points in time for grades and subjects that are not tested by standardized measures. It was not clear how long the span between tests would be, i.e., from fall to spring to measure a year's growth or from spring to spring or from 1st grade to higher grade levels or if a student's growth would

be tracked throughout his or her school career. More detail about what is proposed would have been helpful. Collaboration with LEAs seems to be lacking here. Medium points were awarded.

ii

South Carolina is in the process of defining an evaluation system for its teachers and principals that meets all RTT criteria except one: it is not differentiating effectiveness with multiple ratings. Also, it is not clear that the system will be implemented before the RTT grant runs out. For these reasons, medium points were awarded. The system is being designed and developed with teacher and principal involvement. Improvements in the system that should be noted though are that principals will be evaluated on student growth overall and *for each subgroup* whereas not one of the 9 standards in the current PADEPP Program specifically calls for measuring performance based simply on student achievement. Also principals will be evaluated annually rather than every three years which is currently the case.

iii

South Carolina is adding a student growth component to both teacher and principal evaluations, providing timely and constructive feedback and making evaluations annual ones for both. Worth noting is that there will be two different kinds of goals-based teacher evaluations: one to target specific performance weaknesses that the principal has noted and another for successful teachers to engage in action research.

iv

South Carolina has presented a very thorough plan for LEAs to use teacher and principal evaluations to inform all key decisions pertaining to their professional careers including their development, retention, promotion and removal. The evaluations will inform decisions on movement from initial to professional certification and from an annual to a continuing contract. It will also make and maintain a permanent, longitudinal record of each principal's performance. South Carolina does not grant teacher tenure per se and principal contracts are issued on a one-year basis only.

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

South Carolina clarified in its presentation that it will have its evaluation system in place for all teachers before the RTT grant runs out with the exception of those for whom the PBLAs had not yet been established.

(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

Aware that some challenged schools, especially those in rural areas, were having a difficult time finding and keeping effective teachers and leaders, the State Superintendent commissioned The Task Force on 21st Century Teaching and Learning. Informed by this task force that included education stakeholders and lessons learned from its TAP program plus its extensive data accumulation (that can report statistics needed to determine the extent and location of problem areas, the capability to address them and any gap that needs to be filled), South Carolina devised a high-quality, ambitious plan to ensure equitable distribution of teachers and principals in hard-to-staff schools. It has these features:

•creative ways to make available housing an enticement;
•web sites for rural areas accessible only to certified teachers who can feel isolated (currently has 326

users in 32 neighborhoods);
•a School Transformation Leaders Academy to recruit, develop and support the kind of principal needed in these schools;
•site-based, research-based professional development targeted to this specific personnel; and
•differentiated compensation opportunities and loan forgiveness programs.

A detailed timeline is included that shows the plan is achievable.

D 3 ii

Much of the above will also help the State reach its ambitious, but achievable targets to increase the number and percentage of effective teachers for hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas. In addition to the above, the State will:

- rely on a project that underwrites course tuition and textbook costs;
- expand distance-learning delivery allowing for cost-free course work;
- award additional scholarships to high-school seniors, career changers, teaching assistants and currently employed teachers;
- establish U-TEACH sites at two institutions to prepare math and science teachers;
- rely on its International Visiting Teachers Program that has provided 254 highly qualified teachers in math, science and special education, the National Science Foundation's grants to encourage talented STEM majors and professionals to enter the teaching force; its Teacher Cadet and Making Middle Grades Work programs; and
- fully integrate CERRA into its Regional Support System.

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	**14**	**9**	**9**	
(i) Linking student data to credentialing programs and reporting publicly	7	7	7	
(ii) Expanding effective programs	7	2	2	

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

D4 1

South Carolina has a very high-quality plan for improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs for the following reasons:

- It will link student performance to the teacher and principal preparation programs.
- The results will be disaggregated by the ADEPT teacher performance standards and each of the principal evaluation standards for the 11 leadership preparation programs.
- The Department will publish the evaluation scores of the institutions annually.
- The programs are required to analyze the data and use it for their preparation, evaluation and assistance processes.
- The state board will evaluate the programs based on teacher performance data and indicate which programs are low-performing or at-risk.
- Stakeholders from the South Carolina Education Deans Association will be convened to discuss the results of the data collected and address all the challenges regarding teacher and principal preparation, shortages, accountability and transformation of educator preparation.
- The pilot program involving Clemson University and 15 Leas' analyzing value-added data in relation to certification areas and courses taken will be scaled up to all preparation programs.

D4 ii

While it is emphasized that ineffective preparation programs will be eliminated and replication of successful programs will be encouraged, there is no mention of any plans to expand credentialing options and programs for teachers and principals. Low points are awarded.

(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)

D 5 i

South Carolina will build on its existing Communities Advancing Professional Practices (CAPPs) at all levels – building, LEA, state – to connect educators and learn from one another. CAPPS may focus on individual problems or systemic ones. The State will use its Regional Response Teams to leverage the CAPPS so that local capacity necessary to implement and sustain improvements can be built. Its data system will inform the identification of needs and the resources available to meet them. It will improve its current online listings of professional development to create a Professional Practices Network that will, along with other information, make clear what is available and when and which practices supported – or failed to support – student learning. The state's plan clearly identifies what steps are necessary to provide effective professional development for teachers and principals and how it will take them.

D 5 ii

South Carolina has five programs in place that will be able to continuously collect, analyze and share copious information on its educator support systems, enabling effective evaluations of its programs.

Total	138	119	123	

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	**10**	**5**	**10**	[redacted]

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

E. 1

South Carolina has the authority to directly intervene with only low-performing schools, not LEAs.

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

South Carolina clarified in its presentation that the State does have the authority to intervene in both low-performing schools and LEA's and thus is entitled to full points,

(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

South Carolina has clearly defined a logical methodology for determining which of its schools are persistently low-performing. It has identified 28 Persistently Low-Performing Schools (PLAS) – 15 Tier I schools and 13 Tier II schools.

E. 2 ii

South Carolina has a high-quality plan to support its LEAs in turning around persistently lowest-scoring schools with ambitious yet achievable annual targets. It is an elaborate one with pages of details of the support, training and technical assistance that will be provided by the Department, its partners and competitively selected vendors. Which of the four turnaround models selected will be decided based on the needs of the individual school and schools will not be compared. The state's plan was informed by its considerable experiences in turnaround efforts. Results and lessons learned from its LEA Takeovers, Palmetto Priority Schools Initiative, the Turnaround Schools Project and 9+ Schools Project were included. Results for all of the interventions were positive, some great, some minimally so and some fleeting. Two examples of increased support for the LEAs: the Department is housing a newly created Turnaround Team in the Federal and State Accountability Office that will work with the Regional Support Systems; six Regional Turnaround Specialists will be housed and work in a variety of ways with LEAs within each region of the state. These support personnel will be measured by the progress of participating schools in their zone as will the staff at the state's Turnaround Office. A detailed timeline and performance measures were included.

Total	50	45	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)

i.

The percentage of state funding to education did increase and to LEAs by 7%.

ii.

South Carolina demonstrated that it equitably distributes funds to its LEA's and that most of its funding goes to schools with concentrations of children living in poverty as more than half its children do. In addition to a funding formula that equitably distributes funds:

- the state supplies all LEAs with buses - over 5700 of them - equally providing additional support of $70 million a year;

- the state created a minimum salary for all teachers regardless of where they teach and there is not a wide range of salaries as in other states;
- the ARRA-qualified construction bonds are equalized in that 60% of bond authorization is distributed based on districts with the lowest financing resources; and
- the programmatic needs of children, regardless of what school they attend, are weighted and these funds are distributed accordingly, monitored and subject to annual external audit.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	**40**	**35**	**35**	
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	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	3	3	
(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 no limits on the number or type of or enrollments in its 37 charter schools of which five are virtual with 12 more authorized so it meets that part of the RTT criterion. But whether or not it is some way restricts charter school enrollment is difficult to ascertain given that in two out of the five years documented hardly any applications submitted were approved. Also, even after having a 65% increase in 2008-2009- its biggest - it currently enrolls just 12,000 students, less than 2% of its student population. The State has taken several key steps to support charter schools such as having a statewide authorizer and providing technical assistance once authorized so it will be given "the benefit of the doubt."

F 2 ii

The State thoroughly governs all aspects of charter schools including requiring student achievement to be a significant factor in authorizing them (22.5% of charter schools met AYP vs. 19.5% of traditional public schools. Each charter plan must ensure that the enrollment of the school is similar to the racial composition of the local school district in which the charter school is located, according to South Carolina law. In the last five years, there were 50 charter school applications and 27 were authorized to open. The State has a strong record of closing or not renewing ineffective charter schools. In ten years, the state has closed 17.

F 2 iii

While the State's method of funding depends on the type of LEA sponsor – local or the statewide – the funding is equitable compared to traditional public schools and charters receive a commensurate share of revenues.

F 2 iv

The State provides no funds for charter school facilities to offset their lack of ability to pass bond issues, but it does keep a facilities inventory and makes buildings available to charters plus it is less restrictive with them in regard to facilities regulations. With those supports in mind, medium points were awarded.

F 2 v

The State has included numerous excerpts from its legal infrastructure wording to demonstrate that it enables its LEAs to operate schools other than charters that can be autonomous. It gives several examples of flexible, innovative magnet schools, middle/early colleges, Montessori programs, single gender

programs and natural resource schools that the State supports the development of. Also, 31 LEAs offer open enrollment.

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

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

F 3

South Carolina amply demonstrates that it has fostered other significant reform conditions not previously mentioned. Just a few examples: 1) Funding full-day kindergarten for 10 years; 2) Expanding funding to 23,000 at-risk four-year olds;Several initiatives to improve student nutrition and health including a free dental clinic in the state's poorest county; 3)The State Superintendent holding town hall meetings throughout the state; 4) Setting up a private foundation that allows private citizens to make donations directly to classrooms; 5) Providing a voluntary curriculum to high-poverty districts that do not have the resources to develop their own; and 5) Developing and administering a web-based assessment to measure students music, visual arts, dance and theater achievement and to objectively evaluate schools' arts programs.

Because of these efforts and many others, South Carolina has shown some improvements including gains in the percentage of students scoring basic or above on statewide assessments, a 28-point gain in SAT scores (leading the nation), a 13.1% increase in on-time graduation rates (the nation's best improvement) and has received numerous national awards for outstanding progress in several other areas such as hiring and evaluating school staff and removing ineffective teachers.

Total	55	50	50	

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

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

Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Stem Priority

Given the State's use of and need for scientific and technical services and its history of National Science Foundation support, South Carolina is both strongly motivated and well-positioned to meet the STEM priority. Throughout the application, it emphasizes STEM opportunities in operation and being planned in collaboration with a broad range of organizations and a recapitulation of them is provided. A basic problem was uncovered through data analysis of test results showing that students spend so much time reading narratives that they do not know how to read informational text. That problem is being tackled by providing professional development for teachers in summer academies to improve their skills in teaching students how to read such text and in supplying informational reading materials to high-poverty schools. Thus a root cause of lack of student interest and achievement in scientific and technical course work is being addressed. Other examples of STEM's being a priority include the Governor's School for Science and Mathematics – in existence since 1988 – and a planned seamless P-16 STEM Pathway for a GreenSTEM curriculum. The narrative explains how the State is providing rigorous STEM courses, cooperating with wide-variety of STEM-capable partners and taking steps to prepare more students for STEM advanced study and careers thereby fully meeting this criterion.

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)

Absolute Priority

Necessity being the mother of invention, the large percentage of high-poverty and high-minority children in the state has presented South Carolina with strong challenges to improve student achievement and it has been and is responding with Herculean efforts. It has been innovative in the past and continues to identify, analyze and support reasoned and well-planned initiatives. It is difficult to imagine what else could be offered with the possible exceptions of more opportunities for community involvement and practitioner input. Recognizing that the talented and well-qualified department staff members have helpful local educator backgrounds, there is still a nagging sense that the plan is coming from the top down. Nevertheless, South Carolina's plan is indeed thorough with many outstanding elements; it aligns well with the RTT reform areas and comprehensively and coherently addresses all four of them cutting across the entire application so thereby the application meets this priority.

Total		0	0	

Grand Total	500	450	459	

Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2

South Carolina Application #4200SC-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**	**65**	**65**	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	45	45	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	15	15	

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

(i) The SC plan makes abundantly clear that the state is driven by a succinct vision (the weft) and a carefully articulated reform agenda (warp) woven together by activities, outputs, measures, and long-term impacts. Appendix A1C provides a detailed logic model that links all the pieces together. This section, throughout the text, makes specific reference to both the vision (having all students by 2020 graduate from high school ready for college and careers leading to quality citizenship) and specific components of the reform areas. While the state has already made significant progress, the reader is left with the clear impression that much needs to be done and that education will be the primary driver for intellectual, economic, and civic improvement.

(ii) All 88 districts across the state have signed the MOU, potentially touching all 738,000 students. There are no conditional statements in the application. The MOU goes into great detail, listing some 68 tasks or sub-tasks, that will obligate local educators to significant reform and hopefully improve learning outcomes. Those expectations appear to be ambitious but doable, given the indicated will of all the partners.

(iii) Several features of the plan increase the possibility that the work will have a lasting impact across the entire state:

- all the LEAs are involved with all the activities
- the state is promising a more responsive (based on local input) regional support system to help provide technical assistance and support
- the LEAs are expected to integrate their efforts from other federal funding sources (e.g., state fiscal stabilization funds) to be focused around the four reform areas
- the state is committed to synthesize all research/evaluation activities and associated lessons learned, along with coordinating the work of the various collaborative partners.

This section goes on to clearly articulate reasonable achievement goals (increasing achievement, reducing gaps, and enhancing graduation rates along with college enrollment. All of those not only promise bold gains, but also directly point to the actions within each of the reform goals that will most directly be responsible for those gains.

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	**30**	**24**	**26**	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	16	18	

(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	8	8	

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

(i) The text and accompanying budgets identify a number of new staff, as well as consultants, who will be hired to ensure that the plan is carried out. One consulting contract will specifically be designed to create rubrics to measure whether all the programs are being implemented with fidelity. As noted above, the plan also calls for six new regional support system teams to help local educators implement and institutionalize these changes. It appears that the state will work with their current organizational structure, but to ensure that the existing culture is compatible with the one encouraged by RTTT activities, appropriate state staff evaluations will be based on their ability to be helpful to schools and LEAs. But the fundamental fact is that the structure will remain unchanged and that a new vision will be enough to change the existing culture. Points were deducted because there is ample management research documenting that leaving current structures in place makes it difficult to significantly change the professional culture. The description of the regional support system calls for a broad list of goals regarding what they expect LEAs to do differently (e.g., LEAs doing sustainable planning and carrying out a culture of data use), but is short on how they might move LEAs to actually behave differently. This is largely a function of the acknowledgement that the system must await local needs assessment (e.g, using SLICE). By way of example, one important piece of the stated reform agenda is the need to share best practices, but no tools or strategies are offered for making that happen.

(ii) The SC RTTT proposal text and appendices make clear that the state has reached out to a broad range of stakeholders, beginning with a model effort in 2005 by the Riley Institute (whose survey was updated for this proposal in May 2010), and has continued with a range of documented forums across the state. The text describes how partners/stakeholders will collaborate in each of the four reform areas. The voluminous appendices add further evidence of the broad-based support. While many of those letters cite the specifics of the state's reform agenda, adding detailed support for those agenda items, both letters from educators' professional associations offered no such support for activities related to their evaluation, compensation, or removal.

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

During the presentation the state team provided evidence that the state has been working on changing the professional culture and that it will be a continuing focus, including staff accountability for LEA success, during the duration of the RTTT grant plan. Points were added to reflect that focus.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	**30**	**16**	**16**	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	4	4	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	12	12	

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

(i) SCDE offers a detailed set of activities already undertaken to tackle issues in each of the four ARRA reform areas, with particular emphasis on collaboration with other partners. By way of example, SCDE has worked with South Carolina's Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement to better recruit, retain, and support the state's educators. The application also cites evidence from outside rating agencies (e.g., the state is ranked third in the nation in the number of teachers certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards) that the state has been making progress across three of the four reform areas.

(ii) The SC text provides a brief, but incomplete summary of recent growth in achievement, closing the gap, and high school graduation rates. It is incomplete because none of the three areas is substantiated by longitudinal data displays for the full complement of indicators within the text of the application. This is remedied by an Appendix (A1G), but those data provide evidence that is somewhat contradictory to the text (e.g., fourth grade reading and math scores are largely unchanged between 2002 and 2007 for reading and 2003 and 2009 for math). With respect to the gap data, the text only relies on a third party report (i.e.,

Education Trust), rather than presenting any of its own analyses. Appendix A1G also provides gap data that appears to show little change. With respect to high school data (graduation and college attendance rates) the text focuses more on describing the actions taken (e.g., ramping up guidance and career counseling, as well as dropout prevention) rather than any data trends to verify the actions have worked or not worked. Thus, the score for this section only received "medium" points.

Total	125	105	107	

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 SC RTTT proposal documents the state's involvement (Appendix B1A MOA) in the CCSSO/NGA CCSS which represents a collaboration of 48 states. Through the text and appendices the proposal also makes clear that the state has been an active participant, carefully studying the consortium's work and making recommendations about the alignment of these standards with current state standards. In addition, the plan proposes to use these consortium driven standards as a starting point for the state applying to become a 21st Century Skills Leadership State.

(ii) The SC plan outlines a formal process for adopting the CCSS standards (see Appendix B1F). Further, the state plan presents a timeline for the eventual adoption with most of the steps already completed and final adoption expected by July 14.

(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) The RTTT proposal makes clear that the state is serious about building appropriate, high-quality assessments linked to high-quality standards. As evidence, Appendix B2B describes a range of grants the state has successfully applied for to enhance assessments (e.g. biology end of course, new assessments of science inquiry skills, assessments for diverse learners).

(ii) SC documents that it is a member of two different assessment consortia (MOA in Appendix B2A), both involving a majority of the nation's states -- SMARTER Balance and PARC.

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

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

The plan outlines a set of clear, detailed, and expansive activities that are designed to help LEAs cope with the new standards and assessments. These activities sensibly derive from the state's past standards efforts. They include such important features as professional development, materials/resources, rubrics,

alignment with current standards, stakeholder engagement, support systems, curriculum initiatives, data and management systems, as well as interim and formative assessments, to name just a few. Detracting from the full value of these supportive activities are three features of the proposal: (a) some of the activities appear to have limited connection to high-quality standards and assessments (e.g., decreasing dropouts and Montessori preschools), (b) the time lag for activities at the LEA level will put on hold implementation until latter years of the grant, and (c) the budget presentation makes it hard to link funding to activities. For example, while the text suggests that professional development is central to teachers being able to use the new standards and assessments in a meaningful way, the two detailed budgets for area B (projects B.1 and B.2) allocate most of the money to competitive supplemental bids for LEAs to implement new programs and for contracts to consultants to develop programs, rather than for investments in learning time for teachers and principals to use these standards and assessments.

Total	70	66	66	

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	**24**	**22**	**22**	

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

The SCDE stipulates that their longitudinal data system, SLICE, meets all 12 elements of the America COMPETES Act. An Appendix (C1A) offers further explanation for each of the 12 elements. Element eight specifies that unique teacher identifiers be linked to students. The description in the appendix notes existence of the teacher identifier but no documentation is offered that these can be linked to students.

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

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

The SC plan notes that a May 2010 federal grant for $14.9 million will be used to expand and enhance SLICE, independent of RTTT funding. Three goals will drive this initiative and ensure that both access to and use of SLICE data will be expanded throughout the state. First, a collaborative governance structure will be developed with a committee representative of the broad range of stakeholders who both contributed to and have an interest in using the data. Second, efforts will be undertaken to integrate, expand, facilitate, and create data exchanges. And, third, the state will create intuitive interfaces, along with training to make sure the stakeholders can easily access and use SLICE data.

(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	**18**	**14**	**14**	
(i) Increasing the use of instructional improvement systems	6	4	4	
(ii) Supporting LEAs, schools, and teachers in using instructional improvement systems	6	5	5	
(iii) Making the data from instructional improvement systems available to researchers	6	5	5	

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

(i) The evaluation criterion calls for local instructional improvement systems. But the SC plan instead makes use of what appears to be a single system, referred to as the curriculum management system (details in Appendix C3A). The SC plan outlines an intriguing idea that is grounded in the Netflix concept, which will allow teachers, rather than searching a huge database of curriculum and instruction resources, to input and/or call up key data on individual students or subgroups, as well as teacher resources, and the

system will use that information (much like Netflix uses information about the individual movie goer's tastes) to provide a set of student intervention ideas, as well as networking options for the teacher. The concept has real merit, but as with any new technology the challenge will be in ensuring consistency across LEAs when implementing all the required components. For example, several potential challenges to the credibility of the plan include: (a) ensuring that all teachers have equitable access to the technology, (b) ensuring that all teachers have time to use the technology (notwithstanding the claim that the system will "give teachers the time to teach"), (c) ensuring that the computer-based resources fully take into consideration all the contextualized needs of students in a way that the proposed computer-based intervention can be truly meaningful (will it ever be "properly populated with data?"), and (d) ensuring that this system will not negatively impact the professionalism of teachers when their job is largely defined by a computer-generated list of pedagogical tools.

(ii) The professional development and training plan for helping teachers use the curriculum management system will rely on staff from the regional support system, who have more direct contact and thus better understanding of educators in LEAs than the SCDE. Their support work will be guided by an intuitively sensible model of data competence being adopted by the state (the 7As - acquisition, awareness, access, analysis, application, assessment, and advancement). If implemented with fidelity, these should provide the sound foundation for expanded use of the data by teachers. However, the capacity to deliver through the regional support system, given all their other responsibilities, appears to be a challenge.

(iii) Researchers are recognized in the plan as an important player in providing data to help inform and improve policy and practice. Appropriate guidelines are proposed to control access and ensure anonymity. No details are offered for how to put the knowledge generated by participating researchers into the hands of either policymakers or practitioners.

Total	47	41	41	

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	**21**	**12**	**12**	
(i) Allowing alternative routes to certification	7	4	4	
(ii) Using alternative routes to certification	7	3	3	
(iii) Preparing teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage	7	5	5	

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

(i and ii) The state already has two alternative routes for teachers -- PACE (Appendix D1C), a SCDE-run program that certifies about 10% of new teachers, and a newer but growing test-out option (ABCTE - Appendix D1E). PACE appears to meet at least 4 of the 5 proposal evaluation criteria. However, the plan must also demonstrate alternative routes for principals. This reviewer did not see any such plans, but rather read of one "in the planning stages." There is an alternative for teachers who want to earn principal credentials, but all it does is grant temporary certification while a teacher works toward certification in a traditional program. This does not appear to meet the spirit of a true alternative.

(iii) The state already has in place, and prepares to expand this program, a collaborative effort with the Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA). Appendix D1M documents areas of need. The state also has a SC Dean's Alliance, which is a way to collaborate with higher education to ensure that the teacher and principal training institutions are in tune with the issues and needs

of educator training, as perceived by SCDE, but the plan lacks specificity regarding how they will prepare teachers and principals once the needs are documented.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	**58**	**40**	**51**	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	3	4	[redacted]
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	10	13	[redacted]
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	7	9	[redacted]
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	20	25	[redacted]

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

(i) The state has clear plans to explore a value-added assessment model, with a pilot (TAP) already in place in 43 schools. The plans call for having this in place for only about two-thirds of the participating districts by the end of the grant, thus blunting the full impact of such a design. The state also have plans to expand the growth model to formative and project-based assessments.

(ii) The state has a well-designed plan in place for teachers (ADEPT) that has involved teachers in its development, with four domains in the evaluation - planning, instruction, classroom environment, and professionalism (Appendix D2F). The formal performance evaluation plan does not include student growth (although it does include teacher use of student data). But the plan does call for an overall effectiveness rating that includes multiple value-added scores. Missing from the text is any specification of what proportion of the evaluation will be weighted by student performance indicators. A similar performance system is in place for principals (PADEPP) incorporating nine standards. Like the teacher system, this one will add a new dimension, student growth, but no weighting of that portion is specified. As with the student growth data, this evaluation system will only reach two-thirds of the participating LEAs.

(iii) The current teacher evaluation system is already implemented annually and the principal system every three years. The plan calls for moving the principal evaluation model to an annual cycle. Both plans will only impact approximately two-thirds of the participating LEAs by the end of the grant period.

(iv) Both evaluation systems have built in mentoring and professional development components (these are described in more detail in D5). There is a salary incentive plan proposed for teachers, based on effectiveness (SITE - see D3). Most of the discussion is for teachers. Both the teacher and principal evaluation systems are in transition with respect to granting full certification based on performance. There is a strong commitment in the proposal to make significant changes (e.g., designed a two-tiered system for principals). There is no tenure in the state (a right-to-work state) and both systems will use their proposed effectiveness ratings (which include student growth as part of the formula - for two-thirds of the LEAs by the end of the grant period) to inform dismissal. The specifics are still to be developed.

The state also provides plans for a fidelity of implementation/monitoring process to ensure the reliability and validity of the evaluation systems - a check to make sure they are working as intended.

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

D2i-iv: In the tier 1 scoring the point allocation for all four sections of this part of the plan were premised on the application reporting that only two-thirds of the LEAs would have fully functional data by the end of the grant period. During the question and answer portion of the presentation the state team clarified that the figure presented in the text was not LEAs but rather an estimate of the number of teachers who teach subjects that are currently not tested. This clarification means that the impact of this evaluation system has more utility than this reviewer originally ascribed to it. The state team went further by clarifying how the state plans to take a leadership role in working with other states to accelerate the inclusion of teachers in non-tests areas, while being realistic that full implementation may take longer than the four year funding cycle. Thus, scores for all four subsections were increased.

(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)

6i) The SC plan takes advantage of and draws heavily on a detailed task force report (Appendix D3A). There are four foci: (a) community infrastructure, (b) working conditions, (c) compensation (based on teacher performance), and (d) continuous improvement opportunities. The application spells out a thorough plan for addressing all four, from designing teacher housing projects, to low interest house loans and down payment assistance programs, to student loan forgiveness, to creating a performance-based salary schedule (Appendix D3C), more targeted professional development, and the creation of a virtual, professional neighborhood (TeacherVillage.com). Balancing the elaborate and innovative plans of equitable distribution of professional staff is the budgetary commitment to this section. The proposal calls for spending $30.6 million, about three-quarters of the total budget devoted to this reform area. The vast majority of that money is for supplemental money for LEAs -- so the budget will clearly go directly to local educators in these hard-to-staff schools.

(ii) Like the plans outlined in D3i, there is rich detail provided for a range of programs the state plans to implement to ensure that hard-to-staff subjects and speciality areas are equitably staffed. For example, a special program (Project CREATE - Appendix D3G) will be supported to offer tuition and text reimbursement for special education training, as well as the expansion of distance-learning courses to assist other educators in developing special education qualifications. The state also is proposing to work with local universities to establish two U-TEACH sites to grow the number of highly qualified math and science teachers. In addition, the state hopes to reward teachers with National Board Certification and begin recruiting highly qualified teachers beyond the nation's geographic borders.

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	**14**	**8**	**8**	
(i) Linking student data to credentialing programs and reporting publicly	7	4	4	
(ii) Expanding effective programs	7	4	4	

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

(i) The applicant notes that there is already underway a pilot program with one university and another soon joining forces to link student growth data to their respective credentialing programs (Project HEAT). The applicant also makes clear that 26 of the 31 teacher preparation programs support the RTTT plan and will presumably adopt something similar to Project HEAT, although the promise to only have two-thirds of the participating LEAs implementing the growth model by the end of the grant may limit the effectiveness of this plan. There is also a vague promise to also incorporate reports for all 11 principal credentialing programs, but little detail is offered regarding what that will look like and how the programs will be held accountable.

(ii) The SC RTTT application has a clear plan for using data to assess teacher and principal preparation programs. Nearly all of the text is focused on terminating the least effective programs. Only vague statements are offered about creating incentives to share the practices of more successful programs.

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	**20**	**15**	**15**	
(i) Providing effective support	10	8	8	

(ii) Continuously improving the effectiveness of the support	10	7	7	

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

(i) The SC plan is framed around the perspective that change cannot be externally imposed. Rather, it must be accomplished through collaboration that involves the belief that change is needed, agreement about what the changes should look like, and the resources and capacity to put it into place. The plan articulates a clear plan for the growth and expansion of professional learning communities (what the state calls CAPPs), using National Staff Development Council standards of professional development (Appendix D5A). The initial delivery of the content, process, and context setting will be by the Regional Response Teams within the Regional Support system. They will employ a train-the-trainer model, along with the development on an online professional practices network (part of SLICE) to help link local educators to best professional development practices. A reservation of this reviewer is that financial support for this important activity seems light ($1.8 million), there is no mention of common planning time to enable teachers to employ CAPP strategies, and the model assumes that all the locally trained educators will be able to effectively spread the CAPP skills and understandings effectively throughout their individual LEA systems.

(ii) The plan to improve the effectiveness of these supports relies heavily on measuring and evaluating LEA response to the professional development, coaching, and professional learning experiences through electronic monitoring of SLICE and on the ability to make a causal connection between these supports and student achievement. These data bases are not able to make that link and any possibility of an independent evaluator making that connection is not addressed in either the text or the budget.

Total	138	100	111	

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	**10**	**5**	**10**	[redacted]

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

The state can not only intervene in persistently low-achieving schools but can also reconstitute schools (see Appendix E1A). There was no discussion of the state role in intervening with LEAs except a brief discussion of the governor declaring a state of emergency in one LEA in 1990 and the subsequent state management of that system for seven years, with the result that the LEA still is struggling. Since the scoring rubric specifies that the state must be able to intervene in both schools and LEAs, only half the allotted points were given.

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

During the presentation the state team answered that the state does have the authority to intervene in low-achieving LEAs and even gave a detailed example of having done so.

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

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

(i) SC received federal approval in April 2010 for a two-tiered system of identifying persistently low-achieving schools. The plan clearly documents the 28 schools receiving support under the Project 180

initiative. The state also outlined a process for identifying feeder schools associated with the 20 lowest-performing schools.

(ii) The SC RTTT proposal stipulates that funding to support the 28 schools in Project 180 will be carried out by already existing SIG funds. The RTTT funds will be used to support those schools' qualifying feeder schools (Appendix E2E). A couple of key components of that plan involve the state creating a Turnaround Team and six regionally-based Turnaround Specialists. A Project 180 Council, with broad stakeholder representation, is responsible for reviewing school plans and monitoring school progress. The proposal outlines a six step process for Project 180 schools: (1) needs analysis, (2) LEA capacity to provide resources, (3)budgetary sufficiency, (4) design and implement interventions, (5) recruit, screen and select external providers, and (6) alignment of additional resources. The turnaround specialists are responsible for helping schools follow those six steps. The plan also calls for evaluation activities, including independent formative and summative assessments, to help inform progress. The plan also summarizes in a table at the end the various state-driven school reform initiatives over the last decade and lessons learned. There appears to be a modest correlation between those lessons and what is proposed in this plan. The budget for this reform activity, $14.6 million, represents about 16% of the overall state RTTT budget. There is clear funding for the turnaround specialists and contractually provided, job-embedded professional development, but the bulk of the funding will be supplemental flow-through to LEAs - presumably to hire locally identified external providers to implement the four reform models. The plan makes clear in the vision and throughout other parts of the proposal that the primary leverage point for improving student achievement is in strengthening the nature and quality of classroom instruction. Yet, the plan offers few details on the what or how of instructional changes to be carried out.

Total	50	40	45	

F. General

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

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

(i) The applicant provides documentation that funding did increase, at least proportionately, from 2008 to 2009. However, that increase was quite small - less than 1 percent. The scoring criterion calls for a 4 or 5 (high points) if there was an increase. Since the increase was small the lesser of the two high scores was assigned.

(ii) The application makes clear that "the state's legislative intent is to distribute funds equitably regardless of whether a student resides in a high-need or other LEA." Regulations require that special weighting formulas be allocated for low income schools and students with special needs. The state also set a minimum salary schedule to also promote more equity.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	**40**	**27**	**27**	
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	8	8	
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	5	5	
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	6	6	

(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	3	3	
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	5	5	

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

(i) The RTTT plan stipulates that there are no limits on the number, type, or enrollment of charter schools. Over the past five years the application data show a steady growth in the number of students served, growing from 4,000 to 12,000 in 37 schools. This still represents a small proportion of the state's student population.

(ii) The SC plan cites a recent new regulation that requires a one year planning process for all new charter school applicants. There is also a two part application review process with goals, objectives, and student achievement standards a clear requirement. Further, there are assurances required that the charter school population is similar to that of the local LEA. The state has a strong record of closing or non-renewing ineffective charters. What is unclear from the application is how much the accountability requirements weight the student performance expectations (with the scoring rubric specifying that student achievement is "one significant factor") and what penalties are imposed if those are not met. Thus, the applicant was assigned only medium points.

(iii) There are two types of charters with different funding formulas. Charters associated with LEAs seem to have equitable funding, drawing primarily on state regular funding (on average about 70% of typical LEA budgets), LEA property tax-based funding, as well as federal and state formula grants. The statewide charter district is not eligible for LEA funding, putting them at a potential disadvantage of nearly 30% from a funding standpoint. While the state legislature has tried to counter-balance that with annual per pupil awards ($700 last year), these are not guaranteed by statue or regulation. Thus, the application was assigned a score at the top of the medium points range.

(iv) The scoring criterion calls for assessing the application on whether the state provides facilities funding for charters, not whether that funding is equitable relative to traditional LEAs. The applicant only makes the latter point by noting that, with few exceptions, facilities funding is a local responsibility and that the state has done little to change that. Thus, the application received low marks since little money is allocated for facilities. The state does clearly provide flexibility and assistance for charters with building code requirements and other building regulations.

(v) The proposal specifies that the state statute has a provision to allow any school a waiver from any regulation that inhibits innovation. But it is also clear that all schools are "not totally autonomous from the LEA in which they reside." It is hard to assess how much this inhibits the operation of innovative, autonomous public schools.

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

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

The SC RTTT proposal details a range of legislative (e.g., virtual school, pre-school for at-risk four year olds, school achievement gap closing financial awards) and state-led initiatives (e.g., school choice, healthy nutrition, and high school/college course alignment) actions. In addition, the proposal highlights a diverse set of indicators by other organizations (e.g., Education Week) that the state has been making positive strides in improving educational prospects for the state's children, both across federally defined indicators as well as other state-identified indicators.

Total	55	41	41	

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 applicant makes a compelling case, citing statistics and employment trends across the state of South Carolina, for the need to focus on STEM-related occupations as a central part of the state's education plan. The plan thoughtfully acknowledges that work must target all levels of the system (including early elementary grades), not just high school curricula. The plan calls for three key strategies with important activities detailed in each:

(1) increasing the number of teachers in STEM areas by:

- establishing two U-TEACH sites
- introducing an Adjunct Teacher Program
- paying special focus to STEM fields in the PACE program

(2) strengthening the skills of STEM teachers already in the schools

- build on the S2MART initiative to train elementary and middle school math and science coaches
- offer a range of summer professional learning experiences
- focus on using STEM content when teaching the reading of information text - a weakness area across the state
- developing STEM curriculum guides
- partner with SREB on a GreenSTEM curriculum
- use the Chamber of Commerce to increase minority interest in STEM fields

(3) increasing the number of students interested in STEM subjects and careers:

- target information reading in high poverty schools
- support STEM literacy across the curriculum
- target STEM equipment/materials in 27 under performing high schools and 27 under performing middle schools
- create a pilot ASAP program in schools with large achievement gaps and apply the lessons learned
- articulate middle/high school curricula with IHE offerings using the GreenSTEM curriculum
- offer 200 scholarships to state colleges as part of "Careers for a Green South"
- identifying students from high poverty schools for enrollment in the governors School for Science and Mathematics

In addition to the plans outlined in the section on the competitive preference priority, the application also makes reference throughout the body of the text (nearly 40 references are noted), plus numerous references in the voluminous appendices, to ways in which STEM work will be integrated with the four federal education reform areas.

This reader did note a lack of specificity of ways in which the state planned to encourage females. Instead, most references were to high poverty and under performing schools, which obviously include females. Also, there was not much specific description of the kinds of courses that would be promoted in high schools and middle schools to grow offerings beyond traditional math and science courses.

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 SC RTTT proposal meets this priority by responding thoughtfully and completely to all four education reform areas with clear goals and objectives interwoven across the four reform areas. These are also summarized at the end of each section with clear timelines and accountable staff. A state budget of $87.5 million (with more than half of that being allocated as supplemental spending for LEAs) thoughtfully distributes money across the four reform areas with the largest concentration of resources invested in the future of teachers and leaders. The work is both ambitious and doable. The state's plan characterizes its vision by adopting an acronym for it efforts, INSPIRED, with most segments being addressed very clearly throughout the proposal. The one piece where details were left largely to the needs of individual LEAs was how personalized (but high quality) instruction for all (the second I in INSPIRED) would be ensured across all classrooms.

Total		0	0	

Grand Total	500	408	426	

Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2

South Carolina Application #4200SC-4

A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	**65**	**64**	**64**	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	4	4	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	45	45	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	15	15	

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

(i) The state's comprehensive reform agenda, SC INSPIRED, is expressed most succinctly in its introduction as "a single unifying goal for P-20 education: ensure dramatic growth in student achievement, graduation, and postsecondary enrollment rates through innovative education practices, followed by student success in higher education, careers, and as global citizens." (PDF 19) The state's plan for achieving this goal is complex, involving a very large set of interconnected structures and programs that requires a 5+ page glossary to follow. The plan addresses the four requirements described in the ARRA:

1. adopting internationally-benchmarked standards and assessments that prepare students for success in college and the workplace.
2. Building data systems that measure student success and inform teachers and principals in how they can improve their practice.
3. Increasing teacher effectiveness and achieving equity in teacher distribution; and
4. Turning around the lowest-achieving schools.

(ii) South Carolina presents a persuasive case that its participating LEAs are strongly committed to the plans. The MOU is straightforward, binding, and satisfies the requirements. The 100% participation of LEAs is impressive, and gives the impression of unity of purpose. The thick stack of endorsement letters included with the application adds heft to the application's claims of broad support.

(iii) With full participation by 100% of the state's LEAs, the stage is well set for broad state impact. (page 17, PDF page 34) The state presents clear goals (page 29, PDF 46) that are thoughtfully constructed and specific. The goals are not overly ambitious; for example, the application sets a goal for the black-white reading achievement gap of more than 20 points NAEP at the end of the grant period. This is a large gap; however is also significantly improved from a status quo that has changed little in the past five years.

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	**30**	**21**	**21**	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	13	13	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	8	8	

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

South Carolina has recently reorganized the structure of its top layers of leadership for education, based on

findings of a study by the Center on Innovation and Improvement, with guidance from the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory. The new structure emphasizes geography; the center of action is based in six Regional Response Teams, each headed by a Regional Facilitator. The described model for state-level leadership in implementation of the Race to the Top calls for many voices at the table, overseen by a Project Director, who will force tough decisions. The plan also includes an advisory body with members from many perspectives.

Closer to implementation level, the application describes people slated to be involved in the proposed reforms who seem to have long experience with one another, and with the state, which supports the state's case that it will implement the plan effectively.

With regard to efficacy and efficiency of operations, the application describes many challenging overlaps in responsibility and accountability for key deliverables. Regional Response Teams, for example, appear not to be strictly organized either by geography or by area of expertise, instead deploying resources according to judgment. The application suggests that the state expects to take a year or more to implement this new matrix structure and make it functional.

The state has been very thorough at involving every LEA in the RTT effort, which has created pressure for resources to be spread thinly. As the application points out, if the resources were allocated on a per-student basis, it would amount to a mere $237 per student, spread over four years. (pg 50, PDF 67) The state has elected to deploy the resources strategically rather than relying on distribution. The state has created a very broad advisory committee to help corral and sustain stakeholder support through implementation, and describes a Regional Support System to leverage resources.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	**30**	**9**	**9**	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	4	4	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	5	5	

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

(i) Element A3i of the application asks for demonstration of progress in the State's ability to advance each of the four education reform areas. The state's application highlights programs and accomplishments that relate to each:

With regard to standards and assessments, the state has many admirers, from the Fordham Foundation to the Princeton Review. The PASS system increases focus on standards and student achievement in a way that also helps to expose gaps and celebrate gap closures.

The state was an early leader in creating student-level data systems, and has implemented systems such as PowerSchool to connect student performance to teachers, principals, and colleges. The Snapshot system promises to provide "early warning" about students at risk, putting student level data to work.

When it comes to teacher quality, South Carolina can point to several relevant accolades: The EdWeek "Quality Counts" report, in particular, celebrates improvement in the state's teacher quality, ranking it #1 in the nation. The state has more National Board-certified teachers than any other state its size. The application emphasizes that it has been highlighted by President Obama in recognition of its leadership in implementing the TAP program for teacher evaluation and pay.

South Carolina has struggled to take effective action in struggling schools; The Palmetto Schools Project, initiated in 2007, signals that the state is focused on the problem. This program should benefit from the outcome-focused metrics that the state has described in its plan; thus far, however, the state cannot point to many clear successes in the form of programs or investments that deliver improved student achievement results.

(ii) The state's high standards, celebrated by the Education Trust, (PDF 83) appear not to have changed since 2003, so a changed bar cannot explain away the state's results on NAEP and ESEA assessments, which have been substantially unchanged since 2003 (PDF 541) and remain low by national standards (PDF 548). The application claims that South Carolina students are "scoring at and above average on nationally and internationally standardized tests" but this does not seem supported by the evidence. For example, on math, the state ranks 49th and 36th on NAEP in 4th and 8th grade, respectively.

The appendix of the state's application shows that achievement gaps (for black/white and reduced priced lunch eligibility status) have changed very little since 2003 in South Carolina. The state's application notes that South Carolina was highlighted by the Education Trust for score gains in mathematics, but this was for the period 2000-2007.

Improvement in graduation rates was at one point a highlight in South Carolina, but during the period evaluated by the Race to the Top requirements (since 2003) they appear unchanged. The Snapshot system for statistical prediction and warning of students at high risk of dropping out (pg 64, PDF 81) might be helpful in enabling the state to regain its momentum in this area.

Total	125	94	94	

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 plan states that South Carolina is an active participant with the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association's (NGA) Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Initiative. These efforts are focused on evidence-based development, and on college- and career-readiness. (PDF 99) The application states that South Carolina is in partnership with 48 states regarding alignment of these standards. The state assert that its standards in development appear to be 97% identical to the common core, implying a swift adoption is possible. The target adoption date is July 14, 2010, well ahead of the August 2 requirement.

(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 state's application describes its participation in two consortia that are developing high-quality assessments with significant number of states: "The SMARTER Balanced consortium [33 members] plans to develop a high quality assessment system that includes online, adaptive summative assessments; interim/benchmark assessments; and formative components. The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) consortium [27] plans to develop common, online summative assessments; interim/benchmark assessments; and formative components."

(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	**20**	**15**	**15**	

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

The state points out that the new standards are very similar to the existing ones, but nevertheless presents a detailed plan for the transition. The state's application describes its vision to roll out enhanced standards and assessments across many subjects using a matrix of support from multiple plans to take advantage of this realignment of standards and assessments to engage more deeply with partner organizations including higher education. The South Carolina Course Alignment Project, for example, shines a light on college remediation rates in order to identify effective practices.

Practical ownership of the transition process from an overall leadership perspective appears to fall to the Office of Communications, which will take actions for the Transition Team, a representative group of stakeholders. The Transition team carries a long list of responsibilities. They are to be supported in these responsibilities by geographically dispersed program staff mainly in two programs: "Systemic Support for Making a Real Transformation (S_2MART)" for math and science and "LiteracySC Initiatives" for language arts. At the local level, these programs are in turn to be supported by "CAPPs" (Communities Advancing Professional Practice) at the school/LEA level and functional programs such as S3. (summary on page 95.)

The greatest strength and the greatest weakness of this matrix structure is its flexibility. It is easy to imagine confusion as a result of many loosely defined roles and structures, in which responsibilities may be difficult to pinpoint.

Total	70	65	65	

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	22	22	

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

South Carolina appears not yet to have a completed longitudinal data system that includes all of the COMPETES act elements. It documents plans to complete the missing element (#11), which appears very close to operational. (Appendix page C-2, PDF 1157)

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

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

The application provides many pages of fairly detailed goals and objectives (beginning on page 139, PDF 156) related to the work of making data accessible and used through the various systems associated with longitudinal data. These goals are each assigned to an owner, with an expected delivery date specified by quarter. There is considerable work to be done to design, create, implement, test, and roll out these systems, which will involve new technologies and a different sort of user requirements from the more internally-focused systems that the state has built to this point. In order to staff this project with qualified personnel, it will be necessary to recruit from beyond the education sector. The budget for this work appears to be built on "midpoint" salary assumptions using local education-sector comparisons. For example, the position of CIO is budgeted at about $100k per year, and senior database analysts are budgeted at about $70k per year. These salaries are sufficiently low that they will significantly restrict the talent pool from which the state will be able to draw.

(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	11	14	
(i) Increasing the use of instructional improvement systems	6	3	4	
(ii) Supporting LEAs, schools, and teachers in using instructional improvement systems	6	2	4	
(iii) Making the data from instructional improvement systems available to researchers	6	6	6	

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

(i) The state describes a vision for a modular solution of curriculum options (a "curriculum management system", or CMS: page 129, PDF 146). It states that such a solution, using NetFlix technology, could recommend instructional improvement systems based on a school's needs and the attributes of known systems. The application states that a solution of this sort would need to be built to support the South Carolina Longitudinal Center for Education

(SLICE). This would represent a major project in its own right, but the application appears to leave definition of the work to a contract. It sets aside $4.4 million, front-loaded, to be spent on this work. (PDF 430-431) The details of this part of the state's plan are significantly less specific than other elements. For example, $2.4 million of this budget is described as follows: "Vendor TBD via RFP (V07): Development and implementation of curriculum management system (SLDS) -Develop or license a curriculum management system to integrate common core curriculum, assessment management system, data warehouse, at-risk data, teacher planning, educator and program effectiveness data, and the "Netflix® model" interface"

(ii) The application presents thoughtful goals and ideas related to the support that LEAs will need to use instructional improvement systems effectively. For example, it describes a training approach organized around "Seven A's." The plan does not appear to call for specific professional development regarding the use of these systems and the use of data more generally. Instead, it states that "professional development in the use of data will be integrated into support and technical assistance in all areas of identified need. Regional Response Teams will include members who are proficient in the use of data for all levels of educational planning and instructional delivery in all areas." The plan assigns the task of designing and implementing training modules to the regional response teams, including web-based systems. The plan does not specify how duplication of effort will be avoided, or place a priority on this development work relative to other responsibilities of the Regional Response Team.

(iii) The application defines a funded plan to support work with researchers. (PDF page 176) This plan is detailed, including specific responsibilities set out in quarterly increments. Access to researchers according to this plan will begin in Q3 of year 2.

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

The state's presentation reinforced the state's deep commitment to success in broadening and improving the use of data for instruction, particularly at the state leadership level. Although there are many obstacles to success, the state appears to be making strides to move up a difficult learning curve.

Total	47	37	40	

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	4	4	
(iii) Preparing teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage	7	7	7	

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

(i) South Carolina permits alternative certification of teachers through PACE (Program for Alternative Certification for Educators) for up to three years. By the end of this time, candidates must complete the requirements for a standard certificate (through an institute of higher education), or demonstrate effectiveness in the classroom. The alternative certification process through PACE is selective (particularly for PACE instructors), rigorous, and leads to a full credential. With regard to principals, all paths to certification require participation of an institution of higher education, and therefore do not meet the requirements.

(ii) Alternative certification routes for teachers (especially PACE) are in modest use (PDF 180): "In 2008-09, 264 teachers completed PACE. An additional 3,677 teachers were certified statewide through traditional routes." As noted above, there is not an alternative certification path for principals that meets RTT requirements. There is an accelerated certification process for principals, which produced 30 new school leaders, versus 293 through the standard route.

(iii) The services of the Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA) at Winthrop

University (PDF 183) meet the criteria for tracking shortages of teachers and leaders. Using this sort of data to help fill shortages are programs such as Project CREATE, a partnership with 11 leading colleges and universities in South Carolina, all with NCATE-accredited or State- approved teacher preparation programs in special education.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	**58**	**45**	**45**	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	4	4	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	12	12	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	9	9	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	20	20	

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

(i) South Carolina has set ambitious goals and clear approaches for implementing a value-added system, beginning with a speedy pilot of multiple systems to take place concurrently with the state's redefinition of standards to align with the Common Core. Moving beyond the pilot programs will be a slow process; based on the performance benchmarks provided, more than a third of schools will not have implemented the system by the end of the grant period.

(ii) The ADEPT system for teacher evaluation and the PADEPP system for principal evaluation appear to have been designed with significant involvement and input from practitioners. These systems appear to include multiple rating categories, including student growth as a significant factor. Full points are not awarded because the weighting factors appear yet to be determined. (PDF 202)

(iii) The plan calls for participating LEAs to conduct annual evaluations of teachers, as required. Principal evaluations currently appear to be required every three years, though the application mentions an effort to move to annual evaluations. (Pg. 184, PDF page 201)

(iv) The state's application anticipates that teacher and principal evaluations will be substantive and useful for personnel development and in support of pointed discussions about student learning results. The SITE program appears likely to drive focus, and the Regional Support System will be vital to strong implementation. The application does not appear to include guidelines regarding the outcomes of these ratings and reviews. For example, the plan does not specify what would constitute an expected level of performance-based staff turnover, or the degree to which key decisions such as compensation or advancement will be tied to performance.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	**25**	**19**	**22**	
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	10	13	
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	9	9	

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

i) The state's application (page 206, PDF 223) documents that the status quo distribution of teachers in South Carolina is not equitable. The state proposes strategies to address this gap: pay incentives to attract educators to specific communities (PDF 447); A large investment (about $3 million) in direct housing assistance for teachers in specific rural LEAs; targeted professional development; and a new online community. The application does not present evidence that these strategies have been proven elsewhere as a way to affect teacher distribution. The application does not appear to respond specifically to the requirement to ensure that students in high minority and/or high poverty schools are *not* disproportionately served by ineffective teachers and principals.

(ii) The application lays out a specific set of investments to mitigate shortages in hard-to-staff subjects. These investments include project CREATE (special education), and U-TEACH (STEM). The performance

measurement systems support the plan's emphasis on integrating pay differentiation for effective teachers and leaders as effective components of the big picture that teachers consider when making decisions about where to teach. The application unintentionally demonstrates the difficulty of assembling this sort of data: the baseline data and targets for "teachers evaluated as effective or better" are identical for math, science, special ed and language instruction.

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

The state's presentation clarified the importance of its planned investments in housing assistance for teachers in rural schools. Although the state lacks direct evidence that this approach will work, the plan is carefully considered and is well aligned with the spirit of the Race to the Top program.

(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 is in a leadership position with regard to the capacity to utilize data about student achievement in many ways, including evaluation of teachers and principals, and the programs that prepare them. The state reports effectiveness conclusions annually through a "report card" format.

ii. The state's application appears to focus on culling ineffective programs rather than on expanding effective ones; as noted, the state appears to rely very heavily on institutions of higher education for its teacher and leader pipeline. The application states that when "effective programs are identified, they will be awarded incentives to share their successes with other preparation programs throughout the State." The job of carrying this out is assigned to Mark Bounds to occur in the third quarter of the year. (PDF 267) However, the plan does not appear to back up this intention with budget for Mr. Bounds to carry it out.

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	**20**	**6**	**6**	
(i) Providing effective support	10	3	3	
(ii) Continuously improving the effectiveness of the support	10	3	3	

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

The state's application emphasizes local development of CAPPs (Communities Advancing Professional Practices), a concept that "refers to any organized group of practitioners dedicated to learning with and from one another to support student learning." The application does not provide strong criteria for what constitutes such a learning community or how to measure its effectiveness. The translation of concept to program seems to reside with the Regional Support Teams, though the Department proposes to create a calendar and web resource to help the support teams and LEAs take advantage of others' work. The plan does not appear to be based on any specific data-informed model for professional development, or to include specific planning and collaboration time.

With such wide variance in program design, continuously improving the quality of support will be difficult. The application does not provide benchmarks in order to monitor improvement in a way that can be supported by data. The state will be able to detect differences in student results using its longitudinal data systems, but it does not appear that the state will be able to draw easy conclusions about what is working.

Total	138	97	100	

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init

(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	10	5	10	

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

The state appears to have the authority to intervene directly in low performing schools, with the concurrence of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the State Board. (PDF 281) The scope of the state's authority to intervene appears sufficient to compel action, which could provide the state with a mechanism to enforce the use of the four turnaround models (Appendix E1A, PDF 1564). The state's intervention authority appears limited to the school level, and does not extend to LEAs.

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

The presentation clarified that the state does, in fact, have the authority to intervene in low-performing LEAs, and that this authority was used in 1998.

(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	**40**	**32**	**32**	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	27	27	

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

(i) The state has identified 28 Persistently Lowest Achieving Schools (Page 268, PDF 285. List in Appendix E2B, PDF 1568).

(ii) Additionally, South Carolina has identified the feeder schools associated with these schools, and created intervention strategies at the feeder-school level. The focus of the state's RTT plan is to invest in these feeder schools, augmenting investments in the lowest-performing schools already committed through the SIG program. The model is to focus on "clusters" of schools rather than strictly on individual low-performing schools.

Beyond the planned investments in feeder schools, the center of state-level action for South Carolina's plan to turn around persistently low-achieving schools is the newly created "Turnaround Team in the Office of Federal and State Accountability that includes the SIG Project 180 Director, Project 180 Coordinator, and a Program Assistant (each funded through SIG Project 180). The Project 180 Director reports directly to the South Carolina Title I Coordinator." The Project 180 coordinator supports a multi-stakeholder Project 180 council. This council will depend heavily on the work of six "regional turnaround specialists" funded by Race to the Top grants.

The state's plan emphasizes a regional structure. The state's low-performing schools and their feeder schools have been assigned to six regions, each coordinated by a Regional turnaround specialist. These appear to be key decision makers and program officers for work associated with Race to the Top. Turnaround specialists will report progress quarterly to the Project 180 Council, and will be accountable to the state Turnaround Office for results. The SERVE center at UNC Greensboro has been retained as a third party evaluator.

Responsibility for fidelity of implementation is assigned to multiple parties simultaneously: SERVE, Project 180 Council, SIG Project Director. (page 296, PDF 313) The application declares the state's intent in principle to use the four turnaround models, which LEAs must choose among by the end of the 2010-11 school year (PDF 288). However, there does not appear to be a clear enforcement mechanism to guard against overselection of the "transformation" option. If at the end of a year a school has not turned around, the task of determining the next step is left to the LEA (though they must present their plan to the State Board, which in principle could enforce the requirements with the concurrence of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.)

Total	50	37	42	

F. General

	Available	Tier	Tier	Init

		1	2	
(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 state's budget for education satisfies the requirements, allocating 0.85% more of available state funding to education in 2009 than in 2008. (Page 302, PDF 319, and PDF 1623)

(ii) The application documents an education finance system that is strongly designed to deliver equitable resources for each student. For example, the extent of the local tax base is a driving consideration in determining state disbursements for education. The state does not use a detailed weighted student formula to adjust allocations to LEAs, but augments school funds through program-targeted allocations that satisfy the requirement to direct funds within LEAs equitably.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	**40**	**31**	**31**	
(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	5	5	
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	2	2	
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	8	8	

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

i. The laws of the state of South Carolina do not appear to directly inhibit charter school formation. There are no state-level caps on charter schools, and the state ensures access to charter options through a statewide authorization option. In terms of results, that 3.7% of students in the state attend a charter school suggests that the state is not abnormally restrictive.

ii. The state satisfies the requirements for charter authorization and deauthorization fully. The state responded to an unacceptable rate of charter school failure by creating a requirement for a planning year. With the closure of four charter schools for academic nonperformance, the state has demonstrated firmness about requiring charter schools to live up to commitments regarding student achievement.

iii. To the extent that a charter school is authorized by an LEA, it appears that the school receives funding comparable to non-charter schools in that LEA. However, it appears that students in charter schools established through the state (as opposed to through LEA authorization) are not yet equitably funded, though pending legislation might close this equity gap.

iv. Access to facilities is a significant obstacle to charter school creation in South Carolina. The state appears to provide no ongoing support or access to financing assistance. (PDF page 333.) The state does waive certain building requirements for charter schools.

v. It appears that there are significant non-charter avenues through which schools and LEAs can receive waivers from specific regulations, particularly if they are high-achieving or low-achieving. "Ordinary" schools can also receive waivers with approval from the State Board using Regulation 43-261(c). Such flexibility has been put to use in "magnet schools, middle/early colleges, Montessori programs, single gender programs, "looping" and multi-age teamed teaching, and natural resources schools." (page 320)

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

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

South Carolina has pursued education innovation ideas with vigor, including its recent foray into virtual schooling. The application states that "The Center for Digital Education ranked South Carolina No. 2 in the nation for its policy-making efforts aimed at improving online learning opportunities (November 2009)."

The state has invested in groundwork like its longitudinal data systems that can give it the capacity to identify what works and what does not, and the state appears determined to press forward with innovation. It has a sturdy cadre of charter schools as laboratories for innovation. It has dramatically increased access to early childhood education programs. It has enacted critical changes in policy and regulation. These changes show that South Carolina, despite the relatively flat results since 2003 (as discussed in A3ii) is a state where important change can happen when it is in the interest of children.

Total	55	46	46	

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

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

Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The state's plan places strong emphasis on STEM. The state's plan will expand the number of teachers sourced through STEM-focused programs such as U-TEACH (PDF 348). Expansion of PACE can help direct STEM-qualified teachers to classrooms where they are needed. The state has invested regionally to build STEM teaching capacity through S2MART. The proof is in the results: where the state invested, NAEP math and science scores jumped to a new plateau.

Another such jump seems possible in South Carolina. The state has built new partnerships among academia, industry, schools and communities that could lead to new opportunities for engaged STEM learning programs. The presence of an expanding nuclear power industry in South Carolina adds urgency, specificity and concreteness to the state's investments in STEM education. The state's successes in virtual learning represent hope for students in rural communities to have steadily improving access to new learning options, including STEM courses. Project Lead the Way (PDF 352) connects the dots for students to turn academic success into life options.

Through programs such as these, the state's application directly addresses underrepresented groups, particularly students in rural communities.

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)

South Carolina's application satisfies the requirement, comprehensively addressing the four education reform areas.

Standards and assessments: SC has been a leader in setting high standards, and continues this tradition with its RTT plan. (PDF page 77)

Data systems: SC has built many data-related assets, including a capable longitudinal data system as described in section C. The state's weak plan for implementation and rollout seems very likely to significantly delay the student-level benefits of this work, but the eventual outcome seems likely to be in

keeping with the spirit of Race to the Top.

Teacher effectiveness and equity: ADEPT and PADEPP are critical assets that will benefit student learning and teacher and leader development in an increasing way as the state and LEAs gain experience with them. The initial rollout of these systems may lack in rigor, based on the lack of binding benchmarks, but the state has set the stage well to raise the bar in a way that drives excellence at the individual level, where change must occur.

Turnarounds: The state plan for turning around the lowest-performing schools gets low marks against the Race to the Top criteria, as it does not appear to hew closely to the requirements to rigorously apply the four allowed models. However, the state's focus on the feeder system, coupled with the scale of its investment in turnarounds, qualifies as a coherent and systemic approach. It this approach is unsuccessful, the state appears to have the requisite authority to apply stronger measures.

Support: The most compelling evidence of broad support for the plan is the 100% participation of the state's LEAs. As a right-to-work state, claims of teacher support must be evaluated differently than in unionized settings. The additional evidence of support provided in the application was helpful and compelling,.

Total		0	0	

Grand Total	500	391	402	