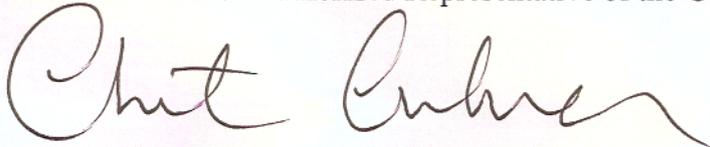
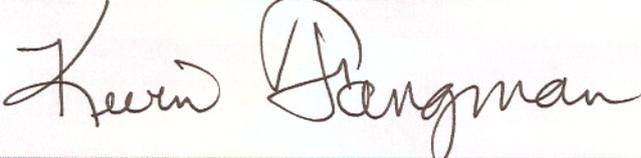
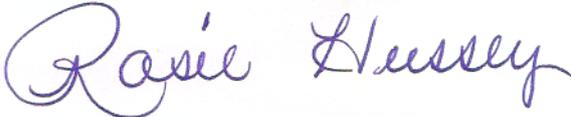


**I. RACE TO THE TOP APPLICATION ASSURANCES
(CFDA No. 84.395A)**

Legal Name of Applicant (Office of the Governor): Chester J. Culver	Applicant's Mailing Address: Office of the Governor State Capitol 1007 East Grand Avenue Des Moines, IA 50319
Employer Identification Number: 42-6004571000	Organizational DUNS: 809301823
State Race to the Top Contact Name: (Single point of contact for communication) Kevin Fangman	Contact Position and Office: Director Iowa Department of Education
Contact Telephone: (515) 281-3333	Contact E-mail Address: Kevin.Fangman@iowa.gov
Required Applicant Signatures:	
To the best of my knowledge and belief, all of the information and data in this application are true and correct.	
I further certify that I have read the application, am fully committed to it, and will support its implementation:	
Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor (Printed Name): Chester J. Culver	Telephone: 515-281-5211
Signature of Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor: 	Date: 5/25/10
Chief State School Officer (Printed Name): Kevin Fangman	Telephone: 515-281-3333
Signature of the Chief State School Officer: 	Date: 5/25/10
President of the State Board of Education (Printed Name): Rosie Hussey	Telephone: 515-281-3436
Signature of the President of the State Board of Education: 	Date: 5/23/10

State Attorney General Certification

I certify that the State's description of, and statements and conclusions concerning, State law, statute, and regulation in its application are complete, accurate, and constitute a reasonable interpretation of State law, statute, and regulation.

(See especially Eligibility Requirement (b), Selection Criteria (B)(1), (D)(1), (E)(1), (F)(2), (F)(3).)

I certify that the State does not have any legal, statutory, or regulatory barriers at the State level to linking data on student achievement (as defined in this notice) or student growth (as defined in this notice) to teachers and principals for the purpose of teacher and principal evaluation.

State Attorney General or Authorized Representative (Printed Name):

Tom Miller

Telephone:

515-281-3053

Signature of the State Attorney General or Authorized Representative:



Date:

5/24/10

II. ACCOUNTABILITY, TRANSPARENCY, REPORTING AND OTHER ASSURANCES AND CERTIFICATIONS

Accountability, Transparency and Reporting Assurances

The Governor or his/her authorized representative assures that the State will comply with all of the accountability, transparency, and reporting requirements that apply to the Race to the Top program, including the following:

- For each year of the program, the State will submit a report to the Secretary, at such time and in such manner as the Secretary may require, that describes:
 - the uses of funds within the State;
 - how the State distributed the funds it received;
 - the number of jobs that the Governor estimates were saved or created with the funds;
 - the State's progress in reducing inequities in the distribution of highly qualified teachers, implementing a State longitudinal data system, and developing and implementing valid and reliable assessments for limited English proficient students and students with disabilities; and
 - if applicable, a description of each modernization, renovation, or repair project approved in the State application and funded, including the amounts awarded and project costs (ARRA Division A, Section 14008)
- The State will cooperate with any U.S. Comptroller General evaluation of the uses of funds and the impact of funding on the progress made toward closing achievement gaps (ARRA Division A, Section 14009)
- If the State uses funds for any infrastructure investment, the State will certify that the investment received the full review and vetting required by law and that the chief executive accepts responsibility that the investment is an appropriate use of taxpayer funds. This certification will include a description of the investment, the estimated total cost, and the amount of covered funds to be used. The certification will be posted on the State's website and linked to www.Recovery.gov. A State or local agency may not use funds under the ARRA for infrastructure investment funding unless this certification is made and posted. (ARRA Division A, Section 1511)
- The State will submit reports, within 10 days after the end of each calendar quarter, that contain the information required under section 1512(c) of the ARRA in accordance with any guidance issued by the Office of Management and Budget or the Department. (ARRA Division A, Section 1512(c))
- The State will cooperate with any appropriate Federal Inspector General's examination of records under the program. (ARRA Division A, Section 1515)

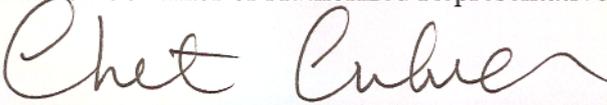
Other Assurances and Certifications

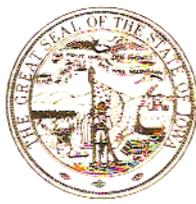
The Governor or his/her authorized representative assures or certifies the following:

- The State will comply with all applicable assurances in OMB Standard Forms 424B (Assurances for Non-Construction Programs) and to the extent consistent with the State's application, OMB Standard Form 424D (Assurances for Construction Programs), including the assurances relating to the legal authority to apply for assistance; access to records; conflict of interest; merit systems; nondiscrimination; Hatch Act provisions; labor standards; flood hazards; historic preservation; protection of human subjects; animal welfare; lead-based paint; Single Audit Act; and the general agreement to comply with all applicable Federal laws, executive orders and regulations.
- With respect to the certification regarding lobbying in Department Form 80-0013, no Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the making or renewal of Federal grants under this program; the State will complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," when required (34 C.F.R. Part 82, Appendix B); and the State will require the full certification, as set forth in 34 C.F.R. Part 82, Appendix A, in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers.
- The State will comply with all of the operational and administrative provisions in Title XV and XIV of the ARRA, including Buy American Requirements (ARRA Division A, Section 1605), Wage Rate Requirements (section 1606), and any applicable environmental impact requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1970 (NEPA), as amended, (42 U.S.C. 4371 et seq.) (ARRA Division A, Section 1609). In using ARRA funds for infrastructure investment, recipients will comply with the requirement regarding Preferences for Quick Start Activities (ARRA Division A, Section 1602).
- Any local educational agency (LEA) receiving funding under this program will have on file with the State a set of assurances that meets the requirements of section 442 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1232e).
- Any LEA receiving funding under this program will have on file with the State (through either its Stabilization Fiscal Stabilization Fund application or another U.S. Department of Education Federal grant) a description of how the LEA will comply with the requirements of section 427 of GEPA (20 U.S.C. 1228a). The description must include information on the steps the LEA proposes to take to permit students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries to overcome barriers (including barriers based on gender, race, color, national origin, disability, and age) that impede access to, or participation in, the program.
- The State and other entities will comply with the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR), including the following provisions as

applicable: 34 CFR Part 74–Administration of Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations; 34 CFR Part 75–Direct Grant Programs; 34 CFR Part 77– Definitions that Apply to Department Regulations; 34 CFR Part 80– Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments, including the procurement provisions; 34 CFR Part 81– General Education Provisions Act– Enforcement; 34 CFR Part 82– New Restrictions on Lobbying; 34 CFR Part 84– Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance); 34 CFR Part 85–Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement).

SIGNATURE BLOCK FOR CERTIFYING OFFICIAL

Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor (Printed Name): Chester J. Culver	
Signature of Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor: 	Date: 5/25/10



CHESTER J. CULVER
GOVERNOR

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

PATTY JUDGE
LT. GOVERNOR

May 25, 2010

The Honorable Arne Duncan, Secretary of Education
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I am proud to submit Iowa's application for the Race to the Top Fund. I do so because I believe now is the time to challenge our state to rethink education. From preschool to college, the old ways of doing things are no longer an option.

In Iowa, Race to the Top funds will enhance our state's unique capacity to support implementation of a vision for reform that I signed into law in 2008: the *Iowa Core*. What started as an ambitious idea about standards evolved into a mandate for a cohesive and coherent system of PK—12 education that ensures all Iowa students develop the knowledge and skills needed for the world of work, college, and life in the 21st century.

Iowa is one of the few states to identify 21st century skills and the related essential concepts and skills as necessary for students to achieve, and as a required element of our education programs. This sets the stage for transformative work to create new learning environments that help our students achieve these skills.

This vision will be bolstered by Iowa's Race to the Top plans, which are guided by three major goals:

- Implement innovative approaches to creating new learning opportunities and environments.
- Use information on student achievement and growth to inform and improve instruction.
- Improve our persistently lowest achieving schools—and share effective innovations and practices system-wide.

We have been on a steadfast path toward instituting demanding standards of professional practice and student outcomes. We hope that what we have learned and what we will learn through Race to the Top programming will help our predominantly rural states and the nation as a whole in our common quest to improve education for each and every child.

Thank you for your consideration of our application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chester Culver".

Chester J. Culver
Governor of Iowa

Race to the Top—Phase Two

Application for Initial Funding

CFDA Number: 84.395A

Iowa Department of Education

Des Moines, IA

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SELECTION CRITERIA

PROGRESS AND PLANS IN THE FOUR EDUCATION REFORM AREAS

(A) State Success Factors (125 total points)

(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEAs' participation in it (65 points)

The extent to which—

- (i) The State has set forth a comprehensive and coherent reform agenda that clearly articulates its goals for implementing reforms in the four education areas described in the ARRA and improving student outcomes statewide, establishes a clear and credible path to achieving these goals, and is consistent with the specific reform plans that the State has proposed throughout its application; (5 points)
- (ii) The participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) are strongly committed to the State's plans and to effective implementation of reform in the four education areas, as evidenced by Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) (as set forth in Appendix D) or other binding agreements between the State and its participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) that include— (45 points)
 - a) Terms and conditions that reflect strong commitment by the participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) to the State's plans;
 - b) Scope-of-work descriptions that require participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) to implement all or significant portions of the State's Race to the Top plans; and
 - c) Signatures from as many as possible of the LEA superintendent (or equivalent), the president of the local school board (or equivalent, if applicable), and the local teachers' union leader (if applicable) (one signature of which must be from an authorized LEA representative) demonstrating the extent of leadership support within participating LEAs (as defined in this notice); and
- (iii) The LEAs that are participating in the State's Race to the Top plans (including considerations of the numbers and percentages of participating LEAs, schools, K–12 students, and students in poverty) will translate into broad statewide impact, allowing the State to reach its ambitious yet achievable goals, overall and by student subgroup, for—(15 points)
 - a) Increasing student achievement in (at a minimum) reading/language arts and mathematics, as reported by the NAEP and the assessments required under the ESEA;
 - b) Decreasing achievement gaps between subgroups in reading/language arts and mathematics, as reported by the NAEP and the assessments required under the ESEA;
 - c) Increasing high school graduation rates (as defined in this notice); and
 - d) Increasing college enrollment (as defined in this notice) and increasing the number of students who complete at least a year's worth of college credit that is applicable to a degree within two years of enrollment in an institution of higher education.

In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion, as well as projected goals as described in (A)(1)(iii). The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's

success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Evidence for (A)(1)(ii):

- An example of the State’s standard Participating LEA MOU, and description of variations used, if any.
- The completed summary table indicating which specific portions of the State’s plan each LEA is committed to implementing, and relevant summary statistics (see Summary Table for (A)(1)(ii)(b), below).
- The completed summary table indicating which LEA leadership signatures have been obtained (see Summary Table for (A)(1)(ii)(c), below).

Evidence for (A)(1)(iii):

- The completed summary table indicating the numbers and percentages of participating LEAs, schools, K–12 students, and students in poverty (see Summary Table for (A)(1)(iii), below).
- Tables and graphs that show the State’s goals, overall and by subgroup, requested in the criterion, together with the supporting narrative. In addition, describe what the goals would look like were the State not to receive an award under this program.

Evidence for (A)(1)(ii) and (A)(1)(iii):

- The completed detailed table, by LEA, that includes the information requested in the criterion (see Detailed Table for (A)(1), below).

Recommended maximum response length: Ten pages (excluding tables)

(A)(1) Articulating State’s education reform agenda and LEAs’ participation in it

- (i) The extent to which the State has set forth a comprehensive and coherent reform agenda that clearly articulates its goals for implementing reforms in the four education areas described in the ARRA and improving student outcomes statewide, establishes a clear and credible path to achieving these goals, and is consistent with the specific reform plans that the State has proposed throughout its application**

Schooling Transformed: The Example of East Marshall High School

██████████ was likely going to drop out. It was 2005, and he was a freshman at East Marshall High School in LeGrande, Iowa. That same year, Mechdyne Corporation, a company in nearby Marshalltown, encouraged the Mayo Clinic to donate a used virtual reality lab to East

Marshall. Rex Kozak, the principal of the rural school community was intrigued. Could the 270 students in the school use the lab—the first in the U.S. made available to high school students—to learn?

Rex decided to try it, but with a twist. Not only would teachers use the 3-D virtual reality lab as an engaging way to teach concepts in biology, chemistry, and physics; Rex wanted students to be the ones to manage the lab and program the lessons. Rex selected [REDACTED] and three other underperforming students to unpack the lab and re-assemble it in their high school. Armed only with the printed manual, the internet, some textbooks, and advice from practitioners online, they learned how to use it. Teachers came to the students to have them design instructional applications. In running the lab, [REDACTED] and his peers directed their own learning, interacted with professionals in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields, tried out new ideas, and demonstrated self-discipline and self-direction through independent learning—critical 21st-century employability skills.

So, what happened to [REDACTED]? The student who was on the path to dropping out became engaged in his own learning in ways that were meaningful to him. He not only stayed in school but, as a senior in the spring of 2009, he had a patent pending for a virtual reality application. Today, he is a student at Iowa State University studying computer engineering and robotics.

What happened to East Marshall High School? Teachers became facilitators of learning and learners in their own right. Rex created the conditions to allow for and support all of this (and prompted other principals in his professional network to consider how to do the same in their own schools).

And what happened to the state? East Marshall became an example of the new vision of learning for all Iowa students that policy makers and education leaders across the state embraced. Seeing the experiment that [REDACTED], Rex, and their community started gave Iowa's governor, chief state school officer, and legislative leaders the concrete example they needed to articulate—and in some cases to radically update—their thinking about how to achieve their goals for high standards and 21st-century skills. Rather than *reform* the existing system to do the same things better, Iowa will *transform* the existing system from a *traditional system* that equates student learning with time spent on discrete subjects to a *competency-based system* that ensures each and every Iowa student graduates from high school proficient in the *essential concepts and skills*.. East Marshall became one of many cases to illustrate Iowa's vision.

Iowa's Race to the Top Systemic Goals

The example of [REDACTED] is illustrative of our bold vision for transformation. We have an impressive foundation given our policy infrastructure and deep statewide commitment to education. However, we also recognize that after historically leading the nation in student achievement, our rates of growth have stalled and we have not been any more successful than other states in overcoming persistent achievement disparities among subgroups of children. This provides tremendous motivation and urgency for change. We now recognize that while we have the *education policy* structures in place and highly competent and committed staff working diligently to improve instruction, continuing on this path will just lead to tinkering with a system that is not designed to meet our new goals. While we have a deep and abiding commitment to education, our hard work has led to *reforming* the current system, not *transforming* it. Given our new vision, we will build our capacity to lead *systemic change*. Our Race to the Top plan lays out an aggressive approach for transformation.

Through Iowa's Race to the Top plan we will transition to a competency-based system of education in order to achieve our priority goals:

- 1) increasing student achievement overall;
- 2) decreasing achievement gaps among student subgroups;
- 3) increasing the number and percentage of students of color who graduate from high school;
- 4) increasing college enrollment and the number of students who complete at least the equivalent of one year of college credit that can be applied toward a degree; and
- 5) increasing undergraduate enrollment in STEM majors in Iowa's or Regents institutions of higher education.

Specific objectives for each goal are listed in (A)(1)(iii).

To achieve these goals for student achievement, we have identified the following specific goals in our priority reform areas.

- 1. Competency-based education.** By the beginning of academic year 2014, 15 percent of Iowa's districts will have fully implemented a competency-based strategy; 70 percent of Iowa's districts will have completed one year of implementation of a competency-based strategy. Online learning and credit recovery initiatives will have been developed. The state will have the capacity to support 100 percent of school districts in implementing a

competency-based strategy for transformation by two years post-Race to the Top. (More details follow below.)

- 2. Standards and assessments.** By August 2010, Iowa will have adopted the Common Core Standards in English language arts and mathematics. By the beginning of academic year 2014, Iowa will have valid and reliable measures of student achievement and growth for all essential concepts and skills in the Common Core and the Iowa Core. These measures will be used by 100 percent of districts by the end of academic year 2015. (See Section (B).)
- 3. Responsive data platforms.** By the beginning of academic year 2014, we will have long completed development of the America COMPETES Act elements; we will have three new, fully operational data platforms; a tiered system of access to the statewide data systems will have been fully operational for three years; use of the statewide longitudinal data system (SLDS) and the new data platforms will have more than doubled; and nearly three times as many local administrators and teachers will be able to effectively analyze student data and other information to provide insights into changes needed in instruction, school organization, and school culture (see Section (C)).
- 4. Educator evaluation and support.** Definitions for effective and highly effective teachers and administrators will be in place by 2011 and updated in 2013 based on the new measures of student achievement and growth that are developed through Race to the Top; 70 percent of Iowa's districts will identify effective and highly effective teachers and administrators using the new measures of student achievement and growth by 2014; 100 percent of Iowa district evaluation systems will incorporate these new measures by the end of academic year 2015; results of the Pay-for-Performance and Career Ladder pilot projects will be reported and a proposal for legislative action will be placed before the Iowa General Assembly for legislative session 2015; examples of measures of the effectiveness of professional learning communities will be provided to 100 percent of Iowa's districts by 2014; 100 more new administrators will have received mentoring in their second year of service (see Section (D)).
- 5. Intensive school supports:** With the intensive school supports provided through Race to the Top, School Improvement Grants, and Title I, all of our Tier I and Tier II persistently lowest-achieving schools that implement a turnaround model will move out of the

designation within two years of receiving intensive supports through Race to the Top. In addition, the subset of schools that take part in our Learning Supports program and our Racial Equity Collaborative will eliminate relevant achievement gaps in the elementary grades and reduce gaps in middle and high school by 50 percent by the end of four years. Participating districts that are not involved in Intensive School Supports will have 40 percent more of their minority students achieving proficiency. Due to our scale-up strategy for building implementation capacity, by the fourth year of Race to the Top funding, our Centers for Collaborative Inquiry system will be prepared to carry the models for intensive school support statewide to assist all schools undergoing this kind of transformation.

From here, we have carried our internal timeline out to academic year 2015–2016 because we are fully committed as a state to carry our Race to the Top plans to scale. To comprehensively transform our system is a monumental task, involving not just the K–12 system, but impacting pre-school, higher education, the workforce, communities, and students. Achieving these goals and outcomes will require a laser focus on increasing achievement overall and closing sub-group achievement gaps; systematic and continuous evaluation, monitoring, and reporting on progress toward the goals and outcomes; and the development of implementation capacity in the state to carry improvement beyond the Race to the Top investment. We believe our plans will help us to achieve each of the goals outlined above.

Why We Will Get There: Iowa’s Context

Our historic commitment to investing in high quality education is critical given Iowa’s overall state plans for economic sustainability and quality of life. As a predominantly rural state, Iowa’s economy has traditionally been founded on a major industry: agriculture. While agriculture remains the major industry, shifts have occurred in Iowa’s economic landscape over the past several years. Those economic shifts have brought three new industry sectors to Iowa’s economy: bioscience, advanced manufacturing, and information solutions. Each of these industries requires substantial preparation in mathematics and science, as well as 21st-century skills including the ability to use disparate information to solve novel problems. Iowans continue to recognize that an investment in education will pay off, as each of the new sectors of

our rural economy has the potential for high yield. Thus, the imperative to deepen Iowa's approach to education is urgent.

Over the past decade, we have diligently been working to create and continuously improve foundational policies and practices to achieve our goals.

A Solid Foundation for Transformation

While we have more to do (as discussed in the next section), Iowa has a strong foundation and a solid strategy for increasing our implementation capacity and our ability to exercise leadership for systemic change. Over the past decade, Iowa has established valuable collaboration between the Iowa Department of Education (IDE); the Iowa legislature; the governor; our regional educational service agencies, called area education agencies (AEA); the community (including families, the business community, and elected officials); institutions of higher education (IHE), including our three Regents institutions, our many private colleges and universities, and our community colleges¹; and other agencies. Out of this collaboration, we have grown a policy infrastructure to promote high achievement.

Regional Network of Support

Originally organized to deliver special education and media services particularly to rural communities that did not have the capacity to provide these services themselves, over the 30 year history of AEAs in Iowa they have grown to become a more crucial component in Iowa's education system. In 1996, the Iowa State Board of Education formally brought the AEA network and the state system together. To build the role and quality of practice within the AEAs, the State Board expanded accreditation standards and the process of accreditation under Chapter 72 of the Iowa Administrative Code (see attachment (A)(1)–1) to include requirements for the educational, special education, and media services provided by an AEA. Iowa is one of only a handful of states to have standards of professional practice and accountability for its regional educational service agencies. The AEAs thus joined Iowa's schools, school districts, colleges, and universities in living up to standards that must be met in order to be accredited.

In the landmark Student Achievement and Teacher Quality Act of 2001, AEAs were further charged with using the then brand-new Iowa Professional Development Model in all of their

¹ The Iowa Department of Education is one of only a few states that has authority for community colleges.

professional development services. This consistent use across the state by the major professional service providers created a “tipping point,” whereby teachers and administrators not only recognized the quality of the professional development model, they began to demand that all of their professional development be so designed. The AEA’s have been necessary agents of this powerful work to improve teaching, leading, and learning and are major players in our Race to the Top plans.

Educator Policy

In 2001, the Iowa legislature passed the **Student Achievement and Teacher Quality Act**, which set the stage for significant work to come (see attachment (A)(1)–(2)). In this landmark legislation, Iowa passed teaching standards, created a required mentoring and induction program (*one of the first states to do this; still there are only 23 such state-level programs in the nation*), mandated high quality professional development, set up career paths and a Team-Based Variable Pay pilot program, and set into code a comprehensive teacher evaluation system, along with training for evaluators. Iowa’s **Comprehensive Teacher Evaluation System** links teacher performance to teacher standards and ultimately to quality instruction and student growth in the classroom. Another significant advancement to come out of the Teacher Quality legislation is our research-based **Iowa Professional Development Model (IPDM)**, which provides a structure for districts to review current professional development needs and proactively plan for just-in-time and future professional development for faculty and staff. Based on extensive research, IPDM supports districts to (1) review current data (including results of the Teacher Evaluation System, student growth, and effective practices), (2) set goals, (3) determine the content and design of professional development, and (4) use a continuous improvement process to implement, evaluate, and revise as needed. IPDM provides an opportune vehicle to effect significant change in Iowa’s instructional delivery across the state.

The General Assembly updated the legislation in 2006 to move from the team-based variable pay pilots to Pay-for-Performance and Career Ladder pilot programs designed to establish the effectiveness of different teacher compensation methods.

Iowa’s **Administrator Quality Program** was established to promote high student achievement and enhance educator quality throughout the state of Iowa. The program consists of four components: (1) The Iowa Standards for School Leaders and criteria to guide the evaluation of and the basis of professional development for Iowa’s school administrators, (2) A mentoring

and induction program for beginning administrators in Iowa, (3) Professional development to directly support best practice for leadership, (4) Evaluation of administrators based on leadership standards. Initial and subsequent evaluations of administrators require documentation of competence on the six leadership standards; the first of just six Iowa Leadership Standards is directly linked to student achievement, growth, and high expectations for both teaching and learning.

More detail on educator policies is in Section (D).

Data Systems

Another outgrowth from the 2001 teacher quality legislation has been a renewed commitment to build the **data systems** needed for an evidence-based education system. Iowa has moved to a unique student identifier for K–12, which is now required by postsecondary in Iowa, and the state has invested in ongoing appropriations from the Rebuild Iowa Infrastructure Fund. This includes a legislative appropriation for partial funding of an electronic transcript and student records exchange system and a statewide longitudinal data system. The Iowa legislature also directed the IDE Community College Division and Iowa Workforce Development to work on a joint effort to create an Iowa education and training database. Additional detail on Iowa’s data systems follows in Sections (A)(3) and (C).

The Iowa Core

One of the most significant pieces of new state law in the past decade is **the Iowa Core** (Senate File 2216, see attachment (A)(1)–3), which became law in 2008. The Iowa Core organizes Iowa’s student standards into the essential concepts and skills in literacy, math, science, social studies, and 21st-century learning skills (civic literacy, financial literacy, technology literacy, health literacy, and employability skills). The Iowa Core is not course-based, but rather is a student-based approach that supports a higher level of learning for all students. Districts must implement the Iowa Core by 2012 in high schools and by 2014 in elementary and middle schools. The Iowa Core is demonstration of Iowa’s strong statewide support for transformation.

IDE is incorporating **universal constructs** as a way of thinking about what implementation of the Iowa Core looks like in practice. Universal constructs articulate the essential competencies and habits of mind for career, college, and citizenry: critical thinking, complex

communication, creativity, collaboration, flexibility and adaptability, and productivity and accountability. The universal constructs should be embedded in the curriculum and should permeate instruction, learning, and environment.

Student Assessment

Iowa has been involved in **statewide student assessment** since 1935, when the Iowa Statewide Testing Program was developed as a voluntary, non-profit cooperative program for Iowa schools provided as a service to the schools by the College of Education of The University of Iowa. Beginning with the Iowa Every Pupil Tests, the emphasis in the program has been on the use of assessment results for instructional purposes. The Iowa Every Pupil Tests became the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS), used in grades K–8. Schools participating in the program subscribe to a comprehensive program of professional services: ITBS test materials, scoring and reporting services, and consultation are available throughout the school year. In 1942, the Iowa Tests of Educational Development (ITEDs) were provided for grades 9–12. Virtually all Iowa school districts—both public and private—have voluntarily participated in this program annually since its inception. That means Iowa has used assessment data for instructional improvement for over 70 years. This culture of data collection also contributes to a culture of research. Iowa schools that participate in the Iowa Testing Program participate in research projects and test development efforts conducted by Iowa Testing Programs to ensure continuous improvement of the state’s assessment system. We will build on this culture in our Race to the Top plans.

Support for Schools and Districts in Need of Assistance

The Iowa **Support System for Schools in Need of Assistance (SINA) and Districts in Need of Assistance (DINA)** was developed in 2003. Our state system of support helps SINAs to develop and implement a two-year action plan that: addresses core academic subjects; utilizes scientifically researched strategies; implements new teacher mentoring; includes parent involvement activities; and provides for a peer review of the plan. SINAs and DINAs allocate 10 percent of their Title I funding to professional development in the area for which the school/district is identified.

In January 2010 passed Senate File 2033 (see attachment (E)(1)–1), a bill that modified Iowa Code in several ways, including adding a requirement that districts with Iowa’s **persistently lowest-achieving schools** select an intervention model and undertake major reform.

Innovation Zones

January's Senate File 2033 also modified Iowa Code to lift some regulations and requirements from schools working in **Innovation Zones**. This legislation allows for a consortium of two or more districts to work together with an AEA to establish innovative practices. District and AEAs in approved Innovation Zones will have greater flexibility to create different organizational structures for learners, allow greater flexibility to meet the educational needs of Iowa's diverse and changing student population, and allow resources to be allocated in innovative ways through specialized school budgets. They will be granted waivers from allowable regulations when it is determined that regulations get in the way of innovation.

Senior Year Plus

Senior Year Plus was enacted by the legislature in 2008, creating a new Iowa Code (Chapter 261E) that consolidated and standardized several existing programs. Senior Year Plus provides increased and more equal access to college credit and advancement placement courses. Courses delivered through Senior Year Plus provide students the opportunity to take a rigorous college curriculum and receive, in many cases, both high school and college credit concurrently. More detail on Senior Year Plus is in Section (F).

Research-Based Initiatives

In addition to strengthening Iowa's policy infrastructure, Iowa also invested in **a series of research-based initiatives** to address our most critical needs. These initiatives range from specific interventions for struggling early readers, to programs to support entire subgroups of students, to whole-scale high school reform efforts. (A list of the initiatives is in attachment (A)(1)–4).

But A Foundation Alone Does Not Guarantee Success

We are proud of the record of leadership and investment this foundation represents. However, despite these investments and although we remain among the highest achieving states in the nation, student performance in Iowa has reached a plateau. The system continues to produce disparities in student experience and achievement. We are not satisfied with sitting still in our high graduation rates and high achievement overall. For our rural state to thrive in the

new economy and for each of our students to achieve success in today's technology and information rich, global community, we must move past our plateau. We must transform ourselves into an innovative, equitable system characterized by engaged, supported, and motivated students.

To do this, we will surround the system with pressure and support toward significant transformation. [REDACTED] and Rex help us imagine an education system that reaches beyond the physical boundaries of classrooms and buildings. We are at an exciting moment when the need for transformation is urgent and our new vision is clear: Iowa will transform from its traditional system of education to a competency-based system in which learning, not time, is the constant, disparities are eliminated, and increased student achievement and success is our legacy.

Iowa's New Vision: A Competency-Based System of Education

A shared vision inspires people to learn not because they have to but because they want to. The practice of shared vision involves the skills of revealing shared “pictures of the future” that generate real commitment instead of compliance. And, the shared vision spreads in organic ways. As people talk, the vision grows more clear. As the vision grows more clear, individuals’ enthusiasm for its benefits grows. Organizations that are able to move from linear thinking toward system thinking bring their vision to reality.

Iowa is building a shared vision for education by inviting districts and education stakeholders into the design, research of, and development of what the shared vision looks like in practice in Iowa. Our work on the Iowa Core, leading into our work on this Race to the Top application, has brought that critical mass of educators and other leaders to the table in support of the hard work of transformation toward a competency-based system of education.

Characteristics of a Competency-Based System

A traditional education system is adult-centered and time-focused. Designed for efficiency, it is organized around Carnegie Units, which typically reflect “contact hours” (i.e., the amount of time the teacher had contact with the students) or “seat time” (i.e., the amount of time students spent sitting in the class). This system requires students to spend the same amount of time in a course regardless of whether they attained the essential concepts and skills before the course started, mid-way through the course, or not at all. Additionally, it tends to divide knowledge into

discrete disciplines and rarely asks students to pull together knowledge to solve interdisciplinary problems. This artificial separation forces the system to organize around and allocate resources by subject and to design learning environments to “cover” course content.

By contrast, a competency-based system is student-centered and learning-focused. Instead of contact hours and seat time, it is organized around student learning. Consequently, it is flexible and responsive to students’ needs. It allows students to progress at their own pace and to demonstrate what they know and are able to do in multiple ways. This benefits all students, and it is especially beneficial for English language learners, students with disabilities, gifted students, and others who may thrive with alternate mechanisms to demonstrate learning. Additionally, a competency-based system frees the system to organize around and allocate resources to achieve state, district, school, and classroom learning goals just as it frees educators to design learning environments and utilize tools and materials to achieve student goals.

Table A–1 below describes how a competency-based system differs from a traditional system in significant ways.

Table A–1. Comparison of a Traditional System and a Competency-based System

	Traditional System	Competency-Based System
System Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content-focused and time-based; learning is the variable. The system is effective for a portion of students. • System expects some students will excel, some will do average work, and some will fail. • System expects teachers will work in isolation toward classroom goals, and administrators will provide direction, protection and order to the adults in the system through building and fiscal management. • System is organized around covering content. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student-focused and learning-based; time is the variable. The system is effective for all students. • System expects all students can achieve at high standards; failure is not an option. • System expects all educational stakeholder will work together toward achieving student, class, district, and state learning goals. • System is organized around robust learning environments, rigor and relevance, and formative assessment.
Standards and Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards are discipline-focused and disciplines are independent of one another. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus is on essential concepts and skills, including 21st-century skills, and universal constructs across

	Traditional System	Competency-Based System
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning is geared toward coverage of content and is disconnected from standards for career, college, and citizenry. 	<p>disciplines; disciplines are integrated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning is geared toward recognized standards and keyed to what students need for career, college, and citizenry.
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relies on summative assessment, including standardized testing. • Grades are based on various (and often highly subjective) points (e.g., attendance, class participation) rather than proficiencies; may reflect quantity over quality (such as extra credit work); may be used in part to punish, reward, or control student behavior. • Grades are sometimes locked in before a course ends, and are often inflated. • Students accumulate graded units of instruction to graduate, regardless of skill levels acquired or grades assigned, and a standard diploma is regarded as the end point of the high school experience. For students capable of doing more and advancing while still in high school, the senior year is often spent coasting to the finish line. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires a balanced assessment system that includes formative, interim (benchmark), and summative assessment. • Values the knowledge and experience that students bring to the classroom. • Criteria are clear, follow learning progressions, include peer feedback and require students to assemble a portfolio of evidence. • Work is based on agreements about evidence of proficiency in essential concepts and skills and ability to apply universal constructs across disciplines. • Rubrics help students plan and monitor their learning; adjustments are made continuously based on what students and educators collaboratively determine to be valuable. • Students with an interest in advanced certification and credits (AP, International Baccalaureate, college credits) are supported in going beyond minimum diploma requirements.
Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrequently collected and analyzed, if at all. • Used almost exclusively by the adults in the system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequently collected and analyzed (currently and longitudinally) by teachers, professional learning communities, and curriculum and instruction administrators, to achieve student, classroom, district

	Traditional System	Competency-Based System
		<p>and state goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students own their data to help them in planning their learning agenda.
Teachers and Teacher Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers are dispensers of knowledge and design learning environments and instruction to ensure “coverage” by discipline, subject, and course. • Teachers are prepared to be content experts and to work independently • Teachers lead class discussion, make assignments, motivate students, give tests and track points, and assign grades. • Teachers primarily assess lower-order skills (e.g., knowledge, understanding). • Teachers often engage in “drive-by” professional development not linked to goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers are facilitators of learning and design learning environments and instruction to ensure students acquire essential concepts and skills and are able to integrate the universal constructs across disciplines. • Teachers are prepared to be content experts, as well as mentors, resources, partners in school management, partners with community resource providers, skilled assessment and data practitioners, members of teaching teams, and members of professional learning communities. • Teachers assess higher-order skills (e.g., application, analysis, evaluation, creation). • Teachers engage in ongoing professional development linked to individual, classroom, school, and district goals.
Administrators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrators manage buildings and people; enforce policies; and handle discipline. • Administrators are prepared to manage and protect the system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrators create conditions and provide organizational support and vision to keep the district/school focused on learning. • Administrators are prepared to be instructional leaders. • Administrators engage in ongoing professional development linked to building and system goals.
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students receive or absorb information passively, recite when 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students envision and help plan their education path, partner in their

	Traditional System	Competency-Based System
	<p>asked, achieve on tests.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students do not have a role in designing their own learning environments. • Students develop primarily independent skills. • Students do not always know at the beginning of a course what constitutes successful learning. 	<p>own progress through multiple sources of data, learn by application, analysis, evaluation, and creation as well as through direct teaching models.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students help create their own robust learning environments • Students develop both individual and group skills. • From the very beginning of a course or project, they know precisely what proficiencies demonstrate desired attainment of concepts and skills, and they work to achieve those proficiencies.

Source: Adapted from Oregon Education Roundtable (2009, March, *Proficiency-based instruction and assessment: A promising path to higher achievement in Oregon education*), by West Wind Education Policy Inc. and the Iowa Department of Education.

While we have some shining examples that have taken root in our state—because we have systematically been creating conditions to allow for the move from a traditional system to a competency-based system—we recognize that this move still will require a significant amount of change. Some of this change is underway. The Iowa legislature began articulating its new vision when they passed the Iowa Core, which organizes Iowa’s standards into *essential concepts and skills* that are articulated by grade span, not grade level. Districts already have the authority to promote students based on competency rather than seat time. This allows us to combine grades and students in configurations that accommodate their place on the developmental continuum, a strategy already used in some of Iowa’s elementary schools. Further, we are in the process of developing a credit recovery system, which will free students from having to “sit through” an entire course in order to attain a few concepts and skills that may take just weeks, days, or hours to acquire. This is especially important for students who transfer from one district to another or who cannot for whatever reason complete a traditional course in the time allotted. Credit recovery currently is being implemented in some of our high schools.

As we move further along toward a competency-based system, though, we are encountering inevitable policy barriers and resistance. For example, institutions of higher education are used to making admissions decisions based on traditional high school transcripts documenting that students took specific, recognizable courses. To ensure students are able to transition seamlessly from a competency-based K–12 system of education to a post-secondary system that is not used to this foundation, we will need valid, reliable, and commonly accepted measures of student attainment of the essential concepts and skills. Thus, it is absolutely critical that we develop multiple measures of student achievement and growth—measures that are acknowledged not only within our state but across state lines.

But we also are doing one more thing. We are no longer simply focused on improving education policy and practice along traditional lines. We are beginning to build our capacity as a system to transform ourselves. This requires that each of us in the system do new work.

The Last Piece of the Puzzle: Doing New Work

For the past 18 months, the IDE has gathered internal stakeholders, external researchers, and consultants in a series of events engaging in the challenge of systems transformation. As a result of this effort, we have pulled together three complementary theoretical frameworks into our approach to implementing reform: (1) implementation capacity (Fixsen & Blase, 2005); (2) learning organizations (Senge, 1994); and (3) adaptive leadership (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). It is this final piece of the puzzle that we will put in place with our Race to the Top funds.

The first component of our framework comes from the work of the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN). Co-director Dean Fixsen notes, “An effective intervention is one thing. Implementation of an effective intervention is a very different thing!” (Fixsen et al, 2009). NIRN engaged in a meta-analysis of several approaches to implementation, out of which they created the State Implementation and Scaling up of Evidence-based Practices (SISEP) Center, funded by the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs. They learned the development of implementation teams is the heart of an effective implementation infrastructure. Implementation science demonstrates that success rates increase from 14 percent to 80 percent when implementation teams are utilized (Balas & Boren, 2000). Balas & Boren found it takes an estimated average of 17 years for only 14 percent of new scientific discoveries to enter day-to-day clinical practice. Fixsen et al (2001) found that with the use of competent implementation

teams, the time it took for practice to change was reduced to 3.6 years. We have built implementation teams into our Race to the Top plans based on these findings.

An implementation team consists of individuals who know interventions from a practice point of view; are skillful users of implementation methods; are thoroughly engaged in continuous quality improvement cycles in all aspects of their activities; and are adept users of system transformation methods. To ensure effective and sustainable implementation, implementation team members work simultaneously at all levels of the system. However, they all focus on a set of six implementation drivers (e.g., recruitment and selection, training). This assures strong linkages and transparent feedback loops, within and across levels. Our staffing design for Race to the Top is based on this framework.

The second component is learning organizations, which are “organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together” (Senge, 1994, p.3). Learning organizations can be distinguished from other organizations by their mastery of five basic disciplines: (1) systems thinking, (2) personal mastery, (3) mental models, (4) building shared vision, and (5) team learning. Systems theory is the cornerstone of the disciplines and requires examination of the whole of the system as well as the interrelationship among its parts. The more we appreciate systems as dynamic, the more appropriate and effective our actions will be.

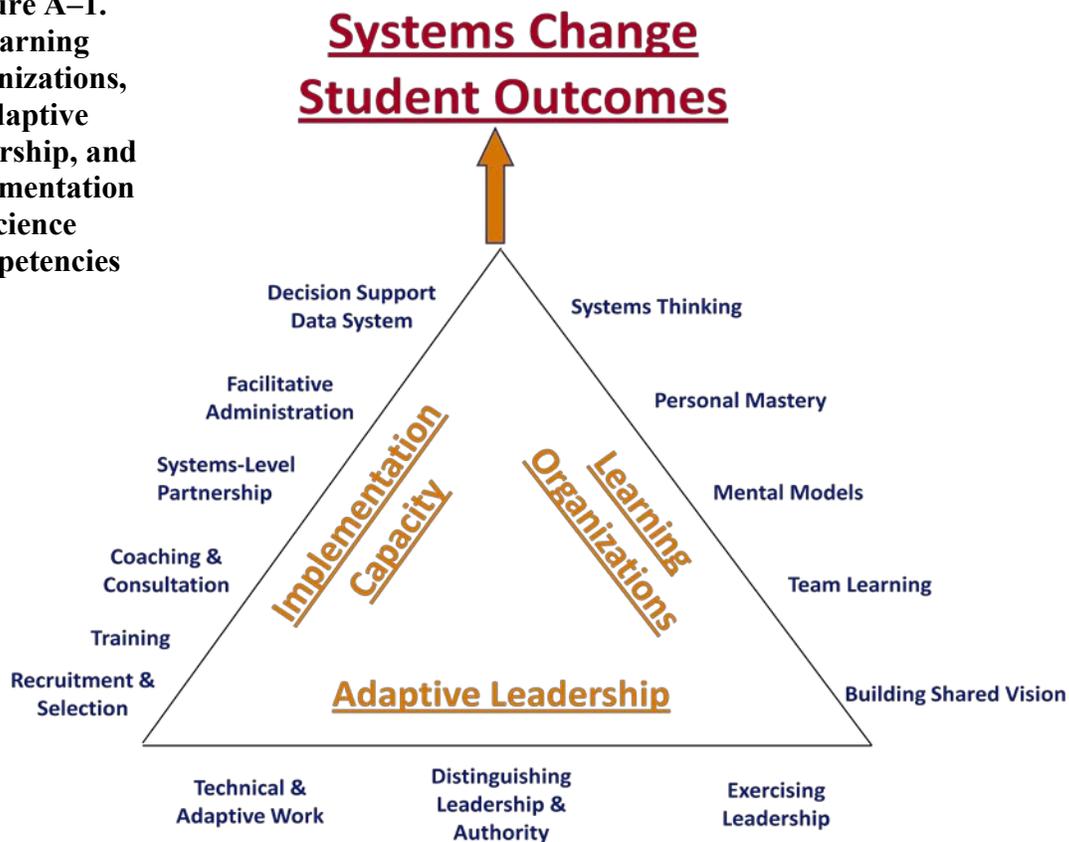
Like learning organizations, the third component, adaptive leadership, empowers every person in the system—not just those with formal authority—to exercise leadership toward transformation. Adaptive leadership also helps us to distinguish technical challenges from adaptive challenges. Many of the challenges facing people who attempt to change systems are technical in nature. That is, the problem being faced is relatively clear, the solution to the problem is relatively straightforward, and the person attempting to lead change has the recognized authority and the knowledge and skill to do so. Many of the management training courses and educational administration preparation programs across the nation train in this mode of leadership. Most challenges in education, however, are adaptive or are a combination of technical and adaptive. With an adaptive challenge, the problems needing solved are not clear. Therefore, the solution is not clear, often the person attempting to lead change does not have the agreed-upon authority to do so, and the existing skill set of the person attempting to exercise leadership does not equip her/him to lead through the problems. In facing an adaptive challenge, learning is required, and the people needing

to institute change are the people with the problem in the first place. Moving toward a competency-based system of education, for example, requires abandoning long-held beliefs about the nature and location of teaching, leading, and learning. The process takes individuals through experiences of loss, disloyalty, and very real feelings of incompetence. Working through adaptive challenges like these means working with people’s hearts, not just their minds. Heifetz and Linsky (2002) teach us that very often we fail to solve our problems when we treat adaptive challenges as if they are technical challenges.

Iowa’s leadership development work over the past decade has drawn on adaptive leadership as a key construct and our Race to the Top consulting partners in have engaged in leadership coaching for years. Thus, the field is ripe for adopting this approach to our process for transformation.

Figure A–1 below brings together the three frameworks in a comprehensive approach to transformation and displays the competencies we will develop with our implementation teams.

**Figure A–1.
Learning
Organizations,
Adaptive
Leadership, and
Implementation
Science
Competencies**



*Adapted for discussion by West Wind
Education Policy from Fixsen & Blase, 2007*

Figure A–1 above outlines the concepts and skills that the adults in our system will need in order to move to a competency-based system. By and large, these are not competencies we have been hiring for in our state and local agencies. Bringing these competencies to bear in our transformed system, combined with the policy conditions we describe above and the plans we describe in Section (A)(2) below, will propel us to our goals.

(A)(1)(ii) Articulating the extent to which the participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) are strongly committed to the State’s plans and to effective implementation of reform in the four education areas

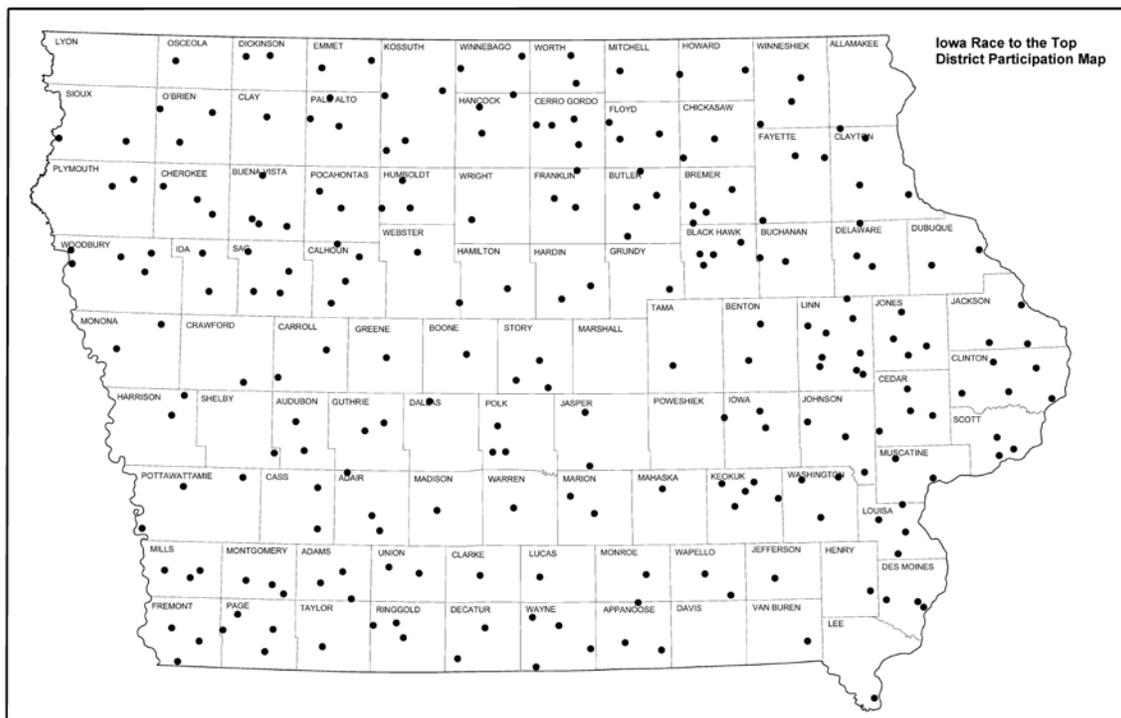
Iowa will realize the transformation of education due to the tremendous statewide commitment for change and the agreement among the strong majority of our school districts to participate in Race to the Top. Since Iowa’s phase one application in January, support for and participation in our state’s Race to the Top plan has grown—including a 54 percent increase in the number of students covered under our Phase Two application.

Iowa developed a stringent Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that districts had to sign in order to participate in Race to the Top (see attachment (A)(1)–5). In fact, districts had to agree to everything in our MOU, which included provisions that went beyond the scope of the minimum Race to the Top requirements.

In spite of strict requirements to participate, more than 73 percent of Iowa’s K–12 public school population is served by districts taking part in the state’s Race to the Top application. That is up from just 47 percent of the state’s K–12 public school population represented in Iowa’s Phase One application. Furthermore, 79 percent of students living in poverty will benefit from the plan proposed in Iowa’s Phase Two application.

In addition, a total of 246 school districts, or 68 percent of the state’s LEAs, have signed on, up from 221 in the phase one application. The eight largest school districts in Iowa, only one of which participated in the phase one application, have unanimously signed on to the state’s current application.

Figure A–2. Statewide Impact



Participants in Iowa’s Phase Two application represent all regions of the state. See Figure A–2 above. Of Iowa’s 99 counties, only four are unrepresented in our Race to the Top transformation effort. As we detail in our goals and objectives in (A)(1) and in attachment (A)(1)–6, this is the right number and mix of districts, students, and stakeholders to move the needle on achievement and make a significant statewide impact.

Equally important, 76 percent of the MOUs came with the signature of the teacher association’s president. This is a result of concerted statewide efforts at collaboration and represents a vote of confidence in Iowa’s strategy.

At the end of the four years of Race to the Top, over two-thirds of the districts in Iowa will have implemented intensive reforms in the Race to the Top priority areas and will have built a culture of data-driven decision making and a focus on equity. We will have new tools, policies, and statewide infrastructures for support with the capacity to scale-up programs statewide. Most important, three out of four students will benefit from this transformation. This is by far past the tipping point of statewide impact.

Specific details about LEA support follow.

- (A)(1)(ii)(a) The Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) include terms and conditions that reflect strong commitment by the participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) to the State’s plans; and**
- (A)(1)(ii)(b) Scope-of-work descriptions require participating LEAs to implement all or significant portions of the State’s Race to the Top plans**

As noted above, we developed a strong MOU through which districts indicate participation in Race to the Top. We expected participating districts to agree to implement every agreement. *All but one of our districts signed on to every one of the agreements.* The dissenting district only opted out of one of the twenty-seven agreements.

Iowa built off the Race to the Top MOU template, adding several agreements to our scope-of-work relating to Iowa’s specific context. The full MOU is available in attachment (A)(1)–5. In addition, Iowa added provisions that will make achievement of our specific goals possible, including:

- LEA will develop a plan for competency-based credit or promotion for a grade span, content area, or 21st-century skill to further expand Iowa Core Implementation by at least the end of the third year of Iowa’s Race to the Top program, using guidance from the pilot State project, and will begin implementing the plan during the fourth year.
- LEA will take part in a survey in the fall of 2010 to gather baseline data necessary for tracking the effectiveness of reforms. (Costs of the evaluation will be covered by other entities.)
- LEA will share data/information/lessons learned on implementation of their instructional improvement program with the State.
- Once the data platform is operational, LEA will submit examples of student work to the IDE for the purpose of developing multiple, authentic measures of student achievement and growth, respecting student confidentiality.
- LEA will collect and submit samples of teacher work for the purpose of professional development, respecting teacher confidentiality.
- LEA will contribute to the development of authentic/multiple measures of student achievement and growth (described in Section (B)).

- LEA affirms that all teacher and principal evaluations are conducted by licensed evaluators.
- LEA, in collaboration with its Teacher Quality Committee where applicable, will ensure its professional development to improve teaching and learning follows the Iowa Professional Development Model.
- LEA will submit examples of teacher and student work to support professional development.

There are only two items that Iowa did not include in its MOU that were in the MOU template. We did not require districts to agree use evaluations to inform compensation, because we are in the midst of a Pay-for-Performance and Career Ladder pilot, which will be extended through Race to the Top (described in Section (D)). We will provide targeted, large subgrants through Race to the Top funds to a select subset of participating districts who will take the pilots to the next level. We could not afford to provide subgrants to all districts for this purpose, and we are not just looking for volunteers. Rather, we want to develop a selective process for identifying subgrantees. Thus, we did not require every district to include this provision in their scope of work agreements at this time. That said, we did require districts to agree they would use evaluations to inform promotion and retention, and 100 percent of districts did so.

The second item we did not include in our MOU is an agreement related to turning around Iowa’s persistently lowest-achieving schools (PLAS). We have signed MOUs from districts wishing to take part in the School Improvement Grants (SIG) (see Section (E) for a discussion of the PLAS provisions and reference to the SIG MOUs in Appendix E). The SIG MOU is much stronger than it would have been as a 28th agreement in our MOU, as the SIG MOU indicates the district already has worked with its teachers association to agree to an intervention model. Thus, agreeing to intervene in a PLAS was not among our Race to the Top MOU provisions.

Summary Table for (A)(1)(ii)(b)		
Elements of State Reform Plans	Number of LEAs Participating (#)	Percentage of Total Participating LEAs (%)
B. Standards and Assessments		

(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	246	100.0%
C. Data Systems to Support Instruction		
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction:		
(i) Use of local instructional improvement systems	246	100.0%
(ii) Professional development on use of data	246	100.0%
(iii) Availability and accessibility of data to researchers	246	100.0%
D. Great Teachers and Leaders		
(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance:		
(i) Measure student growth	246	100.0%
(ii) Design and implement evaluation systems	245*	99.6%
(iii) Conduct annual evaluations	246	100.0%
(iv)(a) Use evaluations to inform professional development	246	100.0%
(iv)(b) Use evaluations to inform compensation, promotion and retention	See explanation**	
(iv)(c) Use evaluations to inform tenure and/or full certification	246	100.0%
(iv)(d) Use evaluations to inform removal	246	100.0%
(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals:		
(i) High-poverty and/or high-minority schools	246	100.0%
(ii) Hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	246	100.0%
(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals:		
(i) Quality professional development	246	100.0%

(ii) Measure effectiveness of professional development	246	100.0%
E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools		
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	NA***	NA**
<p>* Only two MOUs were submitted with conditions. Several MOUs were submitted with comments. These are included in the detailed table in attachment (A)(1)–6.</p> <p>** 100 percent of districts agreed to use evaluation in making decisions about promotion and retention. We did not include compensation in this agreement for the reasons described above this table.</p> <p>*** Iowa did not include this provision in our Race to the Top MOU in favor of the SIG MOU as an indicator of commitment to intervene in Iowa’s 35 PLAS.</p>		

(A)(1)(ii)(b) Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) include signatures from as many as possible of the LEA superintendent, the president of the local school board, and the local teachers’ union leader demonstrating the extent of leadership support within participating LEAs

In Iowa, school boards hold the authority to bind districts to contracts, so the signature of the **school board president** is mandatory for a district to take part in Race to the Top. All 246 of the LEAs which submitted an MOU have the legally required signature of the school board president. In addition, all but one very small district also included the signature of their superintendent.

We are especially pleased that just over three-quarters of our local teacher association presidents (76 percent) signed on to the Race to the Top MOUs. We have been working diligently over the years to assure that our teachers, administrators, and community leaders are on board with the reforms we are proposing and are prepared to help shepherd them in practice. This will be critical to our ability to radically transform the system. We will be working hand-in-hand with the state and the local teacher associations as we move forward. We did it in the design process for Race to the Top and we will continue doing it throughout implementation.

Summary Table for (A)(1)(ii)(c)			
Signatures acquired from participating LEAs			
Number of Participating LEAs with all applicable signatures			
	Number of Signatures Obtained (#)	Number of Signatures Applicable (#)	Percentage (%) (Obtained / Applicable)
LEA Superintendent (or equivalent)	245	246	99.6%
President of Local School Board (or equivalent, if applicable)	246	246	100.0%
Local Teachers' Union Leader (if applicable)	181	239	75.7%

(A)(1)(iii) The LEAs that are participating in the State's Race to the Top plans (including considerations of the numbers and percentages of participating LEAs, schools, K–12 students, and students in poverty) will translate into broad statewide impact, allowing the State to reach its ambitious yet achievable goals, overall and by student subgroup

As noted above, 74 percent of Iowa's schools, 73 percent of Iowa's students, and 79 percent of Iowa's students in poverty are within participating districts. If we are able to improve student achievement dramatically in these districts, the change will have been strong enough to impact state trends. In addition, we are building internal capacity to implement reform, so in the two years post-Race to the Top, we will have the capacity to bring all measures to scale statewide by the end of academic year 2015. What we learn and develop alongside the districts participating in Race to the Top will help all districts in Iowa throughout the course of the Race to the Top program. Even if non-participating districts do not experience improvement, the number of participating districts is such that we can move the needle on reform statewide just by impacting achievement in the participating districts. See attachment (A)(1)–7 for a graphical representation of projected improvements in student achievement.

The following tables provide more detail on our LEA participation and statewide impact.

Summary Table for (A)(1)(iii)			
	Participating LEAs (#)	Statewide (#)	Percentage of Total Statewide (%)
			(Participating LEAs / Statewide)
LEAs	246	361	68%
Schools	1,284	1,727	74%
K–12 Students	343,278	467,461	73%
Students in poverty	137,377	174,852	79%

Race to the Top Objectives

Another challenge to competency-based education is the possibility that in our attempts to become more student-centered, we will allow individuals and groups of students to fall behind, in the name of “moving at their own pace.” To safeguard against this, we will administer new tests in ways that allow us to check growth for individual students as well as for subgroups of students. For now, our trend data and general ability to track growth is based on grade-levels, though a competency-based system of education would have us move away from organizing learning grade-by-grade. For now, because of the data we have, we will measure achievement of our goals by looking at grade-level achievement data. One of the tasks of our CCIs will be to work on alternate measures of accountability in a competency-based system.

To achieve our five over-arching, ambitious goals, we have developed set of objectives, described below. (See attachment (A)(1)–7 for a graphical representation of our objectives.)

Goal 1. Increase student achievement overall

Objectives: (1) Increase achievement for students who are proficient on the state tests at least one grade level per year; (2) increase achievement by students who are not proficient on the state tests by more than one grade level per year.;

Goal 2. Decrease achievement gaps among student subgroups

Objectives: (1) Cut achievement gaps by poverty and race in reading and mathematics in half in grades eight and 11; (2) Eliminate achievement gaps by poverty and race in reading and mathematics in grade three.

Goal 3. Increase high school graduation rates

Objectives: (1) Increase the graduation rate for students of color from 73 percent in 2008 to 95 percent in 2014 and (2) for students in poverty from 78 percent to 95 percent. (In 2006, Iowa ranked third in the nation for average freshman graduation rates. Therefore, we are focusing our Race to the Top efforts on closing the gap in graduation rates.)

Goal 4. Increase college enrollment and the number of students who complete at least the equivalent of one year of college credit that can be applied toward a degree

Objectives: (1) Achieve 75 percent matriculation to post-secondary school rate; (2) Increase the number of students who complete at least the equivalent of one year of college credit applicable to a degree.

Goal 5. Increase undergraduate enrollment in STEM majors in Iowa’s Regents institutions of higher education.

Objectives: (1) Increase enrollment of STEM majors 20 percent overall; (2) increase under-represented minority enrollment by 50 percent; and (3) increase female enrollment to 50 percent of STEM majors.

We will accomplish these goals through a combination of targeted approaches, new capacities in-state, and the full array of interconnected systemic priorities as described throughout the application.

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up and sustain proposed plans (30 points)

The extent to which the State has a high-quality overall plan to—

- (i) Ensure that it has the capacity required to implement its proposed plans by— (20 points)
 - a) Providing strong leadership and dedicated teams to implement the statewide education reform plans the State has proposed;

- b) Supporting participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) in successfully implementing the education reform plans the State has proposed, through such activities as identifying promising practices, evaluating these practices' effectiveness, ceasing ineffective practices, widely disseminating and replicating the effective practices statewide, holding participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) accountable for progress and performance, and intervening where necessary;
 - c) Providing effective and efficient operations and processes for implementing its Race to the Top grant in such areas as grant administration and oversight, budget reporting and monitoring, performance measure tracking and reporting, and fund disbursement;
 - d) Using the funds for this grant, as described in the State's budget and accompanying budget narrative, to accomplish the State's plans and meet its targets, including where feasible, by coordinating, reallocating, or repurposing education funds from other Federal, State, and local sources so that they align with the State's Race to the Top goals; and
 - e) Using the fiscal, political, and human capital resources of the State to continue, after the period of funding has ended, those reforms funded under the grant for which there is evidence of success; and
- (ii) Use support from a broad group of stakeholders to better implement its plans, as evidenced by the strength of the statements or actions of support from— (10 points)
- a) The State's teachers and principals, which include the State's teachers' unions or statewide teacher associations; and
 - b) Other critical stakeholders, such as the State's legislative leadership; charter school authorizers and State charter school membership associations (if applicable); other State and local leaders (e.g., business, community, civil rights, and education association leaders); Tribal schools; parent, student, and community organizations (e.g., parent-teacher associations, nonprofit organizations, local education foundations, and community-based organizations); and institutions of higher education.

In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. The State's response to (A)(2)(i)(d) will be addressed in the budget section (Section VIII of the application). Attachments, such as letters of support or commitment, should be summarized in the text box below and organized with a summary table in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Evidence for (A)(2)(i)(d):

- The State's budget, as completed in Section VIII of the application. The narrative that accompanies and explains the budget and how it connects to the State's plan, as completed in Section VIII of the application.

Evidence for (A)(2)(ii):

- A summary in the narrative of the statements or actions and inclusion of key statements or actions in the Appendix.

Recommended maximum response length: Five pages (excluding budget and budget narrative)

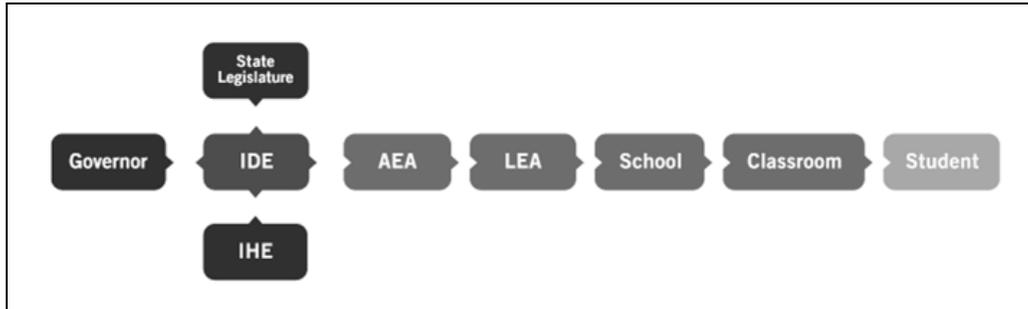
(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up and sustain proposed plans

(i) The extent to which the State has a high-quality overall plan to ensure that it has the capacity required to implement its proposed plan

In a traditional system, work is often organized by project, program, and funding stream. Consequently, activities are often siloed, fragmented, and duplicative. To effect lasting change in the five areas of need stated in (A)(1), Iowa will need to focus on a final area of need – changing the current educational system to a transformed education system.

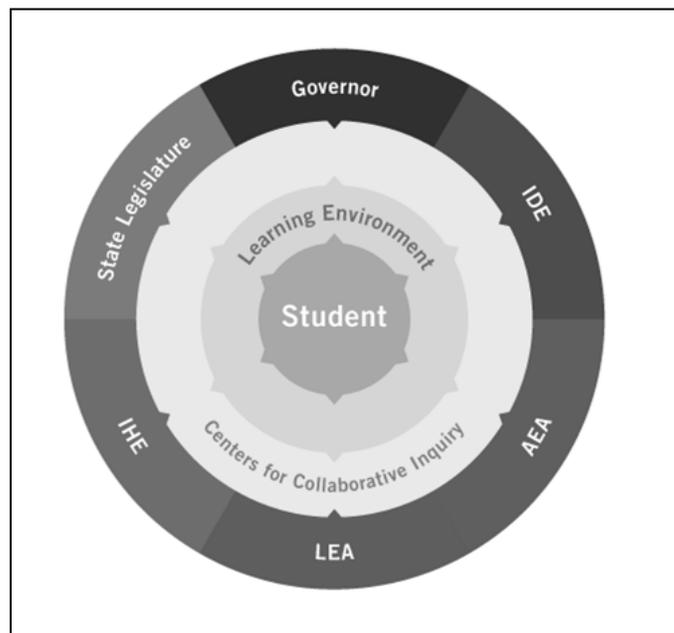
There are pockets of effective collaborative work where the IDE, AEAs, LEAs, other agencies, community members, and IHEs teams work together to solve specific problems. There are also instances where innovation bubbles up and transforms individual students, teachers, administrators, or schools (such as in ██████ experience, described in the opening). However, within our current state agency system, focused on monitoring for compliance, innovative practices have not been expected by the state or the education community at large. Historically, this system clearly delineates roles and responsibilities—the IDE provides guidance on, and monitors compliance with, state and federal policy and procedures; the intermediate units, the AEAs, provide direct services and supports to LEAs; LEAs deliver instructional programming and services to Iowa’s students. While Iowa has established an efficient system of communication and dissemination (see Figure A–3 below), such a linear, sometimes fragmented, and largely unidirectional structure fails to support an iterative, collaborative system of inquiry that directly supports innovation and implementation of systems, supports and strategies with maximum and long-lasting effects. Currently, the IDE is five times removed from a direct impact on Iowa’s students—working with AEAs, who then work with LEAs, who then work with schools, who work with teachers, who then work with students.

Figure A–3. Iowa’s Current System of Education



Though Iowa’s system is not yet structured to support transformative practices or systems, Iowa is ready to transform from the current educational system where the student is at the end of the chain of change to a transformed educational system where the student is in the center of a web of transformation and support, as in Figure A-4.

Figure A–4. Iowa’s Transformed System of Education



Toward this end, Iowa will create *Centers for Collaborative Inquiry*, organized around Iowa’s five priority reform areas, to solve Iowa’s needs in a collaborative, iterative research process. Here, action and applied work directly impacts teacher behavior and student outcomes in the classroom—the results of which will then directly impact policy and practices.

The centers are not physical locations. Rather, centers are collaboratives of local and national experts. Each Center for Collaborative Inquiry (CCI) will be staffed with experts in educational transformation, content, policy, and leadership. Some of these staff will come from existing positions within the IDE and the AEAs and others will be new hires with the competencies that we have not been hiring for to date. These staff will work together with LEA subgrantees (teachers/administrators at the school level) and national experts, and will encourage collaboration with institutions of higher education, communities, and other agencies to solve problems of policy and practice. Monitoring will be conducted as a team, and while there will be a necessary focus on timelines and goals, the majority of the work of the CCIs will be in creating conditions and capacities for research and development (R&D), technical assistance, and leadership needed across the state.

Thus, the CCIs will be staffed by teams of employees who understand education reform priorities, systems change, adaptive leadership, and implementation; who work within their CCI, across the IDE, with the districts, among stakeholders, and across states to find the best outcomes for each and every student; and who are committed to raising student achievement and eliminating subgroup disparities.

(A)(2)(i)(a) The extent to which the state has strong leadership and dedicated teams to implement statewide education reform.

Iowa's education reforms to date reflect commitments by the Iowa legislature, governor, State Board of Education, Board of Regents, IDE, AEAs, districts, and schools to change the way we engage in our work. The legislature has historically kept education at the forefront of change with appropriate funding and needed policy changes, tackling difficult policy as recently as the 2010 legislative session, when they took action to provide authority to intervene in Iowa's persistently lowest-achieving schools. Referring back to their encounters with [REDACTED] and Rex Kozak, the legislature expresses its steadfast commitment to education transformation in Iowa.

Representatives from each of the leading agencies were critical in the development of this Race to the Top application. Iowa's leadership team for this application includes the chief state school officer, IDE bureau chiefs, the governor's education policy advisor, and our consulting

partner. During the application phase, the leadership team met at least weekly to formulate the Race to the Top focus, activities, and related organizational structures within which to transform the system. Our Advisory Committee that provided overall vision and direction was comprised of 20 diverse stakeholders from across state government, the education system, and the community. We engaged an additional 90 different stakeholders in several working groups to develop plans in each of the priority sections.

Creating the Infrastructure to Ensure Statewide Impact

Building on this mandate for change, Iowa will rely on five Centers for Collaborative Inquiry (CCI) to address the five areas of need as described above:

1. CCI for Competency-Based Education
2. CCI for Balanced Assessment
3. CCI for Responsive Data Platforms
4. CCI for Educator Evaluation and Support
5. CCI for Intensive School Supports

The director, director's staff, and the five CCI teams will be responsible for the implementation of all activities by using a common continuous improvement process to monitor and track LEA, AEA, and state progress toward goals and outcomes. The centers will work together as a system to, innovate, transform, and quickly revise practices for maximum effects, terminate ineffective practices, replicate effective practices across subgrantees, and monitor effects and progress within LEA subgrantees in order to proactively intervene when needed. Research and development, rapid prototyping, evaluation, data analysis, collaboration, and support describe the spirit of our Race to the Top effort.

These five new CCIs represent the improvement and management structure that will drive the transformation of Iowa's educational system from a traditional system to a competency-based system. This is not adding a layer of bureaucracy; rather, it is reorienting current staffing into a flatter and more collaborative structure, while hiring for and building new capabilities among staff. Each CCI will be staffed with IDE and AEA personnel working together with LEAs and national experts to manage R&D, rapid prototyping, evaluation, and replication. The project manager at each CCI will be responsible for overseeing all center activities, managing resources,

developing and disseminating CCI results and reports, and working across centers to ensure an infrastructure that supports statewide implementation capacity and sustainability.

(A)(2)(i)(b) The extent to which the state has a high-quality plan to ensure that it has the capacity required to ... support LEAs in successfully implementing the education reform plans.

We designed the CCI system building on lessons from implementation science and other states engaged in efforts to scale-up evidence-based practices.

Race to the Top director and staff. Iowa will identify a Race to the Top director and a coordinating council to ensure the work of the five CCIs is coordinated and supported. The Race to the Top director will be responsible for (a) overseeing all grant management phases/goals and activities, including the evaluation Race to the Top implementation (b) supervising resource and fiscal management, (c) coordinating the work of the five CCIs, (d) directing the coordinating council, (e) managing director staff activities, (f) managing the evaluation of all of the initiatives and the use of evaluation findings to make mid-course adjustments, and (g) ensuring all reporting requirements are fulfilled.

The new Race to the Top director, will report directly to the administrator of PK–12 education, will have expertise in system transformation, and will work with three other staff with expertise in communications, technology, and evaluation in order to coordinate statewide external information, as well as provide professional development in leadership, systems and transformation for all center staff. Each Center will employ a common process to identify problems of practice and design, to develop and test possible solutions within a subset of R&D districts, and to engage in rapid prototyping leading to replication among a broader group of participating districts. In addition, each CCI will apply to be an Innovation Zone so they can remove policy barriers as they are discovered. To develop readiness in the field for implementation of our new programs at the end of the grant period, the Race to the Top office will communicate constantly about development efforts. Specific communication activities include regular webinars, social networking and blogging, presentations at the summer statewide conferences of Iowa’s statewide associations, and annual summer conferences in the capitol-city. In the Race to the Top MOU, districts agreed to report to the public on student progress (Agreement 5), and we will use that opportunity to share our stories. We will host an Expo to

kick-off year four, in which all participating districts share the work they developed over the first three years of Race to the Top. The Race to the Top director and the CCI will be responsible for building the readiness statewide and the capacity internally to take competency-based education to scale within two years post-Race to the Top. We are especially excited to be collaborating with colleagues in other Race to the Top states that also have committed to embarking on bold change. We hope that our hard work will offer other states—rural states, especially—an opportunity to track our progress, learn from our mistakes, and adopt the tools we develop that might meet their needs.

The director also will manage the **Coordinating Council**, comprised of the Race to the Top director, the director of the IDE, project managers from each center, the top division directors in the IDE, and representatives from the AEAs. This team’s primary responsibility is to coordinate efforts across centers and across the IDE, develop sustainability structures, identify and provide salient professional development on systems change, leadership, and implementation capacity to all center staff, and coordinate the management of fiscal, evaluation and reporting activities.

CCI for Competency-Based Education. This new center, which houses the Race to the Top director and staff, consists of four additional established staff at the IDE, one new IDE staff person, and four staff in two AEAs. This CCI will develop the leadership, materials, tools, policy supports, professional development and technical assistance needed to transform a traditional system of teaching and learning to a competency-based system. This includes managing and supporting the subgrants to LEAs. More information is in the Activities section.

CCI for Balanced Assessment. This new center, consisting of four established staff at the IDE, one new IDE staff, and four new AEA staff, will focus on the development and support of the leadership, tools, products, policy changes, and technical assistance needed to collect assessment data on student achievement and growth. Please see Section (B) for a complete description of this center and its activities.

CCI for Responsive Data Platforms. This new center, consisting of four established staff at the IDE, one new IDE staff, and four new AEA staff, will focus on the development of needed data platforms in order to support Iowa’s transformation to a competency base education system. This center will provide key platforms to collect and store needed data as well as the tools to leverage this information. An essential component of this center will be to provide technical assistance, not just in gaining access to this information, but to enhance data literacy about how

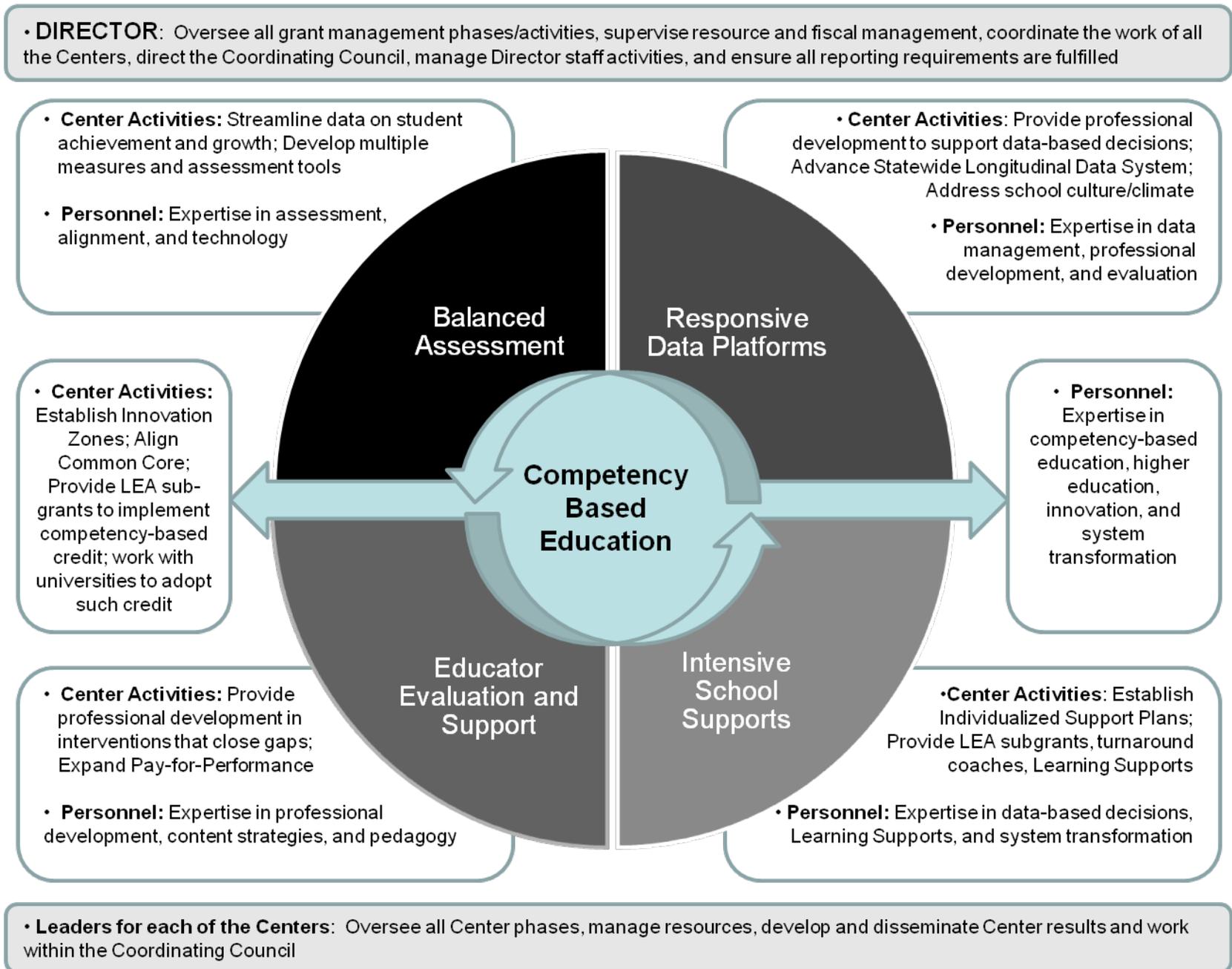
to effectively use this information. This center will assist in building platforms such as the teacher quality partnership data system, which will be available to provide multiple authentic measures that have the potential to be used for teacher evaluation. Center staff will also assist the CCI for Balanced Assessment in leveraging a data system to look at growth across student, classroom, grade, building and LEA. The CCI for Responsive Data Platforms mission is to build high quality data systems that work in unison to support Iowa's key reform areas. Please see Section (C) for a complete description of this center and its activities.

CCI for Educator Evaluation and Support. This new center, consisting of four established staff at the IDE, one new IDE staff, and four new AEA staff, will focus on the development and support of the leadership, tools, materials, policy changes, and professional development needed to increase educator capacity to reduce subgroup achievement gaps and move into a competency-based system. Please see Section (D) for a complete description of this center and its activities.

CCI for Intensive School Supports. This new center, consisting of four established staff at the IDE, one new IDE staff, and four new AEA staff, will focus on the development and support of the leadership, tools, materials, policy changes, technical assistance, and professional development needed to increase the capacity of identified districts to dramatically improve results in Iowa's persistently lowest-achieving schools, decrease achievement gaps by poverty and race, and support all students to achieve at high levels. Please see Section (E) for a complete description of this center and its activities.

The overall CCI structure is provided in Figure A-5 on the following page.

Figure A-5. Centers for Collaborative Inquiry: Iowa's Implementation Structure



An Overarching Timeline for Implementation and Success

Iowa will implement the Race to the Top grant across three phases in time, followed by statewide scale-up:

Design Phase: Running from September 1, 2010, through June 30, 2011, the Design Phase is the time for CCIs to gear up, establish common structures and processes to adhere to effective grant administration, as well as reinforce collaborative teaming, communications, and skill adaptive leadership in systems transformation. During this time, each of the CCIs will be comprised of three existing staff at the IDE, a new project manager, and one staffperson in each of the two partnering AEAs. These staff will pull together representatives of three to five participating districts, partners among the state’s colleges and universities, representatives of the statewide education associations (particularly the Iowa Association of School Boards, the Iowa State Education Association, and the School Administrators of Iowa), and national experts in a collaborative planning process. These teams will articulate priority-focused objectives and sub-activities with clear and transparent timelines and progress benchmarks that will be used to track progress. Within and across the centers, a master project management platform will be developed that will support all phases of the project.

R&D Phase: Running for two years—from July 1, 2011, to June 30, 2013—the research and development (R&D) phase provides time for a subset of districts to join more intensive work around one priority area. Twenty-five districts for each CCI will develop the necessary capacity to implement transformative promising practices and systems. Each center will use the common process of identification, evaluation and dissemination of promising practices to develop priority-focused promising practice, professional development, and technical assistance. Working across centers, districts will be identified to engage in R&D with rigorous monitoring using a common continuous improvement process to monitor and track LEA, AEA and IDE progress toward goals and outcomes. All implementation results will be used to inform and revise systems, practices, and policy.

Replication Phase: The final 14 months of the grant period—July 1, 2013, to August 31, 2014—will be characterized by expansion of the practices and tools developed previously. During the Replication Phase, the number of LEAs involved in intensive work will increase an additional 15 districts per activity, such that every participating LEA will have been involved in

at least one intensive project before the end of the grant period. During this phase, we will test the tools, processes, and practices developed and evaluated in the previous phase, and prepare for statewide scale-up after the grant period ends.

Statewide Scale: In this phase, running for two years post-Race to the Top, centers will actively work to sustain the transformed education system. We designed the number and activities of staff within the five CCIs using knowledge gained through implementation science, as referenced above (Fixsen & Blase 2005) so that we will have the capacity to support taking all the tools, processes, and practices system-wide, across all participating Race to the Top and all other districts in Iowa.

No funding cliff: We have designed our CCI structure and implementation plans to take best advantage of the unprecedented opportunity for American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) funds via Race to the Top. We are investing in new capacities among our staff and are reorganizing our state infrastructure for better collaboration, R&D, policy and practice feedback, and implementation support. Through our Race to the Top R&D efforts, we will have used the infusion of new funds to develop new tools and policies that will be used to propel us forward to our goals. The timeline has been created so that all development work is done by the end of the grant period (August 2014). By then, staff work will focus on scaling-up implementation statewide; salary lines for all staff in the CCIs will transition to state, federal, and local funding sources by September 1, 2014.

Activities in the Center for Collaborative Inquiry on Competency-Based Education

In addition to housing the office of the Race to the Top director and staff, the first of our new Centers for Collaborative Inquiry will focus on the state's transition to a competency-based system of education. The CCI will use the first nine months of Race to the Top to build the capacity and knowledge of new staff and joining districts, as well as to design a high quality R&D and implementation plan for competency-based education. During this Design Phase, the CCI will be comprised of three existing staff at the IDE, a new project manager, and one staffperson in each of the two partnering AEAs. These staff will pull together representatives of five participating districts and the statewide education associations (particularly the Iowa State Education Association and the School Administrators of Iowa) in a collaborative planning process. In subsequent Phases, the following activities will be the responsibility of this CCI.

District R&D and Replication

After the Design Phase, additional staff will be hired, leading ultimately to four staff of the center being housed at IDE, while the two AEAs each will have two staff. As a whole, this team will understand the theories, examples, and mechanics of competency-based education. Some on the team will have deeper expertise in curriculum and instruction; others in policy analysis and political science; others will know how to utilize the Iowa Professional Development Model to provide growth opportunities and supports within the CCI and among the participating districts; and still others will be competent leadership coaches, understanding both implementation science and systems change.

They will work as a team during the R&D Phase with a subset of 20 districts to develop plans for competency-based credit or promotion for a grade span, content area, or 21st-century skill. Over the course of the grant period, the project manager will be responsible for the subgrants to the participating LEAs, reporting, and evaluation. The districts will be responsible for some innovation practice. For example, though they already have the authority to give credit based on proficiency alone, very few districts actually offer competency-based promotion. To be proactive in the ability to address potential policy barriers, each CCI will apply to the state legislature to be an Innovation Zone, giving authority to waive certain regulations as they are discovered to be in the way. The CCIs will engage in what Fixsen and Blase call the “PEP-PIP Cycle” (Policy Enabled Practice-Practice Informed Cycle, Fixsen & Blase, 2005) to identify and overcome challenges posed by new reforms. During the two-year R&D phase, the CCI and participating districts will jointly develop, implement, and study action plans in an effort to rapidly develop prototype systems.

In year four, an additional 15 districts will join the CCI for Competency-Based Education in order to replicate the prototypes developed previously. At the same time, all participating districts will be implementing their own, potentially smaller, competency-based plans. (In the Race to the Top MOU, all districts agreed develop a plan for competency-based credit or promotion by the end of the third year based on the R&D effort.) Regular communication between the R&D districts and all participating districts will be key to the success of this accelerated timeline for transformation.

Credit Recovery

Credit recovery programs allow students to take or retake all or portions of core courses they have not successfully completed in the traditional time allotted, or to capture content they missed because of an extended absence or transfer. Access to credit recovery means students would not have to “sit through” an entire course in order to attain a few concepts and skills that may take just weeks, days, or hours to acquire. Therefore, credit recovery is an important component of a competency-based system of education.

In Iowa, credit recovery programs have a primary focus of helping students stay in school and graduate on time; it has been shown in many contexts to increase graduation rates. Credit recovery currently is being implemented in some of our high schools and is primarily delivered online. However, credit recovery is not yet available to each and every student in the state. A Race to the Top grant will allow the CCI to continue to build our system of credit recovery through distance learning and other alternate delivery mechanisms.

Online Learning

As a predominantly rural state, Iowa has been engaged in distance learning for both educators and students for decades, allowing Iowa to provide quality learning opportunities for teachers and students anytime and anywhere. This has helped Iowa address teacher shortages, particularly in hard to fill regions or subject areas, and provided a wider variety of courses for all students, allowing schools to provide courses or advanced subjects that otherwise would not be available.

Since 2004, the IDE has funded an initiative called Iowa Learning Online (ILO), which collaborates with Iowa’s high schools, IHEs, and AEAs to provide quality learning opportunities for students anywhere in the state. ILO is designed to meet the needs of all students, not only those with advanced learning needs. Course options include credit recovery as well as advanced placement (AP) courses and courses for college credit. Students enroll in ILO courses through their local school district. Learning is facilitated via internet, the Iowa Communications Network (ICN) video classrooms, or a combination of the two (some courses also may include a regional laboratory setting). The timeframe varies. While some courses last a semester or an entire year, others have a flexible start so that students can enroll when and as needed. Each student must be supported locally by a student coach (a local educator, counselor,

or paraprofessional), who meets regularly with the student to support and monitor progress. Student grades and credits are awarded by the student's home school, based on the recommendation of the ILO instructor.

Courses delivered by ILO or the Iowa AP Online Academy are free to students; the IDE is covering course costs (e.g., teacher salary, ICN video, platform, purchase of online courses or software, etc.) for already developed courses. New development is taking place via collaboration between ILO and Iowa high schools or IHEs who want to share classes with a statewide audience. Race to the Top will allow the IDE to fund more course development and the cost of delivering them statewide. The CCI for Competency-Based Education also will explore additional methods of online delivery.

Timeline and Responsible Parties

ACTIVITIES	CCI FOR COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION TIMELINE						RESPONSIBLE PARTIES
	FY 2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	
Establish the CCI for Competency-Based Education	■						IDE
Apply for Innovation Zone status							AEA, LEAs
Begin design phase with 5 districts, national experts, IHEs, and other partners to develop competency-based approaches	■						CCI
Transition to R&D phase with additional 15 districts (20 total)		■	■	■			CCI
Transition to replication phase with additional 15 districts (35 total)				■	■		CCI
Plan for implementing competency-based strategy			■	■			Participating LEAs
Implement competency-based strategy for promotion				■	■		Participating LEAs
Take competency-based strategies to scale statewide					■	■	CCI, all IA LEAs
Credit Recovery	■	■	■	■	■		CCI
Online Learning	■	■	■	■	■		CCI

(A)(2)(i)(c) Grant administration and oversight, budget reporting and monitoring, and fund disbursement.

The coordinating council has the primary responsibility to ensure Iowa's Race to the Top outcomes are reached by overseeing all Race to the Top phases and activities including, but not limited to: (a) managing resources, (b) developing and disseminating center results and reports, (c) coordinating efforts across centers and across the IDE, (d) developing sustainability structures, (e) identify and provide salient professional development on systems change, leadership, and implementation capacity to all center staff, and (e) coordinating the management of fiscal, evaluation and reporting activities. The project manager for each center will be responsible for ensuring appropriate and effective grant administration. Purposefully developed, this new system will support collaborative, shared work where centers will use common processes (i.e., continuous improvement process; process for the identification, evaluation and dissemination of promising practices), structures (i.e., each center has four IDE and four IDE staff working collaboratively with LEA subgrantees, IHEs, community and other agencies), and outcomes to monitor and track the progress of this work [see (A)(2)(i)(a-b)].

Each center will be responsible to track progress toward stated goals and activities. However, the office of the Race to the Top director will be ultimately responsible to track overall progress toward Iowa's major Race to the Top goals and expected outcomes. Results at the IDE, AEA, and LEA subgrantee levels will be provided to centers quarterly, as well as presented at coordinating council meetings. Council members will review progress toward Center goals and State outcomes with respective Center teams prior to coordinating council meetings to (1) determine adherence to timeline, (2) analyze data for possible causes for delay in reaching particular goals/outcomes, if any, (3) determine revisions, if needed, (4) identify any districts who might not be on target to achieving goals and outcomes, (5) detail plans for providing the identified districts with intense technical assistance, and (6) identify districts meeting or exceeding goals/outcomes to provide recognition status at the local and state level. At coordinating council meetings, leaders will collectively review analyses of these six areas to determine systemic approaches to addressing any needs, develop a collective list of districts to receive intense technical assistance and those who will receive recognition, and trouble-shoot possible cross-center needs.

In terms of monitoring expenditures, the IDE will work closely with the USED to establish procedures. Because Race to the Top funds fall under ARRA, we anticipate many of the procedures we developed for State Fiscal Stabilization Funds (SFSF) will be adopted for monitoring Race to the Top funding. A description of these procedures is in attachment (A)(2)–1. In brief, all SFSF Education funds were appropriated into preexisting funding mechanisms. The K–12 schools received SFSF Education funding in three pieces 1) direct state aid replacement, 2) instructional support levy state aid replacement, and 3) professional development funding to supplement existing professional development funding within the school aid formula. Monitoring then occurs in several ways. Every one of these funding streams has established distribution schedules. Since the SFSF appropriation for professional development for schools was to supplement existing professional development to implement the Iowa Core, that distribution occurred once concurrent to the state aid distribution for schools in September.

These entities were expected and have established individual accounting lines for each separate piece of ARRA SFSF Education funding. K–12 schools have established accounting codes statewide and will account for all ARRA funding separately using the regular Certified Annual Report (CAR) process for budgeting and expenditures. As a result, usual accounting and budgeting processes will account for these additional new funding streams. In all cases, subrecipients were cautioned about the types of accounts in which these funds were placed, since federal law limits the amount of interest earned on federal funds. These cautions occurred through webinars, FAQs, and specific written communication to the field.

Monitoring is then occurring on both the revenue distribution and accounting/expenditure ends of the process. The IDE will use the quarterly Section 1512 reporting to the U.S. Department of Education to indicate funds received and distributed to all subrecipients. Subrecipients will be expected to fully comply with Section 1512 reporting requirements and will account for expenditures using regular accounting processes. All of this is subject to audit at the subrecipient level. Section 1512 reporting occurs quarterly. Expenditure reporting occurs annually as a part of the CAR process.

Monitoring Policies and Procedures

The IDE is using established accounting processes to monitor expenditures of ARRA SFSF and state Education funds. These processes are available for review by both respective entities

and have been included in the entity's state audit process. For uses of funds, subrecipients must report cumulative expenditures and uses of the funds in the quarterly Section 1512 reports submitted to the Iowa Recovery.gov web site. Each report will be evaluated against the permissive uses of funds set out in the original ARRA statute. Guidance on uses of ARRA funds has been provided to all subrecipients.

- (A)(2)(i)(d) Using the funds for this grant, as described in the State's budget and accompanying budget narrative, to accomplish the State's plans and meet its targets, including where feasible, by coordinating, reallocating, or repurposing education funds from other Federal, State, and local sources so that they align with the State's Race to the Top goals; and**
- (A)(2)(i)(e) Using the fiscal, political, and human capital resources of the State to continue, after the period of funding has ended, those reforms funded under the grant for which there is evidence of success**

We have crafted a budget for our Race to the Top program that makes high impact investments in building our implementation capacity, developing and perfecting tools we need, and reorienting our human capital toward leadership for systems change. Our budget and budget narrative are included in its separately labeled appendix.

As described above, we are designing our Race to the Top program in ways that will have lasting state impact because it builds upon our policy infrastructure, accelerates transformation toward our vision, and extends our ability to achieve our goals. We are not changing course; rather, Race to the Top is making possible achievement of the goals we have been investing in but not yet achieving. The Iowa legislature has consistently demonstrated its commitment to and funding of this work and has pledged to uphold that commitment as reform advances through Race to the Top. We are coordinating our restructuring plans for the IDE and AEAs with our plans for designing the CCIs.

We already have held several planning forums about moving toward implementation of the CCIs and we will use a small grant from REL Midwest to further develop design specifications over the summer of 2010. Finally, we start out from day-one with a hybrid funding scheme to cover staff salaries in the CCIs, using a combination of federal, state, and local funds to cover the current and new positions in the centers. When we are fully staffed, of the eight positions in each CCI and the four positions in the office of the Race to the Top director, 40 percent are

covered by other federal and state funds; 60 percent are covered by Race to the Top funds. We will be preparing to transition funding for all CCI staff from Race to the Top to other state and federal funds at the conclusion of the four-year grant period.

In the mean time, we are coordinating other state and federal funds toward achieving our comprehensive vision of a transformed education system. As of March 30, 2010, Iowa has received the following ARRA funds, which are being used in ways that support the goals in Race to the Top:

U.S. Department of Education Recovery Act funding on Iowa, March 30, 2010	
State Fiscal Stabilization Funds	\$472,339,542
Title I, Part A– Supporting Low-Income Schools	\$51,497,022
IDEA Grants, Parts B & C – Improving Special Education Programs	\$130,805,036
Education Technology Grants	\$3,344,836
Vocational Rehabilitation Funds	\$5,715,709
Independent Living Services Fund	\$826,261
McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Funds	\$443,632

Our activities through ESEA and IDEA also are being targeted toward support of the goals in Race to the Top. In Section (A)(2)(ii) below, we discuss the levels of funding the state legislature has committed to the reforms that lay the foundation for our Race to the Top program. Given this historic and strong commitment on the part of the legislature, and given that we will be collecting data on the success of our reforms, we are confident their support will continue after the Race to the Top funding period has ended.

(A)(2)(ii) Use support from a broad group of stakeholders to better implement its plans, as evidenced by the strength of the statements or actions of support

Iowans share a collective pride in a long history of academic accomplishment and they also share a sense of urgency to continue pursuing academic excellence in collaborative efforts toward innovation, improvement, and reform. In the systems and visioning phase of Race to the

Top proposal development, the IDE brought together 110 stakeholders across five priority areas to create our plan, establish our goals, and envision our path. Letters sent in support of Iowa's Race to the Top application are included in attachment (A)(2)–2.

Iowa Governor Chet Culver has been a driving force behind Iowa's Race to the Top plan, the national Common Core Standards, the essential concepts and skills outlined in the Iowa Core, and the focus on transforming education. The Iowa General Assembly, too, has been leading efforts to declare a statewide mandate for reform through the Teacher and Administrator Quality legislation, then the Iowa Core, and most recent, Senate File 2033, a bill that passed in January 2010, modifying Iowa Code to lift regulations and requirements from schools working in innovation zones; removed the cap and repeal date for charter schools; and required districts with our persistently lowest-achieving schools to select an intervention model and undertake major reform.

Association and Stakeholder Support

The Iowa State Education Association (ISEA) is the state affiliate of the National Education Association and represents 34,000 educators in Iowa. ISEA stands ready to support the implementation of Iowa's Race to the Top plans. There is a specific commitment by teachers to collaborate in developing the multiple measures of student performance planned in our Race to the Top work. ISEA and the IDE have a history of collaboration on important initiatives including the Iowa Core and the Teacher Quality Program. This collaboration is also reflected in the fact that of the participating districts, more than 3 out of 4 of the ISEA's local affiliates signed on to the MOU.

School Administrators of Iowa (SAI) represents all of Iowa's elementary and secondary principals and superintendents. SAI is excited about moving toward a competency-based system and believes in balanced assessment systems and the importance of professional development and support.

It is the hope of the Iowa Parent Teacher Association that Iowa will be funded and be able to implement its Race to the Top plans to have a competency-based system, balanced assessment systems, teacher and administrator evaluation and support, and supporting our persistently lowest achieving schools.

AEA Support

The Iowa AEA system is regarded as one of the strongest regional assistance systems in the country and every AEA chief supports working with the IDE to build capacity and bring to scale all components of the Race to the Top grant. Offering special education services, media and technology services, instructional services, professional development, and leadership, the AEAs have concentrated on delivering these services as a system in the past five years. The AEA system is a central resource for staffing the infrastructure we plan to implement through this grant.

Workforce Support

The ability of Iowa business to succeed depends on the skills of the workforce. The Iowa Business Council, made up of the top executives of 20 of the largest businesses in the state, is committed to working to effectively align and implement the plans that Race to the Top funding will help achieve. Likewise, the Greater Des Moines Partnership supports Iowa's plans. The Partnership believes a quality education system with workforce connections is a critical component of effective economic development. These alliances become critical as hosts and partners in expanding learning opportunities beyond classrooms and into the communities across Iowa which have committed to this effort.

The Division of Iowa Workforce Development believes funds from Race to the Top can bring the implementation of the Iowa Core to fruition. Iowa Workforce Development will work with the IDE to continue our students' quest to become members of a skilled workforce and be prepared to face the challenges of the global economy.

Higher Education Support

Iowa's 15 community colleges support all of the goals of the Race to the Top plan. In particular, Iowa's community colleges hope to participate in the innovative new teaching and learning models that connect K-12 education through college. The community colleges individually and collectively commit to supporting the implementation of Iowa's Race to the Top plans.

Iowa's three Regents universities and the Board of Regents all also support the Race to the Top plan. The University of Iowa (UI), home to the Iowa Testing Programs, an international leader in educational testing and measurement, offers its strongest support. Used throughout the

United States and Canada, the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills and Iowa Tests of Educational Development, were both developed at the UI College of Education. Iowa has a thriving testing industry, including ACT, headquartered in Iowa City, which derives from the research and expertise of UI's faculty.

The University of Northern Iowa (UNI) is the largest teacher preparation institution in Iowa and partners with the Iowa Department of Education, the AEAs, and local school districts to make sure all students graduate prepared for college, a career, and citizenry. UNI is home to Price Laboratory School, and the proposed Research and Development School, which provides model innovative practices that are shared with Iowa's educators. UNI is poised to support Race to the Top plans by partnering in pre-service to make sure future teachers have the skills they need as well as in-service and professional development with practicing educators.

Iowa State University's Department of Curriculum and Instruction is home for the Center for Excellence in Science, Mathematics, and Engineering Education (CESMEE), which collaborates and conducts research with STEM teachers, teacher educators, and practitioners in the Iowa, and beyond. Iowa State University is committed as a resource to the state and to the IDE on efforts to achieve equity in teacher distribution, improve collection and use of data, enhance the quality of academic standards and assessments, and support struggling schools.

Combined, these statements represent the state's readiness to engage in the hard work ahead.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps (30 points)

The extent to which the State has demonstrated its ability to—

- (i) Make progress over the past several years in each of the four education reform areas, and used its ARRA and other Federal and State funding to pursue such reforms; (5 points)
- (ii) Improve student outcomes overall and by student subgroup since at least 2003, and explain the connections between the data and the actions that have contributed to — (25 points)
 - a) Increasing student achievement in reading/language arts and mathematics, both on the NAEP and on the assessments required under the ESEA; and
 - b) Decreasing achievement gaps between subgroups in reading/language arts and mathematics, both on the NAEP and on the assessments required under the ESEA;
 - c) Increasing high school graduation rate

In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The

narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State’s success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Evidence for (A)(3)(ii):

- NAEP and ESEA results since at least 2003. Include in the Appendix all the data requested in the criterion as a resource for peer reviewers for each year in which a test was given or data was collected. Note that this data will be used for reference only and can be in raw format. In the narrative, provide the analysis of this data and any tables or graphs that best support the narrative.

Recommended maximum response length: Six pages

(A)(3)(i) The extent to which the State has demonstrated its ability to make progress over the past several years in each of the four education reform areas, and used its ARRA and other Federal and State funding to pursue such reforms

Iowa has worked diligently over the last decade to improve policies and practices in each of the four reform areas.

Standards

Some may remember a story about Iowa as being the only state without standards. Nothing could be further from the truth. Iowa’s expectations for students start with mandated state content standards. Our philosophy of deeper and more rigorous expectations for students is akin to the national movement toward higher, clearer, fewer standards. In Iowa, this is embodied in the essential concepts (what students should know) and skills (what students should be able to do) outlined in the Iowa Core. These essential concepts and skills incorporate international benchmarks and state-of-art thinking about 21st-century skills. (Iowa was an early member of the national Partnership for 21st Century Skills and used this relationship and informational resources in developing the Iowa Core. Iowa was also an early and leading member of the Common Core Standards initiative). The critical factor about the Iowa Core is the importance of not just essential concepts, but also the essential *skills* necessary for success in a rapidly-changing, technology-rich, information-dense world.

Iowa's schools, districts, AEAs, state agencies, and community leaders have coalesced around implementing the bold vision embodied in the Iowa Core. The Iowa legislature has demonstrated its ongoing commitment to education reform by codifying the Iowa Core in law and most recently provided an appropriation of \$8.5 million specifically for professional development toward implementation of the Iowa Core. In addition, Iowa has allocated \$2 million in ARRA funds to support implementation.

Assessment

One reason Iowa had developed a “no standards” reputation is that we began systematically using assessment data long before most states imagined a statewide strategy assessments strategy. As noted above, Iowa has used assessment data generated by the Iowa Testing Program (ITP) for over 70 years. ITP, creators of the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) and the Iowa Tests of Educational Development (ITED), is housed at The University of Iowa; employees at ITP are employees of the State of Iowa. Given this unique relationship, Iowa's districts and IDE enjoy benefits. ITP runs the Iowa state testing program and provides student achievement data to the IDE for free. ITP provides a 50 percent discount on scoring fees to districts if they take part in item try-outs. In addition, IDE does contract with ITP to engage in Iowa-specific activities, such as aligning the Iowa tests to the Iowa Core and developing end-of-course assessments that measure student attainment of the essential concepts and skills articulated in the Iowa Core.

IDE funds this work through our ESEA Title IV-Part A funds that are provided to support the development of statewide assessment systems. Iowa predominantly uses these federal funds to provide support for local district assessment systems, allocating directly to local school districts approximately \$3 million of the \$5 million received. Then, the IDE and districts work together to develop assessments for district reading, mathematics, and science standards; align district-wide assessments to local standards and benchmarks; purchase off-the-shelf assessments used to measure standards; score district-wide assessments; analyze and report assessment data; professional development related to implementation of district-wide assessments; and cover costs associated with management of the district-wide assessment system.

Iowa also has become a leading laboratory for this work nationally. IDE has invested over \$200,000 in this effort in the past year and has received additional in-kind donations of expert consulting, facilitation, and travel expenses.

Data Systems

As we implement competency-based system of education, we will manage and validate information on student and system performance. To do this, we are investing in responsive data platforms with new capabilities for data sharing, mining, protection, and quality. Our work on Responsive Data Systems will help shore up our system support that will allow great teaching, leading, and learning to set the course.

In order to involve teachers in the development of curriculum and the development and scoring of assessments, to use assessments to continuously improve teaching and learning, and to develop and validate multiple measures to evaluate students and schools, we must have new technologies that enable quality and information systems that support accountability. Further, in order for teachers to engage in formative assessment and for students to take an active role in setting their own learning agenda and monitoring their own progress, we must have responsive data systems that provide useful information on demand.

In the past year, Iowa has invested \$2.9 million into our data warehouse toward those ends. We recently received an \$8.8 million grant from the US Department of Education. These funds will complement the Race to the Top funds allocated to our data systems. In addition, districts in Iowa are receiving over \$57 million from a settlement with Microsoft. The IDE will support those districts as they determine appropriate uses of these funds toward meeting our Race to the Top goals.

Great Teachers and Leaders

Iowa has been leading the nation in teacher and administrator policy. We developed requirements and standards for professional development; implemented nationally-recognized mentoring and induction programs for new teachers and administrators; promulgated high-quality professional standards for not only teachers and administrators but also for AEA staff; designed nationally-recognized models for school leadership; created an evaluation system that is detailed in Iowa Code; and required evaluators be trained. The State Board of Education required all of Iowa's administrator preparation programs to completely re-engineer their programs and encouraged and approved a preparation program outside of the traditional higher education institutions, run by a partnership of the statewide school administrators association and two AEAs. Finally, Iowa's investment in school leadership in particular has been so consistent

and smart that Iowa has been cited as one of three states named as the best in progress towards a cohesive leadership system by a RAND Corporation study released in October 2009.

Since 2001, the Iowa legislature has invested in teacher salaries, professional development, alternative compensation programs, and educator evaluation trainings toward the goal of increasing Iowa's competitiveness nationally. In 2008, the legislature invested \$28.5 million for professional development (\$8.5 million of this was specifically for implementing the Iowa Core, noted above), just over \$230 million for increasing teacher salaries, and \$5 million for beginning teacher mentoring and induction programming. The \$10 million Teacher Quality Partnership grant we recently received from the US Department of Education will be administered alongside our Great Teachers and Leaders programs, within our CCI for Teacher and Leader Evaluation and Support.

Intensive School Supports

Iowa has developed over the past six years a sophisticated and research-based model for assisting low-performing schools, which leverages state, regional, and local expertise around a research-based process for school improvement. This model is used in the Iowa Support System for Schools and Districts in Need of Assistance (SINA and DINA), which was developed in 2003 in response to federal and state legislation (described in Section (E)). The two-year process for SINA includes five phases—an audit phase, diagnosis phase, design phase, implementation phase, and evaluation phase. With the help of the state's investments in this process, 27 schools have come off the SINA list since 2004-2005 because they made significant achievement gains and are no longer identified as schools in need of assistance. In addition, Iowa has been working with UCLA in implementing their model of Learning Supports to focuses on developing community and school structures to address the many barriers that impact student learning.

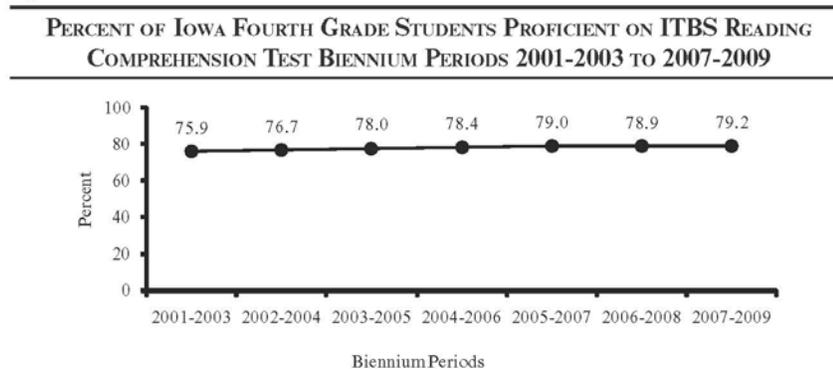
In addition to the regular Title I investment that has been used to run the SINA/DINA process, IDE will receive \$18 million for School Improvement Grants (SIGs), which will complement the work we are doing to turn around our persistently-lowest achieving schools.

(A)(3)(ii)(a) The extent to which the State has demonstrated its ability to improve student outcomes overall and by student subgroup since at least 2003 and explain the connections between the data and the actions that have contributed to increasing student achievement in reading/language arts and mathematics, both on the NAEP and on the assessments required under the ESEA

Student Achievement

With all of this work and investment in education, Iowa has maintained our historically high achievement on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills and the Iowa Tests of Educational Development, which are the summative statewide exams Iowa uses to comply with the ESEA. Indeed, we have been able to demonstrate modest gains in nearly every subject and every grade. Other indicators such as graduation rates, ACT scores, and acceptances to institutions of higher education demonstrate reasonably high outcomes nationally. For example, Iowa has the third highest overall graduation rate overall in the nation.

However, we are not satisfied with these levels of achievement. By and large, our achievement has hit a plateau. We use the example of fourth grade reading, as illustrated in the



Source: Iowa Testing Programs, The University of Iowa.

adjoining graph, to demonstrate the leveling of achievement trends since 2001. Achievement in other subjects and grades demonstrate a similar trend. A complete report of our achievement data overall and by subgroup is in attachment (A)(3)-1.

Further, Iowa has historically been known for our high student achievement levels on the NAEP; overall, Iowa’s NAEP scores still remain significantly higher than the national average. However, here again, our scores clearly have flattened over the past years. While our student achievement scores on NAEP increased throughout the 1990s, they have not changed significantly since 2005, at the same time that other states were earnestly implementing standards-based reforms and saw an increase in their student scores. This is evidenced in Figure A–6.

This trend also is evident in grade-by-grade assessment results in Figure A–7. For example, in 2007, the average scale score in

reading for fourth-grade students in Iowa was 225. This was higher than that of the nation's public schools (220). It was no different from the average score in 1992 (225), but was higher than the average score in 2005 (221). The percentage of students who performed at or above the Iowa NAEP *Proficient* level was 29 percent in 2007. Again, this

Figure A–6. Average Scores for Iowa and the Nation, 4th Grade Reading, 2009

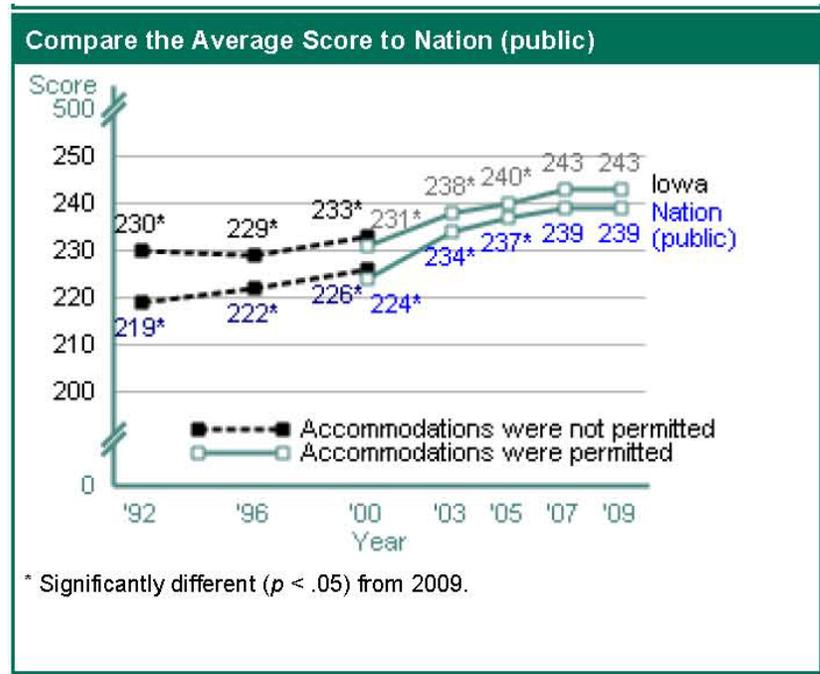
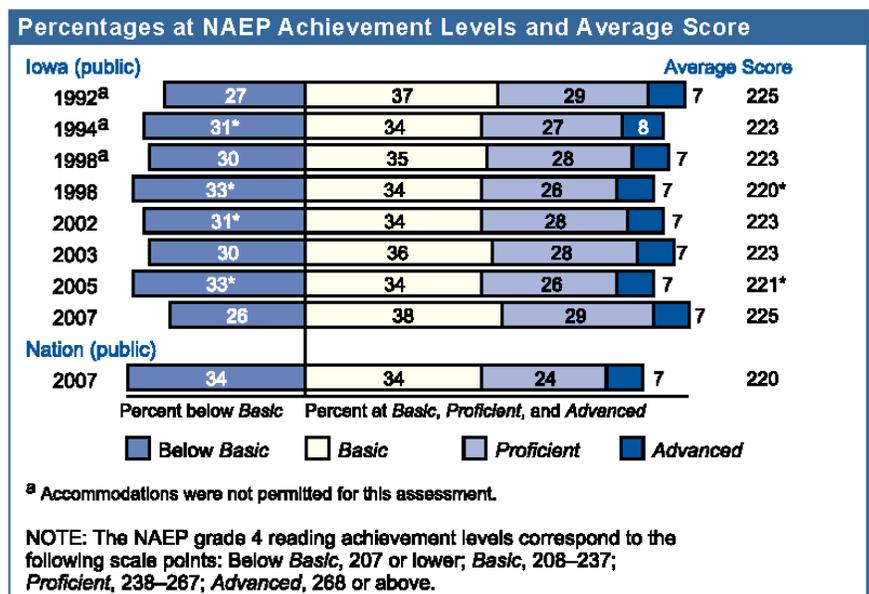


Figure A–7. Grade-by-Grade Assessment Results



percentage was no different from that in 1992 (29 percent), but was higher than the percentage proficient in 2005 (26 percent).

These achievement trends have been a contributing factor to the growing urgency for change across the state of Iowa. As Iowa's leaders redoubled efforts to shore up the system, we have begun looking beyond the system for strategies and inspiration. Our experience with subgroup achievement gaps further bolsters this charge.

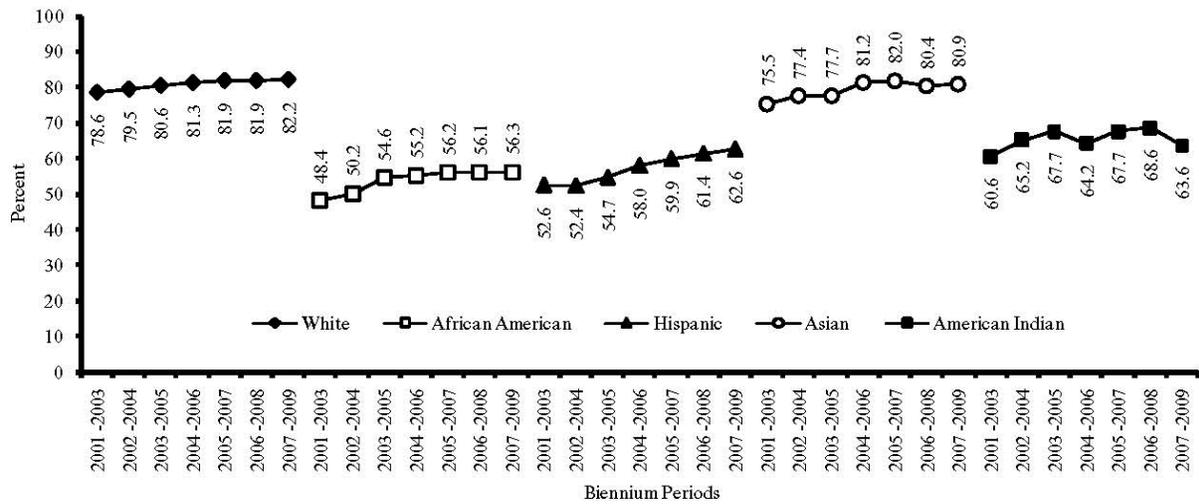
(A)(3)(ii)(b) The extent to which the State has demonstrated its ability to improve student outcomes overall and by student subgroup since at least 2003 and explain the connections between the data and the actions that have contributed to decreasing achievement gaps between subgroups in reading/language arts and mathematics, both on the NAEP and on the assessments required under the ESEA.

Unfortunately, Iowa has not yet been much more successful than other states in overcoming patterns of disparity by race and income. In Iowa, data was first reported for Black students in 1996 and for Hispanic students in 2003. Prior to that time there was not a large enough group in the state to meet reporting requirements. The White-Black gap (19 points) has not closed in fourth-grade since Black students were first reported in 1996. For Hispanic students the gaps have fluctuated seven points or more, but due to the group size the changes are not significant and may have been due to change in the sample selection. See Figure A-8 on the following page.

Again, the representative sample we include in this section is fourth grade reading. Results for eighth grade reading and for fourth and eighth grade mathematics are included in attachment (A)(3)-2.

Figure A-8.

**PERCENT OF IOWA FOURTH GRADE STUDENTS PROFICIENT ON ITBS
READING COMPREHENSION TEST BY RACE/ETHNICITY
BIENNIUM PERIODS 2001-2003 TO 2007-2009**



Source: Iowa Testing Programs, The University of Iowa.

Notes: Percentages for each biennium period represent average percentages of proficient students for the two school years represented, e.g., 2001-2003 represents the average for the 2001-2002 and the 2002-2003 school years. A student designated as proficient can, at a minimum, do the following:
 Usually understands factual information and new words in context.
 Usually is able to make inferences and interpret either nonliteral language or information in new contexts.
 Often can determine a selection's main idea and analyze its style and structure.

NAEP scores paint a similar picture in terms of our achievement by poverty. The Iowa NAEP mathematics score for fourth-grade students who were eligible for free or reduced-price school lunch had an average score that was 17 points lower than that of students who were not eligible for free or reduced-price school lunch. This performance gap changed little from 1996 (15 points). It is interesting to note, however, that the percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price school lunch in Iowa and in the state's NAEP sample increased sharply between 1996 and 2007, from 31 percent to 37 percent in grade four and from 19 percent to 33 percent in grade eight. That this did not accompany a *decline* in NAEP scores as poverty levels increased is perhaps an indicator that Iowa's investments are paying off.

Iowa recognizes that while our plans for implementing the Iowa Core and developing competency-based systems of education will transform learning environments for all children, our efforts to date have suffered because we have not been able to accelerate achievement among low-achieving students, and thus we have not been able to budge the gap overall. We do have

examples where focused programs have raised achievement *and* closed gaps, but we have not yet been able to take these successes to scale.

Investments in Reading Instruction

One reason we may have had modest gains since 1990 is the investments we have made as a state in improving instruction in reading. The state has been implementing four major projects in reading and, therefore, reading proficiency levels for students. These initiatives are designed to help all students succeed and have not had an explicit focus on decreasing achievement gaps. Thus, while we have been able to demonstrate gains in achievement for all students, these gains have only modestly changed the gap between student scores by subgroups. Specifically, Iowa demonstrated modest reductions in the gaps in all but one subgroup between the 2003 and 2009 biennia. [African American (4.3), Hispanic (2.4), Asian (1.8), American Indian (-.06), Free and Reduced Eligible (1.9)]

Still, the modest gains we have made in reading achievement are no doubt due to a statewide focus on reading. We have many strategies targeted toward improving instruction in reading:

- **Every Child Reads K–12** is a professional development strategy for large-scale, building-based structured school improvement focused on accelerating the reading achievement of students, with a special emphasis on students who are experiencing difficulty.
- **Reading First** is designed to accelerate the reading achievement of students in Kindergarten through third grade in low performing/high-poverty schools so that all students are reading at grade level by the end of third grade.
- **The Teacher Development Academies** are a series of professional development opportunities offered to teams from public schools featuring research based content and nationally recognized trainers. The academies offered in the area of reading are Concept-Oriented Reading, Second Chance Reading and Question/Answer Relationship.
- **Strategic Instruction Model** promotes effective teaching and learning about the critical core content in schools through content Enhancement Routines and Learning Strategies Curriculum.

Investments in Mathematics Instruction

Iowa's professional development efforts in mathematics are organized around the Every Student Counts (ESC) and the Teacher Development Academy (TDA)—Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI). The goal of these efforts is to develop the capacity to provide quality professional development and technical assistance to schools focusing on improving achievement in mathematics.

The percentage of 11th graders who are proficient in math provides some information about whether students are ready for postsecondary work. Students designated as proficient can, at a minimum, do the following: sometimes apply math concepts and procedures, make inferences with quantitative information, and solve a variety of quantitative reasoning problems.

At the secondary level, Every Student Counts is closely aligned to the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) content and process standards with a strong emphasis on Teaching for Understanding using Problem-Based Instructional Tasks and Meaningful Distributed Practice. Year one of the initiative focused on NCTM content standards Algebra and Number Sense and all five of the Process Standards. This past year the focus was on Geometry and Measurement and embedding the five Process Standards into professional development.

Math-in-CTE Professional Development is a model to integrate math into Iowa's Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs at the secondary and postsecondary levels.

Again, while we recognize the investments in mathematics instruction is likely connected to our modest gains, the more important story is one of a stalled system. We are looking for the spark to accelerate transformation and radically improve student achievement.

(A)(3)(ii)(c) The extent to which the State has demonstrated its ability to improve student outcomes overall and by student subgroup since at least 2003 and explain the connections between the data and the actions that have contributed to increasing high school graduation rates

Although the graduation rate has decreased slightly, Iowa again continues to have one of the highest graduation rates in the country. There has been a recent adjustment in the rate due, in part, to enhancements in Iowa's data system. The 2008 graduating class is the first group of students to have had a statewide identification number for all four years of high school. This has allowed Iowa school districts and the IDE to keep careful accounting of each ninth grader as he

or she progressed through school. The system has provided advancements in determining when a student graduates, even if the student moved to a different district in the state during his or her high school career.

Table A–2. High School Graduates

Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Rate (%)	90.4	89.8	90.7	90.8	90.5	88.7

All efforts designed to increase student achievement contribute to the goal of increasing the graduation rate. In addition, the IDE, in cooperation with the AEAs, has undertaken several efforts to support schools in reducing achievement gaps.

- **The Strategic Instruction Model** addresses many of the needs of diverse learners and specifically targets upper elementary through high school students who are struggling with learning.
- **Instructional Decision Making (IDM)** supports the use of data for instructional decisions about groups of students and individual students. IDM provides schools with a process for early intervention of learning problems.
- **Teacher Development Academies**, specifically Second Chance Reading is designed to accelerate the achievement of students with significant delays in reading development at the middle and high school levels. Concept Oriented Reading Instruction is designed to provide a more engaging instructional approach to reading using content areas.
- **"Our Kids" Project** has multiple components that are intended to improve the achievement of English language learners.
- **Learning Supports** focuses on developing community and school structures to address the many barriers that impact student learning.

While the story of student achievement trends over the past five to 10 years may seem discouraging, Iowans have taken the data seriously and are forging a new path. Our Race to the Top plan targets energy, leadership, and resources to high-leverage, high-impact, continuous work. If we can move to a competency-based system of education focused on student experience and continuous gains in student achievement, infused with knowledge and information, characterized by inquiry and leadership, with innovative learning environments, accountability to high standards, and a focus on its goals, we are certain our students will exceed our expectations.

(B) Standards and Assessments (70 total points)

(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards (40 points)

The extent to which the State has demonstrated its commitment to adopting a common set of high-quality standards, evidenced by (as set forth in Appendix B)—

(i) The State’s participation in a consortium of States that— (20 points)

Is working toward jointly developing and adopting a common set of K-12 standards (as defined in this notice) that are supported by evidence that they are internationally benchmarked and build toward college and career readiness by the time of high school graduation; and includes a significant number of States; and

(ii) — (20 points)

(a) For Phase 1 applications, the State’s high-quality plan demonstrating its commitment to and progress toward adopting a common set of K-12 standards (as defined in this notice) by August 2, 2010, or, at a minimum, by a later date in 2010 specified by the State, and to implementing the standards thereafter in a well-planned way; or

(b) For Phase 2 applications, the State’s adoption of a common set of K-12 standards (as defined in this notice) by August 2, 2010, or, at a minimum, by a later date in 2010 specified by the State in a high-quality plan toward which the State has made significant progress, and its commitment to implementing the standards thereafter in a well-planned way.

In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State’s success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Evidence for (B)(1)(i):

- A copy of the Memorandum of Agreement, executed by the State, showing that it is part of a standards consortium.
- A copy of the final standards or, if the standards are not yet final, a copy of the draft standards and anticipated date for completing the standards.
- Documentation that the standards are or will be internationally benchmarked and that, when well-implemented, will help to ensure that students are prepared for college and careers.
- The number of States participating in the standards consortium and the list of these States.

Evidence for (B)(1)(ii):

For Phase 1 applicants:

- A description of the legal process in the State for adopting standards, and the State’s plan, current progress, and timeframe for adoption.

For Phase 2 applicants:

- Evidence that the State has adopted the standards. Or, if the State has not yet adopted the standards, a description of the legal process in the State for adopting standards and the State’s plan, current progress, and timeframe for adoption.

Recommended maximum response length: Two pages

State Reform Conditions Criteria

(B)(1)(i) The state’s participation in a consortium of states

Iowa was an early signer to the Common Core Standards initiative. (See attachment (B)(1)–3 for a copy of the Memorandum of Understanding.) Forty-eight states and three territories are participating in the Common Core Standards initiative, which is being jointly led by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). (A list of participating states and territories is in attachment (B)(1)–4.) An advisory group, including experts from Achieve, Inc., ACT, the College Board, the National Association of State Boards of Education and the State Higher Education Executive Officers, provides advice and guidance on the initiative.

The Common Core Standards include standards in college and career-readiness, English-language arts, and mathematics (see attachment (B)(1)–1 for the draft standards). They are research and evidence-based; aligned with college and workforce training program expectations; reflective of rigorous content and skills; and internationally benchmarked. The International Benchmarking Advisory Group for the Common Core Standards consists of education experts representing education institutions, the business community, researchers, former federal officials, and current state and local officials. (See attachment (B)(1)–2 for *International Benchmarking and the Common Core*.) This advisory group’s expertise and experience helped identify the need for international comparisons and provided guidance for benchmarking state education system practices in areas such as standards, accountability, educator workforce, and assessments.

(B)(1)(ii) Adopting Standards

The final Common Core Standards will be released **June 2, 2010**. As soon as they are released, the Iowa Department of Education (IDE) will put together a document showing how the Iowa Core integrates into the Common Core, demonstrating how the Common Core would impact the state.

The Iowa State Board of Education has the legal authority to adopt standards. The State Board has reviewed previous drafts of the standards, and will be presented with and discuss the final, integrated Common Core Standards document at its retreat on June 23–24, 2010. The State Board is on record as committed to adopting the Common Core Standards, and is scheduled to do so at its regular meeting on **July 29, 2010**.

In the mean time, the IDE and area education agency (AEA) staff will have been developing presentations and documentation for the roll out of the Common Core Standards, including how the Iowa Core integrates into the Common Core Standards and how districts' Iowa Core implementation plans can be modified to address the implementation of the Common Core.

Implementation of the Common Core Standards begins August 1, 2010. Implementation plans are described in (B)(3). The end of Section (B)(3) also has an overall timeline for this priority reform area.

(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments (10 points)

The extent to which the State has demonstrated its commitment to improving the quality of its assessments, evidenced by (as set forth in Appendix B) the State's participation in a consortium of States that—

- (i) Is working toward jointly developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments (as defined in this notice) aligned with the consortium's common set of K-12 standards (as defined in this notice); and
- (ii) Includes a significant number of States.

In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Evidence for (B)(2):

- A copy of the Memorandum of Agreement, executed by the State, showing that it is part of a consortium that intends to develop high-quality assessments (as defined in this notice) aligned with the consortium’s common set of K-12 standards; or documentation that the State’s consortium has applied, or intends to apply, for a grant through the separate Race to the Top Assessment Program (to be described in a subsequent notice); or other evidence of the State’s plan to develop and adopt common, high-quality assessments (as defined in this notice).
- The number of States participating in the assessment consortium and the list of these States.

Recommended maximum response length: One page

State Reform Conditions Criteria

(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high quality assessments

(B)(2)(i) The extent to which the State has demonstrated its commitment to improving the quality of its assessments, evidenced by the State’s participation in a consortium of States that is working toward jointly developing and implementing common, high quality assessments....

The SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium

Iowa has joined the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium in order to pool talent and resources across collaborating states. (See attachment (B)(2)–1 for a list of the 33 participating states and attachment (B)(2)-2 the Consortium Document of Commitment.) Iowa will work with the Consortium states to pool resources and identify performance assessments or benchmark assessments in English language arts and mathematics for use at multiple times in the school year; decision-making frameworks for school systems and classroom teachers for analyzing performance problems and supplementing instruction; and progress monitoring tools aligned with grade level expectations for use with struggling learners including students with disabilities. The IDE already has assigned staff to support item development, formative assessment, growth modeling, and technical adequacy.

In this work, Iowa is committed to developing a dynamic, balanced assessment system that answers the following questions: Have individual students achieved grade level benchmarks?

What percentage of students—overall and by subgroup—has achieved grade level benchmarks? Is there evidence that the general education program needs to be enhanced to meet the needs of students not at benchmarks? What academic skills do students need to be taught? Is there evidence that the intended curriculum was enacted? Was instruction changed for students well above or well below benchmark levels?

The data infrastructure for this endeavor is described in Section (C) of this application.

Iowa Core Assessment Program

Iowa is committed to ensuring students receive a comprehensive education and that each teacher has opportunities to receive data on their performance and their students' growth and learning. Thus, Iowa will develop balanced assessment measures for the other concepts and skills embodied in the Iowa Core, including science, social studies, and 21st-century skills.

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

The extent to which the State, in collaboration with its participating LEAs (as defined in this notice), has a high-quality plan for supporting a statewide transition to and implementation of internationally benchmarked K-12 standards that build toward college and career readiness by the time of high school graduation, and high-quality assessments (as defined in this notice) tied to these standards. State or LEA activities might, for example, include: developing a rollout plan for the standards together with all of their supporting components; in cooperation with the State's institutions of higher education, aligning high school exit criteria and college entrance requirements with the new standards and assessments; developing or acquiring, disseminating, and implementing high-quality instructional materials and assessments (including, for example, formative and interim assessments (both as defined in this notice)); developing or acquiring and delivering high-quality professional development to support the transition to new standards and assessments; and engaging in other strategies that translate the standards and information from assessments into classroom practice for all students, including high-need students (as defined in this notice).

The State shall provide its plan for this criterion in the text box below. The plan should include, at a minimum, the goals, activities, timelines, and responsible parties (see Reform Plan Criteria elements in Application Instructions or Section XII, Application Requirements (e), for further detail). Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers must be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Recommended maximum response length: Eight pages

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

State Comprehensive Vision and Plan

Enhanced Standards

Having just recently articulated a clearer, higher, stronger set of essential concepts and skills for students in the Iowa Core, which include 21st-century skills, we have laid the foundation for adopting the Common Core Standards by August 2010. Immediately thereafter, we turn our attention toward implementing them.

High Quality Assessments

Iowa began systematically using student assessment data to improve instruction long before most states imagined a statewide standards and assessments strategy. As noted in Section (A)(1), the Iowa Statewide Testing Program started administering the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) in 1935 and the Iowa Tests of Educational Development (ITEDs) in 1942. Virtually all Iowa school districts—both public and private—have voluntarily participated in this program annually since its inception. *This means that Iowa has gathered assessment data for over 70 years.*

This magnificent history has provided each teacher with information about the achievement and growth of each of their students, and each administrator with information about her/his students, teachers, and schools. As powerful as this has been, however, in order to move to a competency-based system of education and to provide each student, teacher, administrator, institution of higher education, and employer with information about student achievement across the full range of competencies and skills in our standards, we will move beyond where we have been and develop additional measures of student achievement and growth and new competencies in moving the system toward high standards.

Indeed, as a state, we are re-creating our vision for what an assessment system will look like. We are putting in place a system that allows for the best possible decision making at all levels, that supports continuous student growth toward proficiency on the essential concepts and skills outlined in the Common Core Standards and the Iowa Core, and that holds the system accountable to preparing each and every student for college or a career after high school. We are

in the process of developing a “balanced” assessment system. In addition to summative statewide exams, a balanced assessment approach also includes interim, benchmark, and end of course assessments at the local level and formative assessment at the instructional level.

Of particular note, Iowa has stepped out in front of the nation in its work on formative assessment. Formative assessment is a planned process; it is used by both teachers and students; takes place during instruction; provides assessment-based feedback to both teachers and students; and helps teachers *and* students make adjustments that will improve student achievement. The practice includes providing clear (student-friendly) learning targets (learning objectives) based on teacher understanding of the learning progression for the learning target and accompanied by models of both high and low quality work; providing descriptive feedback to help the student know what was done correctly and what could be done to improve; allowing for self- and peer-assessment for students to think meta-cognitively and develop understanding of effective learning tactics; and creating a classroom climate of collaboration—a partnership in the learning process. Iowa has been working with Margaret Heritage, of UCLA’s National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, & Student Testing (CRESST), to implement *Assessment for Learning*, an initiative to build local capacity for formative assessment. This is a major component of a balanced assessment system.

Goals

To achieve our over-arching goals of all students succeeding, we have several goals for our work in standards and assessments:

- Adopt the Common Core Standards
- Provide quality professional development to support adoption of instructional materials at the local level
- Transition to a high quality balanced assessment system that includes multiple measures of student achievement and growth toward attaining the Common Core Standards and the other subjects embodied in the Iowa Core. Such a system will include:
 - formative assessment processes used in instruction

- interim, benchmark, and end-of-courses tests, and rubrics for evaluating student work
- new summative assessment(s) through the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium to measure student achievement of the Common Core Standards (Race to the Top funds would not be used to achieve this goal)
- Provide high quality professional development to support integration of interim assessments at the local level
- Develop a network to support standards, instruction, and assessment at the teacher and administrator pre-service level
- Collaborate with institutions of higher education (IHE) to develop acceptance guidelines for students who have been in competency-based programs
- Monitor implementation and evaluate effects

Activities

Adopt Enhanced Standards at the State Level

Iowa will adopt the Common Core Standards before August 2010. Local districts will integrate the Common Core Standards into their curriculum and instruction as they continue to engage in the required planning for implementing the Iowa Core.

Establish the Center for Collaborative Inquiry for Balanced Assessment

The state will establish the Center for Collaborative Inquiry (CCI) for Balanced Assessment in September 2010. This CCI will be a collaborative of local, regional, state and national experts. National experts will include people like Margaret Heritage of CRESST or Brian Gong of the Center for Assessment. Other national experts will be identified with the assistance of the Council of Chief State School Officers, the National Governors Association, and the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium. Local expertise will be culled from the IDE, AEAs, LEAs and IHEs.

As a whole, this team must know the ins and outs of the standards and have a sophisticated understanding of assessment. Some individual CCI team members will have deeper expertise in standards and curriculum; while others will understand assessment deeply. Still others will know

how to utilize the Iowa Professional Development Model; and others will be competent leadership coaches, understanding both implementation science and systems change. In addition to working on developments at the state level, these staff will devote part of their time to supporting districts to adopt standards, teachers to integrate standards into instruction, and administrators to redesign classrooms and schools for higher level student learning.

The CCI will use the already established Core Network, which consists of AEA, IHE, and LEA staff who are responsible for building capacity within LEAs and providing technical assistance for the implementation of Common Core Standards, enhanced instructional practices and infrastructure redesign for the improvement of student learning. The initial work in 2010 will focus on disseminating information and material to local superintendents, curriculum directors, and LEA staff, as well as legislators and local school board members to facilitate the adoption and implementation of the Common Core at the local district level. The Race to the Top and IDE communications teams are jointly responsible for dissemination of content. In addition, the CCI will collaborate with IHEs to integrate the Common Core into pre-service programs.

In 2011 and beyond, the emphasis will be on getting information to parents to understand the Common Core and supporting teachers to bring the standards to life at the classroom level.

Provide Professional Development for Adoption of Instructional Materials at the Local Level

The CCI will partner with IHEs and national experts to develop a framework and criteria to evaluate quality instructional materials. This framework will be developed between fall of 2010 and spring of 2011. In the summer of 2011, the Core Network will be used to disseminate this framework to the field. The CCI also will identify high quality instructional materials for districts to use. This identification and review of instructional materials will occur 2012 and beyond.

The Core Network then will be used to provide quality professional development to support adoption of instructional materials at the local level. The Iowa Professional Development Model (IPDM) will be used to support this process. The model incorporates demonstration, coaching, feedback, and other high leverage strategies known to impact teacher practice. Schools in Iowa are familiar with applying the IPDM to support initiatives at the building level. However, practices implemented using the IPDM have not universally sustained, so the CCI will work with

AEAs and LEAs to understand the conditions in which application of the IPDM was successful, and build these conditions into professional development implemented for our Race to the Top program. As a result of this professional development, teachers and administrators will make better decisions about developing and/or selecting instructional materials and the state will have a great deal more knowledge about the needs of the field in rolling-out standards.

Transition to A High Quality Balanced Assessment System

Develop multiple measures of student achievement and growth, including local assessments.

IDE started working with the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (Consortium) in the spring of 2010 in order to develop multiple, authentic measures of student achievement and growth in mathematics and English language arts. In this work, we will develop with other states interim and benchmark assessments for use at the local level and summative assessments for use at the state level. (Iowa's Race to the Top funds would not be used to develop the summative assessments; the Consortium is applying for a Comprehensive Assessment System grant to meet the goal of developing new summative assessments.)

In the first nine months of the Race to the Top program (the Design Phase), the CCI staff will work with five participating districts to design the collaborative process of R&D to come. After the Design Phase and for the next two years (the R&D Phase), the CCI staff and an additional 15 participating districts, partners at Iowa Testing Program, and representatives of the state's colleges and universities will undertake a R&D effort to come up with multiple, authentic measures of student achievement and growth in the Common Core Standards subjects and of the essential concepts and skills and universal constructs in other subjects in the Iowa Core. In a collaborative process, the CCI will create, compile, implement, evaluate, strengthen, test, and perfect performance standards, measures, and rubrics for evaluating student achievement. Specifically, during the R&D Phase, a subset of 20 participating districts will submit example measures of student performance across the standards and the essential concepts and skills. (Participating districts specifically agreed to do this in the Race to the Top Memorandum of Understanding. New data platforms will be developed for this use, as described in Section (C).) By the beginning of year four, new assessments will be developed, beta tested, and ready for replication. An additional 15 districts will be provided subgrants to use the measures of student achievement and growth in year four, allowing for replication studies.

By the end of year four, Iowa will have a robust set of measures of student achievement and growth across all the standards, concepts, and skills in the Common Core Standards and the Iowa Core.

Expand Formative Assessment

The CCI for Balanced Assessment will run a special project on Assessment *for* Learning, or formative assessment. Formative assessment is a process teachers and students use to collect real-time, on-the-fly determinations of where students are in individual tasks, lessons, or projects. Also referred to as formative *instruction*, this work is part of an over-arching balanced assessment system. For several years, Iowa has been working on the *Assessment for Learning* initiative with Margaret Heritage of CRESST and now is ready to expand the pilot and move rapidly to validate the work across additional districts.

Currently 18 districts are engaged in the Assessment *for* Learning initiative. This fall, we will use state Race to the Top funds to expand that number by 10 districts. In year three, that number will increase by an additional 15 districts, so that by the end of year four, we will have tested and validated the work and will be prepared to take it to scale.

Thus, roll out of the balanced assessment system will go statewide in academic year 2014.

Provide Professional Development to Integrate Local Interim Assessments

The work of the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium will be used to support integration of interim assessments at the local level. Training on interim assessments will be infused with the training already described on instructional materials. The timeline is contingent on the Consortium and the CCI is responsible for integrating work on the use of interim assessments to inform instruction into professional development developed for teachers on instructional materials. Monitoring implementation of interim assessments will be folded in with the professional development efforts described above in the discussion of standards and instructional materials.

Develop a Network To Support Standards, Instruction and Assessment at the Pre-Service Level

The IDE has an already established network of IHEs, whose role to date has been around teacher and administrator certification, required course work, and infusing the Iowa Core into practice. The CCI for Educator Evaluation and Support will work with this group to assure that the Common Core work is represented. If funded, the conversations with the IHEs will shift in 2010 to infusing the Common Core into pre-service coursework, including understanding standards, effective instructional design, and use of data to inform instruction. Evaluative data on implementation of Race to the Top will be used summatively on an annual basis to determine the next scope of work for the IHE network.

Collaborate with Institutions of Higher Education to Develop Acceptance Guidelines for Students Who Have Been Competency-Based Programs

As Iowa transitions to a competency-based system, the IDE will work with IHEs to ensure that new transcripts can be used for admission decisions. The CCI will be responsible for working with the Board of Regents (the governing body for the state's university system), the IDE's Division of Community Colleges, and the network of junior colleges to facilitate their adoption. Iowa has an established tool to track students' individual coursework, and the role of the CCI is to facilitate conversations with IHE partners so that the transcript framework is aligned with and can be used as part of postsecondary or college admission. Work has already begun to transition this to a competency-based system around core standards. An additional task for this goal is that Iowa will work with the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association to identify states moving toward a competency-based system and develop a Coalition of Competency-Based States. This coalition is important to ensure that reciprocity occurs for states using nontraditional transcripts, so that Iowa high school graduates have many options for postsecondary attendance. Iowa will take the lead on this work, which will begin in 2010 and continue for the duration of Race to the Top.

Monitor Implementation and Evaluate Effects

Given all the goals above, the ultimate goal is to see gains in student learning through the implementation of high quality standards and assessments. Iowa will partner with the

SMARTER Consortium to develop and adopt a balanced assessment system. Hence, we have a way to track student performance on academic measures. The state's longitudinal data system allows us to know how we are improving on a student-by-student basis. In 2010, the CCI will develop a tool for examining implementation in the classroom as defined by the extent to which standards are taught and the amount of engaged time in classrooms. The tool will likely be a self-report tool or will be built into model lesson plans. The IDE has already developed a data collection tool for teachers to report and examine the intended-to-enacted curriculums. The IDE will pilot the data collection framework in 2011 with the intent to scale up to all teachers in all districts in 2012. The IDE will explore the usage of existing systems or the developing a new system to collect these data.

Timeline and Responsible Parties

See the following page for Section (B) timeline.

Timeline and Responsible Parties

ACTIVITIES	STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENTS TIMELINE							RESPONSIBLE PARTIES
	FY 2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015		
Pre-Race to the Top: Adopt Common Core Standards on July 29, 2010	■							IA Board of Ed
Establish the Center for Collaborative Inquiry for Balanced Assessment	■							IDE
Apply for Innovation Zone status								AEAs, LEAs
Begin design phase with 5 districts, the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium, and other partners to develop multiple measures of student achievement and growth in math and ELA	■	■						CCI, LEAs
Transition to R&D phase with additional 15 districts (20 total)		■	■					CCI, LEAs
Transition to replication phase with additional 15 districts (35 total)			■	■				CCI, LEAs
Use multiple measures of student achievement and growth statewide					■	■		LEAs
Develop framework and criteria to evaluate quality instructional materials	■	■						CCI
Provide PD to support adoption of instructional materials at the local level					■	■		CCI
Identify and review instructional materials					■	■		CCI
Expand formative assessment initiative by adding 10 districts					■	■		CCI
Further expand formative assessment initiative by adding 15 districts					■	■		CCI
Take formative assessment initiative to scale statewide					■	■		CCI
Provide high quality PD to support integration of interim assessments at the local level					■	■		CCI
Develop a network to support standards, instruction and assessment at the pre-service level	■	■						CCI
Collaborate with institutions of higher education to develop acceptance guidelines for students who have been in competency-based programs								CCI
Convene Coalition of Competency-Based States								CCI
Gather baseline data for evaluation	■	■						RTTT Director
Monitor implementation and evaluate effects								RTTT Director
Develop tool to examine implementation of standards		■						RTTT Director, CCI
Pilot use of the tool			■	■				RTTT Director, CCI
Provide tool statewide				■	■	■		RTTT Director, CCI

(C) Data Systems to Support Instruction (47 total points)

State Reform Conditions Criteria

(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system (24 points – 2 points per America COMPETES element)

The extent to which the State has a statewide longitudinal data system that includes all of the America COMPETES Act elements (as defined in this notice).

In the text box below, the State shall describe which elements of the America COMPETES Act (as defined in this notice) are currently included in its statewide longitudinal data system.

Evidence:

- Documentation for each of the America COMPETES Act elements (as defined in this notice) that is included in the State’s statewide longitudinal data system.

Recommended maximum response length: Two pages

Iowa’s data system plans are described here, following this logic: Section (C)(1) is about the *technical infrastructure or conditions*; (C)(2) is about the ability of stakeholders to *access* data; (C)(3) is about providing support so stakeholders can *analyze* relevant data. From there, we skip to (D)(5) to discuss the professional development and leadership coaching that will help educators to *use data* (i.e., to act upon their analyses and change their behaviors, such as how to differentiate instruction, make decisions about professional development and staffing, or support the work of professional learning communities, among other activities).

In addition, program evaluation is critical not only after the program wraps up, but throughout the Race to the Top progression of design, R&D, replication, and, finally, scale. Iterative Plan-Do-Study-Act cycles will need to occur regularly. The Centers for Collaborative Inquiry (CCI) for Responsive Data Platforms will be the entity charged with working and reworking data to learn more about our students and our system. This is discussed in Section (A)(2), and mentioned in (C)(3).

(C)(1) Fully Implementing a Statewide Longitudinal Data System

As the Data Quality Campaign asserts, “without data, you’re just another person with an opinion.” Indeed, Iowa’s commitment to transforming the system toward a competency-based system that ensures students achieve essential concepts and skills—and the continuous

improvement of instruction, leading, and learning necessary to achieve that goal—require data systems that are sophisticated, stable, and easy to access and use. Once we agree upon standards and assessments, we can develop data platforms that capture and help us to analyze student work. Armed with valid and reliable data on student achievement and growth, we can shed the steadfast hold on seat time that is keeping us in the previous century. Data platforms provide us with the fulcrum we need to shift toward a competency-based system of education.

The Iowa Department of Education (IDE) has long held a commitment to using data to improve instruction. Iowa’s teachers, administrators, parents, and students have used data on student achievement on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) and the Iowa Tests of Educational Development (ITED) since 1935, when it was developed under the moniker Iowa Every Pupil Test of Basic Skills, as a tool to improve instruction. More recently, through support from a grant from the Institute for Education Sciences, the IDE has built a statewide longitudinal data system (SLDS), named EdInsight, with many of the elements required through the America COMPETES Act. Currently, nine of the 12 elements have been met: Elements 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 12 are complete.

Element No. 1—A unique statewide student identifier that does not permit a student to be individually identified by users of the system

In 2004, the IDE began requiring that all K–12 students be assigned a unique student identifier. The use of this identifier was expanded in 2009, when the Iowa General Assembly mandated (Iowa Code 261E.3(3)(j)) the K–12 unique student identifier be used to articulate with students across all educational entities, including the community college system, public universities, and private colleges. This law created the foundation for tracking students longitudinally, and evaluating the impact of the K–12 system and later outcomes such as post-secondary success.

Element No. 4—The capacity to communicate with higher education data systems

In June 2009, the IDE signed a contract to build and deploy an electronic transcript and student records exchange system. The Iowa Transcript Center (ITC) has four functional components: 1) the electronic exchange of transcript data from high schools to post-secondary institutions; 2) the electronic exchange of transcript data between post-secondary institutions; 3)

the electronic exchange of preK–12 student records between school districts when students transfer; and 4) the creation of a transcript repository for final high school transcripts that will house high school records for perpetuity, facilitate disaster recovery and mitigation, and provide an additional data source for the IDE and EdInsight. The transcript repository will also serve the citizens of the state by its capability to generate copies of transcripts on request.

Element No. 5—An audit system assessing data quality, validity, and reliability

In fall 2004, Iowa implemented EASIER (Electronic Access System for Iowa Education Records), for transmission of individual information on all students across the state. The IDE employs a team that works with school districts on the validity, reliability, and quality of these student records as they are transmitted. The EASIER data collection system has a series of interdependent edit checks, which also assist with ensuring accurate reporting across the K–12 system. Further, the community colleges and public universities (also call Regent universities) have a similar data audit systems in place to provide quality and reliability in reporting, as well as the use of data for data-driven decision making.

Element No. 6—Yearly State Assessment records of individual students

In 2004–2005, the IDE started collecting student assessment records as part of the State measurement system required under section 1111(b)(3) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). These records have been stored using the IDE’s unique student identifier so that longitudinal trends such as growth can be determined for an individual student or groups including matched, cross-section, or simple cohorts. Assessment results are analyzed across the many levels within Iowa’s education system, including but not limited to: statewide, area education agency (AEA), district, building, and grade trends. These data include all subject areas tested, not just those required, as well as records for accredited non-public schools. These data have been loaded into Iowa’s SLDS from 2004 to today.

Element No. 7—Information on student not tested, by grade and subject

Iowa collects records from all students across the state at multiple intervals across several statewide data systems. EASIER collects information on students in fall, winter, and spring. The special education system collects information on all students with an individual education

plan on an ongoing basis. Lastly, test records are obtained from the IDE's testing provider, Iowa Testing Programs, once a month. These data are loaded and snapshots are created in order to provide multiple points in time to view information on students. These multiple data sources are loaded into Iowa's SLDS and provide information on students not tested, and can be broken down by grade and subject as well aggregated, for example, by subgroup.

Element No. 8—A teacher identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students

The IDE has had a unique teacher identifier for more than 25 years and has been collecting individual student and course data since fall 2004 for grades 9–12. In the fall of 2009, the IDE added section and teacher identifiers as an option to the EASIER collection system. These additional data elements and collection system allow for linking students to teachers.

Element No. 9—Student-level transcript information, including on courses completed and grades earned

In June 2009, the IDE signed a contract to build and deploy an electronic transcript and student records exchange system. The IDE can capture course completion and grade data along with a number of other important data elements as part of the Iowa Transcript Center. Other important measures include class rank, statewide common course classification codes, weighted and un-weighted grade point average. These data will be mapped and loaded into Iowa's SLDS.

Element No. 10—Student-level college readiness test scores

As part of the EASIER collection system, the IDE collects ACT scores from districts. ACT composite scores have been reported since 2004 and subsequently loaded into Iowa's SLDS. In the summer of 2008, the IDE began sharing data with ACT in order to receive a more robust and expanded set of information on Iowa students. These data include all subtest areas, such as math, reading, science, or writing; and the interest inventories students complete as part of the examination. These data were shared in order to work with ACT on several projects: 1) review K–12 course-taken patterns in conjunction with large-scale assessment results and ACT scores in order to better understand the predictors of college readiness; 2) examine the science readiness cut score defined by ACT; 3) examine the self-report of core courses taken vs. actual courses.

Element No. 12—Other information determined necessary to address alignment and adequate preparation for success in postsecondary education

Iowa has created and uses a number of measures to determine adequate alignment and preparation from K–12 and post-secondary institutions. In 2007, after an extensive review, the Regent universities created a common set of admission requirements, and the Iowa Board of Regents adopted new admission requirements for the three public universities. The Regent Admission Index (RAI), which was implemented with the entering class of 2009, is a score derived from a mathematical equation that includes four factors that have been shown to be predictors of academic success at the universities—class rank, ACT/SAT scores, grade point average, and number of core courses completed. A high school student who has completed the core subject areas required by the Regent universities and who has an RAI of 245 is automatically admitted to one of the Regent universities. Also in 2007, the Iowa legislature mandated the Board of Regents to create a statewide articulation website. In 2008, the Board of Regents, in collaboration with the IDE, developed and launched the articulation website, called TransferInIowa.org. This web application allows Iowa students to map concurrent enrollment courses earned in high school or traditional community college programs and addresses issues of credit transfer to community colleges and Regent universities. Lastly, student test score results from the *Iowa Test of Basic Skills* and the *Iowa Test of Educational Development* have been shown to have a strong alignment with predicted ACT scores. Reports that show student trajectories can assist in determining post-secondary academic success.

State Plans to Fully Develop the America COMPETES Act Elements

To provide greater accessibility of Iowa’s SLDS and other major data systems to key stakeholders, the IDE will fully develop the America COMPETES Act elements that are currently incomplete. Race to the Top will position the state to achieve this goal. Iowa’s detailed plan is set forth below in Section (C)(2).

Reform Plan Criteria

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

The extent to which the State has a high-quality plan to ensure that data from the State’s

statewide longitudinal data system are accessible to, and used to inform and engage, as appropriate, key stakeholders (e.g., parents, students, teachers, principals, LEA leaders, community members, unions, researchers, and policymakers); and that the data support decision-makers in the continuous improvement of efforts in such areas as policy, instruction, operations, management, resource allocation, and overall effectiveness.

The State shall provide its detailed plan for this criterion in the text box below. The plan should include, at a minimum, the goals, activities, timelines, and responsible parties (see Application Instructions or Section XII, Application Requirements (e), for further detail). Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers must be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Recommended maximum response length: Two pages

Over the past decade, Iowa has developed a number of high quality data systems at the state and local levels. For the most part, however, these systems are distinct—preKindergarten, K–12, community college, public post-secondary, private post-secondary, and financial aid. Iowa has begun to move toward greater interconnectivity and greater ability for robust data analysis. To this end, Iowa invested \$2.9 million of its own resources in its data warehouse, called EdInsight (see attachment (C)(2)–1, for overview).

EdInsight is the IDE’s data warehouse and SLDS reporting tool, where years of student-level data are stored and can be linked and used for local decision making. The goals of EdInsight are to: 1) provide the education community a repository of combined data from multiple sources on one common system; 2) provide tools and training in the use of data for benchmarking and longitudinal and comparative analysis; 3) empower data-driven decision making for education stakeholders; and 4) increase confidence in data by defining and implementing processes to improve data consistency, reliability, and quality.

Multiple sets of preK–12 data currently reside in EdInsight:

- 1) Project EASIER, which includes demographic, enrollment/attendance, program, assessment, graduate, suspension/expulsion, and high school course data;
- 2) Information Management System (IMS), which includes statewide special education data;
- 3) Iowa Testing Programs (ITP), which includes achievement data from the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) and the Iowa Tests of Educational Development (ITED);

- 4) Basic Education Data Survey (BEDS) licensed staff collection, which includes information such as unique educator identification number, teaching assignments, demographics, education background, and experience.

EdInsight has been focused on the state's education improvement efforts, goals, and accountability system since its inception. EdInsight will allow for the collection and analysis of data needed for decision making at every level of the system—from the Capitol to the classroom. The State also was recently awarded a grant for \$8.8 million over five years from the Institute for Education Sciences (IES) to expand and refine its SLDS. One of the key elements in developing Iowa's SLDS is providing the IDE, area education agencies (AEAs), LEAs, principals, teachers, LEA leaders, and community members access to appropriate education data, reports, and decision-support tools through a flexible, easy-to-use web interface. The development of the SLDS to date has been a two-way process between the IDE and its stakeholders, with over 400 individuals from various levels of the educational system providing input in EdInsight's development. EdInsight version 1.25 was released in March 2010 to an audience of the IDE, AEA, and LEA users. A statewide rollout to the broader education community is the next critical step, while being cognizant of the security issues in disseminating such data.

Goals

Iowa has set a series of goals to achieve for further developing the state data system and increasing stakeholder access:

- Establish the Center for Collaborative Inquiry for Responsive Data Platforms;
- Complete development of the America COMPETES Act elements;
- Build three new data platforms;
- Enhance Iowa's Statewide Longitudinal Data System;
- Fully implement a tiered system of access to the statewide data systems;
- Increase use of EdInsight by 25 percent each year;
- Incorporate interoperability standards to move toward a unified education architecture for information about Iowa education;
- Improve reporting.

Activities and Specific Objectives

To provide greater accessibility of Iowa’s SLDS and other major data systems to key stakeholders, the IDE will undertake the following activities as part of Race to the Top.

Establish the Center for Collaborative Inquiry for Responsive Data Platforms

The mission of the CCI for Responsive Data Platforms is to build high quality data systems that work in unison to support Iowa’s key reform areas; to build the capacity of stakeholders across the system to access and use the data systems; and to help local districts make decisions about instructional improvement systems to support their goals. Toward that end, the CCI will use the first nine months of Race to the Top to design a high quality research and development and implementation plan, as well as a plan for building the capacity and knowledge of new staff and participating districts. During this time, the CCI will be comprised of a new project manager, three existing staff at the IDE, and one staff person in each of the two partnering AEAs. These staff will bring together representatives of participating districts, partners at the state’s colleges and universities, and the statewide education associations in a collaborative planning process. CCI staff also will begin developing the data platform for the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium as soon as the consortium is ready with specifications; will develop a base platform for Iowa Core data collection; and, using other funds, will begin developing the Teacher Quality Partnership data platform.

In year two and for the duration of the Race to the Top, four staff of the CCI will be housed at the IDE, while two AEAs each will have two staff. As a whole, this team must know the uses and limitations of data and data systems. Individual team members will have deeper expertise in:

- Designing data platforms;
- The Common Core Standards and the Iowa Core;
- Student and educator assessment;
- How to utilize the Iowa Professional Development Model to provide growth opportunities and supports within the CCI and among the participating districts;
- Leadership coaching—understanding both implementation science and systems change;
- Program evaluation.

Finally, the CCI will be responsible for collecting data and monitoring progress toward the overall Race to the Top goals, as well as specific goals within each of the other CCIs. CCI staff

will work with Iowa's Race to the Top Coordinating Council to develop evaluation plans for the Race to the Top programs and gather baseline data.

Fully Develop the America COMPETES Act Elements

By January 2012, Iowa will finalize work on the last three data elements in the America COMPETES Act elements that are currently incomplete. These elements include No. 2, student-level enrollment, demographic, and program participation information; No. 3, student-level information about the points at which students exit, transfer in, transfer out, drop out, or compete P-16 education programs; and No. 11, data that provides information regarding the extent to which students transition successfully from secondary to postsecondary education, including whether students enroll in remedial coursework. The completion of these data elements will expand Iowa's SLDS into a robust repository across the entire education system, from preKindergardent through grade 20.

The greatest challenge currently in this area is developing interoperability standards and resolving the privacy concerns and re-disclosure issues outlined in Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). There have been encouraging developments in the relationship between the IDE and the Regents; Race to the Top will provide dedicated funding to resolve these data-sharing issues.

Furthermore, the IDE will increase the number of additional indicators included in the SLDS, especially for early childhood data. We will load early reading assessment data (DIBELS, the *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills*), as well as data on behavior and school climate, including disciplinary data and other data collected locally. This application contains a request for funding so that all non-LEA preKindergarten programs could be identified and a methodology for collecting comparable data to those LEA programs that already collect data could be designed.

Build Three New Data Platforms

Iowa will create three new data platforms: the *SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium Data Platform*, to support the development and use of multiple measures of student achievement and growth in English language arts and mathematics; the *Iowa Core Data Platform*, to support the development and use of multiple measures of student achievement and growth in science,

social studies, and 21st-century skills (a base system for research and development will be operational by December 2011; the full platform will be operational by September 2012); and the *Teacher Quality Partnership Platform*, to document (1) teacher knowledge of academic major; and (2) effective teaching, featuring teacher work samples (operational and populated by 2011). Development of the Teacher Quality Partnership Platform will be funded through a separate grant.

SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium Data Platform

Iowa is a member of the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium. The system being built for the consortium will complement Iowa's summative assessment and SLDS at the state level and interim and benchmark assessments at the local level. The consortium's platform will allow Iowa's participants within LEAs (and participants from other states) to load diagnostic and interim assessment tasks, items, and instructional materials, including performance assessments. The consortium's focus is on materials related to the Common Core standards that will be adopted by most states.

The consortium platform should be operational by AY 2012. If the consortium system takes longer to develop than we expect, we will be able to use the Iowa Core Data Platform in the interim. LEAs participating in Race to the Top will populate the consortium's data platform with assessment tasks, student responses, and other materials starting in year two.

Iowa Core Data Platform—Data for a Complete Education

In order to monitor and assess student performance on the full range of concepts and skills embodied in the Iowa Core, Iowa will create a data platform parallel to the Consortium's platform, designed to monitor and assess the implementation and attainment of Iowa's competencies in science, social studies, and 21st-century skills. This parallel Student Assessment and Instruction (SAI) data platform will allow districts to access and use assessments and other materials across content areas. The Iowa Core Data Platform also will capture indicators of school culture and climate, such as data obtained through the Student Voice Survey, and indicators of the effectiveness of the Race to the Top reforms (Race to the Top evaluation work is described in Section (A)(2)). Essential data from this platform will be shared

via interoperable standards to interface key performance measures about students in a unified system.

Teacher Quality Partnership Data Platform

Instructional improvement requires teacher collaboration and deep reflection on practice beyond traditional quantitative indicators of student achievement and growth. Iowa has recently received a grant from the U.S. Department of Education to build a teacher portfolio platform that includes multiple authentic measures for teacher improvement. This grant is funding the Teacher Quality Partnership, a partnership between the IDE, the University of Northern Iowa (one of the state's leading teacher preparation institutions), and the Stanford University School Redesign Network. The partnership will examine and integrate a diverse set of teacher and student artifacts to document content knowledge of academic major and effective teaching, featuring teacher work samples supported by an innovative, integrated technology platform. A key innovation related to this project is the development and implementation of an integrated technology platform that will allow for the scaling of teacher effectiveness to reform and enhance teacher preparation programs and professional development. In such a system, teacher work samples can be recorded for later review by the student, mentors, administrators, and other stakeholders. Iowa will pilot and develop these teacher portfolio programs in participating districts.

In years one and two, we will use the data platforms provided by Stanford University as we construct a platform internally. Once Iowa's platform is operational in academic year 2012, we will transfer all the data collected to the new platform and ensure its functionality.

Enhance Iowa's Statewide Longitudinal Data System

Iowa has a vision of its SLDS which extends well beyond the foundational data elements outlined in the America Competes Act (see attachment (C)(2) –2. Iowa has linked its community college data system to Iowa Workforce Development in order to evaluate issues such as 1) return of investment for community college degree completers by diploma type; 2) examining the match between degree programs, career clusters and wage earning; and 3) supply and demand between job market and degree programs. This evaluation will be extended to K–12 during the lifecycle of the RTTT grant. Iowa will use RTTT in order to meet the following goals:

- Expand K–12 to work force linkages to evaluate career preparedness and outcomes.
- Expand K–12 to early childhood linkages to evaluate school readiness programs outside of the K–12 system.
- Expand K–12 to K–20 system in Iowa to include important outcome data in order to evaluate post-secondary readiness and success.
- Work with other Midwest states to fund a joint project with the Midwest Education Information Consortium (MEIC) for a student locator application to allow students to be identified who cross state borders within our region.

Fully Implement the Tiered System of Access

Parents, students, teachers, principals, community members, unions, researchers, policymakers, and LEA, AEA, and IDE staff all will have access to essential information from all of the data systems via EdInsight. Administrators will have access in academic year 2010; teachers and the public will have access in academic year 2011.

The IDE has created a tiered system of access to Iowa’s SLDS for key stakeholders. This robust security system needs to be expanded in order to accommodate secure access to information to the appropriate end user, including parents, students, teachers, principals, LEA leaders, community members, unions, researchers, and policymakers. For example, teachers and principals might have access to individual student data, while policymakers and community members would be able to access aggregate data only at the school or grade level. Terms of use of the SLDS will be developed in collaboration with teachers, administrators, and education policymakers in consultation with national experts, and will be developed with the confidentiality of students and teachers, and particularly FERPA regulations, in mind.

Increase Use of EdInsight

Our goals are that the number and types of downloads of student data from the SLDS and other data platforms through EdInsight will increase each year by 25 percent (i.e., the number and frequency of reports generated by the system); and the numbers of stakeholders (e.g., administrators, teachers, parents) downloading information will increase by 25 percent each year.

Currently, only 100 users can access EdInsight at any one time. Building the necessary system infrastructure to access EdInsight is critical to widespread use of data to support decision

making, so the IDE will expand system access so that large numbers of stakeholders can access the system simultaneously. The CCI also will track the numbers of educators accessing key information via EdInsight and the numbers of educators downloading balanced assessment results, teacher artifacts, and lessons in order to check for trends, toward the goal of increased access to data.

Finally, the IDE will improve the timeliness of data reports to support decision-makers in continuous improvement. Currently, data in reports are updated for schools several times a year, which is not timely enough for administrators and teachers to use such data to inform practice.

Develop Interoperability Standards

With multiple systems for collecting, analyzing, and using data in development, there is a critical need for the IDE and its partners to continue to develop interoperability standards so that more types of student- and teacher-level data—interim and benchmark assessments, examples of student and teacher work—can be integrated into EdInsight and made widely available to stakeholders. Interoperability standards include common definitions that can be shared across multiple data platforms. Key information will be automated and shared in order to decrease duplication and siloed systems and data. This will be measured by incorporating the new platforms to be built by Race to the Top funds into the IDE’s current interoperability goals. (For more detail about these issues, see attachment (C)(2)–1).

The IDE also will continue to develop interoperability standards so that more types of non-student achievement data—operations, fiscal, management, technology use, and resource allocation, for example—can be integrated into EdInsight and be made widely available to stakeholders. Further, Iowa will identify all non-LEA preKindergarten programs that operate outside of the school system and develop a methodology for collecting comparable data to those within LEAs that already collect data are designed and implemented.

Improve Reporting

Iowa will continuously improve the *Condition of Education* report, which is published annually. Iowa will include information on the Teacher Quality Partnership, as well as fold in development of the balanced assessment system. In addition, in the Race to the Top MOU, participating districts reiterated their commitment to demonstrate, in an annual report to the

public, progress on increasing achievement overall and reductions in achievement disparities among subgroups of students. As more measures come online through the CCI for Balanced Assessment, these measures will be incorporated into district reports.

Timeline and Responsible Parties

See following page for timeline for Section (C)(2).

Timeline and Responsible Parties

ACTIVITIES	(C) (2) DATA SYSTEMS TIMELINE												RESPONSIBLE PARTIES						
	FY 2010			2011			2012			2013				2014			2015		
Establish the CCI for Responsive Data Platforms	█																		IDE
Apply for Innovation Zone status																			AEAs, LEAs
Begin design phase with 5 districts, the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium, TQP, and other partners to develop multiple measures of student achievement and growth in math and ELA	█	█	█																CCI, LEAs
Transition to R&D phase with additional 15 districts (20 total)				█	█	█	█	█	█										CCI, LEAs
Transition to replication phase with additional 15 districts (35 total)										█	█	█							CCI, LEAs
Continue to develop incomplete America COMPETES Act elements 2,3,11	█	█	█	█															CCI
Design SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium data platform	█	█	█	█	█	█													Consortium, IDE, LEAs
Design Iowa Core data platform	█	█	█	█	█	█													CCI
Design Teacher Quality Partnership data platform	█	█	█	█	█	█													IDE, UNI, Stanford University
Enhance Iowa's SLDS system	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█										CCI
Provide SLDS access to administrators	█																		CCI
Provide SLDS access to teachers and the public				█															CCI
Increase capacity of EdInsight		█																	CCI
Track use of EdInsight	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	CCI
Continue to develop interoperability standards																			CCI
Improve reporting	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	IDE, CCI, RTTT Director
Acquire instructional improvement systems	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	LEAs

Reform Plan Criteria

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

The extent to which the State, in collaboration with its participating LEAs (as defined in this notice), has a high-quality plan to—

- (i) Increase the acquisition, adoption, and use of local instructional improvement systems (as defined in this notice) that provide teachers, principals, and administrators with the information and resources they need to inform and improve their instructional practices, decision-making, and overall effectiveness;
- (ii) Support participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) and schools that are using instructional improvement systems (as defined in this notice) in providing effective professional development to teachers, principals and administrators on how to use these systems and the resulting data to support continuous instructional improvement; and
- (iii) Make the data from instructional improvement systems (as defined in this notice), together with statewide longitudinal data system data, available and accessible to researchers so that they have detailed information with which to evaluate the effectiveness of instructional materials, strategies, and approaches for educating different types of students (e.g., students with disabilities, English language learners, students whose achievement is well below or above grade level).

The State shall provide its detailed plan for this criterion in the text box below. The plan should include, at a minimum, the goals, activities, timelines, and responsible parties (see Reform Plan Criteria elements in Application Instructions or Section XII, Application Requirements (e), for further detail). Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers must be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note the location where the attachment can be found.

Recommended maximum response length: Five pages

Iowa has a strong commitment to moving toward a competency-based system of education that will help each and every student achieve the essential skills and concepts in the Common Core Standards and the Iowa Core. The data platforms developed in this grant will house multiple, performance-based measures of student achievement and growth that will help determine student, teacher, principal, school- and system-wide performance and development. Helping districts to acquire local instructional improvement systems that work in concert with

these platforms will provide teachers, principals, and LEA administrators with meaningful support and actionable data to systemically manage continuous instructional improvement. A number of systems are currently used by LEAs around instructional practices and decision making, but they are not consistently well-developed or integrated enough to be used effectively by teachers, principals, and administrators.

(C)(3)(i) The extent to which the State, in collaboration with its participating LEAs (as defined in this notice), has a high quality plan to *increase the acquisition [and] adoption ... of local instructional improvement systems.*

(C)(3)(ii) The extent to which the state has a high quality plan to support participating LEAs...in providing effective professional development on how to use these systems and resulting data to support continuous instructional improvement

Goals

- All Participating districts will acquire aligned instructional improvement systems.
- Analysis of student data and information will increase exponentially

Activities

Acquire Instructional Improvement Systems

Each and every district participating in Race to the Top agreed in their Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) to implement a local instructional improvement program (MOU Agreement 6). Districts already should be implementing these programs as a part of their school improvement plans, so these activities will commence immediately. Participating districts may use their Race to the Top sub-grant dollars for this activity; a subset of districts will receive additional sub-grants for more intensive development activities through the CCI for Responsive Data Platforms. Thus, by the beginning of academic year 2011 year, each participating district will have acquired an instructional improvement system that is aligned with Iowa's SLDS. We will have conducted trainings on the Teacher Quality Data Platform, developed internal evaluation plans for Race to the Top implementation, and gathered baseline data. All LEAs will share with the state lessons learned on implementation of their instructional improvement programs, as stated in Agreement 7 of the LEA MOU.

During the first nine months of the Race to the Top program, the CCI will engage in a collaborative planning process to design specifications and recommendations for districts about selecting instructional improvement systems that allow them to seamlessly access the information housed in Iowa's SLDS. Districts in Iowa will be receiving over \$57 million from a settlement with Microsoft; CCI recommendations will include how to appropriately use those funds to support the acquisition of local instruction improvement systems.

Provide Professional Development to Help Districts Access and Analyze Data

Accessing Data

As noted above, we are building the professional development plans within the CCI for Responsive Data Platforms to support district *access* to and *analysis* of data. Toward that end, the CCI will hit the ground running with professional development and training on how to use EdInsight, as well as helping teachers within participating LEAs to know how to use the Teacher Quality Partnership data platform. There currently is a limited amount of professional development provided on using EdInsight that focuses both on the functionality of the application and on data literacy (see attachment (C)(3)–1). As the number and type of users of EdInsight increase, it is critical for these types of trainings to expand to meet this demand, and be modified for different types of stakeholders accessing the system. This would include the development of online professional development modules to reach these additional system users.

While the trainings provided on the use of the state data platforms may be technical in nature, they are necessary so that Iowa's districts will have access to quality information when making decisions about instructional improvement, teacher and principal evaluation, and the organization of schools. As Iowa continues to build multiple data platforms to support its Race to the Top goals, training will be provided to districts on accessing them. The CCI will track access to the SLD through direct measures of SLDS activity (such as the number and type of reports run, by whom, and how often). The IDE currently has baseline data about the number and types of downloads, as well as survey data on the frequency of access of the SLDS by district users. In the design phase, additional baseline data will be collected in order to track progress on our goals, so that the types and frequency of report downloads from the SLDS will increase by 10 percent in 2010-2011; 30 percent in 2011-2013; and 50 percent in 2013–2014.

Analyzing Data

In year two, the CCI will expand its capacity by expanding its staff to include a total of four staff housed at the IDE and two staff in each of two AEAs. Combined, this team will ensure that the professional development provided on using data platforms will lead to changes in knowledge and behavior, not just changes to the amount of data stakeholders have access to. Specifically, training for districts will segue from *accessing* to *analyzing* data. CCI staff will work with districts to learn how to understand their individual students and subgroups of students and the relationships between that knowledge and aspects of the system, such as professional development opportunities, organizational structures within schools, and reform goals. Using a combination of in-person and virtual training modules and ongoing coaching, CCI staff will help districts to make meaning of the data collected in the SLDS, as well as local data they have and would like to collect. This includes understanding how to collect and analyze varying types of student performance data and data on teacher practice. (In Section (D) we discuss how to support districts as they transition from creating knowledge about students and education systems, toward actually changing instruction, school climate, and organizational structures. The latter move requires deep knowledge of teaching and learning, systems change, and adaptive leadership.) The CCI also will provide professional development to stakeholders so they can effectively analyze the Teacher Quality Partnership portfolio artifacts.

All training and professional development will follow the Iowa Professional Development Model. Through the CCI, Iowa will develop the capacity to scale-up best practices and research-based activities statewide by the end of the fourth year of our Race to the Top program.

All LEAs agreed to share with the state lessons learned on implementation of their instructional improvement programs, as stated in Agreement 7 of the LEA MOU. In addition, the CCI will track the effectiveness of their professional development efforts through focus group interviews and surveys of district users. The CCI also will commission an external evaluation of district use of data and CCI support. Toward that end, in the design phase, additional baseline data will be collected in order to track progress on our goal that the number of districts actively analyzing data and considering implications for policy and practice will increase by 10 percent in 2010-2011; 30 percent in 2011-2013; and 50 percent in 2013–2014.

(C)(3)(iii) Make data available and accessible to researchers

It is essential to evaluate Iowa's transformation to a competency-based system by providing researchers access to the data platforms outlined above so they can review trends, pinpoint areas needed for improvement, and highlight best practices. Thus, the IDE is committed to making data available and accessible to researchers, and to ensuring that standards of privacy and security are maintained in the process. As mentioned above, the IDE recently trained a limited number of state and district staff on the use of EdInsight, and has developed tiered access protocols that give access to various levels of data based on security clearance and knowledge of data use. This security model will be enhanced in order to reach education stakeholders across the spectrum of the system, which will include researchers. The IDE currently works with researchers from The University of Iowa and Iowa State University in providing access to educational data in order to provide program evaluation.

The EdInsight project Steering and Data Governance committees currently include representation from source system owners including the Board of Regents and Regent universities. A subcommittee will be formed in order to review requests for system access for researchers. In the design year, the CCI also will work with the REL Midwest, Iowa's Regional Educational Laboratory, to enhance the existing protocols for researchers as well as building training for handling access. The developed protocols will ensure student privacy and security are maintained.

Timeline and Responsible Parties

See following page for timeline for Section (C)(3).

Timelines and Responsible Parties

ACTIVITIES	(C) (3) DATA SYSTEMS TIMELINE												RESPONSIBLE PARTIES
	FY 2010			2011	2012	2013	2014	2015					
Provide PD for accessing EdInsight													CCI
Provide PD for analyzing data from EdInsight													CCI
Track effectiveness of PD efforts through focus groups and surveys													CCI
Develop protocols for sharing data, ensuring privacy and security													CCI, REL Midwest
Make data available and accessible to researchers													CCI

(D) Great Teachers and Leaders (138 total points)

(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals (21 points)

The extent to which the State has—

- (i) Legal, statutory, or regulatory provisions that allow alternative routes to certification (as defined in this notice) for teachers and principals, particularly routes that allow for providers in addition to institutions of higher education;
- (ii) Alternative routes to certification (as defined in this notice) that are in use; and
- (iii) A process for monitoring, evaluating, and identifying areas of teacher and principal shortage and for preparing teachers and principals to fill these areas of shortage.

In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Evidence for (D)(1)(i), regarding alternative routes to certification for both teachers and principals:

A description of the State's applicable laws, statutes, regulations, or other relevant legal documents, including information on the elements of the State's alternative routes (as described in the alternative route to certification definition in this notice).

Evidence for (D)(1)(ii), regarding alternative routes to certification for both teachers and principals:

- A list of the alternative certification programs operating in the State under the State's alternative routes to certification (as defined in this notice), and for each:
- The elements of the program (as described in the alternative routes to certification definition in this notice).
- The number of teachers and principals that successfully completed each program in the previous academic year.
- The total number of teachers and principals certified statewide in the previous academic year.

Recommended maximum response length: Two pages

State Reform Conditions Criteria

(D)(1)(i) The extent to which the State has—legal, statutory, or regulatory provisions that allow alternative routes to certification (as defined in this notice) for teachers and principals, particularly routes that allow for providers in addition to institutions of higher

Authority for Alternative Routes to Certification

Iowa recognizes the value of providing alternative routes to certification for teachers and principals. Iowa Code authorizes the State Board of Educational Examiners to make rules for the licensure of principals and teachers (IC 272.2 see attachment (D)(1)–1). This expressly includes rules for alternative routes to certification/licensure (IC 272.2(13), see attachment (D)(1)–1).

Principals

A private partnership comprised of the Northwest Area Education Agency, Prairie Lakes Area Education Agency, and the School Administrators of Iowa created the Northwest Iowa Principal Leadership Academy (NW IPLA)—a comprehensive program offered for preK–12 principal certification, which is approved by the State Board of Education. The program has been so successful that, in response to demand, the NW IPLA expanded to Northeast Iowa in January 2010.

NW IPLA meets all five of the criteria in the definition of alternative routes to certification. Specifically, the program meets criteria (a)–(e):

(a) NW IPLA is not limited to institutions of higher education (IHEs), but is a collaborative principal training program offered by a partnership of two area education agencies (AEAs) and a professional organization.

(b) NW IPLA is selective in that only those teachers with master’s degrees in education and a minimum of four years of successful teaching are eligible for the program.

(c) NW IPLA principals spend 24 months in their setting developing the problem-based themes that require action research, attending seminars conducted by expert practitioners, and engaging in problem-solving and reflection. One of the many strengths of NW IPLA is that seminar instructors and mentors are well-connected and highly-knowledgeable practicing professionals. One of the planned strengths of the program is to use NW IPLA graduates as mentors as they become more knowledgeable and expert in the program requirements and trained in research and best practices. In the end, program participants accumulate more than 400 hours of field-based experience.

(d) NW IPLA significantly limits the amount of coursework required. The program meets all the requirements of the Iowa Code, but none of the requirements is accomplished in isolated courses. Instead, the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed by administrators, as defined by the Iowa Standards for School Leaders, are woven into six project-based learning themes.

(e) NW IPLA results in the same level of certification as those who go through traditional routes to principal certification. Even after cohort members complete the program requirements and meet licensure requirements, they continue to receive the support of the seminar instructors and mentors and are expected to continuously assess and monitor their own progress as well as submit a rubric and reflective journal as an acting supervisor/administrator.

Teachers

The State Board of Educational Examiners created rules for alternative routes to certification/licensure for teachers in grades seven through 12 called Teacher Intern Programs (Iowa Administrative Code (IAC) 282—13.9(272), see attachment (D)(1)–2). The Teacher Intern Programs have not yet expanded below grade seven because Iowa currently has a surplus of teachers in the lower grades.

The State Board of Education created rigorous standards for the programs (IAC 281—77 (282), see attachment (D)(1)–3). Teacher Intern Programs clearly meet four of five of the criteria included in the definition of alternative routes to certification on page seven of the application. Specifically, the programs meet criteria (b)–(e):

(b) Teacher Intern Programs are highly selective. Interns must hold a baccalaureate degree with a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.5 (on a 4.0 scale) from a regionally accredited institution, meet the requirements of at least one of the State Board of Educational Examiners' secondary teaching endorsements, possess a minimum of three years of post-baccalaureate work experience, and meet rigorous screening criteria (interns are screened, interviewed, and selected by a teacher intern committee).

(c) Teacher Intern Programs provide supervised, school-based experiences, and ongoing supports such as effective mentoring and coaching. Specifically, they require at least 50 contact hours of field experience with students and a one-year internship during which the intern serves as the teacher of record, participates in Iowa's highly-rated mentoring and induction program, and receives coaching, mentoring, and continuous feedback from the assigned mentor teacher.

(d) Teacher Intern Programs significantly limit the amount of coursework required. Interns must complete 12 semester hours of introductory content prior to beginning the internship, four semester hours of seminar during the internship, and 12 semester hours of concluding content.

(e) Teacher Intern Programs result in the same level of certification as traditional preparation programs. Interns who successfully meet the requirements are eligible for an initial license.

Teacher Intern Programs are limited to four-year colleges and universities, and programs approved include non-traditional institutions, such as Kaplan University and Maharishi University of Management.

The Board of Educational Examiners recently approved the Iowa Portfolio Review and Evaluation Process (IPREP) (see attachment (D)(1)–4). IPREP allows for better review of applications from the rapidly increasing pool of teacher candidates who have completed non-transcribed programs from out-of-state. The process allows these candidates to submit portfolio proof that they have met Iowa’s professional education core and content area work within their program.

Additionally, Iowa participates in the federal Troops to Teachers program, and many of the “traditional” preparation programs offer such alternatives as: post-baccalaureate programs, similar to the Teacher Intern Program with a student teaching component rather than the internship; evening/weekend course options for working adults; satellite programs housed at the institution's own satellite facilities, through the Iowa Communications Network (ICN) or at community colleges; and endorsement courses offered at AEAs. All of these options fulfill three of the five criteria, (b), (c) and (e), and accommodate career-changing adults.

(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals
The extent to which the State has—
(ii) Alternative routes to certification (as defined in this notice) that are in use;

Alternative Routes in Use

Iowa’s alternative routes to certification for aspiring principals and teachers are in use and expanding. Additionally, they are establishing a reputation as high-quality options, ensuring continued expansion.

Principals

NW IPLA is in use in the Northwest region of the state. The program's fourth cohort of 15 students completed the program in December 2008. The program's fifth cohort of 13 students completed the program in December 2009. Twelve NW IPLA students were recommended for licensure in 2008 and 13 were recommended in 2009.

As noted above, NW IPLA recently expanded to Northeast Iowa to meet demand. A cohort of 20 students began in January 2010, and we expect increased demand as the program becomes better known across the state as a high quality option for principal certification.

Teachers

Teacher Intern Programs have been approved by the State Board of Education at: (1) Kaplan University; (2) Morningside College; (3) Maharishi University of Management; and (4) the Iowa public or Regents universities (Iowa State University, The University of Iowa, and The University of Northern Iowa). Iowa utilized its federal Teacher Quality Enhancement grant under Title II to fund the development of Morningside, Maharishi, the Iowa Regents, and Simpson College. As a strategy to deal with shortages, programs include online learning components, as discussed in Section (A). Simpson College's program is still in development and has not yet been submitted to the State Board of Education for approval.

Twenty-one students completed Kaplan University's Teacher Intern Program in 2007–2008. As of April 2009, Kaplan reported 49 students in the program. The program is growing; five graduates were recommended for Iowa licensure in 2006–2007, and 21 were recommended for licensure in 2007–2008. In the 2008–2009, Kaplan University graduated nine students in the online master's degree program and six students in the online intern program.

Morningside College's program began September 2009 and currently enrolls 12 students. Maharishi University's program began in late January 2010 and has four students. The Regents' program will begin September 2010, and the number of requests for information/indications of interest suggests significant enrollment.

(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals (21 points)

The extent to which the State has—

(iii) A process for monitoring, evaluating, and identifying areas of teacher and principal shortage and for preparing teachers and principals to fill these areas of shortage.

Monitoring, Designating, and Filling Shortages

Iowa produces more teachers and principals than it has positions available. Thus, Iowa has not experienced the overall shortages that have prompted some states to sacrifice quality for quantity and speed. However, Iowa has experienced shortages in particular areas (e.g., the STEM fields, special education, English as a Second Language (ESL)) and in some of the state's rural areas.

The Iowa Department of Education (IDE) carefully monitors educator supply and demand by teaching level, endorsement, and geographic area. Data used to calculate the shortages include the number of Class B endorsements, the number and frequency of job postings (including postings on *Teach Iowa*, IDE's statewide teacher recruitment website), and the number of projected graduates in each area. The IDE designates and publishes teacher and principal shortage areas annually (see attachment (D)(1)–5 for a list of shortage areas) and tracks them over time in order to inform policy decisions.

Teachers in shortage areas may be eligible for student loan forgiveness through both state and federal programs, as further discussed in Section (D)(3). Additionally, the Iowa legislature provided market factor incentives to provide funding for districts to recruit teachers and principals for shortage areas.

As discussed in Section (A), as a predominantly rural state, Iowa has been engaged in distance learning for both educators and students for decades—since at least the 1980s—allowing Iowa to provide quality learning opportunities anytime and anywhere. This has helped Iowa address teacher shortages, particularly in hard to fill regions or subject areas, and provided a wider variety of courses for all students, allowing schools to provide courses or advanced subjects that otherwise would not be available. Since 2004, the IDE has funded an initiative called Iowa Learning Online (ILO). Race to the Top will allow the IDE to continue funding course development and the cost of delivery and will allow the CCI for Competency-Based Education to explore additional methods of online delivery. The IDE recognizes that retention is critical to educator effectiveness, and it is especially critical in shortage areas. The IDE has

consistently completed a recruitment and retention survey to gather data such as who is leaving the field and why, as well as how many candidates are in the pipeline, in order to inform policies and practices to encourage more high-quality educator applicants across the board and especially in shortage areas. Additionally, the IDE continues to work to strengthen opportunities and supports (including working conditions) for teachers and administrators. For example, the IDE uses School Administration Managers (SAMs) to free high school administrators from certain managerial duties and to help administrators focus more time on instructional leadership—an important strategy for retaining high school principals and increasing student achievement. More information on the SAMs program is provided in Section (E).

While not designated a “shortage area,” the IDE seeks to increase the number of teachers and administrators of color in its schools to better reflect the increasingly diverse student body. A number of Iowa’s teacher and administrator preparation programs have instituted programs to attract and support minority candidates. For example, in 2008 the University of Northern Iowa—the largest administrator preparation program in the state—created the Minorities in the Leadership of Education (MILE) program to increase the number of administrators of color in the state. Since its inception, the program has more than doubled minority enrollment in the administrator preparation program, and its first cohort of students graduated in May 2010. See (D)(3) for further discussion of plans to increase the number of teachers and administrators of color in Iowa’s schools.

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

The extent to which the State, in collaboration with its participating LEAs (as defined in this notice), has a high-quality plan and ambitious yet achievable annual targets to ensure that participating LEAs (as defined in this notice)—

- (i) Establish clear approaches to measuring student growth (as defined in this notice) and measure it for each individual student; (5 points)
- (ii) Design and implement rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation systems for teachers and principals that (a) differentiate effectiveness using multiple rating categories that take into account data on student growth (as defined in this notice) as a significant factor, and (b) are designed and developed with teacher and principal involvement; (15 points)
- (iii) Conduct annual evaluations of teachers and principals that include timely and constructive feedback; as part of such evaluations, provide teachers and principals with data on student growth for their students, classes, and schools; (10 points) and
- (iv) Use these evaluations, at a minimum, to inform decisions regarding— (28 points)

- (a) Developing teachers and principals, including by providing relevant coaching, induction support, and/or professional development;
- (b) Compensating, promoting, and retaining teachers and principals, including by providing opportunities for highly effective teachers and principals (both as defined in this notice) to obtain additional compensation and be given additional responsibilities;
- (c) Whether to grant tenure and/or full certification (where applicable) to teachers and principals using rigorous standards and streamlined, transparent, and fair procedures; and
- (d) Removing ineffective tenured and untenured teachers and principals after they have had ample opportunities to improve, and ensuring that such decisions are made using rigorous standards and streamlined, transparent, and fair procedures.

The State shall provide its detailed plan for this criterion in the text box below. The plan should include, at a minimum, the goals, activities, timelines, and responsible parties (see Reform Plan Criteria elements in Application Instructions or Section XII, Application Requirements (e), for further detail). Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers must be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Recommended maximum response length: Ten pages

State Reform Plan

(D)(2)(i) The extent to which the State, in collaboration with its participating LEAs (as defined in this notice), has a high-quality plan and ambitious yet achievable annual targets to ensure that participating LEAs establish clear approaches to measuring student growth and measure it for each individual student;

Goal

- The Center for Collaborative Inquiry (CCI) for Balanced Assessment will coordinate a collaborative effort to develop additional measures of student achievement and growth that are comparable across classrooms.

Activities

The IDE currently has an approved measure of student growth for Annual Yearly Progress purposes under Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), using data from the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) and the Iowa Tests of Educational Development (ITED). Because

Iowa has a unique student identifier, we are able to track individual student growth on the state’s summative exams. Teachers and administrators have access to data on individual student growth. As discussed in Section (B), the Center for Collaborative Inquiry for Balanced Assessment will work to develop additional measures of student achievement and growth across the Common Core Standards and the essential concepts and skills in the Iowa Core. These measures will be comparable across classrooms. See Section (B) for more details on how we will achieve our assessment goals.

Timeline and Responsible Parties

The development of multiple authentic measures of student achievement and growth is an activity that must be carefully and thoughtfully executed. Thus, while we will begin the research and development work immediately, we anticipate that development and scale-up will take the full grant period, with assessments coming online periodically. See Section (B)(3) for a more detailed timeline and responsible parties.

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

The extent to which the State, in collaboration with its participating LEAs (as defined in this notice), has a high-quality plan and ambitious yet achievable annual targets to ensure that participating LEAs (as defined in this notice)—

(ii) Design and implement rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation systems for teachers and principals that (a) differentiate effectiveness using multiple rating categories that take into account data on student growth (as defined in this notice) as a significant factor, and (b) are designed and developed with teacher and principal involvement (15 points);

Essential Design Elements of a High-Quality Evaluation System

The IDE takes a systems approach to the design of its educator evaluation system; the entire system should be organized around student learning and is responsible for student achievement and growth. We recognize that evaluation must support and be supported by standards and assessment, data systems, and intensive school supports in order for Iowa students, educators, and other vital education stakeholders to work together to achieve classroom, school, district, and state goals. Thus, while the discussion in Section (D)(2) focuses on the purposes, policies, practices, and processes of educator evaluation, this section should be read in support of and as

supported by the priority areas. Further, this section should be read in tandem with Section (D)(5), which describes more fully how educator development supports and is supported by educator evaluation.

The Purposes of Educator Evaluation

In the last decade, we have enjoyed broad stakeholder support for strengthening our educator evaluation system, due in large part to the involvement of educators and other stakeholders in designing the system as well as to our beliefs about the purposes of evaluation. Our commitment to inclusion as well as our promise to align our educator evaluation system with our beliefs guarantees we will continue to enjoy broad support as we move to further strengthen our educator evaluation system to serve a transformed competency-based system of education.

We believe that an educator evaluation system should be predicated on a spirit of identifying opportunities for educator growth and support, not just on finding evidence of shortcomings. It should serve two primary purposes. First, it should *improve the overall effectiveness of educators* by ascertaining their individual and collective strengths and weaknesses; distinguish highly effective educators for leadership roles including coaching and mentoring; and identify ineffective educators for remediation. Second, it should *allow for credible and fair employment decisions*, including but not limited to rehiring, dismissal, career paths, and tenure.

To serve these two primary purposes, an evaluation system should be rigorous, transparent, fair, and useful. It should be aligned to and support high standards for professional practice; include performance standards appropriate for the different stages in an educator's career; incorporate a variety of evaluation techniques and measures; and be understandable to educators. It should be context-specific, taking into account teaching and learning conditions, and it should be useful not only to evaluators but to educators and other stakeholders invested in educator effectiveness. Further, evaluation should be conducted only by trained evaluators who understand the purposes as well as the policies, practices, and processes for evaluating the complex and highly-skilled work of educators.

Iowa's Theory of Action for Educator Evaluation

Based on the above, the IDE has articulated its theory of action for educator evaluation. This theory of action is described in Table D–1 below.

Table D–1. Iowa’s Theory of Action for Educator Evaluation

IF...	THEN...
... we provide the necessary systems supports (e.g. quality professional development) to those we lead that enable and expect educator growth	... teacher/principal expertise will improve and student learning will increase
... we use data to guide our evaluations of our progress towards learning goals	
... those who evaluate others possess high quality coaching and evaluation skills; and there is a coherent understanding of what robust learning experiences look like	
... there is a clearly articulated set of learner outcomes with supportive formative and summative assessments	
... there is a culture of continuous learning	

This theory of action ensures that strengthening IDE’s educator evaluation system will be an inclusive process that will align with IDE beliefs and will serve the purposes of evaluation as an important piece of a transformed, competency-based system.

Iowa’s Comprehensive Educator Evaluation System

The IDE’s educator evaluation system is rigorous, fair, transparent, and useful. By state law, evaluations must be conducted annually, and they must support and be supported by high standards for professional practice. Performance standards are appropriate at different levels of the system (e.g., district, AEA) as well as at different stages in an educator’s career (e.g., beginning, career, master). Evaluators are required to utilize a variety of methods (e.g., student achievement, observation, coaching) in conducting evaluation. Further, all evaluators are required to complete intensive training (two levels provided by Iowa’s network of AEAs) and obtain a skill-based endorsement from the Board of Educational Examiners (see attachment (D)(2)–1). Evaluators must be able to assess academic rigor and analyze effectiveness as well as develop individualized professional development and intensive assistance plans. They must develop these plans in collaboration with the educator and the plans must be informed by student

achievement data and designed to assist the educator in achieving not only individual goals but school and district goals as well.

Teachers

Iowa Code requires that all teachers be evaluated against, at a minimum, the Iowa Teaching Standards (IC 284, see attachment (D)(2)–2). These eight evidence-based teaching standards are further defined by a set of criteria that articulate the knowledge and skills identified as representing effective teaching. The purpose of the standards and criteria is to provide districts with a consistent representation of the complexities and the possibilities of effective practice. The first standard requires the educator to demonstrate ability to enhance academic performance and support school and student achievement goals. The evaluation process directs evaluators to consider multiple measures of student achievement and growth. Evaluation includes observation as well as analysis of student achievement data, ongoing coaching and feedback, modeling (including teachers modeling for their colleagues), teacher work samples, student artifacts, and other evidence of educator effectiveness.

Beginning teachers must demonstrate competence on the standards within two years in order to be eligible for a standard license. While districts may grant one additional induction year, failure to demonstrate competence within the allotted time period disqualifies that teacher from ever obtaining a license in Iowa. Career teachers with a standard license must consistently demonstrate competence on the standards, and teachers who fail to do so must be placed on an intensive assistance plan. A teacher who fails to meet the goals of an intensive assistance plan must be dismissed.

In order to ensure consistency across the state, model teacher evaluation instruments have been developed and disseminated. Further, the evaluator training and licensure ensures that all evaluators utilize consistent measures and develop high-quality individualized professional development and intensive assistance plans specifically designed to assist the educator in achieving classroom, school, district, and state goals.

Principals

Iowa's evaluation system for principals was developed from input by more than 200 different administrators. Iowa Code requires all administrators to be evaluated against, at a minimum, the

Iowa Standards for School Leaders (ISSL) (IC 284A, see attachment (D)(2)–3). The standards are further defined by a set of criteria that represent a set of knowledge and skills that reflects the best evidence available regarding effective leadership for Iowa schools (IAC 281–83.10(284), see attachment (D)(2)–3). Iowa’s work with the Wallace Foundation and a cadre of national experts ensures that Iowa’s standards and criteria are among the best in the nation.

Administrators must, in collaboration with others, use appropriate data to establish rigorous, concrete goals using the context of student achievement and instructional programs. The evaluation process then mirrors that of teachers as described above.

In order to ensure consistency across the state, model administrator evaluation instruments have been developed and disseminated. Further, evaluator training and endorsement ensures that all evaluators utilize consistent measures and develop high-quality individualized professional development and intensive assistance plans specifically designed to assist administrators in achieving school, district, and state goals.

Goals

While Iowa Code already has established that student achievement and growth be used as a factor in required teacher, principal, and superintendent evaluations, we have established additional goals to strengthen these provisions.

- We will work with a broad-based group of stakeholders to identify and articulate the attributes of “effective” and “highly effective” teachers and administrators.
- We will incorporate multiple, authentic measures of student achievement and student growth as a “significant factor” in the evaluation of teachers and administrators.
- We will expand our evaluator training to include a third level focused on rigor.

Activities

The Center for Collaborative Inquiry for Educator Evaluation and Support

The Center for Collaborative Inquiry for Educator Evaluation and Support will use the first year of Race to the Top to design a high quality research and development (R&D) and implementation plan, as well as a plan for building the capacity of evaluators to utilize the system. During this time, the CCI will be comprised of three existing staff at IDE, a new project

manager, and one staff person in each of the two partnering AEAs. These staff will pull together district representatives, the state's colleges and universities, statewide education associations (particularly the Iowa State Education Association, the Iowa Association of School Boards, and School Administrators of Iowa), and administrators and teachers.

In year two and for the duration of the Race to the Top, four staff of CCI will be housed at the IDE, while two AEAs each will have two staff. As a whole, this team must know the purposes and design elements of a comprehensive evaluation system. Some will have deeper expertise in effective teaching and leading; others will know how to utilize the Iowa Professional Development Model to provide growth opportunities and supports within the CCI and among the participating districts; and still others will be competent leadership coaches, understanding both implementation science and systems change. Combined, this team will ensure that the R&D effort will further strengthen IDE's educator evaluation system.

Identify and Articulate Characteristics of Effective and Highly Effective Teachers and Administrators

Iowa is working with teachers, administrators, their statewide associations, and IHEs to identify characteristics of effective and highly effective teachers and administrators. We have engaged in extensive review of the literature on effective teaching and leading; solicited feedback and work samples from educators; and are in the process of developing a matrix of the characteristics of effective teaching directly and explicitly tied to Iowa's professional standards. The same work is ongoing for administrators; leadership in Iowa has benefitted from the state's long-standing partnership with the Wallace Foundation as well as consultation with a cadre of national experts on leadership including Michael Fullan and Richard Elmore. *In this way, Iowa is leading the nation in articulating the attributes and characteristics of effective teaching and leading, including what it looks like in practice.*

We will continue to work with stakeholders to match the research-based characteristics of effective and highly effective educators to measures that are valid and reliable and can be used in evaluation. The IDE's work will benefit other states attempting to tie policy to practice in ways that will improve teaching and learning.

Incorporate Multiple Measures of Student Achievement and Growth as a “Significant Factor”

We recognize that we *could* use our current statewide assessment as the sole measure of student achievement and growth, and weight that single measure heavily in educator evaluation—perhaps even assigning it a percentage. However, our long history of statewide assessment has taught us that a single measure on a single test administered just one time per year in just a handful of subjects is neither a sufficient nor a fair measure of educator effectiveness. Thus, we are committed to developing multiple, authentic measures of student achievement and growth in order to have such measures as “significant factors” in educator evaluation.

We also recognize the complexities of taking such a system to scale. For example, the system must be able to deal with individual educators who may be effective in some areas and not in others (e.g., an elementary teacher whose students are attaining expected growth in mathematics but not in reading; a principal whose school is excelling in reading but not in mathematics; a superintendent whose elementary and middle schools are excellent but whose high schools are failing to meet district and state standards). Likewise, in order to be applicable for all educators, the system must be able to deal with areas that have not traditionally been tested (e.g., physical education, music, art instruction). With the Iowa Core, our commitment to a complete education, and our transformation toward a competency-based system, these complexities are not fatal. However, they do require us to carefully and thoughtfully design a system that proactively accounts for, rather than ignores or reacts to, these and other complexities.

The State Board of Education has noticed rules to indicate educator evaluation systems will consider multiple forms of evidence of student learning and growth. While Iowa law already requires consideration of student achievement and growth as a factor in evaluation, Iowa will work with education stakeholders, including the Iowa State Education Association and the School Administrators of Iowa; higher education; business partners; and educators themselves to develop specific policies, practices, and processes to ensure that student achievement and growth is a “significant factor” in evaluation.

Refine and Expand Evaluator Training

The IDE will continue to refine and expand evaluator training; such training will be essential in ensuring that the evaluation system is rigorous, fair, transparent and useful. The IDE will develop multiple formats for the delivery of professional learning content, including the first two levels of evaluator training. Delivery may include face-to-face, online, or hybrid formats for instruction. Additionally, the IDE will expand evaluator training to include a third level focused specifically on increasing rigor.

Timeline and Responsible Parties

The timeline and responsible parties for Section (D)(2)(ii) is located on page D–26.

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

The extent to which the State, in collaboration with its participating LEAs (as defined in this notice), has a high-quality plan and ambitious yet achievable annual targets to ensure that participating LEAs (as defined in this notice)—

(iii) Conduct annual evaluations that include timely and constructive feedback; as part of such evaluations, provide teachers and principals with data on student growth for their students, classes, and schools (10 points);

Annual Evaluations, Timely Feedback, and Data

The IDE believes that, to serve the purposes of evaluation described in Section (D)(2)(ii), two types of evaluation must be included: formative and summative. Formative evaluation allows a trained evaluator to determine the extent to which professional standards have been met, to identify areas of strength and weakness, and to a professional development plan specifically designed to assist the educator in achieving student, classroom, school and district goals. Summative evaluation allows a trained evaluator to fulfill these same roles as well as to recommend employment decisions such as promotion, career path, compensation, intensive assistance, and dismissal. To ensure due process, formative evaluation should always precede and inform summative evaluation.

Teachers

Iowa Code requires teachers be evaluated annually (see attachment (D)(2)–2). Formative evaluation of career teachers is conducted in years one and two of the evaluation cycle and is intended to provide feedback on practice and to identify opportunities for growth and support. Summative evaluation of career teachers is conducted in the third year of the cycle and is used to identify opportunities for growth and support as well as to make employment decisions. The evaluation process includes classroom observation, a review of the teacher’s progress on the Iowa teaching standards (and any district-defined standards and criteria), a review of the implementation of the teacher’s individual professional development plan, and supporting documentation from other evaluators, teachers, parents, and students. As noted above, the first standard is the use of student achievement data to improve student learning. Thus, student achievement is a factor in the evaluation. Together, the teacher and evaluator consider and analyze student achievement data and use that data to develop an individual teacher professional development plan.

The purpose of the plan is to promote individual and group professional development. The plan must be based, at a minimum, on the needs of the teacher, the Iowa teaching standards, and the student achievement goals of the school and district as outlined in the comprehensive school improvement plan. The individual plan must include goals for the individual that are beyond those required under the school’s professional development plan.

The teacher's evaluator must meet at least annually with the teacher. The purpose of the meeting is to review the teacher's progress in meeting the goals in the plan; to review collaborative work with other staff on student achievement goals; and to modify, as necessary, the teacher's individual plan to reflect individual needs as well as the needs of the school and district.

Beginning teachers are those who hold an initial, Class A, exchange, or intern license. Beginning teachers must complete a formal mentoring and induction program that requires a summative evaluation after the second year, at which time the district can recommend the teacher for standard licensure. A district may (but is not required to) grant an additional year of induction and mentoring to a beginning teacher if he/she has not demonstrated competence. However, if a beginning teacher is not able to demonstrate competence after the third year, the teacher will never be able to obtain a standard Iowa teacher license.

Principals

The law also requires administrators be evaluated annually. Principals who assume a new administrative position will have a summative evaluation following their first year in the new position. The summative evaluation requires documentation of competence on the six Iowa Standards for School Leaders (ISSL), meeting district expectations drawn from the district's Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP) and building improvement plan (which are based on student achievement goals), Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP) attainment, and other supporting documentation. Thereafter, the law requires annual formative evaluation based on the principal's Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP).

Recently, the IDE created a new, required evaluator performance review course designed specifically for training administrators who evaluate principals. The course is intensive and skill-based and was designed to focus directly on coaching and evaluation skills that link directly to student growth measures (e.g. root cause analysis, analyzing rigor in the classroom, working with individual professional development plans that result in increased student learning, creating a culture of fierce conversations, etc.).

Goals

To achieve our goals in each priority area, we have several goals for our work to ensure that districts provide stakeholders with timely and constructive feedback and provide educators with data on student growth:

- Participating districts will provide educators with timely and constructive feedback specifically designed to improve practice. In addition to the information required by law, districts will utilize existing tools as well as new tools developed by the CCI for Educator Evaluation and Support in collaboration with a broad range of stakeholders.
- The IDE will make data on additional student growth available to districts as it is developed and collected and will require districts to provide such data to educators as part of their annual evaluations.

Activities

Timely and Constructive Feedback

The IDE will provide teachers and administrators with an Innovation Configuration Map of the characteristics of effective teaching and leading. The Innovation Configuration Map (ICM) will be used to facilitate teacher dialogue about classroom practices as administrators and teachers consider videos of instruction and as they observe classroom teaching. This type of observation is intended to be part of a coaching process to build skills. Additionally, administrators will learn about specific teaching skills and behaviors that are critical to improving student achievement and growth. Having deep conceptual knowledge about what effective teaching looks like will enhance instruction as well as administrators' abilities to conduct quality evaluations and provide meaningful feedback. Combining increased skills in observing pedagogy with alignment processes, where teachers and administrators study the degree to which essential concepts and skills are enacted in classrooms, will advance the whole of the professional development and growth system, including the evaluation system.

Data on Growth

In addition to the ICM, the IDE will require districts to provide educators with data on student growth. This data will be available to each district through the IDE's robust and accessible data platforms.

Center for Collaborative Inquiry for Educator Evaluation and Support

The CCI for Educator Evaluation and Support will invite stakeholders, including practitioners, to refine existing tools like the ICM and to develop new tools to ensure feedback is timely and constructive.

Timeline and Responsible Parties

The timeline and responsible parties for Section (D)(2)(iii) is located on page D-26.

(D)(2)(iv) Use these evaluations, at a minimum, to inform decisions regarding— (28 points)

- (a) Developing teachers and principals, including by providing relevant coaching, induction support, and/or professional development;**
- (b) Compensating, promoting, and retaining teachers and principals, including by providing opportunities for highly effective teachers and principals (both as defined in this notice) to obtain additional compensation and be given additional responsibilities;**
- (c) Whether to grant tenure and/or full certification (where applicable) to teachers and principals using rigorous standards and streamlined, transparent, and fair procedures; and**
- (d) Removing ineffective tenured and untenured teachers and principals after they have had ample opportunities to improve, and ensuring that such decisions are made using rigorous standards and streamlined, transparent, and fair procedures.**

The IDE’s educator evaluation system is specifically designed to inform decision-making at every level, from certification/licensure at the state level to compensation, promotion, retention/removal at the district level, to professional development at all levels. The IDE’s plan addresses each of these levels. Thus, the IDE’s goals, activities, and responsible parties, and timeline for (D)(2)(iv)(a)–(d) are included after (D)(2)(iv)(d) below.

Use of Evaluations to Inform Decisions Regarding Developing Teachers and Principals

Teacher and principal evaluations are specifically designed to inform decisions regarding the professional development of teachers and principals. The formative evaluations conducted in years one and two of the evaluation cycle allow evaluators to provide feedback to assist teachers and principals in identifying areas where they would benefit from coaching, support, and professional development. The summative evaluation conducted in year three also is intended to inform employment decisions.

As discussed in Sections (D)(2)(ii)–(iii) above, evaluations are directly and explicitly linked to teacher and administrator professional development plans and assist educators in achieving individual as well as district goals. Further, evaluation should be and, in Iowa, *actually is* a form of development. The entire process, including observation, coaching, providing feedback, and analyzing data goes toward the development of both the evaluated and the evaluator. The IDE plans to continue to strengthen this system of evaluation and development. See Section (D)(2)(iv)(d) below for goals, activities, and responsible parties, and a detailed timeline.

Use of Evaluation to Inform Decisions Regarding Compensating, Promoting, and Retaining Teachers and Principals

As discussed in Section (A)(3), Iowa has been leading the nation in experimenting with alternative compensation models. The Student Achievement and Teacher Quality Act of 2001 increased teacher salaries across the state of Iowa and outlined a career-ladder program to pay teachers higher salaries for taking on additional professional roles and responsibilities. Team-Based Variable Pay (TBVP) was an important piece of this legislation intended to reward individual attendance centers for improvement in student achievement. In TBVP, local school staff members set student achievement goals, decide on pay distribution, help students meet the goals, and are rewarded for student achievement of the goals.

A pilot program was established to give Iowa school districts the opportunity to explore and demonstrate successful methods to implement team-based variable pay. TBVP was first piloted by 18 schools in 10 districts during the 2001–2002 school year. During the 2003–2004 school year, ten schools in six districts participated. TBVP was last funded during the 2004–2005 school year. At that time nine schools in six districts participated.

Most recently, in 2006, the Iowa General Assembly created a Teacher Pay-for-Performance Commission to design and implement a pay-for-performance program and provide a study relating to teacher and staff compensation structures containing pay-for-performance components. Three school districts took part in the Pay-for-Performance and Career-Ladder pilots starting in October 2007. Each district adopted a different design: a career-ladder program in one, a pay-for-performance program in the second, and a hybrid program with both career-ladder and pay-for-performance components in the third.

The legislation required an external evaluation, which was completed by Learning Point Associates (LPA) in March 2010. Utilizing teacher and administrator surveys and case studies, LPA investigated the benefits and cost-effectiveness of the pilots, the strengths and weaknesses of the designs, and the feasibility of scaling up implementation. Primary benefits identified across the three pilots were teacher collaboration and a change in professional culture. Strengths noted by two districts in particular included improved district leadership and communication. Weaknesses in the design included not offering enough professional development and not offering the program to all teachers in the schools or district. LPA also noted the short duration

of the pilot as a limitation of the study. Regarding feasibility and scaling up, interviewees stressed the importance of stakeholder buy-in and the potential barrier of cost if plans for sustainability are not made up front.

The IDE will continue research and development on alternative compensation programs. See below for goals, activities, and responsible parties, and a detailed timeline.

Use of Evaluation to Inform Decisions Regarding Tenure and/or Certification

Iowa's licensure policy is comprehensive and already takes into account the multiple routes to certification. It also takes into account the career pathways of educators.

Teachers

As described above, beginning teachers must complete a formal mentoring and induction program that requires a comprehensive evaluation after the second year, at which time the district can recommend the teacher for standard licensure. A district may (but is not required to) grant an additional year of induction and mentoring to a beginning teacher if he/she has not demonstrated competence. Failure to demonstrate competency in the time allotted means that the teacher will never be able to obtain a standard Iowa teacher license. (The induction and mentoring process is described more fully in Section (D)(5).) A standard license may be issued to a beginning teacher only upon completion of the required induction and mentoring program. To allow for transition, a standard license may also be issued to a teacher who has three years of documented successful teaching experience in an Iowa non-public school or an out-of-state school.

A teacher may be issued a Master Educator's license if the teacher has a valid standard license, five years of successful teaching experience, and has completed a Master's degree in a recognized endorsement area or in a curriculum, effective teaching, or similar degree program with focus on school curriculum and instruction.

Iowa Code states that the first three consecutive years of a teacher's service in the same district are probationary (IC 279.19, see attachment (D)(2)–4). A board of directors may waive the probationary period for any teacher who previously served a probationary period in another school district, and the board may extend the probationary period for an additional year.

Principals

Beginning principals are those who hold an initial license and who have had a minimum of three years of successful teaching experience. Upon successful completion of a one-year mentoring and induction program, a principal may be issued a standard license.

Iowa Code states that the first two consecutive years of a principal's term are probationary (IC 279.24, see attachment (D)(2)–5). A board of directors may waive the probationary period for any administrator who previously has served a probationary period in another school district, and the board may extend the probationary period for an additional year.

Iowa plans to strengthen the connection among evaluation and certification/licensure. See Section (D)(2)(iv)(d) below for goals, activities, and responsibilities, and a detailed timeline.

Use of Evaluation to Inform Decisions Regarding Removing Ineffective Tenured and Untenured Teachers and Principals

Teachers

Currently, Iowa administrators and evaluators have the authority to place a teacher who fails to meet the IDE's rigorous teacher standards in intensive assistance. This can be done *at any time*. The evaluator works closely with the teacher in order to provide the support and opportunities the teacher needs to meet the teaching standards. The teacher must meet the goals outlined in the plan within one year (IC 284, see attachment (D)(2)–2). Where a teacher has been unable to improve despite remediation, he or she will be removed.

Principals

Districts may use the one-year intensive assistance option for principals who fail to meet the IDE's rigorous standards for school leaders. Districts have the option of providing that assistance internally or seeking external supports. Under-performing principals are given specific goals to attain through remediation. It is recommended that formative assessments be conducted to provide supports to the under-performing principal. The burden of proof of remediation is on the principal.

See below for goals, activities, and responsible parties, and a detailed timeline.

Goals

- The CCI for Educator Evaluation, in collaboration with the IDE, will engage in R&D on alternative compensation programs. The CCI will ensure a diverse group of districts pilot pay-for-performance, career ladder, and hybrid programs that include a variety of features.
- The CCI for Data Platforms will create data platforms and make available to districts data on student growth using new measures developed through the Race to the Top program, as well as other information relevant to educator evaluation and decision making. The IDE will track districts' use of the platforms in evaluation and decision making.

Activities

Alternative Compensation Programs

The districts that participated in alternative compensation program pilots had largely positive experiences and would like to continue their programs. Because there is still much to learn in order to maximize alternative compensation as a strategy for improving educator effectiveness and student achievement, Iowa will use its Race to the Top funds to continue this work. Our goals are to double the number of districts and schools in the pilot in order to learn more about what works across a variety of contexts, and to increase the duration of the pilot in order to overcome identified weaknesses in earlier pilots.

Toward that end, in year one, the Center for Collaborative Inquiry on Educator Evaluation and Support will invite six districts to design alternative compensation programs (e.g., career ladders, pay-for-performance) for implementation, building off what was learned in the previous pilot projects. This design year will include continued collaboration with our neighbors and colleagues in Minnesota, who have been actively studying their nationally-recognized Quality Compensation (QCOMP) program.

In years two and three, the districts will implement the designs and, in collaboration with the CCI and an external evaluator, will engage in ongoing evaluation and refinement of those programs. In engaging in this R&D effort, we will isolate program types or components that have a positive impact on instructional effectiveness and student outcomes. By year four, we will have new measures of student achievement and growth across the Common Core Standards

and the Iowa Core essential concepts and skills, so those measures will be incorporated into the pilot districts' ongoing work.

As with all of our work, we will take a systems approach. Thus, our collaborative inquiry, implementation, and evaluation of alternative compensation programs will be shared with the CCI network and will help to inform ongoing work in other priority areas, including educator evaluation, promotion, retention, and professional development.

Evaluation and Data-Driven Decision Making

The CCI for Data Platforms will create data platforms and make available to districts data on student growth as well as other information relevant to educator evaluation and decision-making. See Section (C) for a description of the data platforms. The IDE will ensure districts use the platforms in evaluation and decision making.

Evaluation and Removal

The CCI for Educator Evaluation will develop, in collaboration with the IDE, AEAs, IHEs, principal and superintendent associations, and practitioners, an intensive leadership clinic to be completed by administrators as part of an intensive assistance plan to be implemented prior to removal. The clinic will adapt for principals the instructional rounds model developed by the Wallace Foundation and in use in Iowa in the evaluation of teachers. It will focus professional development on practices that have been shown to lead to increased achievement overall and/or close achievement gaps. The clinic will include a rigorous self-assessment and interview process to assist in the level and type of remediation necessary to avoid removal.

Timeline and Responsible Parties

The timeline and responsible parties for Section (D)(2)(iv) is located on page D-26.

Timeline and Responsible Parties

ACTIVITIES	(D) (2) GREAT TEACHERS AND LEADERS TIMELINE							RESPONSIBLE PARTIES
	FY 2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015		
Establish Center for Collaborative Inquiry for Educator Evaluation and Support								IDE
Articulate attributes of “effective” and “highly effective” educators and administrators.								CCI
Beta-test multiple authentic measures of student achievement and student growth as a “significant factor” in the evaluation of teachers and administrators								CCI
Expand the test of the measures in evaluation								CCI
Implement state-wide the measures in evaluation								CCI
Expand evaluator training program to include multiple delivery formats and a third level of training on rigor								CCI
Provide educators with Innovation Configuration Map to facilitate practice and build skills.								CCI
Refine existing and develop new tools to ensure feedback is timely and constructive								CCI
Ensure all districts provide educators with data on student growth as provided by IDE data platforms								CCI
Conduct research and design RFP for participation in alternative compensation pilots								CCI
Implement alternative compensation pilots								CCI
Incorporate multiple authentic measures of student achievement and growth in the pilots								CCI
Evaluate pilot								CCI
Report results of pilot								CCI
Develop an leadership clinic for administrators on intensive assistance plan								CCI
Track districts’ use of the data platforms in evaluation decision-making								CCI for Responsive Data Platforms

Performance Measures		Actual Data: Baseline (Current school year or most recent)	End of SY 2010-2011	End of SY 2011-2012	End of SY 2012-2013	End of SY 2013-2014	End of SY 2013-2014
Notes: Data should be reported in a manner consistent with the definitions contained in this application package in Section II. Qualifying evaluation systems are those that meet the criteria described in (D)(2)(ii).							
Criteria	General goals to be provided at time of application:	Baseline data and annual targets					
(D)(2)(i)	Percentage of participating LEAs that measure student growth (as defined in this notice).	N/A* 0*	0*	10%*	20%*	100%*	
(D)(2)(ii)	Percentage of participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems for teachers.	N/A 0	0	10%	20%	100%	
(D)(2)(iii)	Percentage of participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems for principals.	N/A 0	0	10%	20%	100%	
(D)(2)(iv)	Percentage of participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems that are used to inform:						
(D)(2)(iv)(a)	Developing teachers and principals.	N/A	0	0	10%	20%	100%
(D)(2)(iv)(b)	Compensating teachers and principals. N/A		0	2.4%	2.4%	2.4%	100%
(D)(2)(iv)(b)	Promoting teachers and principals.	N/A	0	0	10%	20%	100%

(D)(2)(iv)(b)	Retaining effective teachers and principals.	N/A	0	0	10%	20%	100%
(D)(2)(iv)(c)	Granting tenure and/or full certification (where applicable) to teachers and principals.	N/A	0	0	10%	20%	100%
(D)(2)(iv)(d)	Removing ineffective tenured and untenured teachers and principals.	N/A	0	0	10%	20%	100%

* Although the IDE currently requires districts to engage in annual evaluation of teachers and principals, and though student achievement is one of the factors used in evaluation, we are not considering that the evaluation system “qualifies” under these definitions until we have multiple measures of student achievement and growth that allow us to make student achievement and growth a “significant” factor, and until we have developed agreed-upon definitions of and measures for “effective” and “highly effective” teachers and principals. New measures of student achievement and growth will be available for beta testing among a small number of districts in year three, after which they will be improved and available for wider testing in year four. We will provide Race to the Top grant subgrants to 20 districts in year three in order to engage intensively in the R&D effort; these 20 districts will be joined by other participating districts that want to be a part of the R&D effort whether or not they receive a subgrant. Thus, 10 percent of the participating districts will be involved in beta testing in year three. That percentage will expand to 20 percent in year four. By the end of the Race to the Top grant period, we will have in place valid and reliable measures of student achievement, definitions of educator effectiveness, and other components of an evaluation system that will be deemed “qualifying” under the Race to the Top guidelines. At that point, 100 percent of all of Iowa’s districts will participate.

General data to be provided at time of application:	
Total number of participating LEAs.	246

Total number of principals in participating LEAs.		785	
Total number of teachers in participating LEAs.		24,992	
[Optional: Enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data]			
Criterion	Data to be requested of grantees in the future:		
(D)(2)(ii)	Number of teachers and principals in participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems.		
(D)(2)(iii)	Number of teachers and principals in participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems who were evaluated as effective or better in the prior academic year.		
(D)(2)(iii)	Number of teachers and principals in participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems who were evaluated as ineffective in the prior academic year.		

(D)(2)(iv)(b)	Number of teachers and principals in participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems whose evaluations were used to inform compensation decisions in the prior academic year.
(D)(2)(iv)(b)	Number of teachers and principals in participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems who were evaluated as effective or better and were retained in the prior academic year.
(D)(2)(iv)(c)	Number of teachers in participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems who were eligible for tenure in the prior academic year.
(D)(2)(iv)(c)	Number of teachers in participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems whose evaluations were used to inform tenure decisions in the prior academic year.
(D)(2)(iv)(d)	Number of teachers and principals in participating LEAs who were removed for being ineffective in the prior academic year.

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

The extent to which the State, in collaboration with its participating LEAs (as defined in this notice), has a high-quality plan and ambitious yet achievable annual targets to—

(i) Ensure the equitable distribution of teachers and principals by developing a plan, informed by reviews of prior actions and data, to ensure that students in high-poverty and/or high-minority schools (both as defined in this notice) have equitable access to highly effective teachers and principals (both as defined in this notice) and are not served by ineffective teachers and principals at higher rates than other students; (15 points) and

(ii) Increase the number and percentage of effective teachers (as defined in this notice) teaching hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas including mathematics, science, and special education; teaching in language instruction educational programs (as defined under Title III of the ESEA); and teaching in other areas as identified by the State or LEA. (10 points)

Plans for (i) and (ii) may include, but are not limited to, the implementation of incentives and strategies in such areas as recruitment, compensation, teaching and learning environments, professional development, and human resources practices and processes.

The State shall provide its detailed plan for this criterion in the text box below. The plan should include, at a minimum, the goals, activities, timelines, and responsible parties (see Reform Plan Criteria elements in Application Instructions or Section XII, Application Requirements (e), for further detail). In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State’s success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Evidence for (D)(3)(i):

Definitions of high-minority and low-minority schools as defined by the State for the purposes of the State's Teacher Equity Plan.

Recommended maximum response length: Three pages

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

The extent to which the State, in collaboration with its participating LEAs (as defined in this notice), has a high-quality plan and ambitious yet achievable annual targets to—

(i) Ensure the equitable distribution of teachers and principals by developing a plan, informed by reviews of prior actions and data, to ensure that students in high-poverty and/or high-minority schools (both as defined in this notice) have equitable access to highly effective teachers and principals (both as defined in this notice) and are not served by ineffective teachers and principals at higher rates than other students;

Equitable Distribution

Iowa's Revised Teacher Equity Plan (December 2006) defines "high-minority" schools as schools with minority enrollment over 25 percent and "low-minority" schools as schools with minority enrollment less than 10 percent. While minority enrollment across the state increased from 5.5 percent a decade ago to 15.5 percent in 2008, 84.5 percent of Iowa students are white. Thus, Iowa has very few school buildings with minority populations over 25 percent (or even between 10 percent and 24 percent). Further, many of Iowa's high-minority schools are located in urban areas, which are attractive to teachers and principals. Thus, they have not had difficulty attracting and retaining highly qualified teachers and principals.

Iowa's Revised Title II Plan (December 2006) defines "high-poverty" schools as those schools in the top quartile for free or reduced-price school lunch eligibility and "low-poverty" schools as schools in the bottom quartile for free or reduced-price lunch eligibility. With few exceptions, there is little measurable difference among the qualifications and experience of teachers in high-poverty and low-poverty schools. Again, many of Iowa's high-poverty schools are located in Iowa's urban areas.

The IDE's current system of monitoring equitable distribution is based on the definition of "highly-qualified." Thus, once Iowa develops new measures of "effective" and "highly

effective” teachers and principals, as described in Section (D)(2), it will then work to ensure that students in high-minority and high-poverty schools have equitable access to highly effective teachers and principals and are not served by ineffective teachers and principals at higher rates than other students.

Goals

The IDE recognizes that the challenges for urban and rural schools are different; thus, the IDE will monitor the distribution of highly effective teachers and principals and work with districts to devise context-specific strategies to ensure that students in high-poverty and/or high-minority schools have equitable access to highly effective teachers and principals and are not served by ineffective teachers and principals at higher rates than other students.

Activities

Monitoring and Strategic Response

The IDE will monitor the distribution of highly effective teachers and principals and, where inequitable distribution is found, it will work with districts to devise context-specific strategies to promptly eliminate such disparities. Participating districts will agree to monitor the distribution of highly effective teachers and principals and to provide data to the IDE for analysis, from which the IDE will determine best practices for districts throughout the state.

The IDE will work with districts with high-minority and high-poverty schools to monitor teacher and principal distribution in such schools to ensure that students in such schools have equitable access to highly effective teachers and principals. Where inequitable distribution is found, the IDE will assist the district in involving low-income communities and communities of color in developing strategies to promptly eliminate such disparities.

Additionally, the IDE will revise its Guidance Document for districts on the use of Title II, Part A funds (see attachment (D)(3)–1). Currently, this document is intended to help districts ensure that poor and minority students are not taught at a higher rate than other students by inexperienced (a beginning teacher who does not have at least two years of teaching experience) or out-of-field teachers (a person who is licensed to teach in one subject area but is teaching in another subject area for which the person is not licensed). The strategies included are based on

research and are relevant to preventing and/or eliminating inequitable distribution of highly effective teachers and principals in high-poverty and/or high-minority schools.

Predictive Modeling

The CCI for Educator Evaluation and Support will collaborate with the CCI for Responsive Data Systems to develop a system that enables the IDE to utilize Iowa’s data platforms to assist the state and districts in ensuring equitable distribution. Specifically, the IDE will engage in predictive modeling to ensure that, as demographics change, districts are able to take a proactive approach to equitable distribution.

Focused Professional Development for Educators in High-Poverty and High-Minority Schools

The CCI for Intensive School Supports will provide direct support to teachers in high-poverty (Learning Supports) and high-minority (Racial Equity Collaborative) schools in order to increase the number of highly effective educators in these schools. Further, because of Iowa’s demographics, our investments in our persistently lowest-achieving schools will disproportionately impact high-poverty and high-minority schools.

Timeline and Responsible Parties

The timeline and responsible parties for Section (D)(3)(i) is located on page D–38.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals (25 points)
The extent to which the State, in collaboration with its participating LEAs (as defined in this notice), has a high-quality plan and ambitious yet achievable annual targets to—
(ii) Increase the number and percentage of effective teachers teaching hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas (10 points);

Effective Teachers in Hard-to-Staff Subjects and Specialty Areas

Currently, Iowa utilizes a variety of strategies to increase the number and percentage of effective teachers teaching in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas. The Iowa legislature introduced and funded market factor incentives to ensure that school districts in all areas of the

state have the ability to attract highly qualified teachers by offering them additional compensation or other support (e.g., moving expenses, funds to prepare for a license or endorsement in a shortage area).

Additionally, Iowa offers loan forgiveness to Iowa teachers repaying Federal Stafford Loans (subsidized and unsubsidized) to increase the number of teachers in Iowa schools teaching in shortage areas, as designated by the IDE. To be eligible for loan forgiveness, applicants must be beginning their first teaching job and: (1) teach in an approved shortage area at an approved and recognized K–12 school; (2) complete and file an annual application by the deadline; and (3) provide yearly employment verification. If funding is not sufficient to cover all applicants, awards will be made based on priorities—the top two of which are application renewal status and instructional shortage area being served. The maximum annual award is 20 percent of the teacher’s total federal Stafford loan balance, including principal and interest, but not more than the average resident tuition the year following the recipient’s graduation. For 2009 graduates, the maximum award was \$6,704.

Further, Iowa offers loan forgiveness for teacher candidates. The Iowa Student Loan Teacher Education Loan Forgiveness Program provides loan forgiveness of up to \$9,000 for students who are currently working toward education degrees or endorsement programs that lead to licensure in an approved subject shortage area at accredited Iowa colleges, universities, or other similar educational institutions. To date, 575 teachers have been approved into the Iowa Student Loan Teacher Education Loan Forgiveness Program.

We have farther to go, though, to address specific issues within teacher distribution.

Goals

We will use Race to the Top funds to implement the Talent to Teach strand of the (Project TQ(3) described below to recruit and retain underrepresented and minority candidates into teacher and administration. Project outcomes include: 1) increased numbers of highly qualified diverse teachers/administrators in Iowa’s high-need rural schools, 2) increased retention of highly qualified diverse teachers/administrators, 3) increased number of diverse licensed teachers in shortage areas, 4) broader collaboration between partners to identify, recruit, train, mentor, and provide on-going professional development for future teachers, and 5) improved student achievement.

Activities

The CCI for Educator Evaluation and Support will work with a group of partnering organizations to further one part of a three-part project known as the Talent to Teach, Talent to Lead, Talent to Change (Project TQ(3)). The TQ(3) project lead is The University of Iowa (UI) College of Education, in partnership with UI College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS), UI Division of Continuing Education, UI Center for Enrichment and Diversity, William Penn University, Iowa's 10 area education agencies (AEAs), Rockwell Collins, Dardis Communications, and 48 qualified LEAs and 63 schools in Iowa. Project TQ(3) addresses the critical need for highly qualified teachers in shortage areas (see attachment (D)(3)–2).

Project TQ(3) will develop an integrated system for the identification and development of teacher and administrator talent, generating a diverse pool of future teachers and administrators prepared to work in Iowa's high-need rural LEAs. Project TQ(3) has three strands: 1) Talent to Teach (serving teacher candidates and para-educators), 2) Talent to Lead (serving teachers qualified to become administrators), and 3) Talent to Change (serving second career professionals to become teachers). Each strand has similar objectives: 1) Identify a pool of underserved candidates to teach in high-need schools; 2) Recruit participants to enroll in UI and William Penn University's teacher preparation programs, UI's Educational Administration program or the Iowa Teacher Intern License Pathway (ITILP Residency) Program; 3) Graduate/license 80 percent of the participants in each strand as highly qualified teachers/administrators, 4) Place 80 percent of participants in high-need rural LEAs within one year of graduation/licensure, and 5) Retain teachers/administrators in high-need rural schools for a minimum of three years.

To achieve project objectives, program activities include aggressive recruitment, active mentorship, and the delivery of high quality professional development support. The project will create a new model of teacher/administrative preparation that includes scaffolded supports to maximize participant success. Additionally, Project TQ(3) will develop a sustainable infrastructure for identifying and developing teacher and administrator talent, expand dramatically Iowa's pool of diverse and highly qualified teachers and administrators, and positively impact achievement in Iowa's K–12 schools. Project partners will recruit and mentor participants, and develop and deliver quality programming. UI faculty and staff will provide

curricular support, professional development, and technology training to all participants. The IDE will provide mentoring and induction support.

The CCI will ensure a rigorous evaluation design will provide information about the project's efficacy and inform practice in how to develop diverse highly qualified teachers and administrators prepared to serve in high-need rural schools. The combination of expertise, commitment and resources of Project TQ(3) will have a significant impact on student achievement in Iowa.

Timeline and Responsible Parties

The timeline and responsible parties for Section (D)(2)(iii) is located on page D-38.

Timeline and Responsible Parties

ACTIVITIES	(D)(3) GREAT TEACHERS AND LEADERS TIMELINE							RESPONSIBLE PARTIES
	FY 2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015		
Revise Guidance for districts on use of Title II, Part A funds	█	█						IDE
Develop system for predictive modeling to forecast potential for inequitable distribution in high-poverty and high-minority schools	█	█	█					IDE, CCI, CCI for Data Systems
Provide support to teachers in high-poverty and high-minority schools to increase number of “highly effective” educators in these schools			█					IDE, CCI for Intensive School Supports
Implement Talent to Teach		█	█	█	█	█	█	IDE, University of Iowa, William Penn University, AEAs, Rockwell Collins, Dardis Communications, LEAs, Schools

Performance Measures for (D)(3)(i) Note: All information below is requested for Participating LEAs.	Actual Data: Baseline (Current school year or most recent)	End of SY 2010- 2011	End of SY 2011- 2012	End of SY 2012- 2013	End of SY 2013- 2014
General goals to be provided at time of application:	Baseline data and annual targets				
Percentage of teachers in schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are highly effective (as defined in this notice).	N/A	0 0 30			75
Percentage of teachers in schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are highly effective (as defined in this notice).	N/A	0 0 30			75
Percentage of teachers in schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are ineffective.	N/A	0 0 20			10
Percentage of teachers in schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are ineffective.	N/A	0 0 20			10
Percentage of principals leading schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are highly effective (as defined in this notice).	N/A	0 0 30			75
Percentage of principals leading schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are highly effective (as defined in this notice).	N/A	0 0 30			75
Percentage of principals leading schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are ineffective.	N/A	0 0 10			5
Percentage of principals leading schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are ineffective.	N/A	0 0 10			5

General data to be provided at time of application:		
Total number of schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice).	158	
Total number of schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice).	606	
Total number of teachers in schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice).	3,110	
Total number of teachers in schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice).	11,440	
Total number of principals leading schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice).	105	
Total number of principals leading schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice).	405	

Data to be requested of grantees in the future:		
Number of teachers and principals in schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who were evaluated as highly effective (as defined in this notice) in the prior academic year.		
Number of teachers and principals in schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who were evaluated as highly effective (as defined in this notice) in the prior academic year.		

Number of teachers and principals in schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who were evaluated as ineffective in the prior academic year.	
Number of teachers and principals in schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who were evaluated as ineffective in the prior academic year.	

Performance Measures for (D)(3)(ii) Note: All information below is requested for Participating LEAs.	Actual Data: Baseline (Current school year or most recent)	End of SY 2010- 2011	End of SY 2011- 2012	End of SY 2012- 2013	End of SY 2013- 2014
General goals to be provided at time of application:	Baseline data and annual targets				
Percentage of mathematics teachers who were evaluated as effective or better.	0	0	0	80	90
Percentage of science teachers who were evaluated as effective or better.	0	0	0	80	90
Percentage of special education teachers who were evaluated as effective or better.	0	0	0	80	90
Percentage of teachers in language instruction educational programs who were evaluated as effective or better.	0 0 0	80			90

General data to be provided at time of application:		
Total number of mathematics teachers.	1,405	
Total number of science teachers.	1,218	
Total number of special education teachers.	2,644	
Total number of teachers in language instruction educational programs.	1,980	
<p>[Optional: Enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data] As noted in the table above on qualifying evaluation systems, we will have valid and reliable measures of effectiveness in 2013.</p>		
Data to be requested of grantees in the future:		
Number of mathematics teachers in participating LEAs who were evaluated as effective or better in the prior academic year.		
Number of science teachers in participating LEAs who were evaluated as effective or better in the prior academic year.		
Number of special education teachers in participating LEAs who were evaluated as effective or better in the prior academic year.		
Number of teachers in language instruction educational programs in participating LEAs who were evaluated as effective or better in the prior academic year.		

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs (14 points)

The extent to which the State has a high-quality plan and ambitious yet achievable annual targets to—

(i) Link student achievement and student growth (both as defined in this notice) data to the students' teachers and principals, to link this information to the in-State programs where those teachers and principals were prepared for credentialing, and to publicly report the data for each credentialing program in the State; and

(ii) Expand preparation and credentialing options and programs that are successful at producing effective teachers and principals (both as defined in this notice).

The State shall provide its detailed plan for this criterion in the text box below. The plan should include, at a minimum, the goals, activities, timelines, and responsible parties (see Reform Plan Criteria elements in Application Instructions or Section XII, Application Requirements (e), for further detail). Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers must be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Recommended maximum response length: One page

There are 32 four-year colleges and universities approved by the State Board of Education to prepare teachers in Iowa, which includes alternative routes to certification/licensure, and five four-year colleges and universities approved by the State Board to prepare administrators in Iowa. Additionally, one university offers principal preparation only, and there is an alternative route to principal certification, as discussed in Section (D)(1). Currently, approved programs are required to engage in self-study and to report the findings to the IDE. Additionally, in the spring of 2008, the New Teacher Center (NTC) surveyed all first year teachers, their mentors, and some administrators regarding their teacher preparation programs; NTC provided results to programs and aggregate results to the IDE.

(D)(4)(i) The extent to which the State has a high-quality plan and ambitious yet achievable annual targets to link student achievement and student growth (both as defined in this notice) data to the students’ teachers and principals, to link this information to the in-State programs where those teachers and principals were prepared for credentialing, and to publicly report the data for each credentialing program in the State;

Iowa currently has a unique identifier for students, teachers and schools. Beginning in 2010-2011, Iowa will link student achievement on the statewide summative exam to teachers and principals, as described in Section (D)(2), and report the data back to the teachers’ and principals’ preparation programs. However, these data do not comprise a sufficient measure by which to evaluate the effectiveness of teachers and principals or, by extension, by which to evaluate the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs. The Iowa Department of Education (IDE) is working to develop multiple, authentic measures of student achievement and student growth and link that achievement data to teachers and principals, as discussed in (D)(2); to report that data back to their preparation programs; and, ultimately, to publicly report aggregate data for each program. The IDE has been collaborating with the Board of Educational Examiners, Iowa’s public or Regents universities, and representatives of Iowa’s private colleges and universities that prepare teachers and principals in developing these plans.

Goals

Iowa will develop multiple, authentic measures of student achievement and growth, as outlined in Section (B).

Once these multiple measures of student achievement and growth are available, Iowa will link those data to teachers and principals as described in Section (D)(1), and the IDE will report the data in the aggregate by program.

Activities

The Center for Collaborative Inquiry (CCI) for Educator Evaluation and Support will work with the CCI for Balanced Assessment as multiple measures of student achievement and growth are developed. Once developed and used to collect student achievement data, the CCI for Educator Evaluation and Support will link the data to preparation institutions and publicly

reporting the data. The CCI will collaborate with traditional and alternative preparation programs to develop the protocol for public reporting. The IDE will be responsible for publicly reporting the data in the aggregate by program.

This information will be a required component of the accreditation process for practitioner preparation programs. These programs will be required to revisit the components of their programs based on the results of these data.

Timeline and Responsible Parties

The timeline and responsible parties for Section (D)(4)(i) is located on page D-47.

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs (14 points)

(ii) Expand preparation and credentialing options and programs that are successful at producing effective teachers and principals (both as defined in this notice).

Expanding Successful Preparation Programs

Iowa's teacher and principal preparation programs are among the best in the nation. Overall, they take great pride in their roles and independently look for ways to improve. Additionally, there is a strong history of collaboration among the IDE and teacher and principal preparation programs, and the IDE has a history of supporting successful programs and encouraging program improvement. For example, as described in Section (D)(1), IDE used federal funds to provide grants for institutions to develop high-quality Teacher Intern Programs.

The philosophy the IDE brings to improving preparation programs is akin to the approach it brings to the evaluation of teachers and principals. In essence, the IDE believes successful programs serve as models/mentors/exemplars and should be recognized as such. Programs that are less successful should be given an opportunity for improvement, especially when a new system of program evaluation is put into place. However, where external pressure has been required to push for improvement under the existing system, Iowa has not hesitated to use the policy lever of program approval to insist on program improvement.

Goals

The IDE will publicly report aggregate data for each program. Additionally, the IDE will bring together preparation programs to engage in dialogue on the concepts and skills Iowa educators need in order to meet professional standards as well as school, district, and state student achievement goals, as well as how successful programs are addressing these needs.

Activities

The IDE will be responsible for publicly reporting data on teacher and principal effectiveness in the aggregate by program. This will ensure public accountability and will allow preparation programs to show improvement over time.

Additionally, the IDE will bring together preparation programs across the state during its annual conference for dialogue on the needs of educators and how successful programs are addressing these needs.

Timeline and Responsible Parties

The timeline and responsible parties for Section (D)(4)(ii) is located on page D-47.

Timeline and Responsible Parties

ACTIVITIES	(D)(4) GREAT TEACHERS AND LEADERS TIMELINE						RESPONSIBLE PARTIES
	FY 2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	
Link ITBS and ITED results to teachers and principals, and to preparation programs and report to the preparation programs							IDE
Pilot the linking of multiple, authentic measures of student achievement and student growth to teachers and principals, preparation programs							IDE
Publicly report aggregate data by program and use information to determine highly successful programs to garner aspects to be shared statewide							IDE
Use data in accreditation process							
Host an annual conference of preparation programs							IDE

Performance Measures	Actual Data: Baseline (Current school year or most recent)	End of SY 2010- 2011	End of SY 2011- 2012	End of SY 2012- 2013	End of SY 2013- 2014
General goals to be provided at time of application:	Baseline data and annual targets				
Percentage of teacher preparation programs in the State for which the public can access data on the achievement and growth (as defined in this notice) of the graduates' students.	N/A	0 0 25			100
Percentage of principal preparation programs in the State for which the public can access data on the achievement and growth (as defined in this notice) of the graduates' students.	N/A	0 0 25			100
[Optional: Enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data]					
General data to be provided at time of application:					
Total number of teacher credentialing programs in the State.	32				
Total number of principal credentialing programs in the State.	5				
Total number of teachers in the State.	33,645				
Total number of principals in the State.	1,070				

[Optional: Enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data]	
Data to be requested of grantees in the future:	
Number of teacher credentialing programs in the State for which the information (as described in the criterion) is publicly reported.	
Number of teachers prepared by each credentialing program in the State for which the information (as described in the criterion) is publicly reported.	
Number of principal credentialing programs in the State for which the information (as described in the criterion) is publicly reported.	
Number of principals prepared by each credentialing program in the State for which the information (as described in the criterion) is publicly reported.	
Number of teachers in the State whose data are aggregated to produce publicly available reports on the State's credentialing programs.	
Number of principals in the State whose data are aggregated to produce publicly available reports on the State's credentialing programs.	

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals (20 points)

The extent to which the State, in collaboration with its participating LEAs (as defined in this notice), has a high-quality plan for its participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) to—

(i) Provide effective, data-informed professional development, coaching, induction, and common planning and collaboration time to teachers and principals that are, where appropriate, ongoing and job-embedded. Such support might focus on, for example, gathering, analyzing, and using data; designing instructional strategies for improvement; differentiating instruction; creating school environments supportive of data-informed decisions; designing instruction to meet the specific needs of high need students (as defined in this notice); and aligning systems and removing barriers to effective implementation of practices designed to improve student learning outcomes; and

(ii) Measure, evaluate, and continuously improve the effectiveness of those supports in order to improve student achievement (as defined in this notice).

The State shall provide its detailed plan for this criterion in the text box below. The plan should include, at a minimum, the goals, activities, timelines, and responsible parties (see Reform Plan Criteria elements in Application Instructions or Section XII, Application Requirements (e), for further detail). Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers must be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Recommended maximum response length: Five pages

Growing Highly Effective Teachers and Principals

The IDE believes highly effective teachers and principals are not born but grown. They require—and should be able to expect—the system to provide opportunities for growth and ongoing supports throughout every stage of their careers. Growth opportunities include the kinds of professional resources, activities, and organizational designs that contribute to continuous development (e.g., access to professional learning communities and time to collaborate and reflect on professional practice). Supports include system features that guarantee educators’ professional learning (e.g., induction and mentoring and supports that respond to feedback from a well-designed evaluation system).

While the conversation on professional development is often focused on the adults in the system, the IDE understands that the purpose of professional development must be for the benefit of students. Thus, the IDE has very carefully and thoughtfully created a statewide system of professional development to grow effective and highly effective teachers, principals, and superintendents toward the goal of school improvement and increased student learning.

Iowa Professional Development Model

The Iowa Professional Development Model (IPDM) provides the foundation of all professional development supported by the state (see attachment (D)(5)–1 for an overview of the IPDM). The development of the IPDM was a collaborative effort of the IDE and a stakeholders group representing AEAs, professional organizations (teachers, administrators, school boards), school districts, higher education, and other providers of professional development in the state of Iowa. The model reflects their study, collaboration, reflection, and negotiation and provides an invaluable roadmap to the conduct of staff development for educators in Iowa. The IPDM uses an action research cycle and is based on four operating principles: (1) focus on curriculum, instruction, and assessment; (2) participative decision making; (3) leadership; and (4) simultaneity (see attachment (D)(5)–2, for the Operating Principles).

Mentoring and Induction

Iowa Code 284.5 and 284A.5 requires a state-funded mentoring and induction program for teachers and administrators (see attachments (D)(5)–3 and (D)(5)–4). All public school districts and AEAs have an induction and mentoring plan approved by the IDE.

Beginning Teachers

Beginning teachers must complete a two-year mentoring and induction program designed to address their personal and professional needs and to help them develop competency on Iowa's teaching standards. At the end of the mentoring and induction period, a teacher may be recommended for a standard license. However, if the teacher is not able to demonstrate competency on the Iowa teaching standards, the district may grant a third year at district expense. If the teacher does not successfully demonstrate competency after the third year, the teacher cannot receive a standard license and cannot continue to teach in Iowa.

Mentors must have at least four years of teaching experience, demonstrated skills in classroom training and coaching, and training on district expectations. The role of the mentor is to observe, critique, and provide support and advice on effective teaching practices, not to evaluate the teacher. During the 2008–2009 school year, 3,243 new educators participated in the mentoring and induction program. According to a state-by-state assessment of all states by the New Teacher Center (2009), Iowa is one of four states in the nation with an outstanding mentoring and induction program, based on policy and supporting state appropriations.

Beginning Administrators

Beginning administrators must complete a one-year mentoring and induction program funded by the IDE and provided through a collaborative arrangement with the School Administrators of Iowa (SAI). A local district can also provide an approved mentoring and induction program. The program is linked to proficiency in the Iowa Standards for School Leaders and is structured to provide support, professional development, and access to a variety of information sources critical to a beginning administrator's success as a leader of student achievement. New principals and superintendents participate in a one-day New Administrators Institute as well as two, one-day statewide institutes for beginning principals and mentors. Mentors are expected to have monthly, face-to-face interactions with their mentees as well as bi-weekly email or phone conversations. Mentors are provided with training in best practices in coaching skills such as questioning and non-judgmental listening, helping in the development of individual professional

development plans, skills in professional and personal life balance, and providing access to resources. The administrator mentoring program is evaluated annually. Results from the most recent evaluation indicate that 95 percent of program participants indicate the program was either extremely helpful or highly helpful to them.

Professional Development for Career Teachers and Administrators

The Iowa Code requires districts to incorporate a professional development plan into their comprehensive school improvement plan (CSIP) (IC 83.6). This professional development plan must be a long-term plan designed and implemented to increase student achievement and include all teachers. The plan must align all professional development with the school district's long-range student learning goals and the Iowa teaching standards, as well as indicate the district's approved professional development provider or providers.

The Iowa Code requires educators to collaborate, which requires common planning time. Specifically, each AEA's and district's professional development plan must include a description of a process that includes theory, demonstration, practice, observation, collaboration, and the study of implementation (IC 83.6). Further, the Iowa Core describes five characteristics of effective instruction, including differentiation. Specifically, Teaching for Learner Differences and Assessment for Learning address ways to increase differentiation. The Iowa Core roll-out includes plans for explicit professional development to help teachers with skills needed in this area.

Further, each school within a district is required to develop a professional development plan to promote collective professional development, address the needs of teachers, and enhance the student achievement goals of the school and the district.

Additionally, in cooperation with the teacher's evaluator, the career teacher must develop an individual teacher professional development plan to promote individual and group professional development, which must be based, at minimum, on the needs of the teacher, the Iowa teaching standards, and the student achievement goals of the school and district as outlined in the CSIP. The individual plan must include goals for the individual that are beyond those required under the attendance center professional development plan and are developed with the teacher's evaluator.

School districts, AEAs, IHEs, and other public or private entities, including professional associations and consortia of these groups, may provide professional development. The IDE approves providers; educational organizations or programs with specific professional development accreditation or approval from the IDE are considered approved providers. The local district follows an approval process to approve other providers.

Teacher Quality Partnership Grant

The IDE was the only state education agency to be awarded a federal Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) grant (see attachment (D)(5)–5). Additionally, Iowa’s application received the maximum points (100) from all but one reviewer, who awarded 98 of 100 points); *this high score speaks to the quality of Iowa’s plan*. The mission of the Teacher Quality Partnership grant is to increase the learning and achievement of Iowa preK–12 students by developing more highly effective teachers. The grant will achieve this mission by 1) defining emerging attributes of effective teaching and integrating those attributes into both preparation programs and professional development for beginning teachers, and 2) examining and integrating a diverse set of teacher and student artifacts to document content knowledge of academic major and effective teaching, featuring teacher work samples supported by an integrated technology platform.

The purpose of the plan is to enhance and support the professional development of prospective and current teachers in Iowa and to improve decision making of evaluators, teachers, and administrators in determining student growth, teacher growth, and documentation of teacher effectiveness from the time the student enters a preparation program to the time the educator exits teaching. Iowa will revise its statewide evaluator training to integrate the attributes of effective teaching, and the new training (to be in place by Academic Year (AY) 2012–2013) will impact how teachers are evaluated. The teacher work samples described in the grant are based on research proven to increase student achievement.

The Teacher Quality Partnership will collect and use data on student achievement to assess the effect of teachers prepared through the pre-baccalaureate teacher preparation program. It will demonstrate the capacity to provide longitudinal data, capturing student achievement by teacher from year to year through the five-year grant performance period. Relevant data will reflect the effects on student learning and achievement of both teachers in the program and teachers not in the program.

This work will also help principals keep teachers focused on student achievement, provide a measure of professional development based on student achievement, and foster a shared language common to teacher candidates, beginning teachers, and career teachers.

To enhance the quality of beginning teachers entering the profession, the IDE will devise a series of measurable and sustainable objectives that will achieve three major project goals: 1) emerging attributes of effective teaching will be examined, identified, and defined in preparation for integration into an institution of higher education preparation program and into district professional development, 2) preparation program faculty will integrate the attributes of effective teaching into preparation programs, which will be documented through prospective teacher-created digital artifacts to be placed into an integrated technology platform, and 3) districts will integrate the attributes of effective teaching into professional development, which also will be documented through teacher-created artifacts to be placed into an integrated technology platform. This is the Teacher Work Sample (TWS) Project discussed in Section (C).

For principals, the IDE has created the Iowa Leadership Academy (ILA)—a project supported by funding from the Wallace Foundation. The ILA supports two virtual leadership centers—the Principal Center (launched in June 2007) and the Superintendent Network (currently in development). A number of collaborative partners are actively involved in the ILA: the IDE, the School Administrators of Iowa, Iowa Association of School Boards, AEAs, higher education, and local districts.

The Principals Center (PC) was developed “by principals, for principals.” The center’s mission is to create a community where school leaders discover their skills, their wisdom, and their passion for leading learning. Participants in the PC academy indicate that these experiences allow leaders opportunities to: gain craft knowledge and skills that enhance the principal’s ability to advance the school’s learning goals; be inspired, challenged, and committed to the moral purpose of leading; develop leadership plans of action that advance the school’s plan of action; and participate in networking/collaboration/coaching that extends beyond a June conference and supports fulfillment of individual professional development plans.

The Superintendent Network was convened during the 2007–2008 school year through collaboration between Iowa’s AEAs and The Wallace Foundation’s leadership grant. The Superintendent Network uses the instructional rounds model originated by Dr. Richard Elmore and associates at Harvard. Trained facilitators from AEAs, local superintendents, and higher

education personnel guide networks in each of Iowa's ten AEAs. In its first full year of operation, the network served one-third of Iowa's 350 superintendents, and there is documented evidence that its impact is changing the culture of how superintendents lead student achievement efforts.

In 2009, the RAND Corporation's *Improving School Leadership: The Promise of Cohesive Leadership Systems* research report identified Iowa as one of just three states that has made "exemplary" progress toward a cohesive leadership system through developing and assessing against leadership standards, providing high quality professional development for leaders, and improving the policy and practice conditions in which leaders work. (See attachment (D)(5)–6 for the summary from the report.)

Goals

To achieve our goals in each priority area, the IDE has several goals for the professional development of Iowa's educators:

- Provide professional development on balanced assessment/formative assessment/assessment literacy, as fully described in Section (B)(3).
- Provide a second year of mentoring and induction for administrators, allowing them to continue work on increasing student achievement and student growth and on closing persistent achievement gaps.
- Provide on-going support for the Iowa Leadership Academy's Principal Academy to continue principals' growth as instructional leaders, and the Superintendent Network to develop superintendent skills in assessing the level of rigor of learning experiences for students and to determine the impact of professional development activities in the district.
- Support and accelerate the Teacher Quality Partnership grant and the Teacher Work Sample (TWS) project.

Activities

Year Two of Mentoring and Induction for Administrators

A beginning principal or superintendent will be supported by a mentor who will continue to provide coaching supports that build on goals established during year one of the mentoring program. During year one, much of the focus is on supporting the beginning administrator in successful execution of management duties). It is anticipated that in year two there will be an increased emphasis by the mentor on supports to the mentee in development of a robust individual administrator professional development plan, and increased emphasis on instructional leadership. The School Administrators of Iowa will continue to work closely with the IDE in the delivery of the program, provide one state-wide meeting for the mentors and mentees, make new matches in the event that the mentor-mentee match from year one did not prove to be satisfactory or if other circumstances dictate a change, provide monthly on-line resources that mentors can use to enhance their coaching skills with their mentees, and arrange for evaluation of the year two experiences.

A task force will be convened by the School Administrators of Iowa comprised of local practitioners, higher education administrators of educational administration, the CCI for Educator Evaluation and Support, representatives from other professional associations, and persons with specific professional development expertise who will develop the curriculum for year two of the administrator mentoring program. The curriculum and training plan will be vetted through a focus group of year one mentoring program participants and their mentors. Evaluation of program effectiveness will occur annually.

Principals Academy

Wallace Foundation funding has supported the IDE in the development of a common vision, framework, and language, and in developing networks, relationships and supports for our work across the state. The work has not been easy, and there is more to accomplish. Key goals include continuing the work through the Iowa Leadership Academy, specifically the Principals Center and the Superintendent Network.

The School Administrators of Iowa (SAI) will lead the effort to support principals and superintendents as they focus on student achievement and student growth. SAI in collaboration with AEAs, principals, and higher education, will redesign the Principal Academy curriculum and programming based on Iowa’s own promising practices and benchmarking practices in other states. This will strengthen both the development of leaders’ professional growth plans and their applications in schools and districts during the year, which will result in increased student achievement. SAI, in collaboration with AEAs, superintendents, and higher education, also will expand the Superintendent Network to serve more of Iowa’s 350 superintendents. The IDE will work closely with SAI to ensure alignment throughout the system.

A key innovation related to this project is the development and implementation of an integrated technology platform that will provide a method to store digital artifacts documenting effective teaching and thus allow for the scaling of teacher effectiveness to reform and enhance teacher preparation programs and professional development.

Integrated Technology Platform

The CCI for Educator Evaluation and Support will collaborate with the CCI for Responsive Data Platforms, participating districts, and higher education to develop an integrated technology platform with digital artifacts documenting effective teaching as determined. This work will be closely aligned with the work described above to define “effective” and “highly effective” teachers and administrators.

Timeline and Responsible Parties

The timeline and responsible parties for Section (D)(5)(i) is located on page D–60.

(D)(5)(ii) Measure, evaluate, and continuously improve the effectiveness of those supports in order to improve student achievement.

Currently, districts are required to document approved professional development providers and track budget items. However, districts are not required to report on the quality of professional development or to determine the extent to which professional development led to actual change in practice.

The IDE monitors district-approved professional development providers and requires districts to report budget items. However, what Iowa really wants to know is not which professional development providers are most popular or most widely utilized, but which providers are effective in helping teachers and principals to improve their practice.

Goals

To achieve our goals in each priority area, the IDE has several goals for our work on professional development providers:

- Evaluate the effectiveness of professional development
- Use data to drive improvement in professional development

Activities

The CCI for Educator Evaluation and Support will collaborate with a diverse group of stakeholders in order to determine the information required to evaluate professional development in Iowa. The CCI will then collect and analyze the data and report its findings to the IDE. The data will then be used to inform professional development at the building level, and will ultimately be used to inform policy and practice related to professional development at the systems level.

Timeline and Responsible Parties

The timeline and responsible parties for Section (D)(5)(ii) is located on page D-60.

Timelines and Responsible Parties

ACTIVITIES	(D)(5) GREAT TEACHERS AND LEADERS TIMELINE						RESPONSIBLE PARTIES
	FY 2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	
PD on balanced assessment, formative assessment, and assessment literacy	█	█	█	█	█	█	CCI for Balanced Assessment
Convene task force to develop second year of mentoring							School Administrators of Iowa
Provide a second year of mentoring and induction for administrators	█	█	█	█	█	█	School Administrators of Iowa
Provide ongoing support for the Iowa Leadership Academy	█	█	█	█	█	█	School Administrators of Iowa
Collaborate to develop an integrated technology platform	█	█	█	█	█	█	CCI, CCI for Responsive Data Platforms, IDE
Support and accelerate the Teacher Quality Partnership grant and Teacher Work Sample project	█	█	█	█	█	█	IDE, CCI
Evaluate the effectiveness of PD		█	█	█	█	█	CCI
Use data to improve PD		█	█	█	█	█	CCI

<p>Performance Measures</p> <p>Performance measures for this criterion are optional. If the State wishes to include performance measures, please enter them as rows in this table and, for each measure, provide annual targets in the columns provided.</p>	Actual Data: Baseline (Current school year or most recent)	End of SY 2010-2011	End of SY 2011-2012	End of SY 2012-2013	End of SY 2013-2014
(Enter measures here, if any.)					

(E) Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools (50 total points)

State Reform Conditions Criteria

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

The extent to which the State has the legal, statutory, or regulatory authority to intervene directly in the State’s persistently lowest-achieving schools (as defined in this notice) and in LEAs that are in improvement or corrective action status.

In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State’s success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Evidence for (E)(1):

A description of the State’s applicable laws, statutes, regulations, or other relevant legal documents.

Recommended maximum response length: One page

On January 15, 2010, the Iowa General Assembly passed and Governor Chet Culver signed into law a requirement that a school district with one or more schools identified by the Iowa Department of Education (IDE) as a persistently lowest-achieving school implement one or more of the interventions mandated by the U.S. Department of Education (USED) (see attachment (E)(1)–1). Thus, the State has the authority to intervene in LEAs with the persistently lowest-achieving schools.

The USED’s guidance for the School Improvement Grant (SIG) program states, “drawing upon pockets of success in cities and States across the country, the Secretary believes LEAs and unions can work together to bring about dramatic, positive changes in our persistently lowest-achieving schools. Accordingly, the Department encourages collaborations and partnerships between LEAs and teacher unions, and teacher membership associations to resolve issues created by school intervention models in the context of existing collective bargaining agreements.” Research on turnaround schools backs up this stance, demonstrating that in successful turnarounds, teachers and administrators work and problem-solve together, share a common vision and goals, and share an expectation that everyone needs to make changes. Our January 15 legislation specifically addresses this guidance.

Reform Plan Criteria

(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools (40 points)

The extent to which the State has a high-quality plan and ambitious yet achievable annual targets to—

(i) Identify the persistently lowest-achieving schools (as defined in this notice) and, at its discretion, any non-Title I eligible secondary schools that would be considered persistently lowest-achieving schools (as defined in this notice) if they were eligible to receive Title I funds; and (5 points)

(ii) Support its LEAs in turning around these schools by implementing one of the four school intervention models: turnaround model, restart model, school closure, or transformation model (provided that an LEA with more than nine persistently lowest-achieving schools may not use the transformation model for more than 50 percent of its schools). (35 points)

The State shall provide its detailed plan for this criterion in the text box below. The plan should include, at a minimum, the goals, activities, timelines, and responsible parties (see Reform Plan Criteria elements in Application Instructions or Section XII, Application Requirements (e), for further detail). In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Evidence for (E)(2) (please fill in table below):

The State's historic performance on school turnaround, as evidenced by the total number of persistently lowest-achieving schools (as defined in this notice) that States or LEAs attempted to turn around in the last five years, the approach used, and the results and lessons learned to date.

Recommended maximum response length: Eight pages

(E)(2)(i) Identify the persistently lowest-achieving schools

The way Iowa identifies its lowest-achieving schools takes into account both overall proficiency and growth on Iowa's summative assessment, the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS), consistent with Iowa's accountability plan filed with the USED. The State's model for identifying the lowest-achieving schools is described in the appendix (see attachment (E)(2)–1).

In February 2010, the director of the IDE made public the first list of persistently lowest-achieving schools, comprised of six Tier I schools—the persistently lowest-achieving 5 percent of Title I Schools in Need of Assistance (SINA)—and 29 Tier II schools—the lowest 5 percent

of eligible non-Title I secondary schools. Because some districts have more than one of Iowa’s persistently lowest-achieving schools, these 35 schools are located in 18 districts across the state.

In future years, Iowa’s persistently lowest-achieving schools list will be made available each year in the month of July.

(E)(2)(ii) Support its LEAs in turning around these schools by implementing one of the four school intervention models

Through dramatic interventions, intensive supports, and high expectations, our state’s most struggling schools will not only turn around, they will become trendsetters. The inspiration behind this assertion in Iowa comes from a high-minority, high-poverty middle school in Waterloo that is currently one of Iowa’s persistently lowest-achieving schools—and one of Iowa’s most exciting schools to watch. Recognizing their historic struggles to improve, in 2009 the former Logan Middle School was closed, renovated, and then reopened as the George Washington Carver Academy in the fall with new leadership, a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)-focused curriculum, and 21st-century technology. The school put in place an Instructional Decision Making (IDM) system focused on a competency-based approach to learning, with a diligent eye on continuous individual student growth. The IDM system provides struggling students with multiple opportunities to master each individual class objective. The STEM curriculum connects students to real-world challenges and viable careers.

The efforts at the Carver Academy show signs of tremendous payoff. In its first year, students and staff at the Carver Academy already have achieved an important milestone: The school showed the most growth among district buildings in the percent of students proficient on the math, science, and reading portions of the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills. The school will continue using the instructional management system this year and will have more technology available, like Promethean Activboards in every classroom. With this progress, we expect the Carver Academy to come off the list of Iowa’s persistently lowest-achieving schools within only one more year.

Focus on Competency-Based Education

Carver Academy is exciting and serves as a beacon not only for all of our other persistently lowest-achieving schools, but also for all schools across the state. If Carver is able to sustain its

intensive focus over time, it is clear that it has the possibility of going from a turnaround school to trendsetting school. The challenge we face, however, is that demands on the State system of support are increasing because our trajectory toward achievement is increasing, meaning more schools are coming onto the list of Schools in Need of Improvement (SINA) each year. Without more intensive supports from the State, our other SINAs are dependent upon their local leadership and knowledge to leapfrog other schools implementing reforms. This is a lot to ask of schools that already have been struggling so significantly. Waterloo had an important convergence of leadership, vision, and resources. We cannot leave such a confluence to chance.

Taking lessons from the Carver Academy and from our statewide system of support for schools in need of assistance identified under Title I of Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), our approach to turning around our persistently lowest-achieving schools will be to combine our School Improvement Grant program with our Race to the Top program and our Title I system of support to provide these schools with intensive supports over time. Our focus will be to offer coaching on systems change and school turnaround, administrative support, and resources for instructional improvement.

These schools are an important part of our overall comprehensive plan—as they receive intensive support to implement their intervention model, this support will include the goals outlined in our other Race to the Top priorities. They are not exempted from the exciting and important work being done; instead, we believe they will embody a commitment to great teaching, effective leadership, the use of high-quality data in making instructional and programmatic decisions, and a commitment to implementing competency-based education. We expect that, because of the system of intensive support, these schools may have many of the most exciting new learning environments in the state—just like we are seeing in the Carver Academy.

We also are focusing special efforts on our schools where achievement gaps between white students and students of color—and between students in poverty and their wealthier peers—are pervasive. Our plans also include intensive supports to these schools through Learning Supports and a new Racial Equity Collaborative, as described in the “Activities” subsection below.

Historic Support to LEAs for Lowest-achieving Schools and School Turnaround

Over the past six years, Iowa has developed a sophisticated and research-based model for assisting low-performing schools that leverages state, regional, and local expertise around a

research-based process for school improvement. This system of support, described below, will be modified to meet the requirements of Race to the Top.

Currently, Iowa assists its low-achieving schools through the Iowa Support System for schools and districts in need of assistance (SINA/DINA), which was developed in 2003 in response to federal and state legislation. Within three months following identification by the IDE, a school in need of assistance develops a two-year plan (with one-year budget) that:

- Is based on extensive audit and diagnosis phases of three domains—academic, quality educator, and system;
- Diagnoses root causes that are barriers to student learning;
- Addresses core academic subjects;
- Matches scientifically researched strategies with identified needs;
- Provides for professional development based on theory, demonstration, coaching, and feedback;
- Implements mentoring for both new and experienced teachers;
- Includes parent engagement activities;
- Develops leadership skills.

This two-year Iowa Support Team process for SINAs includes five phases: an audit phase, diagnosis phase, design phase, implementation phase, and evaluation phase. In the audit phase, an audit team put together by the IDE in collaboration with the area education agencies (AEAs) reviews school documents and data, interviews school administration and staff, analyzes surveys of staff members, and builds a detailed profile of the school that is shared with school administration and leadership. In the diagnosis phase, a building leadership team comprised of a principal, central office representative, teachers, and often AEA representatives and parents, collects and analyzes multiple forms of data to provide deeper analysis of a school's weaknesses, conducts a gap analysis of current reality and desired state of a forward-moving building, identifies root causes, and determines possible solutions. In the design phase, the school completes an action plan, identifies key intended changes of stakeholders (e.g., students, teachers, administrators, and parents), determines indicators of progress, links the action plan with scientifically based research, creates an implementation plan, and identifies professional development support to effectively implement the action plan. The implementation plan focuses on executing and monitoring the progression of the action plan, the professional development,

and their impact on student achievement—making sure the activities and tasks are moving forward within the identified timelines or are adjusted based on the review of implementation data. The evaluation phase addresses designing, conducting, and reporting the evaluation of the plan and its impact on student learning.

The SINA process for low-achieving schools has resulted in improved student achievement. Since 2003–2004, when the SINA process was introduced, 36 schools have increased student achievement in reading and/or math to be able to be removed from the SINA list. (See attachment (E)(2)–2, for more information about the SINA schools.)

We have learned several key lessons since the introduction of the SINA/DINA process; these lessons inform Iowa’s approach to turning around our lowest-achieving schools, including:

- The audit by an “outside team” is essential in helping the building recognize their current reality.
- The diagnosis is instrumental in “getting to root cause” and determining the “right work.”
- The design must first identify the critical changes needed in the stakeholders—students, teachers, administrators, and parents. This must then be followed by the identification of evidence for those changes, which results in specific and focused actions and activities to achieve the intended changes.
- Focus must address achievement gaps among school subpopulations—by putting “faces to the data,” assuring interventions at both the supplemental and intensive levels, and implementing a quality core curriculum.
- Monitoring is key to quality implementation—monitoring for both implementation and impact. This requires extensive training of leadership to assure quality in the monitoring.
- Evaluation is *not* an afterthought. The planning for evaluation occurs in the diagnosis and design phases, and is conducted and reported in the implementation and evaluation phases.
- Quality leadership is paramount, and support of those leaders is a must if the school is to build capacity and sustainability in quality of learning and teaching for that learning.

The challenge we face in spite of the successes is that the State system of support does not currently provide enough resources to support all of our persistently lowest-achieving schools in intensive ways, and therefore some of our most struggling schools are dependent upon the luck of having inspired local leadership that can envision bold change and that has the resources to seek out success stories through intensive research on their own. This is neither an equitable nor a sustainable solution for our struggling schools.

Thus, our approach to this portion of our plan is both to expand our infrastructure of support *and* to build a process for disseminating lessons learned among the many schools with which the State has intensive engagements. The Carver Academy gives us confidence that bold transformation can put us on the right track with our most struggling schools.

Goals

With the intensive school supports provided through Race to the Top, School Improvement Grants, and Title I, all of our Tier I and Tier II persistently lowest-achieving schools that implement a turnaround model will move out of the designation within two years of receiving intensive supports through Race to the Top.

In addition, the subset of schools that take part in our Learning Supports program and our Racial Equity Collaborative will eliminate relevant achievement gaps in the elementary grades and reduce gaps in middle and high school by fifty percent by the end of four years.

Due to our scale-up strategy for building implementation capacity, by the fourth year of Race to the Top funding, our Centers for Collaborative Inquiry (CCI) system will be prepared to carry the models for intensive school support statewide to assist all schools that want to undergo this kind of transformation.

Activities

Center for Collaborative Inquiry for Intensive School Support

Funds we receive through Race to the Top will be used to coordinate our fifth Center for Collaborative Inquiry (CCI), this one focused on Intensive School Support. The CCI will work with a subset of participating LEAs to identify additional ways to systemically support, learn from, and engage children and families of color and in poverty, as well as low-achieving students

and schools. The lessons we learn from schools engaged in dramatic reinvention and/or focused attention to eliminating achievement gaps will be important for *all* schools in Iowa. The AEAs invited to join the CCI will have been critical players in the existing SINA/DINA process, coordinating the school support teams and providing content-level and special education expertise. Moving forward, they will work directly with building leadership teams in all phases of the action plan—audit, diagnosis, design, implementation, and evaluation—often leading and always supporting the building. The focus of their work is the achievement of a *systemic* approach to improvement to build capacity and ensure sustainability within the identified building.

CCI staff will include specialists in school turnaround, Learning Supports, and achievement gaps. These new staff will coordinate with current IDE staff in school improvement, accreditation, and Title I, as well as in the AEAs. The CCI will engage internal and external experts to chronicle, analyze, and disseminate best practices from participating LEAs. It will serve as the locus for school audits, identify resources and research on effective practice, provide professional development and facilitation to participating LEAs, monitor the use of LEA subgrants provided for participation in the CCI for Intensive School Support, and evaluate the impact of reforms.

Our first strand of work within this CCI will be to support the persistently lowest-achieving schools within participating LEAs. Our second strand of work within the CCI for Intensive School Support will focus on serving schools with the largest gaps in achievement between average achievement statewide and the achievement of low-income students. Our third strand will focus on overcoming racial disparities.

Strand One: Persistently Lowest-Achieving Schools

We are developing our supports for persistently lowest-achieving schools under our Race to the Top program in conjunction with our plans and requirements for School Improvement Grants (SIG) under Title I of ESEA. The SIG will provide significant funding for each of our Tier I schools. However, we will not be able to provide the same level of financial support to each of our Tier II schools under the SIGs. Therefore, our Race to the Top plans include (1) a statewide system of support for both Tier I and Tier II schools and (2) subgrants to districts with Tier I and Tier II schools that did not receive funding through the SIGs.

Our statewide Race to the Top supports for our persistently lowest-achieving schools will initially be made available to all identified Tier I and Tier II schools that commit to implementing one of the four intervention models outlined in the Race to the Top application. All six of the Tier I schools and six Tier II schools have indicated their readiness to do this by submitting a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the SIG grants (see attachment (E)(2)–3). Within those schools, 65 percent of the students are in poverty and 47 percent are students of color.

We will carry out supports through new turnaround coaches, improving and adapting the SINA/DINA supports, providing differentiated school supports, engaging the school audit process, and providing support in adopting and implementing the intervention model(s).

Turnaround Coaching

Through our SIG funds, we already are sending staff through several training programs that we know are in use in several urban centers. In addition, staff of the CCI for Intensive School Support will include specialists in turnaround coaching. Coaches will work directly with the state’s lowest-achieving schools for three to four years, depending on improvements in student achievement. Coaches will provide mentoring and support to school leadership, as well as broker expertise from other state and area educational agencies, and external partners where appropriate. These external partners will also provide professional development and training to the CCI in order to build capacity at the State level to effectively intervene in the lowest-achieving schools. Turnaround coaches will have experience and knowledge around data, assessment, instructional strategies, curriculum, and community services, and/or collaborate with other experts around these areas. External expertise will help build the state’s ability to apply and follow through with the findings and recommendations from research-based school improvement models, focus on the conditions, contexts, factors, and processes that impact how school teams/educators use data and information for improvement, and connect the results of data analysis to specific instructional decisions and interventions. The selection of coaches will be mutually agreed upon by IDE and the LEAs, with identified persistently lowest-achieving schools.

Improving and Adapting the SINA/DINA Process for Turning Around the Lowest-achieving Schools

While the Iowa Support Team process is an effective strategy for implementing change, team members are limited in their capacity to provide ongoing support and monitoring services to LEAs. Iowa Support Team members provide this service to schools in addition to their full-time assignments. Thus, the team members are intensively involved during the three-month audit, diagnosis, and design phases of the process, but they have limited time to work closely with schools during the implementation and evaluation phases.

Iowa will augment its Iowa Support Team process and design to provide more intense support to LEAs in turning around its lowest-achieving schools through multiple levels of involvement: the IDE, AEAs, LEAs, and the schools themselves. Iowa will support its initially identified lowest-achieving schools for the first three years of the Race to the Top grant. When additional schools are identified in year two or three, they also will be eligible for subgrants for up to three years. Our goal, of course, is to help these schools move off the list of persistently lowest-achieving schools within two years; we recognize, however, that the difficult work of school turnaround taking hold requires more than two years. Our funding continues, therefore, even if schools work their way off the state list.

School Audit and Recommendations for Intervention.

Iowa will enhance its current Iowa Support Team audit phase for turning around its lowest-achieving schools. Once a school is identified as low-achieving, a turnaround coach will be assigned to that school. The coach will identify a team of state, AEA, and local experts to conduct a school audit and provide documentation of the school's performance, using a number of indicators, including but not limited to student performance, resource allocation, data monitoring, professional development, and parent involvement.. This audit will take no longer than 60 days.

The school audit team will recommend to the LEA appropriate school interventions as defined in Race to the Top. The LEA will have 60 days to respond to this recommendation and create an Intervention Plan, which will specify which one of the four federally approved intervention models will be selected for that school. This plan will include the input of the local

teacher bargaining unit. Once the plan is finalized by the LEA, the intervention model will go into effect the following school year.

Intervention Model Adoption and Support

If an LEA chooses the “turnaround” or “transformation” intervention model, a turnaround coach will provide mentoring support and broker expertise as needed. This expertise will be consistent with the requirements of the intervention models and the Iowa Core, and may include the following:

- Data analysis for decision making expertise, which would include expertise in multiple measures of student achievement, data, and data analysis;
- Intervention decisions and follow through, which would include expertise in curriculum and instruction, effective and evidence-based instructional models, and strategies for sustaining improvement efforts;
- Community and school leadership and engagement, which would include expertise on internal and external communication, and effective leadership strategies.

Subgrants for Tier I and Tier II schools

While the IDE retains authority to intervene in Iowa’s lowest-achieving schools, participating LEAs will be the ones to carry out the processes required to select which of the four intervention models to use. Because Iowa’s SIG funds will not fully cover Tier I schools, let alone Tier II secondary schools, we will initially provide subgrants through Race to the Top to Tier I and II schools that agree to implement one of the four reform models. The subgrants can be used to hire a School Administration Manager (SAM) and/or to pay for teacher professional development, after school or summer extended learning opportunities, and/or common planning time. (SAM is a national model funded by the Wallace Foundation that provides an administrative manager to a school in order to free up time for principals to serve as an instructional leader. See attachment (E)(2)–4 for more information on the SAM program.) The total sub-grant amount will range from \$50,000 to \$550,000 per school, depending on building enrollment, model implemented, and number of participating schools.

Evidence		
Approach Used	No. of Schools Since 2004–05	Results and Lessons Learned
Iowa Support System for Schools in Need of Assistance	320 schools served through academic year 2008–2009*	In Iowa, 27 schools** have come off the SINA list since 2004–2005 because they made significant achievement gains and are no longer identified as a school in need of assistance. See explanation above about lessons learned.
<p>* This represents a cumulative total number of schools that were added to the SINA list each academic year. A few schools may have come off the list in one year and then gone back on the list in a subsequent year. Such schools would be counted as having received assistance more than once.</p> <p>** This represents a cumulative total number of schools that were removed to the SINA list each academic year. A few schools may have come off the list in one year, gone back on the list in a subsequent year, and then come off the list again. Such schools would be counted as having received assistance more than once.</p>		

Performance Measures	Actual Data: Baseline (Current school year or most recent)	End of 2010-2011	End of 2011-2012	End of 2012-2013	End of 2013-2014
The number of schools for which one of the four school intervention models will be initiated each year.	NA	12	28	7	10
<p>The four intervention models are new, so we do not currently have schools identified as implementing one of them. During the next academic year, all six of our Tier I schools (with support from the School Improvement Grants) and six of our Tier II schools (through sub-grant support from Race to the Top), will implement one of the four models. These schools will receive support for up to three years.</p> <p>We project five new schools will be placed on the persistently lowest-achieving schools list in year two and 50 percent of the other 23 Tier II schools currently on the list will elect to implement a school intervention model in 2011. Given the increasing trajectory, we project an additional seven schools will go on the list in 2012 and 10 in 2013.</p>					

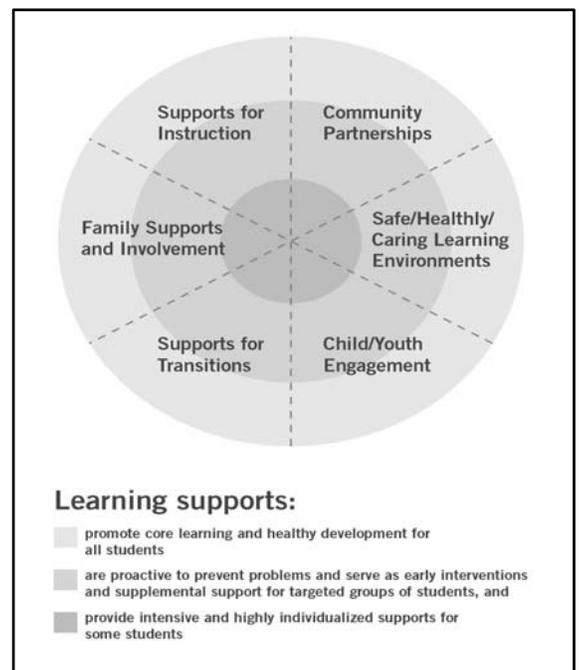
Strand Two: Learning Supports

Iowa is ready to be one of the first states over the next four years to implement and sustain a comprehensive system of learning supports at every school in order to increase the likelihood that students in poverty have an equal opportunity to succeed K–12 and beyond. The work will begin with schools in LEAs participating in Race to the Top that have significant achievement gaps by income. We are serious about going after gaps that have existed for centuries; thus our intensive supports with this subgroup of schools will last the duration of the four-year Race to the Top grant.

Building on the investments the IDE has been making in Learning Supports, we will develop an innovative prototype design for such a comprehensive system of learning supports with the intent of markedly improving how our schools address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students. The system will not only enhance coordination of resources, it will reduce redundancy and redeploy resources by weaving together overlapping school and community efforts to reduce behavior problems (including bullying and other forms of school violence), reduce dropouts and increase graduation rates, close achievement gaps, and better enable students to go on to postsecondary education. It further will increase the number of highly effective educators in our participating schools (see criteria in (B)(3)).

Using a unifying concept, the design unites a full continuum of interventions across six content areas to address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students in classrooms and school-wide (see Figure E–1). The continuum stresses families and communities as critical partners at all levels and alignment and integration at school, district, regional, and state levels. The continuum focuses on three tiers: (1) promoting healthy development and preventing problems (core), (2) intervening as early after onset of a problem as is feasible (supplemental), and (3) providing

Figure E–1. A System of Learning Supports



for those with severe, pervasive, and chronic problems (intensive). The content focus is on six critical, overlapping arenas for classroom and school-wide support. These supports encompass the need for creating the right environment for learning and teaching through a cohesive system that provides: (a) classroom-based strategies designed to enhance engagement and re-engage disconnected students; (b) safe, healthy, and caring learning environments; (c) community partnerships, (d) student engagement and involvement; (e) supports for transition; and (f) family supports and involvement.

It is from the development of such a comprehensive system of learning supports that an increasingly safe and nurturing school climate and culture emerges. And, it is by coalescing all student and learning support resources into a primary school improvement component that schools are better positioned to play a greater role in strengthening students, their families, and their neighborhoods, and to become the heart of their communities.

Strand Three: Racial Equity Collaborative

The CCI for Intensive School Support will carry out a third strand of critical work focused on eliminating achievement gaps among racial subgroups of students. We have a good base for this effort. As a state, we have upheld a historic commitment to fiscal equity (Iowa scored an A, 89.8, on funding equity in the 2010 Education Week Quality Counts Report), so we have an equitable base from which to engage our work to overcome achievement gaps. As noted in Section (D), we also have more experienced teachers in schools serving higher proportions of students of color. Yet, we are recognizing that our strategies to overcome racial achievement gaps have not cracked the historic and persistent patterns of disparity in experience and outcomes that all states face. We believe this is because our education reform strategies to date have focused on improving the capacity of the system overall and strengthening pedagogy and formative assessment in specific subjects through programs such as Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI) in mathematics or Second Chance Reading. While we can demonstrate that our investments in these initiatives have raised achievement of all subgroups—including our students of color—they have not significantly reduced achievement gaps. We are recognizing through our analyses of data and the work underway in identifying disproportionate representation (such as in special education identification or disciplinary actions), that our focus on improving instruction in reading and mathematics has not led us to address as a system the

issues of race and culture that undergird racial disparities. In our Racial Equity Collaborative, we intend to address issues of race head on.

Iowa is a unique place to engage this work. While minority enrollment across the state increased from 5.5 percent a decade ago to 15.5 percent in 2008, Iowa still is a predominantly white state: White children comprise 84.5 percent of Iowa students. Though some of our participating schools and rural communities are majority-minority, overall as a system, our demographics require us to address race in a predominantly white context. Though efforts to face up to race and the legacy of racism that still thwarts student experiences in school are underway in several states and districts, too often these efforts get pulled into conversations about remediation or funding equity, and away from conversations about race. To conduct “courageous conversations” about race in a predominantly white state will indeed be unique. It will be challenging—and it has tremendous possibility for cracking the nut we have not been able to open to date.

We will do this through a collaborative of 10 participating districts and the CCI for Intensive School Support, with involvement by other child-serving agencies and policy leaders. The collaborative will work to develop critical cultural competence, learning to identify underlying forces at play in the system that lead to disparate outcomes. The Racial Equity Collaborative will support each district as they identify and address necessary, targeted, systemic changes related to race, in order to achieve our ambitious goals, which focus on preschool to third grade and STEM subjects in high school. (Our goals are that we will eliminate achievement gaps by race in reading and mathematics in grades two through three; cut achievement gaps by race by 50 percent in grades four, eight, and 11; and increase minority enrollment in STEM majors in college by 10 percent.) We will invite the 10 participating districts with the highest gaps in achievement between students of color and white students to kick off the collaborative, expanding to include the next 10 districts in year two. If we can close gaps in those districts, we will move the needle on achievement statewide.

As noted above, we are serious about going after gaps that have existed for centuries; thus our intensive supports with this subgroup of schools will last the duration of the four-year Race to the Top grant and will focus attention on preschool to third grade, and STEM capabilities in high school. In these ways, we believe the rest of the nation can learn from our earnest approach to overcoming racial disparities in a majority white context.

Timeline and Responsible Parties

ACTIVITIES	(E)(2) TURNING AROUND PERSISTENTLY LOWEST-ACHIEVING SCHOOLS TIMELINE						RESPONSIBLE PARTIES
	FY 2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	
Establish the CCI for Intensive School Supports	■						IDE
Identify PLAS							IDE
Conduct school audit and recommend strategies for intervention selected							CCI
Turnaround Coach works with PLASs							CCI
Implement intervention model and subgrants—Year 1 PLAS							LEA
Implement intervention model and subgrants—Year 2 PLAS							LEA
Implement intervention model and subgrants—Year 3 PLAS							LEA
Implement intervention model and subgrants—Year 4 PLAS							LEA
Evaluate/study impact , share lessons learned and promising practices	■	■	■	■	■	■	CCI, RTTT Director
Continuously improve SINA/DINA process							CCI
Learning Supports districts implement interventions and subgrants							CCI, LEAs
Evaluate/study impact , share lessons learned and promising practices	■	■	■	■	■	■	CCI, RTTT Director
Establish first cohort of the Racial Equity Collaborative							CCI
Establish second cohort of the Racial Equity Collaborative							CCI
Evaluate/study impact , share lessons learned and promising practices	■	■	■	■	■	■	CCI, RTTT Director

(F) General (55 total points)

(F)(1) Making education funding a priority (10 points)

The extent to which—

- (i) The percentage of the total revenues available to the State (as defined in this notice) that were used to support elementary, secondary, and public higher education for FY 2009 was greater than or equal to the percentage of the total revenues available to the State (as defined in this notice) that were used to support elementary, secondary, and public higher education for FY 2008; and
- (ii) The State's policies lead to equitable funding (a) between high-need LEAs (as defined in this notice) and other LEAs, and (b) within LEAs, between high-poverty schools (as defined in this notice) and other schools.

In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Evidence for (F)(1)(i):

- Financial data to show whether and to what extent expenditures, as a percentage of the total revenues available to the State (as defined in this notice), increased, decreased, or remained the same.

Evidence for (F)(1)(ii):

- Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers.

Recommended maximum response length: Three pages

(F)(1)(i) The percentage of the total revenues available to the State (as defined in this notice) that were used to support elementary, secondary, and public higher education for FY 2009 was greater than or equal to the percentage of the total revenues available to the State (as defined in this notice) that were used to support elementary, secondary, and public higher education for FY 2008.

Funding education is a top priority for Iowa, in good times and bad. In fact, during the peak of the most recent economic recession, Iowa continued to increase state support for education, including K–12 and postsecondary, from fiscal year 2008 to fiscal year 2009. In addition, during that same period of time, the overall percentage of the total state budget directed toward education also increased.

A summary of Iowa’s budget for fiscal years 2008 and 2009, and the share allocated for education, follows:

Fiscal Year	Overall State Budget	Education Budget	% for Education
2008	\$5,856,300,000	\$3,146,815,252	53.73%
2009	\$6,133,100,000	\$3,343,305,713	54.51%

(F)(1)(ii) The State’s policies lead to equitable funding (a) between high-need LEAs (as defined in this notice) and other LEAs, and (b) within LEAs, between high-poverty schools (as defined in this notice) and other schools.

Iowa's school funding formula is one of the most equitable in the nation, as established in Chapter 257 of the Iowa Code (IC). This chapter establishes a per-pupil funding amount that is consistent to all schools and is based on the funding allocated divided by the certified annual enrollment. The State’s per pupil funding amounts for the past three years were as follows:

- \$5,333: FY08
- \$5,546: FY09
- \$5,768: FY10

Details about the formula can be found in attachment (F)(1)–1.

This formula has held up over time. Challenges of the equitability of the formula in the court system have all failed. The formula includes provisions for annual allowable growth per year, which ensures that local budgets keep up with increased costs of delivering programming. The formula also includes provisions to ensure that additional funds are available to populations in need and for which programming costs are higher than for the general student population. IC 257.9—10 sets out additional designated funding for students served by Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) programming and for students in grades K–3 who struggle with reading and math (early intervention funds).

Additionally, IC 257.11 includes provisions for supplemental weighting of certain students in order to generate additional funds on top of the state per-pupil amount. This supplemental weighting provides additional assistance to high-need schools and LEAs. Included on that list are at-risk and alternative school students (one criterion for defining at-risk students is high

poverty). Other areas of supplemental weighting include regional and career academies, and district-to-community college course sharing. Finally, IC 280.4 provides additional formula weighting for English language learner (Title III) students.

Conclusion

The commitment of Iowa to increase education funding—during the worst time of the recent economic recession—and increase the per-pupil funding amount, maintain a funding formula tested and proven for its equitability, and utilize methods to provide equitable support for at-risk schools provides a foundation to close any gaps that exist between LEAs, schools, and their students.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools (40 points)

The extent to which—

- (i) The State has a charter school law that does not prohibit or effectively inhibit increasing the number of high-performing charter schools (as defined in this notice) in the State, measured (as set forth in Appendix B) by the percentage of total schools in the State that are allowed to be charter schools or otherwise restrict student enrollment in charter schools;
- (ii) The State has laws, statutes, regulations, or guidelines regarding how charter school authorizers approve, monitor, hold accountable, reauthorize, and close charter schools; in particular, whether authorizers require that student achievement (as defined in this notice) be one significant factor, among others, in authorization or renewal; encourage charter schools that serve student populations that are similar to local district student populations, especially relative to high-need students (as defined in this notice); and have closed or not renewed ineffective charter schools;
- (iii) The State’s charter schools receive (as set forth in Appendix B) equitable funding compared to traditional public schools, and a commensurate share of local, State, and Federal revenues;
- (iv) The State provides charter schools with funding for facilities (for leasing facilities, purchasing facilities, or making tenant improvements), assistance with facilities acquisition, access to public facilities, the ability to share in bonds and mill levies, or other supports; and the extent to which the State does not impose any facility-related requirements on charter schools that are stricter than those applied to traditional public schools; and
- (v) The State enables LEAs to operate innovative, autonomous public schools (as defined in this notice) other than charter schools.

In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Evidence for (F)(2)(i):

- A description of the State's applicable laws, statutes, regulations, or other relevant legal documents.
- The number of charter schools allowed under State law and the percentage this represents of the total number of schools in the State.
- The number and types of charter schools currently operating in the State.

Evidence for (F)(2)(ii):

- A description of the State's approach to charter school accountability and authorization, and a description of the State's applicable laws, statutes, regulations, or other relevant legal documents.
- For each of the last five years:
 - The number of charter school applications made in the State.
 - The number of charter school applications approved.
 - The number of charter school applications denied and reasons for the denials (academic, financial, low enrollment, other).
 - The number of charter schools closed (including charter schools that were not reauthorized to operate).

Evidence for (F)(2)(iii):

- A description of the State's applicable statutes, regulations, or other relevant legal documents.
- A description of the State's approach to charter school funding, the amount of funding passed through to charter schools per student, and how those amounts compare with traditional public school per-student funding allocations.

Evidence for (F)(2)(iv):

- A description of the State's applicable statutes, regulations, or other relevant legal documents.
- A description of the statewide facilities supports provided to charter schools, if any.

Evidence for (F)(2)(v):

- A description of how the State enables LEAs to operate innovative, autonomous public schools (as defined in this notice) other than charter schools.

Recommended maximum response length: Six pages

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools (40 points)

Overview and Current Status

Providing students and their families with choices and options in order to access the best possible education has been a priority in Iowa for years. The State has long provided LEAs and their schools with the opportunity and flexibility to introduce innovative efforts to meet their needs and improve their outcomes. In turn, Iowa’s open enrollment law provides families with the maximum ability to select schools that best serve their needs.

Iowa’s long record of support for innovative schools is consistent with the State’s priority goals in our Race to the Top plan: increase student achievement overall; decrease achievement gaps among student subgroups; increase high school graduation rates; and increase the number of students who complete at least the equivalent of one year of college credit that can be applied toward a degree.

Charter schools are one of several ways in which Iowa has created a climate for successful, innovative schools.

Many innovations that other states must use charter schools to accomplish—from alternative and advanced education programs to lengthening school years—have been realized in Iowa through waivers and exemptions. More than 1,000 exemptions have been granted since 2001. (See Section (F)(2)(v) for further discussion.)

In Iowa, charter schools were first established by the Iowa General Assembly in 2002. Under that law, which was amended in 2008, the State Board of Education could approve up to 20 charter school applications, with no more than one per school district.

Iowa significantly expanded the scope of access to charter schools earlier this year. On January 15, 2010, the Iowa legislature passed Senate File 2033, which Governor Chet Culver signed into law that same day (see attachment (E)(1)–1). Senate File 2033 strengthened Iowa’s charter school law and allowed for additional opportunities for innovation by:

- Removing the current cap of 20 charter school applications;

- Lifting the limit of only one charter school per district;
- Ending the sunset provision on Iowa’s charter law;
- Allowing two or more districts to establish an innovation zone.

School-centered governance, autonomy, and a clear purpose and design for how and what students will learn are the essential characteristics of Iowa’s charter schools. At the center of every charter is a clear statement of mission, goals, philosophy, values, and principles that serve to guide the creation and operation of the learning environment.

Iowa’s charter schools must implement innovative strategies and proven methods for improving student achievement, which are developed around local academic content standards and based on effective, research-based methods and strategies.

Each successful innovative learning environment under Iowa’s charter school law embodies a comprehensive design for effective school functioning including data-driven instruction, assessment, classroom management, professional development, parental involvement, school management, and a commitment to creating a positive learning climate. This design shall align with the school’s curriculum, technology, and professional development.

The Iowa charter school application requires a description of the school’s design and delineates mutual agreements among the charter developer, the local school board, and other parties regarding such issues as the following: budget, employment, contracted services, governance, facilities, special education, content standards, curriculum, and assessment of students.

(F)(2)(i) A description of the State’s applicable laws, statutes, regulation or other relevant legal documents.

The following is a summary of four key components of Iowa law relating to the establishment and governance of charter schools.

Approval Process

Under state law, a charter school may be approved in order to accomplish the following: improve student learning; increase learning opportunities for students; encourage the use of different and innovative methods of teaching; require the measurement of learning outcomes and create different and innovative forms of measuring outcomes; establish new forms of accountability for schools; and create new professional opportunities for teachers and other educators, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program at the school site (IC 256F.1(3)).

Monitoring

In Iowa, the State Board provides for the ongoing review of a charter contract, and periodic reviews are conducted by the Iowa Department of Education (IDE) to ensure continuing compliance (256F.6(3)). All charter schools receive an annual on-site visit by the IDE, and additional technical assistance visits are available by request.

Accountability

Iowa charter schools are required to report, at least annually, to the LEA school board, their advisory council, and the State Board (IC 256F.10). In addition, the State Board submits a comprehensive report to the Iowa legislature each year, which contains the mission statement for each charter school in Iowa, attendance statistics and dropout rates, aggregate assessment test scores, projections of financial stability, the number and qualifications of teachers and administrators, and number of and comments on supervisory visits by the IDE.

Renewal

At the end of the initial four-year contract for a charter school, the LEA school board that established the charter school may act to renew the contract (IC 256F). The school board must hold a public hearing on the issue and submit to the IDE confirmation that a majority of the board voted in favor of the renewal. Also for renewal, a school must show improvement in

student progress on student assessments over that which existed in the same student population prior to the establishment of the charter school.

Closing Charter Schools

Charter schools are held accountable in Iowa and can face the revocation or non-renewal of the contract if (IC 256F.8):

- The school fails to abide by and meet the provisions set forth in the contract, including their educational goals;
- The school fails to comply with all applicable law;
- The school fails to meet generally accepted public sector accounting principles;
- There exists one or more other grounds for revocation as specified in the contract; or
- Assessment of student progress, which is administered in accordance with State and locally determined indicators established pursuant to rules adopted by the State Board, does not show improvement in student progress over that which existed in the same student population prior to the establishment of the charter school.

The revocation or non-renewal of a charter can take place in one of three ways:

- The LEA school board considering the contract with its charter school may vote on such action after notifying the advisory council, families, and the teachers and administrators employed by the charter school. Such action is subject to appeal.
- The State Board may revoke a charter school contract, after notifying the LEA school board and advisory council in writing of the grounds for the proposed action.
- A charter school may voluntarily revoke its charter school contract by giving notice to the school board, the advisory council, and the IDE of its intent to cease as a charter school for the immediate successive school year.

(F)(2)(i) The number of charter schools allowed under State law and the percentage this represents of the total number of schools in the State.

In 2002, the Iowa legislature set a cap of 10 charter schools, with a limit of one charter school per LEA. The law was amended in 2008 to increase the cap to 20 charter schools. The law was further revised in 2010 to remove the cap on the number of charter schools, as well as lift the limit of one charter school per district.

A total of seven charter schools currently operate in Iowa, which represents 0.5 percent of the 1,389 elementary, middle school, junior high, and high school buildings in the state during the 2008–2009 school year.

(F)(2)(i) The number and types of charter schools currently operating in the State.

Since Iowa’s Phase One application was submitted, the State Board has approved a charter school application on behalf of the Des Moines Independent Community School District, the state’s largest LEA; this charter school will serve at-risk middle school students.

The following is a list of all charter schools currently operating in Iowa:

<p>Iowa Central Charter School (11–12th Grade) Southeast Webster Community School District P.O. Box 49 30850 Paragon Avenue Burnside, Iowa 50521-0049 515-359-2235 Administrator: Mike Jorgenson</p>	<p>Storm Lake/Iowa Central/Buena Vista Early College Charter High School (9–12th Grade) Storm Lake Community School District P.O. Box 638 Storm Lake, Iowa 50588-0638 Administrator: Michael J. Hanna</p>
<p>Prescott Elementary School (9–12th Grade) Dubuque Community School District 1151 White Street Dubuque, Iowa 52001 563-552-4200 Administrator: Christine McCarron</p>	<p>Elma Elementary Charter School (K–6th Grade) Howard-Winneshiek Community School District P.O. Box 56 120 West Jackson Elma, Iowa 52155 Administrator: Robert Hughes</p>
<p>Northeast Iowa Charter High School (9–12th Grade) West Central Community School District P.O. Box 54 Maynard, Iowa 50655-0054 563-637-2283</p>	<p>Panorama Charter School (9–12th Grade) Panorama Community School District 701 West Main - P.O. Box 39 Panora, Iowa 50216 641-755-2317</p>

Administrator: Jim Patera	Administrator: Mark Johnson
eSigourney Entrepreneurial Academy for Leadership (7–12th Grade) Sigourney Community School District 107 W. Marion Sigourney, IA 51591 641-622-2025 Administrator: Jason Munn	

(F)(2)(ii) The State has laws, statues, regulations, or guidelines regarding how charter school authorizers approve, monitor, hold accountable, reauthorize and close charter school; in particular, whether authorizers require that student achievement (as defined in this notice) be one significant factor, among others, in authorization or renewal; encourage charter schools that serve student populations that are similar to local district student populations, especially relative to high-need students (as defined in this notice); and have closed or not renewed ineffective charter schools.

(F)(2)(ii) A description of the State’s approach to charter school accountability and authorization, and a description of the State’s applicable laws, statues, regulations, or other relevant legal documents.

Please refer to the summary of Iowa law included in the evidence for Section (F)(2)(i).

Following are charter school statistics for each of the last five years:

	2005–2006	2006–2007	2007–2008	2008–2009	2009–2010
Charter school applications made	3	0	0 2 2		
Charter school applications approved	2	0	0 0 2		
Charter school applications denied	1 application withdrawn	0 0		1 not eligible 1 did not address criteria	0
Charter schools closed	0 1	voluntary withdrawal	1 voluntary withdrawal	1 voluntary withdrawal	0

(F)(2)(iii) The State’s charter schools receive (as set forth in Appendix B) equitable funding compared to traditional public schools, and a commensurate share of local, State, and Federal revenues.

Charter schools in Iowa operate as public schools, with the charter agreement between the State Board and the LEA (IC 256F.6). As such, for the purposes of funding, there is complete equity between charter and non-charter schools in the per-student funding formulas.

(F)(2)(iii) A description of the State’s applicable statutes, regulations, or other relevant legal documents.

The following is a summary of the sections of the Iowa Code pertaining to funding for charter schools in the State:

- **256F.1(1)**: Charter schools shall be part of the State’s program of public education.
- **256F.4(2)(c)**: [A charter school shall be] free of tuition and application fees to Iowa resident students between the ages of five and 21 years.
- **256F.4(2)(e)**: Provide special education services in accordance with Chapter 256B.
- **256F.4(2)(g)**: Be subject to and comply with Chapter 284 relating to the student achievement and teacher quality program. A charter school that complies with Chapter 284 shall receive state moneys or be eligible to receive state moneys as provided in Chapter 284 as if it did not operate under a charter.
- **256F.4(2)(i)**: Be subject to and comply with the provisions of Chapter 285 relating to the transportation of students.
- **S56F.4(7)**: A charter school shall be considered a part of the school district in which it is located for purposes of state school foundation aid pursuant to Chapter 257.
- **256F.5(7)**: The financial plan for the operation of the school including, at a minimum, a listing of the support services the school district will provide, and the charter school’s revenues, budgets, and expenditures.

(F)(2)(iii) A description of the State’s approach to charter school funding, the amount of funding passed through to charter schools per student, and how those amounts compare with traditional public school per-student funding allocations.

Under Iowa’s school finance formula, the State provides the same amount of per-student funding to charter schools as it does to all public schools.

As discussed in Section F(1)(ii), Iowa's school funding formula is one of the most equitable in the nation. Iowa Code Chapter 257 is the chapter of state law that defines this formula. State law establishes a per-pupil funding amount that is consistent among all schools—including charter schools—and is based on funding allocated divided by certified annual enrollment.

The state’s per pupil funding amounts for the following years were as follows:

- FY 2008: \$5,333
- FY 2009: \$5,546
- FY 2010: \$5,768

In addition, as noted in Section (F)(1)(ii), state law includes provisions for supplemental weighting of certain students in order to generate additional funds on top of the state per-pupil amount. This supplemental weighting provides additional assistance to high-need schools and LEAs. Included on that list are at-risk and alternative schools students (one criterion for defining at-risk students is high-poverty). Other areas of supplemental weighting include regional and career academies, and district-to-community college course sharing. Finally, state law provides additional formula weighting for English language learner (Title III) students. These supplemental weighting provisions apply to both non-charter and charter public schools.

(F)(2)(iv) The State provides charter schools with funding for facilities (for leasing facilities, purchasing facilities, or making tenant improvements), assistance with facilities acquisition, access to public facilities, the ability to share in bonds and mill levies, or other supports; and the extent to which the State does not impose any facility-related requirements on charter schools that are stricter than those applied to traditional public schools.

Because charter schools in Iowa are contracted and established with public school districts—and operate as public schools—they have the same benefits available under the law as non-charter schools when it comes to financing school facilities and infrastructure needs.

(F)(2)(iv) A description of the State’s applicable statutes, regulations, or other relevant legal documents.

The following is a summary of the sections of the Iowa Code pertaining to funding for charter school facilities in the State (see attachment (F)(2)–1):

- **256F.1(1):** Charter schools shall be part of the State’s program of public education.
- **256F.4(2)(c):** [A charter school shall be] free of tuition and application fees to Iowa resident students between the ages of five and 21 years.
- **256F.4(2)(e):** Provide special education services in accordance with Chapter 256B.
- **256F.4(2)(g):** Be subject to and comply with Chapter 284 relating to the student achievement and teacher quality program. A charter school that complies with Chapter 284 shall receive state moneys or be eligible to receive state moneys as provided in Chapter 284 as if it did not operate under a charter.
- **256F.4(2)(i):** Be subject to and comply with the provisions of Chapter 285 relating to the transportation of students.
- **S56F.4(7):** A charter school shall be considered a part of the school district in which it is located for purposes of state school foundation aid pursuant to Chapter 257.
- **256F.4(8):** A charter school may enter into contracts in accordance with Chapter 26.
- **256F.5(7):** The financial plan for the operation of the school including, at a minimum, a listing of the support services the school district will provide, and the charter school’s revenues, budgets, and expenditures.
- **256F.5(11):** The provision of school facilities.

(F)(2)(iv) A description of the statewide facilities supports provided to charter schools, if any.

Because charter schools in Iowa are part of the public LEA, there is no difference in the statewide facilities support provided to charter schools than to other public schools. While facilities are primarily funded by revenue generated at the local level, Iowa does provide statewide funding options that LEAs can utilize to fund school facility-related projects, including their charter school facilities. Three primary examples include local option sales tax, physical plant and equipment levy, and public education and recreation levy.

Local Option Sales Tax

In 2008, the Iowa legislature enacted a statewide one cent sales tax to replace a local option tax that had been enacted in all 99 Iowa counties over the previous decade. The proceeds from the statewide sales tax are used for a combination of school infrastructure funding and property tax relief (Hour File 2663).

Physical Plant and Equipment Levy

Iowa provides LEAs with the ability to annually certify a regular Physical Plant and Equipment Levy (PPEL). Revenues from PPEL may be used for purchase and improvement of grounds; construction and demolition; payment of debt principal related to construction; acquisition of a single unit of equipment or technology exceeding \$500 in value per unit; remodeling or repair of facilities; energy conservation; facility rental; acquisition of facilities, transportation equipment, or recreation equipment; and payment of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) obligations (IC 298.2.).

Public Education and Recreation Levy

The voters in each LEA may approve a Public Education and Recreation Levy (PERL), which continues to be authorized until voters rescind. Revenues from the PERL are used to establish and maintain public recreation places and playgrounds in the public school buildings and grounds of the district. PERL revenues are also used to provide public educational and recreational activities within the district and for community education (IC 300 and IC 276).

(F)(2)(v) The State enables LEAs to operate innovative, autonomous public schools (as defined in this notice) other than charter schools.

In order to provide students and their families with choices and options to access the best possible education, the State provides LEAs and their schools with the opportunity and flexibility to introduce innovative efforts to meet their needs and improve their outcomes.

Innovative schools across Iowa are diverse and includes: magnet schools; Montessori, International Baccalaureate, advance, career and alternative programs; block schedules; extended school-day; year-round scheduling; and project-based learning. Iowa law allows for

LEAs and schools to seek exemptions from State requirements in order to implement innovative and autonomous efforts to meet their educational needs. While a rigorous review is conducted of each request, more than 1,000 exemptions have been granted since 2001.

In addition, Iowa’s open enrollment law provides families with choice in selecting schools that best serve their needs and provides accessibility to innovative schools across the state.(F)(2)(v) A description of how the State enables LEAs to operate innovative, autonomous public schools other than charter schools.

In Iowa, a school or school district may seek State approval for an exemption from the general accreditation requirements. As part of the approval process, a school or school district must submit the following information in support of their request:

- The standard or standards for which the exemption is requested.
- A rationale for each exemption requested, in particular how the approval of the request will assist the school or school district to improve student achievement or performance as described in its comprehensive school improvement plan.
- The sources of supportive research evidence and information, when appropriate, that were analyzed and used to form the basis of each submitted rationale.
- How the school or school district staff collaborated with the local community or with the school improvement advisory committee about the need for the exemption request.
- Evidence that the school board approved the exemption request.
- A list of the indicators that will be measured to determine success.
- How the school or school district will measure the success of the standards exemption plan on improving student achievement or performance.

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

The extent to which the State, in addition to information provided under other State Reform Conditions Criteria, has created, through law, regulation, or policy, other conditions favorable to education reform or innovation that have increased student achievement or graduation rates, narrowed achievement gaps, or resulted in other important outcomes.

In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State’s success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location

where the attachments can be found.

Evidence for (F)(3):

- A description of the State’s other applicable key education laws, statutes, regulations, or relevant legal documents.

Recommended maximum response length: Two pages

Overview and Current Status

Iowa has long been a leader in education and academic achievement. Part of that success is due to the state’s history of supporting efforts that create and support innovative programs—programs that are not prescriptive but are collaborative with LEAs to find the best possible solutions that contribute to success.

In addition to innovative efforts noted in Section (F)(2)—including the state’s current charter school law, innovation made possible through Iowa’s opportunity for school districts to receive waivers, and the state’s open enrollment law—the following are examples of programs currently helping Iowa schools to increase achievement and improve graduation rates:

- The Iowa Core
- Innovation Zones
- Senior Year Plus
- Competency-Based Promotion

The combination of Iowa’s successful record of education achievement and innovation along with the support made possible through Race to the Top will ensure that students and teachers in our state will find success within and beyond the classroom.

(F)(3) A description of the State’s other applicable key education laws, statutes, regulations, or relevant legal documents.

Iowa Core

The vision for the Iowa Core is to ensure the success of each and every student by providing a world-class curriculum. The Iowa Core is designed to improve achievement of all students, preparing them for the world of work and lifelong learning. It identifies the essential content and instruction that all students must experience.

Implementation of the Iowa Core increases the likelihood that all students become lifelong learners, productive adults, and engaged citizens. It engages them in more relevant learning experiences and helps them attain deeper knowledge through problem solving and inquiry. Under the Iowa Core, instruction focuses on challenging students and providing assessments that provide feedback to tailor instruction and maximize the potential of each and every learner.

The Iowa Core—together with the state core content standards—provides rigorous expectations for all students and gives teachers the tools to change teaching and learning in this state. It also means Iowa will be ready to incorporate national standards because the Iowa Core provides explicit guidance to reach high expectations.

The governor proposed that the Iowa Core be fully implemented by all Iowa schools—public and accredited nonpublic—and signed Senate File 2216 into law May 1, 2008. The legislation requires full implementation in high schools by July 1, 2012 and in K–8 schools by 2014–2015.

Note: The Iowa Core is more fully explained and discussed in Section (A)(1) of this application.

Innovation Zones

Iowa has long been a leader in education and academic achievement. Part of that success is due to the state’s history of supporting reform efforts that create and support innovative programs.

The first piece of legislation signed into law in 2010, Senate File 2033, modified Iowa Code to lift some regulations and requirements from schools working in **Innovation Zones**. This legislation allows for a consortium of two or more districts to work together with an area education agency (AEA) to establish innovative practices. Districts and AEAs in approved Innovation Zones will have greater flexibility to:

- Create different organizational structures for learners;
- Allow greater flexibility to meet the educational needs of Iowa’s diverse and changing student population;
- Allow resources to be allocated in innovative ways through specialized school budgets.

Districts and AEAs in Innovation Zones will be granted waivers from allowable regulations when it is determined that regulations get in the way of innovation.

Senior Year Plus

Senior Year Plus (SYP) was enacted by the Iowa legislature in 2008. The statute consolidated and standardized several long-existing programs established in the late 1980s that provided college credit coursework to high school students. Senior Year Plus was created to provide increased and more equal access to college credit and advancement placement courses. Courses delivered through Senior Year Plus provide students the opportunity to take a rigorous college curriculum and receive, in many cases, both high school and college credit concurrently.

Each year, tens of thousands of Iowa high school students get a jumpstart on college by earning credit toward a degree. These jointly enrolled students are afforded the opportunity to save money by shortening their time to a postsecondary credential while acclimating to higher education coursework. Through Senior Year Plus, school districts are provided with a variety of options to enhance students' high school experience. Major components of this program include the following.

Advanced Placement (AP)[®]

College-level courses offered by high schools, with curriculum requirements and optional tests provided by the College Board. Based on the examination score and postsecondary institution's policies, students may be eligible for credit or advanced standing at the college or university they attend.

Post Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO)

The Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act was enacted in 1987 to promote rigorous academic pursuits by providing students access to part-time enrollment in postsecondary institutions. Now offered through Senior Year Plus, the program is available to eligible juniors and seniors as well as freshmen and sophomores identified as gifted and talented.

Concurrent Enrollment

The concurrent enrollment program—also known as district-to-community college sharing—promotes rigorous academic, career, or technical pursuits by providing students access to part-

time enrollment in courses through community colleges. Courses are offered through contractual agreements between community colleges and school districts within their service area.

Career Academies

Career academies are programs of study offered to high school students through an agreement or contract between their high school and an Iowa community college. In Iowa, career academies are programs of study that combine a minimum of two years of secondary education with an associate degree in a career preparatory program.

Competency-based Promotion

Awarding credit to students based on student performance instead of instructional time is an option Iowa educators have had for years, as long as students could demonstrate competency. Iowa Administrative Code 12.5(15) states that credit can be earned in the following way:

“A student shall receive a credit or a partial credit upon successful completion of a course which meets one of the criteria in subrule 12.5(14). The board may award credit on a performance basis through the administration of an examination, provided the examination covers the content ordinarily included in the regular course.”

Innovation also is made possible through Iowa’s opportunity for school districts to receive waivers and the state’s open enrollment law.

Conclusion, For Now

Our Race to the Top application opened with the story of ██████████ who as a freshman at East Marshall High School was on the way to dropping out. Fortunately for ██████████ and his peers, Iowa’s policy conditions allowed their principal to experiment with a donated 3-D virtual reality lab and create a robust learning environment that accelerated their learning and opened new pathways beyond high school. Fortunately for Iowa, the experience demonstrated how committed educators can change the way they do their work to engage students—and re-engage themselves—in learning. Using this story as a beacon, we will transform education in Iowa to a competency-based, innovative, and equitable system. The need for this transformation is urgent.

Our Race to the Top plan will ensure we can provide robust, engaging learning environments not just for the students at East Marshall High School, but for each and every child in Iowa.