

State of Nebraska

Race to the Top Round One Application for Initial Funding CFDA Number: 84.395A

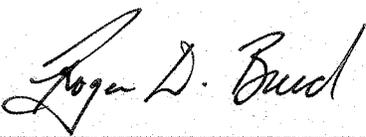
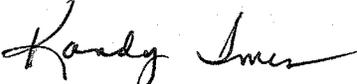


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**III. RACE TO THE TOP APPLICATION ASSURANCES
(CFDA No. 84.395A)**

Legal Name of Applicant (Office of the Governor): Office of the Governor Governor Dave Heineman	Applicant's Mailing Address: PO Box 94844 Second Floor, State Capitol Lincoln, NE 68509
Employer Identification Number: 47-0491233	Organizational DUNS: 808 347 009
State Race to the Top Contact Name: (Single point of contact for communication) Roger D. Breed	Contact Position and Office: Commissioner of Education State Office Building
Contact Telephone: 402-471-5020	Contact E-mail Address: roger.breed@nebraska.gov
<p>Required Applicant Signatures:</p> <p>To the best of my knowledge and belief, all of the information and data in this application are true and correct.</p> <p>I further certify that I have read the application, am fully committed to it, and will support its implementation:</p>	
Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor (Printed Name): Dave Heineman	Telephone: 402-471-2244
Signature of Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor: 	Date: 1-15-2010
Chief State School Officer (Printed Name): Roger D. Breed	Telephone: 402-471-5020
Signature of the Chief State School Officer: 	Date: 1/15/2010
President of the State Board of Education (Printed Name): Kandy Imes	Telephone: 308-436-5981
Signature of the President of the State Board of Education: 	Date: 1/15/2010

State Attorney General Certification

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

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

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

State Attorney General or Authorized Representative (Printed Name):

DALE A. COMER

Telephone:

402-471-2940

Signature of the State Attorney General or Authorized Representative:

Dale A. Comer
ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL
CHIEF, LEGAL SERVICES BUREAU
NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Date:

1-14-10

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

Accountability, Transparency and Reporting Assurances

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

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

Other Assurances and Certifications

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

- The State will comply with all applicable assurances in OMB Standard Forms 424B (Assurances for Non-Construction Programs) and to the extent consistent with the State's application, OMB Standard Form 424D (Assurances for Construction Programs), including the assurances relating to the legal authority to apply for assistance; access to records; conflict of interest; merit systems; nondiscrimination; Hatch Act provisions; labor standards; flood hazards; historic preservation; protection of human subjects; animal welfare; lead-based paint; Single Audit Act; and the general agreement to comply with all applicable Federal laws, executive orders and regulations.
- With respect to the certification regarding lobbying in Department Form 80-0013, no Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the making or renewal of Federal grants under this program; the State will complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," when required (34 C.F.R. Part 82, Appendix B); and the State will require the full certification, as set forth in 34 C.F.R. Part 82, Appendix A, in the award documents for all sub awards at all tiers.
- The State will comply with all of the operational and administrative provisions in Title XV and XIV of the ARRA, including Buy American Requirements (ARRA Division A, Section 1605), Wage Rate Requirements (section 1606), and any applicable environmental impact requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1970 (NEPA), as amended, (42 U.S.C. 4371 et seq.) (ARRA Division A, Section 1609). In using ARRA funds for infrastructure investment, recipients will comply with the requirement regarding Preferences for Quick Start Activities (ARRA Division A, Section 1602).
- Any local educational agency (LEA) receiving funding under this program will have on file with the State a set of assurances that meets the requirements of section 442 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1232e).
- Any LEA receiving funding under this program will have on file with the State (through either its Stabilization Fiscal Stabilization Fund application or another U.S. Department of Education Federal grant) a description of how the LEA will comply with the requirements of section 427 of GEPA (20 U.S.C. 1228a). The description must include information on the steps the LEA proposes to take to permit students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries to overcome barriers (including barriers based on gender, race, color, national origin, disability, and age) that impede access to, or participation in, the program.
- The State and other entities will comply with the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR), including the following provisions as applicable: 34 CFR Part 74—Administration of Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations; 34 CFR Part 75—Direct Grant Programs; 34 CFR Part 77—Definitions that Apply to Department Regulations; 34 CFR Part

80– Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments, including the procurement provisions; 34 CFR Part 81– General Education Provisions Act–Enforcement; 34 CFR Part 82– New Restrictions on Lobbying; 34 CFR Part 84–Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance); 34 CFR Part 85–Government wide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement).

SIGNATURE BLOCK FOR CERTIFYING OFFICIAL

Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor (Printed Name):	
Dave Heineman	
Signature of Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor:	Date:
	1-15-2010

I. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

A State must meet the following requirements in order to be eligible to receive funds under this program.

Eligibility Requirement (a)

The State's applications for funding under Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund program must be approved by the Department prior to the State being awarded a Race to the Top grant.

The Department will determine eligibility under this requirement before making a grant award.

Eligibility Requirement (b)

At the time the State submits its application, there are no legal, statutory, or regulatory barriers at the State level to linking data on student achievement (as defined in this notice) or student growth (as defined in this notice) to teachers and principals for the purpose of teacher and principal evaluation.

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

(A) State Success Factors (125 total points)

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

The extent to which—

- (i) The State has set forth a comprehensive and coherent reform agenda that clearly articulates its goals for implementing reforms in the four education areas described in the ARRA and improving student outcomes statewide, establishes a clear and credible path to achieving these goals, and is consistent with the specific reform plans that the State has proposed throughout its application; (5 points)
- (ii) The participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) are strongly committed to the State's plans and to effective implementation of reform in the four education areas, as evidenced by Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) (as set forth in Appendix D)¹ 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

¹ See Appendix D for more on participating LEA MOUs and for a model MOU.

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).

(A)(1)(i)

The Bright Future for Nebraska Students Initiative will provide sustainable and systemic changes in the state's education system resulting in higher levels of achievement for Nebraska public school students, a clear reduction in learning gaps, and increased graduation and college going rates. Nebraska’s comprehensive reform initiative will create opportunities for excellence at all levels with a focus on implementing high quality standards and assessments; promoting teacher and leader effectiveness; supporting best practices for teaching and learning; and expanding an effective statewide longitudinal data system. The initiative's goals are clear:

- Higher levels of achievement for Nebraska public school students;
- A dramatic reduction of learning gaps;
- Increased high school graduation rates; and
- Increased college going rates.

The need for a coherent and sustainable state wide reform effort has never been greater and the Bright Future for Nebraska Students Initiative has attracted broad involvement and support. Historically, Nebraska has relied on its individual districts to prepare public school students for their future. Nebraska’s unique standards-based, teacher-developed assessment and reporting system, developed in response to the No Child Left Behind legislation in 2002, provided a platform and a reform pathway that resulted in state-wide

improvements in the achievement levels of Nebraska students. Due to a concentrated effort from the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) and the state's Education Service Units (ESUs), the state invested in the capacity of teachers and education leaders to implement standards based curricula, state-required assessments, and No Child Left Behind (NCLB) accountability measures in the state's schools and classrooms. Because of this nation-leading effort, Nebraska's teachers and principals are assessment literate and have been directly involved in setting standards, aligning curriculum, and using data to inform instruction.

Over the past five years, Nebraska students have made achievement gains in all standards areas (reading, writing, math and science) and have traditionally performed above the national average on National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) assessments. Since 2005, however, the gap between performance of Nebraska's students and the national average has narrowed. For instance, in the most recent NAEP mathematics assessment, grade 4 students in Nebraska were at the national average. Moreover, the need for universal high achievement, the closing of learning gaps and increasing high school graduation and college going rates requires a greater commitment of support at the state, education service unit and local district levels to maintain and build upon the gains made in the past.

Nebraska has 253 school districts with a wide range in student enrollment. The state's largest school district, the Omaha Public Schools, has 46,246 students, while the McPherson County Public School district enrolls only 73 students. There are 134 Nebraska school districts that have less than 390 students or fewer than 30 students per grade level. Overall, there are 283,000 students in Nebraska's public schools. Of Nebraska's public school students, 37% qualify for free or reduced price lunch, 7% are English language learners (ELL), and 15% have special education needs. These percentages, particularly students in poverty and ELL students, have risen in the state over the past decade.

Nebraska has a history of schools with strong academic and performance traditions. For example, Nebraska students graduate from high school at a rate well above the national average and score relatively high marks on national tests, such as the National

Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), and the ACT. This high performance level, however, does not hold-up for all student groups and the state has significant achievement gaps and graduation rate disparities. Nebraska is committed strongly to closing achievement gaps for all students. Education is about opportunities for high achievement levels for all students and Nebraskans want all students to graduate from high school career and college ready.

Achieving the Bright Future for Nebraska Students Initiative's goals will require transformation, both within the Nebraska Department of Education and throughout Nebraska's 253 school districts. Three core principles will guide the state's continuous improvement agenda. First, all work within this initiative will be anchored in research and evidence based practice. Second, all work within this initiative will be coherent, P-16, and focused on student learning. Third, all work within this initiative will be sustainable, so as to support the Nebraska Department of Education, Education Service Units and school districts in continuous improvement beyond the grant period.

At this time, 218 of the state's 253 districts enrolling 95% of the state's students have signed MOU's supporting the Bright Future for Nebraska Students Initiative. This proposal takes a systems approach based on continuous school improvement for schools and the state and includes effective intervention when students fail to learn at high expected levels. The implication throughout this proposal is that this is a long-range effort and a long-range commitment by the state to direct resources to the specific reforms described below.

Standards and Assessments – Nebraska is participating in the Common Core Standards development process and plans to adopt the Math and English Language Arts standards by August 2010. Further, Nebraska will create and implement a high quality balanced assessment system building on the nation leading assessment literacy of Nebraska educators and including aligned professional development and district supports (training, curriculum development, instructional materials), use of electronic/computerized assessments to provide immediate and accurate data for classroom teachers via a multi-state collaborative effort, and increasing college readiness curricular and instructional opportunities through a new Nebraska Virtual High School/STEM academy. A

proposed multi-state consortium, called MOSAIC (Multiple Opportunities for Student Assessment and Instruction Consortium) will build upon the work of Linda Darling Hammond, and include performance assessment and the involvement of teachers in the assessment process.

Great Teachers and Leaders – Nebraska will establish state-wide teacher and principal standards of performance. Nebraska will develop and implement a state-wide evaluation model for teachers and leaders, which includes a link to student performance and uses that performance as a predominant part of the evaluation. The project will provide incentives and support for teachers and leaders to serve in the state’s high-poverty and/or high minority schools. Current certification requirements will be revised to build on professional effectiveness and improve development/preparation of educators, particularly in the STEM area. Nebraska will create a statewide, on-going, job-embedded professional development system to build teacher and principal capacity and skills for effective teaching and learning.

Data System - The Nebraska Student and Staff Records System (NSSRS) will be expanded to link pre-K, K-12, postsecondary and career elements, meeting all 12 America COMPETES Act criteria, and support district level data systems to inform instruction. In coordination with the state's State Longitudinal Data Systems grant application filed in December 2009, Nebraska will complete the expansion of its statewide data system and enhance capabilities to use, share and mine data to meet the objectives of Race to the Top.

Turning Around the Lowest Achieving Schools - Nebraska will develop and implement a state accountability system that includes a growth indicator and provide resources to identify, intervene in, and support the state's persistently lowest achieving schools. This support would be based on the four reform models contained in RTTT. Included would be state-led technical assistance and professional development, and access to success based-programs (includes expanded career academies, youth leadership development plans such as Success Pathfinders, Positive Behavior Supports, on-going supervised improvement plans), dropout prevention and recovery support, increasing early learning program quality and access, expanded learning time initiatives, virtual high school

opportunities for credit recovery and access to rigorous curricula, and family/community engagement and support efforts.

The Race to the Top grant will be used to complete the actions above and to create at the end of the four year grant cycle the following sustainable improvements in the Nebraska public school system:

- Standards and Assessment System featuring the NGA/CCSSO Common Core standards, a “balanced” assessment system, and meaningful accountability for the state’s persistently lowest achieving schools;
- Supports and Intervention System, utilizing RTTT’s four models of school reform, for building and sustaining district/school building capacity to continuously improve student performance and close achievement gaps, particularly in the state’s persistently lowest achieving schools;
- Teacher/Leader Evaluation Framework using student growth as a primary indicator and based on new statewide teacher/leader standards;
- Embedded Professional Development and Induction System providing targeted supports focused on effective teaching and learning, including use of data to inform instruction;
- Early Learning Quality System for increasing kindergarten readiness rates;
- Longitudinal Data System for promoting informed decisions by key stakeholders, including teachers, administrators, students, parents and policy makers.

Nebraska state education leadership is unified in support of this initiative. The Bright Future for Nebraska Students Initiative Steering Committee, includes the Governor, the Chair of the Nebraska Legislature Education Committee, the Commissioner of Education, the President of the University of Nebraska system, the President of the Nebraska State Education Association, the Executive Director of the Nebraska Community College Association, the Executive Director of the Nebraska Association of School Boards, the Executive Director of the Nebraska Council of School Administrators, the Executive of the Education Service Units Coordinating Council, the

Executive Director of the Nebraska P-16 Initiative, the Chair of the Douglas-Sarpy County Learning Community Coordinating Council, the Executive Director of the Ponca Tribe of Nebraska, the Executive Director of the Urban League of Nebraska, the Executive Director of the Latino Center of the Midlands, Executive Directors of four large private foundations, and four public school superintendents. (*See Appendix A, Governor's RTTT Steering Committee Members and Letters of Support*)

(A)(1)(ii)

Education leaders in Nebraska, including school board members, superintendents, principals, and teachers are key partners in the Bright Futures for Nebraska Students Initiative. Upon receipt of information detailing Nebraska's plan to advance a broad reform agenda to raise levels of achievement for Nebraska public school students, close learning gaps, and increase graduation and college going rates, 218 of 253 school districts representing over 95% of all students signed the state's Memoranda of Understanding. (*See Appendix B, Bright Futures for Nebraska Students Initiative, Race to the Top by the State of Nebraska, Memorandum of Understanding*) Included among supporting LEAs are 86% of all school districts, which enroll 95% of all students, and 93% of students in poverty. To provide all districts with information, the Memorandum of Understanding required of participating LEAs was e-mailed to all districts and detailed by the State Commissioner of Education in a webinar on December 16, 2009. The percentage of LEA's committed to implementing the initiative's core programs ranges from 74% to 85%. Of the 218 participating LEA's, 100% of superintendents 71% of school board presidents, and 64% of local teachers' union leaders signed the MOU.

(A)(1)(iii)

With 86% of the eligible LEA's, including 95% of the state's public school students, signing onto the Bright Future for Nebraska Student Initiative as outlined in this grant application, the potential for Nebraska to broadly and positively impact statewide achievement, close learning gaps, and increase graduation rates and college going rates is very high. With approval of this proposal,

Nebraska seeks to meet the following goals:

- Raise the overall achievement of Nebraska’s students in reading/language arts, mathematics, and science, as measured by the statewide assessment/accountability system;
- Dramatically close gaps in achievement among various racial and ethnic groups;
- Increase high school graduation rates, while eliminating the current disparity among racial and ethnic groups; and
- Increase college enrollment rates for all students, while significantly raising the enrollments for African American, Hispanic, and Native American students to approximate the statewide average.

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	207	95%
C. Data Systems to Support Instruction		
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction:		
(i) Use of local instructional improvement systems	206	94%
(ii) Professional development on use of data	207	92%
(iii) Availability and accessibility of data to researchers	205	94%
D. Great Teachers and Leaders		
(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance:		
(i) Measure student growth	206	94%
(ii) Design and implement evaluation systems	200	92%
(iii) Conduct annual evaluations	203	93%
(iv)(a) Use evaluations to inform professional development	204	94%
(iv)(b) Use evaluations to inform compensation, promotion and retention	192	88%

(iv)(c) Use evaluations to inform tenure and/or full certification	198	91%
(iv)(d) Use evaluations to inform removal	204	94%
(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals:		
(i) High-poverty and/or high-minority schools	202	93%
(ii) Hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	206	94%
(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals:		
(i) Quality professional development	207	95%
(ii) Measure effectiveness of professional development	206	94%
E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools		
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	201	92%

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

Signatures acquired from participating LEAs:			
Number of Participating LEAs with all applicable signatures			
	Number of Signatures Obtained (#)	Number of Signatures Applicable (#)	Percentage (%) (Obtained / Applicable)
LEA Superintendent (or equivalent)	218	218	100%
President of Local School Board (or equivalent, if applicable)	154	218	71%
Local Teachers' Union Leader (if applicable)	139	218	64%

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

	Participating LEAs (#)	Statewide (#)	Percentage of Total Statewide (%) (Participating LEAs / Statewide)
LEAs	218	253	86%
Schools	892	985	91%

K-12 Students	268,696	283,321	95%
Students in poverty	111,751	117,246	95%

Detailed Table for (A)(1)

See Appendix C, Detailed Participating LEA Table for Criteria (A)(1)

(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)

Leadership for implementing this plan will rest with the State Commissioner of Education, who will maintain constant oversight of

all aspects of the initiative. To provide support, joint teams from NDE and participating LEAs will be formed around each of the sustainable improvements described in Section (A)(1)(i) above. The involvement of participating LEAs in these teams is crucial to ensure that the efforts are more than activities at the NDE level, but really result in change and improvement at district and school level.

Some teams, such as the data systems team, will be chaired by NDE personnel, with local members making certain that data collection requirements are reasonable and that the information collected and disseminated is useful to teachers and other key stakeholders. Other teams, such as the Professional Development team, will be better led by Educational Service Unit (ESU) and LEA representatives. Teams will have four main functions:

- Review current status of state and local level improvement and develop annual and end of project goals and specific activities to be carried out;
- Maintain constant oversight of implementation and progress and make necessary adjustments to the plan;
- Report to the State Board of Education on both an informal and formal basis; and
- Evaluate the success of the initiative.

The State Board will regularly review information provided by the teams and assess the initiative's progress. The Board will approve annual reports prepared by the teams for the State Commissioner of Education, the Governor, and the Bright Future for Nebraska Students Initiative Steering Committee.

Fiscal oversight will be provided by NDE's Office of Finance and Organizational Services. The office will assign full time personnel to the project to ensure all expenditures are within the grant budget and meet other federal requirements.

Nebraska is aware of current and ongoing research that may have implications for the state's efforts. It is crucial that, as new knowledge is discovered, it is put to use in this project. Therefore, NDE's research and evaluation office will play a central role in both assessing the project's progress and providing information to adjust activities in light of new insights. This office will have two main functions. First, it will provide an annual review of progress toward meeting the project's goals, including analysis of the effectiveness of various activities. Second, it will maintain an up to date research base in all areas related to the Bright Future for Nebraska Students Initiative and provide relevant information to the State Board and implementation teams. Further, it will periodically review actions by the board and teams to determine if this information is both useful and, if so, put it to use.

Should Nebraska not be successful in gaining this ARRA grant, the state will maintain these goals and continue to strive to meet them. Without supplementary federal resources, however, the project timeline will be extended significantly. Meanwhile, despite the state's best efforts, the poorest performing schools will not receive adequate support to significantly improve, achievement gaps will be somewhat lessened but remain substantial, some students will leave school before completing grade 12, and college will remain out of reach for many students. (See Bright Future for Nebraska Students budget tables and narratives beginning on p. 148.)

(A)(2)(ii)

As noted earlier, Nebraska state education leadership is unified in its support of this initiative. The Bright Future for Nebraska Students Initiative Steering Committee, described in (A)(1)(i) is broad based, including a wide range of education stakeholders in the state. The Bright Future for Nebraska Students Initiative intends to maintain this steering committee throughout the project period (and possibly afterwards) to make certain the involvement and ongoing support of all relevant parties. Further, steering committee members will be tasked with providing information to their various constituencies and with providing a mechanism for constituent members to provide information to the steering committee and hence to project operation. We are aware that once support for a project is obtained, there is a tendency for entities such as this steering committee to wither. That is not the intention here – we

intend the steering committee to do what its name implies – steer – and its continued involvement is vital. This application includes twenty-six letters of support, including letters from top public officials, leading civil rights organizations, foundations, education associations, major colleges and universities, and the state teachers' union among others. The support letters are included in *Appendix A* and organized using a summary table.

Finally, though this presentation makes regular reference to the “proposal” and “project,” the use of these terms does not imply that the activities to be carried out are in any way not the central operation of education reform in the state. What is being described is the core of the state’s effort to dramatically improve the education of children in Nebraska and the full force of the NDE and other providers of education is behind it.

(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)

In 1998, Nebraska was one of the first states in the nation to launch a comprehensive P-16 initiative to improve student achievement. The initiative has facilitated the adoption of far reaching goals consistent with Race to the Top's four priority areas and coordinated the school reform efforts of education leaders and policy makers from across the state. Nebraska's P-16 Initiative's goals include:

- Adopting a college and career preparation core curriculum that requires four years of English and three years each of math, science, and social studies in Nebraska school district by the 2014-2015 school year;
- Eliminating the academic achievement gap between Nebraska's K-12 white students and its African-American, Hispanic, and Native American students;
- Developing an effective longitudinal data system, to provide information on the Nebraska educational system from preschool through post-graduate degree attainment and entry into the workforce to help align resources with strategic goals;
- Improving Nebraska's high school graduation rate to 90 percent;
- Improving Nebraska's college-going rank to the top-10 tier nationally;
- Providing affordable access for Nebraska students to attend Nebraska's postsecondary institutions;

- Improve time to degree completion and increase the graduation rates of Nebraska's postsecondary institutions; and
- Increase by five percent the number of teacher education graduates in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) within Nebraska postsecondary institutions.

Nebraska's P-16 goals have helped facilitate state progress in each of Race to the Top's four priority education reform areas, including:

Standards and Assessments: Nebraska strengthened its standards and assessments systems in recent years by moving to a new statewide accountability and assessment framework and recently adopted a new college and career preparation core graduation requirement. State Law (Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-760.3 (Reissue 2008) enacted in 2008 is transitioning Nebraska for the first time to a new state wide testing system, the Nebraska State Accountability System (NeSA). The first operational test for reading will occur in 2010, for mathematics in 2011, and for science in 2012. To complement this new assessment system, a new accountability system is under development. It is anticipated that this accountability system, built upon individual student scores generated through centralized state testing, will significantly strengthen the state's accountability framework and better identify the state's persistently lowest achieving schools. Annual funding provided by the federal State Assessments Grant program is being used to effectively implement this new system along with major investments at the state level. As described in the Standards and Assessments section below, Nebraska's new standards are consistent with the level of rigor outlined in the American Diploma Project.

As noted above, in December 2009 the State Board of Education adopted a college and career preparation graduation requirement for all students, including four years of English and three years each of math, science, and social studies in Nebraska school districts by the 2014-2015 school year. Nebraska's governor approved the change on January 14, 2010, and the rules become effective on January 19, 2010. The requirements will be implemented for all students over the next few years.

In addition, 100 Nebraska school districts report using State Fiscal Stabilization Fund investments provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act for formative assessment development and implementation, 121 districts report using the funding for curriculum alignment with new state standards, 136 districts report using the funding to acquire technology for online assessments, 74 districts report using the funding for adding Advanced Placement or more rigorous courses, and 91 districts report using the funding to promote college and career readiness.

Data Systems: Nebraska materially improved its statewide longitudinal data system in recent years and is committed to meeting quickly the twelve elements of the America COMPETES Act. In school year 2007-08, Nebraska began the first full year of implementation of Nebraska's State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) known as the Nebraska Student and Staff Record system (NSSRS) in all public schools. NSSRS included the implementation of the NDE Student ID and the creation of a state data warehouse, which incorporated student level demographic data (including data regarding special education, programs for English language learners, school district or Educational Service Unit operated early childhood programs), student enrollment data, student performance data and other program participation data.

In 2007, Nebraska received funding under the second round of the Institute for Education Science's SLDS grant program for expanding its SLDS to include:

- Incorporation of Special Education and Curriculum components (Special Education data has been incorporated into the NSSRS and updating curriculum component will be delayed to coordinate with the state's December 4, 2009 SLDS application.);
- Implementation of the Data Quality Curriculum (The curriculum is complete and now part of an overall strategy to continuously improve data quality, including an annual data conference);
- Creation of an Electronic Transcript Facility (The Nebraska Transcript Initiative has been adopted in over 75% of

Nebraska schools);

- Installation of a decision support system (The Data Reporting System was implemented in December 2009 and will provide access to detailed data via the internet);
- Supplementing existing training with staff at regional Educational Service Units (This very successful project has provided regional support to Nebraska school districts as they implement new state data systems).

In December 2009, Nebraska applied for a second State Longitudinal Data Systems Grant from the Department of Education. If funded, this application will help Nebraska meet all of the America COMPETES Act elements by the deadlines specified in the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund. If the state does not secure a federal grant for this purpose, the state will invest in completing the system on the timeline required by State Fiscal Stabilization Fund grant program.

In addition, 100 Nebraska school districts reported using State Fiscal Stabilization Fund investments provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to implement/upgrade student information systems and 116 districts reported using the funding to improve overall data quality.

Great Teachers and Leaders: Nebraska has implemented several successful strategies to improve teacher quality in the state.

Currently, 99.7% of the state's teachers meet the requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, including 97.8% of mathematics teachers and 99.9% of elementary teachers. From 2003-2009, Nebraska concentrated on building capacity of teachers through professional development and the use of assessment cohorts to develop assessment literacy. The cohorts were coordinated through the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and supported through professional development grants to school districts supported with No Child Left Behind funds, up to \$3.5 million per year.

In addition, 160 Nebraska school districts reported using State Fiscal Stabilization Fund investments provided by the American

Recovery and Reinvestment Act for professional development for teachers, 89 districts reported using the funding for teacher mentoring programs, 93 districts reported using the funding for leadership development for teachers, 88 districts reported using the funding for collaborative teaching time initiatives, and 73 districts reported using the funding to establish professional learning communities.

School Turn-Around: Nebraska has developed and implemented a model for continuous improvement intended to assist the state's low performing schools and districts. The state has invested state funding to support school turn-around and has used federal School Improvement Grant funds to turn-around low performing schools and develop a statewide system of school improvement as called for by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

The state has designated and deployed Title I Action Compact Teams for all schools identified as in need of improvement and is presently piloting a new model with Resource Coordinators. These specially trained individuals offer specific technical assistance to low performing schools. Additionally, using NCLB funds, the state conducted extensive peer reviews of each school district's classroom based assessment system. The state completed peer reviews of 100% of the school districts. The overall emphasis and impact of this process was again teacher and principal assessment literacy development.

As illustrated below, since 2004, nine schools (over 50% of all schools identified for improvement) and two districts have successfully transitioned out of the ESEA school improvement pipeline. The state recognizes that the use of local assessments may not have resulted in a system as robust as desirable and sees a critical need to develop more rigorous one. The state must also further upgrade its system for supporting improvement in the state's struggling and persistently lowest-achieving schools.

Number of Schools/Districts in Improvement Status Since 2004

School Year	# of Buildings	# of Districts	# of Buildings Removed	# of Districts Removed
2004-05	9	2	0	0
2005-06	6	2	3	0
2006-07	4	0	2	2
2007-08	7	0	3	0
2008-09	17	0	1	0

In addition, 167 Nebraska school districts reported using State Fiscal Stabilization Funding provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act for implementing more effective instructional approaches, 122 districts reported using the funding for 21st Century classroom technology initiatives, 110 districts reported using the funding to expand learning opportunities through distance learning; 84 districts reported using the funding for drop-out prevention programs, 44 districts reported using the funding for extending the school day, 82 districts reported using the funding for early education initiatives, 78 districts reported using the funding for family and community engagement initiatives; and 80 districts reported using the funding to strengthen counseling and other student supports.

(A)(3)(ii)

From 2003 to 2008, on the basis of assessments required and approved under the ESEA, Nebraska students made steady progress. The percentage of students meeting state reading, mathematics, science and writing standards was higher in 2008 than in any other year. According to the 2009 State of the Schools Report Card, the composite results show 93% of students met state reading

standards, 92% met state mathematics standards, 93% met state writing standards, and 89% met state science standards. Since 2003, incremental progress has been demonstrated for all groups.

(A)(3)(ii)(a)

Nebraska teachers and schools have demonstrated consistently the ability to bring about higher levels of student learning over time. As described below, however, Nebraska's performance on other measures, such as NAEP, has not kept pace with the improvement shown on the State Report Card. Like many other states, progress on state measures is not always reflected in results in broader assessments. For instance, on NAEP, until 2005, Nebraska's grade 4 students always scored above the national average in mathematics. Now, they score at the national average. Grade 8 Nebraska students, on the same assessment, scored significantly above the national average until 2008. They no longer do so. Clearly, we must take action now to prevent possible further slippage.

(A)(3)(ii)(b)

From 2003 to 2008, on the basis of assessments required and approved under the ESEA, Nebraska demonstrated significant progress in closing achievement gaps for Hispanic students, African-American students, ELL students and students with disabilities. Notably, these improvements occurred over a time period when the scores of all student groups increased. For example, in 2002/2003, the reading proficiency levels of African-American and Hispanic elementary students were respectively 20% and 15% below their white peers. By 2008/2009, the reading achievement gap between African-American elementary school students and white students had closed to 7%, while the gap between Hispanic and white students reduced to 4%. Similar improvements occurred in math proficiency. For example, African-American elementary students math proficiency levels were 16% lower than their white peers in 2002/2003, but only 5% lower in 2008/2009. The proficiency gap between Hispanic students and white students in 2002/2003 was 16% in 2002/2003, but only 3% in 2008/2009. In 2002/2003, the reading performance gap between

elementary school English language learners and white students was 35%, but by 2008/2009 the difference had been reduced to 9%. In 2002/2003, the reading performance gap between elementary school students with disabilities and white students was 30%, but by 2008/2009 the difference had been reduced to 14%. Similar gains were made in elementary school mathematics scores. In 2002/2003, the mathematics performance gap between elementary English language learners and white students was 26%, but only 6% in 2008/2009. In 2002/2003, the mathematics performance gap between Students with Disabilities and white students was 27%, but only 12% in 2008/2009. Similar reading and math proficiency gains were made by subgroups in middle and high school.

(See Appendix D, Nebraska progress on NAEP reading and math scores and AYP percentages 2003 – 2009)

From 2003 to 2008, on the basis of NAEP results, Nebraska showed progress in increasing subgroup performance in some cases, but did not succeed in materially closing achieving gaps for all subgroups at all age levels. For example, in 2003 the gap between African-American and white eight graders in mathematics was 40 points. In 2008, both African-American and white students made gains, but the gap between the subgroups remained 38 points. The gap between Hispanic students and white students, however, began to close during this period. In 2003, the gap between Hispanic and white eight grade mathematics students was 40 points and in 2009 the gap decreased to 29 points. Hispanic eight graders made similar progress in reading. In 2003, the gap between Hispanic and white eight graders in reading was 30 points, by 2007 the gap had significantly decreased to 16 points. The gap between African-American and white students in reading proficiency, however, did not improve noticeably. The difference between African-American and white eight graders in reading proficiency was 30 points in 2003 and 28 points in 2007. *(See Appendix D, Nebraska Progress on NAEP reading and math scores and AYP percentages 2003-2009).*

The achievement gap based on NAEP results at the fourth grade level is more pronounced. The gap between white fourth graders and African-American fourth graders in reading was 22 points in 2003 and 27 points in 2007. The gap between Hispanic fourth graders and white fourth graders in reading was 12 points in 2003 and 36 points in 2007. Results were similar in 4th grade math where the gap between African-American students and white students was 30 points in 2003 and 32 points in 2009. The gap

between Hispanic students and white students in 4th grade math was 22 points in 2003 and 21 points in 2009.

Addressing the achievement gap indicated by the NAEP results is a top priority for the state. Nebraska hopes to replicate the improvement made by Hispanic eighth graders from 2003 to 2009 for all subgroups. The state has pursued the following strategies to close the achievement gap: (a) continued targeted professional development opportunities; (b) supported districts' classroom based, data-driven instruction; (c) extended before-after school program grants (21st Century Community Learning Centers) to low performing schools; (d) expanded quality at-risk student preschools, and (e) expanded educational opportunities for children and youth in out-of-home placements.

(A)(3)(ii)(c)

Nebraska's public high school graduation rate increased 4.3% from 2003 to 2008, rising to 89% overall. The four-year high school graduation rate for each of the state's five reported racial/ethnic groups also increased between 2003 and 2008. Among minorities, the largest increase in graduation rates between 2003 and 2008 was evidenced among Hispanics (15.4% increase), while significant improvement also occurred for Native Americans (11.4% increase) and African-American students (9.3% increase). Although graduation rates have improved for all racial/ethnic groups, much work remains to ensure that all students graduate ready for success after high school. The 2008 four-year public high school graduation rates for Hispanics (73.7%), African-American (68.7%) and Native Americans (67.4%) remains lower than the graduation rates for whites (92.7%) and Asians/Pacific Islanders (90.6%). These rates were calculated using the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) method. Nebraska is not able to calculate graduation rates for this period using the adjusted cohort rate method, but is transitioning to this methodology.

(See Appendix E, Excerpts from 2009 Nebraska Higher Education Progress Report)

During this period, Nebraska utilized several strategies to contribute to increasing the state's graduation rates. For example, the state effectively utilized Career and Technical Education to keep students on track for graduation. Nebraska uses the High Schools That

Work (HSTW) program in four Omaha high schools and six Omaha middle schools. HSTW is an effort-based school improvement initiative premised on the idea that students can master rigorous academic and career/technical studies if school leaders and teachers create an environment that motivates students to make the effort to succeed. HSTW is the nation’s first large-scale effort to engage state, district and school leaders in partnerships with teachers, students, parents and the community to raise student achievement in high school and the middle grades.

Last May, the state, in partnership with the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, sponsored a “Call to Action – America’s Promise Dropout Prevention Summit.” The summit involved community and school teams from 20 Nebraska school districts. Promising practices were shared and each team developed an action plan for their school district. Included in the plans were expansions of early childhood education efforts, expansion of after school programs, service learning projects and intensive outreach and follow-through efforts for identified at-risk middle and high school students.

(B) Standards and Assessments

State Reform Conditions Criteria

(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.²

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

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

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

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

For Phase 1 applicants:

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

For Phase 2 applicants:

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

²Phase 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.

Recommended maximum response length: Two pages

(B)(1)

Nebraska will adopt the Common Core Standards and ensure they are adopted by all participating local school districts in the state and, in cooperation with other states, build an aligned set of formative and summative assessments tied to those standards.

State legislation enacted in 2007 (LB653) required the revision of state academic standards, putting Nebraska in a favorable position to align with, transition to, and adopt the Common Core standards. As a member of the NGA/CCSSO Common Core Initiative, Nebraska has enlisted the help of Achieve, McREL, Reid Lyon and others in analyzing the newly revised standards in relation to nationally and internationally-recognized standards, the Achieve Standards, The American Diploma Project Benchmarks, the ACT standards, and the Common Core. The outcomes of the validation reports regarding the quality and rigor of Nebraska's reading and mathematics standards have been heartening. In a recent validation report concerning Nebraska's mathematics standards, Laura Slover, Vice President for Content & Policy Research, Achieve indicated, "Nebraska's standards are consistent with the level of rigor outlined in the ADP Benchmarks....If Nebraska students master the state standards, they will likely be well prepared for both workplace and college success."

Nebraska is one of the 51 states and territories that are working collectively on the Common Core standards. Nebraska Department of Education representatives are serving on the writing teams for both the Common Core language arts and mathematics K-12 standards. (*See Appendix F, Common Core Memorandum of Agreement, Participating States, International Benchmarking Evidence and Draft Standards*)

Once the State Board of Education has adopted the Common Core Standards, the standards will be added to the Regulations and Procedures for the Accreditation of Schools (Rule 10). Within 30 days of the standards adoption, a public hearing on Rule 10 will

be held and public input sought. Any gathered public input will be brought before the Board of Education for their consideration and for possible Board action. Once the State Board of Education has finalized the Rule, the Rule moves to the State Attorney General for approval, and once that process is complete, to the Governor for signature. The entire process takes approximately six months from adoption through the rule making process.

The Nebraska State Board of Education will adopt the Common Core Standards in the spring of 2010 or whenever they become final. Following adoption by the State Board, participating LEAs will adopt the Common Core Standards and assure that their local curriculum includes them. The Nebraska Department of Education in partnership with the regional Educational Service Units will work with local school district staff in supporting the integration of the Common Core Standards into local district curriculum.

Persons Responsible for Implementation: Nebraska State Board of Education, Nebraska Department of Education Staff, Local District Personnel, Staff Developers from Educational Service Units.

The Nebraska Department of Education, in partnership with the other consortium states, will develop professional development materials around the instructional integration of Common Core standards. This development process will include the creation of curricular frameworks aligned to the Common Core, defining of learning progressions within content areas, materials on instructional strategies, and suggested interventions. The University of Nebraska's Virtual High School (see description below and *Appendix K*) will assist two ways: helping to disseminate instructional materials and staff development for classroom teachers in remote areas and in making rigorous learning opportunities available to high school students, particularly in those high schools of small size or those where it is challenging to find prepared highly qualified teachers to teach the rigorous courses.

Persons Responsible for Implementation: Nebraska Department of Education Staff, University of Nebraska Virtual High School Staff, Staff from consortium states departments of education.

The integration of the Common Core Standards into each participating local school district curriculum will be accomplished with the assistance of Nebraska Educational Service Units (ESUs); regionally located throughout Nebraska. The ESUs have a long-standing tradition of providing professional development to local school districts. Within one year of adopting the Common Core Standards, each ESU will conduct curriculum integration workshops with teams from local school districts. Participating LEAs will be required to show adoption of the Common Core.

The Common Core Standards increase the level of rigor in the skills and knowledge expected for students graduating from high school. Instructional materials aligned to the Common Core Standards as well as training on effective instructional strategies will be made available to all districts through a collaborative partnership Nebraska Department of Education and the ESUs. Therefore, the standards and assessment work henceforth in the state will be based upon Common Core Standards, access to a rigorous curriculum, and participation in the Common Core Assessment that will provide timely and accurate feedback to further support quality instruction for learning.

Due to the rural nature of many school districts in the state, however, students do not always have access to all content standards, especially in the secondary school STEM areas. There are 134 Nebraska school districts that have less than 390 students or fewer than 30 students per grade level. Additionally, many of Nebraska's smallest school districts by enrollment are large geographically. Few students and immense distances result in significant challenges in offering challenging content and attracting qualified teachers. However, the schools are important not only to their students' success, but also to their communities' (and the state's) economic development. To address this situation, Nebraska plans to establish the Nebraska Virtual School (NVS) STEM Academy, an online school open to all Nebraska students.

Through the NVS STEM Academy, Nebraska students will have access to a rigorous science, technology, engineering, and mathematics curriculum that is aligned with national and Nebraska content standards and focused on the development of 21st

Century knowledge and skills. Students will have the opportunity to work with highly effective teachers and tutors, utilize an extensive library of online resources, participate in supplemental enrichment activities involving research and exploration, and engage in opportunities for information exchange with a national and an international student body.

The increased curricular opportunities of the NVS will result in students who are more fully prepared for college admission, advanced post-secondary study, and careers. By ensuring student access to a college-preparatory sequence and advanced placement courses in the STEM areas, students will meet standard college admissions requirements in mathematics and science. In addition, NVS students will benefit from opportunities to earn college credit while in high school, allowing them to begin college with a number of credits already completed. This opportunity enables students not only to accelerate their college degree plan, but also to enter college as a full-time student with the benefit of early experience and pre-adjustment to college.

A virtual high school, which students can access on their own time, will provide a viable option for students with little or no access to high quality instruction in STEM and other core academic areas. The new Nebraska Virtual School will offer students a full set of high school language arts, mathematics and science courses. Several advanced placement courses will be offered as well. Statistics released by the College Board on February 13, 2008, showed that Nebraska has been increasing the number of students taking advanced placement courses by 20% or more over the past three years. Currently, one in every 10 Nebraska juniors or seniors students is taking at least one AP course. These numbers could be significantly increased if every student had equitable access. NVS will provide such access.

NVS will also offer students the opportunity to earn college credit from state and community colleges and universities in Nebraska with courses such as College Algebra and Trigonometry, Multimedia Approach to Computing, Introduction to Computer Science (based on the 3-D graphical Alice programming environment), Astronomy, Earth's Natural Resources, Oceanography, Plant Science, Insect Biology, Biotechnology, Food Science, etc. The credit must be accepted at all Nebraska colleges and universities

for a college course to be listed as an NVS recommended course—only recommended courses would qualify for support through the NVS scholarship pool. (See college preparatory services in the next section for information about the development of learning plans for each NVS student.) (*See also, Appendix K, Nebraska Virtual School and STEM Academy Proposal*)

(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.

(B)(2)(i) and (ii)

Nebraska is strongly committed to improving the quality of its assessments. For the past 10 years, Nebraska has led the nation in building a local assessment system where teachers have taken significant leadership roles. Teachers have learned to successfully identify and teach to the learning targets inside the state standards, have built classroom-based assessments to measure those targets, and have intervened on behalf of those students who have not met standards. As a result, Nebraska educators have become assessment literate and understand the curriculum, instruction, and assessment connection.

The assessment legislation enacted by Nebraska in the last two years also outlined the development of summative testing in reading, mathematics, and science in grades 3-8 and high school. Nebraska is in the midst of the assessment transition having successfully developed an online reading test, NeSA-R, ready for operational use in 2010. A NeSA-Mathematics test will be ready for field testing in 2010 and operational testing in 2011. The development of NeSA-Science assessment is planned upon the completion of the science standards revision, tentatively scheduled for 2011-2012.

As Nebraska has transitioned to standards revision and building the Nebraska State Accountability State Tests, NeSA, the resources have followed the newly-developing process. State dollars, federal funds, human resources, and time that in the past had been provided to districts to build local assessment and to provide professional development have now been committed to state work in standards and assessment building. Additional resources are needed to continue local work and needed professional development to keep the important components of the previous formative system and to update the curriculum, instruction, and assessment knowledge that developed in the last decade.

Nebraska intends to build into the new standards and assessment system a focus on career and college readiness, a world-class standards and assessment system that is authentic and based on higher order thinking skills, a system including performance assessment and authentic tasks. This assessment system will be comprehensive, balanced, and provide immediate feedback. In addition, we will continue with formative and interim benchmark assessment, providing diagnostic information to be used in

planning for instruction.

Nebraska proposes to join a consortium of states in order to build a balanced assessment system including formative diagnostic tools and benchmark or interim tests capable of providing an “early warning” prior to the administration of summative tools. The system will be built with electronically-delivered assessments, providing immediate and accurate turn around data for all stakeholders. The system will provide formative data to students, teachers, for making instructional decisions, data for administrators and curriculum specialists to make programmatic decisions, and summative data to policy makers for local, state, and national policy making.

Nebraska is proposing to be the lead state in a consortium of states to build a coherent and balanced assessment system including authentic tasks and performance based assessment. Parts of the system will be teacher scored and parts will be electronic, providing immediate data turn around in a formative/benchmark testing system. The consortium, consisting of 26 states will build a system of “Multiple Options (for) Student Assessment (and) Instruction – (MOSAIC). The system will include flexibility in the formative assessments (all aligned with the Common Core), but will share an item bank of adaptive items across the MOSAIC consortium. The item bank will generate common benchmark “early warning” tests with common performance levels across the participating states. A Memorandum of Understanding MOU has been signed by the participating states. MOSAIC states will focus on formative assessment, teacher involvement, and authentic tasks measuring 21st century skills.

Additionally, Nebraska will join a second consortium of states (many of whom will be participating in the MOSAIC process) to develop an adaptive online summative assessment. This consortium, called the “Summative Multi-State Assessment Resources for Teachers and Educational Researchers” (SMARTER) includes a large number of lead states. Nebraska is joining with Oregon, Washington, Idaho and other partners to be sure that the MOSAIC system is seamless with the summative SMARTER test. In this way we want to assure the building of a balanced assessment system will be fluid across the formative, benchmark, and summative components.

Nebraska is joining a consortium of 36 states in building a balanced early warning and interim benchmark assessment system, leading up to the summative Common Core Assessment. “Building a comprehensive and balanced assessment system involves a process that is iterative or unending and requires a collaborative effort.” (Redfield, Roeber, Stiggins 2008).

Nebraska will build an on-line formative/interim benchmark assessment system including an item bank that can be used in building common assessments across a consortium of states.

Nebraska and the other consortium states will contract with a vendor to provide a computerized engine and software platform for both local district formative assessments and to serve as the host of an item bank that will generate common benchmark assessments. Nebraska educators are currently using classroom-based assessments that provide daily formative feedback for informing instruction, but school districts do not have the means to administer assessments online to provide immediate results, nor are these assessments currently measuring the Common Core Standards. This grant will provide that opportunity.

(See Appendix G, MOSAIC Memorandum of Agreement and Balanced Assessment Memorandum of Agreement)

Persons Responsible for Implementation: Nebraska Department of Education Staff, Vendor Staff, Staff Developers at Educational Service Units, local district teachers and administrators, Department of Education Staff and local educators from consortium partner states.

Each state in the consortium will provide field-tested items and authentic tasks in grades 3-8 and 11 to populate an item bank hosted by the online vendor. From this item bank, common benchmark assessments will be generated on a quarterly basis. All districts in Nebraska will be required to participate in the common assessments. Across the consortium common achievement standards will be set, training for the scoring of performance based assessments will be conducted, and the benchmark tests in grades 3-8 and 11 will

be administered under standardized conditions during the same testing window. At each grade level, items of varying difficulty level will be selected for the assessments so that the common tests can be adaptive in nature, adjusting to the ability level of the student. The adaptive nature of the tests will critically important for diagnostic benchmark testing.

Persons Responsible for Implementation: State Board of Education, Nebraska Department of Education Staff, Staff Developers at Educational Service Units, University of Nebraska Curriculum Staff, Vendor Staff, Hired Psychometric Staff, local district teachers and administrators, Department of Education Staff and local educators from consortium partner states.

The formative and benchmark system will generate quarterly reports of student performance showing the progress on the Common Core Standards. The reports will be designed in a student and teacher-friendly format and their purpose will be to track the growth that students are making over time.

Persons Responsible for Implementation: Nebraska Department of Education Staff, Staff Developers at Educational Service Units, Vendor staff, local district teachers and administrators, Department of Education Staff and local educators from consortium partner states.

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

(B)(3)

With the Common Core Standards as the foundation, and the balanced assessment system informing instruction, Nebraska will develop additional teacher resources, curriculum tools and professional development materials that will inform and support teachers throughout the state. The supports include opportunities to increase expertise in varying instructional strategies based on individual student needs, professional development in data analysis and technology for reporting, and skill to evaluate and use results.

This integration of the Common Core Standards into each participating local school district curriculum will be accomplished with the assistance of Educational Service Units; regionally located throughout Nebraska. The ESUs have a long-standing tradition of providing professional development to local school districts. Within one year of adopting the Common Core Standards, each ESU will conduct curriculum integration workshops with teams from participating local school districts. Schools will be required to show adoption of the Common Core Standards as a part of Nebraska's Rule 10 Regulations and Procedures for the Accreditation of Schools.

The Common Core Standards increase the level of rigor in the skills and knowledge expected for students graduating from high school. Instructional materials aligned to the Common Core Standards as well as training on effective instructional strategies will

be made available to all districts through a collaborative partnership Nebraska Department of Education and the ESUs. Therefore, the standards and assessment work henceforth in the state will be based upon Common Core Standards, access to a rigorous curriculum, and participation in the Common Core Assessment that will provide timely and accurate feedback to further support quality instruction for learning.

The Nebraska Department of Education in partnership with the regional Educational Service Units will work with local school district staff in supporting the integration of the Common Core Standards into local district curriculum.

Persons Responsible for Implementation: Nebraska State Board of Education, Nebraska Department of Education Staff, Local District Personnel, Staff Developers from Educational Service Units. The Nebraska Department of Education in partnership with the other consortium states will develop professional development materials around the instructional integration of Common Core standards. This will include curricular frameworks aligned to the Common Core, defining of learning progressions within content areas, materials on instructional strategies, and suggested interventions. The University of Nebraska's Virtual High School (described above) will assist two ways: helping to disseminate instructional materials and staff development for classroom teachers in remote areas and in making rigorous learning opportunities available to high school students, particularly in those high schools of small size or those where it is challenging to find prepared highly qualified teachers to teach the rigorous courses.

Nebraska will provide quality professional development around standards and assessment for teachers including curricular materials that frame the expectations of Common Core Standards, appropriate instructional strategies, data analysis skills, teacher scoring techniques, and strategies for intervention.

Teachers will be prepared to provide high quality and appropriate classroom instruction that focuses on the skills within the Common Core Standards, in particular the increased rigor in mathematics at the middle and high school level. The staff developers

at the Educational Service Units have been trained by the Nebraska Department of Education to provide uniform, high quality professional development in assessment development. This model will be employed in providing high quality learning for teachers in instructional strategies, data analysis and interventions.

Persons Responsible for Implementation: Nebraska Department of Education Staff, Staff Developers at Educational Service Units, University of Nebraska Curriculum Staff, Vendor Staff, Hired Psychometric Staff, local district teachers and administrators, Department of Education Staff and local educators from consortium partner states.

The NDE will survey the 17 Nebraska institutions that have teacher preparation programs to determine the current status of teacher preparation in the areas of instructional strategies corresponding to the Common Core, data analysis skills, and interventions. A new set of pre service requirements will be generated to assure that all graduating teachers will be prepared in the necessary skills to fully support the teaching and learning of the Common Core Standards.

Persons Responsible: Nebraska Department of Education Staff, Deans of the 17 Institutions of Higher Education that have teacher preparation programs, State Board of Education.

The Nebraska Department of Education in partnership with the University of Nebraska will develop a graduate cohort around the “Leading the Common Core” designed for teachers and administrators. The 18 hour cohort of graduate credit will provide specific training in the integration of the Common Core Standards inside local curriculum, the accompanying necessary professional development in high quality instruction, data analysis, and intervention strategies.

Persons Responsible: Nebraska State Board of Education, Staff at the Nebraska Department of Education, Staff at the University of Nebraska, local district teachers and administrators. Department Staff and University staff in consortium states.

The goals regarding development and adoption of standards and assessments and support to districts while transitioning into them will be accomplished through the work of a collaboration of states. Partner states who intend to participate in all activities of the grant include Kansas, Iowa, Wisconsin, Missouri. Other states have indicated an interest in participating in some but not all of the implementation tasks. The following participation levels have been made available to partner states:

- **Level One** - “Total Package” – The state participates in all tasks, shares in all resources available through the project and has an active role in developing, disseminating and sharing professional development tasks and materials.
- **Level Two** - “Partner” – The state contributes to the item bank and professional development materials, and may use components in their state for state-specific work.
- **Level Three** - “Associate” – The state contributes only to the item bank, and may use components in their state for state-specific work.

Timeline for Implementation for (B)(1-3)

March 2010 or completion	State Board of Education Adopts Common Core Standards.
March 2010-March 2011	Participating local districts adopt Common Core Standards and integrate into local curriculum. Participating local districts required to participate in the benchmark testing system.
March 2010-March 2011	Secure contract for online support of formative assessment and for hosting the consortium item bank. Begin development of curricular frameworks, units of instruction around the Common Core Standards, the blending of instruction workshops and the standards integration workshops for teachers

	and administrators.
March 2011- Aug 2011	Consortium states submit test items to the item bank for review, match to Common Core Standards, development of common test forms in reading and mathematics. Loading of locally developed formative assessment and blended instruction units into the vendor software platform.
September 2011	Initial administration of the formative assessment using the online platform.
October 2011-March 2012	Administer first of the quarterly benchmark tests common tests.
(October, January, March)	Generate first “early warning” diagnostic reports for students, parents, and teachers.
August 2010	Establish of baseline performance results on Common Core Standards for all districts participating with a special emphasis on the lowest performing schools.
March 2012-2014	Develop the 18 hour graduate cohort, “Leading the Common Core” through the University of Nebraska.

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
(Enter measures here, if any.)					

(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.

(C)(1)

Nebraska’s statewide longitudinal data system currently includes four of the twelve data elements specified by the America

COMPETES Act. The current status of the state longitudinal data system, by element, is described on the following chart:

COMPETES Act Element:	Nebraska Data System Current Status:
E1. A unique statewide student identifier that does not permit a student to be individually identified by users of the system (except as allowed by Federal and State law).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public PK-12 only. Nebraska has assigned the NDE Student ID to over 470,000 students.
E2. Student-level enrollment, demographic, and program participation information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public PK-12 only.
E3. Student-level information about the points at which students exit, transfer in, transfer out, drop out, or complete P-16 education programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public PK-12 only.
E4. The capacity to communicate with higher education data systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our system does not currently communicate with postsecondary education data systems.
E5. A State data audit system assessing data quality, validity, and reliability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implemented a data quality initiative which provides training to school district staff. • Conducted state data conference in 2008 and 2009. • Implemented a data auditing system making program staff responsible for quality data. • Implemented an automated data validation and verification system.
E6. Yearly test records of individual students with respect to assessments under section 1111(b) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collected for individual students in our current classroom-based assessment system until the implementation of the Nebraska State Accountability System. NeSA will be phased in over the next three years: Reading 2009-2010, Math 2010-2011 and Science

	2011-2012.
E7. information on students not tested, by grade and subject.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collected in the current classroom-based assessment system until the implementation of the Nebraska State Accountability System. NeSA will be phased in over the next three years: Reading 2009-2010, Math 2010-2011 and Science 2011-2012.
E8. A teacher identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our system does not currently support the ability to match teachers to students.
E9. Student-level transcript information, including information on courses completed and grades earned.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our system does not currently support the ability to capture student transcript information.
E10. Student-level college readiness test scores.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual ACT scores are loaded into our system.
E11. Data that provide information regarding the extent to which students transition successfully from secondary school to postsecondary education, including whether students enroll in remedial coursework.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NDE matches Nebraska graduate file with the <i>National Student Clearinghouse</i> to determine Nebraska college going rate. No information on enrollment in remedial courses at the postsecondary level is available at this time.
E12. Data that provide other information determined necessary to address alignment and adequate preparation for success in postsecondary education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For purposes of this application the use of the Perkins program performance measures and the expectations of a longitudinal program analysis will serve as a pilot project to engage, on a smaller programmatic scale, the data systems, and processes developed and implemented as part of the Nebraska Student and Staff Record system (NSSRs). The use of the program specific area to conduct analysis is intended to create potential models for

	<p>implementation and testing, support the longitudinal use and evaluation of the data, and create, in essence, a pilot of deeper and broader analysis in the future of the entire system.</p>
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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.³

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)

Nebraska will use its longitudinal data system to inform and engage key stakeholders and support the state's continuous school improvement model by providing user friendly access to high quality data designed to inform policy, instruction, operations, management, resource allocation, and overall effectiveness. The state will accomplish this goal through three principal efforts: (1)

³ 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.

expeditiously completing its SLDS consistent with the twelve elements specified in the America COMPETES Act (as described in the Nebraska's 2009 State Longitudinal Data Systems Grant); (2) expanding and improving stakeholder's access to the data through two improved, user-friendly web based interfaces; and (3) improving stakeholder awareness and understanding of the SLDS's evolving capabilities.

Nebraska will Complete its SLDS Consistent with the Requirements and Timelines of the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund:

Nebraska filed an application on December 4, 2009 to receive funding from the U.S. Department of Education's State Longitudinal Data program to complete its SLDS. The State does not propose to use RTTT funding for this purpose, but believes this critical step must be described to convey the state's coherent approach to improving data access and use. Through this effort, the Nebraska Student and Staff Records System (NSSRS) – described in (C)(3) below - will be expanded to link pre-K, K-12, postsecondary and career elements, meeting all 12 America COMPETES Act criteria. Completion of a fully operational SLDS is a critical precursor to providing stakeholders with the information they require to make informed decisions, and for successful implementation of Nebraska's comprehensive approach to RTTT's other core reform areas: teacher-leader effectiveness, high quality standards and assessments and school-turnaround, so in the absence of SLDS Grant Program support for this element of the project, state resources will allocated to support completion of the SLDS consistent with the timelines and requirements of the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund.

Nebraska will Expand and Improve Data Access: Nebraska provides timely data access to parents, teachers, school leaders, policy makers and other stakeholders on student achievement and a variety of other topics through the SLDS's reporting components, but will use Race to the Top Funding to strengthen systems designed to ensure that education and other relevant data is easily accessible and usable. Nebraska currently maintains two websites for public data reporting and access: (1) State of the Schools Report; and (2) Data Reporting System (DRS). In 2000, Nebraska published the first State of the Schools Report (SOSR). Initially required by state statute, the SOSR also became Nebraska's No Child Left Behind state report card. The SOSR provides a

comprehensive data view relating to federal and state accountability, student performance, and student and teacher demographics. Under a 2007 state Longitudinal Data Systems grant, Nebraska developed a new Data Reporting System, which made student and staff data from the Nebraska Student and Staff Record System available to stakeholders through a public-facing website beginning in December 2009. The new DRS system enables stakeholders to further leverage data from the state's expanding SLDS, by giving them greater access to data tools for improving instruction, informing administrative and state level decision making, while also supporting research needed to strengthen the state's continuous improvement model. Nebraska will use Race to the Top Funding to support expansion and improvement of the DRS and SOSR systems. Improvements to these two systems will continue as the state develops all elements of its SLDS and to reflect changing stakeholder needs and practices.

Nebraska will Expand Statewide Technical Assistance: Nebraska proposes to build-on the state's successful foundations for data access and use by offering greater statewide technical assistance to help stakeholders better understand the SLDS's capabilities and to provide strategies for using data more effectively. The state will expand its current statewide technical assistance framework to improve overall data access and use by all stakeholders, including through workshops, expansion of the state's data help desk and the development of effective materials designed to address the unique needs of different stakeholders. The project will be administered consistent with the state's proposed next generation professional development framework to ensure maximum reach and effectiveness and will provide technical assistance consistent with the three other major reform initiatives described in this application. This technical assistance effort is described in greater detail in section (C)(3) below.

In developing this proposal, and the state's closely related SLDS proposal, NDE worked closely with a range of state stakeholders. The state's data initiative represents a joint effort between the Nebraska P-16 Initiative and the Nebraska Department of Education and will be led by NDE. The proposals described above and below in section (C)(3) are supported by organizations represented on the executive committee of the Nebraska P-16 Initiative. Another important sounding board in development of the proposed initiatives is Nebraska's state education Data Advisory Committee that includes school administrators, teachers, and data experts.

NDE also consulted individually with representatives of the University of Nebraska system, Nebraska State College system and Nebraska Community College system. Further, NDE consulted with statewide organizations, including the Nebraska State Education Association (teachers union), the Nebraska Association of School Boards, and the Nebraska Council of School Administrators. These stakeholders will continue to collaborate to ensure that the SLDS meets their needs and practices.

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
(Enter measures here, if any.)					

(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

(C)(3)(i) and (ii)

Nebraska proposes to use Race to the Top funding to: (1) provide technical assistance regarding acquiring, adopting and using instructional improvement systems; (2) improving school and district data quality; (3) supplementing district early learning data; (4) improving data systems interoperability and analysis; and (5) making instructional and state longitudinal data available and accessible to researchers.

Nebraska will Expand Statewide Technical Assistance for Using Data to Improve Instruction: Nebraska proposes to expand its current statewide data technical assistance framework, including providing expertise to districts regarding the acquisition, adoption and use of instructional improvement systems. This effort will include expanding the state's data training network for districts and schools, offering additional help desk support and supporting expansion of the DRS and SOSR public reporting websites (described in (C)(2)) that enable data to be easily generated for continuous improvement and decision making. Nebraska will hire four full time data trainers to support all of the state's school districts. One trainer will cover the western part of the state, one the central portions and two trainers, located at NDE headquarters in Lincoln, will cover the state's more populous eastern

region. Each trainer will have significant technical experience and experience working with Nebraska schools. NDE has also established a very successful help desk program to support school districts in meeting state and federal reporting requirements. The state anticipates that the projects described in this application will require one additional FTE serving as an IT Help Desk Specialist.

Nebraska will Support Improved District Efforts to Use Data for Instruction: Nebraska proposes to improve the use of data for instruction, by developing additional teacher resources, curriculum tools and professional development opportunities and materials that will inform and support teachers and leaders statewide. This is a core goal of the MOSAIC project, which is proposed in the Standards and Assessments section of this application. The Common Core Standards and the state's proposed balanced assessment system will serve as the foundation for the state's strategy for better using data to inform instruction. The system will build on Nebraska's existing nation leading local assessment system, which has been operational for over a decade and is further described in the Standards and Assessments section of the application. The supports will include, but not be limited to opportunities to increase expertise in varying instructional strategies based on individual student needs, professional development in data analysis and technology for reporting, and skill to evaluate and use assessment results. These new materials will be practical and professional in nature, so that they will move beyond the collection of data to its use, beyond the knowledge of instructional strategies to their application, and beyond the mere training of teachers to sharpening their expertise in the teaching and learning process. Technical assistance will be delivered through a series of workshops and available over time. NDE will follow up with workshop participants to ensure that data is indeed being used to inform instruction that NDE will regularly evaluate the impact of the workshops on the use of data. The program will be led by NDE and implemented in conjunction with the state's Educational Service Units.

Nebraska currently supports local schools and districts in the use of instructional improvement systems through a series of workshops entitled Leadership for Continuous Improvement. The state proposes to continue and expand this critically important state wide effort. The project will require two full time trainers. Over the past two years nearly 800 educators from 253 schools participated and have benefited from the program. The workshops utilize the seven Standards for Effective Schools from the

National Study of School Evaluation, an arm of AdvancEd. Standard Four - Documenting and Using Results - requires schools to create a comprehensive assessment system documenting performance and using results to improve student performance and school effectiveness. Among other things, quality indicators for this standard include: (1) Establishing performance measures that yield reliable, valid and bias free information; (2) Using student assessment data for making decisions for continuous improvement of the learning process; (3) Using comparison and trend data in student performance in evaluating effectiveness; and (4) Maintaining a secure, accurate and complete student record system in accordance with state and federal regulations.

Nebraska will Improve School District Data Quality: The state also will undertake a sustained effort to support improved school district data quality, in order to maximize the impact of instructional improvement systems. Nebraska implemented a training network to support participating LEAs in the development and submission of state required data, in order to ensure that data is of the highest quality. Four trainers, supported by a help desk program have conducted workshops across the state to help districts improve overall data quality. Based on federal standards, the trainers developed a data quality curriculum to facilitate the creation and use of best practices in local schools. Nebraska proposes to expand this important initiative by supporting the hiring of a "Data Steward" in each participating LEA. Data Stewards will serve school administrators by ensuring that the statistical information reviewed by senior staff represents data that have been entered accurately and collected systematically. Furthermore, Data Stewards enhance the information reporting process through staff development and collaboration with the various offices and programs responsible for producing data and information. As a result, Data Stewards ensure adequate, agreed upon quality of metrics are maintained on a continuous basis

Nebraska will Supplement Early Learning Data: Nebraska proposes to improve state and district early learning data use and quality, by developing an Early Learning Connection Registry to provide a database accessible to early childhood system stakeholders who are tracking the participation of early childhood practitioners in professional development activities (including data use best practices) and quality improvement processes that will improve program quality and lead to improved outcomes for

children in Nebraska. The project will be managed by a full time Early Childhood Project Manager will have primary responsibility for developing and implementing the Early Learning Connection Registry including project design. The Project Manager will serve in a liaison capacity with other potential data sources, support data quality assurance, and provide technical assistance for early childhood constituencies in school-based and school-linked community early childhood programs. The initiative will also support a full time Early Childhood IT Programmer and a part time Early Childhood Career Development Coordinator.

Nebraska will Improve Data Interoperable and Workforce Analysis Capabilities: Nebraska will expand informal educational data sources and better coordinate relevant data collection and use, in order to support district's use of instructional improvement systems. The state will also enhance the work of FutureForce Nebraska by collecting data on programmatic career development interventions from programs in workforce, community based organizations, health and human services, and education to establish a baseline of programmatic interventions that will be available for district alignment and analysis. In addition, pursuing the potential connections of individual-level data associated with some of these interventions in career planning, extended learning experiences, and other sources of non-formal education create a rich foundation for expanding and improving district and state data driven decision making. Finally, NDE is developing a research and evaluation component that will support school administrators, teachers and outside staff providing direct support to schools. An example of this activity is the longitudinal comparison of PK students to their performance on state tests in primary school.

(C)(3)(iii)

Nebraska provides timely state data access to researchers through the reporting components of its SLDS, but will use Race to the Top Funding to significantly enhance this access. The state's Data Reporting System is a valuable new resource for researchers who use NSSRS data, within the limits dictated by federal law. NDE has a longstanding partnership with researchers within Nebraska and outside the state and is committed to expanding these partnerships using the DRS. Most of these researchers are employed by

the state's universities or work at regional labs. NDE also regularly provides NSSRS data to national research organizations and works closely with Nebraska universities and colleges to evaluate state education programs. For example, NDE is currently working with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to evaluate Nebraska state math programs. NDE developed the Nebraska Data Access and Management Policy to outline the procedures researchers and NDE must follow in appropriately sharing student data within the guidelines of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The DRS's "Advanced Inquiry" feature allows users to manipulate data using advanced "cube" technology. The Nebraska Student and Staff Records System contain information on all of the student types identified in Race to the Top's data criterion. These existing systems and policies are supported by statewide training and supports, including a data help desk.

Project Timelines (C)(2) and (C)(3)

Expanding State Technical Support:

Activity:	Project Component Deliverable	Days	Start	Finish
1.1	Develop job descriptions, post positions, interview for training staff	90	Jul 2010	Sep 2010
1.2	Hire trainers, help desk position, support staff	30	Sep 2010	Oct 2010
1.3	Purchase equipment, acquire office space	60	Aug 2010	Oct 2010
1.4	Develop training materials, schedule training	90	Oct 2010	Dec 2010
1.5	Provide workshops and workdays for districts and schools	700	Jan 2011	Jun 2014
1.6	Develop Request for Proposal for expansion of State of the Schools Report and Data Reporting System	60	Jan 2012	Feb 2012
1.7	Release RFP, review proposals/bids award contract for expansion of SOSR and DRS	120	Mar 2012	Jun 2010
1.8	Monitor 24 month contract for expansion of SOSR and DRS	560	Jul 2012	Jun 2014

Supporting the Use of Data to Improve Instruction

Activity:	Project Component Deliverable	Days	Start	Finish
2.1	Develop job descriptions, post positions, interview for training staff	90	Jul 2010	Sep 2010
2.2	Hire trainers, help desk position, support staff	30	Sep 2010	Oct 2010
2.3	Purchase equipment, acquire office space	60	Aug 2010	Oct 2010
2.4	Develop training materials, schedule training	90	Oct 2010	Dec 2010
2.5	Provide workshops and workdays for districts and schools	700	Jan 2011	Jun 2014

Improving Data Quality in School Districts:

Activity	Project Component Deliverable	Days	Start	Finish
3.1	Develop requirements for Data Stewards contract with 253 School districts	10	Jul 2010	Aug 2010
3.2	Set up procedures for monitoring contracts	10	Jul 2010	Aug 2010
3.3	Collect signed contracts	30	Sep 2010	Oct 2010
3.4	Monitor implementation of contracts	100	Oct 2010	Jun 2014

Supplementing Early Learning Data:

Activity	Project Component Deliverable	Days	Start	Finish
4.1	Recruit and hire staff.	5	May 2010	Jul 2010
4.2	Convene grant management team for initial planning.	3	Jul 2010	Jul 2010
4.3	Map communication plan for interface with other related committees and task forces to include: Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council (ECICC), ECICC Multi-system team, Early Childhood Data Coalition, Early Childhood Trainer	10	Jul 2010	Sep 2010

	Registry workgroup, others.			
4.4	Develop Early Learning Connection Registry work plan and SLDS interfaces.	10	Jul 2010	Sep 2010
4.5	Confirm data elements for all aspects of the Registry.	25	Jul 2010	Dec 2010
4.6	Early Learning Connection Registry system software development.	180	Sep 2010	Jan 2012
4.7	Explore considerations needed for unique student identifier assignment for non-school district early childhood programs.	30	Jan 2010	Apr 2010

Interoperability/Workforce Analysis:

Activity	Project Component Deliverable	Days	Start	Finish
5.1	Determine the required data elements and processes needed to conduct longitudinal analysis of Career Education pilot.	20	Jun 2010	Dec 2010
5.2	Conduct meetings and analysis for implementing data collection elements necessary for Career Education pilot that include discussion and planning of potential workforce data opportunities.	20	Jun 2010	Dec 2010
5.3	Develop data analysis model that includes secondary to postsecondary transitions analysis, student-level college readiness test scores, alignment, and preparation for postsecondary, student-level enrollment, demographic and program participation, and student-level exit/transfer/completion.	30	Jan 2011	Dec 2011
5.4	Convene meetings for planning and data analysis model development and identification of informal education data sources	10	Sep 2010	Mar 2011
5.5	Communicate with higher education to develop data audit system that assesses quality, validity, and reliability in preparation for conducting the analysis.	5	Nov 2010	Nov 2012

5.6	Implement data analysis model developed and report findings through the NDE Data Reporting System (DRS).	40	Dec 2010	Dec 2011
5.7	Communicate results of data analysis and implement strategies for identifying continuous improvement strategies that inform instruction and program development.	20	Dec 2011	Jun 2012
5.8	Conduct an evaluation of the model implementation to determine adjustments necessary for additional data analysis projects.	20	Jan 2012	Jun 2012

(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

(D)(1)(i) and (ii)

There are currently several alternative pathways established for teachers to become appropriately certified to teach in Nebraska schools.

Transition to Teaching Program/Certificate (Program is outlined Rule 21, *Regulations for the Issuance of Certificates and Permits to Teach, Provide Special Services, and Administer, Section 005.27*): Requirements for the Transitions to Teaching Program route to certification include the following:

- A request for issuance from the school system in which the applicant intends to teach;
- A baccalaureate degree which includes at least three-fourths of the course requirements for the endorsement area;
- A plan from the employing school system for mentoring and supervising the applicant;
- Completion of a pre-teaching seminar that includes information and skill development; and
- A written agreement with a teacher education program to complete the program for an initial (regular) certificate. The University of Nebraska-Kearney (UNK) is the primary institution that recommends to the Nebraska Department of

Education that a Transitional certificate be issued. UNK has developed an 18-hour online professional education sequence which candidates complete in three six-hour modules. This option is very attractive to candidates who cannot, due to distance travel to campus for coursework.

Approximately 25 individuals enter the program each year; 92 are currently teaching in Nebraska on the Transition to Teaching certificate. Candidates generally complete the program and attain an initial (regular) certificate within three years.

Trades Certificate (Program is outlined Rule 21, *Regulations for the Issuance of Certificates and Permits to Teach, Provide Special Services, and Administer, Section 005.17*): This certificate is issued to applicants who do not meet college credit requirements for a regular certificate but have documented expertise in the area of endorsement in a trades or industrial area. Revision to the Career Education Certificate is expected to be implemented Spring, 2010 including revision of areas of specialization in expanded career education areas. In 2009-10, 27 individuals are teaching in Nebraska public schools with this certificate. College coursework is not required for renewal of this certificate.

Provisional Commitment Certificate (Program is outlined Rule 21, *Regulations for the Issuance of Certificates and Permits to Teach, Provide Special Services, and Administer, Section 005.11*): Individuals with one-half of the pre-student teaching requirements and three-fourths of the content required for an endorsement can obtain this certificate. Annual renewal of the certificate is based upon progress toward completing the requirements for a regular certificate. The certificate expires on August 31 of the year following the year of issuance or renewal and is renewable if the individual receives six hours or credit for course work which fulfills some or all of the remaining program requirements. In 2009-10, there are 22 individuals teaching on this certificate. Most of these individuals will complete deficiencies and qualify for a regular certificate in 2010-2011.

Dual Credit Certificate (Proposed Rule 21, *Regulations for the Issuance of Certificates and Permits to Teach, Provide Special Services, and Administer*): Proposed revisions will provide for a Dual Credit certificate, which can be issued to postsecondary education faculty who are teaching classes offered for both high school credit and postsecondary credit.

Career Ladder Program/Indigenous Roots Teacher Education Program (University of Nebraska Lincoln): This is a federally funded program designed to increase the number of Native American teachers to serve approximately 5,000 Native American students in Nebraska's schools by providing assistance to Native Americans seeking to become certified teachers. The program has been in operation nearly 10 years and approximately 30 individuals have completed it. Students are selected from among paraprofessionals serving schools. UNL provides courses, free of charge to students, and other support necessary for students to complete their degrees.

Native Speaker (Rule 10, *Regulations and Procedures for the Accreditation of Schools*): The program allows individuals who are teaching native languages in reservation schools to teach the language without a regular teaching certificate. Permission is granted by the Nebraska Department of Education upon the request of the local Tribal Council for a waiver of the normal certification requirement. Annually, approximately 3-4 teachers instruct using this option.

University of Nebraska at Omaha's Teacher Academy Project (UNO-TAP): Through an application process, individuals who hold an undergraduate degree in a major related to secondary schools (7-12) content area are selected by participating school districts in the metropolitan Omaha area to work in the district as an intern while completing required coursework. Each school year, approximately 20 project participants move through the program as a cohort and are enrolled as full time UNO students and complete the certification requirements in one academic year. While in the program, the participant is assigned a trained support team (building leadership member, master teacher, and university faculty) to provide professional and educational leadership in the school environment.

Post-Baccalaureate Teacher Preparation Programs: Nebraska teacher preparation institutions offer programs, which provide for individuals who hold a baccalaureate in an endorsable area to complete a teacher preparation program at the graduate level. These programs typically require individuals to complete comparable professional education coursework to that of a traditional undergraduate program; however, the courses may be accomplished in a nontraditional sequence that usually allows for completion in a slightly more compressed timeline.

The Provisional Administrative Certificate for Administrators: The provisional certificate allows persons who do not qualify for a regular administrative certificate to become provisionally certified while completing a regular program. Similar to the Provisional Commitment Teaching, this certificate is outlined in Rule 21, *Regulations for the Issuance of Certificates and Permits to Teach, Provide Special Services, and Administer*, Section 004.08-10. To be eligible, applicants must have completed at least fifty percent of the credit hours required for completion of an approved program for the endorsement of curriculum supervisor or principal, or 75% of an approved program for superintendent. It is basically a 1-year certificate (expires on August 31 of the year following the year of issuance). The certificate is renewable with completion of six semester hours of graduate credit for course work which fulfills some or the entire remaining administrative program. Including all administrative categories, forty-two administrators are currently working in Nebraska public school districts on the provisional administrative certificate. Most of these individuals will complete remaining requirements for full certification by 2010-11 if not before.

(D)(1)(iii)

While the overall supply of teachers in Nebraska is adequate, shortages occur in specific content areas and in certain geographic areas of the state. The following table shows that shortages occur primarily in small, rural districts.

2008-09 Shortage Report

Table A. Number of Districts with Unfilled Positions and Number of Unfilled Positions by District Size

Districts with Unfilled Positions			Unfilled Positions	
District Size	No.	%	No.	%
100	0	0.0	0	0.0
101 – 250	12	23.5	14	21.9
251 – 500	17	33.3	20	31.3
501 – 1,000	9	17.6	10	15.6
1,001 – 2,500	6	11.8	8	12.5
2,501 – 5,000	2	3.9	4	6.3
5,001 – 10,000	2	3.9	2	3.1
> 10,000	3	5.9	6	9.4
Total	51	100.0	64	100.0

The current annual survey is accomplished with resources available under the Excellence in Teaching Act (ETA) for purposes of identifying content shortage areas, however, it does not include detailed information about interventions districts are utilizing to address teacher shortages, nor does it provide information about projected supply/demand. The Excellence in Teaching Act is a forgivable loan program for individuals who teach in Nebraska, with a focus on the awarding of funds and subsequent forgiveness to individuals preparing to teach or who are seeking advanced degrees in content shortage areas. The ETA also provides for accelerated loan forgiveness for individuals who teach in high poverty districts. Expansion of the survey to include better supply/demand information will require assistance and input from higher education institutions, the Nebraska Council of School

Administrators and the Nebraska State Education Association.

Scaling-Up Existing Programs

The existing alternative certification programs have been operational for some time and generally are at capacity. To meet increased demand, some expansion is necessary. In addition, programs must be updated and improved to better meet the needs of districts, schools, and the participants.

The Transition to Teaching program operated by the University of Nebraska at Kearney (UNK) program will be modified so individuals can complete it in 2 years, rather than 3. This will require additional field-based supervisors and other staff to ‘compress’ the experience. UNK will assume sustainability at end of 4 year period.

Additional resources will be made available to support the expansion of the UNO TAP program for purposes of expanding faculty and recruitment and to increase the capacity of the UNO-TAP program to meet ongoing needs in the metropolitan Omaha area. UNO will assume sustainability at the end of 4 year period. The UNO-TAP and other post baccalaureate programs in the state are important resources for addressing Nebraska’s teacher needs by providing an alternative entry into the teaching profession. In addition to providing resources to increase the capacity of the UNO-TAP program, we propose using the program as a model for enhancement of Nebraska’s post-baccalaureate programs. The UNO-TAP serves a more urban need; however, the internship, cohort, and support aspects of TAP are potential model components that would strengthen other Nebraska post baccalaureate programs and provide a more attractive option for individuals, with non-teaching college degrees, to enter the teaching profession. Enhancement of a post-baccalaureate teacher preparation system on a statewide basis, due primarily to the greater geographic and rural disbursement of participants, will require modifications to the UNO-TAP model. Modification considerations will include the development of technology-based components for delivery of coursework and consideration to how to effectively create and utilize

support teams (building leadership, master teachers and higher education faculty) components.

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

(D)(2)(i)

As discussed more fully under the standards and assessment section of this application, Nebraska has, in the past, taken a unique approach toward assessing student performance. Beginning in 2001 Nebraska school districts were held accountable for the results of two district ratings in the state accountability system. The first rating was based on the quality of their local assessment processes used in each district. The second rating was based upon the performance of their students on the reading and mathematics standards as measured by locally developed assessments. Each local district assessment process was reviewed by nationally-known assessment experts and rated in classifications of unacceptable, needs improvement, good, very good, and exemplary. In order to meet state accountability requirements, districts had to earn at least a rating of “good” or higher.

State cut scores for performance in reading and mathematics were established in 2001, and districts were assigned ratings based upon the performance of their students on locally developed assessments. The classifications, ranging from unacceptable to exemplary were published on the State of the Schools Report.

The ratings on both assessment quality and student performance improved dramatically through the years. Nebraska Department of Education Staff spent considerable time working with local district staff in improving both local assessment quality and student performance. As a result both ratings improved significantly. Data collected from 2001-2006 across grades 3-8 and 11 showed the following improvement:

Assessment Quality Ratings:

2001 – 16.71% of the districts did not meet assessment quality in reading.

2006 – 100% of the districts met assessment quality in reading.

2001 – 33.70% of the districts did not meet assessment quality in mathematics.

2006 – 100% of the districts met assessment quality in mathematics.

Student Performance Ratings:

2001 – 27.75% of the districts did not meet student performance ratings in reading.

2006 – 4.36 % of the districts did not meet student performance ratings in reading.

2001 - 34.04% of the districts did not meet student performance ratings in mathematics.

2006 – 7.64% of the districts did not meet student performance ratings in mathematics.

Using federal AYP guidelines, very few school Nebraska buildings have been identified as being in need of improvement in large part because of past improvement efforts. The significant school district rating improvements can be attributed to assessment-literate Nebraska educators who use assessment data. Local districts have focused on the instruction of the state standards, classroom-based assessment, and using data for instructional improvement.

Nebraska is now in a transition from this locally based system to a system of statewide assessment. The new state legislation finalized in Nebraska state statute 79-760 in 2007-08, moves Nebraska to a new state testing system, the Nebraska State Accountability System – NeSA. The first operational test for reading is scheduled for 2010, mathematics in 2011, and science in 2012. As a result of the new assessment system, a new accountability system is under development. The state anticipates that this new accountability system, built upon individual student scores generated through centralized state testing will significantly over

time increase the number of schools identified as needing improvement.

The new accountability system under development using the NeSA results will be based upon student achievement outcomes of individual students. The State Board of Education will select multiple indicators including state test results to determine how much growth actually occurs for each individual student from year to year in grades 3-8. In non adjacent years such as high school growth will be determined by projecting the anticipated growth between grades 8 and 11. The growth between years will be diagnosed through the early-warning system built into the formative/benchmark testing system (MOSAIC – Multiple Opportunities (for) Student Assessment (and) Instruction Consortium) and the summative Common Core Assessment System that will be part of Nebraska’s balanced approach to assessment. The new Nebraska State Accountability System will be able to provide a clear picture of those schools who need additional support.

The activities outlined in the Standards and Assessment section of this proposal, along with the technology infrastructure work identified in the State Longitudinal Data Systems grant, will provide the foundation for evaluating teacher and principal effectiveness through the evaluation (performance appraisal) system described in this section of the RTTT proposal.

(D)(2)(ii)

In the past, teacher and principal evaluations have been conducted locally, using locally developed instruments and methods for those evaluations. A statewide analysis of current performance appraisal instruments and processes used by local districts is being developed through the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF) requirements, however, we know that local appraisals include: traditional methods of observation, review of artifacts such as teacher lesson plans, demonstration of participation/contributions related to school improvement efforts, and evidence of professional growth. Now, however, Nebraska is planning a dramatic change to this approach, both in the role of the state in these evaluations and the criteria on which evaluations will be based. A model educator performance appraisal template will be developed as a basis for annual evaluation process. This performance

appraisal will be based on student achievement outcomes and professional educator standards and associated indicators. Further, Nebraska is proposing the development of a statewide system of professional development support for addressing teacher development and growth needs. The professional development support system will be delivered regionally through the Educational Service Unit structure and is discussed in Section D-5. Participating districts will be required to evaluate teachers and principals on the new system described below and other districts will be encouraged to do so. The evaluation model that will be developed will place student achievement outcomes as the most substantial factor in the evaluation process.

The proposed new structure will be developed to be compliant with Nebraska statute (79-828 R.R.S.), which requires that all probationary certificated employees (teachers and administrators) during each year of probationary employment (3 successive years in the school district), be evaluated at least once each semester. The statute requires that probationary employees be observed and evaluations be conducted based upon actual classroom observations. If deficiencies are noted in the work performance of any probationary employee, the evaluator shall provide the teacher or administrator at the time of the observation with a list of deficiencies, a list of suggestions for improvement and assistance in overcoming the deficiencies, and follow-up evaluations and assistance when deficiencies remain.

Charlotte Danielson's Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teachers published by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, will serve as the basis for development of the Nebraska statewide model. Danielson identifies 4 domains for professional practice: Planning and Preparation, Classroom Environment, Professional Responsibilities, and Instruction.

Omaha Public Schools (OPS), Nebraska's largest and most diverse district, has utilized Danielson's work to create their "Framework for Effective Teaching: Teacher Appraisal System." Their model was developed by a committee of teachers from each school in the district, representation from the Omaha Education Association, and district administration. The OPS model,

which has been operational for several years, will serve as a resource to inform the development of Nebraska's statewide system for teacher performance evaluation. Essentially, the plan calls for 5 steps in the evaluation process:

- Teacher self analysis;
- Teacher identification of goals and a professional development plan for each teacher;
- Classroom observations, both formal and informal;
- Conferences following the observation;
- A summary evaluation.

Summaries are based on 57 criteria grouped under four domains: teacher planning and preparation, classroom environment, instructional techniques used, and professional and leadership development. Tenured and non tenure teachers are covered under the plan, with more attention to pre-tenured faculty. Teachers falling short in any category are provided assistance.

While the OPS foundation for Nebraska's new statewide appraisal system is strong, it can be strengthened. First and foremost, the model will be improved at the state level by adding the most important measure of teacher effectiveness, student learning. Second, the model will be improved at the state level by making it easier to obtain inter-rater reliability. Third, the model will be improved at the state level, but making using a less paper intensive approach in order to make it easier to fully implement in all Nebraska schools. Fourth, it will require modification to assure that the Nebraska Professional Teacher Standards that will be developed and implemented as a result of RTTT funding, are infused and are an integral part of the process. Finally, these types of appraisal systems lend themselves to rating inflation – virtually all teachers do well. Nonetheless, modified to address the issues identified above the existing approach identified in the OPS model is a viable basis for the development of the Nebraska statewide teacher appraisal model especially in providing assistance to teachers not performing up to standard by identifying areas that need to be improved and by engaging teachers in their own improvement efforts and ultimately for providing administrators with information for promotion and retention decisions.

Nebraska's teacher evaluation model, which will have as its basis the Nebraska Professional Educator Standards will be designed

with a minimum of two 'tracks:'

- **Beginning/New to the Profession Teachers (non-tenured teachers).** Nebraska has a 3-year probation period for teachers and the evaluation model, in combination with mentoring/induction strategies proposed in this application, will provide focused support for beginning professionals and evaluation criteria which recognizes the unique growth and support needs of beginning teachers to assume their roles as teachers.
- **Veteran Teachers.** Performance expectations developed for these teachers will be consistent with expectations for teachers who have successfully achieved tenure and who are established in their professional roles/responsibilities. Rubrics for evaluation of these teachers will be more heavily weighted on factors such as student outcomes and individually identified areas for growth and development.
- **Professional/Teacher-Leader.** Consideration will be given to develop a 3rd track which will be used with teachers seeking a Professional License or Teacher-Leader Certification. This track would be consistent with the new teacher certification/licensing strategy also proposed in this application.

In modifying the OPS system, the state will involve stakeholders such as state association leaders, local administrators and teachers from participating districts, and Educational Service Unit leadership (related to their role for providing professional development and potential training for administrators and teachers in the new educator evaluation models). The most significant modification to the Danielson work and the system developed by OPS will be the incorporation of factors related to teacher impact on student performance, both state assessment results and student growth measures. Additional modifications will include greater attention to training of observers (mainly principals); to more standardized appraisals; a review of all paper documents demanded of the system with a view toward reduction, consolidation and utilization of technology tools; and a process for constant review of results. In

keeping with additional strategies proposed in the Nebraska RTTT proposal, linkages to Nebraska Educator Standards, expectations for mentoring/induction support, professional development throughout an educator's professional practice (beginning to veteran/accomplished), and implications for recertification of educators will be factors that will impact the development and design of the appraisal model. This change means that an annual performance evaluation is not an event, but rather is the basis for further growth and development into subsequent years. Although annual teacher/principal evaluations will include measurement of student achievement outcomes as a primary factor for informing annual continuing employment, improvement requirements to maintain employment, and/or promotion decisions, it will also serve as a baseline for continuing growth in subsequent years.

The proposed model will use a three level rating system: (1) Exceeds Expectations; (2) Meets Expectations; and (3) Does Not Meet Expectations. This model will require the state to support teachers and principals to support in utilizing the new statewide assessment model as a professional growth and recertification tool.

As noted above, Nebraska is phasing in a statewide assessment system to replace the local assessments formerly used to measure progress in response to NCLB and state accountability requirements. Nebraska's proposed educator (teacher and principal) appraisal system will use student achievement outcomes as the primary factor in performance evaluations for teachers and principals, with greater than 50% of the weighting or scoring system based on this component. This requirement, in turn, requires that the development of the systems proposed in this application (evaluation/performance appraisal process, the Professional Educator Standards, and the statewide system of professional development/growth) are developed in tandem and are reflective of the Common Core standards and related assessment requirements described in the Standards and Accountability section.

For elementary school teachers, results on both the reading/language arts and mathematics assessments will be used initially with science added as a component after the science assessments are implemented. The state accountability model being phased in utilizes a combined factor process that includes a proportionate factor for math, reading/language arts, and science achievement and a factor for growth from the previous year. Baseline information will be established, and we propose one-year growth for each year

of instruction as the student growth and achievement expectation.

For other teachers, where a clear link between teachers, students, and student performance on statewide assessments is not possible, student achievement outcome measurements will include norm referenced test results and other assessment information such as daily work and classroom-based assessments. Factors such as curriculum alignment to Common Core standards, involvement in data analysis, participation in professional development related to student achievement in core areas, and involvement in school improvement processes will also be considered as weighted factors. For purposes of involvement in school improvement processes, the statewide assessment and accountability system being phased in will provide new information which will serve as a valuable resource to schools and teachers about school wide student growth and overall achievement. Data will be disaggregated on the basis of nine categories related to race, ethnicity, gender, disability, English language learners, and poverty factors. The availability of this information will provide teachers and administrators with a basis for the ‘teacher self analysis’ and ‘teacher identification of goals and development of a professional development plan’ identified above as part of the 5-Step evaluation model.

Principals are a critical partner in ensuring that all students have access to high-quality instruction and that the school system is held accountable to the ultimate goal – high standards for student achievement outcomes. The statewide model for principal evaluation/appraisal will include student achievement outcomes as a significant component of the overall evaluation. It will also include other components similar to the teacher appraisal requirement: professional growth expectations, self-analysis and reflection, and structured observation and feedback requirements. Although other models may be considered, we propose to use the Interstate Schools Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) “Performance Expectations and Indicators for Education Leaders” as the foundation for the Nebraska model for principal evaluation. This work, based on the INTASC standards was completed in 2008. The ISLLC model identifies 6 areas of performance expectations (as listed below) and also identifies administrator dispositions and multiple performance indicators for each:

- Vision, Mission, Goals: Education Leaders ensure the achievement of all students by guiding the development and implementation of a shared vision of learning, strong organizational mission, and high expectations for every student;
- Teaching and Learning: Education leaders ensure achievement and success of all students by monitoring and continuously improving teaching and learning;
- Managing Organizational Systems and Safety: Education leaders ensure the success of all students by managing organizational systems and resources for a safe, high-performing learning environment;
- Collaborating with Families and Stakeholders: Education leaders ensure the success of all students by collaborating with families and stakeholders who represent diverse community interests and needs and mobilizing community resources that improve teaching and learning;
- Ethics and Integrity: Education leaders ensure the success of all students by being ethical and acting with integrity; and
- The Educational System: Education leaders ensure the success of all students by influencing interrelated systems of political, social, economic, legal, and cultural contexts affecting education to advocate for the teachers' and students' needs.

As with the development of the Nebraska Teacher Evaluation model, it will be critical to involve stakeholders in the design of the Nebraska Administrator Evaluation model, including: state association leaders (Nebraska Council on School Administrators and Nebraska Association of School Boards), local administrators and teachers from participating districts and Educational Service Unit representatives (related to their role for providing professional development and potential training for administrators in the new evaluation model).

The ISLLC model has as a basis the INTASC standards which will mesh well with Nebraska's proposed activity to create Educator

Standards (for principals and teachers) based on the INTASC standards. As proposed in this application, the standards and the assessment processes will be linked to professional growth/development and recertification. Consistent with the teacher model, the evaluation tool will be developed to provide for two tracks – a Beginning/New Administrator Track and a Veteran Administrator track. The rubrics for completing evaluations will provide differing levels of expectations for each of the tracks.

(D)(2)(iii) and (iv)

Nebraska will require an annual evaluation process, based upon the proposed model, for all certificated staff in participating districts. This step will require significant discussion and involvement with Nebraska stakeholders in the development of the model and implementation processes since these decisions have always been locally controlled. Moving to a performance model that relates to compensation, removal, and other decisions regarding teacher and principal activities will be a significant change for Nebraska schools and teachers.

The plan for principals and teachers assumes that within the first month of the school year, educators will submit goals and a professional growth plan to the appropriate person (generally the principal for teachers and an Assistant Superintendent/Superintendent for principals) for review and input/approval. Formal and informal classroom visits and progress checks regarding performance goals will be conducted throughout the school year (minimum of 6 documented events) for beginning/new to the profession educators, including probationary (non-tenured) employees who have served under a contract with the school district for less than three successive school years. If deficiencies are noted in the work performance of any probationary employee, the evaluator shall provide the teacher or administrator with: a list of deficiencies, assistance with modification to the professional growth plan to support improvement and to identify resources for assistance in overcoming the deficiencies, and follow-up evaluations and assistance. Formal observations and progress checks will be conducted a minimum of 2 times a year for veteran professionals with the process including a system for intervention if deficiencies are noted. By March 15 of each school

year, the teacher/administrator will submit a written summary of progress on the professional growth plan to the appropriate person; a final summary conference will be conducted by April 15 and will be used to inform promotion, tenure decisions, compensation, retention, and improvement/contract discontinuance for ineffective teachers. This model will require a phase-in period to assure that the model is valid and defensible, evaluators are appropriately trained to effectively administer the evaluations, and professional development and support structures proposed in this application are in place.

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).	N/C	*	25%	75%	100%
(D)(2)(ii)	Percentage of participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems for teachers.	N/C	*	25%	75%	100%
(D)(2)(ii)	Percentage of participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems for principals.	N/C	*	25%	75%	100%
(D)(2)(iv)	Percentage of participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems that are used to inform:	N/C	*	25%	75%	100%
(D)(2)(iv)(a)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing teachers and principals. 	N/C	*	25%	75%	100%
(D)(2)(iv)(b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compensating teachers and principals. 	N/C	*	25%	75%	100%
(D)(2)(iv)(b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting teachers and principals. 	N/C	*	25%	75%	100%
(D)(2)(iv)(b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retaining effective teachers and principals. 	N/C	*	25%	75%	100%

(D)(2)(iv)(c)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Granting tenure and/or full certification (where applicable) to teachers and principals. 	N/C	*	25%	75%	100%
(D)(2)(iv)(d)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removing ineffective tenured and untenured teachers and principals. 	N/C	*	25%	75%	100%
[Optional: Enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data] N/C – Not Collected						
General data to be provided at time of application:						
Total number of participating LEAs.		218				
Total number of principals in participating LEAs.		873				
Total number of teachers in participating LEAs.		23,286				
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) ⁴	Number of teachers and principals in participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems who were evaluated as effective or better in the prior academic year.					
(D)(2)(iii)	Number of teachers and principals in participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems who were evaluated as ineffective in the prior academic year.					
(D)(2)(iv)(b)	Number of teachers and principals in participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems whose evaluations were used to inform compensation decisions in the prior academic year.					
(D)(2)(iv)(b)	Number of teachers and principals in participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems who were evaluated as effective or better and were retained in the prior academic year.					

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

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

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

Recommended maximum response length: Three pages

(D)(3)(i)

Nebraska will increase the number and percentage of effective teachers and administrators serving in high poverty and/or high minority schools so that, at the end of a five year period, equitable distribution is reached. High Minority schools are those schools with a student population that is more than 50% minority. Nebraska proposed in its recent State Longitudinal Data Systems and SFSF grant applications the development of systems that will allow the state to connect specific teachers to student achievement outcomes. The ability to make this connection is a requirement to fully address (and measure the success of) the goal of equitable distribution in high poverty/high minority schools; however, data to link teachers and principals to student achievement outcomes will not become available until 2012-13 of this project. In the interim, we propose development and implementation of a plan to encourage selected teachers and administrators to work in high poverty/high minority schools with priority given to placement in school buildings which are identified as low performing as compared to low poverty/low minority schools. The model will:

- Provide financial, professional development, and working condition incentives for leaders/teachers who agree to serve in high need schools (high poverty/high minority) and high need subjects;
- Ensure high quality teachers and leaders are strategically placed.

Participants in the interim model will be identified/nominated by colleagues and will receive incentives for working in identified

schools and for assisting those schools to improve. In addition to financial incentives, the participants will be provided access to cohort and professional development opportunities. Working condition incentives for interim and final project participants who accept assignment for working in high minority/high poverty schools that are low-performing will include priority access to services through the proposed Nebraska Virtual School and the regional (ESU) professional development network (for assistance to work with staff in their buildings). In addition, the funds provided to the participants will provide them an opportunity to access special instructional technology, release time to acquire specialized professional development, and support activities (including technology delivery) with members of the cohort of participants. Oversight and coordination of the program will be provided by NDE. *(See Appendix K, Nebraska Virtual School and STEM Academy Proposal)*

Nominated individuals for interim program will meet the following criteria: positive annual evaluations that document evidence of professional growth throughout their career; exhibit evidence of contributions to the school as a teacher leader; have a minimum of 5 years experience; and evidence of their understand of, and focus on, improving student achievement outcomes.. Priority will be given to teacher/administrator teams to work in identified schools.

Individuals selected for participation will also serve on a steering committee to assist with continuing development and implementation of the final model in SY2013-14. The steering committee will be apprised of the work outlined in Section E – Persistently Low-Performing Schools/School Turnaround, with an intent, where appropriate, to utilize expertise and experiences of this group to inform and assist with the work identified in Section E (school turn-around).

At this point data related to ‘highly effective’ teacher/principals will be available and individuals selected for participation will complete an application process. Similar criteria to those selected for the interim model participation will be required; however, emphasis for selection will be on evidence of documented student achievement outcomes through the statewide performance evaluation system being proposed (D-2).

NDE staff with responsibilities for this model, and the participants, will coordinate with NDE staff and associated committees regarding the persistently lowest achieving strategies outlined in Section E (school turn-around).

Working condition incentives for individuals who accept assignment for working in low-performing schools will include priority services through the proposed Nebraska Virtual School and priority support through the Educational Service Unit support network being proposed. In addition, the funds provided to the participants will provide them an opportunity to access special instructional technology, release time to acquire specialized professional development as necessary to address identified needs within their school, and support activities (including technology delivery) with members of the cohort of participants which will be managed by NDE.

Leadership and support for individuals participating in this initiative is critical. Best practice/research-based strategies will be identified by the steering committee and implemented. Although this group of individuals will be professionals identified as effective teachers/administrators for working with low performing schools, we believe that access to professional development support to address unique school needs and to assist with local school staff development will be an important..

(D)(3)(ii)

Nebraska will work to increase the number of effective teachers in the state's high need content areas, but as a general matter the state does not have an acute shortage of highly effective teachers in math and science.

Proposed data systems development in RTTT and the SLDS will provide Nebraska with the ability to identify 'effective/non-effective' teachers in high need areas of math, science, special education and ELL/ESL. Until those data become available, and baselines are established in 2012-13, we must base our need in these areas on evaluation of the extent to which teachers in these

areas are appropriately certified/endorsed in the specific areas of their assignment. The current State of the Schools report indicates that 97.81% of Nebraska's mathematics teachers are highly qualified according to NCLB requirements (241 courses of 11,007 total Mathematics courses are not taught by a highly qualified teacher). 98.97% of our science teachers are NCLB highly qualified (88 courses of 8,509 total science courses not taught by a highly qualified teacher). The Rule 10 information on teacher qualifications indicates that 96.36% of our mathematics teachers are appropriately endorsed for the courses they teach. The science percentage is notably lower (88.26%). This is because Nebraska teachers may obtain a 'field endorsement' or a 'subject endorsement.' It is not uncommon for a candidate to complete a subject endorsement in a science area (Biology, Chemistry, Earth Science, Physics) rather than a 'field' endorsement which prepares them to teach the full range of science courses. Consequently, the teacher may hold a subject endorsement but will be given additional assignments in other science areas because of their science background. It is difficult for some schools to attract a field-endorsed teacher.

However, this apparent lack of shortage is partially related to the fact that many rural secondary schools do not currently offer a wide range of courses in mathematics and science. While teachers may be certified in the subjects they do teach, students do not receive instruction in other areas. In addition, the change in graduation requirements, raising the amount of course work in mathematics and science students will complete in order to be college ready will significantly increase the need for teachers in these areas, areas that are already in shortage nationally.

In addition, the increase in the number of ELL students in the state's schools, as well as the state's emphasis on maximum placement of special education students in regular classrooms, will strain the supply of teachers in those critical areas.

In 2005, the Nebraska legislature authorized funding for the Attracting Excellence to Teaching Act which provides forgivable loans to individuals preparing to teach in Nebraska. The loans are forgiven when the teacher completes a commitment to teach for a specified period of time in a Nebraska school. In 2009, the Attracting Excellence to Teaching Act underwent statutory changes and

became the Excellence in Teaching Act and forgivable loan funds (annually \$1,000,000) are now provided to individuals preparing to teach in high-need subject areas and for individuals participating in graduate programs, including those seeking to add endorsements in shortage areas. Although this is a positive step toward recruiting teachers for high-need content areas, we believe that teacher needs will continue to grow based upon the aging Nebraska teaching force, coupled with an increasing emphasis and demand for preparing all students for tomorrow's workforce needs.

Nebraska's plan to increase student access to high quality staff in the STEM areas is discussed in Section (B)(3) in regard to the Nebraska Virtual School. The school is more completely described in Appendix K, Nebraska Virtual School and STEM Academy Proposal.

One of the best resources for recruiting special education and ELL teachers is to leverage the state's current paraprofessionals who are already serving special education and ELL students. Nebraska proposes the development of a program to capitalize on paraprofessional's current employment as field-based education aides and provide these aides with content and pedagogy instruction through a regionally-based, cohort model with much of the instruction delivered via interactive technology. Participants in this program will be involved in a two to three year education/support model leading to certification.

Nebraska's population is becoming increasingly diverse and the need for teachers with skills for working with ELL is increasing. Currently, Nebraska's only endorsement for ELL is a supplemental endorsement which means that it must be attached to another endorsement. Based on the state's increasing needs, we believe a program which leads to a stand-alone endorsement for ELL teachers is timely and appropriate.

Nebraska's approach to special education places a large segment of special needs children in regular classrooms. This strategy requires that individuals with special education expertise work collaboratively with regular classroom teachers to address the unique

needs of students who are identified for special education services. Special education is consistently identified as a state (and national) shortage area and the ability to develop paraprofessionals for teaching careers would be an effective way in which to address our needs.

Nebraska has a strong technology network which provides a cost-effective method for delivering instruction. Participants are not required to travel long distances in order to access the instruction. Organizing the program as a cohort provides additional support for participants.

Nebraska proposes that a statewide model be developed for special education and ELL. The alternative pathway model for each area would initially be developed through an approved teacher preparation program with the potential for replication in other institutions. Candidates would be recruited from current paraprofessionals serving ELL and special education students and provided opportunity to earn credits needed to become certified teachers in these fields. A sizeable portion of instruction would be provided via technology, minimizing the travel candidates would incur. Many paraprofessionals already have some college credit and would welcome the chance to complete their degree and work to become highly effective teachers. This strategy proposes that individuals participating in this opportunity will become fully certified as a result of participation in the program. It is anticipated that this model allows schools to 'grow their own' and therefore districts must invest in the support of these participants through mentoring, release time, access to technology for distance education/cohort activities, and other support activities.

To ensure that the program continues after this project concludes, federal funds available under NCLB and Special Education could be utilized to support it. In addition, districts may be able to prioritize funds to support paraprofessionals who make a commitment to remain with the district upon completion of the program. Implementation of the program is described below:

Model Development through work of an Advisory Committee, which includes higher education representatives, teachers,

paraprofessionals, NDE staff with expertise in SPED and ELL will occur in year one. The Advisory Committee will give consideration to the Career Ladder/ROOTS Model which has successfully operated in Nebraska since 1999 and has been focused on recruitment and preparation of Native American paraprofessionals to become teachers employed in Native American school districts/communities in Northeast Nebraska. The Career Ladder Model includes the following components:

Participants move through the program as a cohort which provides an additional element of support for the participants; required coursework plans are developed around what each student needs to meet the teacher education requirements in Nebraska; courses are generally delivered through utilization of technology, combined with periodic face-to-face meetings and instruction; school site mentors are provided (and trained specifically for the program); students receive a stipend to cover credit hour and coursework costs while continuing employment as a paraprofessional; student advising and financial aid services are provided; clear expectations that individuals not completing the program will be required to pay back funds provided for coursework provided through the project. Selection of one institution of higher education (RFP process) for implementation of each model will also be accomplished in the first year of the project with an expectation that the 1st cohort of participants for SPED and ELL will be selected and admitted into the program in the 2nd project year.

Schools employing the selected paraprofessionals will be required to make a commitment for some paid release time during the day and for making available a mentor/coach who is available on a regular basis (services which may be obtained from the regional ESU under D-5).

Priority selection for cohort participants will be given to individuals who have completed some college coursework, have worked with a school district for more than one year, and have strong recommendations from administrators and classroom teachers, who have worked with the applicant, regarding the dispositions and the potential ability of the applicant to successfully complete the program. Participating individuals will remain employed as paraprofessionals during project participation and provided with a

stipend to cover the cost of coursework (to be paid in installments for each year of participation). Funds requested in the grant assume an average of 100 hours (based upon the expectations that participants will have some college credit) and program completion within 3 years. Schools employing the selected paraprofessionals will be required to make a commitment for some paid release time during the day and for making available a mentor/coach who is available on a regular basis (services which may be obtained from the regional ESU under D-5).

Nebraska will also develop and implement a system for recruiting college math and science major into the teaching profession.

Nebraska recognizes that alternative options for today's potential teachers are important, particularly in STEM content areas.

Increasing the number of teacher education graduates in the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics entering the teaching profession is a priority for Nebraska and is specifically identified as a goal in the Governor's P-20 Initiative.

Preliminary research indicates that there are several successful models that should be considered in the development of a Nebraska strategy. For example, the UTeach (Texas) model, which has been operational for some time has been very successful in recruiting and retaining college math and science majors into the teaching profession. In the first year of the project, propose the creation of a STEM Center at a Nebraska teacher preparation institution. Selection of the site will be through a competitive proposal basis, with the successful institution addressing the following components:

- Research and planning leading to implementation of a program to encourage math and science majors to enter teaching careers. The successful institution must show evidence of consideration of existing models such as the UTeach model, and justification for selection (or development) of the model they elect to implement.
- Collaboration with a steering committee in the development of the proposal and STEM Center. The steering committee will include, at a minimum: STEM faculty, teacher educators, teacher, administrator and guidance

counseling personnel.

- Development of strategies to help teacher education candidates in math, science and technology approach teaching with integrated STEM concepts;
- Development of strategies and materials for other future teachers to provide them with STEM related information to support developing STEM career interests and talents with K-12 students;
- Description of the institution's plan for providing ongoing leadership for the development and implementation of STEM Centers in additional teacher preparation institutions (up to 5 additional institutions) and for providing resources to other institutions not selected to house a STEM Center to incorporate STEM strategies into preparation programs. Funding for additional STEM Centers will be available in Years 3-4 to replicate best-practices and models developed by the initially funded STEM center.

The institutions selected to house the STEM Centers will be required to provide information about their intent to sustain the Center after Year 4.

Up to 5 Nebraska institutions will be provided with funds in Years 3 and 4 to replicate components of the STEM Center developed in Years 1 and 2. Decisions about placement in the 5 additional institutions will be determined by in-kind commitments from the institutions, potential numbers to be served, and geographic distribution. All teacher education institutions will be invited to participate in replication discussions since some of the work of the STEM Center is devoted to developing materials and strategies that can be implemented through teacher preparation coursework and activities.

Performance Measures for (D)(3)(i) <i>Note: All information below is requested for Participating LEAs.</i>	Actual Data: Baseline (Current school year or	End of SY 2010- 2011	End of SY 2011- 2012	End of SY 2012- 2013	End of SY 2013- 2014
General goals to be provided at time of application:	Baseline data and annual targets				
Percentage of teachers in schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are highly effective (as defined in this notice).	N/C	*	*	**	Base +5%
Percentage of teachers in schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are highly effective (as defined in this notice).	N/C	*	*	**	Base +5%
Percentage of teachers in schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are ineffective.	N/C	*	*	**	Base +5%
Percentage of teachers in schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are ineffective.	N/C	*	*	**	Base +5%
Percentage of principals leading schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are highly effective (as defined in this notice).	N/C	*	*	**	Base +5%
Percentage of principals leading schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are highly effective (as defined in this notice).	N/C	*	*	**	Base +5%
Percentage of principals leading schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are ineffective.	N/C	*	*	**	Base +5%
Percentage of principals leading schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are ineffective.	N/C	*	*	**	Base +5%
[Optional: Enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data] Nebraska currently does not collect information on “highly effective” teachers as defined in this notice. The proposed system in the RTTT application will allow us to collect and analyze this information, however, baseline data will not be available until 2012-13. We will be able to measure progress on this indicator in 2013-14.					
General data to be provided at time of application:					
Total number of schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice).	248				

Total number of schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice).	803				
Total number of teachers in schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice).	7,186				
Total number of teachers in schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice).	19304				
Total number of principals leading schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice).	248				
Total number of principals leading schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice).	803				
Data to be requested of grantees in the future:					
Number of teachers and principals in schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who were evaluated as highly effective (as defined in this notice) in the prior academic year.					
Number of teachers and principals in schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who were evaluated as highly effective (as defined in this notice) in the prior academic year.					
Number of teachers and principals in schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who were evaluated as ineffective in the prior academic year.					
Number of teachers and principals in schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who were evaluated as ineffective in the prior academic year.					
Performance Measures for (D)(3)(ii)					
<i>Note: All information below is requested for Participating LEAs.</i>	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.		N/C	*	*	**	5%
Percentage of science teachers who were evaluated as effective or better.		N/C	*	*	**	5%
Percentage of special education teachers who were evaluated as effective or better.		N/C	*	*	**	5%
Percentage of teachers in language instruction educational programs who were evaluated as effective or better.		N/C	*	*	**	5%
<p>[Optional: Enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data] N/C = Nebraska currently does not collect information on effective teachers by the content areas specified. */** = The proposed system in the RTTT application will allow us to collect and analyze this information, however, baseline data will not be available until 2012-13. We will be able to measure progress on this indicator in 2013-14. Nebraska does collect and publish information regarding highly qualified teachers as required by NCLB. (http://reportcard.nde.state.ne.us/Page/TeachersNCLB.aspx?Level=st).</p>						
General data to be provided at time of application:						
Total number of mathematics teachers.	1,632	163				
		2				
Total number of science teachers.	1,415	141				
		5				
Total number of special education teachers.	1,111	111				
		1				
Total number of teachers in language instruction educational programs.		421				
<p>For purposes of NCLB, Nebraska collects and analyzes information related to number of courses taught in Nebraska districts. This information is provided in the chart which appears above the chart required by this application. The data provided in the application chart indicates actual number of teachers who have teaching assignments in the requested areas.</p>						
Data to be requested of grantees in the future:						
Number of mathematics teachers in participating LEAs who were evaluated as effective or better in the prior academic year.						

Number of science teachers in participating LEAs who were evaluated as effective or better in the prior academic year.	
Number of special education teachers in participating LEAs who were evaluated as effective or better in the prior academic year.	
Number of teachers in language instruction educational programs in participating LEAs who were evaluated as effective or better in the prior academic year.	

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

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

- (i) Link student achievement and student growth (both as defined in this notice) data to the students’ teachers and principals, to link this information to the in-State programs where those teachers and principals were prepared for credentialing, and to publicly report the data for each credentialing program in the State; and
- (ii) Expand preparation and credentialing options and programs that are successful at producing effective teachers and principals (both as defined in this notice).

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

Recommended maximum response length: One page

(D)(4)(i) and (ii)

Nebraska will create a system to link student achievement and student growth data to teachers and principals and link this information to the preparation program where teachers and administrators were prepared for credentialing.

Nebraska will establish an annual educator preparation program “Report Card” based on the educator preparation program’s

graduate's student achievement outcomes. This strategy will require significant upgrades to the state's current data system to assure that information regarding teacher education preparation institutions is able to be linked to teacher certification and school personnel information and will be connected to the state's plan (described above) for using student growth to evaluate teachers and leaders. The preliminary infrastructure for linking individual teachers to their institution of preparation and updating the teacher certification system to enable those linkages has been proposed in Nebraska's SLDS proposal. The SLDS proposal includes an ad hoc committee which includes representatives from teacher preparation programs NDE teacher education and certification staff to work with NDE Data Center staff to determine detailed business requirements and rules for appropriately linking of teachers to their preparation programs. This ad hoc committee will continue, under RTTT, to provide input to NDE for the development of a public reporting system. Funds are requested in this proposal to assist with the actual analysis of data that will become available through the proposed SLDS activities and for preparation of an annual public reporting process. Implementation of the data collection system that will link students to teachers and teachers to their preparation institution is scheduled for SY2012-13 and will provide baseline information; therefore the first annual Institution Report Card will be made publicly available based upon 2013-14 data. The Educator Preparation Program Report Card will be made available on the NDE Website. 2012-13 will provide baseline information which we can use to establish appropriate performance expectations for purposes of state approval decisions. At that point, *Rule 20 Regulations for Approval of Teacher Education Programs* will be revised to incorporate performance expectations (and improvement expectations/deadlines) as a component of continuing state approval.

The flagship project of the state's State Longitudinal Data Systems grant application, filed in December 2009, is to establish linkages with postsecondary data systems by extending Nebraska's current SLDS into Nebraska public postsecondary institutions. The initiative will include the assignment of the NDE Student ID to postsecondary students and the reporting of data on those students to the existing NDE data warehouse. The state's SLDS application also requests funding to link teachers to the institution where they received their preparation. The application describes Nebraska's plan for linking teachers to students by adding two new

data collections to Nebraska's system; one to collect detailed information on the courses teachers teach and the other to collect courses completed and the grades earned by students.

The first annual Teacher Preparation Institution Report Card will be published after these upgrades to the data system are complete and when sufficient data is collected to inform the reports. The Educator Preparation Program Report Card will be incorporated into the State of the Schools Report on an annual basis in order to create transparency regarding the performance of the state's teacher preparation institutions. This transparency will enable preparation programs to carry out meaningful self-assessments, help school districts make better informed hiring decisions and help state leaders evaluate and support preparation programs, including providing support consistent with the recommendations below.

Nebraska will provide opportunities for existing teacher education preparation programs to incorporate stronger field-based experiences, program evaluation/accountability structures, and strengthen connections between higher education faculty and school-based practitioners.

Although Nebraska has for several years focused on P-20, conversations have not yet resulted in significant change in the higher education realm, and especially not on educator preparation. Race to the Top's vision and resources provide educator preparation programs an opportunity (and expectation) to reinvent themselves to better meet the needs of students and the P-20 educational system.

The Greater Nebraska Schools White Paper, *Teacher Preparation* (3/1/09) was developed by administrators seeking to articulate how teacher preparation programs could better prepare new teachers for today's classrooms. A subsequent paper prepared by representatives of the Educational Service Unit system, "*Teacher (professional Educator) Training and Certification in Nebraska: A Call to Action*" recommends changes to the state's teacher preparation programs. (See Appendix H, *Teacher Preparation a White Paper, Greater Nebraska Superintendents*) These documents call for upgrading and increasing new teacher knowledge and skills

related to student assessment, technology, student diversity, standards and instructional strategies, and for increased clinical experiences and comprehensive and measurable educator standards.

To address this issue, NDE proposes the creation of an annual Teacher Preparation Summit. This summit will provide a structured environment for education leaders from schools, ESU's and educator preparation/higher education institutions to discuss the state's human capital needs and to develop strategies to address those needs. The annual Summit's goal is to develop and implement specific strategies in each of the following areas:

- **Expanded field-based experiences for educator (principal and teacher) preparation.** In Nebraska and across the nation, teacher and administrator candidates need greater opportunities to develop skills through increased field-based experiences throughout the preparation experience.

Clinical experience (student teaching) is typically a one semester activity in Nebraska; however, under a waiver from the Nebraska Department of Education, the University of Nebraska-Kearney is field-testing a partnership with Grand Island Public Schools (GIPS) to offer a 1-year 'residency' experience, which includes student teaching over the course of two semesters and coursework taken at GIPS rather than at UNK. Institutions must give serious consideration to incorporating this extended experience as an option in their preparation programs; however, it is going to require school districts to become more active partners in supporting the year-long model because, many candidates will find the year-long experience cost-prohibitive. Provision of incentives/support for candidates participating in year-long experiences will be important to the success of the program.

- **Increased collaboration among schools, districts, and teacher preparation institutions.** Not only should the preparation of candidates require increased field-based experiences, current models and literature suggest that highly effective educator

preparation programs include those in which college faculty spend time in the K-12 environment. Although there are some institutions that have very strong collaborative relationships with schools, there are no true "laboratory" or "professional development schools" (PDS) in Nebraska. PDS or laboratory schools are those in which college faculty teach and spend significant time at the PDS and PDS teachers teach professional education components. PDSs can also provide a longer, more extensive field/clinical opportunity for candidates. RTTT funding will provide grants for implementation of PDS structures for each Nebraska educator preparation institution.

- **Increase Supports for Beginning Educators.** Development and implementation of strategies that foster collaboration between the higher education institutions and the districts to establish agreed upon expectations/outcomes for beginning educators and to develop a system for new educator support that involves both entities in the beginning educator's career.

It is unreasonable to assume that a new teacher/principal preparation program completer is fully prepared to perform at the same level that one would expect of an experienced teacher. A preparation program must prepare individuals for a range of expectations, but it is fairly impossible to prepare the individual for the specific setting in which they will be employed or for the rigors of being a fulltime educator. Districts express concerns about what new hires are not fully prepared to manage and institutions indicate that it is unrealistic for all new graduates to know everything. Both are correct; however, the new graduate is the one who suffers because of the potential disconnect. Creation of a strategy which clarifies expectations for the educator preparation institutions to provide ongoing support for new graduates and clarity for hiring schools as to what areas are particularly important induction/mentoring areas is proposed. Some institutions offer significant support/mentoring for 1st year teachers/administrators, one institution provides a 'warranty' on new graduates, but graduate follow-up is not uniform or highly developed as a statewide system of support. Some schools provide well-developed induction/mentoring programs, but likewise, this system of support for new teachers is not uniform or highly developed as a statewide system of support.

As identified in other sections of this proposal, Nebraska is proposing significant changes to expectations and processes for evaluating educator's performance and student achievement outcomes. Successful implementation of these changes will, in part, be dependent upon the preparation of the new professionals moving into the profession as teachers and administrators. Specifically, changes proposed through RTTT with direct implications for educator preparation programs include:

- Implementation of professional educator standards. New to the profession educators need leave the preparation programs well-prepared with the knowledge and skills called for in these standards since they will serve as the basis for continuing professional growth, performance appraisals/evaluation, and recertification throughout their professional career.
- Evolving student assessment processes that will require teachers and administrator to have a strong background in student assessment practices and related data analysis to inform instruction.
- Implementation of Common Core standards and the need for educators to be well-prepared to provide appropriate instruction related to the standards.
- Changing expectations about the quality and quantity of field-based experiences, and expectations from K-12 stakeholders for preparation programs to be more responsive to evolving needs and priorities today's K-12 environment.

Teacher preparation institutions need to be held to high expectations for educator preparation and to be 'brought along' in the K-12 reform discussions. Rule 20 *Teacher Education Program Approval* establishes the basis for state program approval to operate. In light of the changes identified above, the minimums established in Rule 20 must be evaluated/updated to assure that preparation program requirements reflect current Nebraska K-12 needs and expectations and that programs are accountable for preparing adequate numbers of teaching and administrator graduates who are well-prepared to work with Nebraska students to accomplish

Nebraska’s goal for high student achievement outcomes. Funds in this proposal are requested to provide for statewide meetings for teacher preparation programs to evaluate current practices, to examine models and research-based information leading to improved candidate outcomes, to update program approval requirements, and to establish specific strategies and timelines for improvement.

Performance Measures	Actual Data: Baseline (Current school year or most recent)	End of SY 2010- 2011	End of SY 2011- 2012	End of SY 2012- 2013	End of SY 2013- 2014
General goals to be provided at time of application:	Baseline data and annual targets				
Percentage of teacher preparation programs in the State for which the public can access data on the achievement and growth (as defined in this notice) of the graduates’ students.	N/C	*	*	**	30%
Percentage of principal preparation programs in the State for which the public can access data on the achievement and growth (as defined in this notice) of the graduates’ students.	N/C	*	*	**	30%
General data to be provided at time of application:					
Total number of teacher credentialing programs in the State.	17				
Total number of principal credentialing programs in the State.	8				
Total number of teachers in the State.	23286				
Total number of principals in the State.	873				
Data to be requested of grantees in the future:					

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

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

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

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

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

Recommended maximum response length: Five pages

(D)(5)(i) and (ii)

Nebraska will work with its school districts to develop a high quality statewide: (1) professional development system; and (2) mentoring and induction program to ensure that 100% of Nebraska's teachers and leaders meet the state's highly effective teacher/leader standards. The state's new statewide professional development system will be linked to its teacher and leader evaluation framework and system of supports and interventions, and will leverage the work of the new National Center for Research on Rural Education at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. The state also will develop a system for high quality induction/mentoring system to strengthen supports for beginning teachers and administrators.

Professional Development System

In collaboration with the Nebraska Department of Education, Nebraska's Educational Service Unit (ESU) system will lead the state's new professional development for continuous school improvement system. Nebraska's ESUs are intermediate education agencies mandated by state statute (Section 79-1204-1249/Rule 84) to provide professional development for educators as a part of state defined core services; however, there is no corresponding requirement that educators participate in professional development provided by the ESU system. State and local tax dollars are allocated annually to build the capacity for the ESUs to meet their mandate; however, there are no performance requirements for the educational service units to ensure that their state mandated professional development activities are of high quality and focused on statewide and/or local needs for effectively improving student achievement. ESUs have provided services to schools for many years and are well-regarded by the districts they serve because they focus on unique district needs within their regions and provide relevant professional development and support for implementing new state initiatives/ requirements. Unit Advisory Councils are established and include representatives (superintendents or their designee) from each district served by the Unit. This goal seeks to implement a coordinated, effective

professional development system which brings together the NDE's vision to create a statewide system of support using the expertise and organizational structure of the ESU system.

Although the ESU system will be the state's primary professional development delivery system, it is critical that the other leading entities that can support to this goal are involved in the development and delivery of a statewide system of support. This includes, for example, the National Center of Research on Rural Education (NCRRE). Located at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, the NCRRE, has received a nearly \$10 million five-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences to establish the nation's only National Center for Research on Rural Education at UNL. This center's cutting-edge research will address the unique needs of rural education to improve student learning in reading, science and math. Clearly, their work will contribute significantly to statewide professional development in our rural state, as well as contribute significant expertise in core academic areas.

Race to the Top funds will support the placement of expert professional development personnel within the ESU system in the following eight focus areas:

Core Content Areas:

1. Mathematics;
2. Reading/Writing;
3. Science;
4. Social Studies;

ESU Personnel will be responsible for delivery of professional development and in-service related to: standards (including core

content standards) and assessments (statewide and local assessment and student achievement outcomes) in the content areas and assist districts with data analysis related to student achievement outcomes.

5. Educator Development and Support – qualified personnel will work with schools to implement the state's proposed educator performance evaluation process (described herein), which will include a required professional development component for all educators;
6. Diverse Learners/Instructional Strategies – utilizing statewide and district data, ESU experts will provide (in collaboration with NDE's technical assistance initiatives proposed in Section (C) of this application) in service and support to districts within their region to assure that instructional processes meet all students' needs;
7. Technology Leadership – integration of instructional technology into teaching/learning processes;
8. Early Childhood professional development specialists (in select ESU areas) (See Nebraska Early Learning Quality Initiative proposal below).

As the model develops, consideration may be given to the addition of other content areas at select ESUs, including career education, art/music, health, physical education, and world languages.

For each of the 8 focus areas, Nebraska will establish a statewide Focus Area Steering Committee. Composition of the Focus Area Steering Committee will include the ESU representative from each ESU, NDE personnel (including standards and assessment and content specialists), and representatives from statewide associations and projects such as the NCRRE). The Steering Committee, with leadership from NDE personnel, will consider best-practice and research based models for implementation, coordinate development (train the trainer) needs of the ESU staff in each of the areas, data analysis, and evaluation for ongoing improvement/expansion for each of the focus areas. The Steering Committees will also guide resource development and coordination of services through the development and utilization of Professional Learning Networks (PLNs). A Professional Learning Network (PLN) consists of individuals sharing a common need or goal to improve skills and knowledge in a specific area.

Professional Learning Networks may be created for an ESU region, for statewide delivery, or use within specific local district settings. Coordination of PLN material development and delivery in the following areas will be coordinated by NDE and delivered through the ESU professional development network:

- Assessment and using data to make instructional decisions
- Induction/Mentoring
- Continuous School Improvement

Funds requested in this proposal will provide resources to ESUs to deliver high quality regional in-service in focus areas (onsite or via technology delivery), targeted individual school services, or PLN activities, which may cross ESU boundaries. Nebraska's enhanced ESU Professional Development System will:

- Target the needs of educators identified as low performing through the performance appraisal system or as a result of analysis of a district's student assessment results.
- Target persistently low-performing and other schools identified in the next higher tier as low performing or at risk of becoming identified as the low performing with implementation of best-practice and research-based strategies for improvement (such as professional learning communities and collaborative planning time).
- Establish priority professional development areas for teachers and leaders including a focus on implementation of state standards/ Common Core standards and assessment practices, and utilization of assessment information for continuous improvement of instruction and student achievement outcomes.

Regional Mentoring and Induction System

Nebraska will develop a high quality induction/mentoring system to support beginning teachers and administrators. The state's

Educational Service Unit structure is in a unique position to provide services in this area - - ESUs work closely with the school districts in their regions and are centrally located to provide support to teachers and administrators through onsite strategies and/or cohort structures.

Research supports that the first years of a beginning educator's experience are critical for development of the skills needed to remain in the profession and to progress toward become highly effective professional educators. Nebraska will implement the following strategies to significantly change and improve the beginning educator experience:

- Graduate follow-up and support, which includes involvement of higher education institutions and hiring schools;
- Educator performance appraisal processes and expectations that are articulated for beginning, veteran, and accomplished professionals and based upon a uniform set of professional educator standards;
- New re-certification processes based upon successful performance appraisals and professional growth;
- Coordinated professional development networks, delivered through the ESU structure, to assure that sustained, quality professional development is available to beginning (and veteran) educators.

Nebraska will implement a coordinated and ongoing mentoring and induction delivery system to successfully implement these strategies. Preliminary work within the ESU structure identified the "Ready for Anything: Supporting New Teachers for Success" as the appropriate model for the state, which is consistent with the INTASC standards (and which Nebraska is proposing to use as the basis for the Nebraska Professional Educator Standards). In addition, the Teacher Induction, Mentoring and Educational Support (TIMES) model developed by Nebraska educators will serve as a resource for the proposed statewide mentoring/induction strategy. Throughout Nebraska's mentoring/induction strategy, support will be focused on:

- Building positive classroom climate;
- Developing classroom management skills;
- Planning effective lessons;
- Engaging students with effective and differentiated instruction; and
- Using assessments and data to inform instruction leading to positive student growth and achievement.

Implementation of the model assumes:

- Regular, timely, and frequent site-based coaching and support delivered by trained facilitators or administrators;
- Cohort activities which are site or regional-based (depending upon the size of the district and location) and enhanced through virtual technology;
- Opportunities for reflection and self-assessment; and
- Support for the development and implementation of individualized professional growth plans to address individual needs.

This proposal provides for placement of ESU personnel within ESU regions who will be responsible for implementation of all components of the model, including induction/mentoring training for local district staff; development and delivery of support for beginning educators through onsite, cohort and technology-based strategies; consultation with beginning teachers, mentor and administrative teams to determine professional development/growth needs and development/identification of resources to address those needs; and monitoring/evaluation of the local induction/mentoring processes to determine areas for improvement and

enhancement.

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
(Enter measures here, if any.)					

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

State Reform Conditions Criteria

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

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

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

Evidence for (E)(1):

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

Recommended maximum response length: One page

(E)(1)

Currently Nebraska's Commissioner of Education has some ability to intervene in the lowest performing schools under existing accreditation authority. However, given the long history of local control within the state, intervention under this authority might prove contentious. Therefore, the state legislature will be asked to consider legislation during the upcoming session that will give the Commissioner additional specific authority to intervene in the state's persistently lowest achieving schools and districts that are in improvement or corrective action status.

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

(E)(2)(i)

Nebraska submitted a process for identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools in the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund Application Phase II that includes the Tier I, Title I schools that are in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring and Tier II secondary schools that are eligible for, but do not receive, Title I funds plus any secondary school that has a graduation rate of less than 60% over a period of time. As described in Section A, Nebraska has one of the highest overall graduation rates in the country (89%). Using a less than 60% graduation benchmark set by the U.S. Department of Education, only 4 Nebraska secondary schools would be included in the persistently lowest-achieving schools. Therefore, Nebraska requests permission to add to this definition any secondary school with a graduation rate of less than 75% over a number of years. This will enable the state to meet the Department's goal of concentrating resources on the schools with the greatest need for assistance in school reform.

As noted earlier in this application, Nebraska has, in the past, relied on local school districts to develop and implement high quality assessments, based on locally developed content standards, to measure the performance of schools.

Starting with the 2009-10 school year, Nebraska is initiating a new state testing system, the Nebraska State Accountability System – NeSA. The first operational test for reading is scheduled for 2010, mathematics in 2011, and science in 2012. As a result of the new assessment system, a new accountability system is under development. This new accountability system includes all state assessments and has a growth component using the NeSA results. The new state test results will provide an indication of how much

growth actually occurs for each individual student from year to year in grades 3-8. In non-adjacent years, such as high school, growth will be determined by projecting the anticipated growth between grades 8 and 11. It is anticipated that this new accountability system, built upon individual student scores generated through centralized state testing will over time significantly strengthen the state's ability to identify schools as needing improvement. The new State Accountability policy will include the required data for identifying persistently lowest-achieving schools and should also identify schools that are low performing but have not yet reached the criteria for persistently lowest-achieving schools status.

(E)(2)(ii)

Nebraska has established four goals in this comprehensive plan:

- Raise student achievement;
- Close achievement gaps among various groups of students;
- Decrease the number and percentage of students dropping out of school prior to completion; and
- Increase the number and percentage of students attending college.

Districts with persistently lowest-achieving schools will be required to include these goals and measurable objectives for each goal as part of their plans and applications for the ESEA Section 1003(g) School Improvement Grants (SIG). Renewed funding for SIG is contingent upon reaching, or making significant progress, on each of these goals.

Nebraska will establish a new Support and Intervention System that will primarily serve the identified persistently lowest-achieving schools and other schools that are in the lowest tiers in the State's accountability systems. The Supports and Interventions System

has a foundation in: (A) research and evidence-based practices; (B) coherent and focused on system-wide improvements; and (C) sustainable changes at the district level to build capacity for improvement. It will feature: (1) targeted technical assistance designed to build sustainable school and district capacity for promoting continuous improvement, with a focus on strengthening instructional practices that are aligned K-12; (2) additional resources and other supports for helping schools expand learning time, recruit, place and retain highly effective teachers and leaders; and expand parental and community engagement; and (3) directed state education agency intervention when a district lacks the capacity, as determined by a state evaluation, to improve its persistently lowest-achieving schools.

A. Anchored in Research and Evidence-Based Practice

Nebraska's Supports and Intervention System will be anchored in findings from research and evidence-based practices. The following elements are central to the achievement of educational excellence through a sound system of supports and intervention: (1) Teaching and Learning; (2) Resource Management; (3) Curriculum; (4) Culture and Climate; (5) Assessment; (6) Parental Involvement; (7) Leadership; and (8) Community Engagement. These elements are consistent with the requirements and options of the turnaround and transformation models in RTTT and with the elements to the Restart model as well.

B. Ensuring System Coherence

Nebraska's new Supports and Interventions System promotes coherence through the initiatives in the application including reorganization of the NDE, coordinating regional specialists across the state, consistent and thorough training opportunities, etc.. The initiatives support a culture of continuous improvement will have clear and consistent messaging, providing clarity in roles and responsibilities at all levels, align tools and resources, and overall coordination of improvement activities. The system will align state and federal funding, the work of external partners and agencies, and NDE's internal resources such as knowledge centers and tools.

C. Ensuring Sustainability by Improving District Capacity

Nebraska will form partnerships with districts to provide support and increase their ability to meet or exceed expectations in the improvement efforts. Nebraska will work with the State's persistently lowest-achieving schools and schools in the lowest tiers of performance in the State's accountability system simultaneously to build district capacity using the four school reform models described in RTTT. A focus on building district capacity is necessary to ensure that when the intervention ends, districts have the ability to diagnose problems, identify resources to solve them, and effectively mobilize those resources on their own to improve their schools. This will require the development of an effective framework for the evaluation of district capacity.

To assist school districts and schools in choosing and implementing the four reform models, Nebraska will utilize all existing state school improvement resources. In addition, Nebraska will implement eight new initiatives specifically targeting the state's persistently lowest-achieving schools and other low performing schools identified by the state. A description of each program is included below:

State Leadership for School Reform. Nebraska proposes a reorganization of the NDE to create School Reform position, led by an experienced administrator, to provide overall leadership in school reform. This office will coordinate the services and programs provided to districts to help the state's persistently lowest-achieving schools and schools in the lowest tiers of performance in the State's accountability system, coordinate and share information with institutions of higher education, the advisory groups in this initiative, and the public. The person in this position will oversee and coordinate the work of the regionally placed school reform specialists as they work with individual school districts, schools and staff members. The administrator must be familiar with the requirements of the Race To The Top school reform models, how to implement them within the framework of Nebraska laws and regulations and recommend changes, as necessary. NDE staff and the "school reform specialists" must be equipped to provide technical support to districts and schools as they plan for and implement one of the four school reform models and other evidence-based improvement strategies identified by the state. For example, districts

selecting the turnaround model can request assistance with selecting a school principal to lead the school through the improvement process and beyond; in the development of instruments to measure effectiveness of staff; in the identification and implementation of job-embedded, ongoing, high-quality staff development activities; implementation of research-based instructional approaches; identification of resources to increase learning time; and development of strategies for community and family engagement, among other activities.

Districts choosing the restart model may request evidence-based technical assistance leveraging national best practices for opening a new school and guidance to ensure that the school district and any future operator of the school are aware of and have a process in place to meet all applicable Nebraska education laws and regulations. If any waivers of educational rules are needed, consistent with sound educational practices, the office will assist the school district, future school operator, and the school in applying for and obtaining the needed waivers.

Districts may request technical assistance if choosing the school closure model to minimize hardships for impacted families that result from the closure of a school and to ensure student's successful transition to a new school or schools. This assistance could include ensuring that transportation to the new school does not present any barriers for students or impact attendance and participation in school activities. If implementation of the school closure model involves mergers or the consolidation of two or more districts, the school reform office would assist districts involved with the consolidation or merger process.

School transformation model assistance can include development of a staff evaluation system, identification and implementation of high quality staff development, designing or accessing job recruitment activities, designing a system to measure changes in instructional practices, designing and implementing a system to use data to guide decisions regarding the instructional program, and implementing a data system that assists with meeting the academic needs of students. This technical assistance will be provided consistent with the new teacher leader evaluation, professional development, and other programs described in this

application.

The State must develop an evaluation process and support for determining the capacity of districts and schools to create and sustain reform. When a district lacks capacity to turn around its persistently lowest-achieving school(s), based on the state evaluation, the Nebraska Department of Education will intervene to improve the persistently lowest-achieving schools using one of the four reform models and other evidence based strategies identified by the state. The state will also concurrently work to build sustainable district capacity to continue the targeted school reforms implemented by the state and otherwise improve its persistently lowest-achieving school(s).

Commissioner's School Reform Advisory Council. The Commissioner's School Reform Advisory Council will provide advice and direction to the Commissioner and staff of the Nebraska Department of Education as they support districts with turning around persistently lowest achieving schools using one of the four school reform models and other evidence based school improvement strategies identified by the state. The Council's advice and direction will be used to strengthen the state's continuous school improvement system. The Council's recommendations will be communicated to state and local policy makers by the Commissioner and Nebraska Department of Education staff if policy changes are needed to ensure to support core reforms. The Council will be asked to pay special attention to recommending strategies for turning around the state's persistently lowest-performing schools and improve the performance of all students and school staff. Advice might include ways to help schools choose one of the four reform models for implementation as well as strategies for addressing Nebraska specific challenges related to implementation of the models (e.g. successfully replacing teachers and leaders in isolated rural areas where a pool of highly effective replacement staff may not be available). Members of the council would include parents of Nebraska students; teachers and administrators; representative of institutions of higher education; community groups, foundations, business leaders, researchers, representatives of state agencies involved in the financing or delivery of services to children enrolled in the public schools; representatives of the state juvenile justice and foster care systems; individuals who

represent the interest of struggling schools; representative of state organizations serving teachers, school boards, and administrators; and individuals representing geographic regions aligned with membership on the State Board of Education. Council members would serve for the entire four year period of the Race to the Top grant and beyond. Council membership would be selected to insure representation of key stakeholder representing all regions of the state, Council meetings would be scheduled each quarter and held in Lincoln, Nebraska. The administrator for the state leadership office would chair the meetings of the Council and be responsible for the agenda and minutes of each Council meeting.

Commissioner’s Youth Advisory Council. The Commissioner’s Youth Advisory Council will provide advice and direction to the Commissioner and the staff of the school reform office. This advice and direction will be communicated to state and local policy makers by the Commissioner and NDE staff. The Youth Advisory Council will be asked to pay special attention to recommending actions that will turn around the state’s persistently lowest-achieving schools and improve the achievement of all students. An important function of this Council is to ensure that the “voices” of youth and specifically struggling youth are communicated to teachers, administrators, and policy makers at all levels. Representatives for the council will be drawn from the state's persistently lowest achieving schools, but will include students from high performing schools who can provide advice about successful educational strategies used in their schools.

Youth Leadership Program. The Youth Leadership Program will provide services and activities for students attending the state's persistently lowest-achieving schools to reinforce the importance of high achievement, help create a college going culture for all students, and provide leadership skills and a range of tools needed to assist all students reach high achievement levels. The program, led at the school level, but supported by the school reform specialists and postsecondary education staff, will provide services specific to the needs of underperforming student subgroups, including connecting them with caring adults and targeted community services, developing graduation plans and college preparedness and access plans as they enter middle school and high school. As with the youth advisory council, another important function of Youth Leadership Program is to ensure that

the “voices” of youth are communicated to policy makers at all levels and that youth are afforded the opportunity to develop leadership skills.

School Reform Specialists. NDE will contract for the employment of 8 school reform specialists, assigned to regions of the state and housed at selected Educational Service Units or school districts to ensure the persistently lowest-achieving schools and schools in the lowest tiers of performance in the State’s accountability system have a source of ongoing, intensive technical assistance and support. The school reform specialists will have expertise in at least the following areas: the four models of school reform described in RTTT; system change designed to transform schools; policy development based on listening to student and community voices; data collection and analysis; role of diversity in school transformation; and action research. The specialists will also support schools' implementation of the youth leadership program described above, and will work with the advisory councils and monitor model programs implementation.

School Reform Leadership Academy. The School Reform Leadership Academy will provide training to school leaders who serve in, or who will serve in or otherwise support, the state's persistently lowest achieving schools to assist them with using strategies for early identification of students with low school performance, the reasons for this low performance and the provision of services and programs that will improve the performance of all students, while closing performance gaps. Training will equip school leaders to reform the state's persistently lowest achieving schools by implementing one of the four reform models, improve overall student achievement, close achievement gaps, develop instruments to measure staff effectiveness, identify and implement high quality staff development activities, implement research based, data driven instructional approaches, identify resources and implement activities to increase learning time, and develop strategies for community and family engagement and involvement in activities of a struggling school.

Participation in the leadership academy will be available to school leaders employed (or to be employed) in a school that has

been identified as a persistently lowest achieving school by the Nebraska Department of Education or schools in the lowest tiers of performance in the State's accountability system. Each identified persistently lowest-achieving school may enroll a minimum of two staff members in the leadership academy and the program will provide for reimbursement of necessary expenses associated with participation in the academy's training and field experiences.

It is anticipated that participants could use some of the experiences and training opportunities for the college credit needed to obtain an initial administrator's certificate or add endorsements. The academy will work with the college or university where the individual is enrolled to facilitate the acceptance of this work.

School Reform Training Program. The School Reform Training Program will provide school reform focused and job-embedded, ongoing, high-quality professional development for teachers and administrators throughout the state, but prioritized for staff serving in the state's persistently lowest achieving schools, as well as individuals participating in other activities funded by this grant: including but not limited to youth leadership program participants, staff of the Nebraska Department of Education, advisory council members, School Reform Specialist, and participants in the School Reform Leadership Academy. The training program staff will work with ESU staff, staff of the Nebraska Department of Education, LEA teachers and administrators, leadership of NDE's policy partner organizations, and participants in the training activities to insure that staff development activities meet the needs of individuals, the state's persistently lowest-achieving schools, and address improvement of the performance of all students.

Training will provide an overview of the strategies and requirements of the four school reform models and other evidence based school improvement strategies identified by the state, so that all participants are able to support comprehensive efforts to improve the state's persistently lowest-achieving schools and schools in the lowest tiers of performance in the State's accountability system. The program will provide some training activities at a central location as well as work with ESU's to

provide training opportunities throughout the state. School Reform Training Program staff will work with the institutions of higher education to ensure that some of the training provided would be accepted as part of the course of study for additional degrees or endorsements for enrolled participants.

Expanded Learning Time. Expanded learning time is a key component of Nebraska’s reform effort. According to the Common Core State Standards Initiative, “The Common Core state standards are the first step in transforming our education system. For systemic change to occur, educators must be given resources, tools, and time to adjust classroom practice.”⁵ The current school calendar does not provide flexibility to allow either time for the deep professional development needed nor the change in classroom practice required to assist students in reaching new, higher standards. It also does not provide all students the time they need to master content needed to reach the new standards.

Data from the National Center on Time and Learning (NCTL) on implementation of expanded time and learning in some Massachusetts schools show promise of significant improvement in student achievement. NCTL reports:

- Over the past year, ELT schools gained in proficiency at *double the rate* of state schools overall in English/Language Art and Math and gained at nearly *five times* the rate of state schools overall in Science;
- In 2009, Massachusetts ELT schools in their third year achieved substantially higher rates of proficiency versus their pre-ELT performance in all three subjects;
- In 2009, Massachusetts ELT schools in their second year achieved higher rates of proficiency versus their pre-ELT performance in all three subjects.

While the data from NCTL is impressive, Nebraska needs to know if the results in Massachusetts will be duplicated in Nebraska where the district and school organization and the student body are considerably different. Therefore, Nebraska plans to hold a

competition among the state's persistently lowest-achieving schools for state funds to develop and implement extended learning time programs. School districts that elect to expand learning time will be responsible for continuing funding for the initiative at the end of the grant period. This initial state level investment will provide guidance for future activities regarding possible expansion of this component. Persistently low performing schools that do receive state funding for expanding learning time, and that wish to use ELT as a reform strategy, will receive state technical assistance to promote successful implementation. In implementing expanded learning time, Nebraska will seek technical assistance from the leading national authority on expanded time.

Implementation Schedule:

All programs would be implemented as soon as possible. The target is to have everything in place to start the program 6 months after approval of the grant and have all aspects of the program operating within the first year after approval. For the first seven programs:

Step 1-Hire leadership staff;

Step 2-Complete program descriptions and needed job descriptions;

Step 3- Implement the advisory councils;

Step 4- Finalize agreements with Educational Services Units or the ESU Coordinating Council regarding the implementation of the School Reform Specialist Program and hire specialist;

Step 5- Finalize agreement with higher education programs to participate in the training activities and start selection of participants;

Step 6- Evaluate and make needed modifications.

The Commissioner of Education, State Board of Education, Department staff and the administrator assigned to manage the School

Reform Program will be responsible for implementing these programs.

Implementation of expanded learning time will occur as individual schools institute reform models.

Expanded learning time will be implemented as a competitive program for a limited number of the state's persistently lowest-achieving schools. Additional implementation will depend on results of the competitive program and availability of funds.

Evidence

Approach Used	# of Schools Since SY2004-05	Results and Lessons Learned

Nebraska's turn-around efforts have been limited to assisting schools improving both student achievement as defined by the state's assessment system and the quality of their assessments developed in districts. That process is detailed in the standards section (D)(2)(i). The state is actively implementing a new method to identify persistently lowest achieving schools and to direct resources from this grant and other federal and state resources to turn these schools around using the four reform models prescribed by the School Improvement Grants program and Race to the Top, as well as state specific strategies.

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
The number of schools for which one of the four school intervention models (described in Appendix C) will be initiated each year.	N/C	4	4	4	4

(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

(F)(1)(i)

The State of Nebraska increased the percentage of total state appropriations used to support public education (elementary, secondary, and postsecondary) from 34.47% in FY2008 to 35.63% in FY2009, an increase of 1.16%.

	FY2008	FY2009
Total State Support for Public Education (Elementary, Secondary, and Postsecondary)	\$1,717,162,745	\$1,795,135,300
Total State Appropriations	\$4,981,312,200	\$5,037,442,681
Percentage of total State Appropriations used to support Education	34.47%	35.63%

For this analysis, total state appropriations represent both operations and construction, and include General Funds, Cash Funds, Construction Funds, and certain Distributive Funds (see descriptions of these terms immediately below). If appropriations derived only from tax revenue are considered, the percentage increase of support for public education from FY 2008 to FY 2009 would be approximately 1.84%. If construction appropriations are not considered, the percentage increase would be approximately 2.07%.

(See Appendix I, Growth in Education's Share of State Appropriations from 2008-2009)

General Funds are used to account for activities funded by general tax dollars, primarily sales and income taxes, and related expenditures and transfers. Cash Funds are used to account for revenues and expenditures that are directly related to specific activities and may be derived from sources other than taxes, excluding federal sources. Construction Funds are typically transferred from General Funds, and are used to account for the financial activities related to the acquisition or construction of major capital facilities. Distributive Funds are technically appropriated but not "expended," and usually function similarly to an imprest fund. This analysis includes only Distributive Funds which directly receive a tax or fee imposed by the State and subsequently transmit to a non-State recipient. All other Distributive Funds appear as "expenditures" of other Funds and are therefore already accounted for within those Funds.

(F)(1)(ii)

Nebraska's primary funding formula for elementary and secondary education is the Tax Equity and Educational Opportunities Support Act (TEEOSA) at Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 79-1001 et seq. (2008), as amended by LB 545 and LB 5, 2009 Neb. Laws. In 2008, the formula was modified significantly by LB 988, 2008 Neb. Laws and more recently by LB 545, 2009 Neb. Laws, and LB 5, 2009 Neb. Laws, First Special Session. The equalization formula provides unrestricted aid for operational support to school districts where formula need exceeds local formula resources.

In general, the four major components of **formula need** are basic funding, allowances, adjustments and a need stabilization factor:

Basic funding is determined by comparing the spending of school districts of similar student enrollment. After excluding the highest and lowest spending peers, basic funding equals the average of non-allowance spending (i.e., general fund operating expenditures minus expenditures for allowances). For schools with at least 900 students, basic funding is calculated on a per pupil spending basis, while the calculation for smaller schools is determined at the district level. Basic funding represents about 77 percent of statewide formula need in the FY 2010 aid year.

Allowances target additional formula need to school districts with unique, high-priority needs.

TEEOSA provides allowances to address the additional cost of educating students in poverty, English language learner programs and special education. Other allowances provide incentives to reduce class size in the early elementary grades, increase instructional time and develop focus school programs. Allowances also address the higher cost of transportation, distance learning, higher teacher education levels and remote elementary sites for students in sparsely populated rural areas. For FY 2010, allowances represent 18.5 percent of statewide formula need.

Adjustments, with one exception, also increase formula need for specific district circumstances. The single largest adjustment is the averaging adjustment which increases formula need to schools with per pupil basic funding levels below the statewide average. Adjustments also increase formula need for schools with rapid student growth, and summer school enrollment. The local choice adjustment reduces formula need for schools with fewer than 390 students operating near other schools. For FY 2010, adjustments represent about 4 percent of statewide formula need.

Need stabilization constrains formula need change from the prior year, preventing decline in formula need and constraining growth to 12%. However, growing districts are allowed to exceed the 12% growth limit. For FY 2010, this factor only increases statewide formula need about 0.4 percent.

The two most significant components of **local formula resources** for school districts are local property tax capacity and other local revenues collected. These components account for over 93 percent of local formula resources statewide. Property tax capacity is determined by assuming a rate of \$1 per \$100 of adjusted value, after adjustment per § 79-1016. Other local taxes, fees and miscellaneous revenues also contribute formula resources to school districts, including the most significant local revenues: motor vehicle taxes, state apportionment of school land earnings, public power sales taxes, interest earnings, prorated motor vehicle, and local fine/license fees.

LB 545 and LB 5, 2009 Neb. Laws, moderated previously enacted formula increases.

See Appendix J, Tax Equity and Education Opportunities Support Act Certification of 2009/10 Aid.

(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)

Nebraska statutes are silent with regard to charter schools. The statutes neither expressly authorize, nor expressly delimit charter schools. Due to the rural and small school nature of the vast majority of Nebraska school districts, charter schools are not an applicable model of public education in most areas of the state. In place of charter schools, Nebraska law permits great flexibility to school districts in the determination of curriculum offerings, which has permitted numerous school districts to create innovative schools and programs. In addition, Nebraska has a liberal enrollment option law, and a new Learning Community organization of school districts in the Omaha metro area. (See Section V – below). These actions work to keep options available for Nebraska school children, regardless of their location or resident school building or district.

(F)(2)(ii)

Not applicable.

(F)(2)(iii)

Not applicable.

(F)(2)(iv)

Not applicable.

(F)(2)(v)

Nebraska public school children have many opportunities to attend schools outside of the neighborhood where they live. These opportunities include the enrollment option program, specialized intra-district schools, and the new Douglas-Sarpy County Learning Community, which provides for expansion of magnet and focus schools throughout a two county areas made up of 11 school districts and creation of elementary learning centers that are available to any family in the two county area.

Enrollment Option Program Nebraska established an Enrollment Option Program in 1989 to enable any kindergarten through twelfth grade student to attend a school in a neighboring school district in which the student does not reside, subject to certain limitations. An option student is a student that has chosen to attend an option school district. Over the past ten years the number of Nebraska students annually taking advantage of the Enrollment Option Program has grown from 11,679 to 16,931 (5.9% of all students).

Specialized Intra-District Schools Nebraska law provides great flexibility to local school districts to create programs or schools that meet the individual interests and needs of students and families. Several school districts in Nebraska used this flexibility to created specialized schools responding to the wishes of students and their families. At the elementary level these innovative programs include the Core Knowledge School and Montessori School in the Millard School District, which has over 20,000 students in attendance throughout the district and is part of the ground breaking Douglas-Sarpy County Learning Community described below. Other school districts have developed career academies, such as the health careers academy in the Papillion

LaVista School District, which serves over 8,000 students, and Ralston School District, which serves over 3,000 students. Both the Papillion LaVista and Ralston School District are also part of the Douglas-Sarpy County Learning Community. In addition, the Papillion LaVista School District has created a science school associated with Omaha's internationally know Henry Doorly Zoo. Finally, the Lincoln School District, serving over 32,000 students created a fine arts school, a science school associated with the Lincoln Children's Zoo, and an Entrepreneurship Focus Program in partnership with Gallup, Southeast Community College, the University of Nebraska Lincoln Center for Entrepreneurship, and the city's Information Technology Focus Program.

Douglas-Sarpy County Learning Community Options The new Douglas-Sarpy County Learning Community is made up of eleven Omaha area school districts comprising over 1/3 of Nebraska's public school enrollment (over 100,000 students). This new political subdivision seeks to bring the eleven Douglas and Sarpy County School Districts into a cooperative partnership. The Learning Community concept was created in 2007 for three purposes: (1) to share resources (assessed valuation property taxes) via a common levy across all eleven school districts and thereby direct resources to districts with greater needs (poverty, ELL, and highly mobile students); (2) to expand opportunities and options for all students; and (3) to end metro area school district boundary disputes. The Learning Community Coordinating Council has recently adopted a diversity plan that provides for open enrollment in all school buildings in the learning community, subject to specific limitations necessary to bring about diverse student enrollment in each school building in the learning community. Diversity is defined in socioeconomic terms as being equal to the learning community-wide percentage of students who qualify for free and reduced price lunch which in 2008-09 was 37%. School districts are required to permit students throughout the two county area to transfer to any school they choose, subject to certain limitation. The goal, therefore, is for each school building to make progress toward having a diverse student population that mirrors the learning community wide percentage. Students that move the school building's diversity toward the learning community-wide percentage of students who qualify for free and reduced price lunch are given a priority in the learning community open enrollment process.

The Learning Community also has two other options for families. The first is the authority and levy capability to build or remodel facilities for focus schools that are operated by member school districts. The Learning Community Coordinating Council has the authority to approve focus schools and magnet schools proposed by member school districts. Focus and Magnet Schools have a unique curriculum (featuring areas such as leadership, technology, and health careers) and must be open to enrollment from all Learning Community students (as long as the student enrollment reflects the learning community-wide diversity as explained above). The second is the authority and requirement to create and operate Elementary Learning Centers. A minimum of one elementary learning center is required by statute for each 25 buildings with at least 37% of students qualifying for free or reduced-price lunches. Elementary learning centers must be open to all elementary–age children in the learning community and their families. Elementary learning centers, when opened, are to have programs designed to enhance the academic success of elementary students, including but not limited to intensive reading and math assistance outside the school day, assistance with parental reading/language skills, computer labs, mentors, and health services.

While the Douglas-Sarpy County Learning Community is new, its potential to raise the achievement level of all metro area students and close achievement gaps is high. The entire effort is focused on improved opportunities and learning for students who qualify for free and/or reduced price lunch, English Language Learners and highly mobile students.

Magnet Schools and Programs Nebraska’s largest school district, the Omaha Public Schools, operates a system of magnet schools (three at the high school level, six at the middle school level and eight at the elementary school level). The magnet schools are open to all students on a lottery basis with the intention of allowing students and families an option beyond their attendance area schools. Magnet schools, according to the Omaha Public Schools, provide students with unique opportunities and integrated educational experiences. The magnet areas vary per school. The district's three high school magnets, for example, are Information, Technology and Performing Arts at Omaha South High Schools; Math, Science and Engineering at Omaha North High Schools; and the Center for Academic, Research and Innovation at Omaha Central High School.

(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)

Rigorous New Standards and High Quality Statewide Assessments (LB 1157): Passed in 2008, the Quality Education Accountability Act required the development of rigorous new state standards and established new statewide assessments for reading/language arts, mathematics and science phased in over the next three years (reading/language arts in 2010, mathematics in 2011, and science in 2012). Pursuant to this statutory change, the State Board of Education has adopted new standards. As described above, Achieve determined that Nebraska's new standards meet or exceed the ADP Benchmarks and are as rigorous Common Core Standards under development.

College and Career Ready Requirements: As noted above, the State Board of Education adopted college and career preparation graduation requirement for all students in December 2009 and the governor approved the requirements in January 2010. They require four years of English and three years each of math, science, and social studies in Nebraska school districts by the 2014-2015

school year. The new requirements will be implemented for all students over the next few years.

Effective Local Assessment: As described in the Standards and Assessments section above, Nebraska is recognized national leader in local assessment. For the past 10 years, the state has invested heavily in an formative assessment system where teachers play significant leadership roles in developing and using local assessments. Nebraska's teachers have been trained to successfully identify and teach to the learning targets inside the state standards, have built classroom-based assessments to measure those targets, and have intervened on behalf of those students who have not met standards. As a result, Nebraska educators have become assessment literate and understand the curriculum, instruction, and assessment connection.

Nebraska Early Childhood Education Endowment ("Sixpence"): In 2006, Nebraska passed L.B.1256 creating a new public private early learning partnership called the Early Childhood Education Endowment or "Sixpence." This important initiative provides at risk children greater access to high quality, comprehensive early learning opportunities, by helping parents and caregivers provide safe, stimulating environments that spark learning through meaningful interactions. The public endowment funds a range of services including home visitation (supporting parents in their role as a child's first teacher) and center-based services that offer safe, responsive and stimulating environments. Sixpence is a \$60 million endowment comprised of \$40 million from state funds and an eventual \$20 million from the private sector. Annual earnings from the funds are distributed as grants to schools and community partners that serve infants and toddlers who are at risk of failing in school and in life.

Excellence in Teaching Act: In 2005, the Nebraska legislature authorized funding for the Attracting Excellence to Teaching Act which provides forgivable loans to individuals preparing to teach in Nebraska. The loans are forgiven when the teacher completes a commitment to teach for a specified period of time in a Nebraska school. In 2009, the Attracting Excellence to Teaching Act underwent statutory changes and became the Excellence in Teaching Act and forgivable loan funds (annually \$1,000,000) are now provided to individuals preparing to teach in high-need subject areas and for individuals participating in graduate programs,

including those seeking to add endorsements in shortage areas.

III. COMPETITION PRIORITIES

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

Nebraska proposes an ground breaking STEM collaboration with the University of Nebraska Lincoln, utilizing a range of state resources to expand students' access to rigorous STEM opportunities and prepare more students for later education and work in STEM fields. This effort is reflected across the state's application, including a proposal to revise current certification requirements to build on professional effectiveness and improve development/preparation of educators, particularly in the STEM area (building on the state's P-16 Initiative goal to increase by five percent the number of teacher education graduates in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) within Nebraska postsecondary institutions), effectively implement the Common Core Standards and more (Appendix L, provides detailed information about the project and shows how the initiative addresses Criteria (A)(2); (B)(3); (D)(3), (4), and (5); (E)(2); (F)(2)). Due to the rural nature of many school districts in the state, students do not always have access to STEM resources. To address the state's unique rural needs, and to expand new STEM opportunities to all schools, the state's RTTT application includes a proposed Nebraska Virtual School STEM Academy.

Through the Nebraska Virtual School STEM Academy, Nebraska students will have access to a rigorous science, technology, engineering, and mathematics curriculum that is aligned with national and Nebraska academic content standards and focused on the development of 21st Century knowledge and skills. Students from across the state have the opportunity to work with highly effective teachers and tutors, utilize an extensive library of online resources, participate in enrichment activities involving research and exploration, and engage in opportunities for information exchange with a national and international student body.

The Nebraska Virtual School (NVS) STEM Academy partners with local schools to strengthen the depth and breadth of their STEM curriculum offerings at the 7th through 12th grade levels, ensuring student access to a rigorous college-preparatory sequence, advanced placement courses, and college level courses. The curriculum contains rigorous content, engaging multimedia, teaching strategies based on best practices, interactive elements, opportunities for review, self-evaluation activities, and meaningful standards-based assessments.

The NVS STEM Academy allows for a level of STEM industry and research connections not currently available to many students in Nebraska. Through university and industry partnerships, mentors, and the infusion of career connections into the curriculum, students experience possible career paths in STEM areas, as well as consider the educational foundation it takes to achieve such careers. Besides offering applied learning opportunities for students, the NVS STEM Academy Advisory Board of business, industry, and community leaders; educators from across the state and nation; and representatives from government and non-profit agencies assists teachers in integrating STEM content across grades and disciplines, in promoting effective and relevant instruction, and in offering applied learning opportunities.

The NVS STEM Academy and local schools actively identify promising STEM students, helping them form connections with teacher education programs and STEM departments in universities and colleges statewide. In addition, the STEM Academy works closely with local schools to reach out to girls and students from other groups underrepresented in STEM areas, encouraging and supporting their participation in the STEM Academy courses and experiential activities designed specifically to address their needs.

For a detailed explanation of how the Nebraska Virtual School STEM Academy will help the state of Nebraska close the achievement gap in mathematics as well as prepare more students for advanced study and careers in the STEM areas, *(See Appendix K, Nebraska Virtual School and STEM Academy Proposal)*

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 (pre-kindergarten 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

Invitational Priority

Expanding access to high quality, comprehensive early learning opportunities is a high priority for Nebraska. The state proposes three key goals in response to this invitational priority:

Goal One: Partner with high poverty school districts/persistently lowest achieving schools to increase the number of children served by these schools who enter kindergarten equipped with the skills, abilities, and attitudes that will enable the child to benefit fully from K-3 programs and services;

Goal Two: Partner with high poverty school districts/persistently lowest achieving schools to ensure that early childhood education and care programs in the school service area (either center based or family child care homes) use evidence based curriculum that is aligned with the Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines and will participate in the Results Matter Early Childhood

Program Quality, Child and Family Outcomes Framework.

Goal Three: Strengthen the statewide professional development infrastructure to ensure that 100% of early Education and Care providers in areas of the state in which Nebraska's persistently lowest achieving schools operate, have access to high quality professional development to improve the outcomes of children enrolled in the early education and care settings. Research has shown that participation in a high quality early childhood program has positive effects on children's academic achievement and long term success. (Helburn, Culkin, Morris, Mocan, Howes, Phillipsen, et.al., 1995)

Statement of Need: Children who attend high quality child care programs exhibit higher levels of language and pre-math skills. Further, research indicates that the quality of early education and care impacts the child's academic achievement and social skills in the elementary grades. Children in high quality early education and care programs were more social and had higher achievement. Additionally, children who were considered at risk for school difficulties were more affected by the quality of early education and care than those who were not at risk. (Peisner-Feinberg, Burchinal, Clifford, Culkin, Howes, Kegan, et.al, 1999)

Research has shown only one third (34%) of early education and care in Nebraska is of good quality. Children of low income are in high quality programs less often than other children. (Midwest Child Care Research Consortium, 2004) The nonprofit group, National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) has ranked state licensing regulations and oversight of child care programs in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and military child care according to multiple indicators of quality. The organization ranked Nebraska 50th because of inadequate licensing standards and overburdened licensing staff (NACCRRA, 2009).

Approximately 14,900 low income Nebraska children are receiving child care services through the Child Care Development Block Grant subsidy each month. To dramatically decrease, and eventually eliminate the achievement gap in Nebraska's schools, it is imperative that the quality of child care programs be improved and children's learning and development become a focus of child care. To effectively increase the learning and development of children in child care a comprehensive approach consisting of three pillars must be instituted in Nebraska.

Project Description: The first pillar of Nebraska's quality initiative is building school district capacity to improve early education and care for the purpose of increasing kindergarten readiness. The school districts with the highest percentage of poverty and with persistently low performing schools that have licensed, or license exempt child care within their service area will be eligible to participate. School districts, either by themselves or in collaboration with other entities, will employ qualified early childhood staff to provide training and technical assistance to community early education and care providers. These specialists will also be given technical assistance around effective transition practices, and family and community engagement strategies. Each early childhood specialist will work with 6 community Early Education and care providers. These providers may be family child care providers or may work in an early learning center. Each early education and care provider works with an average of 8 children [this is based on Nebraska licensing standards. Some providers will work with fewer than 8 (infant/toddler and some family child care homes) and some will work with more than 8 children (family child care homes with school age children in addition to younger children, and classrooms of preschool aged children)]. The total number of children targeted will be 480 per year. Some children will be in multiage groups and will be served multiple years. Anticipating an average of 20% of the children will move out of care each year and into kindergarten and be replaced; the total number of children to be served with this grant would be 768 children.

Early Childhood Specialists will be given technical assistance around effective transition practices, and family and community engagement strategies. Nebraska Department of Education's Office of Early Childhood/Early Childhood Training Center (ECTC) will implement a plan of targeted training, ongoing follow-up and continuing opportunities for local Early Childhood Specialists in the areas of, transition practices, and family and community engagement strategies.

In return, they will be expected to educate teachers, administrators and community leaders regarding evidence based transition practices and the specialists will facilitate appropriate transition plans for children within the community as they enter school and move through the early grades. The early childhood specialists will become part of a coaching cadre and will be required to receive rigorous training in evidence based coaching techniques sponsored by the

Early Childhood Training Center. Coaching is an effective evidence-based strategy to improve the environment and educational practices in settings for young children. Additionally the Early Childhood Specialists will be linked to the Early Childhood Professional Development Partnerships (ECPDP's) in their areas. These ECPDP's employ coordinators who will assist the Specialists in determining training, mapping the short and long term professional development needs in the area, and filling those needs with high quality professional development opportunities. Early Childhood Education and Care providers will have the benefit of training offered regionally in various formats in addition to the individual coaching offered through the Early Childhood Specialists.

Additionally, the early childhood specialists will be linked to the Early Childhood Professional Development Partnerships (ECPDP's) in their areas. These ECPDP's employ coordinators who will assist the specialists in determining training, mapping the short and long term professional development needs in the area, and filling those needs with high quality professional development opportunities. Early education and care providers will have the benefit of training offered through the region in various formats in addition to the individual coaching offered through the early childhood specialists. Finally, all training will be aligned to Nebraska's Core Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals. *(See Appendix L, Nebraska's Core Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals)*

All identified school districts will have employed a specialist within 6 months. All Local EC specialists will receive initial training within the first year. Outreach to stakeholders begins in year one. 100 % of children in participating Early Education and Care programs will have transition plans by the end of year two. Plans will be updated yearly. 100% of Specialists will have participated in Coaching training within 18 months of hire. Specialists will secure participation of education and care providers in months 6-12. Any Early education and care providers who leave the program will be replaced within 4 months.

The second pillar of the quality initiative is focused on expectations and benefits for local child care providers. Participating child care programs (either center based or family child care homes) will use evidence based curriculum that is aligned with the Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines and will participate in the Results Matter Early Childhood Program Quality, Child and Family

Outcomes Framework.

Training in these areas will be provided through a variety of means; distance learning, group training and through individual coaching from the early childhood specialist. All training will be aligned to Nebraska's Core Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals. Follow-up to the individual education and care provider will be accomplished through individual coaching from the Early Childhood Specialist.

Children in participating Early Education and Care programs will be part of the Nebraska Results Matter System. The following are components of this system:

- Pending legal approval, each child will be assigned a unique student identifier from which NDE will be able to track child achievement throughout the P16 system. Each program will choose one of three child assessment tools and will reliably implement the chosen assessment with all enrolled children. These assessments are administered to each child throughout the year. The assessments indicate the child's level of functioning as well as the child's growth and learning.
- Participating early childhood education classrooms and family childcare homes will be evaluated through the use of an environment rating scale appropriate to the setting (ERS)
- Additionally, an assessment to determine the quality of language and literacy teaching will be used in each center-based classroom or family childcare home.

See Appendix M, Results Matter in Nebraska for additional information about this system.

A detailed report by the United States Census bureau listed the median income of child care workers in the United States is \$17,450. Because early education and care providers generally receive such low wages, it is often not possible for them to equip classrooms and learning spaces adequately to provide an enriched environment for the young children in their care. Therefore, early education and care providers will receive a stipend to augment their income and to improve the quality of the learning environment.

100% of available training will be aligned by date of training delivery. 100% of children in participating early learning programs will have ID's and all newly enrolled children will be given ID's within 30 days of enrollment. 100% of early learning providers will use assessment tool and will participate in Nebraska Results Matter Reliability Check annually. Appropriate Environment Rating Scale and literacy practices assessment will be administered in each early learning setting within three months of provider enrollment and annually thereafter.

By end of year one - at least 75% of early learning programs will score at or above a 3 on ERS.

By end of Year two - 100% will score at or above a 3 with 40 % scoring at or above a 4 on ERS.

By end of year 3, 75% will score at or above a 4 with 40% scoring at or above a 5.

By end of Year 4, 90% will score above a 4 and 75 will score at or above a 5.

Child outcome data will be collected and used by 100% of early learning providers. Program quality data will be used by Local Specialist and early learning provider to target improvement efforts.

The quality initiative final pillar is to strengthen Nebraska's statewide regional early childhood professional development system. The hub of the professional development system is NDE's Early Childhood Training Center (ECTC). The ECTC provides statewide leadership, develops training, and coordinates activities across the early childhood education and care sectors in Nebraska. The spokes of the professional development system are the regionally based Early Childhood Professional Development Partnerships (ECPDPs) and Regional Training Coalitions (RTCs). Early Childhood Professional Development Partnerships consist of local stakeholders who pool their resources to determine local professional development needs and leverage public dollars to provide training to early childhood professionals. The ECPDPs employ a full time Coordinator who can provide technical assistance to schools, child care providers and Head Start staff, the coordinator also facilitates partnerships within the region to open up professional development opportunities for wider audiences. Regional Training Coalitions do much of the same things, except they employ part time coordinators who are limited in their ability to facilitate partnerships and help the coalitions leverage training efforts. This initiative will convert Regional Training Coalitions to Early Childhood Professional Development Partnerships. This will strengthen the Early Childhood Professional Development Partnership system to reach all

areas of the state with full time Coordinators to support school districts, child care partners, and local Head Start/Early Head Start programs where they exist. Additional FTE will be added to areas with the highest populations of low income children. The creation of new Early Childhood Professional Development Partnerships and the strengthening of current partnerships will be focused on areas which serve school districts with highest numbers of children in families with low incomes.

Status of EC component of RTTT grant will be provided annually to ECICC (years 1, 2, 3 and 4). New Professional Development Coordinators will be hired in months 1-6. New ECPDP groups will begin functioning by end of first year and will strengthen throughout the life of the grant.

This initiative will be evaluated in the following ways:

- Children in participating child care programs will be part of the Nebraska *Results Matter* System.
 - This includes the assignment of a unique student identifier from which NDE will be able to track child achievement throughout the P16 system.
 - Child assessments are administered throughout the year. These assessments indicate the child's level of functioning as well as the child's growth and learning.
 - Participating early childhood classrooms and family childcare homes will be evaluated through the use of an environment rating scale appropriate to the setting. Additionally, an assessment to determine the quality of language and literacy teaching will be used in each center classroom or family childcare home.
- A statewide evaluator will analyze the data to determine effectiveness of the program and will provide annual evaluation reports regarding the results.

Participating education and care providers will collect child progress data. Evaluator will observe and analyze coaching behaviors of EC specialists. Evaluator will analyze all data. ECPDPs /ECTC collect data. Evaluator, in consultation with NDE, after end of years 1,2,3, and 4.

Timeline for Goal 1:

- 1-6 months for districts to advertise, interview and hire specialists.
- Training will be provided to Local EC Specialists regarding effective transition practices

during the first year of the grant

- EC specialists will begin educating local stakeholders within first year of grant.
- Transition plans for children will begin in second year of grant
- Coaching cadre training will be scheduled for months 7-12 of grant. Coaching will continue during months 12-48 and beyond.
- Training for community early education and care providers will be offered throughout the grant through the local ECPDP. Coordination between local Early Childhood Specialist and ECPDPs will begin in months 7-12 and continue to strengthen throughout the grant.
- Initial training of community education and care providers will be accomplished within the first year. Follow-up support will be ongoing in years two and three and taper during final year

Timeline for Goal 2:

- Alignment of training will be completed within first 2 months of grant – prior to dissemination of training.
- Unique student identifiers will be assigned within 30 days of program participation, or within 30 days of new child enrollment
- Curriculum and assessment tool will be chosen in months 7-12.
- Training for implementation of curriculum and assessment will begin in months 7-12. Full implementation of curriculum and assessment will occur between months 12 and 24 and will continue throughout grant (and beyond).
- Child outcome data will be collected continually from selection of assessment through end of grant.
- First administration of program quality assessments will occur in months within 3 months of program enrollment in initiative. Subsequent assessments will occur annually throughout life of grant.
- Stipends will be given after initial Environment Rating Scale administration – months 7-12 and annually thereafter based on continued participation and improvement.

Timeline for Goal 3:

- ECICC is currently in operation. ECICC meets four times per year and is ongoing. Months 0-48.
- ECTC is in operation currently. Guidance will be provided to ECPDPs and local specialists from beginning of grant through month 48 (and after).
- Identified ESU's will advertise, interview and hire Early Childhood Professional Development Coordinators in months 1-3.
- ECPDPs will be re configured and expanded within 6 months of grant award. Transition will be completed in months 7-12.
- 1-4 months – the evaluator will be selected and a contract will be created.
- Child progress data will be collected continuously. Data will be analyzed annually throughout life of grant.

Budget: Indirect Cost Information

To request reimbursement for indirect costs, please answer the following questions:

Does the State have an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement approved by the Federal government?

YES

NO

If yes to question 1, please provide the following information:

Period Covered by the Indirect Cost Rate Agreement:

From: 07 / 01 / 2008 To: 06 / 30 / 2011

Approving Federal agency: ED ___Other
(Please specify agency): _____

APPENDIX TABLE OF CONTENTS

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Appendix M, Results Matter in Nebraska	Early Learning Invitational Priority	141

Budget Part I: Summary Budget Table

	Project Year 1	Project Year 2	Project Year 3	Project Year 4	Total
Budget Categories	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
1. Personnel	\$3,555,178	\$3,694,219	\$3,793,747	\$3,839,872	\$14,883,016
2. Fringe Benefits	\$965,425	\$1,036,131	\$1,099,181	\$1,153,117	\$4,253,854
3. Travel	\$499,936	\$444,777	\$411,486	\$385,062	\$1,741,261
4. Equipment	\$214,152	\$94,920	\$94,920	\$94,920	\$498,912
5. Supplies	\$477,874	\$435,695	\$399,134	\$264,958	\$1,577,661
6. Contractual	\$5,666,982	\$5,782,040	\$6,499,822	\$5,779,147	\$23,727,991
7. Training Stipends	\$100,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,110,000	\$1,000,000	\$3,210,000
8. Other	\$824,251	\$621,638	\$622,960	\$601,844	\$2,670,693
9. Total Direct Costs (lines 1-8)	\$12,303,798	\$13,109,420	\$14,031,250	\$13,118,920	\$52,563,388
10. Indirect Costs*	\$524,849	\$531,222	\$532,178	\$524,984	\$2,113,233
11. Funding for Involved LEAs	\$808,000	\$808,000	\$808,000	\$808,000	\$3,232,000
12. Supplemental Funding for Participating LEAs	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$821,789	\$821,788	\$3,643,577
13. Total Costs (lines 9- 12)	\$14,636,647	\$15,448,642	\$16,193,217	\$15,273,692	\$61,552,198
14. Funding for Participating LEAs (50%)	\$13,670,778	\$19,265,911	\$14,281,130	\$14,334,379	\$61,552,198
TOTAL BUDGET (lines 13-14)	\$28,307,425	\$34,714,553	\$30,474,347	\$29,608,071	\$123,104,396

Budget Part I: Summary Budget Narrative

Nebraska seeks funds for activities in four major areas: standards and assessment, data systems to support instruction, great teachers and leaders, and turning around the lowest achieving schools. Detailed project-level budgets for each of these areas are included below. The budget structure follows the outline contained in the application. However, in its detailed budgets, Nebraska has made a special effort to provide adequate information to support each request. For instance, the budget summary narrative for the standards and assessment provides detailed information on each line item in the budget for that area.

All activities and expenditures will be in support of the state's overall reform effort, which drives expenditures of state and local funds, as well as funds from other federal programs. As noted in the narrative, activities described in RTTT do not stand alone; rather, they are part of a larger, long term effort to dramatically improve student achievement in the state. For instance, funds will support the implementation of the Common Core standards as well as the aligned formative and summative assessments the state, in coordination with others, will develop. Initial efforts in these areas precede RTTT; funds requested under RTTT fit firmly into the state's overall plan.

RTTT funds will be used in coordination with other federal funds to advance Nebraska's reform and build upon efforts already begun. For example, activities requested for data systems rest on a base of state and IES funded efforts to build a State Data Longitudinal System, including Nebraska's Student and Staff Record System. Our December 2009 SLDS application will provide additional support in this area and is completely coordinated with the request in RTTT.

Similarly, all funds for implementation of Common Core standards and development of aligned assessments will be used together to put in place the new standards and assessment system. Funds requested for turning around schools will be used, at both state and local levels, in coordination with funds provided under Title I, including those provided under ARRA.

As described in the project narrative, overall responsibility for the project rests with the State Commissioner of Education and with NDE. However, the broad based steering committee will play a central role in overseeing implementation and providing input to project management. Fiscal oversight will be provided by NDE's Office of Finance and Organizational Services. The office will assign full time personnel to the project to ensure all expenditures are within the grant budget and meet other federal requirements. To accomplish this, NDE will assign specific finance officers to the project. Assigned persons will be trained in the specific activities of RTTT as well as in federal financial requirements. A regular internal reporting system will be instituted to make certain all interest parties are aware of project expenditures. The same persons responsible for internal fiscal accountability will maintain records and submit fiscal reports related to RTTT. The records will be maintained with and aligned with other expenditures under ARRA to ensure that fiscal accountability requirements under these programs are met.

Budget Part II: Project-Level Budget Table
Project Name: Standards and Assessments
Associated with Criteria: (B)

	Project Year 1	Project Year 2	Project Year 3	Project Year 4	Total
Budget Categories	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
1. Personnel	\$975,000	\$980,625	\$986,250	\$991,875	\$3,933,750
2. Fringe Benefits	\$54,079	\$56,736	\$59,590	\$62,659	\$233,064
3. Travel	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$800,000
4. Equipment	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$20,000
5. Supplies	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$40,000
6. Contractual	\$1,317,257	\$1,314,315	\$1,311,181	\$1,307,834	\$5,250,587
7. Training Stipends	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$400,000
8. Other	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$100,000
9. Total Direct Costs (lines 1-8)	\$2,686,336	\$2,691,676	\$2,697,021	\$2,702,368	\$10,777,401
10. Indirect Costs*	\$185,414	\$185,867	\$186,322	\$186,776	\$744,379
11. Funding for Involved LEAs					
12. Supplemental Funding for Participating LEAs					
13. Total Costs (lines 9- 12)	\$2,871,750	\$2,877,543	\$2,883,343	\$2,889,144	\$11,521,780

Budget Part II: Project-Level Budget Narrative

Project Name: Standards and Assessments

Associated with Criteria: (B)

Personnel: This section consists of two primary parts: three FTE have been budgeted for the next four years. These new hires would be used to coordinate the RTTT project from both the NDE level as an overall project manager, assistant manager, and a Coordinator responsible for coordinating activities from the regional ESU and local District level. The second expenditure is the training of teachers for integration of the Common Core Standards and for training in instructional strategies, data analysis sessions and intervention strategies. Teachers are typically paid \$150 per day X 5,000 teachers across the state for a total of 750,000.

Fringe Benefits: Fringe benefits for the three FTE have been budgeted over the four year grant. **Travel:** The travel amount would cover travel for the grant project managers and NDE staff to attend consortium meetings, vendor planning sessions, and required federal meetings. Travel costs would also be covered for the teachers working on standards integration and the teachers teaching other teachers. A large amount of the work will occur in local districts or electronically, so will require a minimum of travel; however, teacher trainers and travelers will be reimbursed.

Equipment: The equipment will be used to set up offices for the three new hires.

Supplies: The supplies will cover mailings, materials, and office costs for establishing three new offices, but the cost of developing materials to be stored in the web are included in this figure.

Contractual: The biggest expenditure in the contractual category is 900,000 annually for the contracting software vendor and hosting site for the item bank. This is calculated on the basis of \$5.00 per Nebraska student annually. The second large expenditure is an additional 500,000 annually for psychometric and testing services assuring technical quality of the Common Core formative and benchmark assessments. The last 100,000 will be used for materials development and their dissemination.

Training Stipends and Other: These dollars would be used to fund the 18 hour graduate cohort for “Leading Core Standards and Assessment” through the University of Nebraska. Teacher training stipends are included in personnel, as required. Funding will also support other miscellaneous expenses.

Budget Part II: Project-Level Budget Table
Project Name: Data Systems and Use
Associated Criteria: (C)

	Project Year 1	Project Year 2	Project Year 3	Project Year 4	Total
Budget Categories	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
1. Personnel	\$513,360	\$526,194	\$539,348	\$552,833	\$2,131,735
2. Fringe Benefits	\$258,827	\$278,753	\$300,518	\$324,295	\$1,162,393
3. Travel	\$113,106	\$68,009	\$70,528	\$73,148	\$324,791
4. Equipment	\$42,250				\$42,250
5. Supplies	\$31,405	\$31,792	\$32,962	\$34,180	\$130,339
6. Contractual	\$30,000	\$65,000	\$755,000	\$435,000	\$1,285,000
7. Training Stipends			\$10,000		\$10,000
8. Other	\$24,728	\$25,579	\$26,461	\$27,383	\$104,151
9. Total Direct Costs (lines 1-8)	\$1,013,676	\$995,327	\$1,734,817	\$1,446,839	\$5,190,659
10. Indirect Costs*	\$85,737	\$84,179	\$89,234	\$88,132	\$347,282
11. Funding for Involved LEAs					
12. Supplemental Funding for Participating LEAs					
13. Total Costs (lines 9- 12)	\$1,099,413	\$1,079,506	\$1,824,051	\$1,534,971	\$5,537,941

Budget Part II: Project-Level Budget Narrative

Project Name: Data Systems and Use

Associated Criteria: (C)

Data Project 1: Expanding State Technical Support

This project will support the activities of all of the other proposed data projects. Included in this budget are the costs for continuation and expansion of the training network, additional help desk support and for expansion of the public reporting websites that will enable data to be easily generated for continuous improvement and decision making.

(1) Personnel:

Personnel: The following requested personnel will be hired as employees of the project.	% FTE	Base Salary	Project Total
Trainers: This project requests funding to support four full time trainers to support school districts across Nebraska. One trainer will cover the western part of the state, one the central portions and two trainers, located at NDE headquarters in Lincoln, will cover the eastern part of the state. Each trainer has over three years of experience working with Nebraska schools. The salary for each of these four Program Specialist III positions will be at pay grade 46 at an individual base salary of \$52,110.	4.0	\$208,400	\$865,552
Help Desk Support: NDE has established a very successful help desk program to support school districts in meeting state and federal reporting requirements. It is anticipated that the projects described in this application will require one additional FTE on the help desk. The additional help desk person will be an IT Help Desk Specialist position at pay grade 44.	1.0	\$42,955	\$178,370
Project Support: NDE will hire a person to provide office support on a four year fixed term contract. The salary for this Office Associate II position will be at pay grade 38.	1.0	\$29,927	\$124,272

Salary increased each year by 2.5% from the base salary of the first year.

(2) Fringe Benefits:

Personnel: The following requested personnel will be hired as employees of the project.	% FTE	Fringe Benefits	Project Total
Trainers: The fringe benefits each of these four Program Specialist III positions.	4.0	\$102,320	\$459,072

Help Desk Support: The fringe benefits for the IT Help Desk Specialist.	1.0	\$24,095	\$108,603
Project Support: The fringe benefits for Office Associate II position.	1.0	\$21,982	\$99,829

The basis for cost estimates or computations:

- State Retirement Share figured at 7.4880% of gross salary
- FICA is 7.65% of gross salary
- State Health insurance costs increased each year by 10% of first year
- Workers Compensation figured at 1.0827% on gross salary
- State Life Insurance benefit is \$23 per year
- Employee Assistance Program is \$16 per year

(3) Travel:

The NDE estimates travel budgets based on the amount of travel required of each position as follows: highest \$9,000, high \$7,745, medium \$4,426 and low \$1,053. Because the trainers are required to travel extensively for workshops and conferences, we have estimated the travel cost as follows:

Travel: Expenses for trainers to attend workshops and conferences.	Travel for Four Trainers Year One	Total Travel during the Project
The estimated travel budget for each trainer in year one is \$9,000. The travel budget is increased by 4% each year. No travel is included for the Help Desk or Support positions.	\$36,000	\$152,868

(4) Equipment:

Equipment: Consistent with NDE policy, equipment is defined as tangible, non-expendable, personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$1,000 or more per unit.	Cost of Item	Item Description	Total
Desktop computers, monitors, office furniture, chairs, file cabinets, etc will be needed to supply the needs of six new employees.	\$4,225	Computer including monitor, office furniture	\$25,350

(5) Supplies:

NDE estimates supplies at \$2,820 per FTE per year, with a 4% increase each year. Total expenses for supplies in year one is \$16,920. Total project cost for supplies is \$71,850.

(6) Contractual:

Nebraska has two websites for reporting to the public. The first is the *State of the Schools Report* and the second is the *Data Reporting System*. These current reporting sites will need to be expanded to include data that will be generated under projects described in Nebraska's RTTT application and in the SFSF assurances. Nebraska intends to issue a request for proposal to secure a contractor to expand the websites described in this application and will follow all state requirements and the procedures for procurement under 34 CFR Parts 74.40 - 74.48 and Part 80.36. NDE issued a similar RFP in 2008 to secure a contractor to develop the *Data Reporting System*. Based on past experience, it is estimated that this contract will occur in the last two years of the project and will cost a total of \$1.1 million.

(7) Training Stipends: None

(8) Other:

Rental of office space of \$2,071 per FTE per year and an increase of 4% per year is reported on this line. Total project cost is \$52,770.

(9) Total Direct Costs: See worksheet below.

(10) Indirect Costs:

The Indirect Cost Rate is 8.5%. Indirect costs for contracts are figured on the first \$25,000 only.

(11) Funding for Involved LEAs: None

(12) Supplemental Funding for Participating LEAs: None

(13) Total Costs: See worksheet below.

Project 1

Expanding State Technical Support

Categories	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
1. Personnel	281,322	288,355	295,564	302,953	1,168,194
2. Fringe Benefits	148,397	159,983	172,644	186,480	667,504
3. Travel	36,000	37,440	38,936	40,492	152,868
4. Equipment	25,350	0	0	0	25,350
5. Supplies	16,920	17,598	18,300	19,032	71,850
6. Contractual	0	0	700,000	400,000	1,100,000
7. Training Stipends	0	0	0	0	0
8. Other	12,426	12,924	13,440	13,980	52,770
9. Total Direct Costs(line 1-8)	520,415	516,300	1,238,884	962,937	3,238,536
10. Indirect Costs	44,235	43,886	47,930	47,850	183,901
11. Funding for Involved LEA's	0	0	0	0	0
12. Supplemental Funding for Participating LEAs	0	0	0	0	0
13. Total Costs (line 9-12)	564,650	560,186	1,286,814	1,010,787	3,422,437

Date Project 2: Supporting the Use of Data to Improve Instruction

This project's purpose is to enhance the use and expand the support of instructional support systems. The evidence provided for (C) (3) (ii) (in the application narrative) supports the need to further expand support for LEAs in implementing and using these systems. To enhance support for districts, this project proposes the addition of two FTE to the training network.

(1) Personnel:

Personnel: The following requested personnel will be hired as employees of the project.	% FTE	Base Salary	Project Total
Trainers: This project requests funding to support two full time	2.0	\$104,220	\$432,776

<p>trainers to support local schools in the use of instructional improvement systems through a series of workshops entitled Leadership for Continuous Improvement. The workshops utilize the seven Standards for Effective Schools from the <i>National Study of School Evaluation</i>. The trainers have not been hired but will be well versed in assisting LEAs in implementing the indicators that are part of the Leadership for Continuous Improvement including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing performance measures that yield reliable, valid and bias free information, • Using student assessment data for making decisions for continuous improvement of the learning process, • Using comparison and trend data in student performance in evaluating effectiveness and • Maintaining a secure, accurate and complete student record system in accordance with state and federal regulations. <p>The salary for each of these two Program Specialist III positions will be at pay grade 46 with an individual base salary for year one of \$52,110,</p>			
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Salary increased each year by 2.5% from the base salary of the first year.

(2) Fringe Benefits:

Personnel: The following requested personnel will be hired as employees of the project.	% FTE	Fringe Benefits	Project Total
The fringe benefits for the Program Specialist III positions.	2.0	\$51,160	\$229,536

The basis for cost estimates or computations:

- State Retirement Share figured at 7.4880% of gross salary
- FICA is 7.65% of gross salary
- State Health insurance costs increased each year by 10% of first year
- Workers Compensation figured at 1.0827% on gross salary
- State Life Insurance benefit is \$23 per year
- Employee Assistance Program is \$16 per year

(3) Travel:

The NDE estimates travel budgets based on the amount of travel required of each position as follows: highest \$9,000, high \$7,745, medium \$4,426 and low \$1,053. Because the trainers are required to travel extensively for workshops and conferences we have estimated the travel cost as follows:

Travel: expenses for trainers to attend workshops and conferences.	Travel for Two Trainers Year One	Total Travel during the Project
The estimated travel budget for each trainer in year one is \$9,000. The travel budget is increase by 4% each year.	\$18,000	\$76,437

(4) Equipment:

Equipment: Consistent with NDE policy, equipment is defined as tangible, non-expendable, personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$1,000 or more per unit.	Cost of Item	Item Description	Total
Desktop computers, monitors, office furniture, chairs, file cabinets, etc will be needed to supply the needs of two new employees.	\$4,225	Computer including monitor, office furniture	\$8,450

(5) Supplies:

NDE estimates supplies at \$2,820 per FTE per year with a 4% increase each year. Total expenses for supplies in year one is \$5,640. Total project cost for supplies is \$23,950.

(6) Contractual: None

(7) Training Stipends: None

(8) Other:

Rental of office space of \$2,071 per FTE per year for year one and an increase of 4% per year is reported on this line. Total project cost is \$17,590.

(9) Total Direct Costs: See worksheet below.

(10) Indirect Costs:

The Indirect Cost Rate is 8.5%. Indirect costs for contracts are figured on the first \$25,000 only.

(11) Funding for Involved LEAs: None

(12) Supplemental Funding for Participating LEAs: None

(13) Total Costs: See worksheet below.

Project 2**Supporting the Use of Data to Improve Instruction**

Categories	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
1. Personnel	104,220	106,826	109,496	112,234	432,776
2. Fringe Benefits	51,160	55,064	59,328	63,984	229,536
3. Travel	18,000	18,720	19,469	20,248	76,437
4. Equipment	8,450	0	0	0	8,450
5. Supplies	5,640	5,866	6,100	6,344	23,950
6. Contractual	0	0	0	0	0
7. Training Stipends	0	0	0	0	0
8. Other	4,142	4,308	4,480	4,660	17,590
9. Total Direct Costs(line 1-8)	191,612	190,784	198,873	207,470	788,739
10. Indirect Costs	16,287	16,217	16,904	17,635	67,043
11. Funding for Involved LEA's	0	0	0	0	
12. Supplemental Funding for Participating LEAs	0	0	0	0	
13. Total Costs (line 9-12)	207,899	207,001	215,777	225,105	855,782

Data Project 3: Supplementing Early Learning Data

This project will improve early learning data use by developing an Early Learning Connection Registry. This registry will provide a database accessible to early childhood system stakeholders who are tracking the participation of early childhood practitioners in professional development activities (including data use best practices). This database is part of the quality improvement processes that will advance program quality and lead to expanded outcomes for children in Nebraska.

(1) Personnel:

Personnel: The following requested personnel will be hired as employees of the project.	% FTE	Base Salary	Project Total
Project Manager: The full time Early Childhood Project Manager will have primary responsibility for developing and implementing the Early Learning Connection Registry including project design and management. The Project Manager will serve in a liaison capacity with other potential data sources, support data quality assurance, and provide technical assistance for early childhood constituencies in school-based and school-linked community early childhood programs. The salary for this Program Specialist III position will be at pay grade 47.	1.0	\$57,324	\$238,039
Early Childhood IT Programmer: This will be a fixed term contract position that will be responsible for the design, development, testing and implementation of the Early Learning Connection Registry. The fixed term contract will be based on the cost of a full time Applications Developer Senior, pay grade 47.	1.0	\$57,324	\$238,039
Early Childhood Career Development Coordinator: A current staff member will devote .25 FTE to the development of the data system. In addition to staff, expenses are identified to create a project design advisory group consisting of early childhood specialist and practitioners from across the state.	.25	\$13,170	\$54,687

Salary increased each year by 2.5% from the base salary of the first year.

(2) Fringe Benefits:

Personnel: The following requested personnel will be hired as employees of the project.	% FTE	Fringe Benefits	Project Total
Project Manager: The fringe benefits for this Program Specialist III position.	1.0	\$26,426	\$118,283
Early Childhood IT Programmer: The fringe benefits for the Applications Developer Senior position.	1.0	\$26,426	\$118,283
Early Childhood Career Development Coordinator: The fringe benefits for .25 FTE for the Education Specialist II position.	.25	\$6,418	\$28,787

- The basis for cost estimates or computations:
- State Retirement Share figured at 7.4880% of gross salary
- FICA is 7.65% of gross salary
- State Health insurance costs increased each year by 10% of first year
- Workers Compensation figured at 1.0827% on gross salary
- State Life Insurance benefit is \$23 per year
- Employee Assistance Program is \$16 per year

(3) Travel:

A project design advisory group consisting of early childhood specialists and practitioners from across the state will be appointed. The expenses for this group are based on a 12-member committee meeting 12 times during Year 1 of the grant.

Travel: Travel expenses include travel of 2.25 FTE and for the design advisory group	Year One Cost	Total Project Cost
Travel costs for project staff (1.25 FTE) at a cost of \$4,426 per FTE and 1 FTE of a cost of \$1,053.	\$6,586	\$27,966
The travel expenses for the design group of \$45,720 are based on a 12-member committee meeting 12 times during Year 1 of the grant only. An additional \$1,800 is included for room rental.	\$47,520	\$47,520

(4) Equipment:

Equipment: Consistent with NDE policy, equipment is defined as tangible, non-expendable, personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$1,000 or more per unit.	Cost of Item	Item Description	Total
Desktop computers, monitors, office furniture, chairs, file cabinets, etc will be needed to supply the needs of two new employees. No equipment will be required for the existing .25 FTE.	\$4,225	Computer including monitor and office furniture	\$8,450

(5) Supplies:

NDE estimates supplies at \$2,820 per FTE per year with a 4% increase each year. Total expenses for supplies in year one is \$6,345. Total project cost for supplies is \$24,539.

(6) Contractual: None

(7) Training Stipends: None

(8) Other:

This line includes rental of office space for each position (2.25 FTE) of \$2,071 for year one with an annual increase of 4%. Total project cost is \$19,790.

Data Project 4: Interoperability/Workforce Analysis

This project will allow the expansion of informal educational data sources and better coordinate relevant data collection and use. The state will enhance the work of *FutureForce Nebraska* by collecting data on programmatic career development interventions from programs in the work force, community based organizations, health and human services, and education to establish a baseline of programmatic interventions that will be available for alignment and analysis.

(1) Personnel: None

(2) Fringe Benefits: None

(3) Travel:

Travel: Travel expenses include costs associated with convening meetings and collecting data for each project year.	# of Trips	\$ Per Year	Project Total
NDE has budgeted \$5,000 each year for travel of a representative committee to advise NDE on project policies and procedures.	Eight people times four meetings each year.	\$5,000	\$20,000

(4) Equipment: None

(5) Supplies: Estimated \$2,500 per year, total project cost of \$10,000.

(6) Contractual:

Contract #1: A developmental contract (\$30,000 each year) during Year 1 and Year 2 (\$60,000 total). This contract will be with an individual or firm for leading the process of developing the workforce model described in the narrative.

Contract #2: These contracts will be will be with the seven Nebraska community colleges involved with the pilot project (\$10,000 x seven colleges) during Year 2 and Year 3 (\$35,000/year, total \$70,000).

Contract #3: Evaluation contract of the effectiveness of the data analysis model and dissemination of resources to support the longitudinal analysis (Contract \$55,000) Year 3, \$20,000 and year 4 \$35,000).

The above procurements will follow all state requirements and procedures for procurement under 34 CFR Parts 74.40 - 74.48 and Part 80.36. The estimates provided above are based on previous state procurements for similar projects.

(7) Training Stipends: Training stipends intend to support the analysis and use of the longitudinal analysis (\$10,000 Year 3).

(8) Other: NDE is estimating that \$3,500 will be required in each year to cover meeting expenses such as communications, printing, postage, equipment rental. Total project cost of \$14,000. No rental expenses are included here.

(9) Total Direct Costs: See worksheet below.

(10) Indirect Costs:

The Indirect Cost Rate is 8.5%. Indirect costs for contracts are figured on the first \$25,000 only.

(11) Funding for Involved LEAs: None

(12) Supplemental Funding for Participating LEAs: None

(13) Total Costs: See worksheet below.

Project 4 Interoperability/Workforce Analysis

Categories	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
1. Personnel	0	0	0	0	0
2. Fringe Benefits	0	0	0	0	0
3. Travel	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	20,000
4. Equipment	0	0	0	0	0
5. Supplies	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	10,000
6. Contractual	30,000	65,000	55,000	35,000	185,000
7. Training Stipends	0	0	10,000	0	10,000
8. Other	3,500	3,500	3,500	3,500	14,000

9. Total Direct Costs(line 1-8)	41,000	76,000	76,000	46,000	239,000
10. Indirect Costs	3,060	6,035	5,610	3,060	17,765
11. Funding for Involved LEA's	0	0	0	0	
12. Supplemental Funding for Participating LEAs	0	0	0	0	
13. Total Costs (line 9-12)	44,060	82,035	81,610	49,060	256,765

Budget Part II: Project Level Budget Table
Project Name: Great Teachers and Leaders (Aggregate Sub-Project Budget)
Associated with Criteria: (D)(1-5))

	Project Year 1	Project Year 2	Project Year 3	Project Year 4	Total
Budget Categories	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
1. Personnel	\$179,250	\$235,700	\$245,900	\$200,975	\$861,825
2. Fringe Benefits	\$44,813	\$58,925	\$61,476	\$50,244	\$215,458
3. Travel	\$133,250	\$125,750	\$97,500	\$71,750	\$428,250
4. Equipment	\$41,500	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$221,500
5. Supplies	\$27,500	\$53,000	\$27,000	\$18,000	\$125,500
6. Contractual	\$2,370,000	\$2,480,000	\$2,535,000	\$2,145,000	\$9,530,000
7. Training Stipends		\$900,000	\$1,000,000	\$900,000	\$2,800,000
8. Other	\$34,000	\$27,000	\$27,000	\$27,000	\$115,000
9. Total Direct Costs (lines 1-8)	\$2,830,313	\$3,940,375	\$4,053,876	\$3,472,969	\$14,297,533
10. Indirect Costs*	\$32,709	\$40,237	\$36,709	\$28,982	\$138,637
11. Funding for Involved LEAs					
12. Supplemental Funding for Participating LEAs					
13. Total Costs (lines 9-12)	\$2,863,022	\$3,980,612	\$4,090,585	\$3,501,951	\$14,436,170

Budget Part II: Project-Level Budget Table
Project Name: Alternative Program Scale Up/Teacher Supply
Associated with Criteria: (D)(1)

Budget Categories	Project Year 1 (a)	Project Year 2 (b)	Project Year 3 (c)	Project Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
1. Personnel					
2. Fringe Benefits					
3. Travel	600	600	600	600	2,400
4. Equipment					
5. Supplies	1,000				1,000
6. Contractual	40,000	115,000	115,000	40,000	310,000
7. Training Stipends					
8. Other	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	4,000
9. Total Direct Costs (lines 1-8)	42,600	116,600	116,600	41,600	317,400
10. Indirect Costs*	136	51	51	51	289
11. Funding for Involved LEAs					
12. Supplemental Funding for Participating LEAs					
13. Total Costs (lines 9-12)	42,736	116,651	116,651	41,651	317,689

Budget Part II: Project-Level Budget Table
Project Name: Teacher and Leader Evaluation
Associated with Criteria: (D)(2)

Budget Categories	Project Year 1 (a)	Project Year 2 (b)	Project Year 3 (c)	Project Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
1. Personnel	117,500	173,000	182,250	136,375	609,125
2. Fringe Benefits	29,375	43,250	45,563	34,094	152,282
3. Travel	48,750	41,250	8,750		98,750
4. Equipment	8,500				8,500
5. Supplies	18,500	45,000	19,000	10,000	92,500
6. Contractual		255,000	255,000	85,000	595,000
7. Training Stipends			100,000		100,000
8. Other	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	4,000
9. Total Direct Costs (lines 1-8)	223,625	558,500	611,563	266,469	1,660,157
10. Indirect Costs (8.5% of lines 1-5)	18,201	25,713	21,723	15,340	80,976
11. Funding for Involved LEAs					0
12. Supplemental Funding for Participating LEAs					
13. Total Costs (lines 9-12)	241,826	584,213	633,286	281,809	1,741,133

Budget Part II: Project-Level Budget Table

Project Name: Equitable Distribution of Effective Teachers and Principals

Associated with Criteria: (D)(3)

Budget Categories	Project Year 1 (a)	Project Year 2 (b)	Project Year 3 (c)	Project Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
1. Personnel	13,000	13,200	13,400	13,600	53,200
2. Fringe Benefits	3,250	3,300	3,350	3,400	13,300
3. Travel	14,500	14,500	18,750	18,750	66,500
4. Equipment	31,500	60,000	60,000	60,000	211,500
5. Supplies	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000	16,000
6. Contractual	80,000	70,000	170,000	160,000	480,000
7. Training Stipends		900,000	900,000	900,000	2,700,000
8. Other	3,500				3,500
9. Total Direct Costs (lines 1-8)	149,750	1,065,000	1,169,500	1,159,750	3,544,000
10. Indirect Costs* (8.5% of lines 1-5)	2,954	2,975	3,358	3,379	12,665
11. Funding for Involved LEAs					0
12. Supplemental Funding for Participating LEAs					0
13. Total Costs (lines 9-12)	152,704	1,067,975	1,172,858	1,163,129	3,556,665
<p>All applicants must provide a break-down by the applicable budget categories shown in lines 1-15. Columns (a) through (d): For each project year for which funding is requested, show the total amount requested for each applicable budget category. Column (e): Show the total amount requested for all project years. *If you plan to request reimbursement for indirect costs, complete the Indirect Cost Information form at the end of this Budget section. Note that indirect costs are not allocated to lines 11-12.</p>					

Budget Part II: Project-Level Budget Table
Project Name: Accountability and Support for Teacher Prep
Associated with Criteria: (D)(4)

Budget Categories	Project Year 1 (a)	Project Year 2 (b)	Project Year 3 (c)	Project Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
1. Personnel					
2. Fringe Benefits					
3. Travel	67,000	67,000	67,000	50,000	251,000
4. Equipment					
5. Supplies	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	8,000
6. Contractual	490,000	280,000	235,000	100,000	1,105,000
7. Training Stipends					
8. Other					
9. Total Direct Costs (lines 1-8)	559,000	349,000	304,000	152,000	1,364,000
10. Indirect Costs	5,865	5,865	5,865	4,420	22,015
11. Funding for Involved LEAs					
12. Supplemental Funding for Participating LEAs					
13. Total Costs (lines 9-12)	564,865	354,865	309,865	156,420	1,386,015

Budget Part II: Project-Level Budget Table

Project Name: Professional Development

Associated with Criteria: (D)(5)

Budget Categories	Project Year 1 (a)	Project Year 2 (b)	Project Year 3 (c)	Project Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
1. Personnel	48,750	49,500	50,250	51,000	199,500
2. Fringe Benefits	12,188	12,375	12,563	12,750	49,876
3. Travel	2,400	2,400	2,400	2,400	9,600
4. Equipment	1,500				1,500
5. Supplies	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	8,000
6. Contractual	1,760,000	1,760,000	1,760,000	1,760,000	7,040,000
7. Training Stipends					0
8. Other	28,500	25,000	25,000	25,000	103,500
9. Total Direct Costs (lines 1-8)	1,855,338	1,851,275	1,852,213	1,853,150	7,411,976
10. Indirect Costs (8.5% of lines 1-5)	5,554	5,633	5,713	5,793	22,693
11. Funding for Involved LEAs					0
12. Supplemental Funding for Participating LEAs					0
13. Total Costs (lines 9-12)	1,860,892	1,856,908	1,857,926	1,858,943	7,434,669

Budget Part II: Project Level Budget Narrative
Project Name: Great Teachers and Leaders (Aggregate Sub-Project Budget)
Associated with Criteria: (D)(1-5))

(1) Personnel

Project Coordinator staff to be paid out of funds from this application for D1-5 are generally included at a Program Specialist IV (Level 48) position within the Nebraska Department of Education. Salary is based on 50% of the maximum pay grade for this classification. Salary increases for each subsequent year are included at approximately 1.5-2%.

Support Staff to be paid out of funds from this application for D1-5 are generally included at an Office Associate II (Level 40) position within the Nebraska Department of Education. Salary is based on 40% of the maximum pay grade for this classification. Salary increases for each subsequent year are included at approximately 1.5-2%.

Other Staff calculations for this application for D1-5 are explained below.

A total of \$861,825 is requested for personnel for Years 1-4.

- D-1 No additional staff is requested.
- D-2

Nebraska Professional Educator Standards (NPES) Project Coordinator

Responsible for overall leadership and management for development and implementation of Nebraska Professional Educator Standards (work with teacher preparation programs, revision of Rules, coordination with educator evaluation process development, collaboration with ESUs for training and in-service. Coordinate with Teacher/Administration Performance Appraisal project, Certification, and Data staff.

Performance Appraisal Project Coordinator

Lead development and implementation of evaluation systems. Coordinate with NPES, Teacher Certification, Data, and Standards/ Assessment Staff

Teacher Certification Redesign Project Coordinator

Oversee development of certification redesign processes based on teacher/principal evaluations; develop and work with ESU staff to develop/implement training for statewide implementation; develop new certification levels (including creation of the Teacher-Leader certification) and provide leadership for associated implementation strategies.

Teacher Certification Analyst Staff

Calculated as a Program Associate III (Level 40) at 40% of the maximum pay scale, with estimated 1.5-2% increase for subsequent years.

Assist with transition of current system, provide technical assistance to users, and provide input to section implementation of redesign decisions.

IT Staff

Calculated as an IT Data/Database Analyst Lead (Level 48) at 50% of the maximum pay scale, with estimated 1.5-2% increases for subsequent years..

System changes for recording, issuing certificates, and data management of certification system, system for public report.

- D-3

Coordinator for Equitable Distribution Design and Management

Participant selection/identification development and delivery of support resources and processes for identified teams to work in high-poverty and high minority schools.

(Coordinator works in coordination with NDE staff responsible for strategies related to Persistently Low Performing Schools), statewide steering committee management, monitoring and evaluation functions.

Coordinator for Hard to Staff Program Development

Manage selection processes for model sites; provide technical assistance, monitoring and evaluation of progress. Manage revision of certification and program approval processes as related to the ELL/SPED strategy.

- D-4

No additional staff requested.

- D-5

Statewide Coordinator for Professional Development/Mentoring System

Coordinate statewide steering committees and resources to address focus area needs, collaborate with other NDE staff and systems to support ESU staff, monitoring and evaluation functions.

PERSONNEL	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
D-2 NPES Coordinator	50% FTE \$32,000	25% FTE \$16,250			\$48,750
D-2 Performance Appraisal Coordinator	50% FTE \$32,500	50% FTE \$33,000	50% FTE \$33,500	25% FTE \$17,000	\$116,000
D-2 Teacher Certification Redesign Coordinator	25% FTE \$16,250	50% FTE \$33,000	50% FTE \$33,500	50% FTE \$34,000	\$116,000
D-2 Teacher Certification Analyst	n/a	100% FTE \$32,000	100% FTE \$33,000	100% FTE \$34,000	\$99,000
D-2 IT Staff	33% FTE \$21,250	66% FTE \$43,500	100% FTE \$66,750	64% FTE \$43,500	\$175,000
D-2 Support Staff	50% FTE \$15,000	50% FTE \$15,250	50% FTE \$15,500	25% FTE \$7,875	\$53,626
D-3 Equitable Distribution Coordinator	10% \$6,500	10% \$6,600	10% \$6,700	10% \$6,800	\$26,600
D-3 Hard to Staff Program Development Coordinator	10% \$6,500	10% \$6,600	10% \$6,700	10% \$6,800	\$26,600
D-5 Coordinator	75%	75%	75%	75%	

for Professional Development and Mentoring System	\$48,750	\$49,500	\$50,250	\$51,000	\$199,500
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2) Fringe Benefits

\$215,458 is allocated for fringe benefits for activities described in D1-5 for Years 1-4.

Fringe benefits are based on 25% of salary. Benefits for D1-5 are \$44,813 in year one, \$58,925 in year two, \$61,476 in year three, and \$50,244 in year four.

3) Travel

Travel expenses are computed at state approved rates for mileage and will be paid on an actual costs reimbursement basis.

A total of \$428,250 is requested for travel for Years 1-4.

D-1 For stakeholder travel to attend meetings to develop expanded survey and to develop monitoring, evaluation and identification of needs based on survey results.	6 individuals-1 day onsite meeting for each of 4 years.	Year 1-\$600 Year 2-\$600 Year 3-\$600 Year 4-\$600	Total \$2,400
D-2 Stakeholder group to develop NE Professional Educator Standards—preservice through professional status (for teachers and principals).	35 individuals (higher ed rep, state association rep, NDE & ESU staff, practitioners). 2 meetings in year 1, 1 meeting in year 2.	Year 1 =\$17,500 Year 2=\$8,750	Total \$26,250
D-2 Stakeholder group to develop NE Teacher/Administrator Performance Evaluations	30 individuals (state association rep, NDE & ESU staff, practitioners) X 3 meetings in year 1 30 individuals x 2 meetings in year 2	Year 1- 22,500 Year 2 - \$15,000	Total \$37,500
D-2 Stakeholder group to provide input into redesign of the teacher certification system (recertification based on performance appraisal system,	35 individuals (state association rep, NDE & ESU staff, practitioners, teacher educators) x 1	Year 1 -\$8,750	

new categories of certificates)	meeting-Year 1 35 x 2 meetings-Year 2 35 x 1 meeting-Year 3	Year 2 - \$17,50 Year 3 - \$8,750	Total \$35,000
D-3 Steering Committee for Equitable Distribution Strategy Development: Develop strategies, evaluate progress	15 individuals-includes NDE, ESU, state association and local school leaders	Year 1- 4: 2 meetings per year @\$6,000	Total: \$24,000
D-3 Statewide meetings which include all teacher education institutions to serve as advisory during implementation year and to discuss replication and assimilation of ELL/SPED model and STEM model results.	17 institutions—2 representatives from each institution for each meeting.	Year 1-2: 2meetings per year =\$8,500 per year. Year 3-4: 3 meetings per year@\$12,750 per year.	Total: \$42,500
D-4 Statewide Summit-. Summit focus includes development of: framework for enhanced field-based experience models, strategies to improve educator preparation, collaborative new professional support models	Team of 3 individuals from Teacher Preparation Programs; State Association representation; NDE, ESU and teacher/administrator representatives. 200 participants.	Year 1-4 @\$50,000 per year.	Total: \$200,000
D-4 Program Improvement Meetings - to revise educator preparation standards and other preparation program requirements consistent with changes proposed in this application (e.g. Professional Standards, field experience, alternative delivery).	17 teacher preparation institutions	Year 1- \$17,000 Year 2-\$17,000 Year 3-\$17,000	Total: \$51,000
D-5 NDE staff to attend Statewide Steering Committee Meetings and other regional activities	Estimate 2 trips per month	Year 1- 4 @\$2,400 per year	Total: \$9,600

(4) Equipment

A total of \$221,500 is requested for Years 1-4.

D-2 Computer/monitor and associated peripherals costs for additional staff (7 potential positions; however, some may be combined since not full FTE). Printer (shared)	Year 1 - 4 @ 1,500 per unit=\$6,000. Printer - \$2,500	Total: \$8,500
D-3 Laptop allowance for virtual meetings with cohort participants, research, data management	Year 1 – 20@\$1,500=\$30,000 Year 2 – 4: 40@\$1,500=\$60,000 per each year	Total: \$210,000
D-3 Computer/monitor and associated peripherals costs for additional staff	Year 1 -\$1,500	Total: \$1,500
D-5 Computer/monitor and associated peripherals costs for additional staff	Year 1 -\$1,500	Total: \$1,500

(5) Supplies

Unless otherwise indicated in the chart below, supplies for general operations are calculated at \$4,000 per FTE per year.

D-1 Software for Shortage Survey and Data Collection	Year 1 - \$1,000	Total: \$1,000
D-2 Printing/Postage: Informational and technical assistance documents regarding NPES, performance appraisals, and certification changes.	Year 2-\$32,000 Year 3-\$6,000	Total: \$38,000
D-2 General Office Supplies	Year 1 - \$18,500 Year 2 - \$13,000 Year 3 - \$13,000 Year 4 - \$10,000	Total: \$54,500
D-3 General Office Supplies	\$4,000 per each year	Total: \$16,000
D-4 General Office Supplies, printing, postage	\$2,000 per each year	Total: \$8,000
D-5 General Office Supplies, printing, postage	\$2,000 per each year	Total: \$8,000

(6) Contractual

A total of \$9,530,000 is requested for Years 1-4.

Nebraska follows the procedures for procurement under 34 CFR Parts 74.40 - 74.48 and Part 80.36.

D-1 UNO TAP Program Scale-up- Provide funds for recruitment and support of UNO TAP program		Year 1-4 @ \$20,000 per	Total: \$80,000
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participants and for associated faculty needs to increase capacity		each year.	
D-1 UNK TTT Program Scale-up- Provide funds for program revision to decrease program participant completion time from 3 to 2 year. Will require revision of program components and acquisition of additional field-based staff.		Year 1-4 @ \$20,000 per each year.	Total: \$80,000
D-1 Provide planning and implementation funds to revise post-bac programs to be more responsive to participant needs through alternative delivery (cohort-based, utilization of technology, quality field-based experience/supervision in place of traditional coursework expectations).	15 institutions @ \$5,000 for each of two years	Year 2-\$75,000 Year 3-\$75,000	Total: \$150,000
D-2 Regional delivery of training and support to local schools regarding: the Nebraska Professional Educator Standards (NPES); and NE Educator Performance Appraisal	3 FTE Regional Coordinators located across the state during Years 2-3 of project. 1 FTE for Year 4 (Basis \$65,000 per FTE for each of 3 years). Include operating/travel/meeting expenses @ \$20,000 per year.	Year 1 - n/a Year 2 - \$255,000 Year 3 - \$255,000 Year 4 - \$85,000	Total: \$595,000
D-3 Inservice for cohort participants (research-based/best-practice models) presenter and meeting costs for participants, regional support for participants, acquisition of print resources.	(Travel reimbursement based upon actual costs.)	Year 1-4 @ \$15,000 per year.	Total: \$60,000
D-3 Pilot STEM Center development—includes research/development of model,	1 higher education institution for each of 4 years.	Year 1- \$25,000	

scholarships (loan forgiveness) for participants in the model, development of teacher resources; leadership for assisting with replication at other Nebraska institutions.		Year 2- \$25,000 Year 3- \$25,000 Year 4- \$25,000	Total: \$100,000
D-3 Replication of STEM Center in 5 additional Nebraska institutions.	5 institutions	Year 3 and 4 @\$20,000 X =\$100,000	Total: \$200,000
D-3 ELL Paraprofessional Model: development of program structure, mentoring, field-based experiences, technology support/delivery, and leadership for other institutions seeking to replicate the model.	1 institution: Year 1- Planning, development, recruitment Year 2-program implementation and continuing development Year 3- continuation Year 4-continuation and evaluation	Year 1 - \$20,000 Year 2 - \$15,000 Year 3 - \$15,000 Year 4 - \$10,000	Total: \$60,000
D-3 SPED Paraprofessional Model: Development of a program structure, mentoring, field-based experiences, technology support/delivery, and leadership for other institutions seeking to replicate the model.	1 institution: Year 1- Planning, development, recruitment Year 2-program implementation and continuing development Year 3- continuation Year 4-continuation and evaluation	Year 1 - \$20,000 Year 2 - \$15,000 Year 3 - \$15,000 Year 4 - \$10,000	Total: \$60,000
D-4 Implementation of expanded field-based experience models	17 institutions-baseline of \$5,000 in years 1 and 2 for program revisions; additional funds (\$100,000/yr) for candidate stipends to participate in expanded field-based models will be pro-rated to institutions	Year 1-\$185,000 Year 2-\$185,000 Year 3-\$100,000 Year 4-\$100,000	Total: \$570,000

	based on number of graduates. Institutions will work with districts to develop collaborative support structure.		
D-4 Implementation of Professional Development School models.	17 institutions with a minimum of 1 partnership school- Year 1-\$15,000 per institution to support development and startup costs. Year 2-3 (Continuation, refinement and evaluation) @\$5,000 per year per institution.	Year 1 - \$255,000 Year 2-\$85,000 Year 3 -\$85,000	Total: \$425,000
D-4 Implementation of collaborative Graduate Follow-up/Induction model (Nebraska institutions work collaboratively (with representatives from districts and ESUs) to create foundational model and to build on that model to meet unique aspects of the institution, with planning and intervention consideration to performance on State Educator Preparation Report Card (when data is available).	17 institutions	Year 1-\$50,000 (includes development of foundational model and modifications for individual institutions, development of resources) Year 3-\$50,000 (support for continuation, refinement and evaluation)	Total: \$100,000
D-4 State Report Card- Integration of IHE data into State Report Card	Contract with IT services for assistance with development.	Year 2-\$10,000	Total: \$10,000
D-5 Regional Focus Area staff in located in selected ESUs	8 Focus Area staff x 8 ESUs x 20,000 (25% time + benefits) for each Focus	Year 1-4 @\$1,280,000 per year.	Total: \$5,120,00

	Area. 8 focus areas x 8 regions x \$20,000=\$1,280,000 /year		0
D-5 Mentoring Induction Support	8 Regional ESU staff x \$20,000 (approximately 25% time + benefits). 8 x \$20,000=\$160,000 per year	Year 1-4 @ \$160,000 per year.	Total: \$640,000
D-5 Travel for ESU staff and for district staff to attend regional activities	Staff from each of 8 regional offices @ \$20,000/region	Year 1-4 @ \$160,000 per year.	Total: \$640,000
D-5 Resource acquisition for local school dissemination to support work of ESU staff for mentoring components.	Approximately \$20,000/year per 8 regions=\$160,000 per year.	Year 1-4 @ \$160,000 per year.	Total: \$640,000

(7) Training Stipends

A total of \$2,800.000 is requested for training stipends for Years 1-4.

D-2 Teacher-Leader Field Test Cohort in high need LEAs (application process, cohort provides input into final development of the Teacher-Leader certification and assists with resource development/training for subsequent participants).	20 participants @ \$5,000	Year 3 - \$100,000	Total: \$100,000
D-3 ELL Participants	20 new participants in each of Years 2-4. Average of 100 credit hour equivalent @ \$180 (actual cost will depend upon institution selected to create the model program. Each participant will be provided a	Year 2-\$450,000 Year 3-\$450,000 Year 4-\$450,000 (funds will be distributed over the	Total:

	laptop computer with software to support online instruction and virtual cohort activities (\$1,500 per participant).	course of the individual's participation in the program)	\$1,350,000
D-3 SPED Participants	20 new participants in each of Years 2-4. Average of 100 credit hour equivalent @ \$180 (actual cost will depend upon institution selected to create the model program. Each participant will be provided a laptop computer with software to support online instruction and virtual cohort activities (\$1,500 per participant)	Year 2-\$450,000 Year 3-\$450,000 Year 4-\$450,000 (funds will be distributed over the course of the individual's participation in the program)	Total: \$1,350,000

(8) Other

Funds are requested for Years 1-4 for Virtual and other Statewide Meeting Expenses and Communication costs (\$108,000) and office furniture to accommodate additional staff (\$7,000).

(9) Total Direct Costs

Total direct cost for this project is 14,297,533. The direct costs per year follow:

Year 1 – \$2,830,313; Year 2 - \$3, 940,375; Year 3 - \$4,053,876; Year 4 - \$3,472,969

(10) Indirect Costs

The indirect cost rate is calculated at 8.5%.

Year 1- 32,709; Year 2- 40,237; Year 3- 36,709; Year 4- 28,982

(11) Funding for Involved LEAs: None for this project

12) Supplemental Funding for Participating LEAs: None for this project

Project Level Budget Summary
Project Title: School Turn Around
Criterion: (E)

	Project Year 1	Project Year 2	Project Year 3	Project Year 4	Total
Budget Categories	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
1. Personnel	\$444,700	\$453,050	\$464,378	\$475,985	\$1,838,113
2. Fringe Benefits	\$150,000	\$165,000	\$181,500	\$199,650	\$696,150
3. Travel	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$120,000
4. Equipment	\$29,920	\$29,920	\$29,920	\$29,920	\$119,680
5. Supplies	\$32,000	\$32,000	\$32,000	\$32,000	\$128,000
6. Contractual	\$1,699,725	\$1,688,475	\$1,675,828	\$1,661,610	\$6,725,638
7. Training Stipends					\$0
8. Other	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$120,000
9. Total Direct Costs (lines 1-8)	\$2,416,345	\$2,428,445	\$2,443,626	\$2,459,165	\$9,747,581
10. Indirect Costs*	\$205,389	\$206,418	\$207,708	\$209,029	\$828,544
11. Funding for Involved LEAs					
12. Supplemental Funding for Participating LEAs	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$821,789	\$821,788	\$3,643,577
13. Total Costs (lines 9-12)	\$3,621,734	\$3,634,863	\$3,473,123	\$3,489,982	\$14,219,702

Project Level Budget Narrative
Project Title: School Turn Around
Criterion: (E)

1. Personnel

Personnel funding plans for one full time Administrator, two Specialists, two Staff Assistants, one Evaluator and two Evidence Based Practice Specialists.

2. Fringe Benefits

Expenditures	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
1. FRINGE BENEFITS for State Leadership	150,000	165,000	181,500	199,650	696,150
~Administrator	30,000	33,000	36,300	39,930	139,230
~Specialists	40,000	44,000	48,400	53,240	185,640
~Staff Assistant	20,000	22,000	24,200	26,620	92,820
~Evaluator	20,000	22,000	24,200	26,620	92,820

3. Travel

Travel costs will be minimal, but are needed for state leadership activities, including instate & out-of-state travel for the Administrator-1, Specialists-4, Evaluator-1 – 6 x \$5,000

Expenditures	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
TRAVEL for State Leadership	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	120,000
~Instate & Out-of-State for Administrator-1, Specialists-4, Evaluator-1 – 6 x 5,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	120,000

4. Equipment

Expenditures	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
EQUIPMENT for State Leadership	29,920	29,920	29,920	29,920	119,680
~Computer hardware & software updates \$3,740 X 8	29,920	29,920	29,920	29,920	119,680

5. Supplies

Expenditures	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
2. SUPPLIES <i>for State Leadership</i>	32,000	32,000	32,000	32,000	128,000
~Office Rental (8 x 1,000)	8,000	8,000	8,000	8,000	32,000
~Office support (phone, copying, etc. 8 x 3,000)	24,000	24,000	24,000	24,000	96,000

6. Contractual

Contracts and subcontracts will be used for supporting evidence based practices, sub-grants to selected ESUs, school reform specialist, model programs for LEAs, School Leadership Academy Training in reform practices, Leadership Trainees, the Youth Leadership Council, School Reform Training Program, and other purposes.

7. Training Stipends

None planned.

8. Other

Other expenses include four Advisory Council Meetings, including meals, site fees, lodging and mileage at \$5,000/meeting. These expenses also include costs associated with Subcommittee of Youth to advise Council Policy Makers (two meetings), including meals, site fees, lodging & mileage at \$5,000/meeting.

9. Total Direct Costs

Year One	Year Two	Year Three	Year Four	Total
\$2,416,345	\$2,428,445	\$2,443,626	\$2,459,165	\$9,747,581

10. Indirect Costs

Year One	Year Two	Year Three	Year Four	Total
\$205,389	\$206,418	\$207,708	\$209,029	\$828,544

11. Funding for Involved LEAs

None.

12. Supplemental Funding for Participating Districts

The budget estimates nine participating schools (Nebraska's expected number of persistently low performing schools) at an average of \$100,000 per grant to supplement their budget, in order to help districts implement one of the four specified reform models.

Budget Part II: Project-Level Budget Table

Project Name: Nebraska Virtual School STEM Academy

Associated with Criteria: Competitive Preference Priority 2; and Selection Criteria (A)(2); (B) (3);
(D)(3), (4), and (5); (E)(2); (F)(2)

Budget Categories	Project Year 1 (a)	Project Year 2 (b)	Project Year 3 (c)	Project Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
1. Personnel	\$1,394,540	\$1,450,322	\$1,508,335	\$1,568,668	\$5,921,865
2. Fringe Benefits	\$428,490	\$445,629	\$463,454	\$481,993	\$1,819,566
3. Travel	\$12,600	\$12,600	\$5,040	\$5,040	\$35,280
4. Equipment	\$95,482	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$95,482
5. Supplies	\$321,969	\$253,903	\$244,172	\$117,778	\$937,822
6. Contractual	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
7. Training Stipends	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
8. Other	\$387,906	\$191,939	\$192,379	\$170,341	\$942,566
9. Total Direct Costs (lines 1-8)	\$2,640,987	\$2,354,392	\$2,413,381	\$2,343,820	\$9,752,580
10. Indirect Costs*	\$223,257	\$200,123	\$205,137	\$199,225	\$827,743
11. Funding for Involved LEAs	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
12. Supplemental Funding for Participating LEAs	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
13. Total Costs (lines 9-12)	\$2,864,244	\$2,554,516	\$2,618,518	\$2,543,045	\$10,580,323

PROJECT-LEVEL BUDGET NARRATIVE

(1) Personnel

Personnel: The following requested personnel will all be hired as employees of the project beginning in Year 1. Salary increases of 4% are projected for Years 2, 3, and 4.	% FTE	Base Salary	Total (Year 1)
Independent Study High School Director (1): The Nebraska Virtual School STEM Academy is part of the University of Nebraska Independent Study High School (ISHS). Barbara Shousha is responsible for the administrative leadership of the ISHS and as such would have oversight of the STEM Academy as described in Competitive Preference Priority 2. She has extensive management and administrative experience. Her qualifications are described in the curriculum vitae in Appendix K.	10%	\$75,000	\$7,500
Independent Study High School Principal (1): Barry Stark serves as the principal of the Independent Study High School (ISHS) and therefore will also serve as principal of the Nebraska Virtual School STEM Academy as described in Competitive Preference Priority 2. He has final authority for student grade appeals and approval of school policies. Mr. Stark reports to the Director of the Independent Study High School and has extensive experience as a school administrator in both large and small Nebraska schools. For a description of his qualifications, see his curriculum vitae in Appendix K.	10%	\$58,000	\$5,800
Nebraska Virtual School (NVS) STEM Academy Coordinator (Associate Principal) (1): TBA. This position will be responsible for the overall coordination and management of the Nebraska Virtual School STEM Academy, supervising all staff of the STEM Academy and conducting all routine school-related functions. The person in this position will facilitate partnerships with Nebraska schools involved in the STEM Academy. The person hired in this position must have a Nebraska School Administrators Certificate. The position will report to the Independent Study High School principal and will be responsible for all aspects (budgets, teachers, staff, partnerships with local schools, etc.) related to the functioning of the STEM Academy as outlined in the plan associated with Competitive Preference Priority 2 and further described in Appendix K.	100%	\$65,000	\$65,000
Staff/Project Assistant (1): TBA. This position will provide	100%	\$27,000	\$27,000

<p>support for the STEM Academy administrators, teachers, and staff, handling for example all ordering of supplies, travel arrangements, project tracking and facilitation, data collection, etc., and will assist the Student/School Support Associates during high enrollment periods. This position will report to NVS STEM Academy Coordinator, and will be responsible for all project-related and front-line support related to the functioning of the STEM Academy in the plan associated with Competitive Preference Priority 2 and further described in Appendix K.</p>			
<p>Student/School Support Associates (2): TBA. These positions will be the front-line connection to Nebraska Schools associated with the STEM Academy. They will support the Learning Coach Coordinator, enroll students in STEM Academy courses, arrange for proctoring of exams, answer school questions, resolve issues, etc. These positions will report to NVS STEM Academy Coordinator, and will be responsible for all front-line school support related to the functioning of the STEM Academy in the plan associated with Competitive Preference Priority 2 and further described in Appendix K.</p>	100%	\$27,000	\$54,000
<p>Master Lead Teachers (2): TBA. The Master Lead Teachers will provide expertise, leadership, and supervision to the course teachers in effective distance education instruction, student learning, and curriculum. The Master Lead Teachers will have a minimum of 7-10 years of teaching experience, hold a Master’s Degree (or above), a valid Nebraska certification, and endorsement in requisite STEM content areas. The Master Lead Teachers will report directly to the NVS Coordinator. The Master Lead Teachers will serve as department chairs for mathematics and technology, and science and engineering. They will work with the Instructional Designer/Faculty Developer to design and delivery teacher training activities involving both STEM Academy teachers and local partner school teachers, coordinate the Professional Learning Community, and coordinate workshops and webinar series.</p> <p>These positions are related to the functioning of the STEM Academy in the plan associated with Competitive Preference Priority 2 and further described in Appendix K. In addition, the master lead teachers assist the state in meeting its goals to ensure equitable distribution of effective teachers (D) (3) and to turn around its lowest achieving schools by providing access to highly effective teachers and a rigorous STEM Curriculum</p>	100%	\$50,000	\$100,000

(E)(2).			
<p>Master Course Teachers (15): TBA. The Master Course Teachers will provide the course-content expertise in specific STEM content areas. They will hold valid Nebraska certification with endorsement in the area in which they teach. The Master Course Teacher will have a minimum of 5-7 years teaching experience and Master’s Degrees. The Master Course Teachers will display knowledge and ability in the areas of effective learning techniques through distance education, maintaining frequent and consistent teacher-to-student interaction, feedback, and encouragement. The Master Course Teacher will report directly to a Master Lead Teacher.</p> <p>The Master Course Teachers will work closely with the Local School Learning Coaches to ensure student success. In conjunction with the STEM Academy academic advisor and local school counselors, they will identify promising STEM students to form connections to college and career recruitment efforts and STEM Academy enrichment activities.</p> <p>The Master Course Teachers will supervise pre-service STEM discipline teachers in student teaching and practicum activities.</p> <p>These positions are related to the functioning of the STEM Academy in the plan associated with Competitive Preference Priority 2 and further described in Appendix K. In addition, the master course teachers assist the state in meeting its goals to ensure equitable distribution of effective teachers (D) (3), to turn around its lowest achieving schools by providing access to highly effective teachers and a rigorous STEM Curriculum (E)(2), and to improve the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs (D)(4) by providing opportunities for pre-service teachers to shadow and work with highly effective STEM teachers.</p>	100%	\$45,000	\$675,000
<p>Faculty Developer/Instructional Designer (1): TBA. This position will provide training to teachers, tutors, and others in the use of the STEM Academy Learning Management System and in integration of the online resources into the classroom. In cooperation with the Master Lead Teachers, this position will design and implement training opportunities for the Professional Learning Community, which includes both STEM Academy teachers and local partner school teachers. The position will develop webinars, workshops, and other events in support of teachers and will coordinate the scholarship applications for teacher graduate level course work. This</p>	100%	\$45,000	\$45,000

<p>position requires a minimum of five years experience in distance education faculty development, instructional design, and online course development, and will report to the Coordinator of High School Curriculum.</p> <p>This position leads all course development teams, heads the “inclusion” peer review team, and facilitates faculty development activities related to the functioning of the STEM Academy in the plan associated with Competitive Preference Priority 2 and as described in Appendix K. In addition, the faculty developer in facilitating teacher training opportunities within the Professional Learning Community assists the state in meeting its goals to provide effective support to its partner school administrators and teachers (D)(5) and to support the transition to enhanced standards and the use of assessments to inform teaching practice (B)(3).</p>			
<p>Learning Coach Coordinator/Academic Advisor (1): TBA. This position will work with the NVS STEM Academy schools to identify and train the local school learning coaches. The position will provide support to and guidance for the local school learning coaches and serve as the primary point of contact for the learning coaches. The person in this position will also work closely with the local school counselors to develop individual learning plans for their school’s students involved with the STEM Academy, to identify students who will benefit from involvement in STEM Academy courses and activities, to connect students with a variety of college preparatory services, and to facilitate connections to college and career recruitment activities. This position will coordinate the scholarship programs for STEM Academy students to enroll in college credit courses, participate in enrichment activities, and to take non-STEM distance courses (if necessary). The position will report to the NVS Stem Academy Coordinator and requires a Nebraska counselor’s certification.</p> <p>The position will coordinate all activities associated with the local school learning coaches as related to the functioning of the STEM Academy in the plan associated with Competitive Preference Priority 2 and as described in Appendix K. In addition, this position will help the state meet its goal of closing the achievement gap between groups of students and between schools (E)(2) by working with partner schools to develop a caring and supportive learning environment for students in the STEM Academy.</p>	100%	\$45,000	\$45,000
<p>Tutoring Services Coordinator (1): TBA. This position</p>	100%	\$35,000	\$35,000

<p>supervises and manages the tutoring center, hiring and training tutors, establishing processes and procedures, reviewing the functioning of the center, identifying center hours, determining needed applications and resources, collecting data and modifying tutoring support as needed. This position will report to the NVS STEM Academy Coordinator and will be responsible for the smooth running of the tutoring center as related to the functioning of the STEM Academy in the plan associated with Competitive Preference Priority 2 and described in more detail in Appendix K. In addition, this position assists the state in meeting its goals to provide effective support to its partner school administrators and teachers (D)(5) and to turn around its lowest achieving schools by providing access to students needing additional support to be successful in STEM courses (E)(2).</p>			
<p>Tutors (5): TBA. The individuals in these positions will provide tutoring to the NVS STEM Academy students. They will be subject area pre-service teachers or majors and may be located across the state. They will ensure support for all STEM Academy students, using the online resource library, communicating via email, phone, whiteboards, chats, etc. Tutors will available during school and prime homework hours. In general, the tutors will be part-time, representing a total of 5 full time equivalent hours.</p> <p>The tutors will report to the Tutor Center Coordinator and will assist students in understanding the concepts presented in their STEM Academy courses. These positions are related to the functioning of the STEM Academy in the plan associated with Competitive Preference Priority 2. In addition, these positions assist the state in providing increased opportunities for STEM discipline pre-service teachers and subject area majors to gain experience in online teaching, the integration of technology into teaching, and best instructional practices in the STEM disciplines (D)(4) and to turn around its lowest achieving schools by providing access to students needing additional support to be successful in STEM courses (E)(2).</p>	100%	\$25,000	\$125,000
<p>Technical Services Coordinator (1): TBA. This position will coordinate a technical help center that provides STEM Academy students, teachers, and tutors with assistance in resolving technical issues related to the STEM Academy Learning Management System, applications used within the STEM Academy courses, and other technical issues that make completing the course activities difficult. The Technical Help Center will provide technical support for and training on all</p>	100%	\$45,000	\$45,000

<p>applications and equipment used by the teachers, staff, tutors, and students involved with the STEM Academy. This position will report to the Director of Information Services and will be responsible for all Tech Help Center functions, procedures, training, support, data tracking, etc. The work of this position is related to the functioning of the STEM Academy in the plan associated with Competitive Preference Priority 2.</p>			
<p>Technical Services Support Specialist (1): TBA. Together with the Technical Services Coordinator, this position will, provide technical support to the STEM Academy students, teachers, and students, resolving technical issues, providing training, coordinating with schools to ensure appropriate connections and equipment is available for students and learning coaches, and ensuring appropriate connections for all involved with the STEM Academy. The position reports to the Technical Services Coordinator and assists students in resolving technical issues encountered when working with the STEM Academy courses. The work of this position is related to the functioning of the STEM Academy in the plan associated with Competitive Preference Priority 2.</p>	100%	\$30,000	\$30,000
<p>LMS Administrator (1): TBA. This position will be responsible for the overall leadership and management of the LMS (learning management system) application(s) and the server(s) that support the application. This includes configuration, installation of software, documentation, and security for the server set-ups and the application. The person in this position will enter the position with at least five years experience in supporting server-based applications. The position will report to the Director of Information Technology for Extended Education & Outreach. The work of this position is related to the functioning of the STEM Academy in the plan associated with Competitive Preference Priority 2.</p>	100%	\$55,000	\$55,000
<p>LMS Programmer Analyst (1): TBA. This position will analyze, develop and maintain modifications to the LMS (learning management system) software and associated applications and integrate third party software and back-end business systems. Within a team, the person in this position will determine scope and requirements for development projects and work with other technical staff to implement/integrate products as well as design, code, and test software used to support the LMS. The position will report to the Director of Information Technology for Extended Education & Outreach. The work of this position is related to the functioning of the STEM Academy in the plan associated with Competitive Preference Priority 2.</p>	100%	\$55,000	\$55,000

<p>Extended Education & Outreach Business Affairs Director (1): Randal Leach will be responsible for leadership and management on financial, human resources and facility issues. This includes development of job descriptions and recruitment of staff related to the grant as well as financial reporting and monitoring. He will also manage all work space issues including furniture, equipment, phones, etc. Mr. Leach has had responsibility for these types of functions for over 16 years within UNL as well as multiple years of private industry experience. His work for this project is related to the functioning of the STEM Academy in the plan associated with Competitive Preference Priority 2.</p>	5%	\$96,000	\$4,800
<p>Extended Education & Outreach Business Affairs Supervisor (1): Lee Manns will be responsible for processing, or supervising the processing of, payroll/employment records, including bi-weekly and monthly reporting; as well as the processing of all non-payroll related expenses. She has over 22 years of accounting experience within UNL as well as over nine years of experience supervising staff in the business office. Her work on this project is related to the functioning of the STEM Academy in the plan associated with Competitive Preference Priority 2.</p>	10%	\$33,969	\$3,397
<p>Extended Education & Outreach Information Systems Director (1): Keith Bartels will provide supervision and guidance to the LMS Administrator and Programming Analyst and Technical Services staff. Throughout his more than 20 years at the University of Nebraska, he has gained extensive experience in the supervision, coordination, and guidance of programming, application development, and information systems. He will provide expert assistance in selecting and implementing software and other applications as related to the functioning of the STEM Academy in the plan associated with Competitive Preference Priority 2.</p>	5%	\$92,000	\$4,600
<p>Extended Education & Outreach Marketing Director (1): Danielle Dubuc-Pedersen will be the project manager for the NVS STEM Academy website development and the development of collateral and promotional items related to the functioning of the STEM Academy in the plan associated with Competitive Preference Priority 2. She has more than 20 years in public relations, marketing, account management in both business and education.</p>	5%	\$78,000	\$3,900
<p>Extended Education & Outreach Instructional Design & Development Director (1): Marie Barber will provide overarching guidance in curriculum development, online teaching strategies, online resource identification and</p>	5%	\$76,613	\$3,831

management, faculty training, and distance education instructional design related to the functioning of the STEM Academy in the plan associated with Competitive Preference Priority 2. She has over 30 years experience in distance education curriculum and course development and faculty development.			
Extended Education & Outreach High School Curriculum Coordinator (1): Lucinda (Cindy) Roiné will be responsible for coordinating and leading the instructional designer/faculty developer in the development of STEM Academy courses and professional development opportunities for teachers. She will also serve as a resource and consultant in curriculum standards and trends as well as distance education instructional design, teaching strategies, and technology. She will guide the review of courses selected for inclusion in the STEM Academy. She has 23 years of experience in instructional design including 9 years experience as Curriculum Coordinator. She reports to the Director of Instructional Design & Development, and will provide general guidance on all instructional design and faculty development activities related to the functioning of the STEM Academy in the plan associated Competitive Preference Priority 2 and as described in detail in Appendix K.	10%	\$47,127	\$4,713

(2) Fringe Benefits

Faculty and managerial/professional staff benefits are estimated at 30% of salary while office/clerical staff benefits are estimated at 42%. The actual cost of benefits for each person will be charged to the project.

(3) Travel

Travel: The federal reimbursement rates for mileage, meals, and lodging would apply for Years 1, 2, 3, and 4. As of January 1, 2010, the mileage rate is \$0.55 per mile. For travel within Nebraska, the rate for meals and incidentals is \$46 and the lodging rate is approximately \$70. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln requires actual expenses for reimbursement; thus, no per diem applies.	# Trips	\$ per Trip	Total
Years 1 and 2: The NVS STEM Academy Coordinator, the Learning Coach Coordinator/Academic Advisor, and the Master Lead Teachers will visit the partner schools to explain the workings of the STEM Academy, to develop partner agreements, to review status of the programs processes and success, to discuss the professional development activities	5 trips in each of Years 1 and 2	\$2,520	\$12,600 per year in each of Years 1 and 2

<p>offered for the local school teachers, to touch base with the local school academic advisors and learning coaches, and in general facilitate connections between the schools and the academy.</p> <p>Each trip would result in visits to an average of 10-15 schools per trip with schools grouped by districts and regions. In Years 1 and 2, the group listed above would conduct 5 separate trips of an average of 4 to 5 days per trip. This travel will ensure smooth communications, clear understanding between partner schools and the STEM Academy, provide support for local school administrators and teachers in training and the carrying out of their functions, and provide a face-to-face forum to resolve any issues that may arise. The travel thus supports the functioning of the STEM Academy in the plan associated with Competitive Preference Priority 2 and as described in detail in Appendix K.</p>			
<p>Years 3 and 4: The NVS STEM Academy Coordinator, the Learning Coach Coordinator/Academic Advisor, and the Master Lead Teachers will visit the partner schools during Years 3 and 4 to evaluate status of the programs progress, to examine the impact of the professional development activities offered for the local school teachers, to resolve and work through any issues with the local school academic advisors and learning coaches, and in general facilitate the on-going improvement of the program.</p> <p>Each trip would result in visits to up to 10 schools per trip with schools grouped by districts and regions. Schools would be chosen based on student performance and school needs. In Years 3 and 4, 2 separate trips of an average of 4 days per trip would be conducted. This travel will provide a face-to-face forum to resolve any student and/or teacher support issues, review of student performance, and ensure smooth communications and clear understanding between partner schools and the STEM Academy. The travel thus supports the functioning of the STEM Academy in the plan associated with Competitive Preference Priority 2 and as described in detail in Appendix K.</p>	2 trips in each of Years 3 and 4	\$2,520	\$5,040 in each of Years 4 and 5

(4) Equipment

Equipment: Consistent with policy, equipment is defined as tangible, non-expendable, personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of	Cost of Item	Item Description	Total
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\$1,000 or more per unit.			
Desktop Computer (1): One desktop computer and printer will be needed to supply the needs of the NVS STEM Academy Coordinator.	\$2,350	Computer including monitor and printer	\$2,350
Desktop Computers (4): Four desktop computers will be needed to expand our current office and supply the needs of four new employees (Faculty Developer, Learning Coach Coordinator/Academic Advisor, Tutoring Services Coordinator, Technical Services Coordinator). The configuration of these computers requires the capability to support multimedia applications, web conferencing hosting, and other development applications.	\$2,200	Computer including monitors	\$8,800
Desktop Computers (7): Seven desktop computers will be needed to expand our current office and supply the needs of seven new employees (Staff/Project Assistant, Student/School Support Associates [2], and several part-time tutors officed at the STEM Academy facility).	\$1,450	Computer including monitor	\$10,150
Desktop Computers (2): Two desktop computers will be needed to expand our current office and supply the needs of two new programming employees (LMS administrator and LMS Programming Analyst). These computers require the power and capabilities to support the programming work done by the LMS administrator and programmer.	\$2,500	Computer including monitors	\$5,000
Networked printer (1): One networked printer will be needed to expand our current office and supply the needs of all NVS STEM Academy new employees officed at its facility.	\$1,200	Networked printer	\$1,200
Laptop Computers (17): Seventeen tablet PC computers will be needed to supply the needs of the two Master lead Teachers and the fifteen Master Course Teachers. The Tablet PCs will allow teachers to easily draw graphs and equations on the whiteboards within the LMS and the web conferencing applications to better support distance students in STEM courses. In addition, teachers will be working from across the state and having tablet PC laptops allow them to work from any location home, school, office, while traveling, etc.	\$3,150	Tablet PCs and printers	\$53,550
Servers (2): Two servers will be needed to support the Learning Management System used to deliver the instruction for the NVS STEM Academy. One server will be needed to host the Learning Management System application. This is the application that provides the platform for delivery of instructional material, grades, assignments, messages from instructors, etc., to students. It is also the platform that course developers use to input instructional material for the courses.	\$7,216	Servers	\$14,432

One server will be needed to host the database for the Learning Management System application. While the application server provides the platform for input and output of material and data, the database server holds the actual data within a database management system.			
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(5) Supplies

	Cost of Item	Item Description	Total
Instructional Materials (Online Resources): In addition to the free resources categorized in the NVS STEM Academy online resource library, licenses for online library resources such as PowerMedia Plus, Discovery Education Streaming Plus, PBS Online, or NASA Online Resources will be purchased. These online resources will be used by the NVS STEM Academy teachers and tutors to enhance, supplement, and clarify concepts and by STEM Academy students as part of projects and presentations. They will also be available for use by the local partner school teachers and learning coaches. The Faculty Developer will use these resources as part of professional development on the integration of technologies into the classroom. These resources help support the goal of providing equitable access to all students and teachers to high-quality STEM resources and a rigorous STEM curriculum as outlined under Competitive Preference Priority 2, in Appendix K and in criteria (E)(2).	Varies by resource	Online Resource Licenses	\$110,000 per year for four years.
Instructional Materials (Textbooks): Instructional materials for the STEM Academy include access to course textbooks for NVS STEM students. Textbook costs vary, ranging from \$75 to \$150 depending on the course. In most cases, the textbooks will be online. Textbook purchases follow established school purchase procedures and regulations. Number of student participants per year = \$4,500; access codes timeframes vary from 2 to 4 years.	Varies by course and textbook	Online Textbooks	\$204,469 Year 1; \$136,313 Year 2; \$126,490 Year 3
Office Supplies (Software): Software applications and upgrades needed for instruction and/or course development, such as multimedia, graphic, and web development applications; screen and lecture capture applications; video and audio editing applications, etc.	Varies by application	Software Applications	\$4,500 per year for each of 4 years
Office Supplies (Miscellaneous): Office supplies for	Varies by	Miscellaneous	\$3,000

teachers, administrators, and staff of the NVS STEM Academy including computer supplies (such as CDs, headphones and webcams for teachers and other staff) and miscellaneous office supplies, such as paper, pens, paper clips, markers, etc.	item	Office Supplies	Year 1 (a 3% increase in each of Years 2, 3, and 4)
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(6) Contractual

None

(7) Training Stipends

None

(8) Other

Course Development and Expansion

All of the following assist the state in meeting its goal to provide a high-quality, rigorous STEM curriculum (Competitive Preference Priority 2) to meet its education reform agenda (A)(2).

- New STEM course development = \$22,500 per year for Years 1, 2, and 3. The Nebraska Virtual School STEM Academy will expand its curriculum by developing new NVS online courses. Specifically, new NVS STEM course development (up to 5 developed per year in Years 1, 2, and 3) could include such courses as Principles of Engineering, Digital Electronics, Principles of Biomedical Sciences, or Engineering: The Digital Future, which is focused on engineering and design concepts in wireless and telecommunications, the Internet, electronic music, and other multimedia technologies. In addition, new science and technology courses—such as Principles of Biomedical Sciences, Human Body Systems, Scientific Research, the Science of Technology, or Biotechnology—would be considered for development.
- Learning Object Production = \$30,000 per year for Years 1, 2, 3, and 4. Additional learning objects (an average of 3 per year), particularly those focused on engineering concepts, will be developed for use in all NVS STEM courses. These learning objects will be used by teachers to infuse mathematics, science, and technology courses with engineering concepts.

Operating Expenses: The purpose of the following expenditures is to support the on-going operations of the NVS STEM Academy and relate only to the support for administrators, staff, and teachers of the STEM Academy. An estimated 3% increase in each of Years 2, 3, and 4 is applied to each of the following expenditures.

- Postage and delivery services = \$1,011 Year 1 (includes regular and special delivery costs for correspondence to schools and promotional items)
- Communications = \$8,151 Year 1 (telephone, data ports, wireless connections for 13 NVS STEM Academy administrators, staff, and master lead teachers).
- Printing = \$2,500 Year 1 (includes printing of correspondence to schools, reports, supplemental lesson materials, promotional items)
- Copier Charges = \$750 Year 1
- Dues/Subscriptions = \$2,500 Year 1 (includes subscriptions to journals, such as Online Teaching; membership in organizations such as iNACOL, ASCD, Teacher Subject Area Associations, etc.; as well as photo and image databases used in the courses by teachers and students)

No annual increases are applied to each of the following expenditures

- Professional Development for NVS STEM Academy Administrators, Staff, and Teachers = \$49,000 per year for Years 1, 2, 3, and 4. (\$2,100 per year designated for 2 Master Lead Teachers and 1 NVS STEM Coordinator, \$2,000 for 15 Master Course Teachers,; \$1,200 per year for 6 managerial/professional staff; \$2,000 per year for 1 LMS Administrator and 1 LMS Coordinator; and \$500 per year for 3 office/clerical staff to provide on-going professional development activities targeted at each groups special development needs to ensure currency in skills and knowledge)
- In-depth technical training for LMS Administrator and LMS Programmer = \$15,000 Year 1 and \$5,000 per year for Years 2, 3, and 4 (Specialty training on server support and back-end programming for Learning Management System, the web conferencing application, and the tracking and help desk ticket system that supports the development and delivery of all courses, instruction, and training provided by the NVS STEM Academy)
- Learning Management System (LMS) = \$74,880 Year 1 (Initial set up and purchase of LMS and first year delivery license); \$12,480 per year for Years 2, 3, and 4 for delivery license for 4,500 students plus NVS STEM Academy teachers, staff, and administrators.
- Web Conferencing Application (such as Elluminate, Adobe Connect, or Wimba) = \$36,000 per year for each of 4 years (license for 3,500 students plus NVS STEM Academy teachers, staff, and administrators to hold real-time office hours; present projects, student work, speeches and presentations; conduct webinars for professional development; provide tutoring; hold meetings among teachers, tutors, learning coaches, schools, and NVS STEM Academy staff, etc.
- Tracking and ticket system = \$12,000 Year 1; \$2,000 per year for Years 2, 3, and 4 (An application to track and process help desk questions; tutoring requests; school, parent, student, counselor, or teacher inquiries; or service issues from schools or students)

- Website Development and Maintenance = \$35,000 Year 1 (\$10,000 per year for Years 2, 3, and 4). The NVS STEM Academy will utilize Extended Education and Outreach’s sophisticated web content management system to develop its website. The website includes information about the program, courses, or professional development opportunities for partner schools; enrollment forms; links to electronic communication applications and courses; information for the Learning Coaches; and/or links to tutors, online resources, teachers, and others. In essence, it serves as the portal to NVS STEM Academy. The first year development expenses include the complete design of the website, which are defined as follows:
 - Discovery - The phase of development that includes defining the work and building a work plan schedule. The website must be designed in such a way as to meet all needs of the program with minimal rework for a period 4+ years.
 - Scope Definition - Identifies and outlines all work necessary to produce the final website. The scope is detailed enough to provide a good overview of the work and steps involved to bring the website to full deployment and ensures everyone understands what is expected. This phase should also outline who will work on the project and who will be responsible for maintenance.
 - Graphical Design/Presentation and Wireframes - This phase of the project entails defining the ‘look and feel’ of the website, purchasing and/or photographing any pictures, producing any videos, or other graphical and media elements necessary to communicate the content for the website. Wireframes are the visual guidelines needed to suggest a website structure and the relationships among pages.
 - Design and Copywriting - This phase involves the actual production of the content (text, video, pictures, other media) needed for the site.
 - Programming - This phase involves the actual programming necessary to set up the page templates and fill with the content.
 - Maintenance - Includes the people involved who must be able to correct, update, change, add, or delete any content, media, page, etc., as needed.
 - Software Licensing - Staff who need to update sections of the WCMS may entail additional software licensing.

For subsequent years, minor changes, updates, and upgrades will be required. These changes include updating media, adding new content, creating new web forms, creating new templates, and other general maintenance issues. No major upgrades or development is planned. In all instances, the maintenance will require copy writing, media development and some programming, as well as annual licensing fees for the WCMS.

- Collateral and Promotional Items = \$32,000 Year 1 (\$10,000 per year for Years 2, 3, 4). Major expenditures in the first year include the following:
 - Concept Development and Planning - This phase entails defining the overall ‘look and feel’ of the program and identifies the communication vehicles, which will be used to deliver communications to all prospective audiences. Collateral may include

public relations materials, direct mail, brochures, post cards, e-mail blasts, and social media such as blogs, twitters, Facebook site, etc.

- Media Purchase & Copy Writing - Once the communications vehicles are determined, the collateral will need to be developed in terms of content. This involves the purchase and/or production of photography, videos, testimonials, and other forms of media necessary for each identified form of collateral.
- Production - The cost of graphics layout and printing.

Subsequent year expenses include primarily minor update costs such as copy-writing and new media, and printing of new collateral.

- Office Space = \$67,003 Year 1 only. (Office Set Up for 14 NVS STEM Academy staff officed in facilities at Extended Education and Outreach, University of Nebraska-Lincoln.)

(9) Total Direct Costs

The total direct costs for each year of the budget are as follows:

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
\$2,640,987	\$2,354,392	\$2,413,381	\$2,343,820	\$9,752,580

(10) Indirect Costs

The indirect cost rate is 8.5%.

(11) Funding for Involved LEAs

None

(12) Supplemental Funding for Participating LEAs

None

(13) Total Costs

The total costs for each year of the budget are as follows:

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
\$2,864,244	\$2,554,516	\$2,618,518	\$2,543,045	\$10,580,323

Budget Part II: Project-Level Budget Table
Project Name: Nebraska Early Learning Quality Initiative
Associated with Criteria: Invitational Priority

Budget Categories	Project Year 1 (a)	Project Year 2 (b)	Project Year 3 (c)	Project Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
1. Personnel	48,328	48,328	49,536	49,536	195,728
2. Fringe Benefits	29,216	31,088	32,643	34,276	127,223
3. Travel	10,980	8,418	8,418	5,124	32,940
4. Equipment					
5. Supplies	5,000	5,000	3,000	3,000	16,000
6. Contractual	125,000	103,000	85,000	85,000	398,000
7. Training Stipends					
8. Other (ESU's for ECPDPs)	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	1,200,000
9. Total Direct Costs (lines 1-8)	518,524	495,834	478,597	476,936	1,969,891
10. Indirect Costs*	15,600	14,521	12,205	12,065	54,391
11. Funding for Involved LEAs	808,000	808,000	808,000	808,000	3,232,000
12. Supplemental Funding for Participating LEAs					
13. Total Costs (lines 9-12)	1,342,124	1,318,355	1,298,802	1,297,001	5,256,282

Budget Part II: Project-Level Budget Table
Project Name: Nebraska Early Learning Quality Initiative
Associated with Criteria: Invitational Priority

(1) Personnel

- The professional development coordinator will be paid out of the funds from this application. This is an Education Specialist II position within the Nebraska Department of Education. Salary is based on the Level 46 of the NDE pay structure (Specialist II) and begins at the 40% of the maximum pay grade for this position. In years three and four, the salary increases 2.5% in anticipation of a cost of living increase.
- The position is 1.0 FTE and will be responsible for facilitating and providing support to the statewide professional development system. Specifically, this position will be responsible for the transition of Regional Training Coalitions into Early Childhood Professional Development Partnerships and then the ongoing support of the entire network of ECPDP's.

Personnel: The following requested personnel will all be hired as employees of the project.	% FTE	Salary Year 1	Salary Year 2	Salary Year 3	Salary Year 4	Total
Professional Development Coordinator (1)	1.0%	48,328	48,328	49,536	49,536	\$195,728

(2) Fringe Benefits

- \$127,223 is allocated for fringe benefits.
- Fringe benefits are based on 17% of salary + \$21,000 medical insurance cost in year one. Benefits costs are computed with a 5% increase per year. Benefits are calculated to be \$29,216 in year one, \$31,088 in year two, \$32,643 in year three, and \$24,276 in year four.

(3) Travel

- Travel for Professional Development Coordinator is budgeted at \$4,400 per year.
- The Professional development Coordinator must meet with existing professional development partnerships throughout the state and will need to periodically visit the each area to monitor their success and provide support.
- Travel expenses include cost to rent state car at \$10.60 per day + mileage at .30 cents per mile. Trips over 150 miles one way also include lodging at \$70. Per night and meal expenses of \$36. per day. The average cost of a trip is calculated at \$183. The budget includes 24 trips per year for the Professional Development Coordinator.
- Early Childhood Education Specialists who work at the Nebraska Department of Education and provide technical assistance to local Early Childhood Education Specialists will be traveling to meet with the local district staff, early education and care staff and the Local Early Childhood Education Specialist. Trips for NDE early childhood specialists are budgeted in the same way as those for the Professional Development Coordinator. A total of 36 trips are budgeted for year one since each Local Early Childhood Specialist will need significant support in the first year. Fewer trips for NDE specialists are budgeted in subsequent years since Local Specialists will require less outside assistance. Twenty-two trips by NDE specialists are budgeted for years two and three. Only four trips are budgeted for NDE specialists for year four.

Travel:	# Trips	\$ per Trip	Total
Average cost of trip is \$183			
Professional Development Coordinator	96	\$183	\$17,568
Early Childhood Specialists	84	\$183	\$15,372

(4) Equipment

No equipment will be purchased with grant funds for this project

(5) Supplies

Provide:

- The grant funds will pay for resource books and training materials

- Five Thousand dollars has been allocated in years one and two. A reduction in the need for large training events in years three and four allows the supplies allocation to be reduced to \$3,000 for each of the final two years of the grant.
- A total of \$16,000 has been budgeted for supplies.

(6) Contractual

- A total of \$398,000 will be contracted for this project
- Trainers will be contracted to deliver training to the local early childhood specialists in the area of effective coaching techniques.
 - Coaching training is being estimated at 25,000 in year one. This amount will include 2 trainers at \$1000 per day per trainer for an initial 3 days of training and then one day of follow-up training per month for the next 9 months as well as contracted space. (Goals 1,2)
- Training in the use of early childhood curriculum and assessment will be delivered across the state.
 - In years one and two, a multi-day institute will be held in a metropolitan area of the state. Forty thousand dollars is budgeted for each of these events. This amount will cover the cost of multiple trainers, the venue, and foodservice for participants. (Goal 1)
 - Additionally, in year two, \$3,000 and in each of years three and four, \$25,000 has been budgeted for training in addition to the opportunities outlined above. Contracts will be with trainers who have expertise in early childhood mental health, classroom environments, early literacy and numeracy, or other specialty areas. Contracts will be individually written based on need in areas across the state. An allocation of approximately \$1000 per day per trainer is planned. (Goals 1,2)
- This project will be evaluated by an outside evaluator. The services of the evaluator will be contracted. Sixty thousand dollars is budgeted per year.
 - The evaluator will analyze all child progress and all program quality data. Evaluator will also collect and analyze data regarding the effectiveness of the coaching provided by Early Childhood Specialists. (Goals 1,2)
 - Evaluator will report the aggregated results of child progress, coaching effectiveness, and program quality for this project annually. (Goals 1,2)
 - Evaluator will also compile and report annually on training provided in the Early Childhood Professional Development Partnerships. (Goal 3)
- Nebraska follows the procedures for procurement under 34 CFR Parts 74.40 - 74.48 and Part 80.36.

Purpose	Activity	Cost	Project total
Train early childhood specialists in evidence based coaching techniques to be used with participating early education and care providers.	Coaching training	\$25,000 in year one	\$25,000
Early Childhood Curriculum and Assessment training will be provided for participating early childhood education and care providers so high quality education and care practices can be implemented in local settings.	Early Childhood Curriculum and Assessment Training	\$40,000 in each of years 1 and 2	\$80,000
Specialized training will be offered to participating education and care providers to hone their education and care skills and improve the outcomes of children enrolled in their program.	Training will be offered in specialized areas such as; early childhood mental health, early learning guidelines, early literacy, early numeracy	\$3000 in year 2, and \$25,000 in each of years 3 and 4.	\$53,000
An evaluator will be contracted to analyze child, program, and project level data and report of effectiveness of project.	Project Evaluation	\$60,000 per year	\$240,000

(7) Training Stipends

None

(8) Other

- Grant awards will be provided to selected ESU's to expand the Early Childhood Professional Development Partnerships in high need areas and transform the current Regional Training Coalitions into Early Childhood Professional Development Partnerships. Three hundred thousand dollars per year has been budgeted for a total of 1,200,000. The grant funding will be braided with current funding sources (more than \$650,000 per year)

(9) Total Direct Costs

Total direct cost for this project is 1,969,891. The direct costs per year follow:

Year 1 – \$518,524,

Year 2 - \$ 495,834

Year 3 - \$ 478,597

Year 4 - \$ 476,936

(10) Indirect Costs

- The indirect cost rate is calculated at 8.5%. The indirect costs per year follow:

Year 1- 15,600

Year 2- 14,521

Year 3- 12,205

Year 4- 12,065

(11) Funding for Involved LEAs

- Ten Local Early Childhood Specialists will be hired. Salary and benefits for each specialist is budgeted at \$70,000 for a total of \$700,000 per year. Over the life of the grant the total amount budgeted for this item is \$2,800,000. The Local Early Childhood Specialists will use coaching techniques to assist early education and care providers in the area served by the lowest achieving schools to improve the quality of the learning environment for enrolled children. Districts in the same geographic area with Persistently Lowest Achieving Schools may join together to employ a Local Early Childhood Specialist if they are in a sparsely populated area with few licensed or license exempt early childhood education and care providers. Larger LEA's may employ more than one specialist.
- LEAs will receive \$24,000 per early childhood specialist for operations related to the work of the specialists with the local early education and care providers. This item totals \$240,000 for the project. Early childhood specialists will use the operations money to buy subscriptions to online assessments for each child in the participating early education and care programs. The operations money will also be used to sub-contract with reliable observers to assess the quality of the early childhood environment in the participating early education and care programs.

- Stipends for participating early education and care providers are budgeted at \$800 dollars per year. Sixty early childhood education and care providers are expected to participate in each of the four years. The total amount budgeted to LEAs for stipends is \$192,000
- There will be a maximum of ten LEAs involved in this project. The stipends provide resources for education and care providers to equip and supply the early childhood education environment with enriching materials may be used to supplement the salaries of education and care providers.

For example:

Purpose	Activity	Cost	# LEAs involved	Total per year	Project total
Provide coaching and individualized training to education and care providers	Employment of Early childhood specialists	\$70,000 per specialist per year	Up to 10	700,000 per year	\$2,800,000
Provide allocated resources for program activities including purchase of subscriptions to online assessments, program evaluation, mileage, etc.	Operations	\$6,000 per specialist per year	Up to 10	\$60,000	240,000
Provide resources to supplement learning materials, and education provider salary	Stipends for early education and care providers	\$800 dollars per year per provider. (60 providers)	Up to 10	\$48,000	\$192,000

(12) Supplemental Funding for Participating LEAs

None for this project

