VI. SELECTION CRITERIA: PROGRESS AND PLANS IN THE FOUR EDUCATION REFORM AREAS

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(A) State Success Factors (125 total points)

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

The extent to which—

(i) The State has set forth a comprehensive and coherent reform agenda that clearly articulates its goals for implementing reforms in the four education areas described in the ARRA and improving student outcomes statewide, establishes a clear and credible path to achieving these goals, and is consistent with the specific reform plans that the State has proposed throughout its application; *(5 points)*

(ii) The participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) are strongly committed to the State's plans and to effective implementation of reform in the four education areas, as evidenced by Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) (as set forth in Appendix D) or other binding agreements between the State and its participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) that include— *(45 points)*

(a) Terms and conditions that reflect strong commitment by the participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) to the State's plans;

(b) Scope-of-work descriptions that require participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) to implement all or significant portions of the State's Race to the Top plans; and

(c) Signatures from as many as possible of the LEA superintendent (or equivalent), the president of the local school board (or equivalent, if applicable), and the local teachers' union leader (if applicable) (one signature of which must be from an authorized LEA representative) demonstrating the extent of leadership support within participating LEAs (as defined in this notice); and

(iii) The LEAs that are participating in the State's Race to the Top plans (including considerations of the numbers and percentages of participating LEAs, schools, K-12 students, and students in poverty) will translate into broad statewide impact, allowing the State to reach its ambitious yet achievable goals, overall and by student subgroup, for—*(15 points)*

(a) Increasing student achievement in (at a minimum) reading/language arts and mathematics, as reported by the NAEP and the assessments required under the ESEA;

(b) Decreasing achievement gaps between subgroups in reading/language arts and mathematics, as reported by the NAEP and the assessments required under the ESEA;

(c) Increasing high school graduation rates (as defined in this notice); and

(d) Increasing college enrollment (as defined in this notice) and increasing the number of students who complete at least a year's worth of college credit that is applicable to a degree within two years of enrollment in an institution of higher education.

In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion, as well as projected goals as described in (A)(1)(iii). The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Recommended maximum response length: Ten pages (excluding tables)

(A)(1)(i) DC's comprehensive and coherent reform agenda, with a clear and credible path to goals

The District of Columbia (DC or the District) has one of the nation's most exciting, dynamic education reform agenda. With a solid track record of improvement, demonstrated experience in turning around low-achieving schools, and an unparalleled vision and commitment to make choices that benefit children, DC is on a path toward closing the achievement gap and ensuring that every student, regardless of where he or she is from, reaches high levels of student achievement. Furthermore, while there are many schools that have closed the achievement gap, the nation needs a proof point of this accomplishment at a state level. DC is positioned to serve as this exemplar like no other state.

In both scope and scale, DC's Race to the Top (RTTT) plan combines with ongoing efforts to detail an incredibly comprehensive school reform effort, spanning early childhood to post-secondary education, and with a reach of 91% of DC public school students via participating LEAs. Indeed, education reform and innovation are already underway in classrooms all across DC, where the goals, like the stakes, are high. Over the next four years, the District will radically accelerate turning around its lowest-achieving schools and significantly boost the achievement of its mid-achieving schools by harnessing the power and impact of human capital and data-driven instruction. Using its highest-achieving schools to support low achievers, DC will make best practices of great teachers and leaders the norm. In particular, DC will pursue aggressive LEA intervention, charter authorizer accountability, and State support to turn around or close the District's most chronically low-achieving schools. In the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), Chancellor Michelle Rhee has committed to leveraging Race to the Top funds with other resources and strategies to intervene in more than just the bottom 5% of DCPS schools – instead, her efforts will reach into the bottom 20% of DCPS schools, ensuring that turnaround focuses on a higher number of low-achieving DCPS schools and ultimately reaches more DCPS students.

35 DC LEAs comprised of 201 schools (out of 230 in the District) have committed to RTTT participation. In these participating LEAs, every teacher and principal will be evaluated based on performance, and these evaluations will be used in all significant personnel decisions. Student achievement will count for at least 50% of teacher evaluations. At the time of this submission, the Washington Teachers Union is

tallying the votes on a groundbreaking teacher contract, which will push DC to the forefront of teacher professionalism, in which student achievement results drive both rewards and consequences in terms of employment. Effective teachers will become the standard in DC. The State will support strong professional development systems and effective teacher pipeline programs, while teacher certification programs that fail to provide effective teachers will have their program approval revoked. Moreover, all teachers and principals in every RTTT-participating school will have access to data needed to be an effective teacher and school leader to every DC student and to ensure that every student is held to (and meets) the high and rigorous expectations of the Common Core Standards. The development, refinement, and use of instructional improvement systems across all RTTT LEAs will be critical to DC's achievement of its RTTT goals and objectives. Finally, students at all levels will have the opportunity to explore the world of science, technology, engineering, and math through a coherent network of STEM learning opportunities.

DC's path to success is clear and compelling because the trail has already been blazed. Over 10 years ago, a vibrant charter school movement in the District – started in response to a chronically under-performing DCPS system – sowed the initial seeds of reform, creating pockets of education innovation and achievement. In 2005, the District built upon early reform efforts by adopting new and more rigorous state academic standards that raised the bar for student achievement. These standards are now recognized as among the strongest in the nation. Catalyzed by mayoral takeover of the school system in 2007, the District's growing reform culture and momentum has catapulted to new levels.

DC's starting point for reform is important to understanding its current trajectory. In this city-state of just over 72,000 public school students, only 38% of elementary school students tested at grade-level proficiency in reading in 2007. The statistics for math were more sobering, with only 31% of elementary school students achieving grade-level proficiency. Performance among secondary students was no better, with only 35% and 33% achieving grade-level proficiency in reading and math, respectively. Moreover, a 2006 report by The Bridgespan Group found that less than half of DC's ninth-graders (43%) graduated from high school within five years. Those that did required remedial classes; less than 10% completed college within five years of high school graduation.

Unsurprisingly, from 1985 to 2005, enrollment in DC public schools dropped by more than 10,000 students, as families fled the educational system for DC private or parochial schools, as well as other neighboring public school districts that offered the hope of more promising education options. DC became a national example of the moral abomination of the achievement gap. Drastic action needed to be taken, and has been taken, to reverse this decline.

Today, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan calls DC a "beacon of hope." For the first time in decades, enrollment in DC schools is beginning to rise, as the exodus of departing students has been curtailed. More importantly, student achievement is growing at incredible rates; DC saw gains in both math and reading on the 2009 NAEP exam. In just two years since 2007, student proficiency on the state assessment has improved across both elementary and secondary populations, with approximately 45% of students achieving proficiency in both reading and math (up from 36% in reading and 31% in math in 2007). Even the persistent black-white achievement gap has begun to close. The January 2010 issue of *U.S. News & World Report* reported, "In the past two years, the achievement gap between white and African-American students [in DCPS] has closed from 70 percentage points to 50 percentage points." Although there remains much work to be done, the tide of education reform in DC is turning in a positive direction.

This upward trajectory can be attributed to a bold education reform agenda. Over the past decade, DCPS has benefitted from external pressure from a robust charter sector of 57 independent LEAs, where many high-achieving schools deliver dramatic results with high-needs student populations. Indeed, DC's charter sector has accomplished what it was originally conceived to do: to pressure the traditional system to improve through its own example of achievement. Mayoral takeover of DCPS in 2007 enabled DC Mayor Adrian Fenty to establish a separate, strong state agency. He also appointed Chancellor Michelle Rhee to take the helm of the still-lagging DCPS system and to lead an aggressive agenda of system reform and school turnaround. To this point, Chancellor Rhee and her team have worked relentlessly on behalf of DC students. Among their ground-breaking human capital initiatives, they developed IMPACT, which this past school year began evaluating teacher effectiveness based on student growth and removing chronically ineffective teachers and principals; Chancellor Rhee and the DCPS team have delivered early and encouraging results.

The opportunity now presented by Race to the Top comes at a crucial juncture for the District. Other urban jurisdictions have shown the incredible difficulty of maintaining reform momentum in ways that generate long-term, sustainable, and integrated system-wide outcomes. Few districts, if any, have managed to sustain the pace of initial (Years 1-3) education reform. While DC's political will is in place and critical groundwork for reform has been laid, there is still much to be done. At the very time when reform fatigue becomes a risk, DC needs to accelerate efforts to maintain – and grow – its upward trajectory. Race to the Top presents an unprecedented opportunity to infuse new energy and resources where they are most needed, to help push the District "further, faster." RTTT can be an important vehicle to ensure that DC reform, much of which aligns directly with RTTT goals, continues to produce dramatic improvements to student achievement and system performance. DC and its cutting-edge LEAs intend to take advantage of a RTTT award to accomplish the following statewide performance objectives:

- Increase statewide DC Comprehensive Assessment System (DC-CAS) performance by 5 percentage points per year
- Close the minority achievement gap by 5 percentage points per year
- Close the poverty achievement gap by 3.5 percentage points per year over the next four years
- Increase National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores by 10 points over four years, an improvement that will surpass the highest four-year student achievement gains made by any urban district in 2009 Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) report scores
- Raise high school graduation rates by 3 percentage points per year
- Increase college enrollment by five percentage points per year and develop a baseline set of college-focused data from which DC will soon measure the college-readiness, college credit accumulation, and college completion rates of its students

DC has demonstrated that its primary commitment is to its students. Its reforms demonstrate also that the core components of change promoted by Race to the Top can and will produce a dramatic, positive, and sustainable impact on student achievement. DC is committed to producing results that serve as a national model for urban educational reform.

DC's RTTT reform agenda supports the Theory of Change outlined below, demonstrating a fundamental commitment to: (1) decrease the number of low-achieving schools, (2) shift mid-achieving schools to higher levels of achievement, and (3) increase the total number of high-achieving schools across the State. Critically, high-achieving schools will be used to support efforts at the lower levels through the sharing of best practices and leadership, tools, and lessons learned. This agenda will leverage the four assurance areas outlined in the RTTT notice and drive changes needed to redesign DC's portfolio of school options available to its students. Ultimately, DC seeks to move to a portfolio system of high-achieving schools that will address the needs of all DC students. In doing so, DC will reach its ultimate reform goals of eliminating the achievement gap and becoming the highest-performing jurisdiction in the country.

DC's RACE TO THE TOP THEORY OF CHANGE

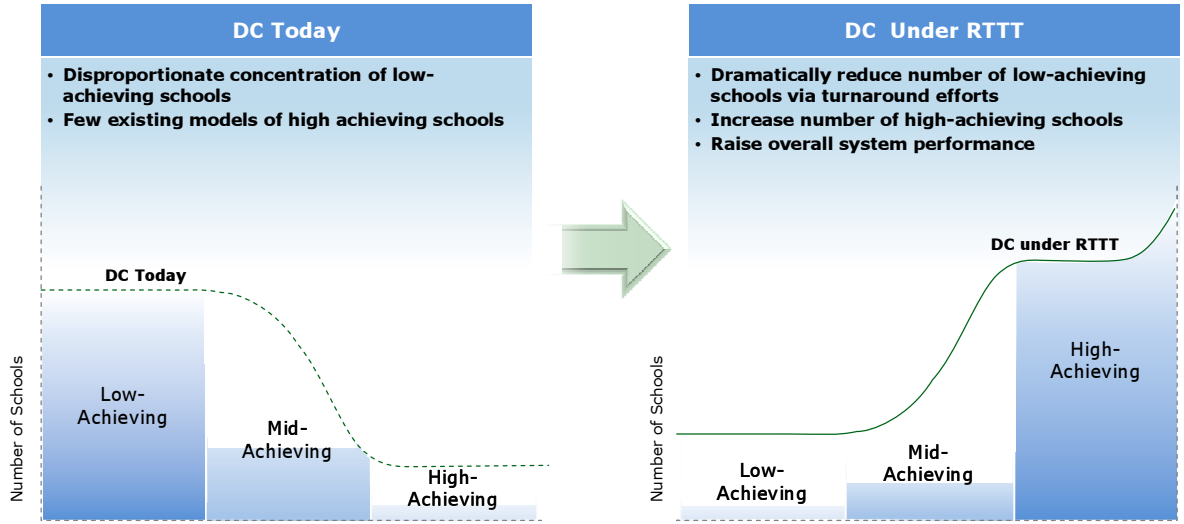


Figure A1.1 DC RTTT Theory of Change

DC's efforts to achieve a new portfolio of schools and ensure a higher proportion of high-quality education options for DC students will build on the bold work already being done throughout the District, much of which aligns with RTTT's reform assurance areas.

Table A1.1 Current Practice and Plans by Assurance Area

Assurance	Current Practice	Race to the Top Plans
Standards and Assessments	• DC's state standards are among the strongest in the nation, having received a grade of "A" from Stanford University's *Hoover Digest* • Many DC schools (but not statewide) have interim assessments aligned to summative assessments, providing real-time information about student strengths and weaknesses	• Move swiftly to adopt the new Common Core Standards, with the meeting date for the State Board's approval already set • Create new summative assessments aligned with the Common Core Standards with non-RTTT funds, with a consortium of states • Require LEAs to use interim assessments that will be aligned with the Common Core Standards
Data Systems to Improve Instruction	• Instructional improvement systems exist in DCPS and in several charter schools • Data-driven instructional practices are beginning to proliferate across the District	• Fund the development of instructional improvement systems for LEAs that lack sufficient systems to support data-driven instruction • Fund capacity-building for school-level data analysis to ensure that student data are analyzed and used to improve instruction
Great Teachers and Leaders	• DC has extensive experience working with a large local network of national partners • Alternative certification providers for teachers and principals contribute significantly to DC's human capital pipeline • Teacher evaluations that use student growth as a primary component are being informed by DCPS • Human capital decisions such as targeted intervention, additional compensation and dismissal are becoming enabled by evaluations	• Hold all certification providers, including alternative providers, to evaluations based on graduates' effectiveness; program approval will be subject to revocation if graduate performance does not meet DC standards • Build and support stronger pipelines for effective teachers and principals • Require all participating LEAs to have evaluations in place for principals and teachers based on at least 50% student growth • Support human capital decisions based on evaluations through investment in systems for decision-making, as well as professional development systems aligned to evaluations • Create professional development collaboratives to support the dissemination of teacher effectiveness across the system

Assurance	Current Practice	Race to the Top Plans
School Turnaround	• DC has an established track record of closing low-achieving schools • Each of the four RTTT turnaround models has already been used in DC schools	• Adopt a statewide definition of "persistently lowest-achieving" schools and ensure that turnaround plans exist for all schools in this category • Fund planning and support efforts of school turnaround teams

Through the execution of DC's Race to the Top plans, the District envisions dramatically altering its current portfolio of schools by:

1. **Drastically reducing the number of low-achieving schools**: through the implementation of intervention models such as school closure, restart, and turnaround. Efforts will capitalize on DC's unique political will and governance structure to intervene in persistently low-achieving schools and to fund the planning and sustainability of school turnaround efforts. DC's turnaround efforts will be modeled after leadership, teaching, and collaborative structures proven effective in high-achieving schools.

2. **Shifting all middle-range schools to higher levels of performance**: through the implementation of standards-based curriculum and assessments based on internationally-benchmarked Common Core Standards. Efforts will leverage data, tools, and training to improve instruction; accelerate human capital strategies (including the compensation of highly effective teachers, the targeted intervention for mid-range teachers, and the removal of ineffective teachers); and ensure strong pipelines of effective and highly effective teachers and principals. Additional support will be provided by high-achieving schools through targeted sharing of and training on what works.

3. **Identifying and expanding/replicating high-achievers**: through the implementation of strategies to position high-achieving schools as anchors for professional learning community collaboratives that lift up middle-range schools. Efforts will support in-house teacher pipeline programs and grant priority access to facilities. LEAs will be encouraged to expand or replicate their highest-achieving schools in order to expand quality seats for students and share best practices throughout DC.

The District's RTTT Theory of Change is predicated upon collaboration and replication of bold and effective practices, as well as the study and continuous improvement of such practices in pursuit of excellence. DC will leverage its diverse portfolio of schools to raise student achievement by increasing the number of students being served by high-achieving schools, both traditional and charter. With this overall outcome in mind, DC has established ambitious goals and performance measures for the next four years (outlined in Appendix A1.1).

DC's UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS POSITION THE STATE FOR RACE TO THE TOP SUCCESS

As a city-state in the nation's capital, DC is unique from all other RTTT applicants. Its size, education governance, and reform structures enable aggressive change at the state level that is able to reach individual schools, classrooms, and students with great speed and impact. DC's Theory of Change and unprecedented momentum of recent reform progress positions the State as a high-impact site for RTTT investment. DC enrolls over 72,000 students in a little over 200 schools, with the vast majority of students represented by LEAs that have committed to participate in RTTT. The simple truth is this: in DC, Race to the Top funds will go "further, faster" than in any other state, enabling the District to make dramatic change for as many young lives as possible. DC is an innovator in areas of human capital recruitment, retention, and training; charter school innovation and cooperation; and school turnaround. As well, the District of Columbia offers both the experience and political will to demonstrate the feasibility of achieving exceptional outcomes backed by a strong reform agenda and aligned leadership and support. The list of factors that position DC for success is long indeed, including a vibrant charter sector, a head start on reform under mayoral control, improved state-level capacity, a supportive network of leading local and national partners, and District-wide urgency around the work that remains to be done.

Vibrant Charter Sector. DC has benefited from a long history of being home to one of the nation's most vibrant public charter school sectors. The Center for Education Reform's 2010 *Charter School Law Ranking and Scorecard* cites DC as having the "strongest of the nation's 40 charter laws" and gives DC's charter school law an "A" grade. Likewise, the National Alliance for

Public Charter Schools recently released a study that compares state charter laws from 40 states and ranked Washington, DC 2nd among states, notably for being a "leader in three of the most critical challenges facing public charter schools: operational autonomy, operating funding equity, and facilities support." Importantly, the operational autonomy of charters allows DC's RTTT plan to be more creative, if less uniform, than other states. Many of the initiatives developed in the state plan reflect the ability for individual LEAs to innovate and meet reform objectives in ways that best suit the unique characteristics of their particular school size, program, and student population. Charter schools in DC are not typical district-style LEAs – many are single-school LEAs with school populations of less than 300 students. As such, statewide, top-down reform approaches do not always benefit the students in these schools; thus, the District's RTTT application is designed to serve these schools too and considers this dynamic deliberately throughout.

DC's charter community is managed by the DC Public Charter School Board (PCSB), an independent DC agency and the District's sole authorizer of public charter schools. PCSB oversees all the District's nearly 100 charter school campuses, with the mission to provide quality public school options for DC students and families through a comprehensive application review process, effective oversight, meaningful school supports, and active stakeholder engagement. PCSB brings accountability to DC's charter school community, with a history of approving only 38% of all applicants and closing underperforming schools. In 2009, PCSB launched its Performance Management Framework (PMF), which is used to evaluate all DC public charter schools according to common academic and non-academic measures, including student growth. While the PMF is relatively new, it is being watched as a potential national model for charter school accountability and support.

Nationally, charter schools were created to encourage innovative practices that could carry over to a broader set of all public schools. While that vision has yet to be realized in other states, DC made this theory a reality: informal networks of reform-minded education colleagues exist across all District LEAs, and best practices – whether around using data to improve instruction or maximizing the potential of alternative preparation programs – are shared through robust formal and informal networks. Non-profit

organizations that work in both DCPS and public charter LEAs support collaboration through school visits and training that facilitate the dissemination of best practices. DC's RTTT application reflects DC's vision for raising LEA collaboration to a new level, where formal and informal collaboration will continue through task forces focused on key issues connected to the RTTT assurance areas. Furthermore, ongoing collaboration among leading national educators from DCPS, the District's charter LEAs, and local and national partners will drive exponential growth in DC student achievement.

Mayoral Control. DC is only one of just over a dozen US cities in which the public school system is managed under the auspices of mayoral control, and the District is the only state with mayoral control covering the majority of its students. Since 2007, mayoral control has played a critical role in eliminating fragmented school authority across multiple entities and accelerating much needed reform efforts. In his first action under mayoral control, Mayor Fenty appointed Michelle Rhee, a leading education innovator and change agent, as Chancellor of DCPS. Because there is no local school board, accountability and decision-making at DCPS are now streamlined, catalyzing an unprecedented level of reform in DCPS, particularly in priority RTTT areas. For example, under mayoral control, DCPS was able to launch the Teaching and Learning Framework and an aligned IMPACT evaluation system for all teachers. IMPACT, a system for evaluating educator effectiveness based in large part on student growth, has created a laser-like focus on increasing teacher effectiveness in a measurable way, on targeting professional development and supports to those areas most in need, and in moving ineffective teachers out of the system. Turnaround work has been taken to new levels with the creation of DCPS's Office of School Innovation, now headed by Josh Edelman, who formerly oversaw Chicago's innovative turnaround efforts. In parallel to this progress in critical RTTT assurance areas, the conditions of school facilities – for too long the most visually striking sign of DCPS's failing school system – have improved dramatically under an ambitious modernization plan executed by a separate facilities agency that reports to the Mayor. Ultimately, mayoral control has been critical to DCPS's recent progress because it ensures the political will and top-level accountability necessary to make the difficult decisions required to promote bold education reform.

Improved State-Level Capacity. The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) was created in 2007 as the State Educational Agency for the District of Columbia. Created as a means of strengthening state-level accountability and support for local education reform initiatives in DCPS and DC charter schools, OSSE is overseen by Dr. Kerri Briggs, the former Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education in the U.S. Department of Education, who was confirmed as the District's State Superintendent of Education in June 2009. Superintendent Briggs brings to DC a wealth of knowledge and experience regarding education policy and federal education laws, regulations, and policies. Dr. Briggs reports to Mayor Fenty through the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME), Victor Reinoso, whose office oversees the District education reform agenda and related coordination among DC agencies. The DME also works to ensure alignment of reform efforts and access to all available District government resources to support school improvement. A State Board of Education (BOE) – also created in 2007 – approves state academic standards and the State's accountability framework. The BOE also serves as an advisor to OSSE on certain state-level education policies (see Appendix A1.2 for an organizational chart that outlines the relationships between DC's education agencies). Race to the Top funding will provide an opportunity for the recently-formed OSSE to continue to improve its capacity and role as the state-level partner for education reform.

Supportive Partners. Washington, DC, as the nation's capital, is a city that attracts significant human capital talent and high-quality partners. Preeminent universities conduct renowned leadership work, upon which the District will capitalize for principal leadership training. Within P-12 education reform, DC attracts the nation's leading education organizations, including Teach For America, The New Teacher Project, and New Leaders for New Schools, many of which have long-standing relationships with multiple DC LEAs. The District is supportive of cutting-edge initiatives, which make it an attractive location for newer education ventures, such as the Center for Inspired Teaching, Wireless Generation, and the Achievement Network. In addition, DC has a strong and committed base of private philanthropists who have funded pilots of numerous initiatives that RTTT funds seek to scale. Moreover, DC leaders are in constant contact with a strong cadre of national education thought leaders across all four RTTT assurance areas, relying on these partners to provide critical feedback on DC's educational reform efforts in order to ensure that they are constantly refined and strengthened.

Urgency Around Work Still to be Done. DC's reform vision is grounded in the core belief that all District children can – and will – achieve at levels comparable to or better than their higher income and suburban peers. DC knows what it takes to ensure that students in high-poverty, high-minority schools succeed, as it has exemplary schools – like Barnard, EL Haynes, KIPP: Key Academy, and Thurgood Marshall Academy – as models. Importantly, DC knows that experience provides valuable lessons learned that, when applied, deepen the chances of future success. DC students have not yet reached acceptable proficiency levels, neither relative to peers in affluent suburbs or other countries, nor to ensure universal student success in college, career and life. RTTT is needed to continue DC's trajectory of achievement and will be used as a driver to continue to implement strategies for improvement, or, when necessary, intervention with low-achieving schools and ineffective leaders and programs.

A1(ii) <u>Articulating DC's education reform agenda and LEAs' participation in it: LEA commitment</u>

LEAs are at the forefront of reform in the District, and OSSE has embraced their energy and dynamism in developing a compelling agenda for this application. To create the bold, rapid reform plan outlined herein, DC engaged LEAs throughout the entire application process. Crafting RTTT priorities and plans involved diverse workgroups organized across the four RTTT assurance areas, with LEA representatives comprising more than half the individuals engaged in this work. For example, the turnaround group brought together representatives from OSSE with LEAs currently engaged in the hard work of school turnaround. The human capital working group – which helped shape the vision for the Great Teachers and Leaders section – included representatives from OSSE, as well as the Deputy Chancellor for DCPS, and three heads of high-achieving charter schools with expertise in recruiting and training great teachers and leaders. Overall, this collaborative approach is indicative of DC's integrated vision for RTTT implementation, whereby OSSE will leverage the momentum and innovation occurring in high-achieving schools to raise the bar statewide. It also ensures that participating LEAs are strongly committed to the State's plans (including plans for effective implementation) given that plans were informed by working groups' visions for what is needed to execute successful reform in DC. As such, LEAs are eager to put RTTT funds to immediate use to support planned innovations.

To this end, 35 LEAs serving over 65,000 students (or 91% of DC students) have signed Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) indicating their willingness to participate in DC's RTTT activities. [See Appendix A1.3 for the DCPS version of the MOU, which includes an additional signature line for the Washington Teachers' Union and no line for a board of education signature, and Appendix A1.4 for the version of the MOU that applies to all other non-unionized LEAs. Both MOUs are identical in terms and substance.]

(A)(1)(ii)(a) and (b) <u>LEA commitment: Terms, Conditions and Scope of Work</u>

The shared commitment to bold reform is clear and uncompromising in DC's Memorandum of Understanding between the State and participating LEAs. By signing the MOU, LEAs commit to ground-breaking work across all four RTTT assurance areas. DC established a high bar for RTTT participation, requiring implementation of every reform element outlined in the RTTT MOU. This requirement ensures that participating LEAs are deeply committed to a comprehensive vision for change in order to maximize the impact of RTTT funds. These required elements include (but are not limited to) the following:

Standards & Assessments

- Create a plan for aligning curriculum with the Common Core Standards and consortium-developed assessments
- Implement interim assessments in grades 3-10 that meet OSSE-specified criteria and are aligned to common standards
- Provide in-school training and professional development on common standards alignment
- Organize school community meetings to explain common standards and assessments

Data Systems to Support Instruction

- Support the State in fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system by providing data to OSSE, as needed
- Develop a local instructional improvement system to collect, analyze, and use data to improve instruction
- Use data to improve instruction (through use of local instructional improvement systems, professional development on the

use of data to improve instruction, and availability of data to researchers)

- Provide teachers with regularly scheduled planning time for using data from interim assessments to inform instruction

Great Teachers & Leaders

- Partner with high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals
- Improve teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance by:
  - Measuring student growth with a common growth measure developed by a Student Growth Task Force
  - Designing and implementing evaluation systems that meet OSSE-defined criteria, including 50% tied to growth in student achievement
- Conduct annual evaluations (to support individualized professional development; to inform compensation, promotion, retention, and removal; and to inform tenure and/or full certification)
- Analyze and develop a plan to improve equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals at high-poverty and/or high-minority schools and in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas, as applicable
- Provide effective support to teachers and principals through quality professional development that is monitored for effectiveness
- Report teacher effectiveness to OSSE

Turning Around Lowest-Achieving Schools

- Agree to implement one of four approved turnaround models for schools that match the OSSE definition of persistently lowest-achieving schools

The table that provides detailed information on the participation of each participating LEA can be found in Appendix A1.5. As outlined in the MOU, all participating LEAs must prepare an agreement that will be incorporated in or attached to a final scope of

work and submit it to the State within 90 days after the RTTT award. This agreement and final scope of work must be approved by the State as being in alignment with the state RTTT plan, and must describe the following: specific goals, activities, timelines, budgets, key personnel, annual targets for key performance measures, and ways in which funds from other federal programs and from state and local sources will be used to support the plan. The work plan must be consistent with the LEA's preliminary scope of work in the MOU, with the approved state plan, and with further guidance that the State may provide. The State will approve LEAs for funding based on the scope and quality of submitted work plans. LEAs have also committed to: posting to a specified website all non-proprietary products and lessons learned from initiatives supported by RTTT funding; participating in grant evaluations; providing data to OSSE, as requested; and implementing the reform plan, among other elements.

(A)(1)(ii)(c) LEA commitment: Signatures

As is evident in the attached MOU signature pages, DC's RTTT application is supported by multiple stakeholders that represent a diverse set of District constituents. The signatures demonstrate:

- Commitment from Mayor Fenty (Mayor of the District of Columbia) and DCPS Chancellor Rhee
- Commitment from the superintendents and Presidents of Boards of Trustees for 30 charter LEAs

(A)(1)(iii) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEAs' participation in it: Broad statewide impact

LEA participation in the District's Race to the Top plan covers 91% of DC public school students, including 96% of the total students in poverty. LEA participation is undoubtedly strong and far-reaching. Specifically, DC's RTTT participation includes 35 LEAs, 201 schools, 5,800 teachers, and 65,734 students, 47,151 of whom are students in poverty. This equates to nearly 2/3 of DC LEAs, 87% of schools, over 90% of teachers, and 91% of students in the state, as well as 96% of the total students in poverty. DC's impressive RTTT participation rate is due in no small part to the rigorous deliberations, collaboration, and hard work of the District's LEAs that helped develop DC's Race to the Top plan. Such broad participation will increase DC's ability to achieve its

four-year goals in a way that will have a truly broad statewide impact on student achievement.

It is important to understand the breadth and scope of LEAs that have signed on in the context of a state with only one traditional school district. Statewide impact should not be measured only by the number of LEAs participating – most DC charters have an average size of 485 students for the entire LEA. Of the 23 LEAs that chose not to participate, all but 5 are single-school LEAs. Of the non-participating LEAs, 2 are closing at the end of this school year and 7 are not Title I-eligible and therefore would not receive direct-to-LEA funding under RTTT. These schools have many legitimate reasons not to participate, including their size, their niche program specialty, and their capacity to pioneer RTTT-level reforms. In fact, 2 of these LEAs serve only adults or early ages, 1 serves only special education students, and 2 serve alternative education populations. The average enrollment of a non-participating LEA is 276 students (compared to 608 for the average participating charter LEA). Because of these reasons, the scale and scope of this application does not make sense for them. Larger scale reforms, like those envisioned under RTTT, may not be aligned with their current needs.

RTTT will also have an important impact on DC's state educational agency, OSSE. As a new organization, OSSE is still positioning itself to support LEAs effectively in their reform efforts. OSSE will use RTTT funding for specific efforts to improve its data collection and systems capabilities, as well as to strengthen the SEA's grants management systems and processes. OSSE will also reorganize to support certain functions related to Race to the Top and, specifically, to support school improvement initiatives where LEAs require explicit state support.

(A)(1)(iii)(a) <u>Broad statewide impact: Increasing student achievement</u>

One of the State's most ambitious performance targets is to increase student proficiency rates over the next four years in math and reading by 5 percentage points annually (20 percentage points overall) on the state assessment. Similarly ambitious goals are in place for the National Assessment of Educational Progress, on which DC aims for an increase in NAEP scores by an average of 10

points in both math and reading, an improvement that would surpass the largest four year gains achieved by any urban school district on the most recent TUDA reports: the 2009 Math Report and the 2009 Reading Report.

As part of its aggressive rollout of the Common Core Standards, in 2012 DC will transition to a slightly modified version of its summative assessment (DC-CAS), which will be aligned with the Common Core Standards. A consortium-developed common assessment will be available 2014-2015. DC will also work to secure a student achievement baseline and ensure data comparability across the years of these assessment transitions. The following tables present the projected four-year student achievement growth on the DC-CAS and NAEP under RTTT funding. A more detailed breakdown of this analysis, including growth by subgroup, can be found in Appendix A1.6. Additionally, DC expectations for growth in the absence of RTTT funding can be found in Appendix A1.7.

Table A1.2 DC-CAS Projected Results through 2014

STATEWIDE ESEA GOALS - Percent of Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced (2009-2013)						
	2009	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**Proficiency Gain (2009 – 2013)**
Reading	45.3%	**51.0%**	**56.6%**	**62.3%**	**68.0%**	**22.6%**
Math	44.8%	**50.4%**	**56.1%**	**61.7%**	**67.4%**	**22.6%**

*Goals are displayed in bold Source: OSSE website: www.nclb.osse.dc.gov

Table A1.3 NAEP Projected Results through 2013

STATEWIDE NAEP SCORE GOALS (2007-2013)						
	2007	**2009**	**2011**	**2013**	**4 Year Gain**	**6 Year Gain**
4th Grade Reading	197	202	**208**	**213**	**11**	**16**
4th Grade Math	214	219	**224**	**229**	**10**	**15**
8th Grade Reading	241	242	**246**	**252**	**5**	**11**
8th Grade Math	248	254	**259**	**265**	**11**	**17**

*Goals are displayed in bold.
Source: National Assessment of Educational Progress: http://nces.ed/gov/nationsreportcard/naepdata/

As mentioned earlier, maintaining a steep upward trajectory of reform progress grows more difficult each year. In the context of nationwide urban school district reform, these goals admittedly push the envelope of reasonable expectations. Yet this is exactly the point. RTTT is needed because DC's education reform leadership has proven its potential and is pushing the boundaries of what can be accomplished with limited time and resources; it is a reflection of Secretary Duncan's "education moonshot." Under RTTT, DC will demonstrate what is achievable.

(A)(1)(iii)(b) <u>Broad statewide impact: Reducing achievement gaps</u>

Unequivocally, the District aims to become the nation's first urban education system to fully eliminate the achievement gap. In addition to targeting overall student achievement, DC has focused efforts on two relevant achievement gaps: the minority achievement gap and the poverty achievement gap. The black/Hispanic-white achievement gap, the starkest in the District, has closed considerably over the past four years, with goals to close the gap by an additional 20 percentage points over the next four years. Additionally, DC plans to close the achievement gap between low-income and non-low-income students by a minimum of 3.5 percentage points per year. The poverty achievement gap is a critical metric in a city where 94% of students are minorities, and it has widened slightly over the past three years. Closing both the race and poverty gaps will be possible through Race to the Top, as the schools in participating LEAs reflect a strong base from which to advance the achievement of black, Hispanic, and economically disadvantaged students. A more detailed breakdown of this analysis, including achievement gap goals by subgroup, can be found in Appendix A1.6. Additionally, DC expectations for subgroup achievement gaps in the absence of RTTT funding can be found in Appendix A1.7.

(A)(1)(iii)(c) Broad statewide impact: Increasing high school graduation rates

High school graduation rates are an important measure of statewide educational success. RTTT reforms will accelerate this growth by: (1) moving rapidly to turn around struggling secondary schools, which account for a large proportion of the District's lowest-achieving schools; (2) focusing on over-age/under-credited (or "off-track") students through inter-LEA collaboration and partnerships that enable these students to catch up with their peers and to graduate with proficiency, and (3) ensuring that teachers and parents have access to quality data about students and schools to help ensure that students are kept on- track toward high school graduation. With RTTT reforms in place, DC anticipates an increase in the high school graduation rate by 12 percentage points over baseline measures by 2013 (without RTTT funding, DC expects a graduation increase of 5 percentage points). As secondary schools are fully transformed, DC expects this growth to continue at an even higher rate beyond 2013. Although DC is transitioning from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) "leaver" rate (e.g., students who "leave" the school system) to a four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate, the State will track graduation using both methods throughout the life of the grant in order to monitor performance gains adequately.

(A)(1)(iii)(d) Broad statewide impact: Increasing college enrollment and credit earned

Every graduating student in DC must be prepared for success in college, career and life. A key District priority through Race to the Top is the engagement of a secondary school/university consortium dedicated to improving the linkage between high school exit requirements and college entrance criteria at DC's elite universities. In addition, the Double the Numbers (DTN) coalition (described in Section A3) will provide ongoing programs such as College Awareness month, the College Access Providers Roundtable, and Consortium Ambassadors (college students who meet with high school students to talk about college experiences). The DTN coalition will also continue to provide access to financial aid and scholarships, administer a college-going website designed for middle and high school students, and support important initiatives such as DCPS's transcript audits and the use of individual graduation plans and the University of the District of Columbia's student retention strategies.

Increasing college enrollment and college credits earned are also overarching goals of DC's reform strategy. Currently, OSSE collects college enrollment data from DCTAG (DC Tuition Assistance Grant Program), a program that provides grants to over 80% of graduating DC high school seniors, and other higher education grant programs. Though not complete, these data serve as a measurement baseline. Through the Statewide Longitudinal Education Data (SLED) system (described in Section C1), OSSE is incorporating these data to better enable OSSE to track college enrollment data for DC graduates, with the ultimate goal of monitoring student achievement from elementary school through college completion. OSSE anticipates raising the number of high school graduates who enroll in college by 5 percentage points a year (the current DCTAG reported number is 39%). This number is significant because DC will increase college enrollment rates at a higher rate goal than the State graduation rate goal (3 percentage points a year). Without RTTT funding, college enrollment is projected to increase by 2 percentage points per year.

OSSE also aims to increase the percentage of college enrollees who earn a year's worth of college credit within 24 months of enrollment by 10 percentage points over four years. (The DCTAG figure for percent of college freshmen returning for a second year, DC's best proxy, is 78%). Without RTTT funding, this rate will increase by 4 percentage points over four years. A more detailed breakdown of these analyses can be found in Appendix A1.6. Additionally, DC expectations for growth in the absence of RTTT funding can be found in Appendix A1.7. [Note: the above goals are informed in part by results attained over the last 15 years by College Summit, the US' largest non-profit that supports a wide range of low-income and high-minority school systems in efforts to increase college enrollment rates. DC has partnered with College Summit since 2004.]

Summary Table for (A)(1)(ii)(b)

Elements of State Reform Plans	Number of LEAs Participating (#)	Percentage of Total Participating LEAs (%)
B. Standards and Assessments		
(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	35	100%

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction		
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction:		
(i) Use of local instructional improvement systems	35	100%
(ii) Professional development on use of data	35	100%
(iii) Availability and accessibility of data to researchers	35	100%
D. Great Teachers and Leaders		
(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance:		
(i) Measure student growth	35	100%
(ii) Design and implement evaluation systems	35	100%
(iii) Conduct annual evaluations	35	100%
(iv)(a) Use evaluations to inform professional development	35	100%
(iv)(b) Use evaluations to inform compensation, promotion and retention	35	100%
(iv)(c) Use evaluations to inform tenure and/or full certification	35	100%
(iv)(d) Use evaluations to inform removal	35	100%
Elements of State Reform Plans	**Number of LEAs Participating (#)**	**Percentage of Total Participating LEAs (%)**
(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals:		
(i) High-poverty and/or high-minority schools	35	100%
(ii) Hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	35	100%
(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals:		
(i) Quality professional development	35	100%
(ii) Measure effectiveness of professional development	35	100%
E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools	35	100%
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	35	100%

Summary Table for (A)(1)(ii)(c)

Signatures acquired from participating LEAs:	
Number of Participating LEAs with all applicable signatures	34

	Number of Signatures Obtained (#)	Number of Signatures Applicable (#)	Percentage (%) (Obtained / Applicable)
LEA Superintendent (or equivalent)	35	35	100%
President of Local School Board (or equivalent, if applicable)	30	30	100%
Local Teachers' Union Leader (if applicable)	0	1	0%

Summary Table for (A)(1)(iii)

	Participating LEAs (#)	Statewide (#)	Percentage of Total Statewide (%) (Participating LEAs / Statewide)
LEAs	35	56*	63%
Schools	201	230	87%
K-12 Students	65,734	72,084**	91%
Students in poverty	47,151	49,137***	96%

* Total LEAs is adjusted to account for 2 LEAs closing at the end of the 2009-2010 school year.

** Enrollment for participating LEAs and statewide number of students based on audited enrollment figures for School Year 2009-2010.

*** Statewide number of students in poverty calculated using the % of students in poverty for 2009-2010

Detailed Table for (A)(1)

See Appendix A1.5 for detailed information on the participation of each participating LEA.

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

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

(i) Ensure that it has the capacity required to implement its proposed plans by— *(20 points)*

(a) Providing strong leadership and dedicated teams to implement the statewide education reform plans the State has proposed;

(b) Supporting participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) in successfully implementing the education reform plans the State has proposed, through such activities as identifying promising practices, evaluating these practices' effectiveness, ceasing ineffective practices, widely disseminating and replicating the effective practices statewide, holding participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) accountable for progress and performance, and intervening where necessary;

(c) Providing effective and efficient operations and processes for implementing its Race to the Top grant in such areas as grant administration and oversight, budget reporting and monitoring, performance measure tracking and reporting, and fund disbursement;

(d) Using the funds for this grant, as described in the State's budget and accompanying budget narrative, to accomplish the State's plans and meet its targets, including where feasible, by coordinating, reallocating, or repurposing education funds from other Federal, State, and local sources so that they align with the State's Race to the Top goals; and

(e) Using the fiscal, political, and human capital resources of the State to continue, after the period of funding has ended, those reforms funded under the grant for which there is evidence of success; and

(ii) Use support from a broad group of stakeholders to better implement its plans, as evidenced by the strength of the statements or actions of support from— *(10 points)*

(a) The State's teachers and principals, which include the State's teachers' unions or statewide teacher associations; and

(b) Other critical stakeholders, such as the State's legislative leadership; charter school authorizers and State charter school membership associations (if applicable); other State and local leaders (*e.g.*, business, community, civil rights, and education association leaders); Tribal schools; parent, student, and community organizations (*e.g.*, parent-teacher associations, nonprofit organizations, local education foundations, and community-based organizations); and institutions of higher education.

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

reviewers. The State's response to (A)(2)(i)(d) will be addressed in the budget section (Section VIII of the application). Attachments, such as letters of support or commitment, should be summarized in the text box below and organized with a summary table in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

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

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

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

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

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

(A)(2)(i)(a) <u>Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up and sustain proposed plans: Leadership capacity</u>

OSSE has placed a high priority on the proper implementation of the reform activities outlined in this application. In addition to the workgroups responsible for the reform plan across assurance areas, the State Superintendent has directed the formation of an implementation working group, staffed by OSSE, LEA representatives, and the Mayor's office, to begin planning and coordination to ensure that DC is ready to hit the ground running if awarded RTTT funds.

In considering Race to the Top implementation, it is important to note the unique context of DC's new State Educational Agency, the Office of the State Superintendent of Education. OSSE has articulated a 5-year strategic plan that outlines several state-level priorities that align directly with Race to the Top in areas such as data and accountability and human capital. One area of strategic focus that is particularly important to Race to the Top implementation is grants management. In the past, the District's history with federal grants management has not met expectations, in part because of the lack of a separate and dedicated office to manage such efforts prior to 2007. One of OSSE's top priorities is to improve the District's grant management processes – not only to meet federal requirements, but also to provide better support to LEAs and the important work they do. While the vast majority of the reform work is 'on the ground', at the LEA

level, there is a clear role for strong support at the state level. OSSE will use RTTT funds to build further capacity for supporting and coordinating LEAs efforts where differentiated tactics might be required to provide meaningful solutions to leading education challenges. In the application, the vast majority of requested RTTT funds are targeted to LEAs either directly or through competitive grant processes, which OSSE can use to drive particular reform priorities. Also, OSSE has an opportunity with Race to the Top to build a new team that will directly support grant management functions and serve as a model for future OSSE-LEA relationships, positioning the agency to be a stronger resource to LEAs for reform and school improvement.

Recognizing this context, the proposed OSSE leadership structure for managing DC's RTTT administration will be as follows:

- a Project Director, responsible for overall management and coordination of RTTT initiatives
- a Fiscal Director, responsible for overseeing fund distribution to LEAs and ensuring compliance with financial tracking and reporting requirements
- a Reporting & Implementation Manager, responsible for ensuring that OSSE and participating LEAs use RTTT funds appropriately/effectively and meet grant objectives
- a Grant & Contract Analyst, responsible for back-office data analysis support and contract management
- a Research & Data Manager, responsible for working on preparing data sets for research use and internal analysis
- three Effectiveness Managers, responsible for supporting specific strands of work that require some level of OSSE coordination, per the individual plans listed in Sections B, C, D, and E, as well as the STEM priority section

This two-pronged approach by OSSE – a team responsible for the overall grant (Project Director, Fiscal Director, Reporting & Implementation Manager, Grant & Contract Analyst, and Research & Data Manager), plus a team responsible for the effective execution of initiatives in the field (Effectiveness Managers) – will ensure that RTTT grant funds are deployed effectively and aligned with LEA work across the four RTTT assurances. [Note: additional detail related to the job descriptions of OSSE's RTTT

team is included in the Implementation Project-Level Budget Narrative. A full timeline of implementation plans is included in Appendix A2.1. Two additional implementation documents outlining OSSE and LEA implementation action items appear in Appendix A2.2.]

In addition to this management structure at OSSE, an RTTT Project Management Team will convene monthly. This team – led by OSSE and consisting of senior-level team members from OSSE, DCPS, PCSB, select charter representatives, and the DME – will be charged with guiding the implementation of reform plans, and will identify and address barriers to implementation, as needed.

Finally, the DC RTTT application calls for the creation of specific task forces with cross-sector participants. For example, a Human Capital Task Force will support statewide initiatives related to Great Teachers and Leaders, while a Student Growth Measure Task Force will oversee the development of a measure for student growth. These groups will ensure that the innovative, collaborative, and visionary spirit of the RTTT working groups – which created the plans in this application – endures throughout the life of the grant and beyond.

(A)(2)(i)(b) Capacity to support LEAs

Ensuring effective statewide implementation of DC's Race to the Top plan is of critical importance. OSSE strives to ensure that its internal structure is organized to support all LEAs in executing plans. This is particularly important for small, single-school charter LEAs that often lack the established infrastructure of DCPS or multi-campus charters. OSSE will provide flexible levels of support and help streamline reporting requirements in order to enable LEAs to take greatest advantage of their autonomy and nimbleness.

The OSSE RTTT Office structure outlined above will support LEAs in the field through the following positions:

- The Reporting & Implementation Manager and the Fiscal Manager will support LEAs in assembling financial and other data into report-ready format

- Effectiveness Managers will serve as main points of contact with all LEAs and will provide guidance on RTTT initiatives, including support for LEAs in developing applications for competitive RTTT state-level grant funds. They will also be responsible for working with the Project Management Team to identify promising practices in the field, evaluate the effectiveness of such practices, and ensure that promising practices are disseminated to other LEAs. Where necessary, they will intervene where ineffective practices have been identified and will help LEAs adjust course. One of the effectiveness managers will have a particular focus on STEM initiatives and serve as the state's coordinating liaison to the DC STEM Learning Network and advisory body.

Additionally, participation by LEAs in the monthly Project Management Team meetings and the assurance-related task forces will ensure that concerns about adequate support to LEAs are raised and addressed in a timely manner. OSSE will capitalize on DC's unique environment of LEA collaboration and innovation to create and incorporate opportunities for LEAs to build cooperative capacity models that promote efficiency and the sharing of effective systems.

(A)(2)(i)(c) <u>Operations capacity</u>

OSSE's Race to the Top Office is designed to ensure that grant activities are executed effectively. This critical function warrants the creation of its own OSSE office, given the significant demands of RTTT implementation and overall grant management. Adding components of the RTTT application to preexisting OSSE job functions would present a high risk of fragmentation and unclear accountability for outcomes. The Race to the Top office, with both budget- and program-focused staff, will provide OSSE with the operational capacity to meet RTTT performance goals. At the same time, the office will be fully integrated with OSSE's ongoing efforts to improve grants administration. While maintaining a dedicated focus on the RTTT grant, broader functions of budget development, expenditure and performance monitoring, and data analysis will work directly with the rest of the OSSE business team to ensure effective operational support and practice across the agency and throughout District LEAs. OSSE will purchase RTTT-funded grant administration software so that it can streamline its approach to managing federal grants and increase its overall

capacity for grant administration and oversight. OSSE will also pilot new techniques in performance measure tracking and reporting through the work of the Effectiveness Managers. In this way, RTTT will serve as a model and accelerator for OSSE's internal reform and capacity-building efforts. Finally, OSSE will engage in constant efforts to learn from RTTT reform and to adopt productive practices that last beyond the life of the grant.

(A)(2)(i)(d) Budget

The overall budget and budget narrative appear in Appendices A2.3 and A2.4 of this grant application. Of particular note is the fact that the vast majority of proposed funding will either be sub-granted directly to LEAs or will flow to LEAs through OSSE, via a dedicated funding stream or competitive grant process. In fact, 85% of the proposed budget will flow to LEAs to support LEA implementation of RTTT assurance area plans with fidelity to the state RTTT plan, with only 15% being retained at the State for capacity-building and state-level projects. Approximately 28% of the award will flow to LEAs through competitive and indirect grants, and OSSE will make sure that support is spread evenly throughout the District. Importantly, DC has outlined specific priorities for LEAs to fund with sub-granted dollars. This is possible in DC as a result of the high level of LEA involvement in the planning process: extensive LEA participation in planning efforts made clear what funding was necessary in each assurance area to make DC a national model for reform. All of the funding is earmarked for specific initiatives that support statewide reform targets.

The project budgets that follow the Budget Summary Narrative are divided into 11 areas, accounting for all indirect-to-LEA funding (i.e., "Supplemental Funding for Participating LEAs") and state-level projects. RTTT funds have been coordinated with other federal, state, and local funding sources so that all funding sources contribute seamlessly to the overall State reform agenda. For example, School Improvement Grant (SIG) funds will be leveraged in conjunction with RTTT funding for school turnaround. SIG funds will be used through 2013 (made possible as the result of a waiver), with RTTT funds serving as a "top off" to meet total funding needs in Years 1-3. A detailed description of these coordination efforts is included in the Budget Summary Narrative.

State and local funds will also be reallocated or repurposed, as necessary, so that they align with DC's RTTT goals. The District's education budget is already aligned to support current reforms, including those that meet RTTT goals, such as the development of evaluation and student instructional improvement systems, or targeted funding to support interventions in struggling schools. Such alignment will continue with RTTT. Where state-level costs associated with the adoption and implementation of the Common Core Standards are not covered in the RTTT application (including funds for the development of an aligned summative assessment), the District will reallocate funds to support such initiatives and ensure that a RTTT award works in concert with, rather than in parallel to, local investments in education reforms.

(A)(2)(i)(e) <u>Sustainability</u>

Sustainability is important to any well-planned strategic reform and encompasses both financial and non-financial considerations. From a financial perspective, RTTT is well aligned with the focus and structure of education reforms currently underway in the District. Many of these reform efforts are focused on the creation of sustainable organizations, the development of infrastructure, the building of capacity, and the alignment of curriculum, assessments and instruction. As a result, the majority of interventions supported by RTTT funding will be sustainable beyond the grant period. Specifically:

- 54% of grant funds will be used to build infrastructure that supports state-level and LEA reform, including the development of systems that will remain well beyond the grant period. Long-term improvements will also be supported through the building of instructional management systems, human capital evaluation systems, and professional development platforms. All of these are catalytic investments that are well-suited for RTTT-type grant funding opportunities and long-term sustainable reform.
- 14% of grant funds will be invested in aligning curriculum with the Common Core Standards, developing standards entry points for differentiated learning, developing a statewide growth measure and piloting expanded growth coverage options,

and developing interim assessments to gauge student progress according to the Common Core Standards. These products will be utilized at the school and LEA levels well beyond the grant period.

- 7% of grant funds will support the strengthening of alternative teacher and principal preparation programs, such as the new teacher pipeline programs sponsored by high-achieving LEAs. These newly created organizations will be set up to be self-sustainable through tuition-based models.

In effect, 75% of requested grant funding is slated for projects that are projected to be sustainable beyond the grant's end and without requiring additional funding.

Funding is also slated for multiple professional development activities, including opportunities for collaboration across schools and sectors in order to leverage best practices and successes across the system. Increasing teacher and principal capacity, as well as building a spirit of collaboration in the District, is truly an investment in the future, as no one can take away the knowledge and power educators gain from best practices related to curriculum, assessment, and data-driven instruction.

Of course, certain DC initiatives will require ongoing funding after the grant period ends. These projects may receive continued funding through state and local sources if proof of positive impact in student achievement exists. As evidence of this, DC is likely one of very few states that did not decrease education funding to schools in these lean times (see Section F), because halting the trajectory of reform was not an option for education officials. In fact, city agencies within the District have recently been directed by the mayor to absorb deeper budget cuts in an effort to hold school as harmless as possible within the context of broader city-wide budget reductions.

Moreover, DC recently conducted a systems resource audit that indicated that improving special education offerings in the District is an important factor in sustaining meaningful and affordable reform. This is unsurprising, as OSSE spends more than $150 million annually on out-of-district placements for students with special needs. Increasing the quality and capacity of special education services in LEAs will significantly reduce the number of students that require a non-public placement, ultimately leading to

budgetary savings and the possibility to reallocate savings to LEA programs such as those articulated here. Such strategies will also help bring a much needed and immediate focus and priority on how DC provides for its students with special needs. The District is currently using local and federal funds to build better data systems to track special education students' Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), services, and placements. However, understanding what services are lacking in LEAs across the State, and how this has subsequently led to the high number of non-public placements, is a data point that DC systems cannot yet demonstrate. To address this need, OSSE will begin a project to build on current data systems and pinpoint the special education services most needed in DC LEAs, allowing as many students as possible to remain in their local school and leading to needed long-term education and budgetary improvements.

Finally, DC is also cognizant of the importance of non-financial aspects that will contribute to the sustainability of RTTT reforms. Underlying the Race to the Top application are inherent elements of District education reform: cooperation, accountability, and innovation. The State's unique governance structure is specifically designed to support aggressive reform and maximize innovation. Mayoral control provides important stability for the school system, while the autonomy of the charter community allows for flexibility and adaptability, even amidst ambitious, sometimes controversial reform. The combination of mayoral control and a thriving charter sector presents the best of both worlds: innovation is both politically possible and practically implementable. In addition, simply having the right people engaged in ongoing RTTT management – as is planned with the RTTT Project Management Team and the assurance area Task Forces – will help ensure that reforms funded under the grant are implemented, evaluated, adjusted and sustained.

(A)(2)(ii) <u>Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up and sustain proposed plans: Stakeholder support</u>

Completion of DC's RTTT application involved multiple stakeholders in different ways throughout the process. As noted previously, stakeholders from OSSE, DCPS, PCSB and charter schools were instrumental in crafting DC's detailed reform plan through participation in four workgroups and a project management team that met weekly (if not daily, at some points). A representative from the DC Public Education Fund was included in all activities, representing the interests and perspectives of many

local and national funders, providing considerations for potential philanthropic matches that will contribute directly to scale-up and sustainability. Community members and additional LEAs were also involved via community forums and various small group meetings that were held with leaders from education advocacy, higher education, school support services, business, and philanthropic and foundation organizations. DC's STEM plan is supported by the Battelle Institute, which has developed a partnership with the District, as evidenced by Appendix P2.3. To date, OSSE has received 20 letters and statements of support for the DC RTTT application. These are included in Appendix A2.5.

(A)(2)(ii)(a) Stakeholder support: Teachers, principals and union leadership

Across the state, teachers and principals provided input into the plans for RTTT, as well as feedback and support through community engagement forums. As discussed previously, charter LEAs, which serve one-third of District children and are not unionized, are represented significantly in DC's Race to the Top application and reform efforts. Teacher and leader support for RTTT among these schools is very strong. DCPS is the only unionized LEA in the District. DCPS has been working closely with the Washington Teachers' Union (WTU) over the past two years regarding the design of its teacher evaluation system, IMPACT. While union support remains important and should not be minimized, DCPS has the authority to move forward with a rigorous teacher evaluation system even without union support. The district has already exercised that authority to institute IMPACT, which explicitly states that using student outcomes is a key part of the evaluation process. Simultaneously, DCPS will continue to engage the WTU on the effectiveness of IMPACT for student achievement and will use evaluation results to determine professional supports to meet teacher needs (as described in Section D2).

DCPS worked with the WTU to obtain its support for the Race to the Top application, but unfortunately the WTU opted not to sign on because of the aggressive teacher evaluation requirements established in the reform plan. Like many unions around the country, the teachers' union in DC is not supportive of heavily weighting student achievement in a performance evaluation or using such an evaluation as the basis for key personnel decisions, including promotion, retention, and termination, as the RTTT plan envisions.

Rather than weaken DC's RTTT plan and application, however, District leaders decided to put forward an application – including its initiatives and goals – that is bold, aggressive, and unparalleled.

While the union does not openly support the proposal, the District strongly believes that a broad base of reform-oriented teachers and school leaders in the school system support the DC RTTT plan. Combined with charter teachers and leaders, this RTTT application earns positive and strong stakeholder support among District teachers and school leaders.

(A)(2)(ii)(b) <u>Stakeholder support: Additional stakeholders</u>

Critical stakeholders have voiced committed support for DC's RTTT application throughout the process. Letters from DC's RTTT supporters are also included in Appendix A.2.5. These include:

State legislative leadership: the Chairman provided a letter of support on behalf of the Council for the RTTT application

Charter school authorizer/Charter school membership associations: the Public Charter School Board was part of both the RTTT Project Management Team and the Executive Team, through which PCSB was engaged in near-daily conversations regarding the application specifics. Their letter of support is included. Moreover, Friends of Choice in Urban Schools (FOCUS, a local charter school advocacy organization), contributed to the development of the application and submitted a letter of support.

State and local leaders: at the national legislative level, Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes-Norton has offered her support of the DC RTTT application. Locally, the State Board of Education was engaged in the process and the President of the State Board of Education, Ted Trabue, sat on the Executive Team that oversaw the direction of the RTTT application. Mr. Trabue also personally attended community meetings to ensure statewide understanding of the RTTT application.

Community organizations: the DC Public Education Fund, as well as several other local and national foundations and community based organizations, have been kept informed of DC's RTTT application process and have all submitted letters of support.

Likewise, a contingent of leading business organizations in the District submitted a joint letter of support. Finally, DC's STEM initiative enjoys support and partnership from the Battelle Institute.

Institutions of Higher Education: the DC RTTT application includes letters of support from American University, George Washington University, Georgetown University, and the University of the District of Columbia.

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

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

(i) Make progress over the past several years in each of the four education reform areas, and used its ARRA and other Federal and State funding to pursue such reforms; *(5 points)*

(ii) Improve student outcomes overall and by student subgroup since at least 2003, and explain the connections between the data and the actions that have contributed to — *(25 points)*

(a) Increasing student achievement in reading/language arts and mathematics, both on the NAEP and on the assessments required under the ESEA;

(b) Decreasing achievement gaps between subgroups in reading/language arts and mathematics, both on the NAEP and on the assessments required under the ESEA; and

(c) Increasing high school graduation rates.

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

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

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

Recommended maximum response length: Six pages

(A)(3)(i) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps: Progress in the Reform Areas

DC has already achieved many breakthroughs in key reform areas. While federal and state funding has been a significant contributor to such success, RTTT funds are needed to maintain such progress at the same (and higher) levels.

Standards and Assessments. DC's state learning standards were adopted in April 2005, based on recommendations from five focus groups consisting of Board of Education members, educational researchers, principals, teachers, and parents. In 2006, Stanford University's *Hoover Digest* published a report entitled *"Keeping an Eye on State Standards"* (Peterson & Hess). The report featured results of a study that graded the rigor of student performance standards across the nation. DC was proud to be one of only six states given an overall grade of "A" for the student standards tested by DC-CAS. In addition, in School Year 2005-06, DC shifted from the SAT-9 to DC-CAS in order to increase the level of rigor of the statewide assessment and to align it with the newly adopted state academic standards. In addition to using rigorous tests to match rigorous standards, DC continues to move beyond local standards and embrace nationally recognized high standards through such strategies like increases in Advanced Placement (AP) course offerings. DCPS is using ARRA funding to increase system-wide AP course offerings and provide individual school supports to help bolster student enrollment in such rigorous courses (and also to ensure that students take the cumulative tests). Charter schools also continue to offer increasingly rigorous school models, programs, and practices. In School Year 2009-10, a new charter high school opened as an International Baccalaureate (IB) program. Some charter LEAs have used School Improvement Grant funds for additional assessment technology, such as Scantron assessment systems for scoring benchmark assessments, enabling schools to

make rapid determinations about student performance relative to the requirements of summative assessments. Other charter LEAs have spent ARRA funding on aligning curriculum to standards, ensuring that they are planning purposefully for mastery of state standards. Finally, the state has moved to support a more coherent and rigorous vision for STEM education through rearticulated science standards and an express commitment to a comprehensive review of state science standards in 2011.

Data Systems. While DC is ahead of most states regarding the use of data to improve instruction, the District is somewhat behind with regard to longitudinal data systems. In August 2007, DC received a Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) grant from the US Department of Education to develop a Statewide Longitudinal Education Data system. While work on this data system continues and OSSE's leadership is focused on the timely completion of this work, the State has been successful in completing nine of the America COMPETES Act elements and integrating them within state systems. For example, OSSE has used unique student identifiers to conduct interim analyses of student mobility across DCPS and charter LEAs. Furthermore, sophisticated data systems are either in-use or in planning stages across many LEAs. As an example, DCPS is using Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) stimulus funds to build a data system to track children ages 3-5 as they are initially evaluated and provided with services. The ultimate aim is to allow for the early identification of learning issues, accelerating the implementation of aggressive early interventions, and reducing the need for special education services later. Likewise, the PCSB recently ensured that all public charter schools have a SIF-compliant student information system and access to both the Scantron assessment system and Edmin's Inform, an instructional management system. These data systems allow the results of standards-based assessments to be used for instructional decision-making and teacher and school performance evaluation.

Great Teachers and Leaders. DC has compiled a long list of successes over the past few years in the realm of Great Teachers and Leaders initiatives. First, in March 2008, the DC State Board of Education adopted a resolution that removed barriers that have kept many effective and credentialed educators out of classrooms. Under the new regulations for teacher credentials, teachers are able to demonstrate content knowledge in subject areas through such options as earning an advanced degree, receiving National Board

Certification in the subject area, or passing a content exam. The new regulations also allow alternative preparation providers that are not affiliated with colleges or universities to certify teachers and administrators, allowing the approval of innovative and highly effective programs like Teach For America, The New Teacher Project, the Center for Inspired Teaching, and New Leaders for New Schools.

DCPS is also committed to ensuring that every student is taught by an effective teacher, who has the skill and will to ensure students are achieving at high levels. Towards this end, DCPS has developed a Teacher Human Capital Team that oversees teacher recruitment, selection, evaluation, compensation, recognition, and retention. This team has been focused on two parallel efforts that align with this fundamental vision of a highly effective teacher force: 1) negotiating a groundbreaking union contract and 2) designing and implementing a rigorous new teacher assessment system.

As of the submission of this proposal, members of the Washington Teacher's Union have voted on the passage of this new collective bargaining agreement, and DC awaits confirmation of the results. At its core, the agreement provides increased accountability for results, as measured by student outcomes. It rewards and protects teachers based on student performance, rather than on seniority. Tenure is no longer defined as a job for life, and highly effective teachers will finally be rewarded with the significant financial compensation they deserve. In fact, under the new contract, high-achieving DCPS teachers will become the best-paid teachers in the country. Importantly, the contract also sets a new bar for teacher professional development, ensuring that the supports are in place for continuous improvement so that teachers have the opportunity to meet the high standards set for them.

While the new teacher contract will allow DCPS to move forward on critical elements like performance pay and performance-based teacher transfers, other key elements of the teacher human capital reform strategy are already underway – and importantly, they are not dependent on the approval of a contract. During the 2009-10 school year, DCPS implemented IMPACT, the new teacher assessment system. This effort has been spearheaded by the Director of Human Capital Strategy for Teachers and 2005 National Teacher of the Year, Jason Kamras. Every DCPS teacher is now evaluated through IMPACT, based substantially on student performance and growth,

and including a rigorous observation component. Teachers who demonstrate chronic poor performance on IMPACT, even after adequate supports are offered, are subject to dismissal at the end of one year, and under the new contract, those who perform at the highest levels on IMPACT would be eligible for significant performance pay. As important as this individual accountability and reward process is, perhaps the most powerful role of IMPACT will be its ability to drive the continuous improvement process, as DCPS now has a centralized dataset of how every teacher is performing against the specific standards laid out in the Teaching and Learning Framework, to which IMPACT is aligned.

School Turnaround. Both in DCPS and in the charter sector, school interventions have been the norm over the past several years. Whereas other jurisdictions have struggled to mount the will and strategy to tackle the difficult work of school turnaround, DC has boldly embraced it. Since placing the school system under Mayoral control in 2007, 30 DCPS schools have been closed due to under-performance. 11 additional schools have been either turned-around or restarted, according to the definitions in this RTTT notice. In parallel efforts, the PCSB has closed 12 charter schools over the last 5 years for reasons of under-performance. Moreover, under the PCSB's new Performance Management Framework, all DC public charter schools are now evaluated using common academic and non-academic measures and then ranked based on school outcomes. Such data help position the PCSB for swift intervention in underperforming schools.

DCPS also plans to use ARRA funding to support a broad range of transformation efforts, including a P-8 school design for middle schools and the ongoing support of the Full Service Schools model, which provides extensive wraparound services to students. It is important to note, however, that in addition to federal funds, philanthropic dollars have been instrumental in supporting DC's recent school turnarounds, as private donors have provided additional monies to turnaround partner organizations.

(A)(3)(ii)(a) <u>Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps: Improving student achievement</u>

In the past two years, DC has witnessed faster and more significant progress in student achievement growth and closing the

achievement gap than nearly any other jurisdiction in the country. While some of these early gains undoubtedly have been the result of higher expectations, the improved practices outlined above and detailed throughout this application will enable DC to sustain and surpass initial gains. Progress in the areas of standards and assessments, data systems, human capital and school turnaround have dramatically contributed to DC's improved student outcomes (overall and by student subgroup) on the NAEP and DC-CAS, decreased achievement gaps across most subgroups, and increased high school graduation rates (as outlined in greater detail both below and in Table A3.2).

National Assessment of Educational Progress

DC has experienced remarkable gains on the rigorous NAEP assessment, gaining 14 scale score points since 2003 in 4th grade math and 11 scale score points since 2003 in 8th grade math (see table below).

Table A3.1 Statewide NAEP Scores, 2003-2009

STATEWIDE NAEP SCORES (2003-2009)						
	2003	**2005**	**2007**	**2009**	**4 Year Gain**	**6 Year Gain**
4th Grade Reading	188	191	197	202	**9**	**14**
4th Grade Math	205	211	214	219	**9****	**14**
8th Grade Reading	239	238	241	242	**2**	**3**
8th Grade Math	243	245	248	254	**5**	**11**
**D.C. had the highest 4 year gain for 4th Grade Math of any state in the U.S. Source: National Assessment of Educational Progress: http://nces.ed/gov/nationsreportcard/naepdata/						

NAEP performance is best understood in comparison with similar urban school systems, and it is here that the District really stands out. Although their study excluded charter schools, the 2009 Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) report (see Appendix A3.1, which analyzes the NAEP scores of 18 urban school districts nationwide) revealed that DCPS was the only urban district in the nation to demonstrate gains in both reading and math. Fourth and eighth grade students in DCPS increased their math proficiency at faster rates than in other large urban districts**. According to the report, DCPS was the only school district to grow more than five scale**

score points in both elementary and secondary math. No other urban school district has seen similar gains since 2005. This is particularly impressive given that DC started as one of the lowest performing districts in the country. DCPS fourth graders showed the greatest improvement compared to all other TUDA districts by growing six scale points in math from 214 to 220, ranking first in growth among TUDA districts for the first time. Gains in DCPS in fourth grade since 2003 are three times the national average and two times that of all large cities. DCPS eighth graders also made major gains, increasing 7 scale score points from 244 to 251. This earned them a national ranking of second place. In reading, the gains are equally impressive. Over six years, DCPS fourth graders have improved their reading by 14 scale points and eighth graders by 3 scale points. District 4th graders achieved the largest increase nationwide on the 2009 NAEP Reading assessment. Students led the nation with a 5 point increase in 4th grade reading, while the national average was unchanged. In 2009, more DC students performed at or above "basic" levels than at any time since the NAEP was first administered in either grade – 44 percent in 4th grade and 50 percent in 8th grade. More detailed data on statewide historical NAEP scores, including scores for subgroups can be found in Appendix A3.2. These results are not by accident; from 2-hour literacy blocks to targeted professional development using the National Reading Panel's five areas of reading instruction to system-wide use of the DIBELS early reading assessment, DC educators are demonstrating that reform efforts are achieving results.

DC-Comprehensive Assessment System (DC-CAS)

As noted earlier, DC student performance on the DC-CAS (ESEA-required statewide summative assessment – see below table) has significantly improved since the 2006 introduction of a new and more rigorous assessment. DC has been recognized for the rigor of the state academic standards, adopted in 2005. The District is firmly committed to maintaining the same high bar and level of rigor as a central component of its reform, and it will not "improve" student achievement by lowering expectations.

Table A3.2 Statewide ESEA Summative Assessment Scores, 2003-2009

ESEA RESULTS - Percent of Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced (2003-2009)								
	2003	**2004**	**2005**	**2006***	**2007**	**2008**	**2009**	**Gain in % Proficiency (2006-2009)**
Reading	35.5%	37.4%	39.8%	34.6%	36.2%	42.7%	45.3%	**10.7%**
Math	43.4%	45.5%	45.3%	26.1%	31.1%	39.6%	44.8%	**18.6%**

*The DC-CAS test, a more rigorous assessment, was first implemented in 2006. Prior to 2006, DC used the SAT-9, a norm-referenced assessment without constructive response.
Source: OSSE website: www.nclb.osse.dc.gov

Since the introduction of the more rigorous DC-CAS in 2006, DC student performance has increased by at least 10 percentage points in elementary reading, elementary math, and secondary reading. Prior to 2007, less than one-third of elementary students achieved grade-level proficiency in math; now, only two years later, nearly half of elementary students are proficient in math and reading. Similarly impressive, secondary students have achieved over 20 percentage points worth of growth, demonstrating tremendous progress. More detailed data on historical proficiency scores, including scores for subgroups, can be found in Appendix A3.2.

This progress in student achievement can be attributed in large part to systematic and sustainable reforms put in place at the district and school levels. Beginning with a renewed focus on quality instruction, LEAs devoted resources and training to schools that demonstrated what quality teaching looks like, how to maximize instructional time in the classroom, and how to increase collaboration among educators sharing best practices. Many charter LEAs have long used extended time programs to increase student achievement, and in 2008, DCPS launched a Saturday Scholars program designed to provide intensive, targeted instruction to students based on individual need. Also in 2008, LEAs worked together with the state to align the DC-BAS interim assessment with the DC-CAS. Finally, through a focus on data and leadership around instructional preparation, participation rates increased across the board, which not only yielded a more accurate snapshot of student performance, but in achieving this goal, forced schools

to engage all students in a meaningful way.

(A)(3)(ii)(b) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps: Decreasing achievement gaps

DC has embraced No Child Left Behind (NCLB) as an opportunity to focus schools and teachers on addressing student needs based on data and to illuminate the existence of achievement gaps between subgroups. Historically, overall achievement gains have been accompanied by the closing of most subgroup achievement gaps. The District was the only jurisdiction in the country to see gains for fourth graders in every NAEP subgroup – male, female, white, black, Hispanic, special education, free and reduced priced lunch, and English Language Learners (ELL) – between 2007 and 2009. Moreover, DC low-income and Hispanic fourth grade students lead the nation in gains. In 2009, virtually every subgroup across the state increased DC-CAS proficiency rates. Special Education students, ELLs, and Economically Disadvantaged students made the most dramatic gains on this statewide assessment. The leadership of the District of Columbia will not be satisfied until the achievement gap no longer exists, but there is reason to be proud of recent progress.

Race: DCPS has made significant headway in recent years, with an ambitious goal to completely eliminate the achievement gap within ten years. On the DC-CAS, the proficiency gap between white (non-Hispanic) students and black (non-Hispanic) students in reading narrowed from 52.9% (2006) to 45.8% (2009). Most significantly, between 2007 and 2009, the gap between secondary math students closed an astonishing 20 percentage points while the gap for secondary reading students closed by 17 percentage points. Similarly impressive gains were seen in NAEP results. Because DC is demonstrating gains among white students as well as students of color, it is important to look at achievement gap through measures other than just the gap itself, as the Education Trust recommended in its January 2010 report, *Gauging the Gaps: A Deeper Look at Student Achievement*. DC's recent success in improving performance of its low-income and minority communities is best demonstrated by comparing NAEP improvement across the nation. For instance, DC has demonstrated NAEP gains of 10 points over 4 years for DC low-income 4th graders, as compared to only 3 points for low-income 4th graders nationwide. Minority students in DC have made similar gains in recent years. Since

2003, DC African-American 4th graders have improved NAEP scores by 11 points and four points since 2007 (outpacing their peers across the country), while Hispanic scores have improved by a remarkable 20 points. As evidenced by the charts below, these score improvements have outpaced black and Hispanic NAEP improvement in urban districts across the country. DC will capitalize on this rapid pace of improvement to close the achievement gap.

4th Grade African-American NAEP Reading Scores

Urban District	6 Year NAEP Improvement
DC	11 points
NYC	3 points
Chicago	1 point
San Diego	8 points
Boston	9 points

4th Grade Hispanic NAEP Reading Scores

Urban District	6 Year NAEP Improvement
DC	20 points
NYC	2 points
Chicago	7 point
San Diego	-2 points
Boston	9 points

See Appendix A3.2 for further detail.

Ethnicity: Over the past four years, Hispanic fourth graders have closed the NAEP achievement gap by 8 scale points for math. Hispanic eighth graders increased 13 scale points in math, closing the achievement gap with their national urban and suburban peers, and placing Hispanic eighth graders only one point below their peer group's national average. According to the 2009 TUDA report in NAEP reading, DCPS Hispanic eighth graders gained 4 scale points, and compared to Hispanic students in other tested districts, more DCPS Hispanic eighth-graders moved from below basic or basic to proficient or above – increasing from 17 percent to 22 percent. On the DC-CAS, the gap for reading has decreased by 6 percentage points while the gap for math decreased by16 percentage points since 2006. See Appendix A3.2 for further detail.

***Students with special needs**:* Although NAEP and DC-CAS scores for students with special needs have increased over the past four years, DC has witnessed an increase in the special education achievement gap in recent years. Since 2006, the gap for reading (5 percentage points) and math (11 percentage points) have increased on the DC-CAS. See Appendix A3.2 for further detail. Closing this gap is a high priority for the District. Initiatives supporting rigorous standards for special education students and an OSSE audit to identify statewide needs in special education are important pieces to the overall RTTT reform agenda.

***English Language Learners**:* DC lacks the appropriate sample size to calculate the achievement gap for English Language Learners on NAEP. On DC-CAS, however, ELL students are performing remarkably well. Virtually no achievement gap exists in reading, while ELLs actually outperformed the state math average by nine percentage points in 2009. See Appendix A3.2 for further detail.

***Economically Disadvantaged Students**:* DC's low-income students have shown strong gains over the past three years, but the proficiency growth of non-low-income students has surpassed that of low-income students. On the DC-CAS, the achievement gap increased by four percentage points for reading and two percentage points for math from 2006-2009. Although both groups improved on the NAEP from 2005 to 2009, at the state level, the 4th grade math achievement gap widened by eight points and the 8th grade math achievement gap widened by five points. See Appendix A3.2 for further detail. Results within DCPS are encouraging, however. According to the 2009 TUDA report for reading, low-income DCPS fourth-graders improved 6 scale points, a higher growth rate than low-income students in every other tested district, while low-income eighth graders improved by 4 scale points. By outpacing their peers in other jurisdictions, low-income students in DC are on the right track toward narrowing the achievement gap, but there is still much work to be done. Because the gap has continued to widen, DC has specifically set closing the poverty gap as an important statewide goal, as noted in Section A1.

***Gender**:* The gender gap on NAEP is three points in 4th and 8th grade math and six and ten points, respectively, in 4th and 8th reading, with females outperforming males. On the DC-CAS, the gender gap is approximately 11 percentage points statewide in reading and approximately four percentage points in math. Although females and males are seeing increased proficiency scores on

both NAEP and DC-CAS, females are improving at a slightly faster rate and the gender gap is widening somewhat. See Appendix A3.2 for further detail.

Actions Contributing to Increased Achievement

DC's relentless focus on instruction has had a significant impact on increasing overall proficiency and narrowing the achievement gap. Principals and teachers make the difference by maximizing valuable classroom time and by pursuing differentiated, engaging instruction. The institution of a new, rigorous assessment in 2006 and the design and implementation of aligned interim assessments have been critical factors of success. Leadership is another important element of change, and ensuring that strong leaders are at the helm of the most struggling schools has been critical in both DCPS and charter schools. Since 2006, many ineffective leaders have been transitioned out of schools, and overall principal professional development and collaboration among school leaders and LEAs has been improved. Content interventions have also had a dramatic impact. For example, DCPS credits its systematic focus on targeted instructional strategies – supported by professional development in math instruction across the district – with the encouraging increase in secondary math scores. Moreover, the impact of closing ineffective schools – and in several instances, giving high-achieving charter schools the facilities and resources they need to grow – has ensured an overall increase in the number of high-quality seats in the District, setting the stage for an increase in student achievement and a reduction in overall achievement gaps.

(A)(3)(ii)(c) <u>Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps: Increasing graduation rates</u>

Since 2006, DC's graduation rate has improved, as the school reform interventions and accountability measures discussed previously have begun to take hold. The state-calculated graduation rate (using the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) leaver rate) rose from 66% in 2007 to 74.7% in 2009. Last year alone, 14 of 17 high schools in DCPS increased their graduation rate with an additional 200 students graduating. Through transcript audits, credit recovery programs, and expanded summer school, DC has embarked on a comprehensive effort to put more students on track to graduate. Based on the data currently available, there are minimal gaps between groups (e.g., between White and African-American students or White and Hispanic students). Rather, the

District's primary focus needs to be on increasing graduation rates for all while improving data quality and ensuring students graduate ready for college and careers. The District is currently transitioning to a four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate starting with the graduating class of 2011. This model will provide a more detailed and accurate picture of graduation in DC. As more detailed data become available with the advent of the cohort method, DC will be able to recognize, publish, and address specific achievement gaps within graduation rates.

The District of Columbia's baseline data and impetus for the current focus on graduation rates and postsecondary enrollment is the 2006 report by The Bridgespan Group. This report, which was based on a sample (rather than the statewide statistics cited above) of the high school ninth-graders in 2001-2002, discovered that less than half of DC's ninth-graders (43%) graduate from high school within five years. Moreover, many of those graduates still required remedial classes in college or to complete job training programs. As a result, the group reported, of DC's ninth graders who attend college, only 9% complete college within five years of high school graduation.

The Bridgespan Group report precipitated the creation of an important coalition, Double the Numbers (DTN). The goal of this group, which includes the Mayor, Chair of the Council of the District of Columbia, Office of the State Superintendent of Education, DC Public Schools, DC Public Charter School Board, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and other District stakeholders, is to double the numbers of ninth graders who finish high school within five years, enroll in college, and graduate from college in a timely fashion. Toward this end, DTN has pursued several initiatives, including:

- DTN's annual College Awareness Month and OSSE's College Fair, which engage thousands of youth in preparing for college.
- DCPS's transcript audits and individual graduation plans and early college high school programs, which prepare more students for college.
- A survey of college access providers that serve DC students, identifying programs, students served, and gaps in services.
- The HERO program, which has helped more than 160 African American and Latino males.

- School-based collaboratives through which diverse college access providers work together to bring greater coherence, innovation, and efficiency in preparing students for postsecondary education.
- Achievers Scholarship, which provides academic and mentoring support and five-year scholarships of $50,000 each to more than 300 Ward 7 and 8 students.
- DC College Success Foundation/Costco Scholarship Breakfast, the Chris Cooley Scholarship Fund, and the Washington Redskins Foundation, which have collectively increased need-based scholarships and awarded a total of more than $800,000 to eligible students.
- College Access Providers Roundtable, which meets monthly to share best practices and work collaboratively in the public schools.

In addition to Double the Numbers, DCPS is defining a Secondary Schools Transformation Strategy that will revamp the school system's approach to middle and high schools. One significant component of this strategy will be to connect information about ninth-grade credit accumulation with graduation projections, and then link these data to early interventions for eighth- and ninth-graders. This strategy holds great promise for identifying issues that may impede high school students' ability and desire to complete high school; some research suggests that the decision to drop out of high school is made in the middle school years, even when students move on to high school before dropping out.

The transition to the cohort method graduation rate, the continued work of Double the Numbers, and the new efforts by DCPS to address high schools are all strong indicators of DC's commitment to increasing graduation rates and increasing the number of students who graduate ready to succeed in college and careers.

RTTT will have a direct impact on improving DC's graduation rate through the continuation of the work of the Double the Numbers Coalition, the establishment of a P-20 Consortium, and directly through the turnaround strategies that will target high schools with the lowest graduation rates in the State.

(B) Standards and Assessments (70 total points)

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

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

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

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

(b) Includes a significant number of States; and

(ii) — *(20 points)*

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

(b) For Phase 2 applications, the State's adoption of a common set of K-12 standards (as defined in this notice) by August 2, 2010, or, at a minimum, by a later date in 2010 specified by the State in a high-quality plan toward which the State has made significant progress, and its commitment to implementing the standards thereafter in a well-planned way.[1]

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

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

[1] Phase 2 applicants addressing selection criterion (B)(1)(ii) may amend their June 1, 2010 application submission through August 2, 2010 by submitting evidence of adopting common standards after June 1, 2010.

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

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

For Phase 1 applicants:

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

For Phase 2 applicants:

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

Recommended maximum response length: Two pages

The opportunity for DC to participate in a consortium of states to develop the Common Core Standards and assessments for K-12 education is an historic opportunity, and DC is committed to being one of the first states to adopt and implement these standards and assessments. To date, DC has conducted five public hearings and meetings with the State Board of Education, and expert teacher panels have reviewed the final draft standards. A vote to adopt the Common Core Standards will be held June 16, 2010 at the State Board of Education's public meeting. Beginning in School Year 2010-2011, the state will initiate a transition process with LEAs, teacher groups, and content experts to develop a full implementation plan and address issues as they arise. By School Year 2011-12, staff statewide will be mobilized, trained, and ready to implement the Common Core Standards and aligned assessments in order to ensure that DC students receive a rigorous, internationally competitive education.

Common standards and assessments provide equal access to an excellent education for ALL students, preparing them with the skills needed to succeed in college, career and life, facilitating student transitions between states (an important consideration given DC's high student mobility rates), and setting international benchmarks to ensure that our nation can compete in a global, knowledge-based

economy and workforce.

(B)(1)(i) Developing and adopting common standards: Common Core consortium

DC enthusiastically signed on to the Common Core Standards initiative, launched by the National Governor's Association (NGA) Center for Best Practices and the Council for Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) in May 2009. A Memorandum of Agreement (Appendix B1.1) was enacted at this time, indicating DC's willingness to participate in the Common Core Standards initiative. The Common Core Initiative involves a consortium of 48 states, the District of Columbia, and two U.S. territories. The full list of consortium members is included in Appendix B1.2.

To date, the Common Core Consortium has produced College and Career Readiness standards (see Appendix B1.3) and draft grade-level K-12 standards in the areas of English Language Arts and Mathematics. A copy of the draft standards can be found in Appendices B1.4 and B1.5. The K-12 standards are expected to be finalized June 2, 2010.

A 2008 report issued by the NGA, CCSSO and the DC-based education reform organization Achieve, entitled *"Benchmarking for Success: Ensuring U.S. Students Receive a World-Class Education"* describes the need for Common Core Standards that are "coherent and rigorous standards in K-12 math, reading, and language arts that are fully aligned with college and career expectations and also internationally benchmarked against leading nations" (p. 24). The report explains, "A key goal of the initiative will be to ensure that standards reflect all three of the critical dimensions exemplified by high-performing nations – not only rigor but also focus and coherence" (p. 24). The result will be fewer, clearer standards that provide a path toward success for all high school graduates.

Participation in a consortium for common standards adoption is familiar territory for the District. DC currently participates in a consortium of 21 states that have adopted English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards. The ELP Standards were developed in

partnership with the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Consortium. The District of Columbia was the fourth state to join the WIDA Consortium (in 2004).

(B)(1)(ii) Developing and adopting common standards: Standards adoption

DC's governance structure –and its small size -- enables the District to adopt standards more quickly than other states, with meaningful stakeholder involvement and minimal committee work. The District's governance structure was established in 2007 when the Public Education Reform Amendment Act (a) transferred control over the District's sole geographic LEA to the Mayor, (b) created the District's first stand-alone state education agency, and (c) established the State Board of Education. Under this structure, state academic standards must be recommended by the State Superintendent for Education and approved by the State Board of Education. The law also mandates that District academic standards be coherent and rigorous, encourage the teaching of advanced skills, and be regularly updated (Section 403 of PERA codified at §38-2652).

DC's recent adoption of comprehensive health learning standards is evidence of the District's broader ability to adopt effective standards efficiently. The comprehensive health standards, though significantly more controversial than the Common Core Standards, were swiftly adopted by the DC State Board of Education. Similarly, the Mayor's office, the State Board of Education, and OSSE are united in a firm commitment to quickly adopt the Common Core Standards.

Steps already taken to accelerate the implementation of the Common Core Standards are as follows:
After the NGA's Center for Best Practices and the CCSSO released the draft college and career readiness standards on September 21, 2009, DC proactively began the process of adopting the Common Core Standards. Communication with stakeholders began almost immediately. First, OSSE released a memo on October 1, 2009, inviting public comment on both the English language arts and math standards. Two public surveys were designed and made available to stakeholders via the Internet, with a request for feedback by October 15, 2009. In addition, a joint public hearing of the DC State Board of Education and OSSE was held on

October 7, 2009 to elicit public comment from the community.

The public comment period facilitated conversation with school districts, members of DC's postsecondary community, and the public. Dr. Jonathan Gueverra, Chief Executive Officer of the Community College of the District of Columbia, testified at the public hearing and emphasized the importance of aligning standards to college readiness expectations, particularly to mitigate the remediation rate among incoming college students. Dr. Robert Mayo, testifying on behalf of PCSB, pledged support of the charter sector for the standards and noted the importance of graduating students prepared for the demands of post-secondary education, meaningful careers, and international influence.

Soon after the initial period for public comment, a joint letter was issued from State Superintendent Briggs and State BOE President Raymond to Gene Wilhoit, Executive Director of CCSSO on October 21, 2009, indicating the continued support of both OSSE and SBOE for the common standards (Appendix B1.6).When the draft standards in kindergarten through grade 12 were made available to state education agencies, OSSE staff created a cross-walk of the District's existing content standards with the proposed draft standards to review the alignment of the Common Core Standards with current DC standards in order to identify content gaps. As subsequent drafts have been released, OSSE has again prepared a document comparing the revised standards to the District's existing standards. OSSE has also conducted a review of the draft college and career readiness standards and identified areas where transition will require a different focus. For example, the panels found that while the majority of DC's English language arts standards align with the college and career readiness standards, DC will need to shift to using more informational text, particularly at the high school level, and foster expectations that <u>all</u> subject-area teachers integrate reading comprehension and writing into their instruction. Essentially, the new standards provide the impetus for OSSE to call for stronger reading and analytic skills across all content areas. The mathematics content standards represent a more profound move from current DC standards, as they suggest a conceptual shift from algorithmic fluency to conceptual understanding. This shift to a deeper conceptual understanding of fewer topic areas will better prepare DC students to move into higher education and competitive workforce options. In this way, the

Common Core Standards are crucial building blocks for higher-level mathematics.

OSSE has briefed the State Board of Education several times on the draft common core standards. In addition, OSSE and the State Board of Education held a public hearing on May 7, 2010, to discuss the proposed adoption of the Common Core Standards. OSSE has also established expert review panels consisting of educators in DCPS and the charter sector, higher education representatives, and community members. In both reading/language arts and mathematics, OSSE has established panels for grades K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12 to review the existing and proposed standards, identify gaps and discuss implementation challenges.

With this initial alignment and review complete, DC is poised for the State Board of Education to hold a vote on June 16, 2010 to formally approve the Common Core Standards. Because the State Board has been involved in Common Core Standards discussions throughout the entire process, OSSE anticipates a smooth and efficient adoption process. OSSE will submit an amendment to this application prior to August 2, 2010 with documentation of formal approval of the Common Core Standards by the State Board of Education.

After the Common Core Standards are adopted, DC will work with LEAs to implement the transition plans articulated below (see Section B3). Through the entire process, stakeholder communication will keep community members and business partners apprised of progress and involved in ongoing decisions. Following comprehensive transition planning led by OSSE (described in section B3), LEA and school-based staff will be mobilized, trained, and ready to implement the Common Core Standards and aligned assessments by School Year 2011-12.

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

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

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

(ii) Includes a significant number of States.

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

Evidence for (B)(2):

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

Recommended maximum response length: One page

(B)(2)(i) & B2(ii) **Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments: Common Core assessment consortium**

DC is a strong proponent of high-quality, benchmarked assessments aligned with curricular standards: in School Year 2005-06, the Board of Education adopted DC-CAS, a standards-aligned assessment system considered to be rigorous and better rounded than its previous assessment, the SAT-9. The District now plans to further enhance standards and assessments by joining forces with other states to set a new bar for rigor by developing an assessment aligned to the new Common Core Standards.

Since the adoption of DC-CAS, both DCPS and charter LEAs have aligned curricular materials, interim assessments, data systems, and school improvement initiatives to a common metric for high expectations. DCPS uses the DC Benchmark Assessment System

(DC-BAS) to measure student knowledge and make informed instructional decisions. Almost all charter LEAs also use interim assessments, including DC-BAS, interim assessments developed by nonprofit organizations, and charter-created interim assessments. In both charter LEAs and DCPS, work is underway to refine interim benchmark assessments and increase their utility. For example, many charters and DCPS have engaged in a partnership with a local nonprofit organization to implement a benchmark assessment pilot aimed at using data to identify and share best instructional practices across LEAs.

With the adoption of Common Core Standards, DC stakeholders are committed to taking the next step, moving beyond the strong foundation of the DC-CAS and developing – in collaboration with 25 other states -- a new, next generation common assessment, along with aligned interim assessments and supporting formative materials. DC's experience in developing, implementing, and using results from high-quality assessments will facilitate the smooth integration of new assessments into the instructional framework.

DC is a Governing State in the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC), signing a memorandum of understanding regarding this consortium on May 10, 2010. (Appendix B2.1). This MOU, and the fact that the District is a governing state, shows a strong commitment to developing a new assessment system that provides greater transparency, comparability, and accountability across all states and sets higher standards by which to measure LEAs, schools, and students (See Appendix B2.2 for list of the 27 states participating with PARCC). It also provides an unprecedented opportunity to work collaboratively with other states to develop forward thinking assessments (and ultimately other aligned tools) that can help deliver on the promise of the common standards.

PARCC intends to apply for grants through the Race to the Top Assessment Program; it submitted an intent to do so on April 28, 2010. The consortium will apply to develop an assessment system that includes common summative, interim, and formative assessments aligned to the Common Core Standards and expects to roll out the assessment system in 2014-15.

Reform Plan Criteria

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

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

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

Recommended maximum response length: Eight pages

Not only will DC be one of the first states to adopt the Common Core Standards, it will also move aggressively to implement the core standards and aligned assessments. In fact, DC's plan calls for interim assessments aligned to standards to be delivered every 6-8 weeks throughout the school year beginning in Fall 2011 – well in advance of the planned transition to the common summative assessment – in order to provide critical information to teachers and students alike. The plan also provides for statewide professional development for every teacher related to the Common Core Standards, as well as for development of standards entry points to encourage differentiated standards-based instruction.

(B)(3) <u>Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments</u>

Education should offer students an opportunity to fulfill their dreams and reach their maximum potential as members of society. College and career-readiness exit standards, and the grade-level standards that lead up to them, are key drivers of such educational opportunity. When instruction and assessment are carefully aligned with internationally benchmarked standards that are proven to prepare students for life beyond high school, all children benefit. This high-quality education is not only a moral obligation for DC, but also an economic imperative in an increasingly global economy.

OSSE's plan for standards rollout is based on three tenets. First, proper standards implementation is impossible without accompanying interim and summative assessments, as proper implementation of standards demands using assessment data to continually improve instruction. Second, all students must find standards challenging yet accessible, including students with special needs, as well as at-risk and other high-needs students. Finally, standards implementation is not complete until high school graduation requirements are connected with college and university entrance requirements. DC's reform goals and performance measures are outlined below:

GOAL 1: Successfully transition to and implement common internationally benchmarked K-12 standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics through consistent instructional leadership, clear guidance to and regular communication with all relevant stakeholders (e.g., staff, parents, students, business community, higher education, etc.), and high-quality professional development for teachers and school staff

GOAL 2: Successfully transition to high-quality assessments, both interim and summative, aligned to these standards

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 1: *prior to the rollout of the Common Core Standards in School Year 2011-12, every teacher/principal/administrator statewide (in both participating and non-participating LEAs) will be provided by the State with professional development on implementing the Common Core Standards, including understanding the crosswalk between the*

current standards and the new Common Core Standards. These employees will also receive multiple PD opportunities during School Year 2011-12.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 2: *by School Year 2011-12, 100% of participating LEAs will implement interim and revised summative assessments*

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 3: *all participating LEAs will participate in the Common Core Standards Working Group*

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 4: *by Fall 2012, the Special Education Data System (SEDS) will be aligned with the Common Core Standards.*

In order to achieve these goals, DC will implement the following strategies:

- **(A) Implement a Fast, Aggressive Rollout Plan for Common Core Standards and Assessments**
- **(B) Create, Organize, and Fund a Common Core Standards Working Group**
- **(C) Create Standards Entry Points for Differentiated Learning**
- **(D) Align High School Curricula and Graduation Requirements with College Entrance Requirements**

(A) Implement a Fast, Aggressive Rollout Plan for Common Core Standards and Assessments

DC's small size allows for a nimble and efficient rollout and implementation of the Common Core Standards and assessments. Importantly, OSSE's plan to adopt the Common Core Standards immediately distinguishes it from a number of other states. The State rollout plan for Common Core Standards includes: (1) standards materials and a user-friendly website for teachers, parents, and other key stakeholders, (2) a modified version of the DC-CAS aligned to the Common Core Standards, and (3) mandatory interim assessments approved by OSSE. Each LEA, as part of its final RTTT scope of work and implementation plan, must develop and submit to OSSE a Common Core Standards and Assessments adoption plan that details the following:

- How the LEA will provide training for all instructional staff, including an introduction to the new standards and an explanation of how they relate to the old standards, mapping of the new standards against curriculum by grade level and content area, and feedback and reflection specifically focused on implementation of the Common Core
- How the LEA will proactively communicate with families regarding the Common Core and its impact on students
- How the LEA will provide (directly or through outside resources) ongoing professional development opportunities to teachers regarding how the new standards tie to career and college readiness and how to differentiate instruction using the standards

An Effectiveness Manager on OSSE's implementation team will work with LEAs to ensure their Common Core adoption plans are sound and will achieve the state objectives.

Standards Materials. In order to facilitate clear communication with stakeholders regarding the transition to the Common Core Standards and assessments, OSSE will use all existing resources, including Achieve, the CCSSO, and other states to provide introductory material and clear, high-quality standards booklets outlining the new English Language Arts and Mathematics standards for educators. If necessary, OSSE will also tap external experts and a graphic design firm to develop supplemental materials. These materials will be printed and distributed statewide. OSSE is NOT, however, requesting Race to the Top funding for the creation and distribution of these materials; rather, OSSE will utilize local funds as needed.

OSSE is also committed to ensuring that teachers, students, parents, and community members have access to relevant and easy-to-understand information about the new common standards and what they mean in terms of expectations for student work. As OSSE works with the State Board of Education to review and approve the Common Core Standards, it has created an initial web presence to begin making public information about the new standards available (See appendix B3.1 for a screenshot of the current Common Core Standards home page). OSSE will partner with other states, external experts and a web designer to develop and launch an

improved OSSE Common Core Standards website, a clear, coherent website featuring the new standards and providing a one-stop source for materials and information about the Common Core Standards in the DC context. The goal of the to-be-developed Common Core Standards website is to make the standards come alive and to explain how they will be used on a daily basis in DC's classrooms. The website will also serve as a bridge between the current DC standards and the Common Core Standards. All website material intended for students and parents will be available in a number of languages to facilitate communication with families where English is not the language spoken in the home. The website will include:

- **Materials for teachers/administrators**: model standards-based lessons, a detailed cross-walk that explains the differences between the old and new standards, annotated student exemplars, and online instructional videos
- **Materials for students**: sample assignments/tasks that align to different standards, an explanation of how standards connect to career/college readiness, and an overview of standards in student-friendly language
- **Materials for parents**: an introduction to the Common Core, tips on how to monitor a child's progress in mastering standards, and information on the re-alignment of the DC-CAS.

Although the OSSE Common Core Standards website will be easily navigable for students and parents, OSSE recognizes that it may not reach all families, although free Internet access is available at public libraries and at school sites. Many of the materials for students and parents will be materials that teachers can use in the classroom and administrators can distribute to parents. Individual LEAs will also receive funding to implement the Common Core Standards in such a way that the needs of the local community are met, but the website will be a one-stop shop for materials and information that can aid this process.

Additionally, the OSSE Common Core Standards website will be interactive. Schools and LEAs will be encouraged to submit information, such as long-term and short-term plans for standards implementation, informational brochures for parents, standards rubrics, and more. All quality material, reviewed by OSSE, will be posted.

Summative Assessment. Implementing new standards without an aligned, summative assessment would send confusing signals to students, educators and parents – and would undermine the transition to and realization of meeting the new standards. DC's immediate roll-out of the Common Core Standards will result in lag time between the need for a summative assessment aligned to the Common Core Standards and the finalization of the PARCC consortium-developed assessment, which is scheduled for 2014-15. Consequently, OSSE feels strongly that modifying the DC-CAS is an important component of the state rollout plan. OSSE will work with its test contractor in Summer 2010 to begin work on modifying the current DC-CAS to phase in questions that better align with new standards and phase out questions that do not. OSSE will also work with its Technical Advisory Council to ensure that this transition maintains the achievement standards and does not disrupt trendlines in achievement. This process will both inform and be informed by the curriculum and resources alignment work that will also be done to prepare schools for implementation of the Common Core Standards. The DC-CAS will be administered "as-is" (i.e., aligned to the current DC learning standards) for the 2011 test administration as OSSE field tests new items that align to the Common Core Standards. The revised DC-CAS will be modified only slightly (alignment analyses have indicated that current DC standards are similar in many ways to the Common Core Standards, particularly in English language arts) and will be phased in beginning with the 2012 test administration. This work will NOT be funded through Race to the Top but is important to the overall reform of standards and assessments; rather, OSSE will utilize local and private resources as necessary.

Interim Assessment. Participating LEAs have agreed to adopt interim assessments in all schools. These interim assessments will provide important real-time data to teachers but will not be used for evaluative purposes. OSSE will provide a recommended list of vendors that can provide high quality, aligned interim assessments, but groups of LEAs may choose to work with a different vendor or create their own assessment provided the vendor can demonstrate that its interim assessments are aligned with the Common Core Standards. Although LEAs will most likely form consortia for developing shared interim assessments, a statewide interim assessment is not appropriate due to differences in curricular sequencing across LEAs. DC's charter schools must be allowed autonomy in determining curricular sequencing and pacing while meeting state standards; this commitment to flexibility has

contributed to the development of DC's vibrant charter sector.

All adopted interim assessments for grades 3-10 must meet the following requirements, derived from the recommendations of a working group consisting of representatives from charter schools, OSSE, DCPS, and local nonprofit organizations:

Interim Assessment Design and Implementation

- The interim assessments for English Language Arts and Mathematics in grades 3-10 are to be based on the Common Core Standards and broken into sub-standards in order to make the assessments instructionally useful
- Multiple questions are to be asked for each standard
- The degree of difficulty, language, and question formats are to be modeled after the current DC-CAS. Items are to be vertically aligned, and the sequence of items is to align with the sequence of curriculum within the LEA
- Assessed standards are to be spiraled across multiple assessments to provide for review and allow teachers to see improvement
- All assessments are to have multiple choice and open response question types
- The format is to be paper-based or online with an ability to view questions. If the format is paper-based, the test vendor should include a plan and timeline for moving to a computer-based administration, including a summary of the system requirements for an LEA to have a computer-administered interim assessment system.
- Four to five English language arts and four to five math assessments are to be designed for each year of grades 3-10
- Assessments are to be given every 6-8 weeks, aligned with the LEA calendar

All schools within participating LEAs are expected to have interim assessments in place for students by School Year 2011-12. LEA funding is also provided for School Year 2010-11, and LEAs may use this money for standards-aligned interim assessments or

alternatively, funding can be used to cover development costs for a new assessment. Provided that LEAs fulfill their interim assessment requirements, they may also use funds for other formative tools and processes (e.g., item banks) that are embedded in instruction and used to provide timely feedback for purposes of adjusting instruction to improve learning.

OSSE will provide LEAs with a level of RTTT funding that is sufficient for school-wide interim assessments but will not fully cover the fixed costs of an interim assessment designed to the Common Core Standards. This is one instance (of several) where OSSE believes RTTT formula funding will improve communication and collaboration among LEAs. In order to help LEAs take advantage of economies of scale, OSSE has convened LEAs and is collaborating with them to discuss interim assessment options. Small LEAs, particularly one-campus charters, are encouraged to partner with other LEAs that use a similar curriculum to purchase interim assessments. Additionally, LEAs may purchase LEA-created interim assessments from one another; this provides an additional incentive for schools to share best practices, all under OSSE guidance to ensure state objectives are achieved.

ACTIVITIES, TIMELINE and RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

1. Adopt Standards (as explained in Section B1): June 2010, State Board of Education

2. Hold Community Meetings to inform parents and community members of the changes in standards and assessments: Spring 2010 – Fall 2010, OSSE (LEAs are also required to hold their own standards/assessment community meetings for their local communities, as well as to provide in-school training for teachers)

3. Design and Develop Core Standards Website: Fall-Winter 2010, vendor under OSSE

4. Begin work to modify DC-CAS to align with Common Core Standards: Summer 2010, OSSE, test vendor

5. Develop and implement interim assessments:

    - Identify vendors capable of meeting the state requirements (above) for interim assessments and publish list to LEAs: Fall

2010, OSSE

- Organize meetings for LEAs to meet and discuss interim assessment purchasing partnerships: Fall 2010, OSSE
- Sign contract with vendor (LEAs may also write their own interim assessments): Winter-Spring 2010, LEAs
- Implement interim assessments: School Year 2011-12, LEAs

(B) Create, Organize, and Fund a Common Core Standards Working Group

In addition to implementing interim assessments, LEAs must be integrally involved in professional development around the new Common Core Standards. In a joint letter to Gene Wilhoit, Executive Director of CCSSO, on October 21, 2009, State Superintendent of Education Briggs and State Board President Raymond state, "Our biggest obstacle for a successful implementation will be the investment in significant and ongoing professional development for teachers. OSSE has begun to consider the options for addressing the areas of greatest concern for teachers and providing the necessary supports." Considerable work is underway statewide to develop expectations for instructional planning and delivery. In DCPS, for instance, the introduction of the Teaching and Learning Framework has laid the foundation for common expectations. DC's overall statewide plan for professional development is two-pronged and calls for: (1) statewide collaboration around standards planning, and (2) formula funding for LEAs to carry out individual implementation plans for their schools and communities. LEAs must ensure they meet the state's high bar for instructional leadership in the transition to new standards – this must occur at the LEA and school level, and it must involve school leader participation as well as authentic teacher engagement and commitment.

With regard to statewide collaboration around standards planning, the Common Core Standards Working Group will bring LEA leadership teams together to create and review plans for implementation of standards and curricular alignment. The Working Group will convene in Summer and Fall of 2010 (LEA attendance will be required for these sessions) and regularly throughout the school year to help LEAs develop standards implementation plans to include curriculum design and job-embedded professional

development for teachers within each LEA. Experts in the area of curriculum adaptation for students with special needs, as well as for at-risk/off-track students, will attend each meeting.

With regard to formula funding for LEAs, participating LEAs will receive direct funding for standards implementation and will commit to providing, pursuant to their Common Core adoption plan described above: (1) information sessions for parents and students on the Common Core Standards, and (2) Common Core Standards professional development for teachers prior to the opening of school in Fall 2011 and then regularly during School Year 2011-12. OSSE believes that differences between LEA communities necessitate implementation at the LEA level so that professional development may be differentiated; OSSE will provide broad-based support through materials and booklets on the Common Core, through the OSSE Common Core Standards website, and through planning support for each participating LEA. Teacher professional development at the LEA-level will include:

- **Curriculum alignment stipends**: funding for curriculum specialists to work on aligning current curriculum to the Common Core Standards
- **Training stipends**: funding for trainers/coaches to work with teachers and staff on Common Core Standards implementation

ACTIVITIES, TIMELINE and RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

1. Hold Common Core Standards Working Group meetings: Fall 2010 – Summer 2011, OSSE
2. Conduct information sessions with parents and other community members: Summer 2011 and ongoing, LEAs
3. Provide school-level professional development on Common Core Standards: Summer 2011 and ongoing for the life of the grant, LEAs

(C) Create Standards Entry Points for Differentiated Learning

The implementation of the Common Core Standards will require making them accessible for ALL students. DC's reform plan calls for collaboration across states in the development of a *Standards Entry Points for Differentiated Learning* manual, which outlines the progression of skills and knowledge that leads to mastery of each standard. These entry points enable teachers to differentiate instruction according to an individual student's starting point, and allow students to set challenging but achievable academic goals. The manual will link standards to a list of activities ranging in difficulty, which will help ensure that every student receives instruction that is challenging but accessible. This work is vital to further OSSE's goals to improve the educational opportunities for DC students with special needs. The framework, and training around the framework, will provide necessary supports to teachers to better meet the needs of students with special needs. Furthermore, DC's renewed focus on serving students with special needs includes raising expectations for this group of students in order to improve their chances to succeed in school and better prepare them for workforce or postsecondary education success.

In format and philosophy, the *Standards Entry Points for Differentiated Learning* will be similar to the *Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for Students with Disabilities*, although OSSE believes that the entry points are relevant for a wide variety of students (i.e., not just students with special needs). OSSE will continue efforts to reach out to states that have already created similar manuals. The OSSE vision for the *Standards Entry Points* is a collaboration of states committed to differentiating instruction according to individual student abilities. Partnerships across states will save time and resources, allowing members to focus on training and implementation of the entry points and enabling the sharing of important implementation lessons and practices.

OSSE also plans to facilitate teacher and educator professional development on the of use of the *Standards Entry Points* to inform Individualized Education Plan (IEP) teams as well as to show how the manual can help link curriculum and intervention resources to ensure standards progression throughout the school year for all students. This training will allow administrators and teacher-leaders to create a school-wide plan for connecting the Common Core Standards to the instruction of high-needs students and

students with special needs, using the newly developed *Standards Entry Points* as a guide.

Finally, SEDS, the statewide special education data system, will be upgraded to align with the Common Core Standards and the *Standards Entry Points*. SEDS will contain a drop-down menu listing the Common Core Standards to inform IEP writers. This functionality will allow educators to use the database, not only to track IDEA compliance, but also to develop IEP goals aligned with Common Core Standards and to monitor student progress toward those goals.

ACTIVITIES, TIMELINE and RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

1. Partner with other interested states to create *Standards Entry Points for Differentiated Learning*: Summer 2010 – Spring 2011, OSSE

2. Contract with a vendor to provide teacher training on the *Standards Entry Points*: Fall 2011 and ongoing

3. Fund a vendor to align the Special Education Data System (SEDS) with the Common Core Standards: vendor hired by Spring 2011, with rollout in Fall 2012, OSSE

(D) Align High School Curricula and Graduation Requirements with College Entrance Requirements

Aligning high school graduation requirements and college entrance requirements with the Common Core Standards and assessments is an area of strength for DC, thanks to The Double the Numbers (DTN) Coalition (described in detail in Section A3). Created in 2007, the goal of this group, which includes the Mayor, Chair of the Council of the District of Columbia, Office of the State Superintendent of Education, DC Public Schools, DC Public Charter School Board, DC College Access Program, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Washington Teachers Union, DC Education Compact, DC Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation, DC Public Charter School Association, and the Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Region, is to double the numbers of 9th-graders who finish high school within five years, enroll in college, and graduate from college in a timely fashion.

In March 2010, Achieve, Inc. released a report, Closing the Expectations Gap, that noted that the District of Columbia is one of 21 states that has aligned its graduation requirements with college- and career-ready expectations. While DC will nonetheless need to reexamine the graduation requirements in light of the Common Core Standards, it is anticipated that only minimal changes will need be made.

There are many ways in which DC high schools are ensuring alignment to higher education, including the DC Tuition Assistance Grant Program (DC TAG), the DC College Access Program (DC CAP), the College Summit, DCPS's Secondary School Transformation, and the School without Walls dual enrollment program with George Washington University.

As a final strategy, DC will develop a P-20 Consortium, consisting of representatives from LEAs and multiple universities, to ensure tight alignment of DC's high school curricular requirements with local college entrance requirements. OSSE has already begun this work informally through the PARCC assessment consortium, meeting with representatives of the higher education system to ensure that the PARCC high school assessments, when developed, appropriately measure college readiness so that students passing the assessments will be able to enter directly into first year, credit bearing courses without the need for remediation. The P-20 Consortium will work in collaboration with the Double the Numbers Coalition and the other high school alignment strategies to craft a strategy for the creation of a P-12 college-going culture. All LEAs will have the opportunity to contribute to the P-20 Consortium, which will convene for the first time in Fall 2010 and meet regularly thereafter.

ACTIVITIES, TIMELINE and RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

1. Convene a P-20 Consortium of 10-12 members: monthly, starting in Fall 2010, OSSE

2. Work with the DTN Coalition and local institutions of higher education to collect data on the level of preparation of students graduating from DC high schools. These data will be used to inform the P-20 Consortium: Spring 2011, OSSE

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

State Reform Conditions Criteria

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

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

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

Evidence:

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

Recommended maximum response length: Two pages

With internationally benchmarked standards and aligned summative and formative assessments in place, DC will be poised to utilize standards-based data to drive instruction. The statewide longitudinal data system will facilitate this process, as will instructional improvement systems in place in all participating LEAs. These instructional improvement systems will allow real-time access to 360-degree student, teacher, grade-level and school data, and teachers and administrators will have the knowledge and skills to use these tools to drive student achievement.

(C)(1) <u>Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system</u>

In August 2007, OSSE was awarded funds to build and implement a longitudinal data system. OSSE has made significant gains toward developing, expanding and using all its data systems in order to make information more transparent and accessible to stakeholders, to better facilitate research to improve student achievement and close achievement gaps and enable responsive and informed policy decision-making at all levels of the education system. To that end, OSSE has implemented nine of the America

COMPETES Act elements and intends to implement the remaining elements by Fall 2011.

America's COMPETES Act Element 1: Unique Statewide Student Identifier

OSSE began assigning Unique Student Identifiers to all students in School Year 2008-2009. To date, all students have a Unique Student Identifier which has proven useful in tracking student mobility across LEAs. OSSE also provides support to LEAs to validate their data to resolve dual enrollments and improve data quality. Appendix C1.1 provides screenshots that serve as evidence of the unique statewide student identifier.

America's COMPETES Act Element 2: Student-level enrollment, demographic and program participation information

OSSE also tracks student-level enrollment, demographic and program participation information and has the ability to track students' enrollment status through the current longitudinal data system. Appendix C1.1 provides evidence of the ability of the longitudinal data system to track enrollment, demographic and program participation.

America's COMPETES Act Element 3: Student-level information about the points at which students exit, transfer in, transfer out, drop-out or complete P-16 education programs.

OSSE is able to determine the history of each student's enrollment throughout his/her enrollment in the District. Appendix C1.1 demonstrates evidence of this element.

America's COMPETES Act Element 4: Capacity to communicate with higher education data systems

Through its DC OneApp data system, OSSE tracks students applying for the District of Columbia higher education grant programs: Tuition Assistance Grant (DC TAG), Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnership Program (DC LEAP), and DC Adoption. The system allows for online processing to determine student eligibility for higher education funding. It further provides OSSE with the ability to review and track students' grant and higher education enrollment. It also provides higher education institutions with the ability to review student participant information and provide student-level data to OSSE. Appendix C1.1 includes a screenshot that

demonstrates this functionality.

America's COMPETES Act Element 5: State data audit system to assess data quality, validity, and reliability

OSSE has a process to review the quality, validity and reliability of data and work with LEAs to facilitate internal audits as well. Specifically, OSSE's current student data system provides data quality exception reports. These reports provide quality assurance assessments for the data provided by the source systems. From these reports, corrective actions at the LEA level may be taken and the corrected data resubmitted to the longitudinal data system, thus continually improving the data quality within the system and in the source systems across the District. Appendix C1.1 includes an example of an error report.

America's COMPETES Act Element 6: Yearly State assessment records of individual students

OSSE collects, cleanses and distributes annual DC-CAS assessment results to LEAs. These records are collected longitudinally across school years and provided to LEAs. A screenshot in Appendix C1.1 reflects a student's assessment records.

America's COMPETES Act Element 7: Information on students not tested by grade and subject

OSSE collects information on students not tested and the reason they were not tested. In addition, OSSE collects information such as students' Special Education status and their English Language Learner status. Appendix C1.1 includes a screenshot of information on students not tested by grade and subject.

America's COMPETES Act Element 8: A teacher identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students

OSSE will begin work to implement this element by Fall 2011. DCPS, the state's largest LEA, is already linking teachers to students and has established a roster validation process for tested grades.

America's COMPETES Act Element 9: Student-level transcript information, including information on course completion and grades

OSSE will develop a course coding system and begin collecting transcript information by Fall 2011.

America's COMPETES Act Element 10: Student-level college readiness test scores

While aggregate AP and SAT scores are currently collected, OSSE will begin gathering student-level scores by Winter 2010.

America's COMPETES Act Element 11: Information regarding the extent to which students transition successfully from secondary school to postsecondary education, including whether students enroll in remedial coursework

As previously mentioned, the DC OneApp – an online secondary application system – helps streamline the process for students applying for financial aid for higher education and facilitates data collection on both student applications and outcomes. To that end, while OSSE is still identifying ways to better track whether students enroll in remedial coursework at their higher education institution, OSSE is able to verify student enrollment submitted by institution. See Appendix C1.1.

America's COMPETES Act Element 12: Data that provide other information deemed necessary to address alignment and adequate preparation for success in postsecondary education

For those students enrolled in the DC TAG program, OSSE is able to track their college graduation rates by ward and cohort and provide schools with information about their students' college enrollment rates. OSSE is still identifying additional data fields to collect to address alignment with success in postsecondary education and ways to better track these data. For a screenshot of the college postsecondary graduation rates, see Appendix C1.1.

Reform Plan Criteria

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

The extent to which the State has a high-quality plan to ensure that data from the State's statewide longitudinal data system are accessible to, and used to inform and engage, as appropriate, key stakeholders (*e.g.*, parents, students, teachers, principals, LEA

leaders, community members, unions, researchers, and policymakers); and that the data support decision-makers in the continuous improvement of efforts in such areas as policy, instruction, operations, management, resource allocation, and overall effectiveness.[2]

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

Recommended maximum response length: Two pages

(C)(2) <u>Accessing and using state data</u>

DC is committed to ensuring that data are accessible and understandable to all stakeholders. DC's numerous publicly funded school options create a wide variety of P–12 choices for DC families, making the accessibility, timeliness, and reliability of statewide data on school and student performance – including student achievement, graduation rates, and college readiness – critical:

GOAL 1: Inform and engage key stakeholders (e.g., parents, students, teachers, principals, LEA leaders, community members, unions, researchers and policymakers) through an improved, interactive, user-friendly online resource

GOAL 2: Provide data to decision-makers for the continuous improvement of reform efforts related to policy, instruction, operations, management, resource allocation, and overall effectiveness

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 1: *by Fall 2011, OSSE will have revised its current website to allow users to view data through a choice of graphic displays and to view data at the school, LEA, and state level, in aggregate or by NCLB subgroup*

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 2: *by Fall 2012, OSSE will have created a more user-friendly website from which users will be able to download aggregate-level data spreadsheets with statistics about students, teachers, and schools that are relevant to decision-*

[2] Successful applicants that receive Race to the Top grant awards will need to comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), including 34 CFR Part 99, as well as State and local requirements regarding privacy.

making

In order to achieve these goals, DC will implement the following strategies:

- **(A) Expand Capacity and Systems for Data Access**
- **(B) Enhance Availability of Statewide Data to Key Stakeholders**

DC's multitude of public school options for students afford DC parents several means for comparing schools across the State. FOCUS, a local advocacy organization for public charter schools, has created a data dashboard so that stakeholders can easily interpret school-level data and compare performance among public schools. GreatSchools.net, under contract with Fight For Children, a local non-profit organization, has created scorecards for every DC public school and has given each school a comparative rating. Additionally, OSSE provides Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) data, graduation rates, and attendance figures for schools and student sub-groups, going back as far as 2003. Local parents report that the quantity of data is both helpful and overwhelming.

OSSE's plan is to ensure that this information is relevant and easy-to-use for decision-making, thereby increasing the impetus for low-achieving schools to change. OSSE will use RTTT funding to develop a user-friendly website accessible in a number of languages to help parents sort through the various tools and websites that provide data on their children's schools. OSSE envisions a website that provides a roadmap for parents to address what data means, where data can be found, and how data can be used to inform a parent's next steps (e.g., school visits, teacher discussions, etc.) to ensure that children are meeting or exceeding expectations through a meaningful and relevant school model or program. Additionally, OSSE will provide the ability to view data through a choice of graphic displays, as well as the ability to view data at the school, LEA, and state level, in aggregate or by NCLB subgroup.

In an effort to increase stakeholder capacity to use and understand data, OSSE will hold community meetings with parents, other

community members, and decision-makers to discuss the ways in which they can use data to make informed decisions, be better informed about the state of education within DC, and be active participants in their local school communities. For those parents who do not have Internet access at home, computer terminals will be available at these meetings to provide free access, in addition to the access provided through the public library system.

In addition, OSSE seeks to improve data availability to be used in the continuous improvement of reform efforts related to policy, instruction, operations, management, resource allocation, and overall school effectiveness. Users will be able to download aggregate-level data spreadsheets with statistics about students, teachers, and schools that are relevant to decision-making. All information about students and teachers will be stripped of personal identifiers. The political climate in DC is one in which numerous community organizations, special interest groups, non-profits, philanthropists and think tanks routinely report on the status of various educational reform efforts in the State. For example, Great Schools and Fight for Children work to make data public and hold educators accountable for results. By making data more readily available, DC increases its accountability to these various publics as well as to its teachers, students, and families. Inefficiencies in policies, operations, and resource allocations will be exposed, and instructional and school improvement efforts and their results will be more transparent.

OSSE will also become more proactive in engaging researchers from external organizations and universities in studying statewide data. OSSE will determine a list of statewide educational research priorities and will work through the P-20 Consortium to encourage researchers to develop research agendas around these priorities.

In addition, OSSE will become more responsive to researchers from external organizations and universities interested in pursuing alternate research agendas. OSSE has assembled a working group to create a user-friendly online process for organizations to apply for access to additional student-level and cohort-level data, in addition to the immediately downloadable data sets available on the website. Functionality will be integrated into the new website to allow OSSE to track and analyze data downloads and requests, in

order to inform a better understanding of external research priorities and data interests.

Finally, OSSE intends to push forward the timeline for reporting DC-CAS results (schools currently receive scores in late June.) While OSSE will not request RTTT funding for this, it believes that this accelerated timeframe could have a significant impact on schools, teachers, administrators, and other key stakeholders and policymakers who rely on this information to make important school management decisions.

The work plan for these initiatives is as follows:

(A) Expand Capacity and Systems for Data Access

ACTIVITIES, TIMELINE and RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

1. Create a new, user-friendly, language-accessible website that allows key stakeholders easy-to-use access to data through interactive web functions and tracks data downloads: Fall 2011, OSSE

2. Hold community meetings with parents and other community members to discuss how data can be made more useful to them: Fall 2011, OSSE

(B) Enhance Availability of Statewide Data to Key Stakeholders

ACTIVITIES, TIMELINE and RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

1. Determine statewide list of research priorities, in addition to the already stated priority of studying the most effective methods for decreasing achievement gaps. Encourage development of research studies around priorities through researchers involved in the P-20 Consortium: Fall 2010 and ongoing, OSSE

2. Develop an online research request tool that allows researchers or outside organizations to easily apply for access to data: Fall,

2010, OSSE

3. Identify/create research-ready data sets, including assessment, enrollment, teacher and financial data: Fall 2011 and ongoing, OSSE

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

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

(i) Increase the acquisition, adoption, and use of local instructional improvement systems (as defined in this notice) that provide teachers, principals, and administrators with the information and resources they need to inform and improve their instructional practices, decision-making, and overall effectiveness;

(ii) Support participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) and schools that are using instructional improvement systems (as defined in this notice) in providing effective professional development to teachers, principals and administrators on how to use these systems and the resulting data to support continuous instructional improvement; and

(iii) Make the data from instructional improvement systems (as defined in this notice), together with statewide longitudinal data system data, available and accessible to researchers so that they have detailed information with which to evaluate the effectiveness of instructional materials, strategies, and approaches for educating different types of students (*e.g.*, students with disabilities, English language learners, students whose achievement is well below or above grade level).

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

Recommended maximum response length: Five pages

RTTT funding will ensure that every school in participating DC LEAs has a high quality instructional improvement system that is used to make real-time classroom decisions. It will also ensure that information is made available to researchers who can help

improve DC's understanding of how to target, reposition, and accelerate reform efforts.

GOAL 1: Develop instructional improvement systems aligned to data systems

GOAL 2: Provide professional development necessary to foster a data-driven culture within all schools

GOAL 3: Make data from instructional improvement systems and the statewide longitudinal data system available/accessible to researchers for the evaluation of the effectiveness of various reform models, instructional materials, strategies, and approaches for educating different types of students

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 1: *by Fall 2012, 100% of participating LEAs will have developed instructional improvement systems according to application-defined criteria*

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 2: *by Fall 2011, 100% of participating LEAs will have an in-school Data Coach or Analyst who devotes a significant portion of his/her time to fostering a school-level data-driven culture*

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 3: *by Fall 2010, processes for external researchers to work with state-level data will be streamlined and efficient*

In order to achieve these goals, DC will implement the following strategies:

- **(A) Develop Instructional Improvement Systems aligned to Data Systems**
- **(B) Support Participating LEAs in Providing Effective PD on Data-driven Instruction**
- **(C) Increase the Availability and Access of Data to Researchers**

Effective data analysis is a cornerstone of the entire DC RTTT plan. In addition to the plan outlined below, RTTT initiatives introduced elsewhere in the application are also focused on creation and refinement of instructional improvement systems.

Table C3.1 Initiatives Supported by Data & Accountability

RTTT Initiatives	Connection to Data & Accountability
Section D2: Teacher and Principal Evaluation Systems: DC plans to support LEAs in expanding and refining systems currently used to evaluate teachers, including funding for the expansion of IMPACT	**Section C3:** IMPACT expansion involves adding new functionality to the current tool so that principals and administrators can easily manipulate data on system-wide strengths and weaknesses and determine necessary real-time interventions
Section D5: Individualized PD Platform: RTTT funding will support the development of the Individualized PD Platform. Teachers and principals will be able to share best practices, view videos, find lesson and unit plans, share PD ideas, and more.	**Section C3:** The Individualized PD Platform is an interactive PD system that connects teachers and principals with PD resources based on needs identified in their evaluations and in student data, including training on data-driven instruction.
Section E2: Office of School Innovation Capacity: The Office of School Innovation will develop school-level scorecards to manage relationships with partner schools executing turnarounds. These scorecards offer indicators of performance central to turnaround schools, such as academic proficiency, attendance and discipline.	**Section C3:** OSI will work with partner schools to determine performance measures relative to benchmarks, in order to target interventions that lead to changes at the school and classroom level

(C)(3)(i) **Using data to improve instruction: Instructional improvement systems**

Effective instructional improvement systems perform two functions. First, they provide teachers with actionable data to inform real-time decisions and secondly, they provide support for teachers to use those data to inform instruction. Although DCPS currently uses a sophisticated series of interconnected data improvement systems, many charter LEAs lack systems that meet baseline criteria. Consequently, OSSE's strategy is two-pronged. First, it will fund instructional improvement systems that meet baseline criteria and are designed to address reform agenda targets in all participating charter LEAs (described below). Second, it will help DCPS expand its existing IMPACT evaluation systems, ensuring that DCPS teachers can be strategic with their own improvement efforts (described in Section D5). A differentiated approach is needed because different LEAs are in different phases of development in regard to instructional improvement systems and need different supports and because there is no 'one-size-fits-all' model or system – LEAs vary depending on their size, program, grade levels, and instructional framework, and their instructional improvement

system needs follow those variances.

DCPS currently uses a robust instructional improvement system made up of various data system components, including DC-STARS, an Internet-based Student Information System that provides teachers, administrators, and central office staff with a centralized location to enter/manage all student-related data. Among other functions, DC-STARS tracks student demographic information, attendance, grades, and progress towards graduation, all to allow teachers to make informed instructional changes based on students and classroom trends. Additionally, the Blackman/Jones Database, a database tailored to special education in the District of Columbia, provides information on students receiving special education services, including timelines of IEP development and service provision. Data dashboards are available to special education coordinators and principals with a rating system of the school's performance.

Instead of expanding already sufficient DCPS student-level data systems, RTTT funding will support the further development of the online portal associated with IMPACT, the new evaluation system used to measure teacher performance (see Section D2). This system provides data to teachers, including trends on individual teacher performance and associated student performance. The system also provides administrators with system-wide trends in effectiveness gaps, allowing principals and others to help in the determination of targeted and relevant interventions. IMPACT is both a human capital evaluation system as well as an instructional improvement system that will provide teachers, principals, and administrators with actionable data. Combined with the PD Platform described in Section D5, teachers and leaders in DCPS will have powerful data tools at their disposal.

Data use for charter LEAs is quite different, although many use instructional improvement systems effectively, often reflecting their entrepreneurial spirit. Thurgood Marshall Academy, for instance, has developed an internal PD system that is informed every 6-8 weeks by the school's interim assessments. Center City PCS uses the DIBELS Data System to drive regular weekly monitoring, planning, and coordination with early childhood coaches, teachers, and specialists. Additionally, partnerships with Achievement Network (ANet) currently exist in nine LEAs and across 26 charter campuses, in addition to 11 DCPS schools. ANet provides

teachers with interim assessment data while working directly with principals to provide specific school-level information. Although 95% of charter LEAs have student information systems and 98% use interim assessments, many charter LEAs struggle because they have too many disparate data systems. Some LEAs use 3-5 systems requiring manual entry for every data element. Consequently, many charter schools face the following challenges:

- Data are isolated in many different and disparate systems
- Assembling data for OSSE and PCSB requests requires substantial human capital resources and skill
- Several systems cannot analyze assessment/performance data according to standards in a way that will inform instruction
- Few tools incorporate a value-added model
- Few tools allow for the analysis of data at a classroom, grade, disaggregated, or intervention level (e.g., by instructional coaches and administrators)

RTTT plans to address these needs, providing charters with an instructional management system that reports to the PCSB and OSSE and also allows for data to be used to drive standards-based decisions. The solution involves two components:

- A data integration tool to provide automatic connections and move data between systems. Other states/school systems report that high quality data are available only when each piece of information is entered into a central system that supports data integration tools. New platforms will then connect to PCSB and OSSE databases using an Extract, Transform and Load (ETL) tool.
- An analysis tool to provide actionable, simple to read information across data elements, systems, and time. Providing high-quality visualization of data makes it possible for teachers and administrators to spend more time acting on information and using their unique expertise to target instructional materials and interventions appropriately.

In terms of LEA use, the following requirements for instructional improvement systems have been developed by a working group

consisting of representatives from charter schools, OSSE, DCPS, and local non-profit organizations and are designed to assist LEAs in meeting RTTT objectives:

Design Process

- Phased deployment and DC field testing
- Extensive professional development during adoption phase of each component
- Annual re-training of data contacts
- Extensive on-demand help – video, manuals, quick reference cards, and contextual help in both accessing/interpreting data

Design Elements

- Adaptability of platform to the data system and interim assessments a school uses
- Ability to pull data from student information systems to produce a 360-degree view of a student, including attendance, grades, standards-based assessment data, and behavior in a one-page display
- Reporting tools that employ graphs/visualizations
- Seamless integration of Common Core Standards, student growth measure, adjusted cohort rate graduation measure, and dropout risk
- Trends in standards-based performance by student, classroom, teacher, grade and school
- Trends in standards-based student growth by student, classroom, teacher, grade and school

Rather than allow each LEA to develop its own instructional improvement system only, OSSE will encourage the establishment of charter consortia of one or more LEAs or charter campuses to develop shared systems that meet State criteria detailed above. Through discussions with charter school principals and local data experts, OSSE has calculated a cost estimate for providing every LEA with an

instructional improvement system and has determined that it is more cost effective to require LEAs to take advantage of economies of scale through strategic partnerships. Charter consortia that submit a plan for adopting an instructional improvement system according to parameters detailed above will receive Race to the Top funding. OSSE believes that these types of RTTT funding opportunities will further enhance charter communication and collaboration throughout the state while maintaining the autonomy and flexibility that is the hallmark of DC's charter sector. Moreover, because each LEA, most of whom are smaller, single-school districts, is at a different level in terms of need and use of an instructional improvement system, this approach will lead to a more efficient use of RTTT funds and ensure greater success in implementation by targeting funds specifically to LEA reform needs and simplifying state data use. Through indirect grants, OSSE will be able to determine priorities and then to encourage multiple LEAs to share accountability in achieving the RTTT objectives. OSSE is currently working with FOCUS, a local charter advocacy organization, to analyze current LEA capacities and needs, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the various systems being used. By doing this homework ahead of time, DC will be well-positioned to put RTTT funds to work immediately. The plan for ensuring that LEAs have a high-functioning instructional improvement system follows:

(A) Develop Instructional Improvement Systems Aligned to Data Systems

ACTIVITIES, TIMELINE and RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

1. Identify vendors capable of meeting the requirements outlined above and designing systems that are integrated with both the Common Core Standards and the *Standards Entry Points for Differentiated Learning*. Submit a list of approved vendors to LEAs: Summer 2010, OSSE

2. Identify current LEA capacities and needs with regard to instructional improvement systems: Summer 2010, OSSE and LEAs, with external partners

3. Submit a plan for using funds to adopt or expand an instructional improvement system: Fall 2010, LEAs

4. Award grants to LEA consortia based on need and plan quality: Winter 2011, OSSE

5. Sign a contract with an OSSE-approved vendor (LEAs may also design their own systems): Spring 2011, LEAs

6. Implement new or improved instructional improvement system: Fall 2012, LEAs

(C)(3)(ii) Using data to improve instruction: Support for use of instructional improvement systems

OSSE has and will continue to provide statewide professional development (PD) on using data to improve instruction. This year, for instance, OSSE offered DC-CAS workshops that included extensive training for individual schools to build expertise in using data to improve instruction. All LEAs participated in the program.

Creating a data-driven culture at the school level, however, requires a resident expert who not only understands how to use data to improve instruction, but who also knows students and staff personally. Participating LEAs have committed to providing teachers with regular planning time for data analysis, and each school will also identify a school-based staff member who can ensure that this time is used effectively. RTTT funding will flow directly to LEAs to fund stipends for a Data Lead or to pay for a portion of a full-time Data Coach in every school within that LEA, depending on the particular needs of the LEA. LEAs that already have designated school-level Analysts/Coaches may choose instead to fund professional development related to the use of data to drive instruction. Data Analyst/Leads responsibilities include:

- Devising a long-term school-wide strategy for analyzing data to improve instruction in conjunction with the principal
- Leading the development/purchase and implementation of interim assessments in conjunction with the principal
- Holding regular professional development sessions for teachers on data analysis
- Helping to facilitate PD sessions provided by instructional improvement vendors, as outlined in Section C3(i)
- Ensuring grade/subject level meetings are used to analyze data effectively and to revise plans based on relevant analyses

- Supporting teachers in using data analysis to design effective units and lessons, implement and formatively assess instruction, and make effective ongoing decisions on instructional modification, particularly for evaluating the effectiveness of instructional approaches for different groups of students
- Regularly updating school leaders on results of data analysis

The plan for equipping all schools with a data analyst or lead is as follows:

(B) Support Participating LEAs in Providing Effective Professional Development on Data-driven Instruction

ACTIVITIES, TIMELINE and RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

1. OSSE will provide formula funding for on-site Data Leads (e.g., a teacher or administrator who spends a portion of his/her time on data analysis) or full-time Data Analysts. LEAs with an on-site Data Lead or Coach in place can alternatively use the funds for ongoing job-embedded professional development on using data to improve instruction. The timeline for each option follows:
   - Submit plan to hire a school-based Instructional Data Analyst/Coach: Fall 2011 and ongoing, LEAs
   - Submit plan to train and offer stipends to data leads in schools: Fall 2011 and ongoing, LEAs
   - Submit plan for ongoing, job-embedded professional development on data-driven instruction: Fall 2011 and ongoing, LEAs or vendor under LEAs (this option is for LEAs that currently have a resident data analyst/coach)
2. Submit best practices on uses of data-driven instruction that can be posted to the Individualized PD Platform. Participating LEAs will allow professional development sessions to be recorded/posted to the PD platform. LEAs will invite other LEAs to participate in or collaborate on PD related to data-driven instruction: Summer 2013 and ongoing, OSSE & LEAs
3. Provide teachers with regular planning time for using data to inform instruction: Fall 2011 and ongoing, LEAs

(C)(3)(iii) Using data to improve instruction: Data availability

DC recognizes that the research community can be a strong ally in informing its reform efforts and strategies. To leverage researchers in support of reform, OSSE will work with national education researchers and experts to develop a portfolio of research-ready data sets, a list of statewide research priorities, and an online data-request tool.

To ensure that researchers have unimpeded access to data, OSSE will provide several research-ready data sets available for download. The data-sets will provide data in the following key areas: (1) data on teachers and teacher preparation programs, (2) student achievement of different student populations, (3) financial reporting data, and (4) data on statewide research priorities. OSSE will provide all state-level data stripped of personal identifiers in a simple, downloadable data format. This will allow local groups and researchers to provide better analysis of educational processes more quickly and comprehensively than with currently available data.

OSSE will produce a list of statewide research priorities to proactively encourage research studies that will directly inform educational reform efforts. This list will be disseminated to researchers through the P-20 Consortium (described in Section B3) and will be made available online. DC will encourage researchers to develop studies around priority areas, including the examination of effectiveness of instructional materials, strategies and approaches for reducing achievement gaps and educating different types of students (e.g., special needs, ELLs, and at-risk/off-track students).

An online data-request tool will allow researchers to request additional data and pursue other lines of research outside the priority areas, while providing OSSE with the ability to monitor requests. OSSE will also provide targeted support to researchers, as needed, in order to ensure that data are understood and properly used. Additionally, the data-request tool will allow OSSE to monitor the research interests of outside organizations. Researchers may use the data-request tool to request permission to conduct independent research based on statewide data. (OSSE will consult with DCPS and the PCSB to ensure the appropriateness of research and data

requests.) Participating researchers must agree to offer information sessions upon completion of their study for teachers and administrators on the ways such research can be used to improve classroom instruction.

(C) Increase the Availability and Access of Data to Researchers

ACTIVITIES, TIMELINE and RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

1. Finalize statewide list of research priorities. Encourage development of research studies around priorities through the P-20 Consortium: Fall 2010 and ongoing, OSSE

2. Develop an online research request tool that allows researchers or outside organizations to easily apply for access to data: Fall, 2010, OSSE

3. Identify/create research-ready data sets, including assessment, enrollment, teacher and financial data: Fall 2011 and ongoing, OSSE

(D) Great Teachers and Leaders *(138 total points)*
State Reform Conditions Criteria

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

The extent to which the State has—

(i) Legal, statutory, or regulatory provisions that allow alternative routes to certification (as defined in this notice) for teachers and principals, particularly routes that allow for providers in addition to institutions of higher education;

(ii) Alternative routes to certification (as defined in this notice) that are in use; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Recommended maximum response length: Two pages

Human capital is the central piece of DC's Race to the Top theory of change. Because research demonstrates that the best way to improve student achievement for all students is through effective teaching (Sanders & Rivers, 1996; Rivkin et al., 2005), DC has committed to increasing the number of highly effective teachers in its classrooms. In the past two years, DC has courageously focused on developing a plan for bold human capital reform in which all adults will be held accountable for their impact on student achievement. DC needs Race to the Top as (1) an endorsement that DC's human capital reforms – which are wholly aligned with the criteria in the Great Teachers and Leaders assurance area – are worth investigating as a model for the future, and (2) capital to accelerate the reforms and get "further, faster," so that DC can close the urban/suburban achievement gap and prove that, with the right approach to managing and supporting the adults in school systems, student achievement is possible on an absolute scale.

DC will use Race to the Top to deliver on the next phase of bold reforms. Specifically, the District will:

1. Identify teacher preparation programs that are not providing effective teachers and hold them accountable for their quality,

providing them with specific feedback on the performance of their graduates to support targeted improvements, and revoking program approval after continued ineffectiveness, as necessary

2. Conduct rigorous teacher evaluations, making student growth count for at least 50% of evaluations by 2011, with every participating LEA committing to use these evaluations in making decisions to retain, promote, develop, and dismiss staff

3. Conduct rigorous school leader evaluations, using student outcome metrics for a significant proportion of a principal's evaluation by 2010 with every participating LEA committing to use these evaluations in making decisions to retain, promote, develop and dismiss staff

4. Provide aggressive support of LEA-sponsored teacher pipelines for effective and highly effective teachers

5. Create teacher and school leader professional development systems directly linked to evaluation data

6. Create consortia of schools anchored by high-achieving schools as a means to disseminate best practices in critical reform areas

Because DC has the nimble structure and aligned leadership that facilitate reforms and help accelerate the achievement of measurable outcomes, the District anticipates being able to achieve meaningful results in very short order – and much faster than other states – upon receiving RTTT funds. Race to the Top positions DC to ensure that its cutting edge human capital work can be accelerated and can serve as a model for innovative human capital reform.

(D)(1)(i): <u>Providing high-quality pathways: Provisions for alternative preparation of teachers and principals</u>

In 2008, in recognition of the need for talent committed to raising student achievement, DC completely overhauled requirements for teacher and principal licensure and approved new standards for post-baccalaureate, non-degree educator preparation programs. The new standards opened the door for new pools of diverse talent to become certified DC teachers and licensed DC administrators

through means beyond institutions of higher education (IHEs). As a result of these reforms, qualified non-profit organizations and local educational agencies are able to develop alternative State-approved educator preparation programs for both teachers and principals.

In order to be approved under the requirements for non-degree, post-baccalaureate licensure programs, all alternative preparation programs in DC must meet a high bar for quality. The January 2, 2009 *Request for Applications: State Approved Educator Preparation Programs* (included in Appendix D1.1) describes the District's requirements for approved alternative preparation programs. These requirements demonstrate the State's insistence that all incoming educators, including school leaders, be strong and capable.

The regulatory language recognizing alternative certification appears in the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR) Title 5, Chapter 16, Professional Education Requirements. Section §1601.11 explicitly stipulates that both participants and graduates of recognized alternative certification (non-IHE) programs as well as traditional higher education programs may be licensed.

Section §1667 outlines the licensure requirements for school administrators. Like the teaching regulations, these regulations were overhauled in 2008 and support alternatively prepared principals and assistant principals. The new regulations recognize that well-qualified candidates may have advanced degrees outside the field of education, such as a Masters in Business Administration (MBA). In addition, the new regulations broaden the educational leadership requirement to recognize school-based experience outside the classroom as well as other educational leadership roles. They also expressly recognize non-IHE providers of state-approved administrator certification programs. The specifications are provided in Appendix D1.2.

(D)(1)(ii): <u>Providing high-quality pathways: Alternative preparation programs for teachers and principals</u>

Given the new regulatory framework, OSSE approved three programs as alternate certification providers for teachers in 2009: The

New Teacher Project (TNTP), Center for Inspired Teaching (CIT), and Teach For America (TFA). Thus, of the ten teacher credentialing programs in the State, three are alternative providers. Currently, 272 teachers are pursuing alternative certification through one of these programs. In School Year 2008-09, the total number of teachers in DC who were "required to be certified" (that is to say, were holding positions within DCPS requiring certification) was only 3,316, with 85% of these teachers (or 2,815 teachers) being in compliance with certification requirements. The use of alternative teacher certification programs in DC ensures that (1) a relatively high proportion of DC teachers will be alternatively certified, given DC's scale, and (2) the use of alternative routes to certification will likely lead to a higher proportion of teachers meeting the revised licensure requirements.

At the same time, OSSE approved New Leaders for New Schools (New Leaders) as an alternative provider for principals, becoming one of four approved certification programs in the state for administrators. There are currently 14 New Leaders in residency, preparing for leadership roles in the School Year 2010-2011. New Leaders also brings more diverse talent into the city. In School Year 2008-09, the total number of school leaders compliant with certification requirements in DC was 147, or 71% of principals. As with teacher certification, the inclusion of New Leaders as a certification option means that (1) a significant proportion of total DC principals will be alternatively certified, and (2) DC will likely see a higher proportion of principals in compliance with certification.

Each of the certification programs mentioned above meets every single criteria for "alternative route to certification," as defined in this notice: they are selective in accepting candidates; provide supervised, school-based experiences and ongoing support; significantly limit the amount of coursework required or have options to test out of courses; and, upon completion, award the same level of certification as traditional preparation programs. Moreover, the alignment between the definition in this notice and the high bar set by OSSE ensures that future OSSE-approved certification programs will continue to meet high standards. More details on DC's current alternative certification are included in Appendix D1.3.

(D)(1)(iii) Providing high-quality pathways: Responding to teacher and principal shortage

Because of its compact size and the fact that it is a vibrant and livable city, DC does not struggle with the same issues of teacher and principal shortages as most other urban areas. Indeed, DCPS boasts a less than 1% vacancy rate for teachers. The alternative certification providers noted above are helpful in creating pipelines for potential shortage areas, providing human capital for areas such as special education, math, science, early childhood, bilingual education and foreign language. To effectively manage shortage information on an ongoing basis, DCPS has a position control system and staffing specialists who work with principals to ensure that all budgeted positions are filled before the start of the school year, and that any vacancies that occur mid-year are quickly filled. Through this system, a high number of vacancies in certain subject areas will trigger communication with alternative certification providers. For example, upon realizing the need to ensure increased capacity to serve students with special needs, DCPS increased its special education staff by 20% by working with TFA between School Years 2008-09 and 2009-10 to increase the number of certified special education teachers.

In terms of principal shortage, DCPS's principal recruitment team works year-round to ensure that there are many qualified candidates for every potential position and has thus far been successful in ensuring a quality leadership pipeline. DCPS asks principals in April or May to indicate whether they intend to return to their position in the upcoming school year. In parallel to such efforts, the Chancellor determines which principals will be re-appointed (DCMR § 520.1 establishes the principalship as a 1-year appointment without tenure). As a result, the majority of principal vacancies for an upcoming school year are known by May. Principal candidates who have been recommended to the Chancellor through the DCPS principal selection process proceed to school-level interviews, following which school communities make recommendations to the Chancellor, who appoints principals.

Charter schools, as independent LEAs, have individualized approaches to monitoring and responding to teacher and principal

shortages. Because of the small scale of charters, shortage management in many schools is often a matter of filling less than a handful of vacancies a year. Given the supportive environment for charter schools and charter school expansion, some charter school staffing needs arise as schools strive to recruit talent for planned school expansion. Most charter schools take an entrepreneurial approach and leverage partnerships with non-profits, like Teach for America or New Leaders for New Schools, or band together to sponsor job fairs to ensure their needs are met, and many more are successful in national recruiting based on strong reputations or personal networks. Four high-performing charter LEAs – KIPP, DC Prep, EL Haynes, and Cap City – have collaborated on a teacher training pipeline for the past six years. Charter LEAs also work hard to identify talent from within their ranks and to cultivate individuals for future leadership positions.

In this environment of effective, LEA-driven shortage monitoring, OSSE's primary role is to remove "market inefficiencies" by supporting alternative certification programs, which it has done successfully. In DC, the critical issue is not increasing the quantity of teachers and principals, but ensuring their effectiveness, which is why teacher and principal effectiveness is central to DC's reform agenda.

Reform Plan Criteria

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

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

(i) Establish clear approaches to measuring student growth (as defined in this notice) and measure it for each individual student; *(5 points)*

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

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

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

(a) Developing teachers and principals, including by providing relevant coaching, induction support, and/or professional development;

(b) Compensating, promoting, and retaining teachers and principals, including by providing opportunities for highly effective teachers and principals (both as defined in this notice) to obtain additional compensation and be given additional responsibilities;

(c) Whether to grant tenure and/or full certification (where applicable) to teachers and principals using rigorous standards and streamlined, transparent, and fair procedures; and

(d) Removing ineffective tenured and untenured teachers and principals after they have had ample opportunities to improve, and ensuring that such decisions are made using rigorous standards and streamlined, transparent, and fair procedures.

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

Recommended maximum response length: Ten pages

DC's commitment to evaluating teacher and principal effectiveness based on student performance cannot be overstated. Across the District, LEAs are taking carefully conceived steps to link teacher and principal evaluations to student performance, to provide targeted, individualized professional development, and to remove persistently ineffective adults from the school system.

DCPS has clearly and specifically defined what effective teaching looks like and has communicated this definition to its teachers. The Teaching and Learning Framework (TLF), grounded in research-based best practices for teaching, outlines three areas of

proficiency for teaching effectiveness: Plan, Teach, and Increase Effectiveness. Each area is divided into standards, and detailed guidebooks tell teachers what the standards look like in a classroom and how they are achieved. Fully aligned with the TLF, IMPACT is a nationally-recognized teacher performance evaluation system that uses multiple measures to assess teaching effectiveness and identify highly effective teachers. Launched in 2009-10, IMPACT generates an overall score for teacher effectiveness (from 1.0-4.0) by using a value-added student growth measure (50% of the score in tested grades and subjects), observed measures of teacher performance based on the TLF, measures of a teacher's contribution to the school community, and the school's overall growth in achievement (details on IMPACT are available in Appendix D2.1).

While other states and districts argue in legislatures over whether or not it is fair and appropriate to evaluate educators based on student performance, DC has already built a system to do exactly that and is now fielding calls from states and districts across the country that are curious about DC's IMPACT system. Moreover, DCPS has proposed an ambitious compensation plan that, when implemented, will revolutionize how teachers are valued and rewarded for their impact on student achievement.

In DCPS, principal evaluations are already based on student growth and, similarly, principal retention and compensation decisions will be driven by principal effectiveness. All principals are on one-year contracts – performance information is necessary for ongoing staffing decisions.

In parallel, the Public Charter School Board has been hard at work to develop its Performance Management Framework, a system for evaluating school-level performance with a weighting of at least 50% based on student academic performance. The PMF, combined with an accountability plan that varies from school to school, requires that each charter Board of Trustees conduct an annual evaluation of its school leader. Some charters use school leader evaluations similar to the DCPS principal evaluation, built around a rubric of clear and pre-determined criteria. Others resemble evaluations used by independent schools, with evaluations that involve goal-building and reflection by the leader on his or her performance. Charter LEAs have already set the bar and made the case for teacher and principal evaluations tied to student performance. Charter schools practice at-will employment, and annually

they ensure that only effective teachers and principals are retained to continue work with students.

Yet DC cannot stop here. RTTT funds are critical to endorsing these initial steps and catapulting current reforms forward. DC is positioned to leverage lessons learned in each of the below areas, and RTTT funds are needed to accelerate and enhance these efforts:

Table D2.1 Human Capital Lessons Learned

DC Work to Date	DC Lessons Learned	How RTTT Will Catapult Reforms
Developed value-added growth measure for both DCPS (teacher-level) and charter schools (PCSB school-level) for standardized test grades	• The task of creating a reliable data set for teacher level evaluation is complex. For example, it requires careful "roster validation" to ensure that teachers are credited with students they actually taught. Also, the comparison set of students matters greatly when actual growth is measured against "predicted" student growth • Less than 20% of teachers are covered under this system	• Establish Student Growth Measure Task Force to ensure that detailed lessons inform next steps • Equip DC with a system for a statewide growth measure to ensure a common data set, language and approach • Equip LEAs in identifying assessments that would work for measuring the impact of the remaining 80% of teachers, moving to implementation in 2014
Developed evaluation systems tied to student growth for teachers and principals (DCPS, PCSB some charters)	• A highly contentious issue that requires both commitment to children and thoughtful involvement of stakeholders • Evaluation is just the beginning – what matters is what happens next	• Ensure that the "back-end" of evaluations is operational by providing funds for adding functionality to disaggregate and report data

DC Work to Date	DC Lessons Learned	How RTTT Will Catapult Reforms
Hired Instructional Coaches for every DCPS school to support teacher development	• The support of Instructional Coaches, paired with the supervision of administrators and Master Educators is essential. • A coordinated system for individualized delivery of professional development is needed.	• Support targeted professional development opportunities based on individualized teacher evaluation data and student performance data
Developed professional development options for school leaders	• Professional development for school leaders must be differentiated based on principal need	• Support a three-tiered, differentiated professional development plan for school leaders
Made human capital decisions based on effectiveness	• Everyone agrees that evaluations should drive professional development, but decisions about tenure and removing ineffective teachers and principals are highly contentious • The timing of the release of student test data makes it difficult to make year-end decisions	• Push all LEAs to commit to making human capital decisions in a timely way as data are released • Ensure that DC can offer quality professional development options for moving teachers and principals up the effectiveness scale

DC has one overarching goal for ensuring the District has Great Teachers and Leaders: ***by Spring 2014, teacher and principal effectiveness will have improved an average of 15% over baseline measures in participating LEAs.***

Specific to Section D2, DC has set the following goals and performance measures for improving teacher and principal effectiveness:

GOAL: Develop a student growth measure for all LEAs, with robust teacher and principal evaluations tied to this measure for use in informing human capital decisions

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 1: *by Spring 2011, a common growth measure will be in place for all participating LEAs for grades 4-8*

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 2: *by Fall 2011, 100% of participating LEAs will have robust systems for evaluating teachers and principals, using the growth measure where applicable, and using evaluations to inform human capital decisions*

In order to achieve these goals, DC will implement the following strategies:

- **(A) Ensure that all LEAs have Student Growth Data for Tested Grades**
- **(B) Expand Pilot Growth Measures to Additional Grades/Subjects for Teacher & Principal Evaluation Purposes**
- **(C) Develop Robust Teacher and Principal Evaluation Systems**
- **(D) Use Evaluations to Make Human Capital Decisions**
- **(E) Collaborate Across Sectors to Support Best Practices in Human Capital**

While targeted professional development for teachers and principals based on evaluation is a key element of the DC plan, discussion of this element will be reserved for Section D5.

(D)(2)(i) <u>Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance: Student growth measure</u>

Per the signed MOUs in Section A, all participating LEAs have committed to measuring student growth with a common, statewide growth measure to be determined in 2010. This means that 91% of students in DC will be enrolled in schools where teachers and school leaders are evaluated using a common growth measure. Improving teacher and principal effectiveness is at the core of DC's reform agenda, and the first step is to make evident the impact each teacher and school leader has on student achievement over the course of a given school year.

A foundation for this common measure is already in place. Beginning in the School Year 2009-10, DCPS implemented a value-added measure for student growth that shows the amount of "value" a teacher has added to a student or set of students that enabled them to succeed beyond expected growth projections (see Appendix D2.1). A teacher is deemed to be adding value if actual student growth exceeds the predicted growth – in other words, if a teacher beats the odds of performance for his or her students.

The Performance Management Framework (PMF) of the Public Charter School Board was introduced in January 2009 and is currently being rolled out to all charter LEAs as a valuable tool for measuring school effectiveness. The PMF student growth measure, which was designed to give the PCSB information about school-level performance, compares a student's growth relative to what is needed to reach proficiency.

Both measures were developed with considerable input from teachers and principals. Teachers and principals have been actively involved in the creation and implementation of IMPACT. In Spring 2009, feedback sessions with 221 teachers on DCPS's previous evaluation system provided valuable insights on what teachers felt would be the most important components of a new evaluation system. Based largely on teachers' desires for more observations, DCPS hired 32 Master Educators to each conduct over 200 evaluations and conferences per year. Feedback sessions with principals in Summer 2009 determined the appropriate number of observations to be conducted, and 78 sessions are currently being held to gather educators' thoughts on how IMPACT can be even more fair, accurate, and supportive. Ultimately, DCPS has solicited feedback from approximately 500 DCPS educators and 40 DCPS administrators. Similarly, the PCSB integrated input from teachers and principals of 11 LEAs and multiple local and national organizations in the development of the PMF, even running a pilot so LEAs could provide use-based feedback.

Given the commitment by DCPS and the PCSB to use student growth data for high-stakes decisions, DC has the unique opportunity to use RTTT funds to (1) identify a common growth measure to be used statewide, and (2) build on current momentum to expand growth measures to educators not currently covered by standardized tests. DC will capitalize on the opportunity as follows:

(A) Ensure that all LEAs have Student Growth Data for Tested Grades

Through RTTT, a task force will be convened to determine the best approach to ensuring a statewide student growth measure for teacher and principal evaluations and building data sets for all LEAs. The task force will be charged with answering the detailed questions that have surfaced from previous experiences by DCPS and the PCSB (examples are included in Appendix D2.2).

ACTIVITIES, TIMELINE and RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

1. Select members of a Student Growth Measure Task Force responsible for overseeing implementation of a measure for all LEAs: Spring 2010, OSSE

2. Determine the statewide growth measure and draft a concrete plan: Summer 2010, Student Growth Measure Task Force (convened by OSSE)

3. Build relevant data systems: Fall 2010 – Spring 2011, Student Growth Measure Task Force (convened by OSSE)

4. Use the student growth measure for DC-CAS tested grades and subjects for educator evaluations: Summer 2011 and ongoing, LEAs

(B) Expand Value-Added Growth Measure to additional Grades/Subjects for Teacher and Principal Evaluations

Though ESEA-required tests are a critical tool in basing teacher and principal evaluations on student growth, they do not provide information about the work of educators in early elementary grades, high school grades, and non-traditional subjects. DC is committed to expanding growth coverage to these areas for the purposes of educator evaluation as follows:

ACTIVITIES, TIMELINE and RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

1. Convene the Student Growth Measure Task Force to (a) develop a priority list of grade and content areas for expanded coverage, and (b) develop specifications for assessments that may be used to identify growth measures that are appropriate for the purposes of teacher evaluation: Summer 2010, OSSE

2. Identify growth assessments that cover priority grades and content areas according to OSSE specifications to use for a two-year trial for informing evaluations: Fall 2010, LEAs

3. Based on the two-year trial, confirm the menu of assessments appropriate for measuring priority non-tested grades and subjects: Summer 2012, Student Growth Measure Task Force (convened by OSSE)

4. Adopt new assessments, to be aligned with evaluations: Fall 2012, LEAs

5. Devise other methods for expanding the grades and subject areas for which a growth measure may be calculated. Measures of student achievement must be statistically rigorous and comparable across classrooms: Fall 2012 – Fall 2013, LEAs

6. Share best practices among LEAs related to expanding the growth measure across grades and subject areas and to using new assessments for the purposes of teacher evaluation: Fall 2012 and ongoing, Student Growth Measure Task Force (convened by OSSE)

(D)(2)(ii) & D2(iii) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness: Annual evaluation systems for teachers and principals

Per the signed MOUs in Section A, all participating LEAs have committed to do the following:

- Design and implement evaluation systems that meet OSSE-defined criteria, including 50% tied to student growth
- Conduct annual evaluations
- Use evaluations to inform individualized professional development, compensation, promotion, retention, removal and tenure/full certification

Critically, every LEA in the District of Columbia can evaluate its teachers and leaders using student performance, without being subject to or pre-emption by collective bargaining agreements or regulations. Under RTTT, 91% of DC students would be enrolled in schools where teachers and principals are held accountable by the District of Columbia for their impact on student achievement, including 100% of students attending school in a traditional school system.

Through RTTT, DC will continue its development of strong human capital management systems, taking into account the starting point of each LEA. As stated above, in School Year 2009-10, DCPS successfully launched IMPACT. A December 14, 2009, article in *Education Week* lauded DC for its efforts, noting that "few districts have ever attempted to go beyond the typical function of evaluations – ensuring teachers meet a basic level of competence – to connect their systems to professional development, teacher promotion, and compensation." IMPACT combines teacher performance based on student growth with performance according to the Teaching and Learning Framework and other indicators to generate an overall score for effectiveness. This score is calculated as follows: (1) individual value-added student growth measure (50%), (2) Performance on Teaching and Learning Framework indicators, such as planning, instructional delivery, and assessment (40%), (3) Commitment to School Community (5%), and (4) School Value Added, a composite of individual value added scores (5%). Teachers receive five formal observations each year (two from school leaders and three from Master Educators who specialize in their grade/content area) to determine proficiency on the Teaching and Learning Framework indicators. Feedback based on these observations includes three cycles consisting of an in-person conference and a written report within 15 days of the observation (thus meeting the requirement for annual evaluations of teachers, including timely and constructive feedback). As part of this process, teachers receive growth information specific to their students and classes. DCPS uses the IMPACT score to make decisions regarding, among other things, teacher retention, dismissal, and compensation.

DCPS has completed Phase I of IMPACT: the herculean task of launching the system. Yet to ensure that the system delivers on its promise, DCPS needs RTTT funds (see Budget Summary Appendix A2.3 for detail). Each day, vast amounts of data on individual teacher practice are being generated by principals and the Master Educators who evaluate teacher practice, conducting up to 10 evaluations and feedback sessions each week. DCPS needs additional human and technological horsepower to analyze these data, to determine which professional development interventions are needed for which teachers, and to make targeted professional development opportunities available to teachers. Additionally, DCPS requests additional funding to support its Master Educators to ensure that they can execute real-time interventions to help teachers who are minimally effective climb a steep learning curve.

DCPS already has a principal evaluation system in place that ties principal effectiveness to human capital decisions (e.g., reappointment/non-reappointment, compensation). At the beginning of the year, principals meet with the Chancellor and Instructional Superintendent to set specific goals and targets for the school, including at least one goal directly related to student achievement. Principals are assessed twice per year by their Instructional Superintendent according to a rubric that aligns with the DCPS Effective Schools Framework. This information is captured in the evaluation and in the mid- and end-of-year assessments. DCPS seeks to better streamline data collection tools for the principal evaluation process to: 1) provide timely, targeted, needs-based professional development opportunities for school leaders; and 2) provide increasingly differentiated compensation for principal effectiveness (based on multiple metrics for student and school performance).

Charter schools are at a variety of different points in their evolution on human capital systems. Some have developed high-quality systems, while others have very limited human capital systems. For example, DC Prep uses a thoughtful, multi-tier evaluation and feedback system to inform decisions about teacher retention. The charter LEAs also makes decisions over the summer about additional compensation, such as teacher bonuses, when DC-CAS scores are released. Some charter LEAs, however, have not fully determined how to weave together student growth data, teacher and principal evaluations, and human capital decisions such as retention, dismissal, and compensation, although all charter LEAs meet the PCSB requirement that the annual review done by each Board of Trustees include an evaluation of the school leader and all conduct annual teacher evaluations. To implement RTTT plans, all participating charter LEAs will require support in connecting evaluations to a newly defined growth measure. As autonomous units, many of these schools struggle to leverage economies of scale. To alleviate this current and projected challenge, RTTT funds will support charters in building systems that meet critical human capital evaluation needs, including the potential facilitation of the collaborative development of systems that serve a consortia of LEAs to provide more effective workforce management. As participating LEAs, charters will use their evaluation systems to drive key personnel decisions.

The following plan will guide the development of the next level of systems:

(C) Develop Robust Teacher and Principal Evaluation Systems

ACTIVITIES, TIMELINE and RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

OSSE:

1. Publish requirements for all participating LEAs' teacher and principal evaluation systems: Spring 2010, OSSE

   Teacher evaluation requirements:

   - Student growth counts for at least 50% of a teacher's evaluation
   - Includes multiple measures for performance besides the growth measure above
   - Divides effectiveness into four tiers (e.g., highly effective, effective, minimally effective, ineffective)
   - Is conducted annually
   - Is used to inform human capital decisions

   Principal evaluation requirements:

   - Uses student outcome metrics for a significant proportion of a principal's evaluation (e.g., student growth, student performance)
   - Includes multiple qualitative measures (e.g., parent and staff surveys)
   - Includes school-specific goals
   - Divides effectiveness into tiers (e.g., highly effective, effective, minimally effective, ineffective)
   - Is conducted annually
   - Is used to inform human capital decisions

2. Ensure that participating LEA Evaluation Systems meet the above requirements: Fall 2011, OSSE

DCPS:

1. Expand and refine the IMPACT human capital management system, which meets the above requirements for teachers
    - Submit a plan to OSSE for using RTTT funds to expand and refine IMPACT to inform and support human capital decisions: Summer 2010
    - Involve teachers and principals in the refinement of IMPACT: Summer 2010
2. Submit a plan to OSSE for how DCPS will conduct the below activities: Summer 2010
    - Refine a principal evaluation system based on planned school scorecards that also meets the requirements for principal evaluation (articulated above)
    - Engage principals in the design of this refined system
    - Implement these evaluations such that they are used to provide teachers and principals with timely and constructive feedback, such as data on student growth for their students, classes, and schools

Charter LEAs:

1. Submit plans to OSSE for how the LEA will do the following: Summer 2010
    - Engage in multi-LEA or multi-school consortia to build new or align current evaluation systems with the requirements for teacher and principal evaluation systems
    - Engage teachers and principals in the development of these new systems
    - Incorporate student growth measures into these evaluations when they become available to charter LEAs in Summer 2011
    - Implement these evaluations such that they are used to provide teachers and principals with timely and constructive feedback, such as data on student growth for their students, classes, and schools.

2. Leverage lessons from DCPS and other charters in developing human capital evaluation systems via the Human Capital Task Force (see Strategy E, below).

(D)(2)(iv) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance: Use of evaluations

Per the signed MOUs in Section A, all participating LEAs have committed not only to creating evaluations based on student growth data, but to using them for human capital decisions as well. Evaluations are only truly valuable to the extent that they are used to inform professional development and human capital decisions. Critically, LEAs in DC are already empowered to use evaluations in this way, as even within DCPS, evaluations are not subject to collective bargaining. DCPS has taken the additional step of strengthening how their evaluations are used by collaborating with its teachers' union. As of the submission of this proposal, members of the Washington Teacher's Union have voted on the passage of a new collective bargaining agreement, and DC awaits confirmation of the results. At its core, the agreement provides increased accountability for results, as measured by student outcomes. It rewards and protects teachers based on student performance, rather than on seniority. Under the new contract, ineffective teachers can be removed, regardless of tenure. Tenure may still be granted after two years, using clear standards and a fair process, but ineffective teachers and teachers rated "minimally effective" for two consecutive years are subject to removal. It would also establish new rules around excess and transfer, empowering DCPS to separate any excessed teacher who is not rehired by another school and is rated as ineffective or minimally effective. Importantly, the contract also sets a new bar for teacher professional development, ensuring that the supports are in place for continuous improvement so that teachers have the opportunity to meet the high standards set for them. Charter schools are also equipped with specific strategies to reward highly effective teachers. For example, as charters expand within the hospitable DC charter context, highly effective teachers receive new opportunities for mentorship and promotion, often taking on the leadership of new schools.

For mid-range teachers, Master Educators are working with DCPS teachers on identifying areas for further development according to the Teaching and Learning Framework. Although this process is still new and requires more training of Master Educators, initial

results are positive: reports from one cohort indicate that 85% of teachers believe their Master Educator is improving the quality of their instruction. Because IMPACT provides actionable feedback based on the Teaching and Learning Framework, all teachers can be directed to targeted professional development that meets individual needs. This individualized approach is further supported through the integration of student growth data in teacher evaluation. Teachers are able to determine precisely the strands of content with which their students have the most difficulty and are able to tap into the expertise of the Master Educator to modify instruction in these areas.

Charter LEAs have a variety of strategies to increase the effectiveness of mid-range teachers, including aligning ongoing support with the improvement-cycle tied to interim assessments results. Capitalizing on their entrepreneurial spirit and nimble authority, charters are able to tailor their support, mentoring, and coaching framework to fit the unique needs of their instructional corps. For example, a relatively new teaching corps may benefit from partnership with an alternative pipeline provider that includes a solid mentoring component, while more experienced teachers may develop better through a program with a local university or subject-matter expert organization that is able to refine and further build upon existing skills. Charters, by their very nature, innovate according to their needs and circumstances.

DC is also in a strong position to act on data about persistently ineffective teachers since all LEAs – both DCPS and charter LEAs – are able to make persistently ineffective teachers subject to termination.

Leaders in DC schools are evaluated annually and evaluation results are used for personnel decisions. Tenure does not exist for leaders in DC schools – DCPS or charters. DCPS will use data from principal evaluations to identify professional development needs and to identify additional opportunities to leverage effective principals in the development of new and/or less effective principals (e.g., through mentors and professional learning communities). The DCPS Five-Year Action Plan also calls for "a reliable, strong pipeline of principals who will receive relevant and rigorous professional development."

To develop a comprehensive portfolio of professional learning opportunities for principals, DC must create a number of paths, each one responsive to the needs of school leaders, based on personal development, school community served, or other criteria. Each of these paths must draw heavily on research which captures the best thinking in the educational community on what is most effective in urban schools, be deeply grounded in the context and needs of the District of Columbia and engage principals in unpacking immediate and anticipated challenges in collaboration with peers facing similar situations. There will be paths at basic, intermediate, and advanced levels, with the goal of moving even the highest-performing principals to stronger levels of performance. Some strategies related to this goal include defining principal paths based on the scope of needs across the District, creating a schedule of learning opportunities and spaces, developing case-based learning modules based on current challenges faced by principals, creating collaboration protocols, offering targeted coaching, matching leaders to schools, organizing ongoing support for continuous learning, and connecting principals to university-sponsored training and certification opportunities beyond the principal credential.

Examples of how this plays out in action in DC can be found in the existing DC3 Collaborative and in the RTTT-proposed PLaCEs project, both of which enable school leaders to come together, examine the data about what is working and what is not, and learn from each other about effective practices to raise student achievement. Finally, to support leader development, charter schools also take advantage of numerous partners involved with principal recruitment, data-driven instruction, and interim assessments in their schools. For example, partnerships with New Leaders for New Schools and Building Excellent Schools provide ongoing support, while working with Achievement Network includes a leader professional development component.

In addition to calling for a strong pipeline of principals, the DCPS Five-Year Action Plan also lays out expectations for “a clearly defined career ladder that promotes and retains the best internal talent to the principalship.” DC must begin to identify potential school leaders early in their educational careers as teachers, coaches, and particularly, assistant principals. That identification would lead to comprehensive professional development along a developmental growth path, including options for graduate degrees, ensuring enough high-quality leaders to meet statewide needs. Some strategies in this area are identifying principal competencies

within the current assignments of aspiring school leaders and closing gaps, as appropriate; developing a scope and sequence for aspiring leaders; creating learning opportunities within current roles to make learning relevant and manageable; offering targeted coaching, mentoring and preparation for the roles; and matching leaders to schools.

These, and the diverse strategies below, form the high-quality plan that OSSE will oversee to ensure that all LEAs meet the rigorous bar for making human capital decisions tied to evaluations. Support for principal professional development and career pathing is not requested through RTTT. It will be funded at the local level.

(D) Use Evaluations to Make Human Capital Decisions

ACTIVITIES, TIMELINE and RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

1. OSSE Effectiveness Managers (see Section A for Implementation Plan) will work with LEAs to ensure that human capital decisions are being made based on evaluations, as follows:

Table D2.2 Use of Evaluation for Human Capital Decisions

Use evaluations to:	DCPS	Charters
Develop teachers and principals, including by providing relevant coaching, induction support, and/or professional development	DCPS will: (1) Use the Individualized PD Platform system described in Section D5 to provide access to differentiated professional development based on IMPACT scores (2) Use Master Educators to provide individualized coaching based on IMPACT evaluations (current and ongoing) (3) Develop interventions for groups of teachers based on aggregated IMPACT data -- e.g., a TNTP intervention pilot for teachers within the TNTP cohort rated minimally effective (current and ongoing)	Charter LEAs will: (1) Leverage resources explained in D5, as well a partners as described above, to provide differentiated professional development (2) Use evaluation data to plan professional development for all staff (current and ongoing) (3) Provide and request support for principals informed by the Performance Management Framework (current and ongoing)

Use evaluations to:	DCPS	Charters
	(4) Use principal evaluation and school scorecard data to provide differentiated support for principals (current and ongoing)	
Compensate, promote, and retain teachers & principals	DCPS will: (1) Pending union contracts, provide bonuses to teachers and principals rated highly effective through IMPACT (2) Use IMPACT data to make decisions about career ladders for teachers and principals interested in coaching and leadership opportunities (e.g., Master Educators) (current and ongoing) (3) Use IMPACT data to identify teachers and school leaders interested in participating in the Professional Learning Communities of Effectiveness as mentioned in Section D5 (timeline below, see Section D5)	Charter LEAs will: (1) Differentially compensate and/or promote teachers, as needed, based on evaluations (current and ongoing); (2) Continue to utilize an annual review process by the Board of Trustees to evaluate school leaders Charter LEAs may: (2) Implement bonuses for teachers with the highest student growth on the DC-CAS (current and ongoing at select charter schools).
Remove persistently ineffective tenured or untenured teachers and principals after they have had ample opportunities to improve	DCPS will: (1) Ensure that teachers are provided opportunities to improve through three cycles of IMPACT evaluation-feedback (2) Use IMPACT data to identify persistently ineffective teachers subject to removal after ample opportunities to improve and regardless of tenure (begin Spring 2010) (3) Use principal evaluation data to identify persistently ineffective principals after ample opportunities to improve (current and ongoing).	Charter LEAs will: *Charters are independent LEAs. To date, all DC charters can and do remove ineffective teachers and principals as needed. Tenure does not exist within charter schools.*

(E) Collaborate Across Sectors to Support Best Practices in Human Capital

One positive outcome of the Race to the Top application process has been the opportunity to assemble great minds from across the state and facilitate the sharing of ideas and successes in managing human capital. Leveraging the spirit of innovation that comes from having a robust charter sector and a reform-oriented administration, DC plans to continue this collaboration as follows:

ACTIVITIES, TIMELINE and RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

1. Select members of a Human Capital Task Force (to include representatives from DCPS, Charter LEAs, and OSSE) responsible for advising and directing the course of statewide human capital initiatives: Spring 2010, OSSE

2. Engage in brainstorming and problem-solving discussions about the implementation of the RTTT initiatives and other statewide human capital initiatives: Spring 2010 and ongoing, Human Capital Task Force

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

(D)(2)(ii)	Percentage of participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems for principals.	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
(D)(2)(iv)	Percentage of participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems that are used to inform:					
(D)(2)(iv)(a)	• Developing teachers and principals.	DCPS	DCPS	100%	100%	100%
(D)(2)(iv)(b)	• Compensating teachers and principals.	Pending WTU	DCPS	100%	100%	100%
(D)(2)(iv)(b)	• Promoting teachers and principals.	DCPS	DCPS	100%	100%	100%
(D)(2)(iv)(b)	• Retaining effective teachers and principals.	DCPS	DCPS	100%	100%	100%
(D)(2)(iv)(c)	• Granting tenure and/or full certification (where applicable) to teachers and principals.	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
(D)(2)(iv)(d)	• Removing ineffective tenured and untenured teachers and principals.	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

As the parameters for "qualifying evaluation" are defined through RTTT, many LEAs have evaluations that have some, but not all, parts of the system. DCPS is the only LEA that is currently fully aligned with the definitions outlined above.

General data to be provided at time of application:	
Total number of participating LEAs.	35
Total number of principals in participating LEAs.	512
Total number of teachers in participating LEAs.	5,598

Criterion	**Data to be requested of grantees in the future:**
(D)(2)(ii)	Number of teachers and principals in participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems.

(D)(2)(iii)[3]	Number of teachers and principals in participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems who were evaluated as effective or better in the prior academic year.	
(D)(2)(iii)	Number of teachers and principals in participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems who were evaluated as ineffective in the prior academic year.	
(D)(2)(iv)(b)	Number of teachers and principals in participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems whose evaluations were used to inform compensation decisions in the prior academic year.	
Criterion	**Data to be requested of grantees in the future:**	
(D)(2)(iv)(b)	Number of teachers and principals in participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems who were evaluated as effective or better and were retained in the prior academic year.	
(D)(2)(iv)(c)	Number of teachers in participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems who were eligible for tenure in the prior academic year.	
(D)(2)(iv)(c)	Number of teachers in participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems whose evaluations were used to inform tenure decisions in the prior academic year.	
(D)(2)(iv)(d)	Number of teachers and principals in participating LEAs who were removed for being ineffective in the prior academic year.	

[3] Note that for some data elements there are likely to be data collection activities the State would do in order to provide aggregated data to the Department. For example, in Criteria (D)(2)(iii), States may want to ask each Participating LEA to report, for each rating category in its evaluation system, the definition of that category and the number of teachers and principals in the category. The State could then organize these two categories as effective and ineffective, for Department reporting purposes.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Recommended maximum response length: Three pages

Equity is a critical component of DC's reform efforts: closing the achievement gap between low-income students and their higher-income peers in a small pocket of the city is a high-priority goal in the State. Since the large majority of DC students and schools are low-income, DC believes that the human capital processes articulated in Section D2 coupled with the professional development opportunities provided in Section D5 are the greatest lever for achieving equity; a strategy for achieving equity is essentially a strategy for improving teacher and leader effectiveness citywide. In particular, if all educators receive targeted professional development and if persistently ineffective educators are subject to termination, the District can ensure that students in high-poverty schools are not served by ineffective teachers and principals at higher rates than other students. Thus, the major approaches to equitable distribution and improving the effectiveness of teachers in hard-to-staff areas are found in Section D2 (where the plans for evaluation and human capital decisions related to effectiveness are articulated), Section D4 (where plans for managing pipeline quality are articulated), and Section D5 (where plans for strategic professional development to increase effectiveness are articulated). DC has actively considered using incentives to entice teachers to work in hard-to-staff schools and content areas, and – likely in contrast to other states – has rejected this approach. DC believes that teachers should not be rewarded prior to demonstrating effectiveness: doing so defeats the purpose of the effectiveness measure and may even entice the wrong teachers to serve in areas where effectiveness is needed most.

With minority students making-up nearly 94% of DC's public school enrollments, DC is a majority-minority state. Thus the SEA's Teacher Equity Plan is focused on ensuring specifically that high-poverty children are not taught by unqualified, inexperienced teachers at higher rates than other students. In this case, poverty is measured by whether or not a child qualifies for Free and Reduced Meals (FRM).While the plans in this section align with this statewide focus, supporting equitable distribution of strong educators (as well as effective teachers in hard-to-staff areas) requires DC to gather new data. To date, statewide teacher distribution data reveals that schools with higher percentages of FRM-eligible students in DC are more likely to be taught by an experienced teacher (one with more than five years of experience) than more affluent students. Ensuring that students have access to the highest

quality teachers as measured by effectiveness – and not length of service or other indicators of the "Highly Qualified Teacher" definition – is an important directional shift that DC is ready to make. DC has set the following goal and performance measures:

GOAL: Improve the proportion of effective and highly effective teachers in the schools in the highest quartile of schools in the State with respect to poverty level and in the hardest-to-staff subject areas

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 1: *by Summer 2014, the percentage of effective and highly effective teachers in the District's top quartile of schools in poverty will have increased by 15% over the 2011 baseline*

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 2: *by Summer 2014, the percentage of effective and highly effective teachers in identified hard-to-staff areas will have increased by 15% over the 2011 baseline*

In order to achieve these goals, DC will implement the following strategies:

Equitable Distribution:

- **(A) Improve Process for Analyzing Equitable Distribution of Effectiveness**
- **(B) Engage in Smart Targeting**

Hard-to-Staff Areas:

- **(C) Improve Process for Analyzing Effectiveness of Teachers in Hard-to-Staff Areas**
- **(D) Support Effective Teacher Pipelines for Hard-to-Staff Areas**
- **(E) Target Professional Development for Teachers in Hard-to-Staff Areas**

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

(A) Improve Process for Analyzing Equitable Distribution of Effectiveness

DC's reform agenda hinges on the belief that every strategic move must be founded in and driven by data. Because definitions of effectiveness and the evaluations that will determine effectiveness are still under development (see Section D2), DC's approach to equitable distribution is to determine the extent of the opportunity for improvement and use these data to inform and accelerate future plans.

ACTIVITIES, TIMELINE and RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

1. Build capacity into evaluation systems outlined in Section D2 to determine effectiveness of teachers within schools: Fall 2011, LEAs

2. Submit percentages of effective and highly effective teachers and administrators by school to OSSE: annually, starting Summer 2012, LEAs

3. Develop statewide picture of the distribution of effectiveness based on the correlation of high-poverty schools (i.e., a school in the highest quartile of schools in the State with respect to poverty level) to teacher effectiveness: annually, starting Fall 2012, OSSE

4. Require LEAs to submit a plan to increase teacher effectiveness in the 25% of schools for which high-poverty and low-effectiveness are most highly correlated: annually, starting Fall 2012 and each Fall, OSSE

5. Monitor and work with LEAs on corrective action plans where plans do not adequately address equity needs: annually, starting Fall 2012 and ongoing, OSSE

(B) Engage in Smart Targeting

Supplementing the data-driven approach articulated above, DC's compact size and nimbleness has proven that the *smart targeting* of talented individuals can go far in ensuring that the District's neediest schools are equipped with the best human capital. To this end, clever strategies proliferate for getting talent where it is needed most. For example, DCPS recognizes that principals of struggling schools are often so busy responding to immediate needs that they are unable to preemptively focus on school hiring needs. In many districts, this means that strong applicants – who are every principal's first-choice candidates – go to strong schools (i.e., those with the resources to start planning earlier) year after year. DCPS has proactively designed a recruitment strategy to reverse this trend. For example, in 2009, DCPS sponsored small, selective recruiting events for principals of struggling or reconstituted schools to meet with pre-screened high-potential applicants. These events allowed principals with the greatest recruiting needs to meet the most promising candidates first. In addition, DCPS has taken steps to transfer effective principals to high-needs schools undergoing turnaround, as it did when it targeted a successful principal from a high-income school to take on the turnaround of Webb-Wheatley, a K-8 school in the lowest-achieving 20% of District schools. Initial results have been promising, and this is a practice that LEAs will seek to replicate. Smart targeting is aggressively used in multi-campus charter LEAs as well. For example, Friendship Public Schools, with seven campuses in DC, strives to ensure that the most challenging classrooms in the most struggling schools get top recruits before any other school. DC believes that continuing to engage in smart targeting for high-needs schools is a critical component of an approach to equity.

Specific schools will be identified for Smart Targeting through the LEA plans for equity submitted to OSSE each year. Within these plans, LEAs will determine targets for the number of effective and highly effective teachers to be voluntarily transferred to the school and will identify other Smart Targeting strategies for each school, such as those listed below.

ACTIVITIES, TIMELINE and RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

1. Engage in recruitment, selection, retention and placement strategies to increase the overall effectiveness of teachers in high-need schools: Spring 2010 and ongoing, LEAs. Examples include:

   - **Recruitment:** Offer small-scale recruitment fairs where pre-screened talent is routed directly to principals of persistently low-achieving and low-achieving schools; fill high-need positions first with the best candidates
   - **Selection:** Support principals in low-achieving schools in implementing rigorous screening processes for new candidates by providing interview and selection training and administrative-level guidance and support
   - **Retention:** Offer end-of-year bonuses for highly effective teachers in high-needs schools (as is planned in the pending WTU contract)

(D)(3)(ii) <u>Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals: Hard-to-staff areas</u>

(C) Improve Process for Analyzing Effectiveness of Teachers in Hard-to-Staff Areas

The same issues with insufficient data on teacher effectiveness in high-poverty schools pertain to teachers in hard-to-staff areas. Thus, DC will target early energies toward understanding the extent of this challenge through explicit activities.

<u>ACTIVITIES, TIMELINE and RESPONSIBLE PARTIES</u>

1. Build capacity into evaluation systems to sort effectiveness of teachers by content area: Fall 2011, LEAs

2. Develop, through coordination with LEAs, and publish a list of content areas identified as high-need by LEA: annually, starting in Fall, 2011, OSSE

3. Submit to OSSE percentages of effective and highly effective teachers by content area: annually, starting Summer 2012, LEAs

4. Develop statewide analysis of effectiveness in high-needs content areas: annually, starting Fall 2012, OSSE

5. Require LEAs that show disproportionate numbers of ineffective teachers in hard-to-staff content areas to submit a plan to increase teacher effectiveness in the bottom five "high-needs" content areas; OSSE will support LEAs in need of stronger plans by providing model plan components and facilitating collaboration with other LEAs: annually, starting Fall 2012, OSSE

DC will pursue two primary strategies for increasing effectiveness of teachers in hard-to-staff areas. First, the District will build a stronger human capital pipeline through recruitment and selection efforts. Second, DC will provide meaningful professional development to teachers of these content areas already in classrooms. The DC RTTT plan addresses both these areas in multiple sections of the application, as outlined below.

(D) Support Effective Teacher Pipelines for Hard-to-Staff Areas

DC has created funding for LEAs to build or partner with teacher pipelines that produce effective teachers, especially in hard-to-staff areas such as STEM, special education, and early childhood education (see Section D4 for activities, timeline, and responsible parties).

(E) Target Professional Development for Teachers in Hard-to-Staff Areas

Human Capital Evaluation Systems*:* the human capital evaluation systems outlined in Section D2 provide the opportunity to ensure that interventions for hard-to-staff area teachers are targeted toward actual pedagogical needs that surface in observations. DCPS has already developed plans for analyzing these data by content area and planning interventions. Teachers in DCPS work closely with Master Educators who specialize in a content area and can provide content-specific evaluation and professional development. Using existing high-performer charter schools as models, charter schools will have the opportunity to work together

or seek support from OSSE to develop targeted interventions based on personnel evaluations.

***Professional Development Systems**:* plans for the Individualized PD Platform outlined in Section D5 pave the way for subject-specific exemplars to be accessed by teachers to raise the overall bar for quality in hard-to-staff areas. Both DCPS and charter schools will be able to access the Individualized PD Platform.

Professional Learning Communities for Effectiveness (PLaCEs): these communities, explained in Section D5, will focus on key reform agenda areas, including STEM and Special Education, and priority will be given to PLaCEs centered around hard-to-staff areas, with the goal of increasing overall school quality and effectiveness of teachers.

Performance Measures for (D)(3)(i) *Note: All information below is requested for Participating LEAs.*	Actual Data: Baseline (Current school year or most recent)	End of SY 2010-2011	End of SY 2011-2012	End of SY 2012-2013	End of SY 2013-2014
General goals to be provided at time of application:	**Baseline data and annual targets**				
Percentage of teachers in schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are highly effective (as defined in this notice).		Base	Base + 5%	Base + 10%	Base +15%
Percentage of teachers in schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are highly effective (as defined in this notice).		Base	Base + 2%	Base + 4%	Base + 6%
Percentage of teachers in schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are ineffective.		Base	3-year goal	3-year goal	Less than 15%
Percentage of teachers in schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are ineffective.		Base	3-year goal	3-year goal	Less than 15%

Percentage of principals leading schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are highly effective (as defined in this notice).		Base	Base + 5%	Base +10%	Base +15%
Percentage of principals leading schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are highly effective (as defined in this notice).		Base	Base + 2%	Base + 4%	Base +6%
Percentage of principals leading schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are ineffective.		Base	<10 %	<5%	<5%
Percentage of principals leading schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are ineffective.		Base	<10 %	<5%	<5%

DC believes it should strive to ensure that high-poverty schools are being served by effective teachers. Thus, it considers the goals for effective and highly-effective teachers in high-poverty schools in the table above as an ***aggregate overall goal***.

The percentage of ineffective teachers and principals in all high-poverty schools will be no more than the percentage of ineffective teachers and principals in all low-poverty schools, and overall levels of ineffectiveness will be less than 15% and 5%, respectively, in both low- and high-poverty schools by Spring 2014.

General data to be provided at time of application (by participating LEAs):	
Total number of schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice).	51
Total number of schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice).	51
Total number of teachers in schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice).	1,268
Total number of teachers in schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice).	1,275
Total number of principals leading schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice).	70
Total number of principals leading schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice).	67

The State Teacher Equity Plan definition considerations "high poverty" schools only. Also, it must be noted that the term "low poverty" in DC includes schools in the lowest quartile of poverty, but that these schools still have up to 65% of students who are eligible for Free and Reduced price lunch.	
Data to be requested of grantees in the future:	
Number of teachers and principals in schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who were evaluated as highly effective (as defined in this notice) in the prior academic year.	
Data to be requested of grantees in the future:	
Number of teachers and principals in schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who were evaluated as highly effective (as defined in this notice) in the prior academic year.	
Number of teachers and principals in schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who were evaluated as ineffective in the prior academic year.	
Number of teachers and principals in schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who were evaluated as ineffective in the prior academic year.	

Performance Measures for (D)(3)(ii) *Note: All information below is requested for Participating LEAs.*	Actual Data: Baseline (Current school year or most recent)	End of SY 2010-2011	End of SY 2011-2012	End of SY 2012-2013	End of SY 2013-2014
General goals to be provided at time of application:	**Baseline data and annual targets**				
Percentage of mathematics teachers who were evaluated as effective or better.		Base	Base + 5%	Base +10%	Base +15%

Percentage of science teachers who were evaluated as effective or better.		Base	Base + 5%	Base +10%	Base +15%
Percentage of special education teachers who were evaluated as effective or better.		Base	Base + 5%	Base +10%	Base +15%
Percentage of teachers in language instruction educational programs who were evaluated as effective or better.		Base	Base + 5%	Base +10%	Base +15%
Though IMPACT data on effectiveness from DCPS will be available at the end of SY 2009-2010, it will not be until the end of SY 2010-2011 that effectiveness data will be available for all LEAs. SY 2010-2011, then, becomes the baseline.					
General data to be provided at time of application (for participating LEAs):					
Total number of mathematics teachers.	603				
Total number of science teachers.	431				
Total number of special education teachers.	697				
Total number of teachers in language instruction educational programs.	452				
Data to be requested of grantees in the future:					
Number of mathematics teachers in participating LEAs who were evaluated as effective or better in the prior academic year.					
Number of science teachers in participating LEAs who were evaluated as effective or better in the prior academic year.					
Number of special education teachers in participating LEAs who were evaluated as effective or better in the prior academic year.					
Number of teachers in language instruction educational programs in participating LEAs who were evaluated as effective or better in the prior academic year.					

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

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

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

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

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

Recommended maximum response length: One page

DC is unafraid to break with tradition in order to guarantee that it has access to the best possible teachers and principals. The State has already made strides in this area, as noted in Section D1, by approving new, non-IHE routes to certification. Charter schools and DCPS are consistently seeking more educators through high quality pipelines and have embraced alternative certification providers. The next step, enabled by the Race to the Top application, is to ensure that these preparation programs and other more traditional programs are assessed systematically, and eventually excluded from ongoing efforts if the teachers they produce are disproportionately and consistently ineffective. RTTT funds will also be used to build charter LEA-sponsored pipelines of effective and highly effective teachers.

Again, all initiatives and activities will support DC's overarching Great Teachers and Leaders goal: ***by Spring 2014, teacher and principal effectiveness will have improved an average of 15% over baseline measures in participating LEAs***

Specific to Section D4, DC has set the following goals and performance measures:

GOAL 1: Improve the quality of information available about teacher and principal preparation

GOAL 2: Increase the proportion of teachers and principals who are prepared through programs that equip them to be highly effective

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 1: *by Fall of 2014, aggregated information on effectiveness of graduates of teaching programs will be publicly available.*

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 2: *by Fall of 2016, any credentialing program with more than 25% of its second-year participants deemed "ineffective" (i.e., the lowest of four tiers) by LEAs may have their program approval subject to revocation by the State.*

In order to achieve these goals, DC will implement the following strategies:

- **(A) Evaluate and Support Preparatory Programs (alternative routes and IHE) by Measuring Teacher/Principal Effectiveness**
- **(B) Build Pipelines of Effective and Highly Effective Teachers, especially in Hard to Staff Areas**

(D)(4)(i) <u>Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs: Evaluation of preparatory programs</u>

(A) Evaluate and Support Preparatory Programs (alternative routes and IHE) by Measuring Teacher/Principal Effectiveness

OSSE will aggregate information collected directly from LEAs on teacher and principal effectiveness from evaluations as outlined in Section D2 and other potential measures, as well as data matching teachers and leaders to their certification programs. At the same time, OSSE will work with higher education and alternative route providers to develop publicly-available Prep Program Scorecards for each preparation program in the State. Prep Program Scorecards will be developed carefully and collaboratively to ensure that they contribute in a meaningful way to the continuous improvement of teacher and principal preparation programs in the State. The Scorecards will be piloted for two years before formal rollout and release to the public.

ACTIVITIES, TIMELINE and RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

1. Collaborate with Preparation Programs to develop a list of information required from LEAs for creating the Prep Program Scorecard (e.g., teacher effectiveness data): Fall 2010, OSSE

2. Design Prep Program Scorecard with input from multiple stakeholders (including deans of IHEs and directors of alternative certification programs): by Spring 2011, OSSE

3. Submit required effectiveness information to OSSE: annually, starting Summer 2012, all LEAs

4. Match teachers to their certification programs using existing LEA data sources: annually, starting Summer 2012, OSSE

5. Create Prep Program Scorecards: annually, starting Fall 2012, OSSE

6. Establish the following:

   - A threshold for performance such that, in addition to other conditions for non-renewal determined by the state, any credentialing program with more than 25% of second-year teacher graduates deemed ineffective by LEAs in 2016 will warrant review by the State and have program approval subject to revocation: by Fall 2012, OSSE
   - A process whereby OSSE supports programs in determining improvements to meet needs identified by the Prep Program Scorecard: by Fall 2012, OSSE
   - A process by which a program can demonstrate that it should be reconsidered for approval: by Fall 2012, OSSE

7. Provide guidance to deans of IHEs and directors of alternative certification programs regarding new quality guidelines: Fall 2012, OSSE

8. Pilot Prep Program Scorecards and provide specific information to Preparation Programs regarding the specific performance of

its graduates in relation to DC teacher/principal evaluation criteria to facilitate program improvements: Fall 2012 – Fall 2014, OSSE

9. Share Prep Program Scorecards with programs two weeks prior to making the scorecards public in order to ensure data are validated: annually, starting Fall 2014, OSSE

10. Publish the Scorecards to OSSE website: annually, starting Fall 2014, OSSE

(D)(4)(ii) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs: Expansion of preparatory programs

In addition to the above data-driven approach to pipeline management, OSSE is committed to expanding the teacher pipeline by improving the influence of high-achieving charter schools on existing and new pipeline programs.

(B) Build Pipelines of Effective and Highly Effective Teachers, especially in Hard-to-Staff Areas

The best way to increase overall student achievement and transition to a system of high-achieving schools is to ensure that DC is able to increase the effectiveness of current staff and to infuse more effective and highly effective teachers into the District. Charter LEAs may hire teachers regardless of licensure, so the Prep Program Scorecards alone may not improve the quality of teachers hired in these schools. Rather, charters seek to build pipelines of effective teachers through two means: 1) training in high-performing urban schools side-by-side with exemplary teachers (an apprenticeship model not typically found in IHE programs) and 2) partnering with other LEAs and/or non-profits to support teachers in their training by giving them the framework and underpinning for what they are seeing and doing in the classroom. Charter LEAs in DC already have some experience doing this successfully. DC Prep, one of the highest-performing charters in DC, is in its third year training teachers in early childhood education. College graduates join DC Prep as Resident Teachers and spend 1-2 years working alongside a lead preschool or Pre-Kindergarten classroom teacher. Residents learn classroom management and instructional skills in a structured progression, through mentoring

and professional development, and through participation in an area certification program. Residents who enter with a strong educational background (through experience or education) may progress faster and become teachers after one year, while those newer to the field can take up to two years to prepare for a lead classroom role.

To meet the needs of charter LEA staffing, OSSE will support the launch of charter LEA-sponsored teacher pipeline models through a competitive grant process targeted toward programs that will increase the effectiveness of teachers, especially in hard-to-staff areas. Through this initiative, high-performing charter LEAs may work with existing alternative preparation providers, IHEs, other high-performing charter LEAs, or independently to develop pipeline programs that reach beyond the training program itself and seamlessly extend into the actual teaching environment. A consortia of high-performing charters has already developed such a program that provides a basis from which to further plan. The Capital Teaching Residency program has four core components that the state would seek to support: coursework, placement, mentoring, and coaching. These components require expertise, experience and careful planning. A competitive grant process will allow OSSE to support and monitor effective program development and implementation.

ACTIVITIES, TIMELINE and RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

1. Issue Request For Proposal for competitive grant process: Summer 2010, OSSE

- Specifications will include:
    - Preference for programs that meet the bar for alternative certification as outlined in Section D1, thus creating more alternative pipelines
    - Preference for programs that ensure that teachers are trained in a way that will lead to measurable effectiveness (e.g., by being trained in a high-performing school) and that include induction and mentoring components to ensure that teachers can be successful in their first two years

- Preference for programs that train teachers with a strong likelihood of effectiveness in hard-to-staff areas, especially STEM, special education, and early childhood development.

2. Hold competitive grant process (two rounds): Winter 2011 and Winter 2012, OSSE

3. Award grants (two rounds): Spring 2011 and Spring 2012,OSSE

4. Launch charter LEA-sponsored programs (two rounds): Summer 2011 and Summer 2012, LEAs

Performance Measures	Actual Data: Baseline (Current school year or most recent)	End of SY 2010-2011	End of SY 2011-2012	End of SY 2012-2013	End of SY 2013-2014
General goals to be provided at time of application:	**Baseline data and annual targets**				
Percentage of teacher preparation programs in the State for which the public can access data on the achievement and growth (as defined in this notice) of the graduates' students.	0%	0%	100%	100%	100%
Percentage of principal preparation programs in the State for which the public can access data on the achievement and growth (as defined in this notice) of the graduates' students.	0%	0%	100%	100%	100%
General data to be provided at time of application:					
Total number of teacher credentialing programs in the State.	10				
Total number of principal credentialing programs in the State.	4				
Total number of teachers in the State.	5,927				
Total number of principals in the State. (includes assistant principals)	379				

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

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

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

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

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

The State shall provide its detailed plan for this criterion in the text box below. The plan should include, at a minimum, the goals,

activities, timelines, and responsible parties (see Reform Plan Criteria elements in Application Instructions or Section XII, Application Requirements (e), for further detail). Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers must be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Recommended maximum response length: Five pages

Since the primary focus of DC's RTTT application is ensuring that teachers and leaders in DC are effective and highly effective, initiatives that support teacher effectiveness through professional development are embedded throughout the application:

Section B3: Supporting Professional Development Around the Common Core Standards: equips schools to provide teachers with time and energy to realign curriculum with the Common Core Standards in a way that is "ongoing and job-embedded"

Section B3: Interim Assessments: ensures that interim assessments may be purchased through providers who also support "data-informed professional development, coaching, and common planning and collaboration time" directly in the school

Section B3: Standards Entry Points for Differentiated Learning: a manual and training for teachers on how to approach access to the Common Core Standards for high-need students demonstrates a commitment to "design instruction to meet the specific needs of high-need students"

Section C2: Making Data Available to Researchers: make data available to researchers and publish a list of research priorities as an important means of ensuring that the State can "measure, evaluate, and continuously improve the effectiveness" of professional development supports in order to improve student achievement

Section C3: Supporting Data-Driven Culture in All Schools: equips schools with funding to support Data Coaches or the training of Data Leads within the school building, reflecting the strong commitment to "gathering, analyzing, and using data," thus "creating school environments supportive of data-informed decisions." For schools that already have Data Leads or Coaches in place, funding

may be used for job-embedded professional development

Section C3: Supporting the Development of Instructional Improvement Systems: acknowledges that some LEAs require support in developing student-level data systems that assist in "gathering, analyzing, and using data" to plan instruction

Section D1: Requirements For Alternative Certification Programs: OSSE requirements for alternative certification programs ensure that alternative pathway teachers in DC receive job-embedded professional development from their certification providers

Section D2: Master Educators Providing Coaching Using IMPACT Data: the cycle of observations and coaching that occurs as a result of the IMPACT evaluation system is a job-embedded strategy that RTTT funds will ensure is successful

Section D2: Provide Tiered Professional Development to School Leaders: although not supported by RTTT funds, differentiated professional development for school leaders based on principal evaluations is critical to the human capital strategy for increasing school leader effectiveness

Section D3: Using Evaluation Data to Inform PD for Hard-to-Staff Areas: the fact that teacher effectiveness in hard-to-staff content areas is tracked over time will ensure that the effectiveness of supports provided to these teachers is measured and improved

Competitive Priority Section STEM: Improving STEM Educators – Great Teachers and Leaders: through a coordinated DC STEM Learning Network that leverages regional and national partners, implementation of a two-pronged strategy that strengthens the pipeline of STEM teachers and develops existing teacher and leader corps in core subjects at every grade level

The additional strategies highlighted in Section D5, then, are meant to supplement an already robust portfolio of professional development options by addressing two priorities: (1) the need for educators to have customized professional development, and (2) the need to leverage pockets of existing excellence in order to support improvement elsewhere in the system. In DC, professional development will be tailored to respond to individual needs identified by teacher and principal evaluation results rather than focused

on top-down State priorities.

Strategies throughout DC's RTTT application all support DC's overarching Great Teachers and Leaders goal: ***by Spring 2014, teacher and principal effectiveness will have improved an average of 15% over baseline measures in participating LEAs.***

Specific to Section D5, DC has set the following goal [Note: since teacher and principal effectiveness is the key objective of professional development initiatives, no additional performance measure is needed beyond the overarching Great Teachers and Leaders Goal]:

GOAL: Create customized professional development experiences based on individual needs and leverage pockets of effectiveness within DC to improve overall educator effectiveness

In order to achieve this goal, DC will implement the following strategies:

- **(A) Launch Individualized PD Platform**
- **(B) Support Charter Professional Development Solutions Tied to Evaluations**
- **(C) Launch Professional Learning Communities for Effectiveness (PLaCEs)**

(D)(5)(i) <u>Providing effective support to teachers and principals: Professional development</u>

(A) Launch Individualized PD Platform

RTTT funds will be used to develop an Individualized PD Platform, a dynamic, interactive, online platform that links student and teacher data to specific professional growth supports. The Platform, built first by DCPS, will be the centerpiece of an integrated support system that will embed professional growth into the daily routines of teachers. Grounded in research regarding the effectiveness of online learning and evidence suggesting that the best professional development is tailored, collaborative, and job-embedded, the Platform will connect feedback and coaching based on in-person observations and student data with online resources

to facilitate teacher engagement in the most needed activities. It will integrate the existing feedback and supports provided by principals, Instructional Coaches, Master Educators, and colleagues, and transform a static repository of PD material into an interactive, solutions-oriented delivery system. In partnership with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the District of Columbia Public Education Fund, the Platform will be developed to provide teachers with the effective, classroom-centered supports they need to act on data and improve their teaching. Project outcomes include increasing student achievement in both elementary and secondary math on statewide assessments, decreasing achievement gaps, and improving graduation rates. In addition, the Platform will increase teacher effectiveness as assessed by standards-based classroom observation data and student achievement. This will be accomplished through a platform that is:

Individualized: suggesting professional development modules, tools or resources based on the needs evidenced through individual teacher evaluation data and student data

Robust*:* containing a wide and deep array of rigorous professional development opportunities, including both technological supports (e.g., streaming videos of teachers who are strong in each aspect of the Teaching and Learning Framework) and human supports (e.g., online scheduling that allows teachers to arrange time to visit a Featured Teacher's classroom)

Teacher-centered*:* offering an intuitive and appealing interface that builds on the best private sector sites and structures (e.g., social networking, online sales and marketing, and interactive interfaces)

Self-service oriented*:* allowing teachers remote access/log-on to engage with the system – at any time or from any location – based on personal development needs

The emerging design for the Individualized PD Platform is represented by the graphic below:

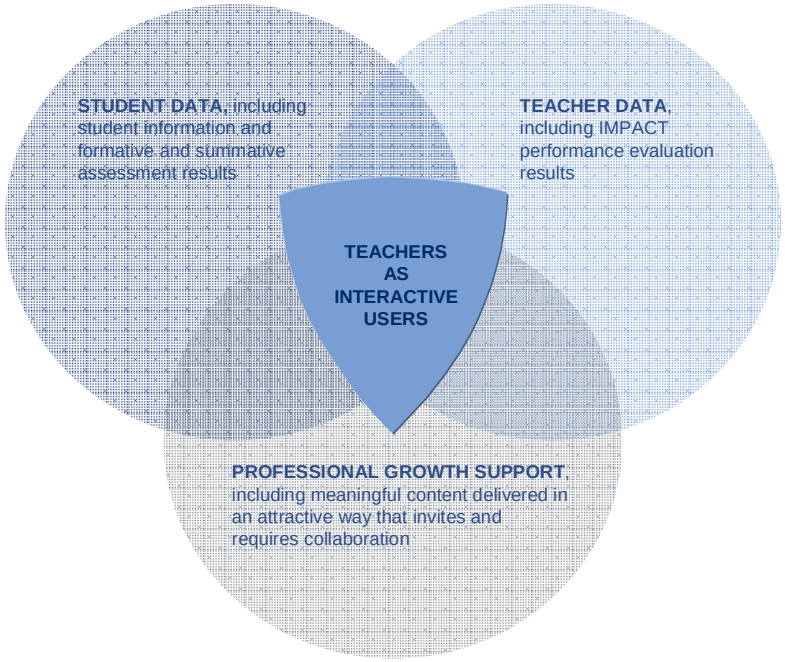


Figure D5.1 Emerging Individualized PD Platform Design

Although the Individualized PD Platform will be developed by DCPS to align to the evaluation system that matches the majority of DC teachers, charter schools will be able to access the platform and contribute their effective practices to the system's repository. Once operational, DCPS will work with charter leaders to develop a workable access plan for charter use. The Human Capital Task Force – the cross-sector collaboration team identified in Section D2 – will ensure that this platform is best able to serve collaborative purposes across all DC LEAs, guided by an array of parameters derived from participating LEA evaluation systems, common core-aligned curriculum, and state-recommended interim assessment and instructional improvement data systems.

ACTIVITIES, TIMELINE and RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

1. Phase I: build interface and connect student data and IMPACT data to Individualized PD Platform: Winter 2010 – 2011, vendor under DCPS

2. Phase II: develop/acquire content, such as video exemplars of effective practice: Spring 2011, vendor under DCPS

3. Phase III: provide charter schools with access to the system; add external PD providers such as online courses and higher level content so effective teachers go from "good to great": Spring 2012, vendor under DCPS

(B) Support Charter LEA Professional Development Solutions Tied to Evaluations

Charter schools will develop evaluation systems based on the specifications outlined in Section D2, with funding for the development of PD solutions that tie to needs identified in evaluations. In order to maximize funding available and expand the impact of higher-performing schools, OSSE has already begun facilitation of the development of charter consortia, similar to those described in Sections B3 (Interim Assessments) and C3(i) (Instructional Improvement Systems) through which charters can combine and leverage resources, knowledge, and capacity to build PD solutions. With this approach, the state can direct the development of PD solutions that meet RTTT objectives while preserving charter autonomy and meeting their unique needs. This strategy will be supported via the following process, through which charter LEAs, either individually or as part of a consortium, will:

1. Submit plans to OSSE for developing or purchasing professional development systems or strategies that address (and will continue to address) teacher and administrator needs based on evaluations. These may include coaching, induction, common planning, and collaboration time that is ongoing and job-embedded: Spring 2012, participating charter LEAs

2. Review LEA plans and provide technical assistance: Summer 2012, OSSE

(C) Launch Professional Learning Communities for Effectiveness (PLaCEs)

DC recognizes the benefits of having schools that span the spectrum of effectiveness in a compact geographic area – the District's geographic size presents an opportunity unlike that of any of state, whereby schools that are not yet high-achieving have immediate access to (and the ability to learn from) high-achieving schools. The State intends to launch Professional Learning Communities for Effectiveness (PLaCEs), in which schools will join professional collaboratives anchored by high-achieving schools as a means to engage educators in professional development and adult learning experiences that will positively affect their impact on students. This initiative serves three critical goals: (1) to foster the transfer of best practices from high-achieving schools to low-achieving schools, (2) to foster collaboration across sectors to tackle difficult challenges (e.g., how to create a culture that embraces STEM education or how to propel overage/under-credited students to graduation), and (3) to give high-achieving individuals and schools opportunities to inform and engage in education reforms beyond their current schools and responsibilities. Participants will come from both DCPS and charter schools, with an expectation that PLaCEs will reach 11 schools and 4,400 students directly by School Year 2013-14, As schools complete the PLaCEs project, they will be asked to partner with another school to share their practices, experiences, and resources gained during the project, further expanding the impact of this initiative and ultimately contributing to significant improvements to teacher and leader effectiveness across the state.

PLaCEs are built upon a new, small scale Dissemination Grant effort within the District. There are currently two functioning collaboratives: The Power of Planning Collaborative (or POP) works with three schools, while the DC Collaborative for Change (or DC3), works with 10 schools. In both cases, the PLaCEs schools have seen strong instructional improvements. For example, within DC3, schools have collaborated on professional development, teachers have observed successful practices in partner schools and then have been observed in their own classrooms to get feedback on how they are implementing these practices, and teachers have voluntarily chosen to transfer from high-achieving DC3 schools to low-achieving ones in an effort to share best practices across

sites. DC plans to build upon these programs and help scale the lessons learned in ways that will dramatically impact improvements to student achievement.

ACTIVITIES, TIMELINE and RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

1. Work with OSSE to determine the parameters of an RFP that effectively captures the collaboration needs for statewide reform (based in part on successful OSSE Dissemination Grants currently underway): Fall 2010, Human Capital Task Force

This RFP will address:

- Collaboration needs, such as overage/under-credit graduation strategies, STEM effectiveness strategies, special education inclusion strategies, early childhood education, and high-needs content areas
- Requirements for composition of PLaCEs (e.g., each one must be anchored by at least one high-achieving school that meets other specifications, such as particular success in a collaboration need area and a demonstrated capacity for coaching others; each PLaCE proposal must be accompanied by a plan for evaluating the intervention)
- A design that ensures consistency with the spirit of the initiative, in which:
    - High-achieving school leaders and teachers share expertise with schools that are not yet high-achieving
    - PLaCEs focus on key issues and reform efforts in DC
    - The Human Capital Task Force and OSSE identify readiness factors for schools that will benefit most from this form of professional development
    - PLaCEs create opportunities for growth, especially for individuals who are successful and who seek new challenges

2. Issue RFP: Spring 2011, OSSE

3. Apply for grant funding, Spring 2011, Spring 2012, LEA collaboratives

4. Award grants (two rounds of three-year grants): Spring 2011, Spring 2012, OSSE

5. Implement Plans: Fall 2010 and ongoing, PLaCEs

6. Provide guidance to OSSE on how to effectively oversee and administer the PLaCEs: Fall 2010 and ongoing, Human Capital Task Force

7. Review results from PLaCEs cluster evaluations: Spring 2014, OSSE & Human Capital Task Force

(D)(5)(ii) Providing effective support to teachers and principals: Evaluate professional development

Many of DC's professional development initiatives have evaluation built in, such as the PLaCEs described above. Through the PD Platform, DC is poised to track the effectiveness of multiple forms of professional development in an unprecedented way.

(D) Develop PD Tracking Capabilities in the Individualized PD Platform

The Individualized PD Platform will allow LEAs to match student growth with the teacher professional development that may have contributed to such growth. This will be done through the Individualized PD Platform through automatic tracking of any resources a teacher/administrator uses while logged into the system and through records of other offline professional development in which the teacher/administrator participates. When correlated with value-added teacher evaluation data, DC will be able to identify PD activities that make differentiated contributions to teacher development. For example, if a teacher uses several resources linked to Teach Standard 2, "Deliver content clearly," the Platform will note the teacher's evaluation rating on this standard in observations both before and after use of the resources to measure their effect on the teacher's practice.

Specifically, such data will help DC evaluate PD options for expansion, improvement, or discontinuation. This information will also be made available to researchers for the purpose of tracking statewide professional development effectiveness. DC intends to bring

the evaluation and use of "data-driven professional development" to an unprecedented level of effectiveness. Ultimately, it will look to its PD system as a core component of its broader human capital strategies, which could serve as a national model for measuring, evaluating, and continuously improving the effectiveness of professional development supports.

ACTIVITIES, TIMELINE and RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

1. Design a process for tracking and analyzing the effectiveness (based on student achievement and teacher evaluation data) of online and offline PD experiences in the Individualized PD Platform: Fall 2010 – Spring 2012, Vendor under DCPS

2. Compile PD effectiveness data stripped of personal identifiers and make available to researchers: Spring 2013, OSSE

Performance Measures Performance measures for this criterion are optional. If the State wishes to include performance measures, please enter them as rows in this table and, for each measure, provide annual targets in the columns provided.	Actual Data: Baseline (Current school year or most recent)	End of SY 2010-2011	End of SY 2011-2012	End of SY 2012-2013	End of SY 2013-2014
Percentage of effective and highly effective teachers in participating LEAs		Base	Base + 5%	Base +10%	Base + 15%
Percentage of effective and highly effective principals in participating LEAs		Base	Base + 5%	Base +10%	Base + 15%

(E) Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools *(50 total points)*
State Reform Conditions Criteria

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

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

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

Evidence for (E)(1):

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

Recommended maximum response length: One page

In the past five years across the District of Columbia, 47 schools have been closed, 13 have been transformed, 7 have undergone turnaround, and 4 have been restarted. DC is a veteran of school turnaround interventions and is poised to leverage its accumulated experience to make a difference in persistently lowest-achieving and low-achieving schools across sectors. In fact, all persistently lowest-achieving schools will have an intervention plan in place by Fall 2012, and DC will target 22 additional schools on the broader list of the District's lowest achieving 20% of schools for intervention within four years.

(E)(1) <u>Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs</u>

The commitment to turn around—and in some cases, close—persistently lowest-achieving schools is a core commitment within the District of Columbia. Taking on the lowest-achieving schools is a challenge to which both DCPS and the Public Charter School Board have risen and continue to rise. The Race To the Top application offers the federal government the opportunity to recognize the strides that have been made in DC and to commit to scaling them and ensuring their effectiveness within a context that enables minimum funding to have a dramatic and lasting impact. DC is uniquely positioned for turnaround work because it has: (1) a strong governance structure with mayoral control, which allows for swift intervention and aligned, coherent leadership of the school system; (2) a robust talent pool committed to turnaround – from DCPS, to high-achieving charters, to committed turnaround operators; and (3) a compact size that enables DC's turnaround efforts among a targeted set of schools to bring about dramatic

results for students. An understanding of the above point #1 is critical to recognizing the State's legal, statutory, and regulatory authority to intervene directly in the District's persistently lowest-achieving schools.

The DC Public Education Reform Amendment Act of 2007 (DC Law §17-9, June 12, 2007) abolished the local Board of Education, which had oversight for the public school system, and placed direct authority for DCPS with the Mayor. DC Official Code §38-172 now states, "the Mayor shall govern the public schools in the District of Columbia. The Mayor shall have authority over all curricula, operations, functions, budget, personnel, labor negotiations and collective bargaining agreements, facilities, and other education-related matters..." When the City Council approved the Mayor's request to take control of the historically low-achieving DCPS system in 2007, it established the legal and governance structure for the State to directly intervene in the state's lowest-achieving schools: unique to DC as a city-state, the Mayor is the state's highest-ranking official and equivalent to the Governor. As a turnaround intervention for school systems, mayoral control is the gold standard of accountability, allowing for decisive actions relating to closing, restarting, turning around, and transforming schools.

The transition to mayoral control was necessitated by a chronic inability of the school system to address its most pressing needs, and thus far the results have been promising. Student achievement has risen since the institution of mayoral control, and enrollment is finally stabilizing as more families see the value of a DCPS education. Part of the value of mayoral control has been the political will for swift closures of under-enrolled schools and turnarounds of underperforming schools. Indeed, not only does the State have the authority to intervene in the persistently lowest-achieving schools, but with Chancellor Rhee's track record of school closures and partnerships, it is clear that DC is actually using this authority.

Beyond political will for swift decision making, the new governance structure positions the Mayor to marshal and direct all the State's resources toward helping improve outcomes for students. The same legislation that established mayoral control for DCPS also created a full-fledged, stand-alone State Educational Agency, separating SEA functions out from the school system for the first time. In addition, the Mayor created a District-wide school facilities agency charged with renovating school facilities. A Deputy

Mayor's office (similar to a Lieutenant Governor or Department of Education in other states) coordinates interagency efforts of the health, mental health, human services, and police departments, among others, to meet established objectives and improve indicators related to youth development. Ultimately, under the District's school governance structure, the lowest-achieving schools receive concerted and aligned interventions and supports designed to raise student achievement.

Charter schools in DC are chartered by an independent DC agency, the Public Charter School Board (PCSB), and governed by separate Boards of Trustees at the charter schools, which are independent DC nonprofit corporations. Provisions of the School Reform Act of 1995 (D.C. Official Code §38-1800 et seq.) in DCMR §934.1 give the Public Charter School Board the authority to revoke a charter (i.e., close the school) if the school has "failed to meet the goals and student academic achievement expectations set forth in the charter." The DC Public Charter School Board is the only entity charged with the authority to close public charter schools and is responsible for monitoring charter school quality. Its oversight of DC's public charter schools reflects a statewide commitment to both accountability and autonomy. The PCSB has a strong reputation for closing underperforming schools, earning national acclaim from the Center for Educational Reform. A newly-developed Performance Management Framework will enable the PCSB to be even more efficient in its identification of schools that are struggling and move towards closure of these schools. In addition, the PCSB has written a letter of support indicating that it will move to close or restart schools that appear on the list of persistently low-achieving schools generated by OSSE. The letter is included in Appendix E1.1.

Efforts at the LEA level, be it DCPS or charter school LEAs, are complemented by NCLB accountability measures, federal grants oversight, and monitoring performed by OSSE which shed light on low performance and non-compliance and lead to corrective action plan implementation and technical assistance. The federal laws have served as groundwork upon which DC has laid its turnaround plans.

In sum, the lowest-achieving schools in DC are swiftly targeted through the dual accountability systems of DCPS and the PCSB in an overall structure of Mayoral control. This system of accountability positions the District as a leader in school improvement and a

potential national model for turnaround efforts.

Reform Plan Criteria

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

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

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

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

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

Evidence for (E)(2) (please fill in table below):
The State's historic performance on school turnaround, as evidenced by the total number of persistently lowest-achieving schools (as defined in this notice) that States or LEAs attempted to turn around in the last five years, the approach used, and the results and lessons learned to date.

Recommended maximum response length: Eight pages

As noted in Section E1, the District of Columbia is fertile territory for executing swift and effective turnaround strategies on account

of its unique governance structure, a robust pool of human capital talent, and a uniquely compact geographic size. Moreover, the history of turnaround in DC has created a context in which important lessons have been learned and surfaced in preparation of the Race To the Top application. The plans outlined below reflect careful consideration of what DC has learned – both best practices and difficult pitfalls – from its on-the-ground turnaround work. These lessons, along with confidence in the fact that DC has prioritized the most important issues relating to turnaround in the crafting of a bold and achievable RTTT strategy, have led to the following goal and performance measures:

GOAL: Intervene with DC's persistently lowest-achieving schools through closure or another turnaround model that puts them on a trajectory for dramatically improved student achievement by creating conditions of support and attracting high-quality human capital to turnaround schools

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 1: *by 2014, all schools that have undergone at least two years of a turnaround model will have demonstrated a rate of growth in student academic proficiency that exceeds the average statewide rate of growth by 1.5 to 2 times in Year 2, and by 2-3 times in Years 3 and 4.*

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 2: *by 2014, all the DCPS schools that have undergone at least one year of a turnaround model will be showing gains on leading indicators to be identified by the Office of School Innovation, such as attendance and credit recovery in secondary schools*

In order to achieve these goals, DC will implement the following strategies:

- **(A) Identify and Plan for the Turnaround of Persistently Lowest-achieving Schools**
- **(B) Provide Preparation Support for Potential Turnaround Teams**
- **(C) Align School Modernization Efforts to Support School Turnaround**
- **(D) Provide Differential Funding for Turnaround Schools**

- **(E) Ensure Capacity for Strong Management of Turnaround Partnerships**

(E)(2)(i) <u>Turning around the lowest-achieving schools: Identification of schools</u>

An important precursor to turnaround work is the identification of schools that are in the greatest need for turnaround interventions. To date, DCPS and PCSB have used federal accountability measures to identify and target the District's lowest-achieving schools for restructuring or closure. Moving forward, OSSE will generate an annual list of persistently lowest-achieving schools and convene a meeting with DCPS and the PCSB to ensure that plans are in place to turn around the lowest-achieving schools across the District's LEAs. For the purposes of this application, OSSE worked with a coalition of thought leaders from DCPS, PCSB, current turnaround partners, and leaders of charter schools to create a definition of and process for identifying the District's most persistently low-achieving schools (based on the definition provided in this notice). Of the District's 173 Title I schools, 133 have been identified for improvement. Five percent of this total – the requirement for persistently lowest-achieving schools – represents seven schools. In addition, 38 schools are currently under restructuring status and 21 schools are planning for restructuring this year (44% of all Title I schools identified for improvement).

Definition

Overall, DC has identified two types of schools for turnaround:

Schools with graduation rates below 60% over a two year-period. Currently, three DC high schools (Anacostia, Eastern, and Luke C. Moore) have reported graduation rates below 60% in each of the last two years. Of these schools, Luke C. Moore HS is an alternative school that targets older, under-credited students (i.e., under-credited relative to graduation requirements), which may call for a differentiated turnaround response (explained below). Given impending changes to the methodology of calculating graduation rates (i.e., adoption of the cohort model for tracking graduation), DC's graduation rate is expected to experience a

downward adjustment that will likely result in more secondary schools being identified for potential turnaround interventions.

The lowest-achieving 5% of Title I schools identified for improvement. To determine this group, DC has created a clear and transparent definition of low-achieving that is based on statewide criteria, including: (1) number of years a school has not made AYP, (2) overall growth in achievement in the school, and (3) current overall achievement level of the school, separate and apart from whether the school is improving achievement. Each of these areas is explained in further detail below:

1. ***Improvement status***. This measure assigns points based on a school's current year improvement status. It is assigned the heaviest weight (50 points) because the measure incorporates a factor of persistence. For example, schools in restructuring have missed AYP for six years. Using this formula, schools receive 10 points if they are in Improvement Year 1, 20 points if they are in improvement Year 2, 30 points if they are in corrective action, 40 points if they are in restructuring planning, or 50 points if they are in restructuring implementation.

2. ***Overall growth.*** This measure relates to the progress schools have made in increasing the percentage of students who score proficient or above on the DC-CAS. Points are assigned based on the change in the percentage of students scoring proficient or above on the DC-CAS in the school overall from 2007 to 2009. Schools receive 10 points each for reading and mathematics if there is a decrease in proficiency from 2007 to 2009 (i.e., they receive points against them for showing a decrease in achievement).

3. ***Distance from the AMO.*** This measure is a snapshot of current achievement. Points are assigned based on the distance between the percentage of students scoring proficient or above and the annual measurable objective (AMO) used for AYP determinations. Schools are flagged if the percentage of students proficient or above is less than half the AMO. Schools receive 5 points each for reading and mathematics if the percentage proficient is less than half the AMO for two consecutive years and 10 points for reading and mathematics if the percentage is less than half the AMO for three consecutive years.

Points are given to schools based on these three categories, with the persistently lowest-achieving schools scoring highest. OSSE will publish annual rankings of all District schools based on this scale. (Appendix E2.1 provides additional context.)

According to the definition outlined above, the following schools are identified for turnaround (three for graduation rate underperformance and seven schools that fall in the bottom 5% of schools, for a total of 10 schools): *Anacostia Senior High School, Eastern Senior High School, Luke C. Moore Academy, Options Public Charter School, Spingarn Senior High School, Kenilworth Elementary School, Browne Junior High School Education Campus, Dunbar Senior High School, Prospect Learning Center, and the Hamilton Center.*

DCPS will devise a turnaround plan for each of the identified schools to the extent that one has not already been defined and implemented, and the PCSB will implement its turnaround action for the sole charter school on the list. Not more than 50% of the identified DCPS schools will be permitted to engage in transformation as an intervention.

Because DC considers school turnaround to be a central tenet of reform, the District intends to pursue a more aggressive strategy than RTTT's minimum requirements. In addition to targeting the bottom 5% of DC's schools and schools with persistently low graduation rates, as noted above, OSSE, DCPS, and PCSB have also committed to considering a more expansive list of schools that include those in the bottom 20% of DC schools, for which turnaround interventions will be considered on a school-by-school basis.

The ongoing plan to support identification and targeting is as follows:

(A) Identify and Plan for the Turnaround of Persistently Lowest-achieving Schools, Revisiting Annually

ACTIVITIES, TIMELINE and RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

1. Finalize list of schools to turn around based on current definition and 2009 data, including at least the ten schools identified above and others within the bottom 20% to be determined: Spring 2010, OSSE, DCPS, and PCSB

2. Examine ranking of schools and eliminate (a) any schools for which an adequate intervention has occurred in the past two years and (b) any schools that may have been flagged due to enrollment of special populations but are deemed to be performing effectively: Spring 2010, OSSE, with DCPS or PCSB, as relevant

   In the case where special program-related schools such as special education and alternative education schools are identified, a joint team from the LEA, OSSE, and the PCSB (in cases in which the LEA is a charter school) will carefully review school data to determine the school's need for a turnaround intervention. This review will be very detailed and cautious, so as to ensure that all contributing factors to a school's overall performance are taken into consideration. Ultimately, a strong and compelling reason must exist for any school to receive exceptional consideration relative to the turnaround parameters outlined in this application. That said, DC is open to considering how intervention strategies might be tailored to address unique school needs. In addition, identified schools that have participated in turnaround interventions over the last two years will be reviewed in greater detail in order to determine whether additional interventions and supports are needed (however, these schools will not be expected to re-do prior turnaround efforts).

3. Publish list of schools slated for turnaround: Summer 2010, OSSE Revisit the adequacy and appropriateness of the definition outlined above for identifying the truly persistently lowest-achieving schools in the state on an annual basis, engaging DC area school-quality thought leaders in the process: Fall 2010 and ongoing, OSSE, DCPS, and PCSB.

4. Establish a detailed turnaround plan and timeline for each school listed above that is slated for turnaround: beginning Spring 2010 with final plans for above listed schools being announced by January 2012, OSSE/DCPS and OSSE/PCSB

5. Plan for additional turnarounds for schools on the OSSE-reported "persistently lowest-achieving school list" as generated annually with new student achievement data: beginning Fall 2011 and annually, OSSE/DCPS and OSSE/PCSB

(E)(2)(ii) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools: Results to date and lessons learned

DC has an extensive history with implementation of the four turnaround models outlined in the RTTT notice (see Appendix E2.2 for a list of schools and models). As a result, the district has developed a strong set of lessons learned, as well as some emerging results. The turnarounds, restarts, and transformations led by DCPS outlined below occurred in either 2008 or 2009. Year 1 of a turnaround intervention is typically viewed as a stabilization year, during which student academic results typically do not increase, as the school is ensuring that leading cultural indicators, such as attendance and discipline, are brought under control. Nevertheless, DC already has a positive story to tell about student achievement in its turnaround efforts. For school turnarounds started in 2008 (and for which data is available), 2009 DC-CAS results surpassed the 3-year average prior to the turnaround by 9 percentage points in reading and 12 percentage points in math. Within this group, some dramatic successes exist: for example, at Sousa Middle School, where the principal was replaced and a Full Service School model was implemented (one of the innovation models referenced in Invitational Priority #6), reading scores increased by 21 percentage points over the 3-year historical average and math scores increased by 27 percentage points. The new principal placed all staff on an aggressive 90-day improvement plan and managed school culture down to the last detail, leading to the dramatic growth results and showing the power of a strong leader in a turnaround school. In 2009, Sousa began planning to become a Catalyst STEM school (For more information, see Competitive Preference Priority #2). Students and teachers at Sousa have personally told Chancellor Rhee that they have every intention of surpassing last year's growth success with this year's DC-CAS.

Table E2.1 School Intervention History and Lessons Learned, SY2004-05 – present

Approach Used	# of Schools Since School Year 2004-05	Lessons Learned (See Appendix E2.2 for specific schools)
Turnaround	7 (7 DCPS)	*In turnaround schools, less than 50% of the staff are rehired, as there is an understanding that immediate, dramatic results require a new in-school team. Recent turnaround efforts have highlighted the need to consider the ripple effect on the rest of the District if a large number of teachers are displaced from a school.*

Approach Used	# of Schools Since School Year 2004-05	Lessons Learned (See Appendix E2.2 for specific schools)
Restart	4 (3 DCPS, 1 DYS taken over by charter)	*To completely restart a school and change the culture among existing students requires a significant investment of time and money, and it is not an attractive proposition for many leaders and organizations. Having enough staff on hand who are aligned with a common vision and can spread a strong academic culture quickly is critical. Having a building that makes students feel proud of their school is another important environmental factor. In a restart, such as Anacostia High School, community engagement is also a critical success factor.*
Closure	47 (35 DCPS, 12 PCSB)	*Closure is an important part of DC's overall strategy to reduce the number of low-achieving seats in the District. In several instances – such as Benning, Birney, Clark and Douglass – the space and seats of underperforming and under-enrolled schools were given to charter LEAs that were able to provide a high-quality education to students.*
Transformation	13 (13 DCPS)	*As with all the interventions, leadership change is extremely important. A strong leader is the linchpin in any turnaround plan. Another critical component of turnaround is strategic planning to ensure a phase-by-phase approach to transformation. Finally, because history in DC shows that transformation is not always a sufficiently aggressive solution, DC has moved to expand its portfolio of plans to include more closure, turnaround, and restarts under the new administration.*

These lessons informed DC's approach to subsequent interventions as well as the RTTT Turnaround Plan, as follows:

Table E2.2 School Intervention Lessons Learned and RTTT Turnaround Plan Implications

Lesson Learned	Implications for DC Turnaround Plan
Turnaround work is not inherently attractive. It is difficult to convince potential leaders and/or external partners to work in schools with a history of dramatic underperformance and insufficient support, facilities, and authority.	**Support:** Enable the Office of School Innovation, the intermediary organization between partnership schools and DCPS, to expand its operations and provide higher quality support to partner schools. **Facilities:** Ensure that the State's plans for modernizing all school facilities within five years aligns with the timeline for turnaround, such that there is a coordinated effort to modernize schools due for

	turnaround on a timeline that positions the school for ultimate success. **Authority:** Explore the option of giving the Chancellor of DCPS chartering authority, which, if enacted, would enable charter schools to have autonomy (e.g., in staffing) while turning around schools.
Turnaround work is expensive, and thus it is important to be thoughtful about additional resources that might be required above and beyond formula funding to ensure that additional investments are warranted and relevant.	Careful analyses of budgets from current turnaround operators affirms the belief that additional per student funding is needed to help fund the variance between formula funding and required capacity to execute a swift school turnaround. **Resources:** Give turnaround schools the resources they need to (a) establish a strong, positive adult presence in the building, and (b) provide adequate support services, while ensuring that the schools have thoughtful plans for the most efficient allocation of resources
Turnaround work is strategically challenging and requires careful planning, sequencing, and prioritization. It also requires thoughtful engagement of community stakeholders at key points throughout the process.	DC will fund a planning year for turnaround teams to draft thoughtful strategic plans, recruit turnaround teachers, and engage the community to ensure that all the necessary elements are aligned for successful turnaround.
The success of turnaround work depends on having strong leadership, and a human capital strategy with specific turnaround training is critical.	**Leadership Training:** DCPS will expand capacity in both the Office of School Innovation to manage partnerships with educational management organizations and in the Office of Human Capital to develop, evaluate, and coach the turnaround teams throughout their planning year.
Turnaround work is strategically challenging and requires careful planning, sequencing, and prioritization. It also requires thoughtful engagement of community stakeholders at key points throughout the process.	DC will fund a planning year for turnaround teams to draft thoughtful strategic plans, recruit turnaround teachers, and engage the community to ensure that all the necessary elements are aligned for successful turnaround.
Turnaround work has a ripple effect throughout the District and must be done with consideration of system-wide impact. It is difficult to completely overhaul staff at multiple schools simultaneously, because teachers are often shuffled between low-achieving schools. It is important to balance the desire to move swiftly with the need for a careful system-wide approach.	DC will use all four turnaround strategies and explicitly phased approaches to turning around schools in the bottom 5% of low-achieving schools, as well as in schools that fall within the broader bottom 20%, committing to turn schools around within the timeline of the grant, but recognizing the problems inherent in trying to front-load all turnarounds.

DCPS Plans

Lessons from recent DC efforts have already begun to inform the District's ongoing approach to school turnaround. Of the 10 schools identified for improvement according to the above definition, five have already been targeted for turnaround using one of the four models defined in this notice. Of the other these schools, two are "restarts," two are "transformations," and one is a "turnaround." All have requisite evaluation systems in place as a result of IMPACT, outlined in Section D2.

Restarts

Anacostia High School – under partnership with Friendship Public Schools – and Dunbar High School – under partnership with Friends of Bedford – are both restarts. Anacostia was closed and then reopened in Fall 2009 under Friendship Public Schools, an operator that has a track record of success in Baltimore, with a completely new leadership team, staff, and instructional program. Though achievement results are not yet available, leading indicators such as safety and security, as well as ninth grade credit attainment, are promising. The leadership team at Anacostia HS has been deeply involved in helping DC think about its turnaround strategy for the RTTT application in terms of human capital and financial resource needs. Dunbar High School was also closed and reopened under a proven non-profit organization, Friends of Bedford, in Fall 2009. Like Anacostia, Dunbar HS was reopened under a completely new leadership team, staff, and instructional program. Friends of Bedford has also taken over the management of Coolidge High School, which according to the definition did not make the list of 10 persistently lowest-achieving schools, but was in the NCLB restructuring phase, thus demonstrating DC's commitment to applying bold interventions to a broader set of schools that fall within the bottom 20% of low-achieving schools.

Transformation

There are two schools on the "persistently lowest-achieving schools" list that are already implementing a transformation strategy: Luke C. Moore Academy and Hamilton Center. Both schools, which serve specialized populations, have used similar strategies, and DCPS is constantly evaluating the approach and results to make adjustments as necessary. For example, Luke C. Moore Academy

strives to provide a competent and compassionate secondary educational setting for young people between the ages of 16-20 who have dropped out of high school or were not being served by traditional school options. Notwithstanding the fact that Luke C. Moore serves a student population with very specific needs, DCPS was concerned by low attendance rates and test scores, and recognized the need for strong leadership at a school like Luke C. Moore more than anywhere. In Fall 2009, DCPS changed the school's leadership. The new principal is a former School Improvement Officer with extensive experience with at-risk youth and disengaged student populations. With the support of DCPS, the principal built a top-notch team, including a Dean of Students with experience in alternative education, an Instructional Coach with 30+ years of experience in urban education, and an Assistant Principal from New Leaders for New Schools. They instituted a new master schedule, packed with credit recovery, college prep classes, and an internship program. This year's attendance rates have already risen to a daily average of 63% versus last year's daily average of 32% under the former school leadership. The number of graduates has doubled from 35 to 75, with an additional 20 students expected to graduate after summer school this year. Additionally, DC-BAS scores have increased by 100% in both math and literacy.

Turnarounds

Eastern High School is the best example of a "pure" turnaround school from DC's persistently lowest-achieving list. The school is currently being closed under a grade-by-grade phase-out, such that in School Year 2010-11 the school will enroll only an outgoing 12th grade class; in School Year 2011-12, the school will begin rebuilding and with a new incoming 9th grade class. A new leader for the school is being hired while at the same time the school's staff is being reconstituted. DCPS has also completely overhauled the building in ways to help catalyze Eastern High School's much needed culture change. Eastern's new leadership team will represent the first of the turnaround teams funded through RTTT to spend a year of planning, community engagement and leadership development before commencing the turnaround in School Year 11-12.

Five additional schools that are not in the bottom 5% of DC's lowest-achieving schools are also currently undergoing a turnaround

intervention aligned with the definition of turnaround in this notice (three schools fall in the bottom 20% of schools, and all five schools are among the 50 lowest-achieving schools in DC). For example, at Wheatley (formerly Webb-Wheatley), a high-achieving administrator from a school in a high-income section of DC was targeted for transfer and moved to Wheatley in School Year 2008-09, to oversee its reconstitution. The principal was given authority over hiring, resulting in less than 50% of former staff being rehired. Although the school is still in the stabilization phase, initial cultural indicators of change are promising, and an increase in enrollment suggests that families are regaining confidence in the school.

Highlights of the work being done in DCPS turnaround schools include:

Replace Principal and Grant Operational Flexibility*:* hire new principals, reconstitute staff, give principal control over budget, allow flexibility in terms of scheduling (e.g., double blocks for literacy and math, half-credit courses to provide more immediate credit accumulation opportunities)

Measure Effectiveness of Staff and Rehire Less than 50% of Preexisting Staff**:** rehire less than 50% of preexisting staff, measure and evaluate all staff with IMPACT (see Section D2)

Implement Human Capital Strategies*:* use multiple pipeline strategies with non-profits, provide TEAM awards as incentives for schools with 20% increases in reading and math, provide performance pay through IMPACT for highly effective teachers (see Section D2)

Leverage Professional Development*:* provide job-embedded professional development for teachers through Master Teachers and Instructional Coaches

Implement a New Governance Structure*:* explore new governance structures, including Wheatley's participation in a "Collaborative for Change" with a new reporting structure and DCPS's capacity building in the Office of School Innovation to oversee new school models

***Implement a High-Quality Instructional Program**:* provide a strong foundation for managing the instructional program through the Teaching and Learning Framework and provide mandatory collaborative planning time (at least 30 minutes daily)

***Use of Student Data**:* use DC-BAS and DC-CAS as well as formative assessments for instruction and differentiation of instruction

***Increase Learning Time**:* schedule evening credit recovery and Saturday AP Academy (HS), summer school and after-school "Power Hour"

***Provide Wraparound Services**:* coordinate wraparound services through the Mayor's office and Interagency Collaboration and Services Integration Commission (*ICSIC)*

In addition to continuing to support these restart, transformation, and turnaround interventions, DCPS will target the remaining schools on the list of persistently lowest-achieving schools and ensure that each school has defined and implemented an explicit turnaround plan by Fall 2012. It will also target additional schools on the broader list of DC's lowest-achieving 20% of schools for intervention and will engage in conversations with potential turnaround leaders and operators, including high-achieving charter schools, about the potential for their intervention in these lowest-achieving schools. The strategies outlined below will ensure the success of these current and future efforts.

In parallel, the PCSB, in partnership with OSSE, will implement a plan for the sole charter school on the current list of persistently low-achieving schools, through the approach outlined in the PCSB's Performance Management Framework.

The strategies detailed below will ensure the success of these current and future efforts.

(B) Provide Preparation Support for Potential Turnaround Teams

As DC considered its turnaround plan, current and potential turnaround operators and leaders provided invaluable feedback about what they require to support and/or manage school turnaround efforts in the District. One critically important element was the

guarantee of funding for a planning year that would allow a school to develop an explicit and intentional turnaround plan in order to help ensure the greatest likelihood of execution success and, ultimately, improvements to student achievement. RTTT funds will be used to build capacity in the Office of Human Capital in order to provide logistical support, professional development, evaluation, and on-site coaching to the planning teams.

ACTIVITIES, TIMELINE and RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

1. Establish new organizational chart and job responsibilities for the Office of Human Capital: Spring 2010, DCPS

2. Submit these, along with a sustainability plan for timeline beyond the life of the RTTT grant, to OSSE: Summer 2010, DCPS

3. Hire new team member: Summer/Fall 2010, DCPS

4. Upon identification of schools for turnaround, decide which schools will be turned around in which of the next three years and assemble administrative teams to take on the turnarounds, Fall 2010 and ongoing, DCPS Office of School Innovation and the Office of Human Capital

5. Fund planning years for administrative teams who will take on the turnaround of a school in the following school year: Fall 2010 and ongoing for life of grant, OSSE

   DC will fund a total of 8 teams over the life of the grant. To the extent that the persistently lowest-achieving schools do not require them (for example, in schools where planning is already underway), the teams will be used to turn around schools in the bottom 20% of schools.

(C) Align School Modernization Efforts to Support School Turnaround

DC has undertaken a five-year School Modernization Plan for all schools in the District. This current effort can be made even more

strategic by aligning the timeline for modernization of specific schools with DCPS timelines for turnaround. DME will coordinate with DCPS to ensure that DCPS turnaround plans can be supported, wherever possible, by facilities improvements that can complement needed environmental changes to schools.

ACTIVITIES, TIMELINE and RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

1. Facilitate discussions between the Mayor's Office (responsible for the Facilities Modernization Plan) and the DCPS Team responsible for planning and executing turnarounds: quarterly, starting in Summer 2010 (for life of grant and beyond), OSSE

(D) Provide Differential Funding for Turnaround Schools

For reasons noted earlier, DC's turnaround plan includes the provision of additional per-student funding for the first four years of a school's turnaround, restart, or transformation efforts. Starting at $1,000 per student for the first two years, the differential funding phases out over years three ($750 per student) and four ($500), when DC expects the turnaround efforts to have taken hold such that schools can plan for more sustainable per pupil funding. In 2009, this funding was provided to DC turnaround schools by private donors, without which many schools might not have been able to meet critical staffing needs, including the on-the-ground / in-school placement of staff from turnaround partner organizations. In order to be awarded the supplemental per-pupil funding for turnaround efforts, DCPS will work in close collaboration with the turnaround school and, where applicable, turnaround partner organization to outline how additional funding will be put to use to support strategic and sustainable activities that meet the unique needs of turnaround school students. In addition, funds will be aligned with any SIG 1003(g) allocations.

ACTIVITIES, TIMELINE and RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

1. Develop a plan for use of differential funding for each school in turnaround (for turnarounds beginning the following Fall): Spring of each year, DCPS

2. Provide differential funding for turnaround schools based on number of students served: Fall of each year, DCPS

(E) Ensure Capacity for Strong Management of Turnaround Partnerships

DCPS needs capacity to effectively manage and support its partnerships with organizations that will play lead roles in turning around DC schools. RTTT funds will help will support capacity-building in DCPS's Office of School Innovation, which oversees all turnaround efforts under the leadership of Josh Edelman, former Chicago Public Schools school portfolio office manager who helped launch that city's turnaround strategy.

ACTIVITIES, TIMELINE and RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

1. Establish new organizational chart and job responsibilities for the Office of School Innovation: Spring 2010, DCPS

2. Submit these, along with a sustainability plan for timeline beyond the life of the RTTT grant, to OSSE: Summer 2010, DCPS

3. Hire new team members: Summer/Fall 2010, DCPS

As noted in the Budget Summary Narrative, School Improvement Grants provide additional funds to support turnaround efforts. DC plans to use RTTT dollars and School Improvement Grants in a seamless strategy to execute the one coherent plan articulated above.

Performance Measures: The number of schools for which one of the four school intervention models (described in Appendix C) will be initiated each year	Actual Data: Baseline (Current school year or most recent)	End of SY 2010-2011	End of SY 2011-2012	End of SY 2012-2013	End of SY 2013-2014
Schools on the Persistently Lowest Achieving List	5	2	2	2	0
Schools beyond the Persistently Lowest Achieving List	46	7	5	5	5

(F) General ***(55 total points)***
State Reform Conditions Criteria

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

The extent to which—

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Recommended maximum response length: Three pages

The District of Columbia is primed for rapid education innovation and improvement. Education funding is a District priority, and DC's charter laws are the strongest in the nation. Autonomous schools are encouraged not only through the charter sector, but also within DCPS. From preschool to college, DC is positioned to meet the needs of all its students, including those who need special

programming. Due to these conditions and the small scale of DC, RTTT funding will be leveraged for maximum impact in the District of Columbia.

(F)(1)(i) Making education funding a priority: Total revenues

The District of Columbia's budget is comprised of seven major funding clusters, with Education being the second highest-funded (only slightly behind Health and Human Services). The Education funding cluster also includes Libraries, Office of Public Education Facilities Modernization, Non-Public Tuition, Special Education Transportation, Public Charter School Board, Teachers' Retirement System, DC Public Schools, and DC Charter Schools. Cluster-level funding for Fiscal Year (FY) 2008 and 2009 is outlined in the table below. More specific detail is provided in Appendix F1.1.

Table F1.1 Education Funding as Percent of Total Budget, FY 2008-09

	FY08	FY09
Education Cluster	$1,284,308,000	$1,401,649,000
Total Budget	$5,767,841,000	$5,964,091,000
Education as Percent of Total	**22.3%**	**23.5%**

Taking into account only local funds for LEAs (DCPS plus public charter schools) and higher education, the trend of increased revenue continues:

Table F1.2 Elementary, Secondary and Higher Education Funding as Percent of Total Budget, FY 2008-09

	FY08	FY09
Elementary and Secondary	$801,808,655	$855,204,181
Higher Education	$62,569,786	$62,070,000
Total Budget	$5,767,841,000	$5,964,091,000
Elementary, Secondary and Higher Education Funding as Percent of Total Budget	**15.0%**	**15.4%**

Education is of the highest priority in DC, as reflected by this budget. DC is clearly committed to education reform as demonstrated by increased school funding, even in difficult economic times. In fact, city agencies within the District have recently been directed by the mayor to absorb deeper budget cuts in an effort to hold school funding stable. With the help of federal stimulus funds, DC's education spending increased in the FY2009 and FY2010 budgets, despite projected revenue declines. In fact, in FY2009 and FY2010 budgets, education spending was the only budget area with consistent or increased funding, and the Mayor has proposed another increase in the per-student formula amount for FY 2011.

(F)(1)(ii) Making Education Funding a Priority: Equitable Funding

Equitable DC education funding is achieved via the Uniform Per Student Funding Formula (UPSFF), as outlined in DC Official Code § 38-2901 to 2912. The UPSFF is neutral among LEAs, as it determines the annual operating funding for each LEA in DC based on specific per-pupil amounts. Every student generates funding for its LEA in the same manner and in the same amount, whether the student chooses to attend DCPS or a charter LEA. Funding under the UPSFF is a straightforward process: each student receives a 'foundation level' of funding, established by law at $8,770 for FY2010 (and established annually through legislation to approve the overall budget). Although the foundation level is the same for all students, DC's comparatively higher level of per-pupil funding reflects the District's disproportionately high level of high-poverty students. Additional individual student weightings are applied based on grade level, special education level, and limited/non-English proficiency, as appropriate (a complete description of the UPSFF weightings is provided in Appendix F1.2). Additional Title I funds flow through OSSE to District LEAs serving children living at the greatest poverty levels.

In a 2006 *Ed Week* ranking of per pupil expenditures across the nation, DC ranked 13th in the nation, even after adjustments for regional cost differences. DC invests significantly in education and is working on improving its resource efficiency and collaborative strategies to support meaningful reform. Ultimately, RTTT funds will serve as a strategic investment in the development of systems and processes that enable funding dollars to be leveraged for results.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools *(40 points)*

The extent to which—

(i) The State has a charter school law that does not prohibit or effectively inhibit increasing the number of high-performing charter schools (as defined in this notice) in the State, measured (as set forth in Appendix B) by the percentage of total schools in the State that are allowed to be charter schools or otherwise restrict student enrollment in charter schools;

(ii) The State has laws, statutes, regulations, or guidelines regarding how charter school authorizers approve, monitor, hold accountable, reauthorize, and close charter schools; in particular, whether authorizers require that student achievement (as defined in this notice) be one significant factor, among others, in authorization or renewal; encourage charter schools that serve student populations that are similar to local district student populations, especially relative to high-need students (as defined in this notice); and have closed or not renewed ineffective charter schools;

(iii) The State's charter schools receive (as set forth in Appendix B) equitable funding compared to traditional public schools, and a commensurate share of local, State, and Federal revenues;

(iv) The State provides charter schools with funding for facilities (for leasing facilities, purchasing facilities, or making tenant improvements), assistance with facilities acquisition, access to public facilities, the ability to share in bonds and mill levies, or other supports; and the extent to which the State does not impose any facility-related requirements on charter schools that are stricter than those applied to traditional public schools; and

(v) The State enables LEAs to operate innovative, autonomous public schools (as defined in this notice) other than charter schools.

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

Evidence for (F)(2)(i):

- A description of the State's applicable laws, statutes, regulations, or other relevant legal documents.
- The number of charter schools allowed under State law and the percentage this represents of the total number of schools in the State.
- The number and types of charter schools currently operating in the State.

Evidence for (F)(2)(ii):

- A description of the State's approach to charter school accountability and authorization, and a description of the State's applicable laws, statutes, regulations, or other relevant legal documents.
- For each of the last five years:
    - The number of charter school applications made in the State.
    - The number of charter school applications approved.
    - The number of charter school applications denied and reasons for the denials (academic, financial, low enrollment, other).
    - The number of charter schools closed (including charter schools that were not reauthorized to operate).

Evidence for (F)(2)(iii):

- A description of the State's applicable statutes, regulations, or other relevant legal documents.
- A description of the State's approach to charter school funding, the amount of funding passed through to charter schools per student, and how those amounts compare with traditional public school per-student funding allocations.

Evidence for (F)(2)(iv):

- A description of the State's applicable statutes, regulations, or other relevant legal documents.
- A description of the statewide facilities supports provided to charter schools, if any.

Evidence for (F)(2)(v):

- A description of how the State enables LEAs to operate innovative, autonomous public schools (as defined in this notice) other than charter schools.

Recommended maximum response length: Six pages

(F)(2)(i) **Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools: Growth of charters**

Enacted by Congress for the District in 1995, the School Reform Act (codified at D.C. Official Code §38-1800 et seq.) has provided the framework for innovate and effective charter options. According to the Center for Educational Reform's publication, *Race to the Top for Charter Schools: Which States Have what it Takes to Win* (2009), the District of Columbia boasts the strongest charter laws in the US, receiving an "A" for its laws governing charter schools. DC's vibrant network of charter schools reflects this favorable environment. With 57 charter LEAs and 96 charter campuses serving 28,066 students in DC, 38.0% of public school children attend public charter schools and 42.5% of DC schools are charters (both percentages are higher than any other urban district except New Orleans). Given the combined funding streams from RTTT dollars that are available to LEAs via formulaic allocation and competitive grant processes, DC charter schools are eligible to access $40.1MM, or 36%, of the total requested grant award, setting the stage for DC to serve as a model of cross-sector education reform.

DC's charter schools also reflect a diverse portfolio of schools that serves various student groups / grade levels based on each charter's guiding philosophy. An overview of DC charter types by grade levels is below:

Table F2.1 Charter Schools by Type, School Year 2008-09

Charter School Type	Number of Schools	Charter School Type	Number of Schools
Early Childhood	11	Middle School	8
Early Childhood/Elementary	11	Middle/High School	6
Early Childhood/Adult	1	High School	11
Charter School Type	**Number of Schools**	**Charter School Type**	**Number of Schools**
Elementary School	15	High School/Adult	3
Elementary/Middle School	22	Adult	1
Elementary/Middle/High School	4	**Total for 2008-09**	93

DC Official Code § 38-1802.03 allows eligible chartering authorities to approve up to twenty annual petitions to establish a public

charter school. As demonstrated in the chart in F(2)(ii), this Congressionally-adopted cap is well above demand for charter school approvals and has not in any way stifled demand or led chartering authorities to limit the number of petitions approved (the number of petitions has never exceeded 20). The high percentage of DC students who attend charter schools has also demonstrated that the School Reform Act provision has had no negative impact on charter growth. Between 2004 and 2008, an average of five charter schools was approved each year. Moreover, with no cap on expansion campuses, successful charter schools can easily increase capacity or replicate their models with approval from the charter authorizer without counting against the cap. The ratio of charter to DCPS campuses is 1.34, and DC also boasts 15 multi-campus charter LEAs. Ultimately, there is no practical limit to growth of the charter sector and no legal or practical limit to the number of students who can be served by charter schools, highlighting an unfettered opportunity for DC's ongoing charter expansion. The District's strong support of charter schools as models of innovation and autonomy extends even further, as DCPS Chancellor Rhee is considering requesting chartering authority for DCPS. This move would allow DCPS to engage more readily in school restarts and to use charters for turnaround efforts.

(F)(2)(ii) <u>Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools: Charter law</u>

The District's mature charter law provisions explicitly outline how charter authorizers approve, monitor and oversee, hold accountable, reauthorize, and, as needed, revoke charters [see D.C. Official Code §38-1802.01 -03 (approval), §38-1802.13 §38-1802.11 (oversight), §38-1802.12 (renewal), §38-1802.13 & 13a (revocation)].

DC Code § 38-1802.06 establishes DC's public charter schools as open-enrollment institutions, open to all DC resident children. This statutory provision explicitly prohibits public charter schools from limiting enrollment on the basis of a student's race, color, religion, national origin, language spoken, intellectual or athletic ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, or status as a student with special needs (although public charter schools may limit enrollment to specific grade levels). In cases where student applications exceed capacity, local statute requires that public charter schools use a random selection process or lottery to admit

students. DC's public charter schools currently serve 88% African-American, 8% Latino(a), and 80% economically disadvantaged students, which reflect higher concentrations of minority and economically disadvantaged than enrollments in DCPS schools. Since its creation, OSSE has taken significant steps to encourage and ensure compliance with IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) requirements among all LEAs. Public charter schools, like DCPS, are required to provide a continuum of services and serve all students regardless of special needs. OSSE issued guidance on charter admissions practices this past year to specifically underscore an LEA's obligation to admit students regardless of a child's special needs and also to outline prohibited discriminatory practices.

Charter school accountability in the District of Columbia is strong. Charter schools are subject to annual monitoring by PCSB (currently the District's only charter authorizer), as well as a comprehensive review process every five years to ensure charter compliance, as outlined in DC Official Code § 38-1802.12. Under §38-1802.13, a chartering authority may revoke a charter if it is determined that the school has: violated the charter agreement, including violations related to the education of students with disabilities; "failed to meet the goals and student academic achievement expectations set forth in the charter;" or presented a case of fiscal mismanagement. Although this process is already rigorous, PCSB continues to pursue accountability with the introduction of the Performance Management Framework, a common framework that is used to evaluate charter school performance against rigorous standards. The table below provides a five-year history of charter school applications, withdrawals, approvals, denials, and measures taken to close non-performing charter schools.

Table F2.2 DC Charter Authorization History, 2004-09

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	Total
Total Applications	19	19	17	13	10	N/A	**78**
Denials	9	13	14	7	8	0	**51 (65%)**
Approvals	10	6	3	6	2	0	**27 (35%)**
Replications Approved	0	4	5	2	7	7	**25**
Charter Revoked		0	2	1	1	0	**4**
Charter Relinquished	1	0	3	1	2	1	**8**

Charter school accountability in the District is strong. Between 2004 and 2009, 27 new DC charters were approved, 51 were denied, and four were revoked. This approval rate is consistent with historical trends, as PCSB has historically approved only 34% of all applications, demonstrating a commitment to ensuring that only petitions for high-performing charters are approved in the first place. Over the last five years, 12 charter schools were closed. Of these closures, four charters were revoked, and eight were relinquished after an intensive monitoring and review process. The Center for Education Reform's 2009 Accountability Report cites operational, management, academic performance and financial challenges as reasons for most charter school closures in DC and concludes by lauding the PCSB as having "created the gold standard in charter school accountability."

(F)(2)(iii) <u>Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools: Funding</u>

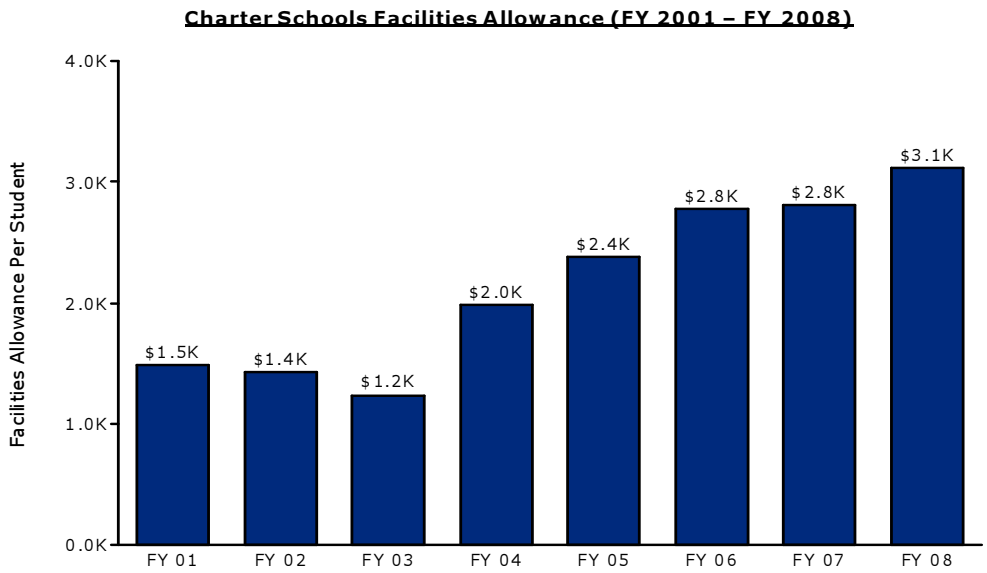
As outlined in F1(ii), above, DC's UPSFF ensures equal funding for every public school student, regardless of the type of LEA in which a student is enrolled. Both charter LEAs and DCPS are funded according to the same student-based formula, where total funds are based on October 5 enrollment counts submitted by LEAs and audited by an independent auditing firm commissioned by OSSE.

All District charter schools qualify as LEAs or otherwise eligible sub-recipients under federal education statutes and therefore receive equitable access to major federal education formula grant (with the exception of three charters that exclusively serve 3- and 4-year old students who do not qualify for Title I funding but who instead qualify for local Pre-K innovation grant funding).

(F)(2)(iv) <u>Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools: Facilities funding</u>

In addition to UPSFF funding, public charter schools also receive a per-student facilities allowance, established by DC Official Code § 38-2908. In FY 2010, this amount is $2,800 per pupil, which can be used for facilities leasing, purchase, financing, construction, maintenance, and repair. DC Official Code § 38-1804.01 further allows the Mayor and the District of Columbia Council to "adjust the amount of the annual payment ... to increase the amount of such payment for a public charter school to take into account leases or purchases of, or improvements to, real property, if the school…requests such an adjustment." The chart below illustrates Charter School Facilities per-pupil funding amounts for non residential charter schools for 2001-2008.

Figure F2.1 Charter School Facilities Allowance, FY 2001-08



Enhanced funding streams for public charter school facilities have been made possible through the education component of DC's annual federal payment from the federal government, which supports several public charter school facilities programs. These include: (1) a $30 million Direct Loan Fund that provides low-cost real estate backed loans of up to $2 million; (2) a $22 million Credit Enhancement Fund that provides loan and lease guarantees to facilitate financing and encourage commercial bank lending; (3) the City Build Incentive grant program, which has invested approximately $14 million in the form of grants of up to $1 MM to encourage the location of quality public charter schools in strategic neighborhoods; and (4) the Public Facilities Grant program, which has invested $6.5 million in former DCPS buildings leased to public charter schools. In addition, OSSE manages the Charter School Incubator Initiative (CSII), an innovative public-private partnership supported through a $5 million Credit Enhancement grant awarded by the US Department of Education. The CSII provides "incubator space" for new public charter schools in need of space, which allows them to grow and stabilize before taking on greater facility and financial responsibilities.

DC public charter schools also benefit from various programs managed through the DC Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED). The largest and most widely used program is the District's Industrial Revenue Bond program, which enables non-profit organizations, including public charter schools, to access low-cost, tax-exempt bond financing for commercial real estate projects. In addition, DMPED has awarded Qualified Zone Academy Bonds, Qualified School Construction Bonds, and grants from the Neighborhood Investment Fund to public charter schools in support of facilities projects. The Office of Public Charter School Financing and Support within OSSE oversees these various financial options and provides guidance to public charters navigating the system.

In an effort to make public school facility space more accessible to charter schools, DC Official Code § 38-1802.09 gives the "right of first offer" for any current or former public school property to "an eligible applicant whose petition to establish a public charter school has been conditionally approved." This same law also states, "Any District of Columbia public school that was approved to

become a conversion public charter school ... shall have the right to exclusively occupy the facilities the school occupied as a District of Columbia public school under a lease for a period of not less than 25 years, renewable for additional 25-year periods as long as the school maintains its charter at the appraised value of the property based on use of the property for school purposes." DC Official Code § 38-1831.01 extends a similar right of first offer to charter schools for leasing space within underutilized DCPS school facilities. Both the Mayor and DCPS Chancellor maintain a strong interest in providing an incentive to high-achieving charters by helping to address critical facilities needs. For example, the Mayor's Office is exploring the possibility of linking facilities leasing opportunities to student academic performance as a means of providing incentives and rewards to high-achieving schools. Together, the funding streams described above provide a significant and accessible resource for public charter schools to build or lease and maintain quality school facilities.

(F)(2)(v) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools: Autonomous schools

School autonomy as a condition for reform and innovation is a key component of the District's education reform landscape, as evidenced by the large proliferation of charter schools. School autonomy is important to charter success and growth, and DC seeks to support such autonomy wherever possible (for example, through OSSE policies and LEA guidance or the minimal restrictions on how charters use funding).

School autonomy is also relevant for DCPS efforts. As the District's only traditional geographic LEA, DCPS has benefitted from a mayoral priority to support district-wide school innovation, including school autonomy. Chancellor Rhee created DCPS's Office of School Innovation (OSI) to increase the level of diversity and innovation in DCPS's school portfolio. This office, led by Josh Edelman (former Chicago Public Schools school portfolio office manager who helped launch that city's turnaround strategy), pursues a relentless focus on innovative and effective whole school reform initiatives and models that contribute directly to improving student academic achievement. For example, a third grade student from one of DC's high-poverty neighborhoods who loves math should have the opportunity to attend a STEM elementary school near her home. DC's rapid reinvention of its school

system is focused on ensuring that all children, irrespective of test scores or where they live, have access to innovative schools that meet their unique needs.

OSI is currently focused on the development and implementation of nine different innovative school models, three of which are autonomous school models: Autonomous Schools, DC Collaborative for Change (DC3), and Partnership Schools. Currently, 17 DCPS schools operate under one of these three autonomous projects, described below:

- **Autonomous Schools (4 schools)**: designed to provide schools that have demonstrated academic success with the structural space to innovate as a means of further increasing student academic achievement. Schools that are granted autonomy receive enhanced flexibility in five core areas: budget, instructional program, professional development, schedule (within parameters), and textbooks. Eligibility for autonomous status requires that 75% of a school's student body be proficient in math and reading <u>or</u> have averaged more than 10% growth in both reading and math over the previous three years. In order to qualify, a school must also complete a letter of intent and receive a score of at least three in each area of a Quality School Review (QSR), and a score of four in "Leadership" or "Teaching and Learning."
- **DC Collaborative for Change (DC3) (10 schools):** DC3 brings together principals from ten elementary schools with a diverse set of challenges for the purpose of creating a citywide cluster of likeminded elementary schools. DC3 relies on a shared culture of achievement and shared resources to (a) improve teaching practice, (b) improve leadership capacity across schools, and (c) increase teacher retention with the ultimate goals of enhancing equity among DCPS schools and improving student achievement. DC3 schools are granted more autonomy in the areas of budget, instructional program, professional development, scheduling, and textbooks. This model has acted as a foundation for the Professional Communities of Effectiveness (PLaCEs) described in Section D5.
- **Partnership Schools (3 schools):** Partnership schools are designed to improve school culture and student achievement at chronically low-achieving high schools through relationships with turnaround organizations that have practical – and

successful – experience in turning around high schools. Currently, Friendship Public Charter Schools, which serves over 4,000 students in DC and Maryland public and public charter schools, is managing turnaround efforts in Anacostia High School. Friends of Bedford, the organization behind NY's Bedford Academy High School (ranked in 2009 as one of New York State's best high schools), is playing the same role in DC's Coolidge High School and Dunbar High School. These partnerships exemplify the promising potential for innovative collaboration between DC's charter sector, DCPS, and external partners and underscore the ability of charter and DCPS partners to work together to turn around DC's lowest-achieving schools. Ultimately, such tangible examples of collaboration are a common priority in DC's educational reform efforts and represent a commitment to removing barriers to change. Together, these elements position the District uniquely among states with regard to opportunities for innovative cross-sector collaboration.

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

The extent to which the State, in addition to information provided under other State Reform Conditions Criteria, has created, through law, regulation, or policy, other conditions favorable to education reform or innovation that have increased student achievement or graduation rates, narrowed achievement gaps, or resulted in other important outcomes.

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

Evidence for (F)(3):

- A description of the State's other applicable key education laws, statutes, regulations, or relevant legal documents.

Recommended maximum response length: Two pages

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

Universal Pre-Kindergarten

DC's education reform efforts span all ages and grades and include strong early-education opportunities that are designed to align with and prepare students for success in kindergarten and elementary school. DC recognizes that the most successful students begin with a solid foundation built through early education.

In 2008, the DC Council passed the "Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Act" (DC Official Code § 38-273.01), which embodies the strong commitment of DC to school readiness. The act is a multi-pronged initiative that will create high-quality and universally available Pre-Kindergarten (PK) education services in DC, through a mixed delivery system that includes DCPS, public charter schools, community-based organizations, and Head Start by 2014. State-led initiatives include: the establishment of high-quality standards and quality assessments; a capacity audit; a program evaluation that utilizes nationally recognized assessment tools to gauge program quality (including program structure, language and literacy environment, quality of instructional support, classroom climate, and classroom management); and administration of locally-funded program assistance funds and incentive grants designed to help PK programs meet high-quality standards.

LEA-level strategies for Pre-K are detailed in *Competition Priority #3: Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes*, which outlines robust support for creating a pipeline of school-ready children within the early childhood sector.

Special Education Interventions

True education transformation and reform in DC cannot take place without addressing deep and long-standing challenges within DC's special education system. As a result of DC's failure to appropriately serve students with special needs, many families seek alternative placements – often in private facilities – for their children. This presents a significant cost burden for the District and

indicates a basic inability to meet student needs. Not only is it a moral imperative to provide high-quality special education services within DC, it is also an economic imperative. DC's recent efforts are designed explicitly to curtail the financial and political drain on city resources caused by too many students who require the services of out-of-district special education schools. This move will not only serve students more effectively, it will also free energy and resources for other reform efforts that can be allocated toward sustaining initiatives begun under RTTT.

Since 2007, OSSE and DCPS have taken serious steps to jointly address the challenges with the special education system. At DCPS, efforts are underway to improve the overall quality of programs and services for students with special needs. Part of this strategy has involved the development of Schoolwide Application Model (SAM) schools and Full Service Schools (FSS) to help reduce DCPS's high number of private outplacements.

- **Schoolwide Application Model (SAM) (15 elementary schools and 1 early childhood center)**: a general education approach to student supports that directs all available school and community-based resources to improve academic and social outcomes for all students. SAM is a response to intervention (RtI) model, meaning that individual student achievement and behavior data is used to identify required student supports for progression according to grade level expectations. Frequent and ongoing assessments help determine the instructional approaches best suited to meet each student's individual needs.
- **Full Service Schools (FSS) (11 middle schools):** a school model that brings together best practices in instructional design, behavior management, and mental health support for middle schools in school restructuring status. FSS also uses RtI logic to identify and create systems to address school-wide needs in the areas of academic achievement and student behavior. FSS provides targeted supports and services for 5-10% of the most high-need students and offers intensive coordination and case management support for the most high-need 1-5% of students.

Providing stronger special education services in the District also involves a robust and innovative human capital strategy, including

a commitment to increase the pipeline of effective teachers and principals who serve special education students.

At the state level, OSSE's Office of Special Education has focused on establishing the regulatory and policy framework needed to bring the District into compliance with federal law and encourage best practices such as RtI. This has been no small feat and is evidenced by the significant volume of new regulations, policies and guidance available on OSSE's website (and provided to the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services). These new efforts are aimed at ensuring that children are served in the Least Restrictive Environment, that all LEAs provide a continuum of services, that IEP meetings are properly conducted and that services are provided in a timely and high-quality manner. OSSE is also fostering reform in this area by ensuring better data and reporting at the LEA level as part of the state's Special Education Data System and federal annual and special conditions reporting to the U.S. Department of Education.

Finally, OSSE's state-level efforts also include the recent establishment of a Placement Oversight Unit, which provides consultation to IEP teams on Individual Education Plan development, placement, data tracking, and intervention and supplemental services. This innovative model has already resulted in the diversion of a significant number of non-public placements, which has positive implications for DC schools' ability to serve more DC students through quality (and more cost effective) special education solutions. OSSE also provides technical assistance, training and support to LEAs for building knowledge capacity and professional development to ensure that schools are able to meet the needs of all students, regardless of an LEA's size.

Alternative Education

An important element of reform is ensuring that disengaged and disaffected students, who are off-track for graduation, are able to pursue meaningful and accelerated credit recovery in order to graduate from high school. DC has various alternative education programs that are designed to re-engage these youth via meaningful and relevant school options. DCPS's Alternative Education programs, which are run in conjunction with the DCPS Office of Youth Engagement, aim to ensure an opportunity for every student

to learn in a clean, safe, interactive, and educationally sound environment. Altogether, DCPS operates eight alternative education programs and schools that serve targeted student populations. For example, the Youth Engagement Academy (modeled from Big Picture Learning, which provides design and curricular support) is a new DCPS high school that opened in 2008 to provide an alternative education setting for off-track high school students. DCPS Twilight programs, geared toward disengaged students who are returning to DCPS after an extended period of not having attended school, allow students to attend school during the day and then participate in an afterschool/evening program in order to accelerate credit accumulation while receiving other academic and youth development supports.

In addition to DCPS's alternative options, a number of charter LEAs also support alternative student populations. Maya Angelou Public Charter School operates one such program to create a learning community for students who have not been well served by traditional school environments, in which it combines academic, employment, and social skill development. Maya Angelou and the DCPS Office of Youth Engagement are currently designing a partnership that will use the Maya Angelou school as a professional development center to support DCPS teachers who teach in alternative education classrooms, intended to help facilitate smoother transitions for students who transfer between Maya Angelou and DCPS high schools.

From preschool through high school and beyond, DC is positioned to meet the needs of all its students. The conditions for reform across DC are primed and ready for the innovation that RTTT can offer.

VII. COMPETITION PRIORITIES

Priority 1: Absolute Priority -- Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

To meet this priority, the State's application must comprehensively and coherently address all of the four education reform areas specified in the ARRA as well as the State Success Factors Criteria in order to demonstrate that the State and its participating LEAs are taking a systemic approach to education reform. The State must demonstrate in its application sufficient LEA participation and commitment to successfully implement and achieve the goals in its plans; and it must describe how the State, in collaboration with its participating LEAs, will use Race to the Top and other funds to increase student achievement, decrease the achievement gaps across student subgroups, and increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers.

The absolute priority cuts across the entire application and should not be addressed separately. It is assessed, after the proposal has been fully reviewed and evaluated, to ensure that the application has met the priority.

Priority 2: Competitive Preference Priority -- Emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). *(15 points, all or nothing)*

To meet this priority, the State's application must have a high-quality plan to address the need to (i) offer a rigorous course of study in mathematics, the sciences, technology, and engineering; (ii) cooperate with industry experts, museums, universities, research centers, or other STEM-capable community partners to prepare and assist teachers in integrating STEM content across grades and disciplines, in promoting effective and relevant instruction, and in offering applied learning opportunities for students; and (iii) prepare more students for advanced study and careers in the sciences, technology, engineering, and mathematics, including by addressing the needs of underrepresented groups and of women and girls in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

The competitive preference priority will be evaluated in the context of the State's entire application. Therefore, a State that is responding to this priority should address it throughout the application, as appropriate, and provide a summary of its approach to addressing the priority in the text box below. The reviewers will assess the priority as part of their review of a State's application and determine whether it has been met.

Recommended maximum response length, if any: One page

With its robust reform efforts, multitude of innovative LEAs, and geographic location, the District of Columbia is well-positioned to be an exemplar for science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education. Many well-developed partnerships and a commitment to

STEM have resulted in pockets of excellence in STEM education in DC. What is needed is a comprehensive and cohesive vision for STEM that is aligned horizontally and vertically throughout the State, with STEM experiences embedded throughout not only science and math courses, but also other core subjects as well. Through RTTT, and with the help of Battelle and other partners, DC will design a statewide STEM strategy that will leverage local and national partnerships and expertise with rigorous standards and challenging and interesting programs led by highly-trained educators.

DC recognizes the importance of STEM as part of a well-rounded educational experience. STEM skills and knowledge are not only valuable components to a solid academic program, but also core fundamentals for life experience. STEM skills and knowledge help students develop logic, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills that can be used in every discipline and that enable them to compete in the continually growing high-tech job sector. As such, DC strives to improve STEM opportunities for all its students and has established the following statewide goals for STEM:

GOAL 1: To prepare all students in DC to graduate high school with a college- and career-ready mastery of math, science, engineering and technology

GOAL 2: To increase the number of DC students who major in STEM fields in college and enter STEM careers

PERFORMANCE MEASURE: *by 2011, DC will have a coordinated statewide plan for STEM, developed by the DC STEM Learning Network, to include targets for the number of DC graduates choosing majors and careers in STEM-related fields*

A Statewide Vision

A coherent statewide vision for STEM is critical to achieving DC's STEM goals. Under such a vision, DC will link programs, resources, students, teachers, and practices in the shared pursuit of STEM education. The District's approach focuses on the following strategies:

- **(A) Learning Network**: Creating a new learning network that leverages existing resources and programs, distributes new insight and knowledge across LEAs, and

facilitates collaboration for continuous improvement

- **(B) Standards and Assessment**: Establishing a strong foundation in STEM subjects, aligning efforts in Standards and Assessments to ensure that the District's state standards in math, science, engineering, and technology support rigorous instruction and capitalizing on STEM interest among students to ensure they graduate and go on to college (See also Section B3)
- **(C) Great STEM Teachers and Leaders**: Consistent with DC's RTTT strategy, developing robust human capital resources in STEM through establishment of new pipelines and improved professional development of the existing workforce (See also Sections D4 and D5)
- **(D) STEM Pathways for Students**: For grades K-12, developing a map of when and how students master STEM knowledge and skills needed to be prepared for and successful in college
- **(E) Turning Around Struggling Schools**: Using STEM education as the key program component for several turnarounds implemented by DCPS (See also Section E2)
- **(F) STEM Partnerships**: Coordinating and enhancing partnerships between LEAs and university and industry sectors to enhance STEM education opportunities across all grade levels

Current STEM Education Initiatives

Currently in the District, STEM education is a growing priority among major LEAs and consists of several exciting, innovative programs and partnerships.

DC has a number of unique STEM programs already underway among its LEAs, and many more are envisioned. The five LEAs detailed in the table below account for 68% of DC students and among them include 21 schools with specialized programs, making STEM education widely accessible in DC. This is just an illustration of the opportunities that will be leveraged statewide through advanced knowledge management practices. More complete descriptions of these programs can be found in Appendix P2.1.

Table P2.1 STEM Initiatives

LEA	Level	STEM Program
DCPS	Catalyst Program – 6 STEM Elementary & K-8 Schools	STEM Catalyst Program: STEM integration reaches every grade, including preschool and Pre-K programs Non-selective admissions in a neighborhood school – designed to expose more female students and students of color to STEM Intensive, job-embedded professional development for teachers provided by Carnegie Institute of Washington and the National Institute of Health
DCPS	High schools, including 2 STEM High Schools	Both represent turnaround efforts, with full-scale renovations of facilities and programs 5 DCPS high schools certified by Project Lead the Way
E.L. Haynes Public Charter School	grades PK-8	Well-developed science standards and aligned interim and end-of-year assessments Data-driven planning model 6-9 week Learning Expeditions focus students on real-life problems and integrate service learning Integrated science and technology; expanding to encompass an engineering focus as well
Friendship	6 schools	SmartLabs and SmartLab Facilitator in 5 campuses

Public Charter School	grades PK-12	Active robotics program begins in kindergarten – First Robotics Legos Competitions, Computer Clubs, Robotics Clubs CISCO Certification Engineering-focused college tour University of Maryland Science Lab Internship Program
Howard University Middle School of Mathematics and Science	Middle School located on a university campus	Longer School Day Accelerated Instructional Programs After School Enrichment includes MathCounts, Science Fair and Architecture Club
Washington Math Science & Technology Public Charter High School	High School	Two pathway programs, including the Pathway of Engineering (co-sponsored by Project Lead the Way) and The WMST Technology Pathway Internet and Computing Core Certification (IC3) and Microsoft Office Certifications Summer Engineering Program with Johns Hopkins University Science Fair

Achieving a Statewide Vision for STEM Education

(A) Learning Network. With pockets of STEM excellence throughout the District, high-level coordination and policy guidance is key to the success of a statewide STEM vision. In the

coming months, DC plans to partner with the Battelle Institute to develop a DC STEM Learning Network and coordinating council made up of representatives from the State, LEAs, and higher education and industry partners. The STEM Learning Network will be similar to efforts in other states that model strong statewide STEM initiatives. It will serve to highlight the critical importance of STEM education and unite stakeholders in the STEM system – teachers, students, and schools – to provide a forum for program guidance, development and best-practice sharing. DC plans to work with Battelle to map current programs, professional development opportunities, and partnerships prior to developing a vertically-aligned pathway for students pursuing STEM educational opportunities so that the State can understand better where the gaps exist and how to fill them. In correlation, the STEM Learning Network will provide a space for collaboration, direction, and support for the development of both policies and partnerships. The coordinating council will be tasked with creating the conditions for the Learning Network to be successful over time, including recommendations and guidance on investing public and private dollars effectively to advance STEM education across the District, as well as policy and regulatory proposals.

(B) Standards and Assessments. According to Achieve, the District already has strong college- and career-ready standards for math. As detailed in Section B3, DC plans to build on this success by adopting the Common Core standards later this year. The State Advisory Math Panel described in Section B1 has already identified curricular changes needed within DC to meet the College- and Career-Readiness Common Core Standards in the area of mathematics. The release of grade-level Common Core Standards has promoted the curricular alignment work described in Section B3, which concentrates on higher-level math. The statewide math curriculum will shift from a focus on algorithmic fluency to conceptual understanding.

Over the next year, DC will also begin the process of revising DC science standards so that they reflect research-based pedagogy and mastery of inquiry-related skills and position DC to quickly adopt and adapt Common Core science standards. Moreover, DC science standards must integrate with reading standards to promote science-area content literacy. In March of this year, the State Board of Education approved a resolution jump-starting this process (See Appendix P2.2 for a copy of this resolution). DC is closely following the two-phase effort underway to develop next generation science standards. This process, led by the National Research Council and Achieve, will also involve key stakeholder groups and states in the development process. DC

will consider these developments in as it makes decisions regarding revisions to its current science standards. Efforts will begin during the FY 2011 school year to streamline current science standards, which will allow teachers to use familiar standards that have been revised to focus on national best practices. The emphasis will be on identifying the standards associated with essential knowledge and skills, providing a 'scaffold' to common/national science standards.

As OSSE works with LEAs to expand use of summative and interim assessments (as described in Section B3) and to consider ways to expand the student growth measure to non-tested grades and subject areas (as described in Section D2), STEM education will also benefit by focusing staff on the importance of STEM student success. Also, in order to promote the use of relevant and enhancing technology, DC will seek to adapt standards from the International Society for Technology in Education for students, teachers, and administrators. Finally, the P-20 Consortium described in Section B3 intends to bring colleges, universities, DCPS, and the charter sector together to work on alignment of curriculum and high school exit requirements. Care will be taken to extend invitations to join the consortium to the DC STEM Learning Network and university and industry partners who currently collaborate with DC schools. Moreover, P-20 Consortium discussions around establishing a college-going culture will involve strategies for enhancing girls' interest in STEM-related careers.

(C) Great STEM Teachers and Leaders. Rigorous standards and strong STEM programs require a specialized and dedicated cadre of leaders and teachers who have highly-developed content expertise, keen familiarity with national best practices and field trends, and a genuine passion for STEM. Consistent with Section D, DC's STEM approach to human capital combines strategies that build a solid pipeline for new teaching professionals with initiatives and commitment to developing the existing math and science teaching force to meet the level of quality and specialization described above. Simply put, DC cannot reach its STEM goals quickly enough simply by bringing in new teachers and leaders – and the District is fortunate enough to have ample supports and collaboration potential with the higher education and industry sectors that can take its STEM workforce to the next level.

As detailed in Section D4, OSSE will give priority consideration in a competitive grant process to LEA-sponsored teacher pipeline proposals that outline explicit plans to attract, train, and retain

STEM teachers with a high likelihood of effectiveness. Additionally, alternative preparation programs beyond LEA-sponsored initiatives will be encouraged to continue preparing teachers in the STEM areas. A strong presence of alternative certification programs, including The New Teacher Project and Teach For America, is a major benefit to STEM education in DC. These programs help prepare individuals with college majors in STEM subjects or "career switchers" from STEM professional fields to become classroom teachers. Section D1 outlines DC's commitment to use alternative preparation programs for STEM area teachers and others. Details in Section D5 also outline how a Professional Learning Community for Effectiveness (PLaCEs) will be established around the STEM theme to ensure cross-school collaboration in striving for STEM effectiveness. Schools with exemplary STEM programs will anchor professional learning communities and provide support and development to teachers in the collaborative to increase effectiveness of all teachers in the cohort. Once again, all opportunities will be coordinated through the statewide STEM Learning Network to facilitate efficient knowledge management across the State.

Developing the current workforce of science and math educators is a high priority to the state and its LEAs. DC utilizes a federal Math and Science Partnership grant to fund professional development across LEA STEM education. Throughout DC's STEM plan, partnerships are key. The Carnegie Institute, which provides training for middle school math and science teachers, and the National Math and Science Initiative, which has a professional development program and an initiative focused on increasing the number of students taking AP courses in STEM subjects that relates directly to increasing college readiness as described in Section B3, are examples of partners that will be brought into the DC STEM Learning Network so that all LEAs can benefit from these opportunities. A more complete list of partners and specific areas of focus can be found in Appendix P2.4.

DCPS has also applied for an Investing in Innovation (I3) application to fund a professional development component for its STEM Catalyst program. The I3 application will support one of the most critical aspects of the Catalyst program – professional development for teachers and leaders. Extensive, job-embedded professional development aligned to school-wide focus is the most significant lever for improving educators' practice and thereby improving student outcomes. The I3 project calls for a partnership with American University to develop a graduate certificate

program for STEM teachers at Catalyst schools in order to bring them up to the level of instructional knowledge necessary for a rigorous STEM education program. Scale-up strategies include widespread dissemination of best practices through on-site school visits, podcasts, content contributed to the Individualized PD Platform, and webinars.

(D) STEM Pathways for Students. Building a K-12 vertically aligned pathway for students interested in STEM careers begins in the early levels and links clearly to post-secondary study. The development of curiosity and scientific thinking is a central goal of DC, best reached when students do the work of "real scientists" by tackling real-world questions and problems through hands-on, minds-on investigations. Research shows that students' curiosity and interest in science in middle school is the most critical factor in determining whether they continue to pursue and excel in the subject through high school and college. This approach ensures that DC's students not only enjoy science, but have a broad knowledge base of many science topics and skills.

DCPS, starting first through the Catalyst initiative, will use an integrated science and math approach in elementary and middle school that embeds science and math skills throughout other subject areas. This approach enables educators to make connections between scientific disciplines and to capture the interest and imagination of students early on and prepare them for the pursuit of STEM-related coursework and programs in high school and beyond. Across the District, LEAs are increasing the number of quality STEM opportunities for younger students and aligning those programs with college-ready PreK-12 standards and expectations. In elementary grades, DC students will be exposed to the basic fundamentals of STEM education. For example, DCPS and several charter LEAs are already using the Everyday Math curriculum as an inquiry-based approach to mathematics. Students will study life, earth, and physical science content each year, with scientific processes and communication skills embedded throughout. Experiential learning will build students' interest in STEM subjects. As mentioned earlier, through the DC STEM Learning Network, the District will map out the experiences and opportunities that are critical to student development and coordinate the capacity of LEAs to provide these experiences to their students.

STEM Catalyst schools in DCPS are expected to promote an increased focus on STEM

throughout the State. The unique programs, pilots, and engaging lessons and units that these schools build will be scaled to enhance STEM education in schools across the District.

At the high school level, the culture of STEM will continue to grow through mentoring programs and exposure to STEM career opportunities through internships and deep skill development. DC students are already required to take four courses of math and four courses of science, including three lab-based courses, in order to graduate. In the next six months, the state will also provide rules and policy guidance on dual enrollment in high school and college courses to facilitate expanded STEM education for advanced students.

Several LEAs, including DCPS (in five high schools), WMST, and Friendship, have also adopted a framework for creating an engineering pathway for students called Project Lead the Way. Project Lead the Way is a nationally recognized program that establishes a sequence of courses for students to take each year, culminating in a capstone course project designed to prepare students for advanced studies and to transition seamlessly into engineering majors in college. Students from Project Lead the Way-certified schools can earn up to 15 college credits. Professional development is required for each teacher of a certified course, and a partnership advisory group provides guidance to each LEA program.

(E) Turning Around Struggling Schools. The Catalyst program mentioned above will serve as a proof point that STEM is a viable school improvement tool: of the six schools that fully implement the STEM Catalyst theme in Fall 2010, one is in Year 1 of improvement status, one is in Year 2 of improvement status, and three are in corrective action. STEM is viewed as multi-prong strategy to address student needs while simultaneously serving as a turnaround lever.

(F) STEM Partnerships. In order to reach the majority of DC students, DCPS has engaged in an innovative design collaboration with Battelle that will provide grant support, in-residence staff, and technical assistance for its developing STEM programs. The Battelle team will support two DCPS STEM coordinators to focus on identifying and developing leadership and teaching resources supported by relevant public/private STEM partners (See Appendix P2.3 for the Battelle Partnership Agreement). This model will accelerate the learning curve for DCPS staff and create a sustainable, best practice-driven foundation for STEM-related education in the school system.

In addition to the STEM professional development partners mentioned in the Great STEM Teachers and Leaders strategy above, the State STEM plan calls for the STEM Learning Network to expand upon and strengthen the many partnerships already in existence throughout the State. For a listing of current STEM partnerships, please see Appendix P2.4.

By leveraging the exceptional STEM programs in place in DC and coordinating partnerships and initiatives through a STEM Learning Network, DC is positioned to develop a strong statewide focus on science, technology, engineering and math that is aligned both horizontally and vertically, resulting in more students prepared and excited to enter STEM fields.

Priority 3: Invitational Priority – Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes *(not scored)*

The Secretary is particularly interested in applications that include practices, strategies, or programs to improve educational outcomes for high-need students who are young children (prekindergarten through third grade) by enhancing the quality of preschool programs. Of particular interest are proposals that support practices that (i) improve school readiness (including social, emotional, and cognitive); and (ii) improve the transition between preschool and kindergarten.

The State is invited to provide a discussion of this priority in the text box below, but such description is optional. Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful must be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Recommended maximum response length, if any: Two pages

The statewide approach to early childhood education is detailed in Section F3. As the largest provider of pre-school and pre-kindergarten services in the city, DCPS has also prioritized early childhood education (ECE) as a key component of its broader school reform work. The early education strategy is three-fold:

(1) Expand access to preschool (PS) services to three-year old children, and access to pre-kindergarten (PK) programs to four-year olds

(2) Improve quality of PS/PK programs, with a particular emphasis on ensuring the provision of comprehensive services to children in high-need schools

(3) Leverage partnerships with community-based organizations to increase access and improve early education quality throughout the city, including for children ages birth to three

In School Year 2009-10, more than 4,900 three- and four-year old children attended programs in 85 DCPS elementary schools. In fact, every elementary school in DCPS offers ECE services. A recent capacity study of PS/PK services found that close to 2,000 children in DC were underserved by existing ECE programs. In response, over the last 2 years DCPS has opened new ECE classrooms as a means to reach more underserved children. DCPS has increased its outreach and recruitment activities to ensure that families are well informed about PS/PK enrollment opportunities and the benefits of a high-quality early education experience. For the current school year, the expansion of classrooms and robust outreach activities were highly successful. DCPS grew its enrollment in PS/PK classrooms by 15%. For the coming school year, DCPS will continue its expansion efforts by adding an additional 39 classrooms. 24 of these new classrooms will be new preschool classrooms, including 7 in schools that are offering preschool for the first time. Combined with public charter schools, DC will add over 1,000 more PS/PK seats in the 2010-2011 school year.

In addition to increasing the numbers of three- and four-year old children who benefit from a PS/PK experience prior to kindergarten, DCPS has begun work to redesign its ECE program model in order to enhance programmatic quality. This will be accomplished by blending existing ECE funding sources to form a coherent support for comprehensive programming for all DCPS young children and their families. DCPS currently funds PS/PK services via two funding sources: 40% of PS/PK services are funded by federal Head Start funds, with the other 60% supported by local dollars. These monies now fund two distinct early childhood classroom types within DCPS schools (Head Start and non-Head Start PS/PK) where programmatic services differ widely. Under the blending model, DCPS will invest $2 for every federal Head Start dollar in exchange for the flexibility to distribute equitably its federal Head Start funds across all Title I elementary schools (73 out of 85), regardless of whether the classrooms are currently categorized as Head Start or not. The first phase of blending will begin in School Year 2010-11.

There are several advantages to the blending model. DCPS will have the flexibility to allocate Head Start resources and expand comprehensive programming in a manner that is similar to the way in which Title I funds are utilized to support school-wide approaches. This new flexibility will allow all DCPS three- and four-year olds in Title I schools to benefit from comprehensive services, such as family support services and developmental and medical screenings. A recent

analysis conducted by the DCPS Office of Early Childhood Education found that nearly two-thirds of children enrolled in PS/PK classrooms are income-eligible for Head Start. This represents an additional 1,500 children beyond the 1,782 who are currently receiving services funded by DCPS Head Start grants.

In addition, this change will help DCPS build a single early childhood program by eliminating the distinction between Head Start and Pre-K specific classrooms. Under the blending model, all PS/PK classrooms will serve mixed income children. DCPS will therefore have uniform expectations for program services that meet Head Start requirements and quality standards that will be common across all PS/PK classrooms. Finally, children, families, and schools will benefit from the blending model in very concrete ways. The reallocation of federal and local dollars will allow DCPS to: hire a cohort of 15 early childhood instructional coaches; enhance professional development for ECE instructional staff; improve services to young children with disabilities by supporting schools in implementing full inclusion PS/PK classrooms; and hire a cohort of 15 family engagement specialists. DCPS firmly believes that blending will position the District to leverage its strengths in the area of early childhood, such as a highly qualified ECE teacher workforce and robust PS/PK access, in a manner that ensures that the most vulnerable students benefit from a high-quality early education experience.

DCPS continues in its efforts to leverage partnerships with the broader ECE community to meet the needs of families with young children in the District in several ways. To begin, DCPS is engaged in conversations with several partners in an effort to bring the highly-regarded Educare program to the District. Educare is a well-regarded national model for childcare with a track record of success in producing early learning outcomes for children from birth through age five. DCPS is looking at the potential for making available the land adjacent to a DCPS elementary school in a high-need community for the construction of the Educare facility. As well, DCPS plans to support the operation of Educare and the alignment of services with the elementary school in order to ensure that families served by Educare benefit from a seamless program. Finally, DCPS is exploring partnerships with community-based Early Head Start providers regarding the opening of Early Head Start centers in each of its high schools. Pregnancy and early parenting contribute to the alarming high school dropout rates among DC's student population. These centers will support students in completing high school and meeting parental

responsibilities, while ensuring access to childcare and early education options that support development and school readiness. Plans are underway to open Early Head Start centers in three high schools for School Year 2010-11.

Across the District, the State is emphasizing the expansion of quality early childhood options in public schools. Among charter schools, several early childhood charters already exist, providing not only additional seats, but quality PS/PK programs in a specialized setting. One such provider, Appletree, has signed an RTTT MOU despite not being eligible for Title I funding. Appletree is strongly committed to the principles in each of the RTTT assurance areas and will bring an important perspective to the communities of participating LEAs. The autonomy of charter LEAs allow for the development of best practices in early childhood education, such as the development and use of specialized assessments and varied staffing models to meet individualized student needs. In some cases, early childhood charter schools are co-located within elementary and secondary charter and DCPS schools, allowing for collaboration among LEAs and *de facto* feeder patterns as students matriculate from one school to the other. Such partnerships and collaborative models are encouraged and supported through accessible funding sources and thoughtful planning for use of excess school facility space. Ultimately, DC is strongly committed to ensuring that education reform efforts are comprehensive of the District's youngest students.

Priority 4: Invitational Priority – Expansion and Adaptation of Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems *(not scored)*

The Secretary is particularly interested in applications in which the State plans to expand statewide longitudinal data systems to include or integrate data from special education programs, English language learner programs, early childhood programs, at-risk and dropout prevention programs, and school climate and culture programs, as well as information on student mobility, human resources (*i.e.*, information on teachers, principals, and other staff), school finance, student health, postsecondary education, and other relevant areas, with the purpose of connecting and coordinating all parts of the system to allow important questions related to policy, practice, or overall effectiveness to be asked, answered, and incorporated into effective continuous improvement practices.

The Secretary is also particularly interested in applications in which States propose working together to adapt one State's statewide longitudinal data system so that it may be used, in whole or in part, by one or more other States, rather than having each State build or continue building such systems independently.

The State is invited to provide a discussion of this priority in the text box below, but such description is optional. Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful must be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Recommended maximum response length, if any: Two pages

As plans for DC's Statewide Longitudinal Education Data (SLED) program progress, OSSE plans to expand the scope of both Special Education and English Language Learner program integration with the Statewide Longitudinal Education Data system. While the initial implementation of SLED includes primary indicators for both programs, future integration with the source systems that manage these data will allow the SLED to collect, analyze and report on this expanded information. Additionally, OSSE's collection of enrollment information is part of SLED's initial implementation. The enrollment information collected will eventually expand to include data from pre-registration, school choice, and charter school applications, in order to propel the District's collection of data regarding student enrollment choices to more sophisticated levels.

Although OSSE did not receive 2009 ARRA grant funds, the goals of that proposal remain, especially the need to develop an integrated early childcare management system. This system will modernize childcare provider licensure and child case management systems, track early childcare center attendance, and communicate with the State's financial system. Once developed, data within this system will be integrated into SLED, providing OSSE with the ability to: (1) establish USIs for children prior to Pre-K/Kindergarten entry, (2) analyze the longitudinal effectiveness of early childcare programs and centers, and (3) identify additional support for children based on other information collected in SLED.

Additionally, SLED uses the NCES Data Dictionary as the foundation for all collected data elements, including behavioral and discipline data. In addition to the integration of information from source systems and SISs, SLED also plans to include data from human resources, school finance, student health, and other relevant sources included in the NCES data dictionary.

Finally, because it utilizes the NCES data dictionary, SLED is structured in such a way that will enable OSSE to share data with other states and the federal government in a universal method in the future.

Priority 5: Invitational Priority -- P-20 Coordination, Vertical and Horizontal Alignment *(not scored)*

The Secretary is particularly interested in applications in which the State plans to address how early childhood programs, K-12 schools, postsecondary institutions, workforce development organizations, and other State agencies and community partners (*e.g.*, child welfare, juvenile justice, and criminal justice agencies) will coordinate to improve all parts of the education system and create a more seamless preschool-through-graduate school (P-20) route for students. Vertical alignment across P-20 is particularly critical at each point where a transition occurs (*e.g.*, between early childhood and K-12, or between K-12 and postsecondary/careers) to ensure that students exiting one level are prepared for success, without remediation, in the next. Horizontal alignment, that is, coordination of services across schools, State agencies, and community partners, is also important in ensuring that high-need students (as defined in this notice) have access to the broad array of opportunities and services they need and that are beyond the capacity of a school itself to provide.

The State is invited to provide a discussion of this priority in the text box below, but such description is optional. Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful must be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Recommended maximum response length, if any: Two pages

Several structures and initiatives in place in DC support P-20 coordination and vertical/horizontal alignment. These include the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education, the P-20 Consortium, a vibrant early childhood program, alternative education options, and high school-to-college transition programs. Each is detailed below.

Deputy Mayor for Education

As part of his 2007 education reform agenda, Mayor Adrian Fenty created the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME) to plan, coordinate, and supervise all public education and education-related activities under its jurisdiction, including the development and support of programs to improve the delivery of educational services and opportunities from early childhood through post-secondary education. The DME is able to marshal and align District resources for coordinated support of student success over time. DME also plays an important role in cross-agency collaboration, as it operates the Interagency Collaboration and Services Integration Commission (ICSIC), which coordinates services of non-education agencies (e.g., health, mental health, and human services) to address the needs of children outside the classroom. Through ICSIC, the DME uses dedicated innovation dollars from the local budget to implement, evaluate, and scale evidence-based programs that focus on improving student outcomes.

P-20 Consortium

As described in Section B3, DC plans to launch a P-20 Consortium with representatives from LEAs and universities who will be charged with examining issues of high school curricula and college entrance, with the ultimate goal of crafting a strategy for the creation of a P-12 college-going culture across DC. High schools within participating LEAs will work to align curricula with college requirements, and all RTTT participating LEAs will have the opportunity to contribute to the P-20 Consortium. DC is pleased to have the support of several leading universities as part of its RTTT application (see Appendix A2.5), which will be instrumental in ensuring that this effort produces a meaningful result for DC students.

Early Childhood to School Transition

As detailed in both Section F3 and Invitational Priority 3, the statewide focus on early childhood programming is a key element in P-20 coordination. In particular, as detailed in Priority 3 (above), the focus on expansion of school-based early childhood programs will help all students develop a foundation for long-term education success and help ensure smooth transitions to kindergarten programs, often in the same school where students attend preschool or prekindergarten.

Alternative Education

In addition to off-track students (for whom alternative education programs are detailed in Section F3), the District of Columbia has a sizeable population of youth in transition from adjudication and other settings. The District is committed to offering differentiated school models to address the unique needs of such students. Maya Angelou Public Charter School/See Forever Foundation operates the Maya Angelou Academy at New Beginnings (formally Oak Hill) Youth Center, the District's secure facility for youth who have been adjudicated delinquent and committed to the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS). A leading national expert on education within juvenile facilities recently commented that the school was one of the best (if not *the* best) schools in a youth correctional facility in the country.

High School to College Transition

The District of Columbia is deeply committed not only to increasing graduation rates, but also to ensuring that DC graduates go on to – and succeed in – college. DCPS conducts transcript audits

and uses individual graduation plans to ensure that students are on-track to graduation. These district efforts are supported by the Double the Numbers Coalition (DTN) described in Section A3, which seeks to facilitate the transition of high school students to college and increase the number of college-ready high school graduates in DC. Post-secondary transitions to college are made possible through increases to need-based financial aid, the provision of scholarships, and the facilitation of college access connections within schools (provided through DTN partners). DTN's Consortium Ambassadors program enables current college students to speak with high school students about the college experience and helps inform high school-to-college transitions. DTN has fostered a strong relationship with the University of the District of Columbia and Trinity University in efforts to facilitate smooth college transitions for DC's high school students. UDC's student retention strategy has helped increased student retention from 37% in 2004-2005 to 59% in 2007-2008.

Priority 6: Invitational Priority -- School-Level Conditions for Reform, Innovation, and Learning *(not scored)*

The Secretary is particularly interested in applications in which the State's participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) seek to create the conditions for reform and innovation as well as the conditions for learning by providing schools with flexibility and autonomy in such areas as—

(i) Selecting staff;

(ii) Implementing new structures and formats for the school day or year that result in increased learning time (as defined in this notice);

(iii) Controlling the school's budget;

(iv) Awarding credit to students based on student performance instead of instructional time;

(v) Providing comprehensive services to high-need students (as defined in this notice) (*e.g.*, by mentors and other caring adults; through local partnerships with community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and other providers);

(vi) Creating school climates and cultures that remove obstacles to, and actively support, student engagement and achievement; and

(vii) Implementing strategies to effectively engage families and communities in supporting the academic success of their students.

The State is invited to provide a discussion of this priority in the text box below, but such description is optional. Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful must be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.
Recommended maximum response length, if any: Two pages

School-level conditions for reform are the standard operating procedure in the District of Columbia. As has already been explained throughout the application (particularly Sections E2 and F2), DCPS launched Office of School Innovation (OSI) in 2007 to increase the level of innovation in the district's school portfolio and to ensure that students have higher quality school options. OSI is currently focused on the implementation of nine different innovative school models that engage 58 schools – or 45% of schools – throughout the district. RTTT funds will enable OSI to expand its reach and support more turnaround and autonomous schools. Charter LEAs, by nature of their small scale, are drivers of school-level conditions for reform. In particular, the District of Columbia has strengths in three particular areas (also mentioned above):

(i) Implementing new structures and formats that extend the school day and school year, resulting in increased learning time. Both charter LEAs and DCPS believe in the power of increased learning time to improve student achievement. Many charter LEAs have extended the school day into the evening, providing students with enrichment programming and additional academic learning time. In addition, several DC charter schools are well known for their Saturday Schools as well as their summer programs. DCPS has several out-of-school programs that it intends to expand through stimulus funds (see Budget Summary, Appendix A2.3). One such program is Saturday Scholars, in which students in grades 3-12 focus on reading and math skills and/or Advanced Placement (AP) studies. DCPS also offers robust afterschool programs, including: academic "Power Hour" and arts and recreation activities for elementary students; and credit recovery classes, college preparatory classes, and enrichment activities for high school students. DCPS also offers a comprehensive summer school program for elementary, middle and high school students, which provides a variety of academic and extracurricular activities. This summer school program is available at no cost to children whose parents or guardians are residents of the District of Columbia.

(ii) Providing comprehensive services to high-needs students. There are many school level innovations in DC that ensure the delivery of comprehensive services for high-needs students. For example, Full Service Schools (FSS, described in Section F3) bring together best practice, instructional design, behavior management, and mental health supports for middle schools under restructuring status. Eleven middle schools in DCPS are currently Full Service Schools. FSS feature the support of Instructional Coaches, a Student Family Care Coordinator, Respect Center

Mentor, School Mental Health Clinician, 521 Mentor, and Intensive Wrap Care Coordinator. Resources are intentionally integrated to systematically address comprehensive student needs and provide caring environments for students.

(iii) Creating school climates that support student engagement and achievement. DCPS is currently executing an innovative student engagement incentive strategy in 15 schools, called the Capital Gains Program. The program, a partnership with Dr. Roland Fryer, founder of Harvard's Education Innovation Laboratory (EdLabs), is based on the simple premise that financial incentives can motivate students toward positive learning outcomes. In each Capital Gains school, students earn dollars in five different areas related to student achievement, including attendance, behavior, and academic performance. Every two weeks, student progress is recorded and students receive their rewards either via personal check or direct deposit into individual savings accounts at SunTrust Bank. The program was piloted as part of a randomized trail, with half of DCPS's middle schools serving as the treatment group and the other half as the control. Year one of the pilot produced promising results. the program showed a significant effect on student test scores, with effects particularly strong for two hard-to-reach groups: boys and students who had significant behavior issues the year before.

Financial incentives are not the only means of engaging students, however. DC also aims to offer rigorous academic curricula that are inherently rewarding. For example, DCPS is currently launching schools with an International Baccalaureate (IB) model. The goal of IB schools is to provide a pathway to an internationally recognized diploma based on a challenging program of international education and rigorous assessment. Students who participate in IB programs experience a comprehensive, inquiry-based approach to teaching and learning that supports students in developing an understanding of their own cultural and national identity while engaging with the rest of the world. This program is overseen by the Office of School Innovation as one of the multiple school innovation models designed to provide more high-quality school options for DC students. In addition, the Early College High School programs mentioned in Invitational Priority 5 provide an additional incentive for students: by attending school and focusing on their college-level coursework, students are able to receive college credit and even an Associate's degree.