



# Race to the Top

## Technical Review Form - Tier 1

### Utah Application #4400UT-4



#### A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1
<b>(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>25</b>
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	1
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	18
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	6

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

**(A)(1)**

**(i)**

Utah's application details a Reform Plan, Promises to Keep, as a pathway to addressing the four reform areas. The Plan links the four reform areas to four promises and three principles.

The four promises are –

- To ensure that every Utah student gains the literacy and numeracy skills they need for success
- To ensure that all Utah children receive high-quality instruction in every classroom everyday
- To make certain that all students are engaged in curriculum that embodies high standards and relevance to the world students will encounter after high school
- To ensure that high quality effective assessment inform both instruction and accountability

Three principles - leadership, service and accountability - underlie the integrated reform agenda. The four reform areas are not presented as four distinct and independent strategies, rather, projects from Utah's Comprehensive Reform Plan are detailed and dovetailed to ensure the accomplishment of the four reform areas.

The narrative suggests that the USOE will use RTTT funds to expand upon existing efforts and develop new programs and processes to improve student outcomes. As well, the RTTT funding will be used to accelerate the development of data systems, by as much as 10 years, needed to support the State's plan.

The USOE intends a full scale statewide adoption of the reform practices. LEAs are expected to participate and will be held accountable for results. The Plan details goals for English Language Arts and Mathematics, goals to cut the achievement gap, goals to improve NAEP scores, and goals to decrease the drop out rate. These goals and the acceleration of timelines are based on a confidence in the USOE's past record of performance.

While the USOE's Promises to Keep reform agenda is supported by legislation and policy and espouses an intended focus, the plan overall, lacks a cohesive approach that is guided by a defined theory of change and supported by clearly articulated and aligned structures, processes, resources and budgets. The dependence upon external "experts" referenced throughout the application is troubling in that it suggests that these experts, rather than the USOE, will be counted upon to determine and sustain the course of action for a large majority of the projects. Equally troubling is the absence of LEA and USOE

collaboration and the emphasis of a top-down, authoritative approach to direct and manage the reform agenda.

The USOE's reform agenda, as presented, lacks a clear and credible path to achieving the goals set forth in its plan.

(ii)

There are 111 LEA's statewide; 108 LEA's have signed the MOU and agreed to the State's Scope of Work. The MOU signed by the participating LEAs is based on the ED standard form. The Scope of Work is based on the ED standard form.

Of the 108 participating LEA's 42 are public schools (as noted by the letter from the School Boards Association) and 72 are charter schools (as noted by the Utah State Charter School Board). There are 39 LEA's that are represented by the Utah Education Association with a local Teachers' Union Leader. Of these, 34 LEA local Teachers' Union Leaders have signed the MOU and agreed to the State's Scope of Work; 5 LEA local Teachers' Union Leaders have not signed the MOU. Although there is a State Teachers' Union with local union leadership it is interesting to note that there are no collective bargaining clauses in the MOU. There is however a letter from the President of the Utah Education Association in Appendix 6 of the application. In the letter the President of the Association states that "the Race to the Top grant will be developed in collaboration with educators through the voice of their local associations, as well as the state association..." suggesting that agreement must exist among these stakeholders as a prerequisite to implementing the LEA Scope of Work plans.

Of particular note is the absence of any letters of support (in the appendices or elsewhere in the application) from the local Teachers' Union Leaders for any of the 39 LEA's. The 5 LEA's without local Teachers' Union Leaders signatures on the MOU represent a total of 113,478 students (20% of the total number of students in Utah schools) Of these students 44,888 are students in poverty (this represents 58% of the students in the 5 LEA's and 23% of the total number of students in poverty). Four of the 5 LEA's that are absent local Teachers' Union signatures are among the largest LEA's in the state of Utah. Anticipated funding for these LEA's based on the applicant's anticipated allotments totals \$23,321,637 (27% of the total LEA distribution of \$87,500,000). At first glance it appears that the State has done an admirable job of gaining LEA commitment. However, a more in depth analysis shows the potential for serious gaps in the level of commitment from the largest LEA's with students who have the most pressing needs.

(iii)

The lack of commitment from the four LEA's previously noted in section (1)(A)(ii) coupled with the student population they represent (especially students in poverty), Utah's current CRT assessment scores (based on a review of the applicant's 2009 scores) and the visible lack of teacher union support (as evidenced by a lack signatures on the MOU and lack of written support from local leaders and support conditional upon LEA union leader support) brings into the question these LEA's commitment and the USOE's capacity to create the conditions to introduce and sustain the broad reform it envisions. The previously mentioned factors, in addition to the plan as presented, does not engender confidence in the State's ability to achieve RTTT goals to increase student achievement, decrease the achievement gaps, increase high school graduation rates and increase college enrollments.

<b>(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>14</b>
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	11
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	3

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

(A) (2)

(i)

(a) The State has created four departmental teams – Teaching and Learning; Data, Assessment and Accountability; School Improvement Team; and Oversight Team – distributing the four reform areas among the first named teams with oversight of all the teams and the reform areas by the last team named. The language in the narrative states that these teams “will be” responsible to “develop, ensure, manage, oversee and/or lead” the implementation of the four reform areas. This language suggests that the team responsibilities described are newly created and are preparing to, rather than ready to, implement and support the reform agenda.

The States reform strategy offers the State the opportunity to establish an organizational structure aligned with the strategic intention to *drive* rather than to *manage* a reform agenda. The applicant states that departments have been reorganized to “more efficiently respond to reform efforts”. The organization chart presented by the State is a traditional hierarchical structure organized by functional area. The areas of instruction, assessment and accountability and finance each have an Associate Superintendent that report to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. The four new teams, as they are presented in the organizational structure, have been embedded into the existing organizational construct. It is not clear how the State's organization will result in more effective processes to support LEAs and impact student outcomes. If the reorganization is merely dropping these four new teams into an existing construct this could be problematic to the success of reform efforts for a number of reasons -

- First, there is no evidence of processes or structures that will ensure how these teams will coordinate their efforts to ensure the seamless and effective transmission and implementation of reform strategies and action plans to support the LEA's.
- Second, there is no mention of the USOE's change management strategies to address the potential challenges associated with driving a reform agenda into the culture that created the current results.
- Third, there is no evidence of what the State will do to ensure that USOE employee roles and responsibilities, especially those not directly affected by the reform agenda, are aligned with the reform agenda.
- Fourth, there is no evidence other than defining the four teams and their roles and responsibilities that the State is taking steps to create and sustain a culture for reform supported by a systemic theory of change.

It is not clear from the organization chart or the narrative whether the charter schools reform plans will be integrated into the new teams or will reside with the Deputy Superintendent as shown in the organization chart.

(b) The Oversight Team is charged with *directing the work* of the Teaching and Learning Team, the Data, Assessment and Accountability Team and the School Improvement Team and providing the State Superintendent and the State Board with quarterly reports on the progress of RTTT activities and outcomes. It is not clear from the narrative the extent to which the teams will focus their efforts to identify promising practices, evaluate the effectiveness of practices or eliminate ineffective practices. The applicant states that the Oversight Team will be responsible to ensure that LEA's are held accountable for progress and performance and will intervene where necessary. It is not clear from the narrative how resources will be brought to bear to coordinate the efforts of working with LEA's to bridge the State's reform agenda from policy to practice to performance and measurement. The budget does reflect a \$23M investment in contracted services over the four year period of time for which there is no detail in the narrative.

Professional development was identified by key stakeholders (noted in Appendix 6) as a critical aspect of the reform agenda. It appears from the narrative and the organization chart that this responsibility while addressed is spread among the four teams based on the specific focus. For example, the Teaching and Learning Team will provide professional development to LEA's for Literacy and Math and Leadership Training; the Data, Assessment and Accountability Team will train educator and researcher how to use data to inform instruction and to use the data dashboard and will train LEA's in the new assessments; the School

Improvement Team will train and monitor school consultants. With the professional development shared across these teams it is unclear how professional development efforts will be specifically linked to instructional practices, human capital management processes and leadership development; how they will be coordinated and integrated into LEA plans or how the professional development will be monitored and measured to identify the best practices that have the greatest impact on student achievement.

A review of the budget indicates that LEA resources (teachers) will be enlisted to accomplish the tasks outlined in many of the projects. The lack of an overarching operations framework seems to result in redundancies in the use of these resources from project to project and it is not altogether clear how these resources will be coordinated and aligned to implement their work product within LEAs.

In many instances the budget narratives describe a span of influence between those enlisted to provide services and the LEAs and staff being served that seems too large to impact the adoption and utilization of new processes or to provide the follow up support needed to realize substantive improvements in results.

(c) The USOE has in place a series of checks and balances through the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget and the Legislature and adheres to the Federal Cash Management Act to process expenditures and draw transactions. The USOE will use the Budget and Accounting System for Education (BASE) to ensure the effective and efficient operations and processes for implementing the RTTT grant.

(d) The applicant has provided a detailed budget for each reform area and related projects. The State Board has adopted the USOE Comprehensive Reform Plan (which is aligned to the RTTT reform areas) and has directed that all state funds, programs and resources be re-purposed to align with the plan. A detailed description of how state and federal funds are being repurposed is provided by the applicant in the narrative.

The State has described a plan to use its financial and human capital resources to implement the State's and RTTT reform agenda. What is not specifically detailed in the application is how the State will ensure a comprehensive, coordinated and systemic approach to ensure the efficient and effective implementation of the States reform agenda.

**(ii)**

(a) Letters from the state's elementary and secondary principal's association express mild support. There are no letters from teachers, principals or LEA superintendents. As previously mentioned in section (A) 1) the letter from the State's teachers' union president establishes the parameters for collaborative decision making that involves the local union leaders and the state association to implement LEA plans. Support from the state's charter school associations is evidenced by a letter from the president of each organization.

(b) USOE's RTTT application is supported by leaders who hold political office and leaders in associations and state higher education institutions. It is interesting to note that the majority of the support for the USOE's application (letters in Appendix 6) comes from external rather than internal stakeholders. The majority of letters are from those who may determine and influence policy. There is an absence of letters from those who will be called upon to adopt, implement and sustain the reform agenda. This calls into question whether there is sufficient internal commitment and support from those who must bridge the State's policy into practice to realize the promised goals.

The State has broad support from many stakeholders. However, given the absence of support from those who will be called upon to make decisions about the reform agenda at the local level and the audience of students and staff they represent (as noted in (A) (1)) there is a concern that the State has in place the current capacity to implement, scale up and sustain plans in a timely manner.

<b>(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>17</b>
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	3
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	14

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

(i) The State has been focused on reform area efforts during the past several years and spent a total of \$404,353,400 to implement and support programs. The State has invested a total of \$59,632,400 of federal and states funds on the four reform areas. These investments include:

Standards and Assessment - \$52,168,000

This effort is focused on K-3 reading, reading instruction, family literacy centers for ELL students and parents, graduation rates, STEM across the grade levels. It is not mentioned whether formative or summative assessments are being used to link data to instruction.

Data Systems to Measure Growth and Inform Instruction - \$1,076,000

Although the State has collected longitudinal data on reading and mathematics since the 1980's the system does not currently have the capability to track and analyze K-12 student growth and performance.

Great Teachers and Leaders - \$3,025,000

The State currently invests funds in CACTUS a system that tracks teacher and leader quality and a state professional development tracking system, as well as programs to recruit and retain teachers for math, science and special education. The State has also funded the Revision of the Professional Educator Continuum, pilot pay for performance plans, alternate route to licensure laws and policies and signing bonuses and tuition scholarships in the hardest to staff content areas and assignments.

Turning Around Lowest Achieving Schools - \$2,913,400

The State has invested in programs targeted at students living in poverty and struggling schools. The State collaborates with WestEd to develop a System of Support (SOS) for struggling schools. The SOS requires schools to identify school leadership teams, use the SOS instructional appraisal process to inform the school's improvement plan.

A total of \$344,721,000 of ARRA funds were used with the intention to 1) spend funds quickly to save and create jobs; 2) improve student achievement; 3) ensure transparency in reporting and accountability, and 4) minimize the funding cliff. The funds were used in the following ways:

- Save teaching jobs - \$185,500,000
- Replace nutrition equipment – \$721,000
- Increase IDEA services - \$109,000,000
- Increase Title 1 services - \$49,500.000

The majority of the State's use of State, Federal and ARRA dollars has been directed to maintain instructional staff and to increase services to students with disabilities and students in poverty. Specific details of how the funds were used were not specified therefore it is not possible to determine the extent to which the ARRA funds where used to support reform initiatives. State and federal funds were directed to the four reform areas with Standards and Assessment receiving the greatest amount of funding. The other three reform areas were funded at less than 1% each of the total amount of funds noted in the narrative. Although the State spent considerable funds, based on the information provided the State used approximately 16% of the available funds towards the four reform areas.

(A) (3)

(ii)

(a) The analysis of Utah's CRT and NAEP results and the graduation rates point to modest, albeit consistent gains in student growth outcomes within student subgroups. White and Asian students consistently outperform other subgroups. There appears to be a persistent and worsening gap among subgroups particularly for African American, Latino and other disadvantaged students. Despite investments and focused efforts to increase teacher and principal capacity in Reading and Mathematics and the extenuating circumstances surrounding the change to Mathematics standards and assessment which resulted in more rigorous standards and a new benchmark, Utah's results demonstrate an inability to sustain increased student achievement, to close the achievement gap and decrease the drop out rate for minority and at risk students. The absence of 2003 to 2009 NAEP Mathematics data for African American students is noted.

For English Language Arts, the results of Utah's statewide CRT assessment indicate a modest 2.5% increase in student scores, from 78.4% proficient in 2003 to 80.9% proficient in 2009.

- The applicant attributes the increases in English Language Arts from 2003 to 2009 to the K-3 Reading Initiative which began in 2004, the Optional Extended-day Kindergarten program, the Family Literacy Centers and the use of the Utah's "Three Tiered Model of Reading Instruction".

For Mathematics, the CRT assessment results showed an overall -4.2% decrease from 72.4% proficient in 2003 to 68.2% in 2009.

- The decline in the Mathematics scores is impacted by a decrease in scores from 2008 to 2009 when the scores went from 74.5% proficient in 2008 to 68.2% proficient in 2009. This decline is being attributed to the change in the Mathematics standards and corresponding assessment as a result of an effort to increase the standard's rigor.
- The 2009 results are a recalibration based on the more rigorous standards and serve as the baseline going forward. Prior to 2009, Mathematics scores increased a total of 2.1%, from 72.4% proficient in 2003 to 74.5% proficient in 2008.
- These increases are attributed to the 4-6 Initiative which is designed to provide teachers with professional development, coaching and financial incentives, the USTAR program which offers students the opportunity to be involved in STEM activities during an extended school year and the UTIPS program which provides teachers with a bank of test items to use to create formative assessments.

The NAEP results for English Language Arts (Reading) suggests that although there was a slight decrease in results a higher percentage of Grade 8 students are at or above basic than are Grade 4 students.

- Grade 4 student's overall results remained relatively level with an increase of 3% from 66% at or above basic in 2003 to 69% in 2007. These results were 3% higher than the 2007 national average.
- Grade 8 students overall results decreased 1% from 76% in 2003 to 75% in 2007. These results were 2% higher than the 2007 national average.

The NAEP results for Mathematics for Grade 4 and Grade 8 indicates that Utah students outperformed the national average in Mathematics.

- For Grade 4 Utah students' average Rausch Unit ((RIT) scores went from 235 to 240 - one point higher than the national average RIT score of 239 - and demonstrated a 4% increase in students at or above basic.
- For Grade 8 student RIT scores went from 261 to 284 - two points higher than the national average RIT score of 282 - which reflects a 0% change.
- When comparing the Grade 4 and 8 results to each other a different trend is apparent. This data suggests a widening of the achievement gap between Grades 4 and 8. What is evident is that Grade 4 students are advancing to proficient and advanced at larger percentages than are students in Grade 8. Additionally, a higher percentage of Grade 8 students remain at below basic (Table 6) than do Grade 4 students.

(b) The applicant provided Utah CRT assessment data (2003-2009) for nine student subgroups— Asian, African American, White, Hispanic/Latino, American Indian Pacific Islander, Low Income, Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners. All student sub groups, during the period 2003 -2009, with the exception of the Asian and White students, had significant and persistently lower percent proficient CRT scores for both English Language Arts and Mathematics.

- Overall these subgroups' 2003 to 2009 annual scores for percent proficient were below the overall scores for Utah students on the CRT.
- The percent increase for with the Students with Disabilities, Pacific Islanders, Hispanic Latino, American Indian and Low Income subgroups bettered the percent increase of overall students.

*It must be acknowledged that there are marked improvements in achievement within the respective subgroups from 2.2% for African American students to 8.2% for Students with Disabilities. However, the achievement gap still persists among subgroups and is worsening for African American students (from a 5.2% gap in 2003 to a 15.4% gap in 2009) and English Language Learners (from a 25.1% gap in 2003 to a 27.8% gap in 2009).*

For Mathematics the 2003 to 2009 annual CRT scores declined overall for all subgroups with the exception of the Student with Disabilities subgroup which had an .8% increase.

- As previously noted, the applicant attributes the decline to the change in standards and the related assessment.
- Prior to the aforementioned changes, all subgroups with the exception of the English Language Learners subgroup showed increases in percent proficient from 2003 to 2008 ranging from .2% for the African American subgroup to 6.4% for the Student with Disabilities subgroup.
- The results for 2008 - 2009 showed decreases in scores ranging from 5.6% for Student with Disabilities to 9.1% for Pacific Islanders.

For English Language Arts the 2003 -2009 annual CRT scores showed an increase for all subgroups with the exception of English Language Learners which had an -.2% decrease.

- Overall these subgroups' scores were below the overall scores for Utah students.
- Students in these subgroups increased from 2.2% for African American students to 8.2% for Students with Disabilities.

The NAEP results for English Language Arts (2003 - 2007) reflect data for the White, Latino, Low Income, Students' with Disabilities and English Language Learners subgroups. No data was provided for African American students.

- For Grade 4 the results showed increases in the percentage of students at basic or above ranging from 3% (White students) to 11% (ELL). The Low Income and English Language Learners sub groups outperformed the national average. Although Utah's overall NAEP results show improvement and bettered that national average, gaps exist for students in the White, Latino and Students' with Disabilities subgroups.
- For Grade 8 the results indicate that Latino, Low Income and Students with Disabilities increased scores by 2%, 2% and 1%, respectively. White students and English Language Learners scores decreased by one percentage point. Although Utah's overall NAEP results show improvement White and Latino students and Students with Disabilities under performed the national average by 4%, 4% and 9%, respectively. There was no data provided for African American students.

The NAEP results for Mathematics reflect data for the White, Latino, Low Income, Students' with Disabilities and English Language Learners subgroups. No data was provided for African American students.

- The Grade 4 results indicate that while Utah's overall NAEP score for Grade 4 Mathematics was higher than the national average and there has been improvement within the subgroups the data

shows that students in the White and Latino subgroups continue to lag behind (based on 2007 data). No data was provided for the African American student subgroup.

- The Grade 8 results indicate that while Utah's overall NAEP score for Grade 8 Mathematics was higher than the national average score and there has been improvement the data shows that students in the White, Latino and Students with Disabilities subgroups continue to lag behind (based on 2007 data). No data was provided for the African American student subgroup.

(c) Utah used data from a three year cohort to determine the graduation rate. The total number of students in the three year cohort is 99,007. Utah's average graduation rate from 2007 to 2009 is 88%. The highest graduation rate exists for the White (91%) and Asian (90%) student subgroups. The total number of students in these subgroups is 82,739 white students and 1,897 Asian students for a total of 84,631 or 85% of the cohort. The total number of students in the remaining subgroups totals 14,376. The graduation rates range from 69% for Limited English Proficient to 86% for Pacific Islander students.

What is interesting about the data is that Utah graduates more students (91%) from the subgroup with the largest population of students (White and Asian students) and is challenged to increase the graduation rate of those students in the remaining subgroups (listed above) who make up less than 15% of the total population of students in the three year cohort used for the analysis.

Total	125	56
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## B. Standards and Assessments

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

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

(B) (1)

(i)

(a) The CCSSO and the National Governor's Association Center for Best Practices Common Core Standards Memorandum of Understanding is signed and provided in Appendix 8. The standards for Mathematics and English Language Arts will be aligned with college and work expectations, be research based, include rigorous content and skills and will be internationally benchmarked. Utah has submitted several suggestions for improvement and upgrading of the standards. A letter signed by the ELA Literacy Team (included in Appendix 9) thanks state participants for their involvement to review and refine the Common Core Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects.

(b) The consortium is comprised of 48 states, 2 territories and the District of Columbia.

(ii)

The applicant states that the Utah State Board of Education has voted and agreed to adopt the common core standards and is committed to adopting the common K-12 standards by August 2, 2010, or later date in 2010 if the standards are not yet complete.

The timeline (Table 10) provided in the narrative does indicate that the Common Core and Standards Map will be presented by the SEA to the State Board with a recommendation for adoption in June 2010. There is delineated a plan for State Board adoption, presentation of Common Core and Standards Map to the LEAs and presentation of implementation tasks and timelines to LEAs, also in June 2010.

Additionally, a timeline of July – October 2010 noted in the narrative describes that the SEA will revise the core curriculum to reflect the new common core standards with support from the LEAs. A review of the Timeline of Activities (Table 10) for the SEA and LEAs includes the following activities not mentioned Utah's Comprehensive Reform Plan Goals and Projects:

- October 2010 - Present new common core curriculum and standards to LEA leadership teams and other stakeholders for comment.
- November 2010 - Solicit public comment
- December 2010 - Report to State Board on progress of common core standard initiatives. Obtain permission for next steps.

Although It is unclear from the narrative in Table 10 and the project plan how these additional steps are integrated or will impact the adoption of the common core standards Utah intends to adopt the common core standards by August 2, 2010.

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

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

(i)

Utah is a lead state in the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium. Dr. Judy Park, Associate Superintendent for the Assessment and Accountability Division is the co-chair of the Consortium. The SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium MOU (Appendix 14) has been signed by the Governor, the State Superintendent and the President of the State Board of Education. States are asked to identify potential risks or barriers in State laws, statutes, regulations, or policies. There are two risks noted in the MOU:

- The first risk is that the State Legislature must appropriate sufficient funds to implement common core standards. This falls under Policy and the governing body is the State Legislature. The approximate date to initiate action is the next legislative session, January 2011. The target date for removal of the barrier is the end of the legislative session, March, 2011.
- The second risk is State contributions – and a question of what these are expected to be? Certain costs may need prior legislative approval. This falls under Policy and the governing body is the State Legislature. The approximate date to initiate action is the next legislative session, January 2011. The target date for removal of the barrier is the end of the legislative session, March, 2011.

It is not clear from the narrative whether the risks will impede the timeline noted in Table 10 to implement SMARTER English Language Arts assessment in June 2012 and Mathematics assessments in June 2013.

(ii)

The Consortium is comprised of 32 states which represents a majority of the States in the country.

<b>(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>16</b>
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**(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

The State has developed a 4 year implementation plan, based on past practice, that details the activities for the State and LEAs beginning with the implementation of English Language Arts standards in 2010-2011 followed by the implementation of Mathematics in 2011-2012.

1) The components of the plan consist of several projects that span the continuum from –

- Creating awareness of the new standards,
- Developing professional development, tools and programs to ensure the use of the new standards,
- Integrating the new standards into existing successful initiatives (such as the "Three Tiered Model of Reading Instruction"),
- Embedding reading across all content areas, including science, social studies, art, and CTE standards,
- Ensuring alignment across schools/classrooms

What is not evident in the Activity Table or Budget for each of the projects mentioned above are the key goals, detailed activities (including the rationale for each activity), the timelines (including milestones) and the project management structure (roles and responsibilities). Specifically, what is not evident is a high quality plan that details the comprehensive coordination and utilization of resources to align the core standards, define a K-12 scope and sequence, develop lesson plans, develop a "repository" and provide professional development for all participating LEAs.

It is not clear from the narrative or budget how external and internal resources will be utilized to develop instructional materials, introduce the standards to leadership stakeholders, scale the implementation of the new standards, and provide for ongoing support to increase leadership and teacher capacity. It is noted in the budget, yet not described how 994 teachers will become coaches and how they will be prepared to deliver professional development to participating LEAs, how the content of best practices will be developed, how 1650 Superintendents/Directors/Teachers will be trained and by whom and it is not noted in the budget how the development of the repository will occur and be funded.

2) The State's plan includes specific activities to cooperate with the State's Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) requirements for standards and assessment to ensure post secondary success. The plan includes –

- Student and parent engagement regarding career pathways
- Coursework aligned with college and career pathways beginning in 6<sup>th</sup> grade continuing through 12<sup>th</sup> grade
- Engagement with LEA's and higher education to ensure alignment of English and Mathematics curriculum and courses to the common core standards
- Work with the business community, industry and higher education partners to define the skills and knowledge needed to for a quality workforce.

3) Utah's plan is also designed to leverage its involvement in the SMARTER Consortium to refine the Utah's Performance Assessment System for Students (U-PASS) for English Language Learners and Student with Disabilities, create a technology-based testing system, implement the use of formative assessments for mathematics and reading in all schools. Additionally, Utah plans to continue its current test pilot programs, revise the high school exit exam and create a common, standard kindergarten entry and post assessment.

In conclusion, Utah's plan to transition to enhanced standards and high quality assessments is based upon the success of past practices and while it describes activities to transition to enhanced standards and high quality assessments, it does not demonstrate evidence of a high quality plan. While past practices have contributed to improvements for the Asian and White students these practices do not seem to have impacted Utah's highest needs students to close the achievement gap. The plan does not articulate or delineate specific strategies to use student data to prioritize the implementation plans to ensure the success of these high needs students or the teachers, leaders, parents and schools that support them.

Total	70	65
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**C. Data Systems to Support Instruction**

	Available	Tier 1
<b>(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>20</b>
<p><b>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>                      (C) (1)                      Utah has a P-20 Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) and notes that it has all twelve COMPETES elements in place. However, a review of Appendix C confirms that the state has not completed SLDS requirement 2 and 7 based on the evidence provided in Appendix 16.</p>		
<b>(C)(2) Accessing and using State data</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<p><b>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>                      (C)(2)                      Utah has a 4 year project plan to enhance its P-20 Statewide Longitudinal Data System. The enhancements to the system will include expanded access for researchers and instructional staff to answer questions related to policy, programs and practice, the assignment of statewide student identifiers, the addition of discipline data, the inclusion of Pre-K data and the collection and analysis of other non-cognitive data. The plan is designed to engage key stakeholders in its design. The State plans to implement a State Data Dashboard that will be provided to LEAs and will be used to monitor LEA accountability. Data management tools, included in the SLDS will make it possible for LEAs to integrate data from multiple sources to inform and improve instructional strategies and to support effective decision making.                      Performance measures suggest that Utah will complete the longitudinal system by the end of SY 2011-2012, engage in testing of the system by the end of SY 2011-2012 with the system 100% complete and in 100% of LEAs by the end of SY 2012-2013.</p>		
<b>(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>7</b>
(i) Increasing the use of instructional improvement systems	6	3
(ii) Supporting LEAs, schools, and teachers in using instructional improvement systems	6	2
(iii) Making the data from instructional improvement systems available to researchers	6	2
<p><b>(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>                      (C) (3)                      Utah indicates in its Performance Measures that 100% of LEAs will have completed the Principal Data Institute by the end of SY 2013 – 2014 and that 100% of LEAs will have completed at-risk interventions and dropout prevention and use of data professional development by end of SY 2013 -2014.                      (i)                      Utah has a detailed and robust plan to ensure the integration of multiple data platforms and the acquisition of local instructional improvement systems by LEAs to provide teachers, principals and administrators with information needed to inform policy, programs and practice. It is noted in Project Three: Effective Data Use</p>		

in the Reform Area Two Goals, Projects, Timeline, Budgets and Managers (Appendix 3) that Principals will be involved in a Principal Data Institute. It is unclear just how the Instructional Improvement Systems will be introduced to other instructional staff and how the system will be designed to be used "rapid time" to inform instruction and assess impact. Nor is it evident in the project activities how the Data Coaches will be specifically utilized to work with principals and the LEAs and how the span of influence will be managed as 50% of the principals from participating LEAs are involved in professional development for years 2010 - 2011 and another 50% will be engaged during 2011 - 2012. It is also not clear how the system will be integrated into the instructional and leadership work processes noted in the criteria and what the SEA's change management plans are relative to the impact on staff and stakeholder work structures and processes.

(ii)

Utah's has a three-pronged approach for LEA professional development focused on effective data usage to inform instruction and decision making. The first prong is targeted at LEA data teams including Superintendents, Assessment Directors and Curriculum Directors; the second prong is be focused on LEAs with struggling schools and will focus on professional learning communities and school improvement strategies and include resources from the Data Mentor program; the third prong will be focused on understanding at risk, drop out and graduation data.

It is not specified how or when teachers and other instructional staff will be introduced to the instructional improvement system or how the professional development will demonstrate for teachers how data can be used to connect practice to performance outcomes and how data will be used to illuminate the unique needs of individual students and differentiated instructional practices.

Additionally, there is no apparent link between the professional development to introduce the instructional improvement system and the transition to the common core standards. Based on the respective project timelines this professional development could possibly be occurring simultaneously for the LEAs.

(iii)

Utah's plan to implement its instructional improvement system includes access to Utah's data dashboard by researchers and other stakeholders. The project plan includes efforts to conduct an outreach program and to engage SEA and LEA partnerships, local colleges and universities to increase access and analysis of resident data. There is no explicit mention of encouraging researchers to evaluate the effectiveness of instructional methodologies, strategies and approaches to educating different types of students and the causes of the achievement gaps.

Total	47	32
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#### D. Great Teachers and Leaders

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

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

(D) (1)

(i)

Utah's narrative and Appendix 19, R777 Education, Administration, R2777 – 503 Licensing Routes, R2777-503-3, Definitions details Utah's provisions that allow alternative routes to certification. In Utah The Office of Educator Quality and Licensing administers the program. The Alternate Route to Licensure encompasses the rigor defined in the criterion.

For teachers seeking an alternative route to licensure a Professional Growth Plan is established and details licensure requirements which includes taking and passing State Board approved coursework and test, working with a trained mentor and demonstrating effectiveness based on LEAs evaluation system. ARL candidates may pursue a course of study outside of traditional IHE. Two programs of note used by USOE are the American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence (ABCTE) and Troops to Teachers. The ABCTE is used to help fill math teacher shortages and is used for other difficult to fill content areas.

(ii)

Information provided by the USOE in the Alternative Routes to Licensure Statistical Report (Appendix 25) indicates that through October 2009 947 ARL teachers are employed by USOE in a wide range of content areas and grade levels in Charter and Public Schools. From the data there appears to be a increase in the number of ARL applications. Approximately 20% of the applications taken from ARL candidates result in placement. The USOE did not provide specific information about the ARL programs in use, the number of educators involved and the placement of these educators into the LEAs.

(iii)

Utah does not have an overall teacher shortage; however, the USOE is experiencing teacher shortages in mathematics, science and special education. And they struggle to fill positions in the frontier LEAs where teachers need certification or endorsements in multiple content areas.

The USOE has an award winning technology based teacher credentialing and record keeping system, CACTUS (Computer Aided Credentials of Teachers in Utah Schools), which produces an annual report called the Criticality Index. The Criticality Index identifies areas of teacher shortage based on a number of factors resident in the CACTUS system. The data from the Criticality Index is shared with LEAs and teacher preparation institutions to fill anticipated gaps. Although the Criticality Index does not track principal shortages data from CACTUS is used to inform recruitment and retention efforts.

The USOE employs many initiatives to fill identified shortages. These include legislative provisions for scholarships for advanced degrees, endorsements, license programs and signing bonuses in mathematics, science and special education. The ARL process is utilized through University partnerships to encourage participation in programs to fill the difficult to fill positions.

Plans to fill anticipated administrative shortage are underway. Principal preparation programs are being reviewed to ensure that coursework and development includes an emphasis on instructional leadership, data informed decision making and instructional leadership.

Of note, a new position, the teacher leader is being developed to attract more highly effective teachers into administrative roles. The teacher leaders license will be implemented in 2011.

There is an absence of a system to identify and fill principals shortages.

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

**58**

**35**

(i) Measuring student growth	5	3
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	11
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	6
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	15

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

(D) (2)

(i)

The USOE, through the SMARTER assessment system, State Longitudinal Data System and the student data warehouse is equipping itself with the capacity to provide LEAs with tools to assess, measure and track student growth. Coupled with the ability to assign unique personal identification numbers to students and staff it will become possible to link student growth to teacher effectiveness and to identify leading rather than lagging indicators of student growth.

The narrative describes the State's current ability to capture student growth and to link this information to individual teachers; however, the State does not mention the existence of processes to measure student growth. It is also mentioned in the narrative that the State uses a "value table" approach for holding schools accountable for longitudinal growth. The calculation, which occurs at the school level, is currently available and is used as the basis to provide incentives to schools to increase the performance of matched students, especially those scoring below proficient as they move through the school. Although the State indicates it has the capacity to capture student growth data and can link to student data and can calculate a "value table" for schools, it is not clear from the narrative the how these three metrics are used to inform and support student growth. In addition, there appears to be a lack of coordinated effort between the Assessment and Accountability Team and the Teaching and Learning Team to link and leverage the complex data management systems and the data these systems provide.

(ii)

Utah plans to design and implement a rigorous, transparent and fair evaluation system for teachers and principals. The plan will use State Board policy as the basis to develop the evaluation system to reform LEA practice and to impact LEA performance.

The narrative indicates that Utah's legislature passed a bill, HB264S Educator Evaluation Amendments, in 2009 to update Utah Statute for teacher evaluation (Appendix 32). The legislative action requires the State Board of Education "to make rules specifying criteria for an educator evaluation system adopted by a local school board". The legislation indicates that there is jurisdiction at the local school board to develop an evaluation program that adheres to the legislative requirements and is developed in consultation with its educators through the appointment of a joint committee that consists of an equal number of classroom teachers, parents and administrators appointed by the local school board. A 4 year project plan describes how teachers and principals will be involved in the design of the evaluation framework and other supporting processes, the creation of joint committees within each LEA and the work with the local school board to obtain buy off.

There are three projects for improvement noted to respond to the criteria in this section. There appeared to be redundancies among the activities, specifically in the definition of instructional standards and measures, the development of tools and the use of LEA pilots. This is noted because each of the projects and their related activities were assigned budgets.

It is mentioned in the narrative that multiple metrics, including 40% on student growth, 40% on instructional practice, and 20% on stakeholder satisfaction, have been recommended by the State Board for evaluation and compensation. Student achievement, in the form of student growth, is being established by the State Board as a critical metric to measure teacher performance. The use of formative and summative

assessment is referenced in the narrative as a means to inform the evaluation. The evaluation framework does not distinguish what sources of data will be used to inform student growth.

Although it was mentioned earlier in the application that the State capacity currently exists to link student growth data to individual teachers, the State indicates that future plans include the capacity to aggregate student growth data to the teacher level to determine teacher effectiveness status (highly effective, ineffective). It is not clear from the State's plan how it will enhance its current processes to link student growth data to individual teachers and how this data will be used in the process to determine performance evaluation metrics.

It is not evident how the process will capitalize on the available technology and data management systems. Note: although the State Board does not define requirements for the principal evaluation the USOE is initiating the development of the principal evaluation framework consistent with the development of the process to define the teacher evaluation framework. The same observations as previously noted exist for the principal evaluation process.

The legislative support to define a statewide teacher evaluation system that consists of multiple rating categories strengthens the plan. However, the timeline to gain LEA buy in, the absence of references to use student data to determine/prioritize standards as well as the implementation plan, the lack of evidence of a comprehensive professional development plan and the redundancies among the project activities contributes to an incomplete plan.

(iii)

The narrative states that the development of Utah's new statewide framework for teacher evaluation will ensure that all educators will be evaluated and receive feedback on an annual basis. Utah has the technological capacity (and plans to enhance the capacity through the efforts of this grant) to use unique student and teacher identifiers to collect and link student data to teacher effectiveness for purposes of evaluation. What is not clearly specified in the narrative is the formal process for how and from whom teachers will receive feedback about student growth and how this will be linked, in their performance review, to their rating of effectiveness. It is also not clear how the data student growth data will be aggregated to provide information regarding a teacher's class and a principal's school.

(iv)

(a) The narrative describes a traditional approach in response to performance evaluation results – induction support for new teachers through the EYE program, induction support for principals, coaching and professional development and university partnerships. These efforts are supported by a statewide educator development management, tracking and reporting system known as On Track. The system is capable of maintaining individualized professional growth plans, recording professional development activities and tracking licensure hours.

It appears that the data from the performance evaluation will be used to determine strategies for individual support and remediation. What is absent in the plans is a process to aggregate the data to the school, LEA and state level to identify patterns and trends of performance among and across the teacher and principal population to inform improvements to coaching, induction and professional development strategies.

The mention is made again in the application about the need to train LEA principals and teachers on the use of the systems that will capture and monitor professional growth plans. This illuminates the potential need for coordination with project managers of other teams to ensure the efficiency and fidelity of communications to accelerate the learning curve, minimize redundancies and to maximize efficiencies.

There seems to be no mention of funding for the On Track system in the budget or funding associated with coaches and professional development.

(b) The narrative provided information about Master Practitioner and Master Principal (which appeared to be new titles) positions. There was no mention of a detailed career and succession planning process, compensation planning or the use of resources and titles such as Master Coaches that are detailed in the budgets to implement the RTTT programs. This is evidence of the lack of attention to human capital management practices and the inclusion of this discipline as a critical component of the reform agenda organization.

(c) The process to grant tenure is based on Utah's current practices supported by the planned introduction of the new evaluation criteria which sets out rigorous standards and transparent and uniformly implemented procedures. Utah's process does allow LEA discretion to act based on the educator's performance.

(d) Utah's teachers cannot be dismissed without due process. The Orderly Termination Act requires that the LEAs and State follow a prescribed process to advise, counsel and remediate educator performance. The evaluation process is a crucial element of the process and serves to provide the data needed to act on non performance. Tenured teachers may have up to two years to demonstrate competence after the initial evaluation for the need to improve performance.

There is little evidence that the USOE is leveraging the results of the performance evaluation beyond the traditional means to comply with State Board policy. Although the USOE is taking steps to quantify the link between student growth, instructional effectiveness and stakeholder interest, how this data will be used to inform policy and affect practice is not well specified and articulated in the narrative. The plan as outlined meets only the basic elements of a highly quality plan to impact performance and improve student outcomes.

<b>(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>14</b>
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	8
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	6

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

(D)(3)

(i)

Utah struggles to ensure the equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals, especially in its frontier, Title I and Charter schools. Utah is experiencing an increased minority enrollment which the State believes has contributed to this situation. The data provided in the application indicates that only 50.7% of teachers in high poverty and/or high minority are rated "effective". USOE has a four step plan to improve outcomes. The plan requires LEAs to submit a plan for improvement based on the use of multiple sources of data including information about highly quality teacher status, effective teacher and principal data, detailed plans to use incentives, transfers, professional development, and the use of budgets to leverage effective teachers into classrooms. Also, the USOE will monitor the LEA's and IHE's use of the Teacher-Teacher.com, a statewide recruitment tool, and will work with the State's legislature to increase resources for housing and loan forgiveness for teachers in the frontier schools. The plan also includes modification of the CACTUS system to capture relevant data to inform LEA hiring and placement decisions.

Utah's approach to ensuring the equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals is to hold the LEAs accountable for compliance to USOE plans and to report on progress. There is no evidence of USOE and LEA collaboration nor a systemic approach to address the increasing and persistent challenge to ensure that high poverty and/or high minority schools are staffed with effective teachers and principals. The project plan provided in the narrative indicates that CACTUS will be enhanced to house teacher

effectiveness data and plans to conduct a more thorough analysis of staffing patterns to develop for improvement.

The budget is based on targeting up to 13 LEAs with the highest levels of inequity in effective teacher assignments and the USOE working with the Utah Chamber of Commerce, Utah Technology Council and legislative leadership to provide incentives, loan forgiveness and housing supplements to staff the frontier areas. The plan is based on business and industry providing matching funds over a 4 year period of time.

The USOE Performance Measures includes baseline data, however, the USOE did not provide information regarding annual targets.

(ii)

Utah is challenged on two fronts to increase the number of effective teachers teaching hard to staff subjects and specialty content. First, is that only 58.9% of mathematics teachers are rated as "effective" and second is increasing the number of teachers in critical content areas in difficult to staff locations.

The USOE uses a "criticality index" to determine gaps in staffing for critical content areas. Math, the physical sciences and special education are areas of critical need, especially in the frontier areas. To address this issue the USOE is working with its university partners in an effort to focus new teachers on STEM related teaching assignments. To increase teacher effectiveness funds are being channeled to math, science and special education teachers for signing bonuses, retention and professional development to encourage their efforts to gain endorsements and advanced degrees in the critical content areas. From 2004 to 2009 at total of \$15,716, 849 have been spent on these programs. RTTT funds will be used to support LEA efforts to help teacher obtain necessary credentials.

Baseline information regarding the percentage of effective teachers and principals in schools is provided in the application, however, there is no additional information about future targets for improvement. Additionally no information was provided about how the USOE will collaborate with LEAs to staff the critical areas of need.

<b>(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>8</b>
(i) Linking student data to credentialing programs and reporting publicly	7	3
(ii) Expanding effective programs	7	5

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

(D)(4)

(i)

The USOE has the capacity to link student achievement data to teacher data and indicates in the narrative that two new programs will be in place by the Spring of 2011. The first is a program to publish data linking student growth and teacher effectiveness to Utah IHE's on the USOE's website. The system will also include school improvement data tied to principal effectiveness. The narrative indicates that the student achievement metrics will be tied to the new common core standards and be reported beginning in spring of 2012. According to plans provided in the application the assessments are scheduled to be piloted in 2012 and will be implemented in 2013 and 2014. There is no specific plan or annual targets for this program other than the narrative provided in the application.

The second program will use student achievement data to improve teacher and principal preparation programs and inform the work of the Multi State Consortium – Revisioning the Professional Educator Continuum. No plan or annual targets are provided that describes the activities to inform the Consortium's work.

(ii)

The USOE has outlined a plan (without annual targets) to strengthen what the USOE perceives is a strong preparation and credentialing system of providers and system to monitor and improve teacher and principal effectiveness.

The USOE is engaged in a number of state consortia whose efforts will improve teacher preparation and support. These efforts are focused on development of teaching standards, a program to pilot new content and expanded classroom experience and urban schools preparation. Additional efforts are focused on improving principal preparation and the development and use of new leadership standards in principal preparation programs. Finally, the USOE will use the School Leadership Preparation and Practice Survey to gather feedback to recommend changes in IHE and ARL curriculum, intern experiences and administrative program requirements.

Although the USOE detailed the elements of the plan no timeline and targets were provided.

<b>(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>8</b>
(i) Providing effective support	10	5
(ii) Continuously improving the effectiveness of the support	10	3

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

(D)(5)

(i)

The USOE plan detailed in the narrative appears to focus on strategies for a career maturity model designed to address the specific stages of a teacher's career rather than a plan with specific strategies to support current teachers and principals that in their current jobs are challenged to improve student achievement.

There is little mention of strategies to create job embedded use of student data to inform professional development and strategies to engage LEAs in the development of tactics to create workplace structures to support coaching, common planning and collaboration time. There was no mention of working with LEAs to support the design of differentiated instruction to meet the specific needs of high needs students. Nor was there mention of working with LEAs to align systems and remove barriers to practices that will improve student outcomes. There is mention in the narrative about activities for induction, mentoring, professional development,

The plan described in the narrative, as well as the budget, appear to lack a specific emphasis on student needs and strategies to bridge school process and instructional practices to student needs to improve student outcomes.

There was no mention of plans to leverage and link reform strategies previously mentioned in the application into the plan, such as, the use of the common core standards and assessments, the use of the State's Longitudinal Data System, Effective Data Access for Instructional Improvement and Principals Data Institute. Opportunities to leverage these reform activities can possibly increase the efficiency and reduce the possibility of redundant use of time, resources and funding.

(ii)

The USOE plans to work with LEAs and an externally contracted resource to measure, evaluate and continuously improve the local system of support by using data collected from CACTUS, LEA reports and student achievement results. It appears that reports will be generated annually. As such, these reports will provide LEAs little value or insight to inform student achievement efforts, because LEAs would benefit from a continuous improvement system that provides feedback based on rapid time data from reliable sources that is linked to teacher effectiveness and student outcomes.

Total	138	84
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### E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

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

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

(E)(1) On January 7, 2010, the Utah State Board reviewed and passed R277-114, Corrective Action and Withdrawal or Reduction of Program Funds. This ruling provides for investigation, corrective action, monitoring and possible withholding of education funding from LEAs and schools that do not comply with state or federal standards.

<b>(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>25</b>
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	20

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

(E)(2)

(i)

USOE detailed the definition of its persistently lowest-achieving schools and provided a detailed list of schools based on the criteria.

(ii)

The USOE partners with WestEd and implements a two pronged, hybrid approach to turn around its lowest performing schools. The first is a Title I System of Support (SOS) model to prevent a school from becoming persistently low performing. The second is the use of an intervention model in persistently low performing schools.

The USOE has a system for rating low performing schools. Based on its rating criteria the USOE identifies Tier I, Tier II and Tier III schools. If an LEA's schools appear on the list the LEA is required to analyze the needs of its Tier I and Tier II schools and must proceed through a rigorous series of requirements to assess

conditions (leadership and instructional strengths and challenges) that contribute to the current outcomes and use this information to create and implement an improvement plan. The USOE System of Support is an integral part of the prevention model. The SOS is a comprehensive process that commits an LEA to improvement in the four reform areas supported by professional development, USOE resources and other appropriate stakeholder engagement. The narrative provides a look at six case studies of schools that used the SOS to increase student outcomes. The ARRA RTTT school intervention models are included as the final step in the four step System of Support process and would be used only if a school does not respond to the Utah Title 1 System of Support. One example is provided that demonstrates how the Turnaround Model was used in the West Middle School.

Persistently low performing LEAs and schools must engage in an in depth analysis of the student achievement, student growth, school demographic, teacher and principal (and other relevant) data as a basis to determine the most appropriate intervention model. The LEA must create a comprehensive turnaround plan and work with a USOE School Improvement team to implement the plan and monitor the LEAs progress towards improvement.

The USOE performance measures detail a plan to use one of the four school intervention models with eight schools during the next four years. It is noted that there are 14 schools in Tier I and one LEA with all of its schools in either Tier I Tier II or Tier III.

The USOE has what appears to be a successful model in place with plans to integrate the ARRA RTTT School Intervention Model; however, with 40 schools identified in the application as low achieving it is unclear how the USOE plans to work with LEAs, what resources will be brought to bear to improve these schools results and which of the two approaches these LEAs will be directed to employ.

Total	50	35
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**F. General**

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

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

(F)(1)

(i)

Utah's percentage of total state revenues used to support public education and higher education increased from 53.7% in 2008 to 59.2% in 2009.

(ii)

The State's funding policy ensures that "on average, per pupil funding is the same in wealthy as in poor LEAs and that income related funding gap exists". Utah has a "weighted pupil unit" that is used as the basis for determining specific funding amounts for specific types of students and programs within the Minimum School Program Act. This funding formula helps to ensure equitable funding for all school children. Additionally, Utah has two other funding programs the Highly Impacted School and the Necessarily Existing Small School programs that ensure that factors such as student mobility, SES, school size and location do not adversely impact school/student funding.

<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>39</b>
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	8
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	8
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	8
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	7
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	8

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

(F)(2)

(i)

The State does not have a cap or prohibit or effectively inhibit increasing the number of high performing charter schools. There are currently 72 charter schools operating in the State (7.3% of schools) serving 6% of the student population. The type of charters, to name some, includes Core Knowledge, Arts Focused, Early College, International Baccalaureate, Science and Technology, Virtual Learning, etc.

(ii)

The State has a charter school law that includes student achievement as a significant factor, and also financial management and performance as considerations for revoking a charter. The law encourages charters for under served student populations which may include low income students, students with disabilities, English language learners or students in remote areas of the state. The law also provides for charters to provide opportunities for innovative teaching practices, new public school models, increased choice in learning models and new forms of accountability.

Only one charter has had its charter revoked. This was because the school failed to make progress towards opening in its preparatory year. Another closed voluntarily and two are being closely monitored by the State Charter School Board. Between 2005 and 2009 a total of 71 charter applications were submitted; 30 were approved and 41 were denied. The reasons for denial include poor applications, lack of readiness to open, financial considerations and applications withdrawn.

(iii)

The charter schools are funded on the principle that funds follow the student. This represents funding equal to traditional public schools and is a commensurate share of State, Local and Federal funding.

(iv)

The Utah law does not impose any facility-related requirements on charter schools that are stricter than those applied for public schools. The law provides assistance to charter schools for facilities in three ways: 1)10% of local replacement funds must be used for facilities; 2) a state funded revolving loan is available to charter schools; and 3) for a nominal fee charter schools can participate in traditional school athletic programs that use traditional school athletic facilities. No mention is made in the narrative or in the Appendix about the charter schools ability to share in bonds and mill levies.

(v)

The State enables LEAs to operate a multitude of innovative, autonomous schools including IB schools, a distance learning high school, CTE schools, Adult Education programs, year round schools, early college high schools, etc. The state has local school community councils that makes decisions about student needs at the local level.

<b>(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>		
(F)(3)		
Utah State law creates the conditions for education reform and innovation and prevents action that inhibits innovation, efficiency and productivity in a public school, charter school, or school district. A list of the laws governing these schools is provided in the narrative. The USOE provides a list of its innovative schools; however, it does not provide evidence of these schools' impact on student achievement other than anecdotal narrative.		
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>52</b>

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

	Available	Tier 1
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Utah has a high quality systemic plan that spans elementary, secondary, higher education, business and industry involvement supported by the implementation of the common core standards, targeted efforts within their MESA program, professional development to improve STEM instruction and parental involvement.		
Specifically, the USOE STEM efforts are intended to offer a rigorous course of study by creating a STEM college and career pathways and aligning STEM courses beginning at the end of 6th through 12th grade. The USOE will work with IHE to ensure that USOE STEM course are vertically and horizontally aligned. The USOE also plans to use data analysis to inform improvements and extend STEM programs into its Career and Technical Education (CTE) initiatives to increase student participation.		
The STEM Task Force will work with the Teaching and Learning Team to coordinate efforts for professional development. Additional strategies to engage teachers in professional development and teacher advance in STEM related content includes the use of salary incentives for math and science teachers. Additionally, the USOE Science Technology and Research (USTAR) program extends teacher pay for math and science educators and provides for extended learning time (extended school year and school day) for students. USOE business partners and community relationships provide internships for teacher leaders to experience hand on real world learning to improve and enhance their knowledge and skills.		
Utah reaches underserved groups and women and girls by providing classes and clubs through the MESA program. School counselors encourage students to enroll in STEM courses and Early College High		

Schools target and recruit girls and students from underrepresented groups to attend. The CTE curriculum has successfully introduced engineering, biotech and information technology courses.

The STEM emphasis is woven throughout Utah's Promises to Keep effort and throughout the four reform areas.

15 points.

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

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

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

Utah's Comprehensive Reform Plan marries the USOE's Promises to Keep agenda with the RTTT four reform areas and lays forth very specific strategies and tactics to meet very aggressive goals. The strategies as described are generally intended to ensure implementation of USOE defined programs and processes and to manage LEA compliance rather than to lead, collaborate and engage LEA participation.

The USOE has reorganized to ensure that capacity exists within the organization to support the reform agenda. It was persistently evident in the plans for each reform area that the members of each organization will need to establish strong lines of communication and work process to streamline potential redundancies, ensure the seamless implementation of programs and processes to avoid overburdening and confusing the LEAs.

Utah's Success Factors position them well to implement the plan with the cooperation from LEAs, higher education institutions, legislators, community members and parents. The USOE must focus its efforts to gain LEAs union leadership and teacher support to realize the full impact of its plan. This is especially important because an analysis of the data indicates that approximately 20% of Utah's students attend schools in LEAs that did not have union leader signature on the MOU and of these over 44,000 students are students in poverty.

Utah's students are showing steady growth from 2003-2009; however, the achievement gap between White and Asian students and the other subgroups persists. The USOE has two predominant reform area strengths – Standards and Assessments and Data Systems to Support Instruction. The USOE leadership role in the CCSSO Consortium and the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium and the experience implementing a statewide adoption of core standards position Utah to accelerate the implementation and support of common core standards and related assessments. The state of the art longitudinal data systems, the CACTUS system, the ability to determine the "growth value" for each student and link this data to teacher effectiveness will ensure that LEAs and school have the data needed to make informed decisions about instructional strategies for each and every individual child.

Although the plans for creating Great Teachers and Principals generally met the criteria, there was a lack of innovation and a definite lack of specific attention to the strategic value of human capital management process to improve student outcomes. The organization structure lacks a strategic level human capital visibility and emphasis to ensure a coordinated and systemic effort regarding change management, professional development, scaling processes and sustainability across all reform areas.

The USOE System of Support for Low Performing schools is institutionalized and bearing results. The theory of preventing low performing schools was well described and supported with data.

The budget is interesting in that a majority of the dollars are targeted to Standards and Assessment and Data Systems to fund the implementation and integration of data systems and the least amount of dollars are allocated to the reform areas that impact people and low performing students. It is noted that almost every reform area plan depends upon external resources. It was not evident how the USOE will build the internal capacity that will be needed to sustain the reform after the RTTT dollars are exhausted.

Utah's plan has its strengths and areas of concerns. When this is balanced by Utah's commitment to students and the great need to improve student outcomes an investment in Utah's plan, with consideration given to the aforementioned points, has the potential to impact students and staff and the community they serve.

Total		0
Grand Total	500	339



# Race to the Top

## Technical Review Form - Tier 1



Utah Application #4400UT-5

### A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1
<b>(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>43</b>
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	30
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	8

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

(i) Utah's plan is comprehensively presented in a concise, logical manner through a vivid narrative outlining its statewide education reform agenda in a way fully consistent with the four education areas described in the ARRA. The State Board of Education made a commitment to four promises that were enacted in the summer of 2009. These promises are each aligned with and supportive of the framework required by this competition in placing an emphasis on students being college and career ready, full literacy across the State, high-quality instruction, curriculum with high standards and relevance, and effective assessments.

Therefore, the existing State reform framework suggests a strong opportunity for Race to the Top to greatly augment the probability of achieving Utah's goals. Utah's performance goals are based firmly on strong student outcomes. The State's goals in Reading/Language Arts, Mathematics, increased graduation rates and college enrollment are ambitious yet achievable based on the historical context presented in the narrative. These goals, performance targets and precise time frames are evidence of a statewide agenda consistent with the spirit expected in Race to the Top. Utah's Comprehensive Reform Plan is compelling evidence of an agenda that will achieve statewide impact. Further, the 18 projects that are detailed in this section as specific tactics in support of the Reform Areas paints a complete portrait of an ambitious, exciting and bold agenda along with clear evidence of exactly where the State intends to go with the support of Race to the Top funds. The plan is thoughtfully integrated and aligned while providing a clear and credible path forward.

(ii) Utah has succeeded in obtaining 100% participation of its 41 qualified LEAs and participation of 95.7% of the State's 70 qualified charter LEAs. The MOU follows the template guideline provided within the Notice and meets the criterion. However, the narrative asserts that the details included in Utah's Comprehensive Reform Plan "outlines the specific activities that each participating LEA has agreed to perform" without then including evidence of this either through the Scope of Work in the MOU nor through any evidence given which would indicate how the LEAs are bound to the Plan. Instead, the narrative presents the MOU and Plan as essentially parallel documents that lack any supporting evidence of a formal intersection that would bind the LEAs to the agenda described in the plan. The The State has secured a substantial number of signatures as required by the criterion but is inadequate in a very important area. The teachers unions in the State's four largest districts of Washington, Salt Lake, Nebo and Canyon represent a student population of 110,518 or 20% of the total State student population. The argument for credible statewide reform is weakened by the absence of these signatures.

(iii) The application provides clear evidence that the State's Race to the Top plans are thoughtfully focused on broad statewide impact. The agenda is presented thoroughly in the narrative with credible plans to increase student achievement in reading/language arts and mathematics, decreasing the achievement gaps between subgroups, increasing high school graduation rates and increasing college enrollment.

Ample evidence is provided to meet the criterion, however, the absence of participation by the teachers unions in the State's four largest districts calls into question the overall ability to translate the plan into broad statewide impact.

<b>(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>20</b>
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	16
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	4

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

(i) (a) The application provides a clear understanding of how the State is currently organized to ensure capacity to implement Race to the Top and also indicates exactly how the State's infrastructure will be augmented to appropriately increase LEA capacity in each of the reform areas. The Teaching and Learning Team as well as the Data Assessment and Accountability Team indicate a depth in structure to support a grant of this magnitude. However, the single Coordinator identified to work under the ESEA Director as the total School Improvement Team seems to be inadequate.

(b) The narrative fails to provide sufficient evidence of specific activities as required by the criterion for how the plan will support LEAs in identifying promising practices, evaluating these practices' effectiveness, ceasing ineffective practices, disseminating and replicating effective practices statewide or how the State will hold participating LEAs accountable for progress and performance. The description of the Oversight Team is thin in that teams are referenced without then indicating who will be on the teams, how these teams will work together nor is any detail provided that supports evidence for meeting the criterion.

(c) Utah has a comprehensive process for administering federal grants and proposes to use the same process for Race to the Top that meets the criterion with regard to grant implementation and oversight, budget reporting and monitoring, performance measure tracking and fund disbursement.

(d) The application provides detailed evidence of how existing state and federal funds are applied in support of the State's goals in each of the Reform Areas. The plan substantiates the fact that the State's education budget is fully aligned with the reform agenda and that this budget is in place with or without Race to the Top funding. The plan explains that Race to the Top funds will allow increased capacity to move all four reform areas forward quickly and simultaneously. The budget narrative is thorough in providing nineteen project-level budgets that are targeted on critical elements within each Reform Area. The budget detail provided in the appendix is very comprehensive.

(e) The overall narrative for this section offers a clear explanation that Utah is committed to the reform agenda to the capacity that its existing resources will allow, with or without access to Race to the Top funds. This is indicated in the alignment of existing federal and state dollars to support the reform agenda and the complete restructuring of the State's education infrastructure to support their agenda for many years to come.

(ii) The State has undertaken a thoughtful and comprehensive approach to include a broad array of critical stakeholders in preparation for implementing its plans. This is evidenced by the actions taken to conduct outreach meetings among education stakeholders in five different regions including both urban and frontier counties. As required by the criterion, the application does include letters of support from the State's teachers and principals associations though these letters are bland in content, appear to be somewhat pro-forma, and provide little evidence of truly strong support. Other critical stakeholders, such as members of the charter school community, higher education, tribal education boards, parent organizations, State political leadership and non-profit organizations, have presented letters, as required by the criterion. However, these letters largely follow an identical format and are lacking any specific evidence of how their support is linked to the reform agenda articulated in the State's plan therefore resulting in a lower score.

<b>(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>19</b>
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	4
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	15
<b>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>		
<p>(i) The application provides an abundance of detailed evidence in support of the State's commitment to making progress in each of the four Reform Areas. What is less clear from the narrative is just how much progress has been made through the establishment of the myriad of elements described. The school level case studies provide some excellent detail regarding their experience and success but this evidence of measured progress is limited to the reform aspect of turning around lowest achieving schools.</p> <p>(ii) (a) The State's progress on its CRT scores since 2003 is unremarkable. The mathematics scores over the seven year period have decreased by four percentage points while English/Language Arts scores have only increased by under two percentage points over the same period. By subgroup and when considering the achievement gap, the CRT scores indicate substantial challenges in mathematics where scores across all but one subgroup decreased significantly while reading scores showed generally modest gains across subgroups. This is explained due to the change in mathematics standards and corresponding assessments in 2009. The picture presented for NAEP scores is generally very positive for Grade 4 Reading, level for Grade 8 Reading, outstanding specifically for Grade 4 Math, and mixed for Grade 8 Math.</p> <p>(b) The achievement gap is clearly being reduced in Utah based on the evidence provided in its NAEP and CRT scores. The improvement in scores for students with disabilities is particularly impressive. Results are similar for student performance in the NAEP for Math. Generally, all subgroups demonstrated improvement except for level or mixed scores among ELL students. Overall, the State has experienced steady improvement in NAEP and CRT scores when considered in terms of decreasing the achievement gap.</p> <p>(c) Success in terms of graduation rates appears to remain elusive. While the overall graduation rate remains flat over the prior three years, the graduation rates have decreased over a majority of subgroups within this period.</p>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>82</b>

**B. Standards and Assessments**

	Available	Tier 1
<b>(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20
<b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>		
<p>(i) Utah is participating in the Common Core Standards consortia being developed under the leadership of the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association, as evidenced by the executed Memorandum of Agreement and draft standards included in the application. Utah is one of 47 States and 3 Territories that comprise the consortium. The Common Core Standards are internationally benchmarked and targeted toward college and career readiness as required by the criterion.</p> <p>(ii) Utah has committed to adopting the Common Core Standards by August 2, 2010 and the application provides a credible path and timetable for meeting this goal including specific activities to be undertaken by both the SEA and LEAs. The State's timeline indicates a June 2010 deadline for the State Board of</p>		

Education to adopt the Common Core Standards well in advance of the August 2 deadline stated in the criterion and also represents that Utah has already reviewed and mapped its current standards against the Common Core Standards thereby demonstrating progress toward adoption.

<b>(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality assessments	5	5
(ii) Including a significant number of States	5	5
<b>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>		
<p>(i) Utah is a member of the Summative Multi-State Resources for Teachers and Education Research (SMARTER) Balanced Consortium. The State has also taken a leadership role in the consortium through having its Associate Superintendent for the Assessment and Accountability serve as co-chairman. The application provides descriptive evidence that the consortium has prioritized the development of a new generation assessment system that support ongoing improvements in instruction and learning which is consistent with the expectation of this competition.</p> <p>(ii) SMARTER has a total of 32 participating States therefore indicating a significant number as required by the criterion and qualifies Utah for a high score. The application includes a complete list of participating States.</p>		
<b>(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>		
<p>The application presents a high-quality plan for integrating the implementation of newly adopted Common Core Standards with new assessments to measure student performance against these standards. The plan includes specific objectives for professional development activities, consistent with an ambitious yet reasonable timetable, to support implementation of the new Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics common core standards by teachers, administrators and LEAs. Responsible parties and timelines are specifically identified throughout the application. The narrative provides a concise and comprehensive explanation of the State's plan for effectively implementing its standards consistent with a results-oriented approach that builds toward college and career readiness starting in the sixth grade with high-quality assessments linked to these standards. The application is thorough in its presentation of activities and timelines to achieve these objectives with an emphasis on innovative strategies including optional extended-day kindergarten and processes for effectively using data to identify and replicate high performing projects and practices. Finally, the State's overall plan for integrating its new, high-quality assessments is based on a solid appreciation and understanding of historical experience and is presented in a reasonable, coherent manner suggesting a high likelihood of success.</p>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>70</b>

**C. Data Systems to Support Instruction**

	Available	Tier 1
<b>(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>		
<p>The application provides evidence and reasonable documentation in the appendix that Utah has a statewide longitudinal data system that includes all of the America COMPETES Act elements as required by the criterion. Further, the application provides a detailed status of the ongoing development of compliance with the seven capabilities prescribed by the 2009 ARRA statewide longitudinal data system</p>		

request for application prescribes. Although the status of each of the twelve elements varies to some degree as indicated by the ongoing and future development described in the application that are largely being accomplished as part of the ARRA SLDS grant awarded to Utah, sufficient evidence is in place that the elements are complete to earn full points.

<b>(C)(2) Accessing and using State data</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>		
<p>The application provides a reasonable and credible plan for ensuring wide use of the State's data system by the stakeholders required in the criterion however there are gaps in the narrative for describing exactly how this will be achieved. For example, the Activity Table for Project Two, Activity 4, asserts that the State will "conduct an outreach program to inform researchers and policymakers of the data available to them" but does not offer any explanation for who will be responsible for this or how it will be accomplished. The State's plan relies heavily on the use of contractors in several key elements of the work described but fails to amplify on the criteria expected of these contractors or how the process will be monitored and evaluated. Finally, the application asserts the importance of accessible data for teachers, principals, policymakers and researchers to make informed decisions about instruction but does not provide sufficient detail to support the assertion.</p>		
<b>(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>5</b>
(i) Increasing the use of instructional improvement systems	6	1
(ii) Supporting LEAs, schools, and teachers in using instructional improvement systems	6	4
(iii) Making the data from instructional improvement systems available to researchers	6	0
<b>(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>		
<p>(i) The application is somewhat confusing in that the reference to "increasing the acquisition, adoption and use of local instructional improvement systems that provide teachers, principals, researchers, and administrators with meaningful support and actionable data" is included in C(2) and is not referenced as required in C(3). Activity 1 in the Activity Table for Project Two asserts a three step process to accomplish this goal but the supporting descriptions for how this will be done are thin and not sufficient to meet the criterion. There is no supporting evidence for how the plan will use Race to the Top resources to inform and improve the State's instructional practices, decision-making and overall effectiveness as required by the criterion.</p> <p>(ii) The State's plan is reasonable with regard to how support and professional development will be provided to LEAs, teachers, principals and administrators on how to use instructional improvement systems. The plan articulates three activities which emphasize separate and critical elements of data reporting including understanding and using at-risk, dropout and graduation data which is an impressive dimension of the plan.</p> <p>(iii) Beyond a casual reference to researchers, the plan does not provide any detailed evidence for how the State would make the data from instructional improvement systems, together with statewide longitudinal data system data, available and accessible. The application simply does not address the requirements of this criterion.</p>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>31</b>

**D. Great Teachers and Leaders**

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

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

(i) Overall, the application references Utah's participation as a principal member of the Multi-State Consortium for Revisioning the Professional Educator Continuum as evidence of the State's ongoing commitment to define successful models of programs designed to produce great teachers and leaders. More detail with regard to the goals, timeframe and processes envisioned in this work would have provided a better framework to evaluate these activities against the required criterion. Utah has an extensive system of alternative licensure pathways for teachers and principals that are innovative and evidenced by longstanding statute. In addition to Institutes of Higher Education, multiple pathways also include those offered by qualified private providers in addition to collaborations among the Utah State Office of Education and LEAs. As required by the criterion, the plan provides credible evidence that all five of the elements listed in the definition of alternative routes to certification are met.

(ii) The application provides ample evidence of effective alternative licensure programs currently in use for teachers representing 14% of all new teachers hired in the 2008-2009 school year. The largest of these is offered by the Utah State Office of Education. Additional programs are offered by the American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence, Troops to Teachers and university based alternative pathways. The narrative emphasizes the fact that alternative preparation programs do not need to be affiliated with an institute of higher education. Evidence is provided that alternative pathways for administrators are also currently in use as required by the criterion.

(iii) Utah has a comprehensive and effective system in place to track teacher shortages and a more indirect process for tracking principal shortages. While the application points out that principal shortages are not an issue in Utah, the State's Computer Aided Credentials of Teachers in Utah Schools contains the necessary data for use in informing recruitment and retention efforts. Specifically, the narrative provides a thorough description of the Criticality Index and its use to track teacher shortages. Given the unique circumstances of the frontier counties and the resulting challenges for filling teacher needs in those areas, the State's plan is reasonable and credible with regard to efforts to successfully address them.

<b>(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>50</b>
(i) Measuring student growth	5	5
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	15
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	10
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	20

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

(i) Utah has an impressive system to measure student growth through both criterion referenced and summative data and a clear process for tracking each individual student with his or her own unique personal identification number.

(ii) The application is comprehensive in providing credible evidence for the State's plan to design and implement rigorous, transparent and fair evaluation systems for teachers and principals that use student growth as a key factor. Working with the State Board of Education and the Legislature and building upon

the work of a representative group of P-12 LEA-based educators and teacher education faculty known as the Educator Quality Workgroup, the State has produced a thorough plan, supported by enacted legislation, for implementing an effective statewide educator evaluation system. These systems include multiple rating categories and were developed with strong involvement by teachers and principals as required by the criterion. Responsibility for each aspect of the activities outlined to execute the plan are clearly identified in the application.

(iii) The State's plan provides for annual educator evaluations as part of a new statewide framework for teacher evaluation, though evaluations are currently required every three years. Student growth data is provided annually to schools and can be aggregated for principal evaluations. Data disaggregated by teacher can be used for teacher evaluation. Evidence is presented to support that data are provided in a timely manner to enable constructive feedback for teacher and principal evaluations.

(iv) (a) The application describes the State's detailed plan for offering induction support for teachers through its Entry Years Enhancement program for Level 1 or provisional educators. This program indicates a strong commitment by the State to invest energy and resources to offer maximum support to new teachers. A similarly strong mentoring program exists for principals including the use of learning communities among principals. The State has an innovative program for professional development for teachers and principals called OnTrack that is comprehensive and that aligns professional development with state and local standards. A particularly interesting feature of this system is the use of on-demand access to nearly 1000 research-based video segments.

(b) The State's plan does include additional compensation and recognition provisions through extended contracts for Master Practitioners and Master Principals that also allows for additional responsibilities as required by the criterion. However, retention plans are not clearly articulated in the plan.

(c) The State has a clearly defined process for the fair determination for granting tenure or full certification to teachers and principals. Sufficient time and information needed to improve performance are a part of this process. Formative and summative data including student growth are used in combination with stakeholder input to made decisions regarding tenure which is consistent with what is required by this criterion.

(d) Utah has specific legislation in place under the Orderly Termination Act that specifies the process through which ineffective tenured or untenured teachers and principals may be removed. The process presented is fair and transparent. Tenured teachers have as much as two years to demonstrate competency after their initial evaluation indicating the need for improvement.

The criterion requires evidence of achievable yet ambitious annual performance targets linked with each of the elements within the criterion. Except for evidence that 100% of participating LEAs measure student growth, performance targets are not provided for any other category resulting in a reduced score.

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

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

(i) Utah has legislation in place requiring the State to comply with the equitable distribution of highly qualified and experienced teachers in settings with high percentages of poor and minority children. The State has presented a credible process in the application for how it monitors teacher qualification and experience relying on LEAs to analyze their own growth data and develop equitable distribution plans to ensure compliance. The State's plan includes a particular focus on challenging compliance issues that exist in charter schools and frontier LEAs. The State requires any LEA that is identified as having a deficiency to submit a plan to amend inequitable distribution within 90 days. However, the application fails to include the specific performance targets, required by the criterion, with an explanation given that "teacher level aggregation could not be made in time for the grant application."

(ii) The State's plan includes an annual survey of each LEA to determine staffing needs in hard-to-staff areas, specifically identified for Utah as being in the areas of mathematics, the physical sciences and special education. Utah has created loan program incentives to encourage education students in shortage areas in addition to placing a focus on recruiting outstanding students to teach in prioritized critical areas of need and to recognize teaching as a positive career choice. The State describes a particularly innovative

statewide online application system that provides access to a nationwide pool of applicants for frontier LEAs as a mechanism to address shortages in these counties. The plan is credible and comprehensive.

<b>(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>12</b>
(i) Linking student data to credentialing programs and reporting publicly	7	5
(ii) Expanding effective programs	7	7
<b>(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>		
<p>(i) As part of the State's SLDS grant, Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) will publicly report student achievement data that is linked to teacher data for each college or university. The IHE's are currently collecting this data but have not been required to report it publicly. The plan indicates that public reporting of school achievement metrics as tied to effectiveness will begin in the spring of 2012. The plan also describes that State's participation in a multi-state consortium to better utilize student achievement data to improve teacher and principal preparation programs. The overall plan and activities are reasonable and meet the criterion except that the application does not provide the required performance targets.</p> <p>(ii) In addition to providing credible evidence of the State's plan for expanding successful preparation and credentialing programs, the State also has in place an effective system for terminating those programs that are not successful. The State will use longitudinal data that indicate high numbers of highly effective and effective teachers to identify the most successful programs with a particular emphasis on those programs that produce more teachers in hard-to-fill subject areas especially math and science. Utah's plan is aggressive as reflected by the State's participation in two multi-state consortia to further support its plans for identifying and expanding effective programs. The plan presents credible evidence for identifying and supporting expansion of successful principal preparation programs as well.</p>		
<b>(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>
(i) Providing effective support	10	10
(ii) Continuously improving the effectiveness of the support	10	8
<b>(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>		
<p>(i) Utah has adapted the National Staff Development Council Professional Learning Standards, called the Utah Professional Development Standards, as the basis for its plan to provide effective, data-informed professional development. The standards include the elements required by the criterion and the plan references multiple activities underway to enhance ongoing support to teachers and principals, among them are a pilot program focused on urban elementary teacher preparation programs as well as novice, developing and experienced practitioner programs. The State has a high-quality plan with strong evidence presented in thoroughly described activities and ambitious yet achievable timelines that meet the criterion.</p> <p>(ii) The plan includes annual review of student achievement data, effective teachers and principal preparation programs, and professional development, collected from multiple sources, to measure, evaluate and continuously improve the effectiveness of supports to teachers and principals. The application provides limited details in support of this commitment, however, which limits the ability to completely evaluate against the criterion.</p>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>120</b>

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

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>
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<b>(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> The application provides statutory evidence that the State has the authority to intervene directly in persistently lowest-achieving schools and LEAs.		
<b>(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	35
<b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> (i) Utah's definitions for identifying its lowest-achieving schools are consistent with the definitions included in the School Improvement Grant and the ARRA Stabilization Phase 2 Grant application. The application provides specific evidence of the State's use of this definition to identify all Title I schools that are persistently low achieving as well as putting in place a system to identify non-Title I schools that are at risk. The plan presented is comprehensive, coherent and detailed including a list of all schools currently identified as persistently lowest-achieving.  (ii) Utah uses a System of Support (SOS) model to focus on turning around persistently low-achieving schools. The application is well-written in this section and captures the spirit intended by this competition as symbolized by the plan's phrase, "Race to the Top is a Race to Prevent Failure." The plan provides specific evidence of the State's experience related to several of the fifteen schools currently in improvement status as of the 2008-2009 school year. The plan outlines a specific process to turn around failing and persistently-struggling schools that is consistent with the implementation of one of the four school intervention models. The plan includes an initial, thorough analysis of a variety of multiple data sources and, based upon this analysis, a required rationale for why the LEA selected the intervention model for each school. The plan is very detailed and vivid in its requirements of LEAs to address this problem consistent with the criterion. The activities described as part of the two projects related to developing a system of support for low-achieving schools and preventing low-achieving secondary schools are clear, comprehensive, binding and substantive. Finally, the State has only one school that has gone through a restructuring process. This school decided to use a turnaround model and made AYP in its first year of operation indicating, to some degree as it is only referring to one school, the effective procedures put in place by the State.		
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>

**F. General**

	Available	Tier 1
<b>(F)(1) Making education funding a priority</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
(i) Allocating a consistent percentage of State revenue to education	5	5
(ii) Equitably funding high-poverty schools	5	5
<b>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> (i) Although the combined budgets for public education and higher education decreased from 2008 to 2009, the percentage of total revenues available to the State in FY09 is greater by almost 6% than that available in FY08. Consistent with the requirements of the criterion, the application earns full points.  (ii) (a) The State's Constitution and existing legislative statues ensure equitable funding between high-need LEAs and other LEAs. Evidence is amply provided in the application to substantiate this.		

(b) Further, State law exists to require policies for equitable funding within LEAs as required by the criterion. The application provides sufficient evidence. The application also provides evidence of two existing State programs designed to ensure equitable funding between high-poverty schools and other high need schools as required by the criterion.

<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>30</b>
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	4
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	7
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	3
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	8
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	8

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

- (i) The State does not place a cap on the number of charter schools in Utah, however, due to funding limitations, State law does limit charter school enrollment. While the application provides a reasonable explanation for this provision, guidance requires that a medium score be given.
- (ii) The Utah laws governing charter schools are detailed and comprehensive with regard to charter authorization, monitoring and evaluation, and the process required to close under performing or unsatisfactory charter schools. The application does not make specific reference to a requirement that authorizers require student achievement be one significant factor in the decision to renew or authorize charters though the statute requires an annual review of student indicators for all schools, disaggregated for various subgroups. However, detailed review of the statute included in the appendix provided evidence that student achievement is a factor in authorization, expansion and repeal of charter agreements. Student achievement is a factor when determining charter school expansion in terms of student performance on standardized assessments as indicated in the statute. The statute also includes language that "charter agreements can be repealed based upon factors that may include persistently low student achievement inconsistent with comparable schools."
- (iii) The application provides limited evidence of equitable funding for charter schools within the narrative beyond a few sentences asserting that "locally chartered school students receive equal funding to students attending traditional schools in the district." There is no discussion in the application of whether a commensurate share of local, State and Federal funds are provided to charter schools as required by the criterion.
- (iv) The application presents evidence that facilities funds are available to charter schools.. Further, Utah's State law does not impose any facility-related requirements on charter schools that are stricter than those applied to traditional public schools as required by the criterion.
- (v) The application describes nine distinct examples of how the State has enabled LEAs to operate innovative, autonomous public schools other than charter schools. In fact, the enabling legislation pre-dates the State's charter school law.

<b>(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>
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**(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

The criterion requires a description in the text of this section of the application that provides an explanation of how the State is demonstrating other significant reform conditions. The application lists a series of Utah Code and State Board Rules without any descriptive language of what is meant for each. This is followed by a very few sentences that offer weak support of any evidence that other conditions exist that have

increased student achievement or graduation rates, narrowed achievement gaps or resulted in other important outcomes as required by the criterion. The application does not address this criterion.		
Total	55	40

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

	Available	Tier 1
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>		
<p>The application provides consistent evidence of the State's commitment to a STEM focused reform agenda throughout the narrative in a number of sections and succeeds in presenting a high quality plan in this regard. This is amplified by the summary provided specifically within this section. The application comprehensively addresses with sufficient evidence each of the requirements contained in the criterion for this Priority. These include detailed explanations of planned activities and projects with reasonable and specific timelines. This is a well-written component of the application and justifies full points.</p>		
Total	15	15

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

	Available	Tier 1
<b>Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform</b>		<b>Yes</b>
<b>Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>		
<p>Utah's application is well-written, comprehensive in almost every aspect and coherently addresses all of the four education reform areas specified in the ARRA as well as State Success Factors Criteria. The State provides ample evidence of sufficient LEA participation and the commitment of these LEAs to successfully implement and achieve the goals described in the plan. Throughout the application, consistent evidence is provided to support Utah's commitment to use Race to the Top funds in a thoughtful, well-organized manner to increase student achievement, decrease achievement gaps across student subgroups and increase rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers. Moreover, the application reflects a sustained commitment in each of the critical areas for achieving the State's overall reform goals therefore presenting a credible, high-quality plan.</p>		
Total		0

<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>408</b>
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# Race to the Top

## Technical Review Form - Tier 1

### Utah Application #4400UT-7



#### A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1
<b>(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>62</b>
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	42
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	15

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

- i. The applicant has a strategic reform plan that aligns with the four RTTT areas. The plan includes specific goals with clear paths for achieving those goals. Much of what is included in the application is all ready in place—the applicant's intentions for RTTT funds are to expand on and accelerate what is currently taking place in the state.
- ii. There is strong support for the state's plans among LEAs, evidenced by agreement of participation on the scope of work from by all LEAs in the state. Of the 70 charter schools operating in the state, 64 agreed to participate on the scope of work as well. The MOU can only be changed through agreement from all partners. All superintendents' signatures are included, as are the signatures from 93.5 % of the local school boards and 87.2% of local teachers' unions. In the case of the latter, there is no discussion in the application of how the state intends to work with local teachers' unions that do not support the states' reform agenda plans.
- iii. The applicant's reform agenda focuses on improved achievement in reading/language arts and mathematics across the state. While there have been periods of increased achievement for all students over the past several years, the rate of achievement has not been acceptable to the state. As a result, the reform agenda has a goal to accelerate the rate of achievement. Achievement levels for students of color reflect continuous improvement in reading/language arts, and mathematics for Latino/Hispanic students. Mathematics achievement among American Indian students has not improved. While the state has experienced a reduction in the achievement gap between white and students of color, the rate of reduction has been slow. As a result the state plans to reduce the achievement gap between white and students of color by 50% in reading/language arts and mathematics over a four year period. This is an ambitious goal and may be achievable in reading/language arts and in mathematics for Latino/Hispanic students, since there is evidence of past success. Without highly innovative approaches and resources, the achievement of these goals in mathematics for Native American students in such a short period (4 years) is questionable since mathematics achievement for American Indian students has proved to be a challenge for the state. It must be noted however that only one school in the state had not achieved AYP for several years—and it appears that this school was populated with substantial numbers of Ute students. With state intervention, and support and efforts of the local community, this school eventually reached AYP. This achievement however is placed next to American Indian math achievement throughout the state that has remained stagnant. Replication of success such as this in multiple LEAs will be required in order for the state to achieve its goals. The state proposes conservative goals for increased enrollment in public higher education institutions, although the percent of increase does not include improved enrollment of students in private institutions. Although specific graduation rates for students of color are not included in the application, the applicant plans to reduce the gap for students of color by 50%, which is a laudable goal

regardless of the current graduation rate. It is evident that the applicant is interested in accelerating achievement of goals they believe are possible, even if RTTT funds are not forthcoming.

<b>(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>24</b>
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	20
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	4

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

i. The state has an organizational and leadership structure that should enhance its ability to implement programs and support participating LEAs. Existing teams are organized in structures to support the four RTTT areas, and additional teams will be organized to increase the capacity of the state to carry out the strategic plan. Expected responsibilities, timelines and activities for each team are listed in *Utah's Comprehensive Reform Plan*. Having existing personnel who are familiar with the state's plan should reduce the amount of start-up time necessary to begin action outlined in the agenda. Support for LEAs is in the form of funding and assistance from state teams. LEAs will have the flexibility to determine how they reach strategic plan goals—which in effect supports local control while all LEAs are working toward a common state agenda. Funds are available in the form of grants to LEAs with the lowest performing schools, with additional funds for schools with high populations of students in poverty. This use of funds is consistent with the state's goals to reduce the achievement gap and increase graduation rates among specific sub-groups of students. Specifics as to how LEAs will access the funds are not discussed. The state's use of existing personnel with limited additional funds supports the possibility that successful projects will continue when the grant period has ended.

ii. Educators and a broad array of business, community, and government leaders have been involved with the strategic plan since its inception. The goals of the plan were generated from inputs from focus group meetings involving stakeholders and letters of support were submitted by 27 stakeholders. The letters fall into three categories: letters where no mention is made of the specifics or impact of the strategic plan from the stakeholder's perspective; letters where the purpose of the organization or association is stated, along with support to "raise achievement and accelerate reform;" and letters where authors clearly see the role of the reform agenda in the state and offer support from the stakeholder's organizational perspective. Unfortunately the latter represents only a third of the letters. The first two groups of letters do not reflect strong statements of support.

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

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

i. The applicant lists a number of accomplishments for each reform area. Some of the accomplishments listed under adopt standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college, workplace, and global economy (e.g., distribution of a parent and teen guide outlining college and career pathways; development of strategically located Family Literacy Centers; extended –day kindergarten programs; development of a concurrent secondary-post secondary enrollment program) do not clearly address the intent of this reform area. The state has outstanding accomplishments in building data systems and has been using a longitudinal data system for a number of years which allows them to collect, analyze and distribute assessment and other data. Activities in the area of recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retraining effective teachers and principals focuses primarily on teachers with no discussion of activities related to principals. The state has developed a System of Support for struggling schools in collaboration with WestEd and has experienced impressive success with schools on the brink of becoming low performing schools. In fact, examples are presented where potentially low performing schools were moved to award winning schools. The state has also had one school successfully complete a restructuring process.

ii. Evidence exists that the state has had success improving student outcomes overall and by student subgroups. Performance by students overall advanced one to two percentage points every four years on NAEP. Hispanic/Latino populations have closed the achievement gap four percentage points over a four year test reporting period. Overall, students showed improved achievement in reading/language arts between 2003 and 2009 on the state’s criterion reference exams (CRT). Even though achievement gaps are evident, all subgroups show improvement at points over the last five years. The state attributes much of this improvement to their Three Tiered Model of Reading Instruction and Family Literacy Centers. The state has not shown significant progress in increasing high school graduation rates, and has seen a decline in graduation rates among students of color and limited English proficient students. This situation is attributed to an increased number of students of color in the state’s schools. While the state plans to change this trend, to-date there is a gap between the graduation rates of white, and students of color and limited English proficient students.

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

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

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

i. The state is one of 48 states, 2 territories, and the District of Columbia working on common core standards in English/language arts and mathematics.

ii. The applicant presents a timeline where common core standards were to be submitted to the State Board in June of 2010, with the recommendation that the common core standards be used as the framework for Utah’s core standards. As result, it the state’s plan that standards be adopted in time to meet the required August , 2010 deadline. Based on a plan for continued work on the standards, it appears that the state is committed to implementing the standards by December 2010. Steps for implementation of the standards once they are adopted are well planned.

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

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

- i. The state is working jointly with the SMARTER Balance Assessment Consortium in order to develop and implement common high quality assessments that will be aligned with K-12 standards.
- ii. The Consortium includes 32 states.

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

The state has a detailed plan for the transition to enhanced standards and high quality assessments which includes goals aligned with the four RTTT areas of reform. The plan includes dates for implementation, parties responsible and specific actions required for a smooth transition. The most relevant activities for transition include professional development for educators, the development of instructional materials, the alignment of courses between high schools and Utah public and private higher education institutions, and piloting and implementation of assessments aligned with standards. The elements that make up the state's plan are consistent with a high-quality plan.

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

	Available	Tier 1
<b>(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>

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

The state is fully implementing all 12 elements of for each of the America COMPLETES elements.

<b>(C)(2) Accessing and using State data</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>
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**(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

The state's plan to expand capabilities of its existing longitudinal data system includes the goal of ensuring increased data access to researchers, policymakers, and educators. The state is explicit in its goal that data appropriate at the school, LEA and SEA are levels are used to inform decisions made at appropriate levels. Missing from the state's plan is a discussion of how these data are made accessible to communities, parents, and students.

<b>(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>3</b>
(i) Increasing the use of instructional improvement systems	6	1
(ii) Supporting LEAs, schools, and teachers in using instructional improvement systems	6	1
(iii) Making the data from instructional improvement systems available to researchers	6	1

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

i. The applicant proposes that teachers, and principals, directors, and superintendents will have access to critical information about students to inform instruction, drive intervention, and ensure effective decision making. However, the state's plan as presented lacks sufficient detail as to how these elements of the plan will be promoted and implemented. The state proposes to provide support for school improvement strategies by developing strategies for individualized Data Consultation through the Data Mentor program but does not provide information on what these entities are and how they contribute to the goals of the criterion. The state also proposes to provide professional development focused on the use of data to inform instruction but does not include teachers in professional development sessions focused on the use of data to inform instruction or discuss how teachers will learn this skill. Overall, the state does not discuss in detail elements and associated actions expected of an instructional improvement system (as defined in the notice).

ii. As alluded to above, the activities associated with the project provides for training, however it is not clear that this training reaches teachers in ways that will allow them to access data to improve instructional and intervention strategies. Professional learning communities are mentioned as part of the state's activities but there are no details that explain how the state perceives the concept of learning communities as important to their strategic goals, or discussion of how the state intends to lead or support LEAs in the development of learning communities. Professional development is mentioned but these sessions appear to be narrowly focused (i.e., understanding and using at-risk, dropout, and graduation data) and not the broad training one would expect to ensure that teachers and principals engage data for the improvement of instructional practices and decisions for all students.

iii. While a statement is made that critical information about students will be available to researchers and policy makers, details as to how this will occur was not included in the application. Generally, for this total criterion, infrastructure and software connections are well planned—connecting and coordinating people to available data and resources are not as well articulated.

Total	47	31
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**D. Great Teachers and Leaders**

	Available	Tier 1
<b>(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>15</b>
(i) Allowing alternative routes to certification	7	6

(ii) Using alternative routes to certification	7	2
(iii) Preparing teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage	7	7

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

i. The State Board has authority to establish rules for alternative routes to licensure programs. This authority is clearly articulated in the Utah State Code. The Board may grant individual requests from LEAs for an individual to serve as an administrator without having an administrator license and may exempt charter school directors and administrators from having a license as well. Alternative teacher licensure is provided through two state programs--Troops for Teachers and American Board for Certification Excellence (ABCTE); institutions of higher education; and cooperative programs between LEAs and institutions of higher education. Although the state reports that 25 administrators completed an alternative licensure program, the elements of those programs are not discussed. The state's alternative routes address all five elements listed in the definition of alternative routes. It appears that once an alternative pathway is completed by a teacher or a principal, the same level of certification achieved by traditional program completers is awarded to alternative route program completers. The statutes that provide for alternative routes to certification ensure that the alternative routes are of high quality.

ii. A list of alternative programs that includes the extent to which each addresses required elements of an alternative program and the number of teachers or principals who successfully completed each program is not included with the application. Of the 3,250 new teachers hired during the 2008-09 school year, 455 or 14% completed a state sponsored alternative licensure program and some of the 74% of teachers hired who completed a university teacher preparation program, completed an alternative program delivered by these institutions. Of the 450 new administrators hired, 25 arrived as administrators through alternative pathways. There is no explicit statement that teachers and principals hired were certified.

iii. The state has a useful process for monitoring, identifying, and evaluating areas of teacher and principal shortages. The Computer Aided Credentials of Teachers in Utah Schools (CACTUS) system allows the state to generate reports on specific areas of shortages, and this information is shared with preparation institutions and LEAs. Multiple initiatives are currently in place to address shortage areas, including the state funded Public Education Job Enhancement Program which provides scholarships for advanced degrees, endorsements, licensure programs, and signing bonuses in shortage areas. Teacher shortages can also be addressed by the state's alternative licensure programs, dual licensure programs at institutions of higher education, and STEM projects designed to recruit math and science majors into teaching.

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

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

i. The state's approach to measuring individual student growth relies on summative data (e.g., criterion referenced data and end-of-year content exams). The state's system allows them to track students throughout their P-20 education and maintain measurement data for students who may leave and return to the state. This is an important feature when it comes to tracking student growth (or lack thereof) over time.

ii. The state plans to restructure both evaluation tools and processes for both teachers and principals. In both instances, the design and development of a revised evaluation system will include involvement of teacher and principal representatives. With respect to teacher evaluation, new evaluation tools will combine professional teacher standards with standards of teacher quality. Teacher and principal evaluations will include both formative and summative assessments. The state plans for all LEAs to use the state framework for evaluation of teachers and principals, which is an important improvement over the current process where a variety of evaluation processes exist across the state. The revision will allow the state to have comprehensive measures of teacher and principal impact on student growth that can be evaluated statewide. The inclusion of student growth as a factor in evaluation is more explicitly stated for teachers than principals. The State Board has recommended student growth represent 40% of the teacher’s evaluation—for principals there is a reference to student achievement but no explicit statements of how it will figure into principals’ evaluations. The multiple methods of dissemination (e.g., seminars, online brochures, professional development) will enhance transparency of revised and newly generated standards, and the implementation process. It is difficult to determine how the state proposes to distinguish between an effective and less effective teacher and principal in the evaluation process, since measures that describe differences among levels of teacher and principal effectiveness are not discussed.

iii. All educators in the state will be evaluated annually, once the revised evaluation system is developed and implemented. The state is currently able to disaggregate student performance data by teacher so that this information can be used for teacher evaluations. Aggregate student performance data by schools can be used to evaluate principals and can be used for professional development and employment decisions.

iv. Some components of the state’s plan to use evaluations to develop teachers and principals are not strong. For example, the state plans to identify teachers and principals in need of coaching based on formative and summative assessments of their performance, although there is no indication that formative student performance data will be available to use in this decision. While the state has tools and technology to support professional development, the state’s plan as presented in the application does not clearly delineate how teacher and professional evaluations will be used to inform professional development. There is no discussion of how evaluations will be used to promote or retain highly effective teachers and principals. Master Practitioners and Master Principals however will be compensated with extended contracts where they engage in activities that benefit both teachers and students. The state’s strategic plan does not call for change in the current process for awarding tenure—based on evaluations over a designated period, teachers and principals can be granted full certification and tenure or be terminated. Similarly, existing policies regarding termination of ineffective teachers and principals will continue to be in effect. The state’s plans for the use of evaluations, when viewed within the context of strategic reform, meet minimum expectations for this aspect of the criterion.

<b>(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>12</b>
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	8
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	4

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

i. The state’s plan to ensure equitable distribution of teachers includes four components: ensure that a database of educator qualifications exist so that LEAs can make hiring and placement decisions appropriate for equitable distribution of teachers; improve analysis of LEA staffing patterns and share this information with LEAs for the purpose influencing hiring patterns; expand the Teachers-Teachers.Com recruitment tool; and work for incentives such as housing and loan forgiveness in the most challenging teacher placement areas. While the plan addresses important areas related to issues of equitable distribution of highly effective teachers and principals, important areas are overlooked when baseline data are considered. For example, 50.7 % of highly effective teachers work in high/minority, high/poverty schools or both, compared with only 18% of principals in this category. Data suggest that 30.4% of ineffective teachers work in high/minority, high/poverty schools or both and 43.9 % of principals working in these schools are ineffective. The newly developed action plan does not discuss or include bold plans for addressing existing ineffective teachers and principals (e.g., professional development focused on skills and knowledge needed for improved performance in high/poverty, high/minority schools for existing ineffective teachers and principals; termination and replacement with more effective teachers and principals) who may currently be assigned to high poverty and/or high minority schools. Additionally, the plan does not discuss annual targets.

ii. The state has existing incentive programs (low-interest loans, scholarships) to encourage teacher candidates to pursue teaching licenses in shortage areas, along with funding to encourage teachers to pursue advanced credentials or endorsements in areas of critical shortage. The state plans to use RTTT funds to reduce the number of teachers who are teaching in shortage areas for which they do not have a license in frontier LEAs and to work with higher education institutions to encourage teachers to pursue STEM related credentials. Funds would also be used to add features to an online application system that provides access to a nation-wide pool of applicants. The collaborative work between universities and LEAs to provide credentialing coursework for cohorts of teachers in shortage areas is a promising and action oriented strategy for increasing the number and percentage of effective teachers in hard to staff subject and specialty areas. Overall however the state’s plans include strategies that have been used by states in the past, even as areas of critical shortage persist. In this sense, their strategies are neither bold nor ambitious.

<b>(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>11</b>
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(i) Linking student data to credentialing programs and reporting publicly	7	4
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(ii) Expanding effective programs	7	7
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**(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

i. The state has data systems that are capable of linking student achievement data to teacher preparation programs, and is currently making this information available to institutions of higher education. The CACTUS system is also capable of linking student achievement data to principals and in-State programs where they were prepared. While there is mention of a State Report Card, it not clear whether or not this report will be used as the mechanism by which the state will publicly report data linking student achievement growth to program completers for each in-State teacher and principal preparation program. A Teacher Quality Report is also mentioned but again, it is not clear how and with whom this information is shared.

ii. Plans exist to ensure that programs are successful at producing successful teachers. Trend data that suggests a state approved teacher preparation program is inadequately preparing teachers is reviewed by a Dean’s Council and the Utah State Office of Education. The program will be required to present an improvement program, and will be monitored to ensure the improvement program leads to effectiveness. Programs producing high numbers of effective teachers and principals will be replicated—thus increasing

the number of quality teacher preparation programs in the state. The State has representation on the 2010 INTASC Task Force which will be revising teaching standards. The new standards will be incorporated into approved program preparation standards. The State is also part of a multi-state consortium which is in the process of developing the Revisioned Continuum Framework, a model that is focused on effective preservice and inservice teacher education and development. While these efforts do not necessarily directly expand preparation and credentialing options and programs in the state, the quality of education and development of both preservice and inservice teachers in the state will be impacted based on the state's adoption of revision efforts. With respect to the preparation of principals, the state intends to create a licensure program that will use both face-to-face and online delivery methods, as means for increasing the number of candidates choosing an alternative route to licensure. This program will expand preparation options for principals.

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

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

i. Professional development in the state will be guided by the Utah Professional Development Standards that have been adapted from the National Professional Development Council Professional Learning Standards. These standards are based on data-driven professional development that occurs in communities of learners. The State intends to ground its professional development practices in the Revisioning the Professional Educator Continuum of Support, which evolved from the multi-state consortium of which the state was a part. The Continuum represents cutting edge professional development activities practices and encourages data-driven activities, based on the position of the educator along a career continuum. The State presents a detailed plan for implementing the framework, which includes professional development for both teachers and principals.

ii. The state plans a comprehensive evaluation and monitoring process for the Continuum project. Data will be collected from multiple sources, to include data from student achievement. The state is choosing an outside evaluator to analyze data and make recommendations for improvement. The comprehensive nature of the evaluation process will enhance efforts of ongoing improvement to the professional development process.

Total	138	96
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**E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools**

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

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

Utah State Constitution, Utah state law, and State Board Rules provide the State Board with the authority to directly intervene in state LEAs and persistently low achieving schools. Intervention can be based on reasons that negatively impact students, including low student achievement.

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

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

i. The state has a detailed process for identifying low achievement schools that has been approved by the US Department of Education.

ii. The State has focused on preventing failure and has successfully used the System of Support teams, along with a cooperative intervention model to improve achievement of low performing schools. The process for turning around schools has included identification of school leadership teams, an instructional appraisal to identify schools' strengths and challenges, and the use of this information to revise the schools' improvement plans. The SOS team then monitors progress of struggling schools through data analysis and an appraisal rubric. The state intends to begin with 4 schools that are among those listed as persistently low achieving schools, and select four additional schools the following year. Schools not showing significant progress after two years will move to one of the turnaround models identified by RTTT (one low performing school that has not benefited from SOS intervention will use a RTTT turnaround model in 2010). It is clear that the state intends to extend a level of autonomy to LEAs as they attempt to change the persistently low achieving status of their schools. While this value may be laudable, two years leaves only a two additional years for the state to implement a turnaround plan recommended by RTTT should the state intervention model fail—and two years of funds to implement the plan. The application does not provide a clear explanation of how the state intends to manage allowing enough time for the LEA structured intervention to work, while at the same time ensuring sufficient time and resources for the RTTT turnaround model to be implemented and evaluated.

Total	50	40
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**F. General**

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

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

i. The percentage of total revenues available to the state used to support education in the state was greater in FY 2009 than it was in 2008.

ii. The state reports that no income-related gaps exist and that on average, per pupil funding is the same for poor and wealthy districts. The state policies result in most of funding for public schools coming from state revenue (70% of the funding for public and charter school funding came from state revenue in 2008). Different types of students and programs receive funds based on a "weighted pupil unit" which allows funding to align with the needs of students. Equitable funding is established by law in the Utah Constitution—in part which states that all children are entitled to "reasonably equal educational opportunities" regardless of where they live. The equitable funding for high poverty schools is addressed in

the Highly Impacted School and Necessarily Existing Small School programs, both of which extend additional funding to schools. In the case of the latter, additional funds are extended to schools with high numbers of ethnic minority, low income, high mobility rate, and single parent families, as well as those with high numbers of ELL students. Funds are extended from the Necessarily Existing Small School program to frontier schools that have small numbers of students, but are too isolated to be combined with other schools.

<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>29</b>
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	3
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	8
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	8
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	8
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	2

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

i. There are no caps on the number of charter schools in the State however Utah Code limits the number of students who can participate in charter schools on an annual basis, even though it is understood that this is done in order to facilitate legislative financial planning. Currently there are 72 charter schools operating in the state, which represents 7.3 percent of the state's schools. Still, limiting the number of students who can participate in charter schools could prove to be restrictive. There are charter schools that focus on the arts, at-risk students, autism spectrum disorders, back-to-basics, classical education, core knowledge, direct instruction, dual languages, early college, environment, expeditionary learning, international baccalaureate, project based, science and technology, and virtual learning.

ii. Utah law describes the formation, process for application, evaluation, termination, and accountability of charter schools, as well as the process for creating charter school boards. Oversight and monitoring responsibilities by a State Charter Board is outline in State Board rules and Utah law requires the State Charter Board to be responsible for the authorization and promotion of growth of charter schools. Final approval of charter schools rests with the State Board. Consequences for charter schools that fail to meet the purposes of their charter or expected financial practices faces consequences specified under Utah law. This law also provides for consequences if charter schools fail to meet learning needs of the lowest performing and fail to meet AYP. One charter was revoked by the State Board progress was not made toward opening in the first year, and second charter school closed voluntarily. A total of 71 charter school applications were made over the last five years. Of these, 30 were approved and 41 were denied. Over the years, reasons for denial include lack of readiness for opening, withdrawn applications, poor applications, and financial difficulties.

iii. State funds follow children in the state. Charter schools receive portions of federal funding, as well as funding from the state and local school district. It seems as if children in charter schools receive funding equal to that of children in traditional schools.

iv. Assistance with facilities for charter schools is provided for by Utah law through requirement that a percentage of local replacement funds by used for facilities and a state loan program. The state is also working to ensure that traditional and charter schools be treated the same when it comes to local zoning ordinances.

v. The state is clearly committed to innovative practices, given the schools that are currently operating in the state that are using innovative approaches (e.g., year-round schools, four-day week schools, and schools assisted by virtual learning). However the state does not discuss how schools using innovative approaches meet the definition of innovative and autonomous schools.

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

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

Conditions favorable to education and innovation in the state are enhanced by Utah law that allows the State Board to request rules be waived that potentially inhibit "innovation, efficiency, and productivity in a public school, charter school, and school district." Additional laws in the state assist with the creation of innovative schools.

Total 55 44

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

Available Tier 1

**Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM** 15 15

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

There are a number of programs in place, to include a MESA program directed at increasing the number of minority and female students who pursue STEM-based careers, and the Early College High School programs which encourages students from underrepresented groups to pursue STEM related associate degrees and receive automatic admission to state colleges and universities. The state has also focused teacher professional development focused on math for elementary level teachers, as a means to increase mathematics achievement for these students. Several state reform goals aligned with the goals of STEM, to include goals to ensure numeracy literacy among children. The state also plans curricular changes that support STEM, to include rigorous alternative routes to the traditional mathematics courses, as well math initiatives to ensure challenging K-6 mathematics curriculum. Utah plans to connect with stakeholders such as parents, businesses, higher education, state government and other community leaders to ensure that STEM initiatives have impact throughout the state. Lastly, the state has initiated a number of efforts to ensure that a sufficient number of highly qualified STEM educated teachers exist in the state.

Total 15 15

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

Available Tier 1

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

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

Utah presents a comprehensive and coherent approach to all four education reform areas specified in ARRA. The state has clearly taken a systematic approach to reform. While the state, in most instances outlines detailed goals and actions, in some cases the content of those goals are not particularly ambitious. The application often focused on monitoring and compliance, and often reported on what has already been accomplished by the state. A more expansive vision of possibilities beyond what has been accomplished was often not evident—this was an application too often of continuing what is already in place. The state has made tremendous progress with the use of technology as a resource and support to state reform efforts. At the same time, details regarding support of and use of human resources were not as strongly presented in the application. Even so, there is strong LEA commitment, evidenced by signatures from superintendents. The strength of the state’s commitment to reform lies in its belief that reform will take place, even if RTTT funds are not forthcoming—that without funds the commitment of the state to its children and youth will only take longer.

Total			0
Grand Total		500	407



# Race to the Top

## Technical Review Form - Tier 1

### Utah Application #4400UT-8



#### A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1
<b>(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>44</b>
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	3
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	33
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	8

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

i. **Utah's specific reform plan for Race to the Top ("RTTT") is internally consistent. It is built on and parallels the State's 2009 state-wide reform plan, "Promises to Keep." "Promises" was published before the RTTT competition was announced.**

The goals for the implementation of reforms in the four RTT areas are clear. The goals for improved student achievement as measured by NAEP and the State's criterions referenced tests ("CRT") for grades 4, 8 and for closing the achievement gaps in reading and math are all clear. There are, however, no subgroup goals for the Asian, African American, Pacific Islander sub-groups. There are no goals for students in poverty or for those receiving special education services. There is no gender differentiation in any of the stated goals.

The goals for increasing graduation rates are less clear because there is no historic comparison offered. There are no graduation goals for any sub-group. The goal for increasing college enrollment for all students is clear but not ambitious. There are no goals for any sub-group.

The premises and goals of "Promises" are not entirely consistent with the requirements of RTTT. The apparent results of these inconsistencies are:

- a very heavy emphasis in terms of activities and resources by the State on Area I, adapting and implementing common standards and assessments, areas in which the State says that it has long, extensive, and successful experience;
- less emphasis and a slow pace for implementing evaluation systems for teachers and principals that take student growth and achievement into account; and
- fewer activities and resources devoted to turning around persistently low achieving schools in a state where student achievement and student growth in achievement as measured by NAEP scores in Grade 4 and 8 are little better than the Nation as a whole.

Accordingly, Utah earns a score in the mid range.

ii. **All participating LEA's agreed to terms that mirror those in the model MOU disseminated by the U.S. Department of Education (USED) for the RTTT competition. Ninety seven percent of all districts in the State and close to 100 percent of all participating districts agreed to the preliminary scope of work in Exhibit 1.**

There is a major concern, however. It is that that presidents of several teachers' union locals did not sign. These locals represent districts including over 18 percent of schools in the State, over one-fifth of the students in the State, and over one-fifth of the students in poverty. This concern is

exacerbated by the letter from the leader of the statewide teachers' union which indicates that significant portions of the State's RTTT reforms will require additional negotiation.

These factors do not add up to strong commitment to the State's RTTT plan or to its effective implementation. Accordingly, the State earns points in the mid range.

iii. As noted there are concerns regarding the strength of commitment to the plan and its effective implementation. Therefore, the prognosis for its having statewide impact is mixed.

The goals for increasing overall student achievement as measured by NAEP and CRT for grades 4 and 8 are clear and ambitious. The goals for closing the achievement gaps in math and English/Language Arts (ELA) between "students of color" (as defined by the State) and white students were clear and ambitious. The label, "students of color," is problematic because which sub groups are included and which ones are not is not clear.

There are no goals for student achievement for the following specific sub-groups: Asians, African Americans, Pacific Islanders, students in poverty, students receiving special education services, English language learners. None of the stated goals include differentiation by gender. These omissions are especially notable because the State says that it is experiencing an increase in the diversity of its student population. There are no goals stated for closing achievement gaps associated with any of these groups. There is no explanation for these omissions.

As noted, there was no comparison data presented to put into context the goal for increasing the overall student graduation rate. Because the State's goal of closing an achievement gap between "students of color" and white contains no definition of "students of color," its meaning is not clear, and there is no context by which to judge how ambitious it is. There are no goals for increasing the graduation rates of the other student sub-groups, and these omissions are not explained.

There are two concerns regarding the goal of increasing the overall rate of college enrollment. The State's reforms are not to begin until mid-way through the grant period; so whether the State can achieve its goal of a five percent increase in its "all-students" graduation rate in the years remaining in the grant is problematic. In addition, are no goals for increasing the college enrollment for any student sub-group. There is no explanation for this omission.

For these reasons, Utah earns a score in the medium range.

<b>(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>22</b>
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	18
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	4

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

i.:

a. Utah appears to have strong executive leadership for implementing its reform plan in the person of Superintendent Shumway and in the teams he has formed within the Utah State Office of Education (USOE). The Superintendent's leadership is substantially enhanced by his constitutional authority to act for the State School Board (State Board), by his authority to intervene in LEA's, and by his being able to direct actions be taken to implement the reform plans "easily and quickly."

The USOE was recently reorganized to complement the implementation of the initiatives in the "Promises" plan which is, in turn, the foundation for the RTTT application. In addition, the USOE will add personnel or further reorganize to create additional teams dedicated to implementation of the RTTT grant. The description of roles, responsibilities and projects to be performed by the teams and their personnel are clear, specific, and logically related to the proposed reforms. Therefore, Utah has the kind of leadership and dedicated teams that will enable it to successfully execute its RTTT plan.

b. The State's RTTT plan contains activities, processes, and procedures including identification and dissemination of best practices. It includes provisions for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the reforms undertaken by the USOE and by the participating LEA's. It contains appropriate provisions for holding those implementing the plan accountable and for intervening if performances are misdirected or inadequate. For these reasons, the State can be judged to possess the capacity to support the participating LEA's in implementing its RTTT reform plan.

c. The State has provided for effective and efficient operations and processes by reorganizing the USOE, by aligning the activities of the USOE with the State's "Promises" and RTTT reform plans, and by creating a dedicated "Oversight Team" for the RTTT grant. The functions of the Oversight Team are to support, manage, and monitor the implementation of the RTTT plan. Because the Team is supervised directly by an Associate Superintendent and because it reports directly to the Superintendent and State Board quarterly, the Team occupies a powerful position within the USOE bureaucracy. The strength of the Team's position is consistent with its responsibilities and with the State's refocusing of the entire USOE on reform.

d. In the RTTT application, the State describes a comprehensive effort to coordinate, reallocate, and/repurpose existing funds from Federal, State, and local sources to meet its reform goals.

e. The State's response can be summarized in words from this section of its Narrative, "Utah will ... use ongoing state and non-RTTT federal funds to continue needed reforms." The State does not say which of the RTTT reforms is "needed" or how the State will make that determination. Moreover, a high quality plan which meets RTTT standards would include more specificity regarding key goals, key activities, and rationale linking activities to goals, timelines, and an allocation of responsibilities. Because none of those are provided here, this portion of the State's plan is of low quality.

Despite the weakness of the plan under "(e)," Utah's capacity under this sub-criterion is in the high range.

ii.

Based on the letters in Appendix 5, the State will not be better able to implement its reform plans because of broad-based stakeholder support. The State does not describe other actions by stakeholder groups that contradict this conclusion. More specifically:

1. Educators: The association of superintendents' letter is tepid in its praise of the reforms and offers no specific support. The teachers' association qualifies its support by signaling the reforms are subject to further negotiation during implementation. The secondary principals' association cites the purported support of the elementary principals rather than making its own statement of support. The elementary principals' letter, in turn, reads as cursory, vague, and more focused on its own mission as though it were not related to the RTTT or "Promises" reforms.
2. Other Stakeholders:

These letters followed a general pattern. First, there was an extended description of the mission of the group which the signatory represented. In some letters, the mission description was followed by a description of a challenge facing the State. Where a challenge was described, however, the writer did not draw a connection between the challenge and RTTT. Closings were typically brief and expressed hope that the State's application would be funded. With the two exceptions noted below, signatories did not demonstrate specific knowledge regarding RTTT or the State's "Promises" reform plan.

Among the letters were one's from the PTA, the school boards' association, the Chamber of Commerce, two Native American tribes, an office of minority groups' advancement, a technology council, and seven post secondary educational institutions. Like the letters described in the paragraph above, each was general, formulaic, and contained no clear evidence of that the authors understood the nature of the reforms they were supporting.

Although they participated in conferences regarding the reform plans, not all titular leaders of the legislature provided letters of support.

The only exceptions to the kinds of letters described were one letter from three signatories representing the Utah System of Higher Education and two letters from charter school leaders. These did contain evidence that the authors knew and understood the RTTT reforms and that the authors saw participation in RTTT as a means to meet important challenges facing the State.

For these reasons, the score for this sub criterion is in the low end of the medium range.

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

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

i. **The State describes progress on initiatives that address each of the four areas of reform. Although much detail is given about a few schools that were turned around, the instances are few in number. The State implies without being specific that there are few low achieving schools requiring turn around. The state provides convincing detail regarding its use of ARRA, Federal, State, and local funding sources to achieve progress. The State has earned a score in the high range on this sub criterion.**

ii.

**a. ESEA test scores: The State presents data which show improvement in both ELA and Math for students overall and for all but one of 10 reported sub-groups between 2003 and 2009[1]. The State articulates credible links between the reported improvements in student achievement and several of its programs and initiatives.**

**NAEP test scores: The State presents data which show improvement for students in Grade 4 in both reading and math. The State presents data showing substantially less success in raising achievement in both subjects at Grade 8.**

**In grade 4 Reading, the Nation showed greater improvement than Utah among students overall for 2003 through 2007. The Nation showed greater improvement in eight of the 10 reported subgroups over the same years. In grade 8 Reading, the Nation showed greater improvement among students overall for the same period. The Nation showed greater improvement in eight of the 10 reported sub-groups for the same years.**

**In grade 4 Math, the Nation showed greater improvement than Utah among students overall for 2003 through 2007. The Nation showed greater improvement in five of the 10 reported sub-groups, and Utah showed greater improvement in four of the 10 sub-groups. In grade 8 Math, the Nation showed greater improvement among students overall for 2003 through 2007. The Nation showed greater improvement in nine of the 10 reported sub-groups for the same years.**

**b. There are a number of concerns regarding the State’s discussion of its progress in closing achievement gaps. The concerns are described below:**

- **The discussion in the Narrative emphasizes changes in achievement among students of the same sub group rather than changes between/among students in different sub groups.**
- **Because the data is reported in line graphs instead of tables, the State’s assertions regarding what scores were earned by what subgroup at what point in time cannot be verified. This detracts from the credibility of the State’s contentions.**
- **There is no clear statement regarding who belongs to the State’s “targeted subgroups.” The State compares some students based on scores of “proficient,” and elsewhere,**

the comparison is on scores which aggregate basic, proficient and exemplary scores together. No explanation is offered for the different comparisons made. This creates confusion and detracts from the credibility of the State's contentions.

- American Indian student achievement is shown and discussed for ESEA Math but not Language Arts. The scores of Students with Disabilities (SWD) are shown in the Language Arts graph but not in the Math graph. Grade levels 4 and 8 are used in comparisons under A. 3. ii a. but not in this discussion. There is no explanation for these inconsistencies.
- There is no clear statement of what gaps the State has focused its efforts on. There is no systematic summary saying what, if any, gaps have actually narrowed. Statements about efforts to close gaps are mixed with observations to the effect that increases in the student population of some sub groups have caused test scores to go down. The State has not drawn clear connections between the data it presents and the actions it has taken regarding achievement gaps.

c. The State indicates that there are no improvements in high school graduation rates to be discussed. Accordingly, there is no substantive discussion of the connections between its actions and the data reported.

In summary, the progress in student achievement is mixed. There are improvements in the ESEA test scores, but Utah's progress on NAEP is slower than the nation as a whole. The discussion of closing achievement gaps lacks focus, and the presentation of data is confusing. There is no progress on graduation rates, and the State offers no discussion of what has been learned in this regard. For these reasons, the State earns a score in the mid range.

[1]In 2009, the State changed its math standards and that created new baseline achievement data in math. The trend until then was for the improvement described in the comments above.

Total	125	83
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## B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1
<b>(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20
<b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>		
<p>i. a and b. The State states that it is working jointly with a consortium of states to adopt a common set of K-12 standards which are internationally benchmarked and build toward college and work readiness by the time the State's students graduate from high school. The consortium that the State has joined includes a majority of the states in the country. Accordingly, the State is entitled to points in the high range.</p> <p>ii. The State indicates that it is committed to adopting the standards by August 2, 2010 if they are complete. The State is also committed to adopting the standards if they are completed at a later date, and the State is committed to implementing them should the adoption be delayed until after the August 2 deadline.</p>		
<b>(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>

(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality assessments	5	5
(ii) Including a significant number of States	5	5
<p><b>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b></p> <p>i. and ii. The State is working with a consortium of 32 states to develop assessments meeting the RTTT criteria for high quality and appropriate alignment. This earns the State high points under each sub criterion.</p>		
<p><b>(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments</b></p>	20	10
<p><b>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b></p> <p>The following concerns prevent the State’s plan from being high quality under RTTT standards:</p> <p>The State asserts that it currently has exemplary standards and that, over the past 40 years, has become highly adept at assessment. For these reasons, it is not clear why it proposes to invest so heavily in time and money in committees, meetings, curriculum mapping, hiring and training site-level teacher- coaches, and making capacity-building grants to LEA’s as preliminaries to implementation. The assertion statement that the adoption of these new standards is out of sequence with the State’s accustomed adoption cycle is not sufficient to justify spending \$15.7 million on what is proposed.</p> <p>There is no clear rationale for Project Four. Although the State projects increasing college enrollment by five percent through its plan, it does not clearly or convincingly link hiring a project manager and support staff, providing professional development for counselors, providing STEM internships to teachers and students, creating a 6-year plan for acquiring workforce skills, creating a college/career website, hiring a consultant to write a plan for more high needs students to participate in AP/college credit bearing courses, and piloting the plan in (only) two schools will increase college enrollment as projected.</p> <p>There is no clear rationale or justification for Project Five. The State asserts that it has learned from its extended-day initiative that “early intervention at the pre-school level is essential to narrowing achievement gaps.” In fact, data provided by the State show that it has made little or no progress in this area. More important, the State does not explain how the activities proposed will positively affect its achievement gaps.</p> <p>Under the Project Six rubric, there are a number of activities which lack appropriate rationales. There is no rationale for revising high school exit exams to incorporate “Explore” and “ACT.” There is no rationale for the creation of kindergarten entrance and exit assessments. No reason is given for the revision of the ELL and SWD assessment systems. There is no rationale for the purchase of 2,557 testing stations (\$2.6 million). There is no explanation for the necessity of hiring Utah teachers to write formative assessment test items(\$4.8 million). Any and all of these might be regarded as good practices. Without explanations of how and why they will reform Utah’s education system and improve student outcomes, however, their inclusion detracts from the quality of the State’s plan.</p> <p>Under Six, the State proposes to take until 2012-13 to implement the LEA assessments and until 2013-14 for the math assessments. Given its 40 year history of success in implementing high quality assessments, the assertion that it “takes time” to do this work properly is not sufficient justification for a lack of urgency. In short, the State’s targets are not “ambitious” as that term is understood under RTTT</p> <p>For these reasons, the quality of the State’s plan earns points in the lower mid range.</p>		

Total	70	60
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### C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1
<b>(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> Although neither the State’s narrative nor its incorporated Appendix 16 provide direct and concise information in this regard, the State appears to currently have a longitudinal data system (LDS) which meets the 12 elements under the America COMPETES act.		
<b>(C)(2) Accessing and using State data</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> The State’s narrative lacks the detail required under RTTT for a high quality plan. The reference in the narrative to Appendix 3 with its “detailed chart” causes the narrative to be disjointed and confusing. The explanation in the narrative which contains an analogy to an aircraft pilot reduces the quality of the presentation. It appears that the primary stakeholders, K-12 educators, IHE staff, and researchers, will be using the LDS by 2012-13. This is an acceptably ambitious timeline. It is not clear if, when, or how students, parents, community members, or non-K-12 policy makers will use the LDS. For these reasons, the plan is of medium quality.		
<b>(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>7</b>
(i) Increasing the use of instructional improvement systems	6	3
(ii) Supporting LEAs, schools, and teachers in using instructional improvement systems	6	2
(iii) Making the data from instructional improvement systems available to researchers	6	2
<b>(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> i. The State's approach is not high quality. Activities are described in the Narrative, Appendix 3, and Appendix 51. This makes it difficult to gain a comprehensive understanding and to discern with precision what the goals are, how the key activities link to the goals, what the rationales are for the activities, who will be doing what, and when activities will be completed. Given the State's assertion about its existing capacities in this area, the goal of having LEA and school-based personnel using the dashboard and the DMS in 2013-14 is not ambitious. This approach earns points in the mid range.  ii. Because the the State's description of its approach to the providing of professional development statewide to all its teachers and principals is highly abbreviated, it does not meet RTTT standards for high quality. The State says that it had originally planned to take until 2025 to complete all the requisite activities but now it will be able to complete them before the end of the RTTT grant at the end of the 2014 school year. This is a reduction in time of 11 years. Without a more detailed explanation of how this dramatic acceleration is to be accomplished, the goal does not seem achievable. Moreover, the State does not provide the requisite information regarding annual Performance Targets. The approach earns points in the mid range.  iii. The State’s plan is not specific regarding when researchers will have access to an instructional improvement system meeting RTTT specifications. Because of this, it cannot be determined what		

data researchers will have access to and whether they will be able to use the data for the purposes specified. Consequently, this approach earns points in the mid range.

Total	47	34
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**D. Great Teachers and Leaders**

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

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

**i.: The State has statutory and regulatory provisions for alternative routes to licensure for both teachers and principals. As required in the RTTT application, the routes can be provided by various types of quality providers (IHE’s, LEA’s, and private providers). The programs provide for selectivity in different ways, and all are “selective” in that initial eligibility is based either on a bachelors degree, relevant experience, achievement in professional endeavors related to the applicable license, or some combination of them.**

**The routes provide for supervised, school-based experience, and on-going support—typically mentoring. Several of the programs limit and tailor course work to the specific needs of each candidate as identified by testing and consultation. There are also provisions for testing out of course work that might otherwise be required. Although two of the more innovative routes, the LEA/charter school-specific license programs for teachers or administrators provide limited licenses, others of the alternative programs provide for the same kind of license one earns through an IHE-based program.**

**The State also enables persons with “outstanding professional qualifications’ to serve as administrators in schools and LEA administration without a license. Persons with the same qualifications can also serve in the USOE in any position that would otherwise require an administrator’s license. These are uniquely innovative approaches to an effort to bring “real-world” experience into schools, LEAs, and state level administration.**

**The State’s system of alternative licensure is thoughtful, innovative, and commendable. It provides a variety of paths for an unusually wide spectrum of persons to become teachers and administrators. The system earns a score in the high range.**

**ii. Collectively, the alternative routes are in use. They are producing a substantial percentage and growing number of licensed teachers and administrators to the State. Therefore, the State has earned points in the high range.**

**iii. The State currently identifies “critical needs” for teachers and shares this information with its legislators and LEA’s. It has already embarked on a robust set of initiatives to address areas of persistent need. The State does not, however, offer targets, timelines, or performance measures for meeting the identified needs.**

**The State says it has no identified need for principals and that it has what amounts to a surplus of educators trained to be principals. The State is, however, developing an approach to developing teacher leaders and will review its principal preparation programs in the coming school year in**

response to nationwide data predicting principal shortages in the future. These approaches earn points in the high range.

<b>(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>32</b>
(i) Measuring student growth	5	3
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	10
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	5
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	14

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

i. The plan under this sub criterion is not clear, and it is not comprehensive. The State asserts, "Utah has the capacity to measure student growth and to connect this information to specific teachers." Elsewhere in its narrative, however, the State appears to indicate that these data are confined to the subjects of math and ELA. This raises the question whether the State's has a plan is for measuring student growth outside the math/ELA realms and for measuring student growth where test data does not apply. A high quality plan under RTTT standards would clarify these matters and would provide a greater level of specificity regarding activities, rationales, timelines, and responsibilities for the development of all measures of student growth it intends to apply in measuring the effectiveness of its teachers and principals. The plan earns points in the medium range.

ii. The State plans to spend 20 million dollars and four years to produce new approaches to the evaluation of teachers and principals. The 20 million dollars will enable the State to involve a large number and a wide range of stakeholders in the process. Significantly, these will include teachers and their unions as well as administrators and their associations. The State has re-organized many of its leaders and staff to focus on implementing its "Promises" and RTTT plans. Should the RTTT grant be awarded, their efforts will be supplemented by large numbers of contractors including school-site staff, consultants, and stakeholders. In this way, the State will gain the benefit of their considerable expertise.

The State's plans in the Narrative for revising the evaluation systems are in summary form. This makes necessary reading the additional information in Appendices 3 and 51 to gain a fuller understanding of what the State proposes to do. The Appendices do contain evidence of considerable planning and reasonably clear descriptions of what is expected of USOE staff, LEA/school staff members, and consultants. Taken as a whole, however, the State's plan is not high quality. Below are the primary concerns which contribute to this conclusion.

- *Despite the State's apparent strengths in standards, assessments, and its current ability to measure student growth, it proposes to take four years (and spend 20 million dollars) to modify its current evaluations to meet RTTT criteria. This reflects none of the sense of urgency which underlies the RTTT approach to reform, and it does not meet the RTTT standard for an ambitious Target.*
- The pilot programs for the model systems are not sufficiently broad based. The State says that its educators face distinct challenges created by the locations of its schools in urban, suburban-urban, rural, and frontier locales. The State says that the students to be educated are becoming more diverse thus presenting a widening spectrum of unique and/or special needs. Overall, there are 111 LEA's 1001 schools, over 560,000 students almost 200,000 of whom are "in poverty." Despite this, it appears from the Appendices that the scope of the

pilot program is confined to five LEA's, 40 teachers, and 20 principals. There is no explanation of why the scale is so small, and there is nothing to suggest that those piloting can or do represent an appropriate cross-section of educators presented with a representative spectrum of the challenges facing their colleagues. These factors substantially diminish the quality of the plan.

- The schedule for scaling up the State's teacher evaluation system is problematic. The pilot program ends in 2012-13, and the model system is evaluated that year--presumably at the end of the year. The following year, the School Board expects the its new framework, standards, and evaluations to be "embedded" in every LEA and used for all teachers. Such a target is not realistically achievable.
  
- The State's plan for an evaluation system for principals is problematic. Although the State foresees taking three years to refine the existing teacher evaluation system before implementation, it schedules all the more significant activities associated with the new principals' system--writing standards, aligning standards with the various systems currently in use, delivering all supportive professional development, and the State Board's adopting them--for a one-year period in 2012-13. There is no explanation why this process should go so quickly in contrast to that which involves teachers. Because the State has placed its confidence in the longer timeline, it is logical to look askance at this schedule and judge it too rushed to result in a high quality system.
  
- The schedule for scaling up the State's system for principals is problematic. The pilot program ends in 2012-13, and the model system is evaluated at the end of the year. The following year, the School Board expects a system for principals built on its new standards, assessments, and student growth data to be used by every LEA for each of its principals. Such a change in scale given the development schedule proposed by the State is not realistically achievable.

For these reasons, the overall quality of the plan is in the mid range.

iii. The State does not currently require annual evaluations for all of its teachers and principals. Baseline data provided by the State indicates that currently no LEA is using an evaluation system which meets RTTT criteria. The State provides no annual Performance Measures. The State's approach earns points in the mid range.

iv. a. The State's plan for developing provisional teachers (EYE) already exists and appears institutionalized. The activities and timelines are specific. The activities are logically related to the challenges faced by most beginning teachers. There is a clear goal--the earning of a Level 2 license. The induction plan for provisional principals does not now exist. The State provides a sketch of potentially helpful supports for novice principals. There are no annual targets, and no convincing evidence that the State can and will cause them to happen systematically for every provisional principal.

The State's plan for professional development consists of a list of to-be-created activities interspersed with brief descriptions of existing ones. There is likely merit in some of the activities--possibly all of them. There is, however, no underlying system directed toward the development of specific competencies. There are no annual performance targets.

b. The compensation and promotion approach which the State uses does not link to educator effectiveness as defined in the RTTT application. Instead the State will reward educators for undefined "mastery levels of professional conduct" and volunteering for extra duty pay based on

duty time. This is not consistent with the RTTT goal of rewarding educators for producing extraordinary growth in student achievement.

c. The State’s decisions regarding tenure are based on the new evaluation systems to be produced based on the plans described in “(D)(2)(ii).” Those plans have been scored in the mid-range. Significant concerns have been noted regarding the consistency of the systems, and when/if they will be fully implemented.

d. The State’s approach to denying tenure to educators is established and gives them ample opportunities to improve. The State’s approach includes appropriate due process.

Overall, the State’s plan earns points in the mid range.

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

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

i. The State is asked to provide a high quality plan and ambitious annual targets for ensuring the equitable access of high needs schools to highly effective teachers and principals. Beginning in 2010-11, the State will rely on each LEA to develop and implement a plan to meet these requirements. The State will also begin to monitor LEAs in their use of an on-line resume warehouse called “Teacher.Teacher.” The following prevent the State’s approach from meeting the applicable standards:

- The State does not propose to have evaluations establishing “effectiveness” as that term is defined under RTTT in each LEA until 2013-14. Its current reliance on licenses and experience are not equivalent measures. Therefore, its LEAs will not be able to identify educators in terms of effectiveness and competently redistribute them.
- The primary consequence for an LEA failing to produce and act on a plan for equitable distribution is the filing of another plan. Such a consequence is not reasonably calculated to ensure that LEAs will prepare aggressive plans on which they will act.
- The nature of the State’s activities under its approach—to enhance its CACTUS data system, to analyze LEA data, and to provide unspecified kinds of support to LEAs as they implement their individual plans—are not activities reasonably calculated to ensure changes in the distributions of teachers or principals.
- “Teacher.Teacher” provides a user with on-line access to resumes of would-be teachers seeking jobs. There is nothing inherent in the reviewing of resumes which will foster (or ensure) equitable distribution of teachers as this concept is understood under RTTT.

In building its approach on these activities, the State does not propose to act in any way that would have a direct effect on the distribution of effective teachers in its high needs schools. Moreover, the State sets no annual or final Performance Targets for equitable distribution. The State does not address the distribution of principals in any way. This approach earns points in the low range.

ii. The State is to provide a high quality plan and ambitious annual targets for increasing the number and percentage of effective teachers teaching in hard to staff subjects and specialty areas. The State’s hard to staff areas are math, physical education, and special education. As noted the State will not be evaluating teachers in terms of effectiveness as the term is defined until 2013-14.

The State is attempting to increase the number of teachers certified in its shortage and hard to staff areas through its Terrell Bell loan program. It does not provide any data which shows what effect this program has on the supply of such teachers.

The State is attempting increase the number and percentage of teachers certified in its shortage areas now serving in frontier schools by offering uncertified teachers professional development to leading to certification. The State provides no data regarding the numbers of such teachers or how many are engaged in the necessary professional development.

The State says that providing LEAs access to Teachers.Teachers will enable them to “track the effectiveness of their job postings.” As an activity, this is not reasonably calculated to increase the number and percentage of teachers teaching in the State’s shortage areas.

The State sets no annual or final Performance Targets. This approach earns points in the low range.

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

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

i. The State indicates that it can link student achievement and student growth data to teachers and to the programs in which they have prepared. Part of the State’s RTTT plan includes reporting this data on a publicly accessible web site. The plan earns points in the high range.

ii. The State describes competent approaches to linking student achievement data to preparation programs. It indicates that it will use this data to encourage improvement of the less successful programs and the replication or expansion of those that are more successful. Although the State has not addressed each element of a high quality plan under RTTT, its approach earns points in the high range.

<b>(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>15</b>
(i) Providing effective support	10	10
(ii) Continuously improving the effectiveness of the support	10	5

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

i. The State prefaces its plan for this sub-criterion with its commitment to the National Staff Development Council Professional Learning Standards. In essence, this commitment is one to provide professional development which meets the RTTT objectives under this sub-criterion. The State then presents in copious detail many activities under various rubrics which will meet these standards and, hence, the RTTT objectives. There are a number of meritorious activities/projects included. Many of the activities and/or projects include timelines. There is a table that appears to encompass all of the activities and set overall timeline for all activities. This plan earns points in the high range.

ii. The State provides a brief outline of monitoring and evaluation activities to meet the objectives under this sub-criterion. The State will engage competent organizations with successful records in professional development--the Educational Testing Service and the National Staff Development Council. The State’s outline of activities describes a cycle of monitoring support and review of data points including student achievement, effective teacher and principal preparation, professional development, level of implementation of programs, and level of effectiveness of professional development. The "outside agency" doing this work will make recommendations to the State regarding policies and changes in its support.

The description of the data points are vague. How they are to be used is not clear. Why and how monitoring them will lead to improvement in supports is not clear. The State’s assertion that the

activities outlined will lead to improved student achievement is not substantiated. This approach earns points in the mid range.

Total	138	85
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### E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1
<b>(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>		
<p>Based on the statement in the State's narrative to this effect and the Attorney General's verification, Utah earns the highest points for having legal authority to intervene directly in its schools and LEA's for reasons that include low student achievement.</p>		
<b>(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>15</b>
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	10
<b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>		
<p>i. Utah's definition of persistently lowest achieving schools had been approved by the U.S. Department of Education (USED). Applying this definition, the State identified 59 schools. This earns a score in the high range.</p> <p>ii. Utah will <u>not</u> require any of its persistently low achieving schools to use any of the RTTT intervention models until and unless they have <u>not</u> improved student achievement using its System of Support model.<sup>[1]</sup> The State justifies this approach by pointing to successes it has had in 2008-09 in preventing 27 of 29 "alert" schools from moving to "schools in need of improvement status" (SINI) and in assisting 14 SINI schools to achieve Annual Yearly Progress (AYP).</p> <p>Based on this approach, four of the State's persistently low achieving schools will begin using one of the four RTTT intervention models in 2010-11 and four more will do the same in 2012-13.</p> <p>This approach is not consistent with the RTTT requirement that persistently low performing schools use of one of the four RTTT intervention models. The cited successes in 2008-09 do not provide a compelling case for the small number of schools which are predicted to engage in RTTT turn around activities. For these reasons, the Performance Targets are not ambitious, and the plan is not high quality. The plan earns a score in the mid range.</p>		
<p><sup>[1]</sup> The State exempts its "frontier" schools from ever using any of the RTTT models on the grounds of geographical isolation and other challenges. Given the relatively few numbers of students and staff in frontier schools, the exemption is not likely to have a substantial negative effect on RTTT efforts state wide.</p>		

Total	50	25
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**F. General**

	Available	Tier 1
<b>(F)(1) Making education funding a priority</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
(i) Allocating a consistent percentage of State revenue to education	5	5
(ii) Equitably funding high-poverty schools	5	5
<b>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>		
<p><b>(i) The percentage of the total revenues used to support public education as defined increased from 53.7 percent in fiscal year 2008 to 59.2 percent in fiscal year 2009. This earns points in the high range.</b></p> <p><b>(ii) (a) and (b) The State incorporates statutes which support the assertion in the narrative that equitable funding is provided for LEAs and for high poverty schools. This earns point in the high range.</b></p>		
<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>26</b>
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	5
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	7
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	5
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	7
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	2
<b>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>		
<p><b>i. The State places a cap on the number of students who may be enrolled in charter schools. New legislation provides that the current cap can grow on an annual basis in the future. The current enrollment in charter schools amounts to 6% of the public school age population. Accordingly, the State earns points in the mid range.</b></p> <p><b>ii. Under law and by regulation, the State authorizes and holds charter schools accountable considering factors which include student achievement. There is nothing that encourages charter schools to serve student populations similar to local district populations. The State has not been required to close an ineffective charter school. The State earns points in the high range.</b></p> <p><b>iii. The State does not provide enough information to compare the per pupil funding for charter school students in terms of the percentage provided to traditional public school students. The assertions in the narrative suggest that funding approximates that for traditional students; so the State earns points at the high end of the mid range.</b></p> <p><b>iv. The State does not provide charter schools with facilities funding <u>per se</u>, but it does require some of its charter school funds to be used for facilities. It provides a revolving loan fund to assist charter schools with facilities and enables charter school students to participate on teams using public school athletic facilities. The State does not impose stricter facilities related requirements on charter schools. The State earns a score in the high range.</b></p>		

v. The State does not make clear that the examples given by the State meet the criteria for “innovative, autonomous public schools” as defined under RTTT. Therefore, the State earns points in the low range.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	1
<b>(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>		
<p>The summary descriptions of programs given by the State do not provide sufficient justification for labeling them innovative or as ones which create conditions favorable to reform. Schools in correctional institutions, CTE programs, adult education programs, and the International Baccalaureate exist in many LEAs and in many states. Without more on which to rely, therefore, the Utah versions do not meet the RTTT requirements. It is possible that either the early college or electronic high schools would meet such criteria if they were more fully explained. The State does not offer data to support its assertions of improved student outcomes. The State’s score is in the low range.</p>		
Total	55	37

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

	Available	Tier 1
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	0
<b>Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>		
<p><b>CPP2 (i):</b></p> <p>The list of activities summarized here do not present a high quality plan to offer a rigorous course of STEM study. The primary reasons are:</p> <p><b>Project Three from B(3):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not provide sufficient information to demonstrate the courses will be “rigorous”—some will be “alternatives” to calculus</li> <li>• It is not made clear how the activities will result in students being engaged in a rigorous STEM course of study</li> <li>• There is not a persuasive rationale which convinces that these “first steps” (i.e. Project Three in (B)(3) of the State’s application) and the list of additional STEM initiatives on p. 249 will result in the offering of a rigorous STEM course of study.</li> <li>• The initiatives listed in Project Four are common practices in many LEAs in many states. Therefore, they do not represent innovative approaches to meeting the RTTT requirements in the STEM area.</li> <li>• There is a lack coherence among the activities described by the State, and the activities are not clearly focused on delivering a rigorous course of STEM study for the State’s students.</li> <li>• The existence of a STEM Task Force and the creation of the position of STEM Coordinator do not remedy the lack of coherence or focus described above.</li> <li>• There are no performance measures linked to this goal.</li> </ul> <p><b>CPP2 ii.</b></p> <p>The State lists STEM learning activities for students and teachers. It also describes ways that individuals are encouraged to become STEM teachers. It can be reasonably inferred that these meet the objectives of promoting effective STEM and offering applied learning opportunities. Nothing cited by the State speaks directly to the integration of STEM content. There are no performance targets for this goal.</p>		

**CPP2 iii.**

The MESA and Early College High School programs are existing programs which directly address this goal. The State cites no data to link the CTE initiative with underrepresented groups. The State describes no other programs or initiatives to serve this goal. There are no performance targets.

Overall, the State's approach does not constitute a high quality plan to meet the needs described.

Total	15	0
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**Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform**

	Available	Tier 1
<b>Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform</b>		<b>Yes</b>
<b>Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>		
<p>The State's plan addresses all four of the education from areas specified in the ARRA and the State Success Factors Criteria. The scores given above indicate the degree to which the State is judged to have been successful under each RTTT criterion. Overall, the State's plan meets the Absolute Priority.</p>		
Total		0

<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>324</b>
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# Race to the Top

## Technical Review Form - Tier 1

### Utah Application #4400UT-6



#### A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1
<b>(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>40</b>
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	3
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	30
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	7

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

(A) (1) (i): UT has designed an ambitious reform agenda that articulates its goals for implementing its reforms in the four areas, however, implementation at the LEA level--where the effect will be observed, for example, in student achievement, does not begin until year 2 and often year 3, raising concern about whether the goals set forth by UT can be reached.

(A) (1) (ii): The MoU is consistent with the reform agenda developed by UT and reflects the goals in the four areas, as well as clearly stating the conditions: participating LEA responsibilities, state responsibilities (joint responsibilities, state recourse for LEA non performance, assurances, modifications, and duration.

A major area of concern appears in the letters of support, specifically in the letter from the President of the UT Education Association where she states: "The UEA understands that it is the intention of this application that the programs undertaken in UT by the [RTTT] grant will be developed in collaboration with educators through the voice of the local associations... ." This caveat raises the question of whether the programs were developed through the voice of the LEAs, especially given that in each of the projects in the different reform areas the majority of the work appears to be done at the SEA level and then implemented by the LEA. This concern continues in the number of LEAs where the President of the local association did not sign the MoU. Several of the districts are large districts and the N (where the local president did not sign the MoU) represents 27% of the schools statewide. Thus, although there are signatures from superintendents and school board personnel, the fact that the local association president did not sign the MoU in the districts that together represent 27% of the schools and the question about whether indeed these school districts did not feel they were involved in program development and thus chose not to sign, raises concern about the state's ability to build capacity statewide.

(A) (1) (iii): As discussed in ii above, there is concern about several districts not participating because the local association president has not signed the MoU. Several of the districts are large and together the districts where president did not sign the MOU represent 27% of the schools. One could argue that this is a low percentage but the fact that several of the districts are large districts where capacity building is critical to developing true reform and the possible reason for a decision not sign the MoU because teachers were not involved in program development raises concern. This issue is particularly important given that it is some of the urban LEAs where the MoU was not signed (e.g., Salt Lake) where one wants to see changes in the achievement gap of different groups of students.

There is also concern about the ability to reach the targeted achievement goals in years 1 and 2 given

that in the majority of projects in each of the reform areas, the first year and often the second year, is dedicated to planning at the SEA level. While planning and development are crucial to reform implementation, it is difficult to see how the changes in student achievement identified by the State for math and reading in years 1, 2, 3, and 4 can actually occur if there is no implementation of "changed" programs until year 2 and possibly year 3. This concern carries over to the issue of decreasing the achievement gap across different groups of students. Similarly, hs graduation rates are affected by GPAs and passing of assessments, which will not change if implementation of new programs does not occur until midway through the grant period. There is also concern about the potential impact of the goals statewide and in particular in building capacity statewide given that the MoU was not signed by the President of the Local Teachers' Union in several school districts with large numbers of schools (e.g., Salt Lake SD, Canyon SD). Finally, as each of these areas are related, if program changes do not occur until midway through the grant period, an increase in college enrollment will likely not occur.

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

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

(A) (2) (i):

a) The Superintendent, Larry Shumway, will oversee the statewide reform teams. His work will be supported by the State Board, state teacher's association, LEA superintendents, directors and their boards of education, the State Charter School Board and state charter school associations. In addition, the K-16 Alliance will bring representatives from public education, governor's office, the legislature, and higher education to initiate reforms and resolve challenges. There are four dedicated teams that will be involved in the implementation of the statewide education reform: Teaching and Learning Team, Data, Assessment, and Accountability Division Team, School Improvement Team, and Oversight Team.

b) Each of the four teams identified in a) above will support the participating LEAs in a variety of ways:

Oversight Team: this team will direct the work of the other teams and the LEAs using Utah's Comprehensive Reform Plan to implement promising practices evaluate LEA effectiveness in implementing reforms, and serve as facilitator and resource for positive LEA change. This team will also ensure compliance and maintenance of reform efforts while helping LEAS to determine the best way to implement the reform agenda.

Teaching and Learning Team, Data, Assessment, and Accountability Division Team, School Improvement Team: each of these teams has been assigned specific projects and roles that will directly or indirectly assist LEAs, e.g., through implementation of professional development, assist with funding needs, etc.

c) The USOE consistently administers federal grants in accordance with federal and state requirements. The application for any federal grant is reviewed by the Governor's Office of planning and Budget and the Legislature for consideration of committed infrastructure and purpose alignment with state objectives. The USOE adheres to its Federal Cash Management Act contract in processing of expenditures and drawing transactions. Expenditures are monitored by USOE program directors and subject to review under the State of Utah A-133 audit as required by the Office of Management and Budget. The audit is conducted by the Office of the State Auditor and coordinated with the USOE.

d) The State Board has formally adopted the Comprehensive Reform Plan and has directed that all state funds, programs, and resources be repurposed to align with the plan. RTTT funds will be used to jumpstart the state's reforms, which will have a direct impact on how quickly it can deliver the desired student outcomes.

e) Utah states that its effort to maintain the reforms implemented with support of the RTTT grant will not end with the RTTT program's conclusion. The reform plan for Utah was not written for the RTTT grant; in deed, the framework was already in place as part of a strategic reform initiative. After the grant period, the state will a) continue to promote a commitment to continuous renal directed toward keeping its promises; use ongoing state and non-RTTT federal funds to continue needed reforms; and, continue to coordinate with other stakeholders to ensure that the impetus for improvement stays strong. The state will maintain its stakeholder roundtables, the K-16 Alliance, its work with teachers throughout the state and the teacher's association, and it will maintain a positive working relationship with government leaders.

(A) (2) (ii):

a)/b/: The application states that there is broad support for its comprehensive reform agenda, stating that input from a diverse group of stakeholders was involved in the preparation of the application-- teachers, principals, superintendents, higher education personnel, business leaders, government officials, charter school personnel, and the like. Meetings were held around the state to gather input from different constituent groups. The result was a high level of collaboration and a shared vision about the reform agenda. However, when one looks at the letters of support, many of them appear to be boilerplate letters containing the same personalized information about the organization and general information about the reform without a connection or intersection between the organization and its role in the reform. Also of concern is the letter from the teacher association which includes a caveat about the conditions for its support. There is concern about the breadth and depth of commitment given the content of many of the letters. Thus while there may have been meetings across the state to discuss the reform, because RTTT, according to the application, came "after" the state had developed its reform plan, the role each organization would play in RTTT is not as obvious as it needs to be.

As noted in an earlier discussion, the State has an ambitious program planned and if it is achieved it has the potential to have broad impact, but probably not until midway through the grant period and that is a concern. In many reform areas in year 1 and also in year 2 the SEA is still involved in planning and development and it is not until midway through the grant period that the LEAs are actually implementing the reforms. This will affect the realization of the targeted changes in student achievement, which affects the ability to reduce the achievement gap among different groups, college readiness and attendance, etc. There is also concern as discussed earlier that the local association president in several LEAs has not signed the MoU so building capacity is going to be hampered by the lack of support from a key constituency. This is problematic, especially given that the lack of support is present in some large LEAs where differences among sub-groups in their achievement is more pronounced.

<b>(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>15</b>
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	10

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

(A) (3) (i): Historically, Utah has engaged in many effective innovations, beginning with the development of state core standards over a century ago. Utah's LEAs have been part of the core curriculum development process and have a long history of success with developing and using both standards and aligned assessments. The state has core curriculum standards and master plans for achievement in language arts, math, science, and different career areas. It also has a criterion-referenced testing program of long standing. The state will build on its work that has been accomplished in each of the four reform areas, including adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to enter and succeed in college and in careers, building on existing STEM activities, improving and expanding data systems that can be used by a variety of stakeholders to monitor educational progress as well as improve instruction in the classroom and improve teacher quality, recruiting and training new teachers in hard to staff areas, turning

low achieving schools around.

(A) (3) (ii):

According to the application narrative, the state has made steady progress in increasing student proficiency in math and reading/language arts. Overall, the state advances one to two percentage points every four years. However, the data in the Tables provided contradict this information. Table 2 illustrates only 2007 reading scores and and 2009 math scores. There is no way a comparison could be made from 2003.

Table 3 provides information from 2003 to 2009 for the state test in English Language Arts and Math but it is not clear what grade level. For all students there is fluctuation from year to year, often going down from one year to the next and then up the following year. However, in 2003 the ELA score for all students was 78.4 and the following year it was 77.5 (2004) and then back up to 78.1 the following year (2005). This pattern continues through 2009. The same pattern of fluctuation occurs for math from year to year for all students. White students overall make more incremental progress from year to year, although there is also fluctuation and students of color have overall lower scores and their scores also fluctuate from year to year making small incremental changes. Occasionally there is a two point change but it is not consistent over time. There are two tables with linear graphs that illustrate percentage proficient but there are no tables with these data in which to to cross-check.

Table 9 illustrates the graduation data from 2007 to 2009. For the entire state the rate has remained the same at 88%; the highest rates are for White students, followed by Asian students and Pacific Islanders students. There is fluctuation in rates for all three years, with some groups of students holding steady and other groups making slight increases. Interestingly, some groups had higher rates in 2007 than in 2009. There is no consistent pattern within or across groups of students over the three year period.

<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>82</b>
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## B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1
<b>(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20
<b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>		
(B) (1) (i): The materials indicate that "at the present time, 48 states, 2 territories, and the District of Columbia are in the [standards] Consortium."		
(B) (1) (ii): The materials indicate that the State is committed to adopting the common K-12 standards by August 2, 2010. A timeline is provided and it appears that if the State stays on track the common core standards will have been presented to the LEAs and the common core curriculum that reflects the new standards will be under revision by August.		
<b>(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality assessments	5	5
(ii) Including a significant number of States	5	5
<b>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>		

(B) (2) (i): The application shows evidence of the development and implementation of common assessments. UT is the lead state in the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium. According to the application, the Consortium was formed from a merger of three consortia that emerged in January 2010 in response to the RTTT competition. The consortium will develop common, high-quality assessments.

(B) (2) (ii): According to the application, there are a total of 32 states participating in the Consortium. Table 11 identifies the participating states.

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

(B) (3)

Overview

The state has a long history of success with implementing standards that are aligned with assessments. As a result the state has an established process for updating and implementing new common core standards and aligned assessments. The state has designed several projects that will meet the Reform Area One and support the transition to the new common core standards and high-quality assessments.

By August 2010 Utah will adopt and begin implementation of K-12 standards in math and literacy. To facilitate the implementation of the standards, professional development will be provided and instructional materials will be developed that together will increase the capacity of leaders and teachers.

By July 2012 Utah will align relevant math and English courses between all high schools and Utah public and private institutions of higher education and will develop a system to monitor student enrollment in courses preparing students for post secondary education that will provide feedback to students, parents, and schools.

By the start of the 2011-12 school year, Utah, working with the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium, will begin piloting of high quality assessments that are aligned with the standards to determine student achievement.

The state is involved in several projects and accompanying activities associated with implementation of internationally benchmarked K-12 standards; the standards will lead to preparing students for college and career readiness. Evidence of the state's high quality plan is embedded in each project and carefully designed activities.

Reform Area One Goal: Implement Common Core Standards and Assessments in Literacy and Numeracy that prepare students for success in college and careers.

Project #1: Adoption and Implementation of the New common Core Standards in Reading/Language Arts and Math. The adoption of the standards is intended to provide consistency in expectations for teachers, students, higher education, and other interested stakeholders. There are two activities planned for this project.

Activity 1: Professional development to support implementation of the new reading/language arts common core standards.

Activity 2: Professional development to support implementation of the new math common core standards.

Project #2: Using the Common Core Standards to Improve Reading Instruction. The standards will give Utah the opportunity to address all aspects of effective delivery of reading instruction. There are four

activities planned to implement this project.

Activity #1: Develop web-based lesson plans for reading/language arts.

Activity #2: Embed a reading strand into the science, social studies, healthy lifestyles, and fine arts core and CTE standards.

Activity #3: Implement recommendations for the expansion of the literacy initiative through 8th grade with a focus on adolescent literacy.

Activity #4: Continue to support the work of the Family Literacy /Centers and the use of ELL software to assist students with the acquisition of English language skills and increase reading/language arts proficiency.

Project #3: Using the Common core Standards to Ensure Math literacy for all Utah children. Professional development and coaching will be used to implement the new core. Three activities are planned for this project.

Activity #1: Development of web-based lesson plans for math.

Activity #2: Creation of rigorous and relevant math courses that are alternative.

Activity #3: Preparation and implementation for state K-6 math initiatives and an algebra math initiative.

Project #4: Ensuring Post-Secondary Success. This project will enhance Utah's existing initiatives that are designed to help secondary students prepare for college and careers. There are eight activities planned for this project.

Activity #1: Provide annual information for students and parents regarding career and college pathways and aligned coursework.

Activity #2: Revise and add academic pathways to the career pathway materials.

Activity #3: Work with LEAs and higher education to advise and initiate secondary renewal and reform

Activity #4: Continue coordination with higher education for dual and concurrent enrollment courses.

Activity #5: Work with two high need LEAs to ensure that disadvantaged subgroups have quality access to AP and concurrent enrollment programs.

Activity #6: Review the data and reports from current STEM initiatives and propose continued, enhanced, or new initiatives that increase student participation in the study of STEM fields.

Activity #8: Work with business and industry, and higher education partners to define needs for a quality workforce and develop instruction to support acquisition of skills to meet those needs.

Project #5: Improving Early Learner Outcomes. There are four activities for this project.

Activity #1: Using data and reports from the Utah K-3reading initiative to identify and replicate high performing projects and practices.

Activity #2: Maintain full-day kindergarten for eligible students using State funds and use data to replicate high performing projects and practices.

Activity #3: Support early intervention programs for high-need Pre-K children.

Activity #4: Develop and distribute Pre-K academic standards.

Project #6: Refinement of Utah Performance Assessment System for Students (U-PASS) Testing.

Activity #1: Design and implement testing systems and high quality assessments.

Activity #2: Design and implement testing systems that computer technology.

Activity #3: Continue and expand current pilot to allow four urban districts, six frontier districts, and 10 charter schools.

Activity #4: Revise the high school exit exam requirements.

Activity #5: Participate in the formative and interim assessment consortium while expanding informal, ongoing formative assessment of mathematics and reading in all schools.

What is particularly noteworthy about the development of the projects and accompanying activities is the careful attention to the sequence of the activities--they build on one another--and to the involvement of LEAs in most of the activities. The involvement of teachers and principals in workgroups (e.g., committees that review standards and promote courses), professional development training on the standards, collaboration with IHEs, planning task forces, STEM initiatives, analyses and review of data, and consultation with the business community, are examples of how well conceived each project is. The timeline for the activities is realistic and achievable.

<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>70</b>
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### C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1
<b>(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>

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

(C) (1): The State's longitudinal data system currently has the America COMPETES required seven capabilities and twelve data elements as described in the materials.

<b>(C)(2) Accessing and using State data</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
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**(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

((C) (2) The state has in place a P-20 longitudinal data system that includes all of the America COMPETES required elements. Its application plan for accessing and using state data will expand and adapt the State Longitudinal system (SLDS) to enhance its existing capabilities, which includes increased data accessibility for educational stakeholders, including researchers. The SEA and LEAs will track several key data items through its data dashboard. The dashboard is a way to monitor LEA accountability. The data system is available to a broad educational constituency that includes parents, students, teachers, principals, community members, teacher and principal associations, researchers, and policymakers, all of whom may track the educational attainment of students and link student achievement to curriculum and instruction and standards. The overall effectiveness of an LEA can thus be closely monitored by use of the data system.

The state has designed two projects with several activities as evidence of its intended work in these areas. The activities are continuous and build on one another and funding is adequate given the nature and extent of the activities. Similar to its focused work in other areas, the carefully designed and sequenced activities augur well for attainment of the project goals. Completion and testing of the longitudinal data system is targeted for 2011-2012, with 100% implementation of the system by 100% of the LEAs by the end of the 2012-2013 school year.

Project #1: Expansion and Adaptation of State Longitudinal Data Systems. This project includes 7 key activities:

- Activity #1: USOE will work with partner agencies to share their de-identified data and then coordinate analyses and research using those data.
- Activity #2: USOE and LEAs improve vertical SSID/SIS integration through automated assignment of statewide student identifiers to supplement and replace current batch system.
- Activity #3: USOE will add disciplinary data to the Utah eTranscript and Records Exchange System.
- Activity #4: USOE will expand Pre-K data collection.
- Activity #5: USOE supports collection and analysis of non-cognitive data.
- Activity #6: USOE introduces new data elements to allow connections between measures of quality

instruction, teacher practice, strategies, teacher performance, and student achievement.

Activity #7: USOE integrates Utah SIS2000+ system's grade book with Utah's Test item Pool formative assessment delivery system via state and common core standards.

Project #2: Effective Data Access for Instructional Improvement. This project includes four key activities.

Activity #1: USOE will increase the acquisition, adoption, and use of local instructional improvement systems.

Activity #2: USOE will ensure the state data dashboard tool integrates data from multiple sources for effective decision-making.

Activity #3: USOE will ensure local data management tools allow for data collection that is unique to the LEA to be included in the data available to stakeholders.

Activity #4: USOE will ensure data from the SLDS are accessible to, and use to inform and engage key stakeholders and that data support decision makers in the continuous improvement of efforts in such areas as policy, instruction, operations, management, resource allocation, and overall effectiveness.

<b>(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>13</b>
(i) Increasing the use of instructional improvement systems	6	6
(ii) Supporting LEAs, schools, and teachers in using instructional improvement systems	6	4
(iii) Making the data from instructional improvement systems available to researchers	6	3

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

C) (3)(i/ii/iii): Using its longitudinal data system Utah is in a propitious position to use critical information about its students to inform instructional decisions. Teachers, principals, and administrators will have quick access to important information to make key instructional decisions and to determine the overall effectiveness of the curriculum and its capacity to educate students. To ensure that data are used properly, professional development will be provided to teachers and principals, as well as other interested parties, about how to use data to increase student learning by improving instruction. According to the application, "any report available to any educator or policymaker is also available to any researcher." The data from the system can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the instructional materials strategies, and approaches for educating Utah's students, particularly students whose achievement is well below or above grade level.

The State has one project--Effective Use of Data to Improve Instruction--that involves three activities. The timeline for each activity begins in the first year of the grant and extends to the end of the grant period. LEAs are involved in some of the activities during the 4-year period.

1. Activity 1: Provide professional development to LEA level data teams in the use of data to inform instruction. LEA teams will include, at a minimum, superintendents, curriculum directors, and assessment directors.
2. Activity 2: Develop and support LEAs and struggling schools in the use of professional learning communities and school improvement strategies.
3. Activity 3: Develop and provide professional development for understanding and using at-risk, dropout, and graduation data.

The timeline of the activities is realistic and they are appropriate to ensure that data will be used effectively. The original date for completion of the system was targeted for 2025 but with RTTT funding the timeline has been adjusted for all activities to be completed by 2014. Although the timeline is reasonable given the nature of the activities, there is some concern that the targeted end date for

providing professional development (2012/14) (Activity 3) will result in teachers not being able to help students meet the targeted performance goals for their students. There is also concern that data may not be available to researchers. The requirement is for data to be available and the application states only that reports will be made available to researchers. It is not clear if researchers will also have access to the data generated for the reports, data that would allow them to conduct studies of effectiveness.

<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>42</b>
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### D. Great Teachers and Leaders

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

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

(D) (1) (i): Alternative routes to licensure programs have been established for teachers and principals under Utah State Code 53-A-1-402(1)(a). The statute gives the State Board authority to establish rules for all ARL programs. The provisions under the statute specifically provide program parameters for alternative routes, including the means for teachers and principals to receive certification through pathways that do not require participation in an IHE program. Information in Appendix 19 provides evidence that the state meets the requirements established in the RTTT application.

(D) (1) (ii): Many new teachers in UT were prepared in alternative preparation programs. Similarly, a percentage of new administrators came through alternative routes. The ABCTE and Troops to Teachers are two programs that are widely in use in UT and produce many of the new teachers teaching in UT.

(D) (1) (iii): The State has a process in place (electronic teacher credentialing and record keeping system) for monitoring, evaluating, and identifying shortage areas and for preparing educators to fill these areas. According to the materials UT is not experiencing a shortage of principals, however there are shortages in other areas, particularly SPED and STEM areas.

<b>(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>39</b>
(i) Measuring student growth	5	5
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	8
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	8
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	18

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

(D) (2) (i): UT has the capacity to measure growth for each individual student and to connect this information to specific teachers. Its system is comprised of two major components: criterion-referenced data and summative data from content end of year exams. Both enable each LEA to submit normative

data to provide teachers and leaders . Each student, teacher, and administrator is tracked using a unique personal identification number. This enables the USOE to track students' academic data even if they move throughout the state, or leave the state and return.

(D) (2) (ii):

(a)/(b): The state has designed a rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation system for both teachers and principals. LEA-based educators and teacher education faculty came together as part of a group—the Educator Quality Workgroup—and studied teacher evaluation. The group engaged in several activities to produce an evaluation tool for LEAs to support their work in instructional improvement and teacher evaluation. Professional development and technical assistance will be provided to all LEAs as part of this process. Although the tool will be used both formatively and summatively, it is not known from the application whether the tool to evaluate teachers will differentiate effectiveness using multiple rating categories as no evidence is provided for this.

A principal evaluation system is also being designed. Like the teacher evaluation it will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of principals. Similar to the teacher evaluation tool, the instrument will be aligned with the new standards. Also similar to the teacher evaluation system, professional development will be provided. Although the tool will be used both formatively and summatively, it is not known from the application whether the tool to evaluate principals will differentiate effectiveness using multiple rating categories as no evidence is provided for this.

(D) (2) (iii): State statute outlines student achievement, classroom observations, and stakeholder input as a few of the multiple measures required in the LEA evaluation system that are used for both teachers and principals. Data on student growth is provided to schools and teachers annually based on state assessments in math and language arts. Given that only the state test is used as part of the evaluation system, it is not clear what or how data for grades and subjects areas that are not part of the state test would be used to evaluate teachers and principals not working in the areas tested on the state test.

(D) (2) (iv):

(a): The information provided by the evaluations of teachers and principals will be used to provide responsive professional development that includes mentoring, coaching, and induction support for teachers and principals in years 1-3 of their professional career, and ongoing professional development throughout their career. One of the tools available is a statewide educator development management, tracking, and reporting system called On Track that enables LEAs to improve the effectiveness of their professional development programs.

(b): The State has a system in place for teacher and principal compensation that promotes professionals that are identified as having mastery levels of professional conduct and who undertake additional responsibilities. However there are no provisions for compensation, e.g., merit pay or something like merit pay, for teachers and principals whose students perform well on assessments.

(c): The decision to grant tenure after the completion of the 3rd year of employment as a teacher or principal will be based on successful evaluations that include formative and summative data and appropriate technologies in instruction, student growth, and stakeholder input. Teachers and principals will receive formative feedback culminating in annual evaluations during the first three years. A teacher who does not demonstrate proficiency by the end of the third year will not be granted tenure and may not continue in that position.

(d): Under UT's Orderly Termination Act, teachers cannot be dismissed without due process. Teachers must be given opportunity to correct areas identified as needing to be remedied. Until the evaluation system incorporates student achievement growth and specific means for helping teachers in a timely manner less effective teachers will not be able to be removed from the system. The Appendices of student data suggests that teachers in low performing LEAs need to be targeted and that part of the evaluation system needs to include a specific timeline including PD and coaching for teachers whose

students continue to perform poorly over time. At this time, the evaluation system does not include this.

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

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

(D) (3) (i): The State has a plan to ensure that students in high poverty and/or high minority schools have equitable access to highly effective teachers and principals and are not served by ineffective teachers and principals at higher rates than othr students. Several activites are designed to implement the plan, including the use of the teacher and principal evalauiton informaiton. An example of an activity designed for implementation of the plan is that the State will conduct a thorough analysis of staffing patterns by LEAs and provide strategies for improvement. In year 1 of this activity the SEA will make recommendations and provide strategies for improvement and in year 2 it states that the LEA will implement improvement strategies.

(D) (3) (ii): The state has a strong plan to increase the number and percentage of effective teachers teaching hard to staff subjects and specialty areas including math, science, and special education, and languages. It will use, for example, Teachers-Teachers.Com, a statewide on-line application system that provides access to a nationwide pool of applicants for frontier LEAs. As well, the USOE is working with higher education partners to encourage teachers to upgrade their credentials or switch to STEM related teaching assignments. PEJEP is a targeted funding source for teachers of math, science, and special education to earn advanced credentials, endorsements or signing bonuses. University programs are working with LEAs to provide credentialing coursework for cohorts of teachers in shortage areas. For example, the Utah State University Alternate Teaching Pathway will help certify teachers in special education.

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

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

(D) (4) (i): Systems are in place--in CACTUS and the Student Data Warehouse--to connect IHE information to applicable LEAs. IHEs are already tracking and reporting this data as part of their accreditation process but public reporting has not been done (it is planned for 2012 but a structure is not yet in place thereby possibly delaying this).

(D) (4) (ii): The State is planning several activities to expand its preparation and credentialing options and programs that are successful at producing effective teachers and principals.

Student achievement data are used to improve teacher/principal preparation programs. UT is engaged in a multi-state consortium to provide a blueprint for effective pre-service and inservice teacher education and development. Student achievement data that are tied to the university or college that prepared students' teachers will be used to inform the Consortium's work.

Teachers

1. Align practice with updated standards: the new INTASC standards will be woven into State Board approved preparation standards that will be collaboratively developed with the UT Council of Education Deans, LEAs and USOE. This initiative will tie into updating the UT Professional Teaching

Standards currently under revision.

2. Using a multi-state approach to re-envision the teaching profession: UT is participating in a multi-state consortium with five other states to re-envision the teaching profession along the continuum of an educator's career. The new system will include educator recruitment, development, preparation, and advancement. The USOE is participating in an integrated teacher preparation pilot with the University of UT and the SLC.

Principals

1. Development and implementation of Leadership Standards: The Dean's Council, the UT Council of Education Leadership, and leaders from USOE are developing standards for principal preparation that are focused on instructional leadership. The new standards will require that internships include emphasis on analyzing and utilizing student data to inform instructional practices. The new standards will also examine requirements for entrance into the principal preparation programs in order to inform program revisions.
2. Beginning in 2011 data from the CACTUS system to track placement of principals will be included in the State Report Card. The School Leadership Preparation and Practice Survey will be administered annually in all UT leadership preparation programs to solicit feedback from their graduates and alumni regarding specific areas that will be used to inform the programs. Data from CACTUS and the Survey will be reviewed annually by the Dean's Council and USOE and will be used to recommend changes in curriculum, intern experiences, and administrative program requirements.

The activities that are planned are realistic, ambitious, and achievable given the timeline and involvement of key stakeholders.

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

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

(D) (5) (i): Six states including UT are developing and implementing a continuum of support for the stages of development in an educator's career. The continuum is defined by practitioner states: preparatory, novice, developing, and experienced. In UT the activities will be a collaborative effort among IHEs, LEAs, and USOE. and will be developed as pilot programs to ensure quality implementation. Most activities will begin with pilot phases and are expected to be fully implemented by fall of the last year of the grant period--2014.

- Preparatory Practitioner: The University of UT and the SLC LEA have entered into a partnership with the USOE to begin a pilot to restructure the university's urban elementary teacher preparation program. The pilot will incorporate innovative internships and PD school models, among a variety of school-based programs for preparing teachers.
- Novice Practitioner: To ensure that there is appropriate support for teachers who have earned their initial license and are working toward professional licensure, mentor standards and accompanying tools are being developed. Additional strategies include engaging novice teachers in cohorts to conduct action research and improve instructional practices. A co-teaching model with experienced teachers will also be piloted with RTTT funding.
- Developing Practitioner: The focus will be on real-time access to a digital PD resource connected to UPTS. The USOE will expand a current LEA model to provide access for all teachers, especially those in frontier areas. This project began in fall 2009 and will be ready to implement in fall 2010.
- Experienced Practitioner: Teachers who seek formal leadership opportunities will be given formal responsibilities, licensure, and differentiated compensation for their new role. Depending on the need in a particular school, the experienced practitioner leader will perform different leadership activities.

These activities will begin in fall 2010.

The State has planned a series of projects with specific activities for each of the four pathways.

(D) (5) (ii): The USOE will partner with ETS and NSDC to monitor and report on all activities and collected data from the Multi-State Continuum project. An outside agency will monitor and analyze the data throughout the project development and implementation phases to make recommendations for policy and statewide implementation of successful activities. This will include an annual review of student achievement data, teacher and principal preparation data, and the PD that will be provided. Recommendations for improvement will be based on these data and used each year to make changes in each pathway.

<b>Total</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>117</b>
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### E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1
<b>(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>		
(E) (1): The UT State Constitution Article X, Section 3 permits the State to intervene directly in the State's lowest achieving schools and LEAs.		
<b>(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>15</b>
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	10
<b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>		
(E) (2) (i): The State has provided a definition of persistently low achieving schools and in Table 14 identified the schools within the LEAs/Academies (Title 1 List of Lowest Performing Schools) that met the criteria in the definitions. There are 16 LEAs listed with a total of 59 schools identified as the lowest performing.		
(E) (2) (ii): The application materials describe activities many low performing schools have been engaging in but there is no information about the specific model(s) the identified low performing LEAs will use with its schools. The State supports the efforts by LEAs to turn its schools around but none of the specific models identified by RTTT--turnaround model, restart model, school closure, or transformation model--is identified by name with information about how the LEA plans to implement the model. However, the State does state that it will assist LEAs in their efforts to improve student achievement in the LEAs and its schools and will collaboratively select which intervention model is most appropriate for the school community. Note: The State did describe a very successful turnaround model for one of its schools.		
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>25</b>

### F. General

	Available	Tier 1
<b>(F)(1) Making education funding a priority</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>

(i) Allocating a consistent percentage of State revenue to education	5	5
(ii) Equitably funding high-poverty schools	5	5

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

(F) (1) (i): UT increased its education budget from 53.7% in 2008 to 59.2% (appropriated) for 2009 (p. 231).

(F) (1) (ii): According to the materials, UT is one of only five states where no court case challenging the equity of the state's education finance system has ever been filed. The state distributes funding for public and higher education according to statute. The aim of the formulas is to provide an equivalent amount of money for each student in the state. There are two key funding programs that lead to equitable funding between high-poverty schools and other schools.

<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>36</b>
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	8
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	8
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	8
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	4
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	8

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

(F) (2) (i): The State charter school law does not prohibit or effectively inhibit the number of high-performing charter schools. There is **no cap on the number of charter schools**. The percentage of charter schools in the state is 7.3% serving 6% of the public school age population. However, in order to ensure adequate funding for all students, the law defines the maximum number of authorized students in each charter. The purpose of this restriction is to facilitate the Legislature's financial planning, not to inhibit the number of charter schools in the state.

(F) (2) (ii): The State has a law--UT Code, Section 53 A-1a-501 through UT Code, Section 53A-1a-520 that allows the formation of charter schools and describes the creation of charter school boards, processes for charter school applications, evaluations, terminations, and accountability. There is also a State Board Administrative Rule that defines the State Charter School Board's oversight. The UT law provides specifically for consequences if charters fail to meet their charter purposes, fail to meet expected financial practices, and/or fail to serve the lowest performing students by failing to meet AYP. UT law provides for a continuum of consequences for underperforming or unsatisfactory charter schools. The charter of only one charter school has been terminated and two others are currently being closely monitored. Since 2005, there have been 71 charter applications, of which 30 have been approved and 41 denied.

(F) (2) (iii): **UT charter schools receive equitable funding under the principle that state funds for education follows the student. Charter school students receive equal funding to students attending traditional schools in the district.** Charters receive their commensurate share of federal funding; receive an annual state appropriation that is divided among all charter schools on a per student basis; and, as of 2008 legislation, receive a portion of local school district revenues determined by the number of district students that leave traditional schools to attend charter schools.

(F) (2) (iv): Utah law provides assistance to charter schools for facilities by requiring that 10% of local replacement funds be used for facilities. The application states that UT law does not impose any facility-

related requirements on charter schools that are stricter than those applied to traditional public schools; however other than the provision of 10% of the local replacement funds that go to charter schools, the application stops short of stating that it provides specific funding for facilities acquisition, access to public facilities, and the ability to share bonds and mill levies.

(F) (2) (v): UT has a long-standing commitment to inviting LEAs to develop innovative approaches to educating students, e.g., adult education programs, early college high schools, IB schools, dept of correction schools, electronic high schools, etc.

<b>(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>		
<p>(F) (3): Under UT law, the State Board may waive any rule, upon request, that the State Board is convinced inhibits innovation, efficiency, and productivity in a public school, charter school, or LEA. The law allows the State board to support school productivity and effectiveness measures. These provisions have allowed UT to encourage innovative, autonomous public schools and programs. Each of the innovative practices has resulted in improved student outcomes. The application includes several examples, all of which provide evidence that graduation rates have increased (CTE programs), increased college attendance and increased grades (Early College HS), recover missing credit and take more hours than traditional hs (Electronic HS), and accelerating students (IB schools).</p>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>51</b>

### Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

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

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

UT has been committed to increasing student and teacher access to STEM fields of study since 1999. Currently UT has three programs in place:

1. MESA (math, engineering and science achievement) program: developed to increase the number of underserved, ethnic minority and female students who pursue coursework, advanced study, and careers in STEM
2. Grades 4-6 Mathematics Initiative: a combination of of intense PD, coaching, and financial incentives for teachers to increase grade 4-6 math achievement.
3. Early College HS: program that focuses on encouraging students from underrepresented groups to pursue a science and engineering associate degrees and receive automatic admission to state colleges and universities.

(i): UT will develop Web-based lesson plans for math that ensure alignment across schools/classrooms regardless of variation in materials; create rigorous and relevant math courses that are an alternative to the traditional calculus track; create annual information for students and parents regarding STEM career and college pathways and aligned coursework beginning at the end of grade 6 and continuing through grade 12; revise and add academic pathways to career pathway materials; coordinate with higher education to review and ensure that STEM courses are vertically and horizontally aligned; review data and reports from current STEM initiatives and propose continued, enhanced, or new initiatives; and, work with business, industry, and higher education partners to define needs for a quality workforce and develop instruction to support acquisition of skills to meet those needs.

(ii): UT will use creative scheduling and will add STEM courses to summer offerings; UT's secondary UT

Science Technology and Research (USTAR) program will extend teacher pay for math and science educators and extend the school year and day for STEM students; and, create partnerships with STEM community and business leaders in order to provide internships for practicing teacher leaders that will enhance their content knowledge and skills and provide real world hands-on experience with STEM outside the classroom.

(iii): in addition to the MESA program and UT's Pathways that provides information outlining high school to college career pathways, the CTE program provides programs such as engineering, biotech, and information technology. The CTE program will be expanded.

<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>
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### Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

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

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

Although there are weaknesses in some reform areas that could impede implementation, particularly in the state's ability to build capacity in each reform area, the state has produced a reform agenda that has the potential to affect statewide change in the lives of its students. The biggest concerns are in three areas: 1) the large urban LEAs where there does not appear to be teacher association support in some LEAs where student achievement among disenfranchised groups is high, 2) the implementation schedule at the LEA level for some of the reforms, and 3) the lack of consistent attention to using student achievement data to help teachers improve their instructional practices. This needs to be embedded at every stage.

<b>Total</b>		<b>0</b>
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<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>402</b>
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