Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 1

Maine Application #2950ME-10

A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	**65**	**23**
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	3
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	14
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	6

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

i) The application describes the five interrelated elements of the State's plan that generally address the four ARRA areas. The focus on standards and individualized learning build on prior state efforts and are a strength of the application. However, the clear and credible path to achieving these goals is much less evident.

ii) The MOU is similar to the model one; however, there is an "opt-out" clause for bargaining units that diminishes the potential impact.

iii) Only 38% of LEAs and 63% of schools will be participating statewide, which is not high representation. Of the participating districts, of concern is that only 78% had Local School Board President signatures, and only 30% had Local Teacher Union Leader signatures. The lack of teacher support is a critical weakness. By the time the State reduces the participating LEAs by those that have significant support of critical stakeholders, the lack of LEA participation is a weakness in ensuring broad impact. The application states that the RTTT effort will reach 70% of all students and only 59% of highest need students, which only indicates partial statewide impact on the students critical to closing the achievement gap. Though the state's achievement rates are already fairly high, student achievement goals are not ambitious and there isn't a stated rationale for how they were set. The plan only vaguely addresses closing the achievement gaps and how the State will improve from an 80% to 90% graduation rate.

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	**30**	**18**
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	14
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	4

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

i) The plan articulates an existing organizational structure that would add RTTT accountability to it's responsibilities. It is positive that the recent reorganization of the Maine Dept. of Education (MDE) has resulted in increased alignment of the organization to the RTTT assurance areas and priorities increasing the likelihood that the capacity of existing MDE staff could be built to sustain the reform effort after the RTTT funding ends. The inclusion of leadership from other involved agencies such as the Higher Education Commission is positive. However, it is not clear how this very large effort will just be integrated into existing efforts without a specific plan which is not articulated here. The primary SEA support to LEAs described will be through dedicated support teams and consultants, funding for professional development and continuous

evaluation; however, much of the detail about the how the State will monitor and provide these supports is missing so it is not clear what the actual implementation plan would be. The plan is heavily dependent upon external contractors, again without much detail on how their efforts will be integrated with existing efforts. The budget reflects the high reliance on external resources throughout the duration of the grant and raises the question of how the reform efforts will continue after the funding ends.

ii) The application includes indicated support from the State's legislative leadership, higher education, the administrative association, school board association, the business community and various other educational partners. However, key support from the State's principal and teacher associations and parent constituencies is not included and considered a significant weakness.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	**30**	**19**
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	3
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	16

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

i) The plan describes a well-developed content standards process that began in 1997 and briefly describes a school improvement effort that has been implemented with Title I schools. However, their state longitudinal data system has only been in place since 2007 which suggests a relatively new effort in regards to data systems. Additionally, the plan does not describe any efforts to assess teacher and principal effectiveness in relation to student achievement and only mentions distance learning as the method for ensuring statewide access to high quality teachers.

ii) The State describes prior student achievement gains in the state assessments and a generally high level of achievement on the NAEP. However, NAEP scores in reading and mathematics have been relatively flat since 2003 and achievement gaps have not decreased. The graduation rate has dropped but the State attributes this to changes in the calculation method. No direct connections between interventions and student achievement increase were described that would indicate that the planned interventions would result in improved outcomes.

Total	125	60

B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1
(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards	**40**	**37**
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20
(ii) Adopting standards	20	17

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

i) The State is participating in the Common Core State Standards Initiative, which includes a significant number of states.

ii) The State has committed to adopting the Common Core Standards during the summer of 2010 to be complete by the end of August. An Emergency Rulemaking Process is described that may or may not enable the standards to be adopted by August 2, 2010.

(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	**10**	**9**

(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality assessments	5	4
(ii) Including a significant number of States	5	5

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

i) As described in the applications, the State is participating in several consortia to develop assessments including the SMARTER consortium but the specific content and quality of each assessment set is not clearly stated .

ii) The appendices includes the list of 33 states participating in the SMARTER assessment consortium, of which Maine is a governing member.

(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	**20**	**8**

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

The State describes that it will be implementing a variety of formative and summative assessments which is a strength and provides a general plan for the "rollout" of the new standards and assessments. However, the articulated plan provides few implementation details so it is not clear how this rollout will be accomplished. Many of the timelines are too broad ("Beginning in the Fall of 2010 and continuing through 2014, the State will develop and provide support for regional collaboratives) to be useful for implementation or monitoring. Finally, the plan describes the implementation of many new assessments without a clear indication of how each will be used and overall how they are aligned.

Total	70	54

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

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

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

The plan articulates implementation of 11 of the 12 America COMPETES Act elements (12 is missing).

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

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

The description of how the state would build a system for accessing and using data represents a positive effort to integrate various data systems. The State does not provide a description of the implementation details for how it will ensure that all stakeholders are able to fully access the data, as well as the comprehensive training to address how to help stakeholders review, examine, and interpret their data. The State has convened a Data Management Team to work collaboratively with LEAs to discuss the implications and benefits of using the longitudinal data systems, but details regarding actual implementation are very general and the goals for implementing such a robust system so ambitious that they appear to be unrealistic. The table that outlines the implementation goals and activities includes some activities for which the timeline is so general (Dec 2009-Apr 2015) that it is effectively meaningless.

(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	**18**	**4**
(i) Increasing the use of instructional improvement systems	6	2

(ii) Supporting LEAs, schools, and teachers in using instructional improvement systems	6	2
(iii) Making the data from instructional improvement systems available to researchers	6	0

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

i) The plan very briefly describes that the State will develop statewide benchmark/formative assessments for the new standards, which is very ambitious and that these assessments will be used by teachers to inform instruction but there is little detail as to how that will be implemented. The plan also indicates that these 'real-time' formative assessments will be tied to assessing teacher effectiveness and lead to identifying professional development needs for teachers, without sufficient detail as to how this would happen.

ii) As described in the plan support to LEAs, schools and teachers in using the Maine's Formative assessment System for Teachers (MeFAST) will be accomplished by SEA-provided data coaches who would train school and district personnel. The proposal very briefly describes this significant activity and includes a table with three goals and related activities; however, the timeframe for the majority of the activities is too broad (June 2011 - Feb 2014) for it to be useful for tracking or actual implementation. Also, this significant aspect of the reform agenda is heavily dependent on an unnamed external vendor(s) so the capacity of the State to implement this is difficult to assess.

iii) This goal is very briefly stated with no supporting detail as to how it would actually be implemented.

Total	47	29

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	**21**	**3**
(i) Allowing alternative routes to certification	7	1
(ii) Using alternative routes to certification	7	0
(iii) Preparing teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage	7	2

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

i) The State does currently have alternative routes to certification for teachers (principals are not mentioned), but they are all within institutions of higher education and only include one of the provisions defined by the notice (they provide supervised, school-based experiences).

ii) No information about how many teachers or principals have been certified through the alternative routes is included in the application.

iii) The application described areas of shortage and an overall percentage of teachers in shortage areas, but did not include specific quantitative information about which areas were of greatest need. The description of the EFM Loan Program is a good example of an incentive for teachers to serve in areas of need; however, information regarding the number of teachers eligible for this program is not indicated so it is unknown the impact that this program will have in addressing the problem, nor is it clear that this program would actually address the areas of shortage. The application describes a committee of stakeholders that has been convened to develop a plan for resolve the shortages, which is a start, but not a plan that can be implemented. No description of incentives or a strategy for preparing principals is described.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	**58**	**18**

(i) Measuring student growth	5	1
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	4
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	3
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	10

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

i) Given that the state has just recently begun to track individual student data, implementing a Multi-faceted Professional Accountability System (MPAS) that will be able to link student growth to teacher and principal effectiveness and be fully operational by Fall 2012 as stated in the plan is very ambitious, and given the lack of implementation detail, probably unrealistic. Additionally, the plan appears to have multiple aspects that are variable and could compromise the integrity of the program such as using measure other than NECAP, or using a locally developed system instead of the MPAS.

ii) The plan describes that the State will permit the use of either the MPAS or a 'locally developed system deemed as equivalent in design, rigor and focus' which provides a level of flexibility that potentially weakens the strength of the proposal. Additionally this local model may need to be approved by a stakeholder group, but does not define the stakeholder group or the approval process. The performance measures for this aspect of the plan only identify 35% of participating LEAs as the target for implementation by the end of the grant, which is very low.

iii) The description of the evaluation systems that incorporate indicators of teacher and principal effectiveness based on student performance is very general and only describes that the MPAS annual evaluation system makes 'possible', not that it will ensure this aspect of evaluation. Annual teacher evaluations are only broadly described and the nature of timeliness and quality of feedback to teachers is not described. Principal evaluation based on student achievement is only vaguely mentioned.

iv) A general implementation plan with a timeline is articulated but does not include many details. The MPAS Project Goals address the five required areas; however, as indicated in the Performance Measures, by the end of the grant (2014) the targets for the percentage of participating LEAs that would be using the evaluation systems to inform teacher or principal compensation, promotion or removal of ineffective professionals is very low.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	**25**	**7**
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	5
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	2

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

i) The State has defined high-poverty and high-minority schools that meets the definition of the notice; however the definition of effective teachers and principals does not appear to include student achievement growth. Additionally, the targets for ensuring this equitable distribution by the end of the grant are very low (30-50%).

ii) The State has identified specific areas of teacher shortages (lists them) and briefly describes that technical assistance that was previously provided that focused on offering professional development opportunities to address these areas. However, it is not clear that the technical assistance was effective because no data is provided that links the professional development to decreasing these teacher shortages, particularly in high-needs schools.

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

(ii) Expanding effective programs	7	0

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

i) While the plan indicates that "many" of Maine's public and private educator preparation programs have agreed in a 'Statement of Purpose' to transition to a system based on Maine's 10 Initial Teacher Certification Standards linked to "national teacher certification standards and Maine's content standards", there is no implementation plan for how this would happen. Additionally, given that the tracking of individual student achievement data is a relatively new effort for the state, it is very ambitious to indicate that the effectiveness of these preparation programs could be effectively linked to the preparation institutions. However, given that there are only 16 teacher and 8 principal credentialing programs in the state, perhaps this is more achievable than it initially appears. The lack of detail in an implementation plan makes it difficult to assess.

ii) The application does not indicate how the State would expand effective programs.

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

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

i) The plan articulates a leadership development effort based on prior efforts in the Maine Leadership Academy. It appears that this is primarily for principals but some of the content refers to teacher leadership so it is unclear who the exact audience is. Also, the number of participants identified in the plan is for three cohorts of 30 individuals or 90 over the course of the grant period. This appears to be inadequate for supporting the teachers and principals in the 412 participating schools. Specific details regarding common planning and collaborations for teachers and principals that are job -embedded are not described. Specific strategies for improvement such as differentiated instruction (particularly for specific high-needs students) are mentioned but no implementaion details included.

ii) The plan states that the professional development system will include ongoing evaluation and that an external firm or consultants will be engaged to assist. Because of the lack of implementation detail, it is unclear what the evaluation activities will be and also unclear how the results would be used to inform and improve other professional development.

Total	138	37

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

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

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

As described in the application, legislation currently exists that allows the State to intervene both in persistently low-achieving schools and LEAs.

(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	**40**	**28**
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	23

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

i) The application has articulated a method for identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools as defined by the notice.

ii) The application describes that each of the four school intervention models could be used and therefore addresses the requirement of the notice. The State has demonstrated prior success with turning around a considerable number of Title I low-achieving schools which indicates that they can build on this success. The application identifies an "Improvement Network" as a system of support and a Turnaround Team of School Consultants that would be comprised of former administrators. These teams would also work with the regional improvement teams to evaluate outcomes on a regular basis. The plan also describes intensive support for dropout prevention that incorporates the Jobs for Maine's Graduates (JMG) which has demonstrated previous success. Each of these aspects of the turnaround plan is evidence that the State could be successful in future turnaround efforts.

However, given that the State has been using these strategies with the persistently lowest-achieving districts, it is unclear what additional intervention will be provided in a systemic way to stimulate improvement. Additionally, the description of the framework or structure that would be used by all schools is limited. Significant customization of the activities and implementation plan is required for each school so it is difficult to determine how systemic the reform efforts would be.

Total	50	38

F. General

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

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

i) The percentage of the state revenue allocated to education was greater in 2009 (43%) than in 2008 (40%).

ii) The application described provisions for equitable funding for high-needs LEAs but no provision for equitable funding for high-needs schools within LEAs.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	**40**	**5**
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	0
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	0
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	0
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	0
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	5

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

i - iv) None of these criteria are addressed in the application.

v) Legislation was enacted in early 2010 that enabled LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools and it appears that several have applied for approval. Most aspects of the definition in the notice were addressed with the exception of budgetary control.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	**5**	**2**

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

The application describes the following reform activities:

- AP4All
- increased graduation goals
- STEM plan
- preschool effort
- school administrative reorganization act

Documentation of increased enrollment in AP classes was cited in several LEA's. Without additional information it is unclear that these activities represented significant reform in the State.

Total	55	15

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

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

Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The description of STEM activities was not coherent or pervasive throughout the application. Of the three categories of a high-quality plan to address the STEM priority, the only one that the description met was that of collaborating and cooperating with various partners. It did not describe a rigorous course of study in the STEM areas, and specifically did not address the needs of underrepresented groups and of women and girls.

Total	15	0

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		**No**

Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The application describes goals for each of the RTTT reform areas but lacks specificity regarding how the State would actualize each goal. This is a major weakness. The application is very general throughout and the lack of clarity about what would actually be implemented is problematic. The relatively low participation of districts statewide in combination with the low support teacher associations and the low targets for implementation indicate a low level of statewide impact on student achievement (particularly for high-needs students).

Total		0

Grand Total	500	233

Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 1

Maine Application #2950ME-5

A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	**65**	**39**
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	24
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	10

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

(i) The state is moving forward to create personalized learning opportunities for all students. This overall plan is focused on Maine's vision- its people will be among 'the best educated in the world'. The plan addresses standards and assessments, expanding the longitudinal data system, creating new educator evaluation systems and addressing school achievement for low performing schools.

The approach appears unique for a statewide K12 education system, especially in areas related to personalized learning, laptop initiative/focus on technology, and the systems supports to assist students and teachers. The reform plan is impressive in many ways.

The reform plan at first did not appear to have a focus around persistently low performing schools, but subsequent sections of the proposal present the Maine plan and their success rate of improved student achievement. The work around persistently low performing schools in Maine has produced impressive results.

(ii) The MOU provided in the appendix contains both required components and optional components. Of concern is the level of commitment from various required groups. The number of LEA commitments includes an opt-out clause for LEAs, and apparently many of the LEAs have taken advantage of this option. It appears as if the Maine reform plan has not attracted strong support from teacher union groups. Overall there are key issues with the securing of LEA commitments for the reform plan.

The scope of work descriptions requiring LEAs to implement all or significant portions of the RttT plan is questionable, with both required and optional components included. Maine appears to have difficulty creating a program to tie student achievement to educator evaluations. In addition, the focus in the plan for great teachers and principals focuses almost exclusively on teachers. Principals are mentioned in various parts of the section on great teachers and principals, but the quality of strategies to meet the criterion are limited to discussion and little concrete action re: these strategies.

(iii) A significant number of the LEAs are participating in the RttT plans, with all superintendents on board and 78% of school board presidents. Only 30% of teacher unions are committed via the MOU, and there is no explanation for these discrepancies. The participation of LEAs, in terms of superintendents is a positive signal that LEA participation has the potential to produce strong statewide impact. The overall support of many of the school board presidents also is a positive sign for the potential of state-wide impact. However, the lack of strong teacher support is cause for concern.

The data provided regarding NAEP and ESEA subgroup performance show an overall positive trend for subgroups from 2003-2009. Of note is the plan to raise NAEP scores by 2-3% from one testing cycle to the next, yet no explanation of how this will be accomplished. Setting arbitrary goals without defining the steps to be taken raises serious concerns.

Maine has both positive programs and results in place to build a foundation for statewide impact. LEAS appear to have been successful in the positive, steady growth in student achievement over the past few years (2003-2009). On the other hand, the proposal acknowledges a need to focus on high school achievement and graduation rates. Steps taken to address ways to increase college enrollments are impressive through increased accountability at the high school and higher education levels.

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	**30**	**21**
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	14
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	7

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

(i) Most of the LEAs are participating in the RttT plans, with all superintendents on board and 78% of school board presidents. The state appears to have built strong support from all component parts of state and community, with the exception of the teacher unions, and appears to have the capacity to implement the proposed plan. The lack of the Maine Teacher Union signature on the RttT plan impacts the state-wide capacity, but overall the level of support appears to be strong, as evidenced by the breadth of support at all levels- federal, state and local official letters of support.

The plan proposes extensive professional development to support implementation of RttT initiatives. This is an example of the support that appears extensively throughout the grant application to demonstrate strong support for LEAs. Of significance, Maine has 82 LEAs and a low population base overall. In this setting support for LEAs from the state appears to be ongoing based on past history.

The implementation of effective and efficient operations is strong, as evidenced by the plan to use similar processes, budget reporting and monitoring as currently being used with ARRA funds. Furthermore, the plan's budget proposal refocuses current initiatives into a single funding stream that will allow the state to expand current projects (such as leadership academies and professional development in standards/assessments) while reallocating and re-purposing funds to meet meet the four reform requirements. Examples include new efforts in alternative certification programs and more options for innovative schools.

The plan for this state builds on many current initiatives and expands these strategies at a much quicker pace based on RttT funding. In addition, there are legal and regulatory provisions to support many of these initiatives. This is evidence of continued support for RttT plans after funding ends.

(ii) The state principal/administrators associations appear to be strongly supportive of the state plan. As mentioned previously the state teacher union leader did not sign onto the plan, and only 30% of teacher union leaders at the LEA level committed to the plan.

Other critical stakeholders have strongly committed, as evidenced by the letters of support. The number and content of many letters is evidence of this strong support. These letters came from elected officials at the state and federal levels, business organizations, higher education institutions and other education-related non-profits.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	**30**	**19**
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	4

(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	15

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

(i) The state appears to be making progress in three of the four reform areas. Especially impressive is the state's work in turning around many persistently low performing schools (24 of 36 to date). The one reform area where there appears to be a real lack of progress is Great Teachers and Leaders- almost all of their focus in this area is on teachers, with little emphasis on principals.

(ii) Achievement in a variety of outcome measures in mixed, as evidenced by the information below:

- Performance on the state assessment shows general progress, with subgroups improving their performance significantly.
- NAEP performance appears to be flat in some areas and generally improving (slowly in others). Achievement gaps mirror the trends of state assessment results.
- Graduation rates have actually declined since 2003, with the plan stating the change in calculation impacted the trend. However, a review of the data beginning in 05-06 shows a four years trend of overall decreasing graduation rates.

Total	125	79

B. Standards and Assessments

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

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

(i) The state is participating in a number of consortia, including the New England Compact Consortium, and the SCASS project sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers. These consortia are creating common standards that are internationally benchmarked and provide standards to improve student preparation for post-high school success. Each consortia is made up of a number of states, ranging from the New England Consortium (5 or fewer states) to the SCASS project (40+ states). In addition, Maine has been one of the 48 states involved with the Achieve consortia on setting world class standards.

(ii) The state has outlined a specific adoption process for the common standards currently being finalized. This plan includes legislative action to permit the Commissioner to finalize this over the summer of 2010 to meet the August deadline for adoption.

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

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

The state's commitment to assessment is evidenced by its participation in a number of consortia focused on improved assessments, including the SMARTER Balanced Assessment program, Accountability and Systems Reporting, Career and Technical Assessment Consortium, Science Education Assessment, and the State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards. In addition, the New England Consortium

is involved with the development of high-quality assessments. The number of states in these numerous consortia exceeds the minimum state requirement of the rubric, with state participating in these consortia

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

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

The state has provided a comprehensive and coherent plan to support the state's transition to enhanced standards and assessments. The implementation of the Common Core Standards appears to be the driver of significant initiatives to focus standards and assessments around the state's vision for students-personalized learning.

The plan includes activities, timelines and the responsible parties; the overall activities are followed by specific, concrete steps to achieve these activities. Especially appropriate for this proposal is the emphasis on designing and developing STEM-related assessments, as well as developing a plan for increasing statewide support for students through professional development of teachers.

In addition, the state is proposing to focus on early childhood standards and guidelines as a part of the whole system's approach to improved standards and assessments.

The major weakness of the plan is a lack of specificity around the development of a plan to incorporate the Common Standards into the roll out of these standards by content area. A set of bulleted steps is provided, but the lack of specificity makes it difficult to assess the comprehensiveness and the practicality of this area of the proposal.

Total	70	65

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

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

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

The state has completed all elements but #12, although the ambiguity in response around specific capacity and implementation issues is cause for concern.

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

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

The state's plan includes a Data Management Team to work cooperatively with other state agencies and LEAs on the longitudinal data system effort to access and use state data. The plan is coherent and comprehensive, as evidenced by the plan's goals, activities, dates and persons responsible. Included in this plan is concrete and specific- in the proposal provides a series of specific steps are provided to implement the missing elements of the America COMPETES act. The goals of the plan are especially appropriate, focusing on key weaknesses the state has identified. Throughout the discussion of the state's plan, the state's willingness to audit all agencies in state government, provide professional development for LEA personnel, and create dashboards on performance, provides strong evidence of a well crafted approach.

The major weakness is the lack of an explanation regarding the capacity to inform parents in the plan, including the availability of information in the native language of the state's subgroups of population.

(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	5
(i) Increasing the use of instructional improvement systems	6	2
(ii) Supporting LEAs, schools, and teachers in using instructional improvement systems	6	2
(iii) Making the data from instructional improvement systems available to researchers	6	1

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

(i-iii) The overall information provided in the narrative section appears to be a philosophical discussion about the need for the subsection elements of (C)(3). A few specific examples of systems currently in use are mentioned, such as MeFAST (the state's current testing program), but the explanation of the use of these examples is limited. There is limited discussion of the details of how the plan will increase instructional improvement systems- the specifics are missing. In addition, the overall concept is to take the current state testing program and enhance its current functions to address improvement through providing educators with additional data and information. However, there is limited information presented about how this would be accomplished.

The state plan provided has listed goals, activities, timelines and persons responsible, but due to the lack of information in the narrative, the plan as presented is not as clear as necessary to adequately review.

In sum, the applicant's information regarding the increase in acquisition/adoption of local instructional improvement systems is not clear in the proposal. The current LEA efforts to provide professional development on how to use data systems is not clear in the proposal. The availability of data to research efforts is also not clear in the proposal.

Total	47	31

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	**21**	**4**
(i) Allowing alternative routes to certification	7	1
(ii) Using alternative routes to certification	7	0
(iii) Preparing teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage	7	3

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

(i-iii) The options, current usage and a process for monitoring shortages are all focused on teachers. Limited information is provided about principal alternative routes or filling shortages in high needs schools- there appears to be neither provisions nor options for principal candidates. A leadership academy is mentioned in the area of principal professional development, but this appears questionable as viable alternative route to certification for principals.

The discussion of alternative routes to certification is mixed. There appear to be appropriate statutory and regulatory policies to allow alternative routes, but there are none currently in use, and the provision of non-IHE options is apparently not in place. There was no explanation of why there is statutory provision but the alternative route is apparently not being used.

The discussion of ways to deal with critical shortages is limited, with the Maine loan forgiveness program cited as a key strategy to provide incentives for teacher shortages in critical high needs areas. However,

the Maine loan forgiveness program does not appear to be a unique program focused on shortages of teachers and/or content. This information in this sections needs further clarification.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	29
(i) Measuring student growth	5	1
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	9
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	5
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	14

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

(i) Maine has not implemented a growth model at this time, and the plan to develop a growth model is inadequate, stating that the Department is developing one for full operation by 2012. No evidence or explanation is cited to explain how this is being developed. The state does have a current plan to measure student growth over time, and the focus on raising NAEP scores 2-3% from one testing cycle to the next does not provide a detailed explanation of how this improvement is to be achieved.

(ii) The design and implementation of an evaluation system is hampered by the lack of a viable plan to develop a growth model to measure student growth over time. The plan presented appears to be focused on teachers only- principal evaluation tied to performance appears not to be a factor.

(iii-iv) The narrative in this section is very limited, yet the plan appears to be coherent and comprehensive. The lack of details explaining the plan, including use with principals, is a concern. It is difficult to understand the intent and implementation plan without a narrative base as a foundation. The plan is presented in chart form and covers the requirements of activities, timelines and responsibilities. However, there is little presentation of a narrative to explain in detail the implementation process for this plan.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	5
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	3
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	2

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

The state is not addressing the equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals in its plan. The proposal states that because of the size of Maine and its rural nature, the number of high-poverty, high-minority schools is not as pressing a need as found in other states. The narrative on equity includes general information, but not specific details about the plan other than the use of MPAS than 'includes measures to promote equitable distribution of teachers". One strategy proposed is to use technology to bring new opportunities to all students, which will benefit those high-poverty schools.

Currently there are no provisions for compensation tied to performance for either teachers or principals, and plans in the future appear to be general and limited.

The requirements of this section are addressed in a limited manner. If there is not a pressing need re: equity in the state, additional information and data should be provided to validate this position.

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

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

(i) The narrative for (D)(4)(i) is inadequate in terms of linking student achievement and growth to teachers and principals. The information presented is limited and generic- there is no clear commitment to this requirement other than as statement that says with the SLDS this information could be linked. The plan does not commit to the requirements of this subsection.

(ii) The information supplied in (i) above applies to this subsection as well. The narrative refers to generic possibilities, but there is no commitment in writing to the requirements of this subsection.

Overall, there does not appear to be a detailed plan for this criterion, which contributes to the scoring of this section.

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	**20**	**9**
(i) Providing effective support	10	5
(ii) Continuously improving the effectiveness of the support	10	4

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

(i) The narrative discusses at length the professional development plans for aspiring principals, including the curriculum at various Academies. Generic strategies with no explanation are mentioned for teachers. There does not appear to be a high quality plan, with activities, timelines and persons responsible for teachers, and a set of strategies for principals.

(ii) The narrative does not provide a specific plan to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of the supports for teachers and principals, in order to improve student achievement. Continuous improvement as a philosophical support mechanism is mentioned in the narrative, but there is no accompanying plan in this section.

Total	138	52

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

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

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

The state clearly has the authority, both in statute and regulation, to intervene in both School Administrative Units (LEAs) and schools that are persistently lowest-achieving. Numerous statutes and regulations were presented to support the intervention in these schools. Clear documentation through various legal steps is presented.

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

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

(i) The state has presented a wide-ranging and impressive plan to identify the persistently low-performing schools, both Title 1 and non-Title 1, and has a wealth of strategies that have already been implemented,

with significant success. In addition, new strategies are being proposed to help these schools. The activities, timelines, and people responsible are anchored by the narrative description of current efforts and the success of the Intervention Team strategy currently in place. Examples of this plan include a list of state statutes that clearly outlines the Commissioner's responsibilities to intervene, a list of current schools in improvement, corrective action or restructuring, and the use of the turnaround model as required by RttT in future identification and intervention.

(ii) The support for LEAs in turning around these schools is well chronicled through two primary support mechanisms- support for the implementation of the Intervention Model and support for assisting schools in analyzing root cause analysis and intervention planning. Maine has significant data to support the current work in this area- 20 of 34 persistently low performing schools have exited CIPS (Continuous Improvement Priority) status and have continued to make AYP.

Total	50	50

F. General

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

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

(i) Based on the information provided, the state has increased its percentage of state revenues dedicated to education from FY 2008 to FY 2009.

(ii) Based on the information provided, the state has policies that appear to support equitable funding for high poverty schools and/or LEAs. Included as evidenced is the state adequacy-based funding formula entitled Essential Programs and Services. This model has been in place since 2003-2004.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	**40**	**8**
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	0
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	0
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	0
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	0
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	8

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

(i-iv)- No evidence is provided about charter schools other than the following statement; "These are not applicable in Maine". No points are awarded.

(v)- The state does allow LEAs to operate innovative and/or autonomous schools other than charter schools. Evidence provided include;

* A new statute to promote the development of "Innovative Schools" by LEAs across the state, giving them the authority to establish and operate innovative, autonomous public schools.

* Online learning and technological opportunities, especially given the rural nature of the state.

Taken together these opportunities address the innovation requirement of (F)(2) (v). It is not clear exactly if and how the autonomy of schools are provided.

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

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

The state application has provided a number of significant reform efforts, both in statute and regulation, that demonstrate evidence to support additional reform conditions. One reform in place is a redesign of high schools, including redirecting federal funds to support whole school high school reform. Also presented in the narrative are legislative goal setting around graduation, financial incentives for pre-school and a state STEM plan to target high needs LEAs.

The evidence supports satisfactory demonstration of significant reform conditions.

Total	55	22

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

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

Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The proposal could have been significantly stronger in identifying and describing the STEM effort, but there is enough information presented to demonstrate that STEM is an important component of the K12 system in Maine. Especially helpful was the description of Priority 2 in area VII- Competition Priorities. This information was helpful in better understanding the overall focus of STEM in the state. Also helpful was the discussion of the state STEM plan to target high needs LEAs.

The current and planned STEM-related initiatives include;

- STEM partnerships in LEAs across the state.
- STEM Collaborative (non-profit) committed to improving STEM learning.
- STEM grants that have been applied for and are awaiting final decisions.
- A set of ambitious goals for raising student achievement in STEM areas, increasing teacher training, and increasing student aspirations.

This information and other references throughout the proposal provide sufficient information to support awarding appropriate points for the emphasis on STEM category.

Total	15	15

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

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

Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The state plan is strong in a number of the reform areas, and needs improvement in the area of teacher and principal performance issues. The lack of teacher union support raises questions about the capacity of commitment to make the plan successful across the state.

Especially strong is the work on standards and assessments, as evidenced by the number of consortia the state is participating in to create internationally benchmarked standards and assessments. The plan (ie personalized learning) is designed to significantly improve K12 education in the state. The use of technology related to improved instruction around new standards and assessments is especially appropriate given the rural nature of the state.

In addition to the weakness of the teacher/principal reform area the charter schools area appears to be limited. However, the state appears to have the legal authority to move forward with alternative options for some educators and for students who want options for school attendance.

Overall the plan has both strengths and weaknesses, with the most glaring concern the lack of teacher support for the reform plan and this impact on capacity to implement.

Total		0

Grand Total	500	314

Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 1

Maine Application #2950ME-6

A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	**65**	**24**
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	4
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	13
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	7

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

(A)(1)(i) Maine articulates a moderately comprehensive reform agenda. Their narrative indicates that they are dedicated to designing a transformational system that is comprised of five interrelated elements: personalized learning; performance-based learning; systems of learning support; great teachers and leaders, and data used to guide teaching and learning. Maine is in the process of implementing the new Common Core Standards and Common Cross State Performance Assessments including STEM areas. Maine is in the process of implementing the Maine Professional Accountability System which will evaluate teachers and principals in part based on the growth and achievement of students. Maine plans on providing ongoing support to teachers and principals in low-achieving schools. Maine earned high points for this element.

(A)(1)(ii) Maine's MOU requires a high level of participation and is moderately ambitious. However, it is weakened by "the opt out" phrase related to collective bargaining. The scope of work is ambitious but is weakened considerably by having over 26 % of the elements being optional. Maine seems to have garnered only low to moderate support from LEAs. Maine only has 38% of LEAs agreement to participate in RTTT. Part of the criteria is that the state should have as "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 teachers' union leader ...demonstrating the extent of leadership support within participating LEAs ". Of those LEAs who have agreed to participate, only 78% of the President's of local school boards signed the agreement, and only 30% of Local Teacher's Union Leader signed the agreement. Maine appears to have only low to moderate commitment from LEAs. Maine earned low/moderate points for this element.

(A)(1)(iii) Maine is working across state agencies to achieve content area goals. However, the lack of broad LEA support (see (A) (1)(ii)) weakens the proposal. In particular, only 30% of union leaders signing the MOU agreement, making it difficult to achieve broad statewide impact. They have set moderate goals that result in a 2-3% per year gain across reading and mathematics, and similar yearly goals for post-secondary enrollment rates. However, Maine's narrative only talks generally about decreasing achievement gaps among minority and special populations, so it is hard to make a judgment as to the level of commitment and ability to closing the gap. Of equal concern is that some of the items of the scope of work only had partial commitment (as low as 67%) from the School Administrative Units (SAUs). Maine only talks in generalities about graduation rates. Maine earned moderate points for this element.

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	**30**	**14**
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	10
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	4

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

(A)(2)(i) Maine appears to have weak to moderate capacity to implement RTTT and sustain them after funds are dispersed. To Maine's credit, the state appears to plan to provide strong leadership through building an integrated team composed of: PK-20; Career and Technical Education; Guidance and Counseling and ESEA teams to allow schools and LEAs to work with one integrated team from the Department. Maine plans on using an inter/intra agency RTTT team but gives little detail as to the composition of this team and the team members responsibilities. The narrative suggests that RTTT efforts will be integrated into the Department's effort, but there is no plan on how this will be accomplished in an efficient manner. More detail as to the implementation of the plan would have strengthened the narrative. Detail in the budget suggests that most of the work will be done by outside contractors with few provisions to continue the work after RTTT funds have been dispersed. If Maine does not have the infrastructure to implement these plans hiring outside contractors could be an efficient method to bring in the necessary expertise. However, it is not clear how the outside contractors will build internal support and sustainability for RTTT. There is a general statement related to the integration of funds but no details are provided to how different funds will be used to support the RTTT initiative. It appears that Maine has the internal mechanisms to manage the grant funds. The narrative states that Maine will use its current grants management and fiscal oversight procedures to administer RTTT funds. Maine earned low-moderate points for this section.

(A)(2)(ii) Maine has moderate to weak stakeholder support for RTTT. Maine has received letters of support from 30 stakeholders such as IHEs, business community members, state legislatures, and congressional members. However Maine only has 38% of LEA's support, and only 30% of the union leadership has signed the MOUs. Additionally, the Maine Education Association voted to not support the RTTT application. The Maine Principals Association did not provide a letter of support either. This is a definite detriment to implementing and sustaining the process. Maine earned low points for this element.

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

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

(A)(3)(i) Maine has used state funds, ARRA funds and funds from such organizations as the Gates Foundation and the National Governors Organization to make progress in the four education reform areas. Maine has been involved in developing content standards since 1997. These standards were revised in 2007. As a continuation of this process, Maine is a member of the consortium that is developing the Common Core Standards. They plan on adopting these standards later this year. They also have made strides in developing assessments that are tied to their standards. Maine points to its innovative use of technology to ensure that there is an equitable distribution of educators in high needs areas. Maine has had a Statewide Longitudinal Data System since 2007. Additionally, Maine has passed legislation that allows the use of Student Social Security numbers in the data system. This support is weakened by the fact that parents do have an opt-out option. Maine points to their success with Title I schools as evidence to support their ability to turn around schools, but they do not give evidence as to what that success is. Maine has made significant progress in these reform areas. Maine earned high points for this element.

(A)(3)(ii) Maine has had mixed results in their quest to improve in student achievement. Maine historically has had high achievement in their state. Generally, the whole group improved approximately at a rate of change of 1.07 in mathematics and 1.16 in reading for grades four, eight and eleven. In reading, this is an 8 % change since 2005. Mathematics has had a modest increase at the fourth and eighth grades of about 3%, and has held steady for eleventh graders. Similar results were reported for NAEP data. Aggregated data suggest that scores went up two to three scaled points per year. While there was general improvement across all categories of students in both NAEP and ESEA data, gaps between majority groups and minority groups have not been closed significantly. Graduation rates have been trending down since 2002-2003. Maine changed their method of counting graduates in 2009, and believes it is not possible to compare that year to previous years. However, even discounting 2009 data, graduation rates have been trending

downward to the point where there was almost a negative 5% difference in 2008 from 2002. Data were not desegregated for graduation rates. Maine receives moderate points for this element.		
Total	125	57

B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1
(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards	**40**	**35**
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20
(ii) Adopting standards	20	15

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

(B)(1)(i) Maine is working with several consortia to develop high-quality standards. This common set of K-12 standards are supported by evidence that they are internationally benchmarked and build toward college and career readiness by the time of high school graduation. Some examples of the consortia include: Common Core Standards Consortia (50 states/territories); American Diploma Project (35 states) Career Technical Education Consortium of States (14 states). A significant number of states are involved in these efforts. Maine earns high points for this element.

(B)(1)(ii) Maine plans on having the Common Core Standards adopted in August with finalization planned for 2011 by the legislature. The governor signed into law legislation giving the Commissioner of Education the ability to adopt the standards through emergency rule making. It is not clear in the narrative what the difference between finalization and adoption is and therefore how this will impact the implementation, thus weakening the plan. Maine earned in the low range of high points for this element.

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

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

(B)(2)(i -ii) Maine is actively developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments. Maine is participating in two (2) consortia developing high-quality assessments tied to their common core standards. Maine is a part of the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) which is comprised of four states. This consortium has been recognized by the USED as an excellent example of a consortium developing high quality assessments that are benchmarked to high quality standards. These assessments are both formative and summative and are being designed to provide timely feedback to students and teachers. Maine is also a "Governing State" with the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (33 States). This consortium is working together to providing high quality assessment that provides timely feedback to both teachers and students. These assessments will be internationally benchmarked and can provide summative program assessment. Maine earned high points for each element (i and ii).

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

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

(B) (3) Maine presents a moderately comprehensive plan to roll out the new Common Core Standards and concomitant assessments. The ambitious plan includes: providing PD; information sessions for parents, students and general public; support for development of model syllabi and instructional materials; support for LEAs to purchase computer based assessment systems, and support for regional collaborative. It

seems to incorporate all of the necessary components. While a timeline is provided, the process of the roll out is not clearly defined which is a weakness. The State refers to various teams as bearing responsibility, but it is not clear how these teams will function and who will be on the teams. This is a weakness. Maine earned moderate points for this section.

Total	70	59

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

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

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

(C)(1)(i) Maine has eleven of twelve components met. They have not met the tthe last criteria ; however, They continue to refine their system and work on increasing access to data and increasing the types of data collected. Maine earned high points for this element.

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

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

(C)(2) Maine has put together a high-quality achievable plan to ensure that data from the state's longitudinal data system are accessible to and used appropriately by key stakeholders. Governance of the data system resides with the Office of Information Technology. Maine anticipates that the Data System will provide educators with objective data that can guide decisions regarding instruction, professional development, school improvement initiatives, and personnel decisions. The Data Management Team in collaboration with the School Administrative Units (SAU) , school, and community level will work together to ensure there be continuous improvement of efforts in such areas as policy, instruction, operations, management, resource allocation, and overall effectiveness. Maine's timeline and responsible parties table appears to meld together a group of contractors and department staff to implement and evaluate the system. The use of contractors for the design and implementation of the technology and data system seems to be an efficient method of implementing this complex and comprehensive system. Maine earned high points for this section.

(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	**18**	**12**
(i) Increasing the use of instructional improvement systems	6	6
(ii) Supporting LEAs, schools, and teachers in using instructional improvement systems	6	6
(iii) Making the data from instructional improvement systems available to researchers	6	0

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

(C)(3)(i)Maine has an high-quality achievable plan to increase the acquisition and use of local instructional improvement systems. As a part of this plan Maine plans to deploy Maine's Formative Assessment System for Teachers (Me FAST) which combined with information from their Data Warehouse will feed into an overall improvement strategy that will provide teachers with on demand access to data. MeFAST will include Business Intelligence tasks that will plot achievement trajectories, draws conclusions based upon trends, and recommends standard-centered interventions. These functions would certainly make it easier for educators/administrators to analyze data, making the use of the system attractive to the stakeholders. This would naturally encourage expanded usage. The MeFAST system as planned would seem to provide critical performance data for critical tasks to all stakeholders. Maine earned high points for this section.

(C)(3)(ii) Maine has built an innovative and achievable plan for supporting stakeholders in using instructional improvement systems. Maine plans on providing support to participating LEAs and schools that are using Instructional improvement systems by providing PD to teachers, administrators and principals on how to use the system and data to support continuous improvement. Maine has developed a plan based on job-embedded PD to foster successful implementation of MeFAST. Another ambitious but achievable part of this plan is training SAUs to use MeFAST data to drive Response to Intervention. Maine earned high points for this section.

(C)(3)(iii) Maine does not present a plan of how they will work collaboratively with researchers and other stakeholders to identify practices and policies that are most effective in educating all students, especially practices that are effective in closing the achievement gap. Maine's narrative states that they will continue to work with researchers but does not supply any detail as to how this will be accomplished (who, what, when and where). The timeline does not address this element either. Maine earned no points for this element.

Total	47	39

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	**21**	**5**
(i) Allowing alternative routes to certification	7	2
(ii) Using alternative routes to certification	7	0
(iii) Preparing teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage	7	3

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

(D)(1)(i) Maine has an alternative route to certification for teachers, but it is housed in IHEs. No mention is made of alternative routes to certification for principals. These are weaknesses. Maine earned low points for this section.

(D)(1)(ii) Maine has no alternative route teacher programs currently operating in the state. No mention of principal programs was mentioned. Maine earned no points for this section.

(D)(1)(iii) Maine has a partial plan in place for preparing teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage. This plan includes a method for identifying critical shortage areas for teachers. No mention is made of principals. Maine's major way of addressing their shortages is through student loan forgiveness. Maine currently does not have other methods to address shortages such as an expedited alternative route or endorsement path. This is a weakness. Maine earned medium points for this element.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	**58**	**20**
(i) Measuring student growth	5	2
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	5
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	5
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	8

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

(D)(2)(i) Maine has a partial plan to tie teacher and principal evaluation to student growth, However, the plan is weakened by the fact that there will not be a specific percentage assigned to student growth as a

measurement of performance. This is a definite weakness of the plan. Low points were earned for this element.

(D)(2)(ii) Maine's plan does not appear to be ambitious. Maine is in the process of developing evaluations called the Multi-faceted Professional Accountability System. The system appears to have only two or three ratings: highly effective and effective; and those who do not meet the previous criteria. This does not seem to be enough of a deferential to provide effective feedback. The narrative does annotate that it will be developed with principals and teachers by pulling together a stakeholder meeting after the RTTT funds are won. There is an opt out phrase that allows LEAs to use equivalent systems of their own. There is not enough description provided to allow one to judge how this opt out option would work. It would seem that this option would considerably weaken the integrity of the plan. Maine uses language such as "makes possible the use of assessment data". Stronger language that indicates that assessment data "would be used" would strengthen the narrative. Performance measures suggest that only 35% of participating LEAs will be using the system by the end of the grant period. This would appear to not be an ambitious goal. Maine earned moderate points for this element.

(D)(2)(iii) Maine's legislation supports annual evaluation of teachers and principals. The plan involves using the "Danielson" model but no specifics are given about the model, and therefore it is difficult to asses it's strengths. Additionally, little information is provided about the feedback loop and the methodology for implementing this plan. The narrative states that there will be feedback and student growth will be mapped to evaluations, but little detail is provided to help in judging in the comprehensiveness and ability to implement the plan. Moderate points were earned for this element.

D) (2) (iv) Maine's narrative does not adequately address this element. The performance measures table suggests that Maine expect only 35 % of participating LEAs to have qualifying evaluation system .This translates into only 12% of LEAs statewide using the system. Of that 12 %, Maine expects 100% to use the evaluation system: to develop teachers and principals; to retain principals and teachers, and to grant tenure and full certification. However, Maine only expects 10% of the LEAs with qualifying evaluation system to use the system for compensating teachers and principals; 25% for promoting teachers and principals, and 20% for removing ineffective teachers and principals. This translates into about 2% participation across this state in these areas. This is not an ambitious goal. Other areas of the plan seem to have more ambitious goals for the implementation of specific elements such as: retaining effective teachers and principals; measuring student growth, and providing professional development. However, the plan is weakened since it does not seem to be able to be used statewide to make some very important decisions.
Maine earned low points for this element.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	**25**	**7**
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	5
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	2

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

D)(3)(i -ii) Maine's narrative does not directly present a plan relating to these elements. Maine does have method for highlighting shortage areas. The narrative refers to a plan that has not been implemented fully, but gives little detail as to how it will be implemented other than to say that RTTT funding will enable them to implement it. The narrative does mention that since 2006 Maine has implemented a Teacher Quality and Equity Action Plan. Maine used these funds to deliver monetary and technical assistance to increase inequitable distribution of effective teachers and principals to high-poverty/minority schools and hard to staff subjects and specialty areas. However, with no description of this plan or future plans it is not possible to assign many points. Additionally, there is no baseline data available to judge the performance measures against. Maine earned low points for both areas.

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

(i) Linking student data to credentialing programs and reporting publicly	7	4
(ii) Expanding effective programs	7	0

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

(D)(4)(i) Maine's Student Longitudinal Data System is linked to student performance and growth information to individual teachers and principals as well as to preparation programs throughout the state. Performance measures indicate that Maine expects 100% of teacher and principal preparation programs to have these data accessible to the public by the end of the grant. The narrative mentions that these data will help stakeholders make decisions about the quality of teacher and principal preparation programs. However, the narrative does not give a plan for how these data will be reported which weakens the plan. Maine earned moderate points for this element.

(D)(4)(ii)Maine's narrative does not provide a plan for expanding effective programs. The narrative talks about some of the improvements that have been implemented but there is no plan on expanding excellent programs. No points were awarded.

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	**20**	**11**
(i) Providing effective support	10	6
(ii) Continuously improving the effectiveness of the support	10	5

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

(D)(5)(i) Maine presents a plan for providing PD to teachers and leaders. Maine states that the plan will be data driven. The models of PD focus on Leadership development, and focuses on areas such as: Learning Communities; implementing new teacher evaluation systems, Response to Intervention, etc. However most of the PD seems to be focused around Leadership Academies which seem to be being run in limited locations and not at the SAUs themselves. It would seem that the Academy model would be generic and therefore not able to support the specific needs of different SAUs and schools as stipulated in RTTT. For example, there is no mention made referencing common planning time for collaboration among school faculty and administration. Induction activities are mentioned in passing, but there are no specifics as to how the induction activities will be implemented. More detail would have provided support for the effectiveness of the program. Maine earned moderate points for this element.

(D)(5)(ii) Maine's narrative suggests that the evaluation plan will be data driven and is based on the National Staff Development Council's Standards. The narrative states that there will be ongoing evaluation in order to continuously improve the effectiveness of support. Maine plans on using outside consultants to do the evaluation, it is not clear if this will build sustainability within the state once RTTT funding is exhausted. Maine earned moderate points for this element.

Total	138	47

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

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

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

(E)(1) Maine appears to have the ability to intervene in the lowest-achieving schools. and LEAs. Maine earned high points for this element.

(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	**40**	**29**

(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	24

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

(E)(2)(ii) Maine shows a record of turning around low-performing schools. Maine has successfully turned around 20 of 34 low performing schools in the last five years. This is a commendable accomplishment and lends credence to their ability to implement their current plan in this area. Maine presents a plan that is modeled on their previous successes. The foundation of this model is a cadre of school improvement consultants. Additionally, Maine plans on using technology to facilitate the intervention process in rural schools. This is an innovative use of consultants and technology. Maine says it will ask the schools to adopt one of the four intervention models. However, Maine's narrative does not supply much information specific to these interventions, and the way these particular interventions would be implemented at the school or LEA level. This weakens the presentation. Most of the narrative focuses on the "consultant teams" that will work with the schools, but little evidence is presented relevant to any of the four sanctioned models. The narrative refers to "turn around" teams but these appear to be outside advisors not directly related to any of the models in particular. More information related to the models would have strengthened this proposal. Maine earned moderate points for this element.

Total	50	39

F. General

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

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

(F)(1)(i). Maine allocates a consistent percentage of State revenue to education. The state is to be commended for increasing the percentage of funding to education by approximately 3% over the past 2 years. Maine earned high points for this element.

(F)(1)(ii) Maine has an equitable formula for funding high poverty schools. Maine has a cost analysis approach that calculates the level and cost of education components in each school. The essential programs and services allocation calculated depends upon student, staff and school characteristics, resulting in unique foundation operating costs for each LEA. This model is designed to ensure that adequate and equitable resources are provided for all students with additional funds being allocated for specialized student populations. Maine earned high points for this element.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	**40**	**8**
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	0
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	0
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	0
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	0
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	8

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

(F)(2)(i-iv) Maine has no laws pertaining to charter schools. No points were earned for i-iv.

(F)(2)(v)Maine seems to have recently set the stage for innovation within the state in an ambitious, innovative manner. Maine has recently enacted a law enabling LEAs to operate innovative autonomous public schools. This law gives a school administrative unit the authority to establish innovative, autonomous schools other than charter schools. In order to accomplish these plans, Maine has partnered with various organizations such as the Chief State School Officers. Maine also are making effective use of technology to ensure that students in rural parts of the state are exposed to the same types of courses and effective teachers as their urban counterparts. Maine earned high points for this section.

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

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

(F)(3) Main has achieved success in setting up conditions to foster significant reform. In particular, Maine has put significant effort into supporting secondary education. Maine has redesigned support systems for secondary schools, have a focus on STEM, and seem to be making innovative use of technology to solve some of the equity challenges of a rural state. Maine has also focused on preschool education, and on implementing the RTI model of assistance for students at risk. They have enacted legislation that enables school administrative units (SAUs) to be formed that best fit the needs of the communities the SAU serves. These are all initiatives that set the stage for future reform. Maine earned high points for this element.

Total	55	23

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

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

Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Maine over the course of the last several years has placed an emphasis on STEM activities. They have formed a STEM Collaborative of various stakeholders (non-profits; government, and businesses) committed to improving STEM learning. There are other partnerships working to expand resources including those seeking grants from USDOED, NSF and NASA. Maine has also used technology innovatively to give rural and high-needs students' access to STEM courses. Maine earned points for this element.

Total	15	15

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

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

Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Maine has presented a plan that coherently addresses the four reform areas of ARRA and is in the spirit of the RTTT process. Maine has made significant progress in addressing standards and assessments and has the backing of 63% of the state's LEAs. Maine is member of several consortium that are dedicated to developing a coherent set of core standards and assessments tied ultimately to student growth.

Maine has addressed issues related to STEM. While more union buy-in would be helpful, Maine's record of turning around low performing school districts is an indication of the state's ability to implement this plan.		
Total		**0**

Grand Total	**500**	**279**

Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 1

Maine Application #2950ME-7

A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	**65**	**49**
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	35
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	9

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

This state has been seriously addressing reform with specific statutory efforts that have translated into specific activities including adoption of rigorous state standards and assessments along with a statewide achievement data base. These efforts began in 1997 and were reaffirmed in legislation passed in 2007. The present plan builds on these previous efforts and expands its comprehensiveness, its commitments to new and more rigorous standards and its expanded efforts to develop (in collaboration) related student assessments. These expansions are all calling for the enhancement of student achievement, high school graduation and post secondary readiness. The state plans to develop and implement a new teacher and principal assessment system that includes student achievement as a key element. In short, the state has generated a comprehensive and coherent plan aligned with that called for in the RTTT Request for Proposal (RFP).

The state has made important efforts to secure LEA commitments that ensure a statewide effort. It was successful in obtaining MOU sign-off from 100% of superintendents, some 80% of LEA board chairs, and some 30% of LEA teacher leader representatives. These sign-offs are an important indicator of statewide support and potential impact, however a key issue may lead to reduced impact:

- Some 60% of teacher leaders did not sign-off on the MOU-- this leaves the possibility of lessened support by teachers statewide.

The state does articulate a set of statewide goals related to achievement in multiple areas. With regard to student performance, the goals are achievable but not particularly ambitious-- increases of some 1-6%, with no attention to substantive decreases in student achievement gaps. However, there is a clear mandate in recent state law that sets a goal for student preparation such that 90% of high school graduates would be prepared for post secondary education by 2020, an important and ambitious goal that RTTT resources could assist in achieving.

Overall, the state plan as articulated in this proposal builds on present efforts in an important way but could be weakened by issues related to statewide impact and less than complete student achievement goals.

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	**30**	**20**
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	14
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	6

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

The capacity for the state to implement the proposed plan is supported by a re-organized Department of Education that has formed cross-cutting teams that are meant to enhance collaboration and are focused on student educational enhancement at the state level with a "partnership" activities related to supporting LEAs. The Department will form an RTTT Team that is made up of important stakeholders in education including other state agencies. The Education Commissioner will oversee its efforts and coordinate with other ongoing Department of Education activities. An RTTT Project Director will be employed to ensure day to day operations in operations and financial domains. In addition, RTTT fiscal activities will be monitored by a newly created statewide ARRA oversight group in the Governor's office--this is an added plus in maximizing communication and efficiencies related to state ARRA efforts. These collaborative efforts in moving the plan forward are very positive and will address important aspects of overall support and oversight. RTTT resources are intended to be used to provide system level develop support efforts that allow the antecedents of the RTTT products to be sustained once RTTT funds are expended. When examining the budget that will be used to implement the plan, some 40% of the requested budget will be for contracted services and therefore places a great deal of burden on the quality of those services. Although this may not be overly problematic, no effort to describe quality assurances in the outsourcing endeavor is available in the proposal. The budget does seem to tie resources directly to goals, but the lack of quality assurance related to external contracting can lead to weakened implementation.

Since a statewide impact requires support of teachers and principals, the absence of substantial support on the MOUs by teachers is relevant here in assessing support of the plan by these stakeholders. Overall, other stakeholders in higher education, businesses, related professional associations, etc, affirm their support in over 30 positive letters.

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

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

The state is making progress in all reform areas of importance in the RTTT RFP-- starting in the late 1990's with adopting standards, utilizing statewide assessments and reaffirming these with a new state law in 2007. Of particular significance, the state has begun to develop a data system that stretches from early childhood to adulthood and has had success in turning around low achieving schools.

Maine has a record of solid student achievement, nationally, recently ranking in the top 10 in both reading an mathematics on the NAEP. It has made improvements in student achievement, overall, on the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) and state level student assessments, with particular gains from 2006--2009, a period when new assessments were introduced and therefore yearly comparisons are possible. But, there has been no substantial decrease in achievement gaps, particularly for African Americans and English Language Learners (ELL) students. At best the reductions in achievement gaps for underrepresented students are uneven and difficult to interpret for Hispanics and Native Americans. In addition, the high school graduation rate has declined overall in the last few years-- possibly due to new data collection changes--yet the drop is troublesome.

Overall, progress at the implementation level of reform is evident, with only some positive indicators of progress in student performance and with little or no achievement gap reductions for African Americans and ELL students.

Total	125	90

B. Standards and Assessments

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

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

The state is working with the state consortium related to development of Common Core standards as well was with several New England states in New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) on various standard setting activities. In doing so they are working with over 30 states, a majority of states, in these efforts.

They are moving forward on a plan to adopt core standards but have yet adopted them, indicating that the adoption process leading to adoption by August 2. 2010.

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

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

Maine is working with NECAP in a consortium effort of four New England states in developing assessment grades 3-8, and with SMARTER, a consortium of 33 states developing more comprehensive assessments in various domains. By doing so, this state demonstrates a significant effort to work collaboratively on rigorous student assessment tools.

(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	**20**	**12**

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

The proposal provides a detailed table indicating a set of goals, timetables and responsibility indicators for supporting the transition to new standards and assessments in the state. The table and text of the proposal provides such activity descriptors as "designing," "adopting," "conducting", "performing," but does not provide any specific articulations of how the state will go about implementing these activities. Without such specifics, it is unclear whether the plan will be able to succeed in accomplishing these activities and how the efforts will be implemented.

Total	70	62

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

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

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

The state indicates that its data system provides the "present capacity" in 11 of the 12 COMPETE requirements.

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

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

The proposal discusses the various elements of the data system at a very technical level indicating that the system will be accessible to a wide array of audiences, but it does not address how the system will be made accessible to those various audiences. The descriptions indicate that the system will be primarily a English language digital system requiring access to computers. This possibly would leave out some parent audiences that may not have ready access to digitized information. In addition, the information may not be accessible to non-English speaking parents and students.

(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	4
(i) Increasing the use of instructional improvement systems	6	2
(ii) Supporting LEAs, schools, and teachers in using instructional improvement systems	6	2
(iii) Making the data from instructional improvement systems available to researchers	6	0

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

This section of the proposal lacks the specifics with regard to the system, supports and availability. For example, to assist teachers and other educators the state proposes the development and deployment of an advanced tool that provides for easy and continuous access to student achievement data (and other variables related to achievement) for use in instructional decision making--this is the Maine's Formative Assessment System for Teachers (MeFAST). This system seems quite innovative and potentially of importance. However, key elements of the tool such as how it will be developed and evaluated is unavailable in the proposal.

In supporting the use of the tool at the LEA and school level, timetables and goals are addressed but specifics related to implementation of support to educators is quite vague. The specific role of the RTTT team, the department, the LEAs and the schools are not addressed in any detail. Therefore, verifying the impact of these support efforts is presently difficult without this information.

With regard to making the data available to researcher, the proposal indicates it will make the data available, but no specific avenues to achieve those results are described. By not describing how the data will be made accessible to researchers, it is unclear how and when it will be accessible to this audience.

Total	47	28

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	**21**	**8**
(i) Allowing alternative routes to certification	7	4
(ii) Using alternative routes to certification	7	0
(iii) Preparing teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage	7	4

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

This state does provide a description of one alternative teacher preparation route that is made available in concert with those defined in the RTTT rfp--it meets all the five elements required by RTTT. No description of alternative routes for principals are available in the proposal.

That state does not have any active alternative routes active at the moment.

The state does track certification shortages statewide and conducts an annual statewide survey for identifying teacher shortages and proactively provides a loan forgiveness program as an incentive to fill these shortages. No description is available for identifying principal shortages.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	36
(i) Measuring student growth	5	3
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	10
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	5
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	18

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

The state does not presently have a growth model for student assessment, but it plans to have one in place by 2012. Positively, the state is moving in the right direction, but this delay will mean that any educator evaluation system will not be available until this system is deployed. The state will move forward in developing teacher and principals evaluation systems that will include these stakeholders and it is to be fully operational in 2012--this is the Multi-faceted Professional Accountability System (MPAS). However, the state will allow LEAs to develop their own systems--to be approved by the state--and recall that only 30% of teacher leaders signed on to this activity, generating some concerns about the viability of the system. A concern may arise in the short timeframe that allows only two years for the student data system to meld with the educator evaluation systems. The system will be able to provide yearly evaluations , however, the projected goal is that only 35%of participating LEAs will be utilizing the system by the end of the RTTT grant period. This is not a goal that would have substantive state impact and does not meet the proposed requirement by the RTTT RFP. for yearly evaluations.

The evaluation system will be used to assist in decision making in all the areas called for in the RTTT RFP, however it will be used with various goals in mind. These diverse goals may have a significant impact that negatively effects overall implementation of the plan.

- 100% of participating LEAs will use the system for retention and full certification
- 10% of participating LEAs will use the system for compensation
- 20% of participating LEAs will use the system for educator removal

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	9
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	7
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	2

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

The state plans to fully fund a previous effort entitled, "Maine's Quality Teacher Education Plan," that is the main effort that addresses equitable distribution of quality teachers. No specifics regarding this plan for teachers or principals are provided although a timetable with goals are included. In essence the "whats" are described but the "hows" are absent.

Similarly, goals and timetables are provided for filling hard to-staff areas but it is not made clear how those goals will be met.

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

(ii) Expanding effective programs	7	3

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

The state proposes linking student achievement to educator production programs in the near future. However no specific implementation of evaluations, analyses, communication or publication of these linkages are provided. Without such information in the proposal, it is difficult to determine how the state will evalute programs and move to enhance the most effective ones.

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	**20**	**10**
(i) Providing effective support	10	6
(ii) Continuously improving the effectiveness of the support	10	4

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

The primary focus related to supporting teachers in the plan is to vet and select professional development efforts developed by LEAs and made available in the state's Professional Development Support Models portfolio. Participating LEAs can then select from these models to support teachers implementing RTTT efforts. Although, this could be a very valuable way to meet local contexts necessary for professional development, it will mean several important steps will need to be taken and be successful to fully implement this support with statewide impact. This could lead to delays and could limit significant impact.

For principals, The RTTT plan calls for the development and deployment of regional Leadership Academies with course work and experiences related to implementation of the reforms articulated in the plan. This effort is lead by the state and is well articulated in the proposal--it will be launched immediately upon funding.

There is a clear reference in the proposal that evaluation of these efforts will be conducted, including the use of an external consultants/contracting. However, there is no description of the timetable, goals or processes to be utilized for evaluation, internally or externally.

Total	138	69

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

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

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

The state is able to intervene directing to turn around low achieving schools or education units (understood by this reviewer to be LEAs).

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

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

The state has a clear method for identifying the lowest achieving schools using three consecutive years of student performance data as well as graduation rates for high schools. The state seems well positioned to identify the schools for RTTT efforts.

The state has been using state implemented Turnaround Teams as the vehicle for addressing persistent underachievement at the school level. There seems to be some record of success in doing so and the RTTT plan calls for scaling up these efforts. The functions of the team and the expected outcomes have demonstrated effectiveness with the Turnaround Teams assisting school level educators with data systems, instructional intervention and other academic achievement related augmentations. At the high school level, the Turnaround Teams assist local educators focused on dropout prevention strategies and career/jobs development utilizing the Jobs for Maine Graduates program. A clear timetable with expected results along with responsible parties is provided and a specific budget item is included for these efforts. Overall, this is a solid state-level partnership that can help expand past efforts and enhance more turnaround activity in Maine.

Total	50	50

F. General

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

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

The percentage of overall state revenues expended for education have risen by an estimated 4%, from 2008 to 2009.

The state has fiscal processes that address equitable funding in state funding formulas for LEAs but not schools within LEAs. Only federal resources are distributed with equity in mind at the school level.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	**40**	**8**
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	0
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	0
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	0
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	0
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	8

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

The state does not address the formulation, evaluation or funding of charter schools. However, there is an aggressive policy effort to allow and support "innovative" schools at the LEA level. This new legislative opportunity is available to all LEAs and incentives to deploy these schools are made available.

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

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

The state has enacted legislation and related educational policy to identify and meet a very ambitious goal of preparing 90% of its high school graduates for post secondary by 2020. This goal can do much to guide the educational reforms delineated in the RTTT plan. In addition, the state has launched a substantive early childhood initiative, an effort that can raise student achievement.

Total	55	21

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

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

Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

There are efforts throughout the proposal to address augment activities related to STEM. However, the state does not provide a clear description of any new rigorous course of study in STEM, nor is there evidence in the proposal that its STEM efforts will prepare more students for STEM careers, particularly with a focus on girls, women and underrepresented students.

Total	15	0

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

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

Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The proposed plan addresses all areas of the RTTT competition. It is comprehensive, aims at increasing achievement and reducing achievement gaps and proposes to have statewide impact. It builds on a long history of reform activities in the state and moves the state forward with new rigorous standards and related student assessment. Its plan to develop and employ a educator evaluation system is promising. There are aspects of the proposal that do not address goal attainment specifics and the timeline for development and implementation of the proposed work is challenging and potentially problematic, but if the plan meets all these challenging and problematic possibilities, it is certainly worthy of consideration.

Total		0

Grand Total	500	320

Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 1

Maine Application #2950ME-11

A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	**65**	**45**
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	30
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	10

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

(i) Maine has proposed an ambitious plan for educational reform that has student learning and achievement as the core focus. The plan has key priorities centered on preparation of students for 21st century learning through curriculum redesign and alignment with state standards for consistency across Maine school divisions, collaborations with external partners such as (1) Educational Policy Improvement Center for curriculum review, revision, alignment ,and validation that the Maine Learning Results are embedded in multiple courses; and, the (2) Council of Chief State School Officers for shared access of resources and research in the implementation of New Generation Learning Innovation Labs Network to create conditions for dramatically high student achievement through lab schools.

The plan includes:

1. personalized learning (e.g., smaller learning communities, multiple pathways, expansion of Course Pathway for vertical and horizontal alignment, virtual learning opportunities, and implementation of learning opportunities that focus on certifications and industry standards)
2. performance-based learning (e.g., demonstration of mastery through multiple opportunities for success through the Course Pathways Project)
3. support systems (implementation of Course Pathways allows for high school students to plan a path of courses that address standards, system of interventions)
4. development of great teachers and administrators (e.g., implementation of an evaluation system that uses student growth and success as one component for evaluation, use of multiple measures for evaluations, evaluation of models includes educational organizations such as Maine Education Association, new teacher support, Turnaround Teams for lowest performing schools, professional development to implement the new initiatives, collaborate with teacher prep programs on innovative practices)
5. data systems that include individual student achievement followed throughout the K-12 course of study, implementation of longitudinal data that utilizes multiple data sources (e.g., students, teachers, schools, and district) to specific performance measures.

Maine has proposed a plan that addresses the four core areas of education reform and advances their current processes to design, implement, monitor and evaluate priorities of standards and assessments that prepare students for college, workplace, and the global economy, enhancing data systems to monitor progress towards performance measures, supporting teachers and principals through professional development, and providing lowest performing schools the needed support. Maine has outlined a proposal that integrates the various components in a plan to reform current practices and policies to prepare and support student achievement and success.

(ii) Maine has the support of 82 Local Education Agencies (LEAs) with letters from each superintendent, 64/82 letters of support from local school boards, and 24 letters of support from educational organizations such as higher education institutions including the Maine community college system president, KIDS Consortium. The letters of support indicate commitment to the project; however, a concern is the low number of school divisions in Maine that have signed on to the project. There are 216 LEAs in Maine which indicates 38 % level of support from the school divisions (82/216). Of note, is that all participating LEAs did not have the support of school boards.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with LEAs has 46 components of which 12 are optional. A review of the MOU finds that LEAs will be required to develop, implement and provide evidence of specific strategies that strengthen quality standards and assessments. The optional strategies that LEAs are not required to implement seem counter to the goals of the project as previously articulated. The optional strategies seem to be ones that would directly support student access to quality educational experiences that are linked to college access and support (e.g., implement Maine Course Pathways, access to online and virtual learning, increase AP or IB course offerings, extended learning opportunities, tracking systems of student progress towards post secondary and career readiness).

The chart indicates that the LEAs have not supported all areas listed in the MOU agreement. Additional review of the specifics goals and LEA support finds some areas that LEA nonsupport may hinder the implementation and evaluation of the project. A key reform goal was the use of evaluations for teachers and administrators that hinge upon student performance and achievement; a review of the summary table finds that 67% support the use of evaluations to inform compensation, promotion and retention. Since this aspect is a cornerstone facet of the proposal, the limited participation and support of this objective may limit the overall success of the project.

(iii) Despite a 38% LEA participation rate, over 70% of all students and 59% of students in poverty will be affected by the project. Maine identifies several areas of concern with regard to student achievement and closing the achievement gap (e.g.,achievement in English Language Arts and Math, and the graduation rate of 80%).

A review of NAEP data indicates student performance at or above the proficient level is low--40% or less in some instances. There was no evidence of subgroup performance which was required of this criterion. The New England Common Assessment results indicate better performance although not exceptional(scores range from 63% to 77% on reading/mathematics scores).

The goals set for student achievement are not overly strenuous in that a gain of 1% in a year overall and 1.5% for Free Reduced Lunch (FRL) and disadvantaged subgroups does not seem to be very ambitious. A gain of 6% for overall student achievement by 2014 seems reasonable although again not particularly ambitious. A review of the data charts on achievement from 2003- 2009 finds subgroup performance has improved although there is still disparity with Free Reduced Lunch, students with disabilities,and African American students. Of note, is the gap for African American students in 8th grade reading and growing in proportion in grade 11 reading scores; with only 26% of African American students scoring at the proficient or above level in grade 11. The scores have not improved substantially since 2003 to 2009 for this group with only 22% at proficient level in 2002-03 and 26% in 2009. Similar data for math achievement clearly establishes the need for reform efforts.

The applicant notes the SAT has become the state assessment; this is not clearly articulated as to what this means and for what purpose. It was not clear if Maine Learning Objectives were or were not aligned to the SAT. The increased graduation rate goal is a specific target for 90% which would be a 10% improvement.

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	**30**	**22**
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	15
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	7

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

(i) The applicant provides evidence of how the state education agency has reorganized for efficiency and effectiveness over the past several years. The reorganization has integrated several departments and appears to be more cohesive in structure and organization, and developed teams for implementation of the project. The State and grant priorities are aligned making the current organizational structure at the State level suitable for implementation of the project. The applicant plans to ensure that existing roles at the State are reexamined for sustained continuity of the project goals and that reform efforts will be built into the current processes, roles, and responsibilities at the State level.

The state education agency will oversee the grant and has done so with similar projects of this size and scope such as the ARRA funds. The applicant provides examples of how the State has worked across multiple agencies and coordinated activities to support students; for example, Children's Center, and has coordinated with agencies such as the Department of Labor and Job Corps. Structures are in place to support grant management and oversight as described by the applicant in the plan; or example, requiring districts to conduct implementation evaluations.

The capacity to work with multiple partners both government and private is an advantage. A plan that considers all resources that are available and aligned to the grant priorities indicates support from diverse participants. The applicant addresses the role of the State and state agencies for implementation and mentions a Leadership Team. What is not articulated is the role of the LEAs. The State will provide implementation support through leadership and dedicated teams, and financial resources.

What is not clearly articulated is the connection and conduit from State to local LEAs; through what mechanisms will this be facilitated and monitored is not clearly established. While financial resources are vital to building long-term capacity to support reform efforts, sustained change will require more intensive support. to change culture and climate. How the State and LEAs will work together specifically and over time to facilitate reform efforts that lead to sustained change is not clearly articulated. The use of established regional professional development centers are an effective tool to provide training to local LEA teachers and administrators.

(ii) The applicant has included letters of support from a range of stakeholders including higher education. business and education partners, and legislators although not an extensive list. Letters of support from parents, students, administrators and teachers were not evident. Coupled with low LEA participation and support, this seems to limit the overall commitment from stakeholders. The Maine Education Association (local teacher association) did **not** support this application; the concern was the linking of student achievement to teacher/principal evaluations.

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

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

(i)The applicant states in the narrative that "reform efforts have been effective" and will build upon the current model, although there is no description of the model and any details of what constitutes success. The applicant states that they have undertaken a variety of reform efforts and used funding from many sources but does not provide any specific details. One example that was mentioned was the expansion of STEM education and yet this was an optional requirement in the LEA MOU requirement to participate. This presents a an unclear picture of goals and priorities.

(ii) State achievement data on the standards indicates improvement and in some instances extremely low performance (<10% success) for subgroups. The data presents a troubling overview of both success and lack of success in closing the achievement gap despite almost a decade of reform efforts. Of specific note is the lack of achievement and success for all students in grade 11 reading proficiency and with subgroups in particular.

A review of the NAEP and State data show improvement although there continues to exist significant gaps in the achievement of African American students and students in FRL. The applicant acknowledges the gaps and the lack of achievement over time despite efforts. To aggregate data to show an average does not address the gaps that exist and have existed and presents a false positive of long-term success. As well, the graduation rates have declined almost 7% from 2002-03 to 2008-09. The applicant addresses this decline as the result of improved data collection. The applicant acknowledges the issues, however; has not provided any substantive information as to what reform efforts have worked with success and details of the current model. The applicant outlines how an intervention team will be provided to schools to assist with a corrective action plan to address the dropout and graduation rates.

Total	125	84

B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1
(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards	**40**	**39**
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20
(ii) Adopting standards	20	19

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

(i) Maine is a member of several consortia (e.g., New England Common Assessment Program, Career-Technical Education Consortium of States, Next Generation Learning, American Diploma Project) that are collaborating on the development and implementation of State standards and the Common Core Standards. Maine developed their own standards previously but notes the value of collaboration in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, cost sharing, and higher quality products. Maine is one of 48 states, two territories, and the District of Colombia to sign the MOU to adopt the Common Core Standards at the onset. Maine continues to be involved and committed to the Common Core Standards, internationally benchmarked standards, through the development and review with participation by state specialists and educators. The newest initiative is The Next Generation Learning Partnership, a coalition of six states, whose work is aligned with Common Core and focused upon strategies and practices focused upon assessment. The self-assessment included degree of preparation to implement innovative practices as an Innovation Lab. To establish an Innovation Lab, Maine had to assess their readiness and capacity and commitment to reform efforts at all levels.

(ii) Maine will adopt the Common Core by August 2, 2010; the Legislature will have to formally adopt in 2011 legislative session. Maine has made progress towards seeing the adoption of Common Core Standards as evidenced by approval of legislation signed by the governor into law giving the Commissioner of Education the authority to adopt the Common Core through emergency rule making.

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

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

(i) Maine is part of a consortium (New England Common Assessment Program) to develop and share a common assessment system for grades 4 - 8. This model has been recognized by the USED as an excellent example of sharing and collaboration in the development of assessments. In addition, Maine is a member of the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium of 13 states and 20 advisory states for a total of 33. The consortium is using Common Core standards to develop achievement standards for large scale

online assessment. The consortium is working to design assessments that use multiple measures of student assessment and link to teacher/administrator evaluation.

(ii) Maine is a member of other coalitions that support assessment and accountability including Accountability and Systems Reporting, Career and Technical Assessment Consortium and Science Education Assessment. While the number of states involved in all the initiatives are not identified, Maine's involvement with the Common Core and New England Assessment Program indicate their level of commitment. There are 33 states, a majority, that participate in the SMARTER initiative.

(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	**20**	**12**

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

Maine has provided evidence of their commitment to the Common Core Standards as well as other reform efforts related to the development of high quality standards and assessments. The emphasis on preparation for the future and skills needed for post-secondary education or careers is evident in the documents provided and examples in the appendix, State content standards and Common Core support Maine Guiding Principles which articulated the skills needed for the future (e.g., responsible and involved citizen, self-directed and life long learner, effective communicator) .

The rollout plan articulated by Maine includes incorporation of the Common Core into the state's current standards in all 8 content areas. The plan articulates specific strategies and a timeline.

What is not clear is what priority Maine is focused upon in terms of standards that support high quality assessments. The plan does provide not in-depth detail or organization as to how the multiple standards will frame one coherent and cogent plan of action. There is value in the Advanced Placement (AP) overview but how this links to the larger plan is not provided. A coherent plan that outlines what standards will be developed, implemented ,and aligned with international benchmarks that link assessment criteria that inform practice and efforts to improve student achievement is not overtly provided in the application. There is no in-depth information as what professional development would be provided to teachers and administrators to implement the standards in any meaningful manner. The transition to standards does not seem fully developed in terms of priorities and appears disjoint in terms of what exactly will be done. There is limited evidence provided as to what the plan will seek to accomplish.

Total	70	61

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

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

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

Maine has a state system for the reporting and collecting of data and is expanding their system to provide greater support and infrastructure to the local level. The plan to create a system that allows educators/LEAs (e.g., Educator Improvement System) and parents (e.g., Family Information System) information that is specific to their needs for understanding student achievement. The development of a Data Warehouse and Decision Support System will provide Maine the ability to collect, analyze and understand trends as well as make adjustments and changes as needed to the effectiveness of programs, teachers, administrators and state initiatives.

Maine has developed and implemented a majority (11/12) of the elements of the American COMPETES Act . With the support of the 2010 SLDS Grant (statewide longitudinal data system) Maine plans to extend their capabilities in data collection and analysis including the extension of local and state capabilities in formative and summative assessment. The plan to expand and increase capabilities in the collection

and analysis of data for improving education indicates understanding of the cyclical process of instruction, data analysis, and alignment of learning objectives with student outcomes. Specific information is missing on element 12. Clarity and specificity is lacking and more information on each element would have strengthened the application.

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

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

Maine seeks to integrate multiple sources of data into a comprehensive data base for ease of access and use by stakeholders including LEAs, parents, community, and other state agencies. These efforts will reduce duplication and streamline data collection and analysis. As well, it will provide a more complete representation of multiple data points for analysis that inform policy makers, LEA's, parents, students and other stakeholders as to the progress towards performance outcomes regarding student achievement. The longitudinal collection of data is vital to inform those set policy as well as practitioners to make changes to instruction.

Maine has articulated a plan that emphasizes the both the technical aspects of data collection, management and system components; and, linking reform efforts to Key Performance Indicators. This two -pronged focus is a strength as it recognizes that implementation of a extensive data system will require expertise, planning, and ongoing development for successful implementation.

Maine has proposed a high quality assessment plan for collection, access, analysis and use of data. For example, Maine has outlined a plan for data analysis on student participation and success in post secondary education. This data is necessary to improve Maine's declining graduation rates. The goal to link student data to teacher performance is a key goal of this application. Maine has also proposed that teacher performance data be used to develop professional development and improve instruction.

The use of student growth models will chart improvement at the student, teacher, school, division and state level for an accurate representation of successful programs and practices for all students including at-risk. The Balanced Scorecard will help parents and community assess the effectiveness of programs and chart a course for students. Multiple languages and access to digital information may be problematic for implementation.

Maine has a goal of sustained and focused collection of data used to improve the quality of education. The collaborative plan includes input and dialogue with stakeholders as well as pilot testing for utility purposes.

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

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

(i) Maine has proposed an integrated data system for the collection, analysis and use of multiple sources of data to improve instructional programs and systems through the use of timely access to accurate data. Maine acknowledges the current limitations "across the state with respect to uniformity and quality of formative assessments used by teachers to measure progress in learning the curriculum" and proposes a plan to address this concern.

Educators will be able to make needed changes and adjustments to instruction quickly and based on current student progress. This real time access to information will support systems in decision making for instructional improvement and student success in an efficient manner. The design and implementation of a online formative assessment tool that will provide educators aligned benchmark items to the Common Core

and state standards. This alignment will allow educators to see the links and provide appropriate instruction. The use of MeFAST (Maine's Formative Assessment System for Teachers) will allow divisions, schools and teacher access to make improvements through deep data mining. The program will be a useful tool in the reform efforts proposed.

(ii) Maine has proposed job embedded professional development for teachers to gain knowledge in the use of data for making needed changes to instruction. The applicant proposes to provide training on MeFAST to teachers and administrators during the school day which shows support and commitment to the plan. The goal is for division, schools, teachers and administrators to become knowledgeable of the use of data and create culture of continuous improvement.

The applicant does not address how the loss of instructional time for training will be impacted. If training is provided during the school day how will that be accomplished and how classroom instruction be recaptured is a concern. The training is not specifically articulated as to the parameters; what will provided, how much, how frequently, what is the follow-up for ongoing professional development.

(iii) The applicant did not clearly address data would be utilized by researchers for improvement. The applicant did not provide examples of large scale data analysis that would be useful to the State or school divisions in making changes. The focus is upon the link of student achievement data to teacher performance. While this is a goal it is not the only goal and other more comprehensive plans for the use of such data should be articulated. This is not a developed goal or plan that provides specific information as to what will done by the state.

Total	47	39

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	**21**	**5**
(i) Allowing alternative routes to certification	7	2
(ii) Using alternative routes to certification	7	0
(iii) Preparing teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage	7	3

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

(i) Maine allows Alternative Routes to Certification that prepare teachers who possess an undergraduate degree but not a teaching endorsement or license. Maine currently only has alternative routes through institutions of higher education. However, the legislative body in Maine has passed a resolution to open the regulations regarding alternative routes to certification for public comment and possible revision.

(ii) Maine does not currently use alternative routes to certification. It was unclear as to what is practiced with regard to alternative certification in Maine. Data or evidence of any programs in higher education was not provided.

(iii) Maine has identified areas of critical teacher shortage including special education, ELL, mathematics and science. Those teaching in shortage areas represent 37.59% (total of 6016) of the total teaching force of 16,005 with emergency certification of 13.1% of the teachers in Maine. This indicates a real need for alternative routes for certification to be implemented. The application does not provide details to their process for monitoring, evaluating, and identifying areas of teacher and principal shortage and for preparing educators to fill these areas of shortage. The focus is primarily upon teachers working in high need subject areas. Administrator preparation is not mentioned.

Maine does offer financial incentives to those teachers through loan forgiveness programs. Maine has a STEM Collaborative to address teacher shortage in those fields; however, what specifically has been

done or strategies to be implemented to address the issue was not articulated. Maine mentions discussions with the The College Board and Schools of Education to train AP teachers; this is not developed in-depth .

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	25
(i) Measuring student growth	5	1
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	9
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	5
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	10

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

(i) The applicant states that a growth model has not been implemented to date. A model will be piloted in 2010 and operational by 2012. It will be difficult to assess student progress and achievement without a plan for student growth and thus link to teacher and principal effectiveness. The gaps in the plan such the lack of a statewide assessment for grade 9 are areas of concern in overall student assessment.

(ii) Maine proposes to implement an evaluation system that links student performance to teachers and administrators evaluations. There is an initiative to have all stakeholders involved in this developmental process although specifics are not articulated as to what model was approved or who were the stakeholders.

Before this system can be used Maine has to build a data system and develop a system for defining and measuring student growth. Maine has plans to designate teachers and administrators as effective or highly effective based on the student growth model- as yet not defined or articulated. There is cause for concern that the educator evaluation system is more developed than the student growth model . Increasing the cadre of effective educators will require that the foundation of what will be assessed to be determined first or at the very least articulated in a clear and precise manner. This ambiguity is reflected in the MOU agreements and the lack of support by LEAs on this system. Only 35% of participating LEAs are onboard with this initiative.

(iii) Maine proposes multiple evaluations of teachers and administrators by trained evaluators including annual evaluations. Specifics were not articulated as to what and how this would occur although the applicant did mention training supports will be provided to teachers and administrators.

(iv) The Longitudinal Data system will improve the data collection and analysis process and will assist divisions, schools, and educators to use data for instructional improvement and change in all of the four required areas. The applicant did not articulate any incentives for those teachers and administrators who are considered highly effective- this was noticeably lacking in the proposal. The applicant did articulate that novice teachers must attend training and show satisfactory levels of student growth before receiving licensure and tenure protections. Maine is focused upon the link of student achievement to teacher effectiveness; what is lacking in the narrative are other descriptors and indicator of successful and effective teachers and administrators.

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

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

(i) The applicant has provided monetary and technical assistance to high-need LEAs to increase the equitable distribution of highly qualified teachers and decrease under qualified and/or inexperienced teachers; the applicant does not articulate or specifically provide any detailed information as to the strategy

and the effectiveness of the strategy. The link that is established by the funds and technical assistance does not explain how this facilitated a positive change. The plan provides parameters for high needs schools including Category A ,(not less than 49.9 % qualify for Title 1 and 5% < Maine average of 95% for three years or more) and Category B adds more than 12.8 % of the teachers have less than 3 years of teaching).

Recruiting experienced educators for hard to staff schools will require more specificity;- the plan as stated it is general without any precise guidelines. Of note, Maine does not plan to offer any performance compensation for educators in hard to staff schools. Performance measures do not appear to be overly ambitious at the end of 2012-2013 with only 20% of the teachers in high poverty and/or high minority deemed highly effective.

(ii) Additional performance measures for science, mathematics, special education and ELL were more stringent and more ambitious with 60% deemed highly effective by 2012-2013. The strategies are not clearly stated nor the plan clearly framed so that previous work done by applicant in this area is utilized to inform the proposed plan. The plan does articulate the equitable distribution but rather the preparation.

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

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

(i) The applicant indicates that many of Maine's higher education institutions have agreed to transition to a preparation system for teachers and administrators that has linked external standards (NCATE/TEAC/ISSLC) and Maine's content standards. The SLDS (Student Longitudinal Data System) will link student performance to individual teachers and administrators and eventually to individual colleges or universities. There are other data that would be useful to utilize in this plan; teacher test scores, GPA, years of teaching, gender, age, quality of the undergraduate experience; these variables should be considered in the plan for linking student data to programs. The applicant seems to be establishing a one to one correspondence and this may limit the effectiveness of the plan. The targets for performance are not articulated and thus, what is unclear is precisely what will be measured and evaluated. What adjustments colleges and universities will make based on the data is not articulated.

(ii) The collaboration of K-12 with higher education is a positive strategy in that it links the educational systems in preparation, access and graduation along a continuum. The performance measures seek to identify successful education programs through student performance outcomes; however, the percentage of programs for which the public can actually access data is not ambitious. Since there are only 16 teacher credential programs and eight principal programs, a target of 25% reported publicly by end of 2011 is small. This assumes that all of the data management components are in place as well.

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	**20**	**9**
(i) Providing effective support	10	5
(ii) Continuously improving the effectiveness of the support	10	4

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

(i) The applicant will provide coaches and support to LEAs, teachers and administrators with embedded professional development during the school day for the purpose of working with data and using data to make informed decisions with regard to instruction and individual students. The State in conjunction with LEAs and stakeholders will select comprehensive models of teacher and leaders development; the models will align with the evaluation system for teachers and administrators. The State will develop and provide

modules of professional development (e.g., performance based learning, use of data mentoring) that will support LEAs in the reform efforts.

The implementation of Leadership Academies will further support the development of teachers and administrators as leaders for change. The curriculum will include training and support in:

1. Leadership for High Performing Schools--use of research on instructional leadership and standards based instruction
2. Leadership for Local Accountability and Commitment to Learning- focus on standards and curriculum delivery
3. Professional Learning Communities- focus on collaboration and building community
4. Collaborative Coaching - role of effective mentors
5. Promoting Teacher Leadership to Strengthen School Culture

The professional development coupled with school/ turnaround skills, classroom observations, new teacher evaluation, cultural awareness, differentiation, general and special education training, and models for change will provide a platform for supporting LEAs,teachers and administrators in the implementation of the project. What seems to be missing is the link that binds the individual pieces into a coherent framework. Professional development)PD) should be driven from the data, the data aligned to student learning outcomes, and outcomes driven by curriculum framework. The PD appears to a singular part that is not connected into the larger foundation of reform. What is also missing is the link to working with high needs and high risk students. Information about changing school culture informs and guides but the reality is that is takes time and hard work to change beliefs and practices.

(ii) The applicant proposes to provide high quality professional development but does not articulate precisely what that means or used in support of improving the effective support systems. . The applicant does plan to disaggregate student data for continuous improvement but does not articulate what data and how it could be used and plans to utilize outside contractual services to accomplish this goal. The applicant does not provide any specifics or any details of the plan that supports high quality and ambitious strategies for reform that are specifically focused upon student achievement.

Total	138	54

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

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

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

(i) Maine has developed legislative statutes to intervene directly in schools that are low performing and school administrative units (e.g., community school distract, regional school district , and does not include a career and technical education region). In the documents provided, the for authority for intervention provide the Department of Education with the authority to initiate a comprehensive review of low performing schools based on the results of Maine content standards assessments. The revised statutes include language that the commission shall address administrative requirements to develop a school improvement plan, oversee compliance, validate and report on the status of schools and plan, provide assistance including an assistance team for at least one year. The State has the authority to intervene as well as the reasonability to assist and monitor the school improvement plans and provide support to those low performing schools.

A review of the material provided in the appendices indicate the State has established standards that govern and provide oversight of all schools with a focus on those that are low performing. Schools that are persistently low performing are categorized based on student performance as Tier I (receives Title I funds)

or Tier II (does not receive Title I funds), based on student achievement, (3 year average of proficiency in Reading and Math) and graduation rates less than 60%.

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

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

(i) Maine has defined and developed criteria for the identification of the persistently low performing schools. Low performing is defined as both a three year average of proficiency on math and reading from 2007-2009, and, demonstrating a level of progress less than the median rate for all Maine schools. The applicant did not identify if the schools were from one or more school divisions or if the under-performance was characteristic of a few school divisions,

The data utilizes gain in yearly averages to determine ranking and to identify those schools eligible for funding through Title I School Improvement Grants. Schools that are persistently low performing are categorized based on student performance as Tier I (lowest achieving 5% of Title I schools or graduation rate less than 60% for 3 years) or Tier II (lowest achieving 5% of secondary schools or lowest 5 that are eligible for but do not receive Title I funds) based on student achievement, (3 year average of proficiency in Reading and Math) and graduation rates less than 60%.

Maine has identified 5 schools in Tier I in 2009-2010 and 5 schools in Tier II using this formula. As well, Maine will identify additional secondary schools not eligible for Title I that are in the lowest 5% of achievement and with a graduation rate less than 60% over the past three years. The focus on secondary schools that are both low performing and low graduation rates will couple and link achievement and graduation. The number of identified schools seems small --10 ; specific data on the under performing schools would have provided more details and information. Information as the number of students in each school, SES, ELL, etc, would have been useful.

(ii) Maine proposes to build on a current model that has been successful in assisting 20/34 schools to maintain improvement thus removing these schools from Continuous Improvement Model. The data Maine has provided (60% success rate in 5 years of intensive support) shows the challenges faced in making sustained improvement in academic performance.

Maine's approach to turning around low performing schools is structured to encompass the level of support needed by individual based upon the data. Schools will be identified as Turnaround, Closure or Transformational and assigned a Turnaround Team whose skills align with the needs and priorities of the school. The Turnaround Team will provide ongoing and sustained support, intervention, and recommendations to the schools and the school will in turn, develop a corrective action plan for submission the State. The applicant outlines support for educators through professional development that addresses data use for instructional change, leadership strategies, assessment and intervention practices, and linking the improvement plan to data; and, the development and implementation of an Improvement Network to share resources and strategies and will use technology through an online platform to assist those schools in rural areas as well. The applicant mentions new leader participation in Leadership Academies outlines in section D. The support of new leaders in schools that are historically under-performing is a critical component; new leader need mentoring and support as do teachers in setting high expectations for success while changing a culture of underachievement.

Numerous strategies are mentioned for success such as AP, IB, and STEM professional development , computerized assessment and validation of practices where students have demonstrated success. What is lacking is a focus on two critical components- how the development of the improvement plan and current data are linked to set clear and measurable objectives and specific strategies that assist in the achievement of the set objectives. It is laudable to set goals of AP and IB professional development; however, in schools that are persistently under-performing with low graduation rates perhaps the plan should scaffold the goals

and use vertical alignment and teaming to ensure that students are prepared to participate and excel in advanced coursework.

The applicant describes a strategy to improve graduation rates through research and support on dropout prevention. While a conference is one strategy, there is abundant research currently available that outlines specific strategies that have shown to be successful for disengaged youth, for example, mentoring, creating support systems such as tutoring and computer remediation opportunities, opportunities for technical and career certification programs.

The applicant describes the implementation of a new data system and how the under-performing schools and students will receive timely feedback which is a good strategy for periodic review. The kinds of data and intervention efforts needed on a daily basis to make changes to instruction and target specific gaps in student learning is not addressed. This type of data intervention should occur at the school level through the use of ongoing assessments; either teacher constructed or computer models that link to the curriculum and standards.

The applicant mentions a few strategies that have been successful with underachieving schools; for example, Jobs for Maine's Graduates. Successful strategies should be implemented and build upon as well as needs assessments as the school level. Although individual schools will have unique needs and resources, models should consider some consistency of strategies in order to evaluate the effectiveness.

Total	50	44

F. General

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

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

(i) Based on the evidence provided, Maine allocated a greater percentage of total revenues for elementary, secondary, and higher education in 2009 (43.10%) than in 2008 (39.97%).

(ii) Maine articulates an adequacy-based formula for funding called Essential Programs and Services, that is calculated based upon student, school, and staff characteristics. The applicant states that each LEA will receive additional funding based upon students who are in poverty or ELL for example. The applicant did not provide any specifics, evidence or examples to determine if the funding is equitable between high-need and/or high-poverty LEAs and schools.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	**40**	**6**
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	0
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	0
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	0
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	0
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	6

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

(i) Not addressed in the application, not applicable according to the applicant.

(ii) Not addressed in the application, not applicable according to the applicant .

(iii) Not addressed in the application, not applicable according to the applicant.

(iv) Not addressed in the application, not applicable according to the applicant.

(v) Maine has passed legislation (April 2010) that permits the establishment of innovative schools . Maine's adoption of an innovative school by an LEA allows for open enrollment, has high student accountability and flexible program delivery including instructional design, school calendar, staff selection , and methods for assessment; all done so as not to conflict with any state requirement or statute. Maine also allows for school choice and in many of the rural areas students have both options and tuition assistance. Maine indicates that over 9,000 students exercised the school choice option in 2010.

Maine will implement a lab school model as part of the Partnership for Next Generation Learning. This model has not yet been implemented so evaluation and evidence is not available. Maine appears to be poised on the next step of proactive and forward thinking with respect to innovative and independent models of public schools. There is support for such models and a lab school will certainly move the opportunities forward; however, there is little data or details as to what this will look like and what innovation will occur.

Maine implemented the AP4All program to provide AP coursework via an online platform for rural and low income students with success. The program was suspended due to grant funding. Online coursework such as AP, Dual Enrollment, and other courses with limited teachers, students, and resources can be a successful strategy to address some of the equity of resources, rural, and access to college preparation for all students.

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

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

Maine has taken the initial steps in educational reform through the passing and enacting of legislation that supports the achievement and success of Maine students. Efforts at reform begin with an examination of current standards, policies, data, programs, funding and it appears the applicant has taken into account not only the successes but the limitations that exist in the current system. One focus has been upon the Learning Results System. Efforts to support learning include legislation that supports the development of Innovative Schools, standards for graduation, funding that has increased since 2008-2009, and additional funding for high needs schools and LEAs. Maine's legislature has set a goal of 80% graduation rate by 2012 and 90% by 2016; a very ambitious goal.

The STEM goals focus upon all students who do not have access to advanced STEM coursework and career opportunities in high need school divisions. Girls and minorities are not specifically mentioned nor are strategies that target initiative. The laptop initiative is another strategy to support high need schools and students. This initiative requires additional funding and support and the State appears to be supportive although how much support, what kind, and what is mandated by law is not specific. The initiatives require support from the State and through the legislature of funding, human capital, and a commitment to the process; a process that will require time, strategic planning with all stakeholders, and an unwavering focus on student achievement. While the legislature has established some statutes and laws, for a plan of this scale and to accomplish the reform that is proposed, more may have to be considered. Maine has begun the process of reform as evidenced by their initiatives; however, financial support and laws will need to be enacted.

Total	55	19

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	0

Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Maine has proposed strategies for student achievement and success within STEM content and preparation within their overall RTTT application. The focus on AP courses is one example of providing advanced level coursework as a preparation for college entry and success. The professional development provided to educators to enhance their knowledge, skills and strategies for teaching is another area that will strengthen student achievement and success in STEM courses. The laptop initiative is primarily for elementary and middle with plans to extend to high school students and teachers. Maine has several partnerships with organizations that will strengthen curriculum, assessments and links to teacher effectiveness with student performance. Many of the partnerships including those that are STEM focused are in the early stages of development and implementation.

Maine has begun the process of working towards STEM goal and throughout the application, there were sections that attached STEM priorities and goals. The goals and strategies however, were not woven into a comprehensive plan that clearly links the various initiatives in such a manner that reform efforts are clearly articulated. Rather, the information is presented more singularly in that STEM seems an addition to other goals.

The opportunity to partner with community colleges, technical certifications, hospitals, museums, private industry within and external to the State are not developed as a comprehensive reform plan focused upon the goals of RTTT. Collaborations that involve community and business partners that become part of the school culture were not evident nor were plans to the point articulated.

The plan did not address girls and minorities specifically in terms of other avenues to explore that would assist their entry into STEM careers. Clubs, science fairs, mentoring, are all ways that would make the strategies more specific the targeted groups. The goals articulated by Maine are worthy and certainly ones to establish priorities for success; however, there must be strategies that explicit for achieving those goals. The goals must link back to the overall plan and in places there were gaps in the process and plan.

Total		15	0

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		**No**

Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Maine has submitted a reform plan that proposes to improve student achievement as well as begin to organize multiple initiatives for efficiency. The initiatives include major tasks associated with curriculum alignment and assessment, the collections and analysis of data, teacher evaluation linked to student achievement. There was not a clear sense of the role of the LEAs in the initiatives; for example, in the STEM activities and goals. Although the State proposes to increase STEM courses and student achievement and preparation for advanced as well as other STEM courses little is mentioned as to what the LEAs are currently doing in this area and how to utilize successful partners and programs that LEAs have in place. The role of the LEA seemed secondary and at times was missing in the collaborative nature that this application and funding would require for success. Subgroup performance was another secondary focus and in places was noticeably missing in the data and goals of the application.

Maine has provided a preliminary plan that requires alignment of goals, strategies and priorities that are clearly defined and articulated. How the individual components fit into an comprehensive and coherent plan was lacking. The LEA participation was limited although the number of students that could potentially be impacted of greater significance.

The implementation of new standards and training for all teachers is the foundation of creating systemic reform. The pay for performance and evaluation system was not supported by all of the participating LEAs. Coupled with a small LEA participation rate this could undo many of the initiatives that this plan is predicated. There was not a tightly constructed focus of the goals and how the various initiatives and strategies went together as a framework. Individually, many of the goals seem separate from the plan. The plan has to be an ambitious plan that is aligned with the RTTT priorities and in places, Maine certainly had strengths. The assessment and use of data illustrated this point. However, there were gaps and this is an area of concern.

Total		0

Grand Total	500	301