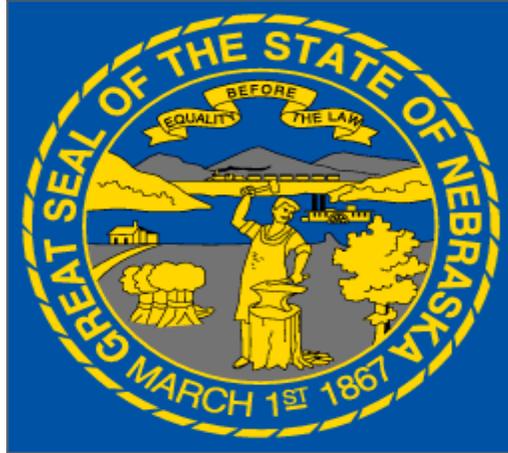


**Race to the Top
Application for Phase 2 Funding
CFDA Number: 84.395A**

Submitted by the Nebraska State Department of Education



U.S. Department of Education
Washington, D.C. 20202
OMB Number: 1810-0697
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Paperwork Burden Statement

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1810-0697. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 681 hours per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate(s) or suggestions for improving this form, please write to: U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C. 20202-4537. If you have comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this form, write directly to: Race to the Top, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., S.W., Room 3E108, Washington, D.C. 20202-3118

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

Legal Name of Applicant (Office of the Governor): <i>Office of the Governor Governor Dave Heineman</i>	Applicant's Mailing Address: <i>P.O. Box 94844 Second Floor, State Capitol Lincoln, NE 68509</i>
Employer Identification Number: <i>47-0491233</i>	Organizational DUNS: <i>808 347 009</i>
State Race to the Top Contact Name: (Single point of contact for communication) <i>Roger D. Breed</i>	Contact Position and Office: <i>Commissioner of Education Nebraska Department of Education State Office Building</i>
Contact Telephone: <i>402-471-5020</i>	Contact E-mail Address: <i>Roger.breed@nebraska.gov</i>
Required Applicant Signatures:	
To the best of my knowledge and belief, all of the information and data in this application are true and correct.	
I further certify that I have read the application, am fully committed to it, and will support its implementation:	
Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor (Printed Name): <i>Dave Heineman</i>	Telephone: <i>402-471-2244</i>
Signature of Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor: 	Date: <i>5-28-10</i>
Chief State School Officer (Printed Name): <i>Roger D. Breed</i>	Telephone: <i>402-471-5020</i>
Signature of the Chief State School Officer: 	Date: <i>5-28-10</i>
President of the State Board of Education (Printed Name): <i>Kandy Imes</i>	Telephone: <i>308-436-5981</i>
Signature of the President of the State Board of Education: 	Date: <i>May 27, 2010</i>

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.

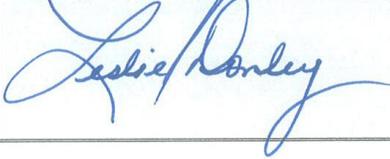
State Attorney General or Authorized Representative (Printed Name):

Leslie S. Donley
Assistant Attorney General
Nebraska Department of Justice

Telephone:

402-471-2940

Signature of the State Attorney General or Authorized Representative:



Date:

5/25/10

ACCOUNTABILITY, TRANSPARENCY, REPORTING
AND OTHER ASSURANCES AND CERTIFICATIONS

Accountability, Transparency and Reporting Assurances

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

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

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

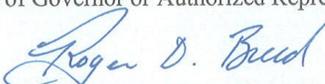
- The State will comply with all applicable assurances in OMB Standard Forms 424B (Assurances for Non-Construction Programs) and to the extent consistent with the State's application, OMB Standard Form 424D (Assurances for Construction Programs), including the assurances relating to the legal authority to apply for assistance; access to records;

conflict of interest; merit systems; nondiscrimination; Hatch Act provisions; labor standards; flood hazards; historic preservation; protection of human subjects; animal welfare; lead-based paint; Single Audit Act; and the general agreement to comply with all applicable Federal laws, executive orders and regulations.

- With respect to the certification regarding lobbying in Department Form 80-0013, no Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the making or renewal of Federal grants under this program; the State will complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," when required (34 C.F.R. Part 82, Appendix B); and the State will require the full certification, as set forth in 34 C.F.R. Part 82, Appendix A, in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers.
- The State will comply with all of the operational and administrative provisions in Title XV and XIV of the ARRA, including Buy American Requirements (ARRA Division A, Section 1605), Wage Rate Requirements (section 1606), and any applicable environmental impact requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1970 (NEPA), as amended, (42 U.S.C. 4371 et seq.) (ARRA Division A, Section 1609). In using ARRA funds for infrastructure investment, recipients will comply with the requirement regarding Preferences for Quick Start Activities (ARRA Division A, Section 1602).
- Any local educational agency (LEA) receiving funding under this program will have on file with the State a set of assurances that meets the requirements of section 442 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1232e).
- Any LEA receiving funding under this program will have on file with the State (through either its Stabilization Fiscal Stabilization Fund application or another U.S. Department of Education Federal grant) a description of how the LEA will comply with the requirements of section 427 of GEPA (20 U.S.C. 1228a). The description must include information on the steps the LEA proposes to take to permit students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries to overcome barriers (including barriers based on gender, race, color, national origin, disability, and age) that impede access to, or participation in, the program.
- The State and other entities will comply with the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR), including the following provisions as applicable: 34 CFR Part 74—Administration of Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations; 34 CFR Part 75—Direct Grant Programs; 34 CFR Part 77—Definitions that Apply to Department Regulations; 34 CFR Part 80—Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments, including the procurement provisions; 34 CFR Part 81—General Education Provisions Act—Enforcement; 34 CFR Part 82—New Restrictions on Lobbying; 34 CFR Part 84—Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance); 34 CFR Part 85—Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement).

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

SIGNATURE BLOCK FOR CERTIFYING OFFICIAL

Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor (Printed Name): Roger D. Breed, Ed.D. Commissioner of Education	
Signature of Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor: 	Date: 5-28-10

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.

The certification of the Attorney General addresses this requirement. The applicant may provide explanatory information, if necessary. The Department will determine eligibility under this requirement.

(Enter text here.)

I. 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 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;

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

- (b) Decreasing achievement gaps between subgroups in reading/language arts and mathematics, as reported by the NAEP and the assessments required under the ESEA;
- (c) Increasing high school graduation rates (as defined in this notice); and
- (d) Increasing college enrollment (as defined in this notice) and increasing the number of students who complete at least a year's worth of college credit that is applicable to a degree within two years of enrollment in an institution of higher education.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Recommended maximum response length:

(A)(1)(i) Bright Futures Plan

Nebraska has long been known for its pioneering spirit of independence. An essential quality of the pioneers who formed this great state, that spirit of independence is reflected in the educational system they built. Local control has been our mantra and students have thrived under a system built on local decisions. However, the flattened world with a globalized society of the 21st century calls for the establishment of standardized processes to ensure equity and accountability for students from our smallest rural district (93 students) to our largest urban district (48,938 students). A Bright Future for Nebraska Students Initiative is a bold plan to focus the educational system and resources of the State on critical goals, standardize processes to ensure equity and accountability at all levels, and meet the four school reform assurances of ARRA in a coherent and comprehensive effort.

A Bright Future means —

All students will have opportunities to learn that

- *begin in early childhood,*
- *prepare them to be college and career ready,*
- *support improved graduation rates,*
- *raise achievement while closing gaps, and*
- *are equitable regardless of zip code.*

All teachers and principals are

- *well prepared and mentored upon entering the profession,*
- *supported throughout their careers with professional growth and development, and*
- *meet high standards in ongoing evaluations that include student achievement outcomes*

All districts will

- *have a continuous improvement process for accreditation that is research-based, built on standards and focused on student learning;*

- *assign effective teachers and principals according to student needs;*
- *have access to high quality data to improve instruction; and*
- *provide supportive and caring environments through family and community engagement.*

All schools in the future will

- *employ effective principals and teachers,*
- *demonstrate high expectations for all students,*
- *offer a rigorous curriculum aligned to 21st century standards and assessments,*
- *provide access and use technology to support student and staff learning, and*
- *receive intervention and support as needed.*

To reach this vision of the future, Nebraska will substantially change the expectations and processes used throughout our educational system. Common core standards will move the expectations of what students should know and be able to do to a world-class 21st Century level. New assessments will build on the solid foundation of formative assessment literacy of Nebraska's teachers by adding assessments built on the common core standards. Teachers and principals will have new avenues for growth and learning and new expectations for effectiveness. Districts will have data available for informed decisions on multiple levels from teacher and principal placement, hiring and retention decisions to district, school and classroom level student performance information. For schools that are struggling, the State will provide a helping hand with technical assistance tailored to their needs and School Intervention Specialists stand ready for assignment to any school needing intervention.

The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) will reorganize to concentrate on these reforms and add new teams such as Research and Evaluation, School Improvement and Intervention Systems and Support to lead the implementation the changes. A Bright Futures Roundtable will organize the leadership of the entire Department to manage, coordinate and evaluate the Bright Futures Initiative.

Perhaps the most critically important factor to the success of the Bright Futures Initiative is the leadership and support behind it. The

Governor, a committee of State leaders from all levels of the educational system, the State Board of Education, our partners in the ESU and higher education, and districts are united in pursuing a Bright Future for Nebraska Students.

This comprehensive and coordinated effort will enable Nebraska to meet the goals it has established.

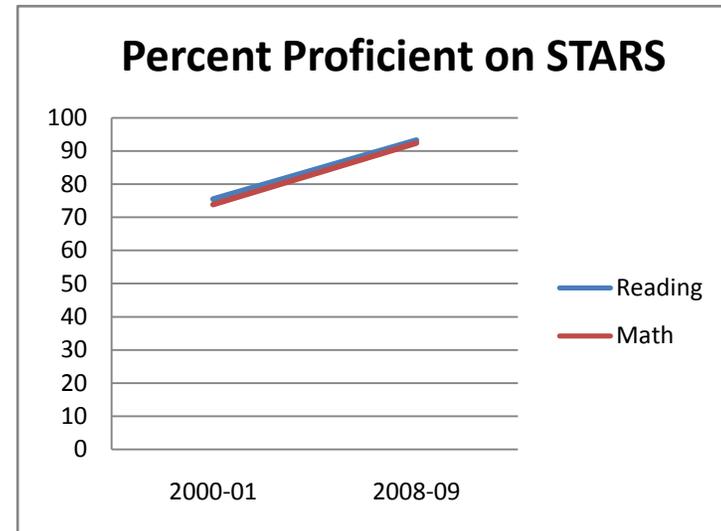
- 1) Raise the overall achievement of Nebraska's students in reading/language arts, mathematics, and science, as measured by the statewide assessment/accountability system;
- 2) Dramatically close gaps in achievement among various racial and ethnic groups;
- 3) Increase high school graduation rates, while eliminating the current disparity among racial and ethnic groups; and
- 4) 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.

Major Components of the Bright Futures Initiative

A. Standards and Assessment

New opportunities to learn for students will include college and career ready education when Nebraska joins other states in implementing the new common core standards and assessments. Nebraska 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.

Nebraska students have demonstrated tremendous gains in performance under the STARS system of locally developed assessments even as the quality of the assessments improved over time but more importantly, as the demographics of the student population changed. Locally developed assessments provide teachers with essential data to inform instruction and are appropriate for local accountability but lack comparability necessary for state accountability. In 2008, the State legislature mandated statewide tests for state accountability while allowing locally developed assessments for instructional use and local accountability. Adopting the common core standards and assessments will further standardize this process and ensure equity and accountability for Nebraska's students.



B. Effective Teachers and Principals

Increasing the capacity of all teachers and school leaders to ensure that all are effective is crucial to students. Historically in Nebraska, it has been a condition of accreditation to have high percentages of teachers assigned to teach in their endorsed areas at all levels. Under the NCLB highly qualified teachers, Nebraska had one of the highest percentages in the nation with no statistically significant disparity between high- and low-poverty schools. Bright Future's plan adds the critical criteria of teacher and principal effectiveness through a multi-pronged approach. The Effective Teachers/Leaders Plan begins with establishing Teacher and Principal Standards. Nebraska will convene groups of educators to examine existing researched-base information and prepare a set of standards for State Board approval and inclusion in the accreditation requirements. Additional educator groups will take the next step to develop a standard model of teacher and principal evaluations based on the State Standards and incorporating student achievement

outcomes. Districts will be provided technical assistance and training for principals and superintendents to use the new model in evaluating teachers and principals.

Effective teacher and leaders need ongoing, job-embedded, high-quality professional development. Nebraska will develop and adopt standards for professional development and require professional development for renewal of teaching and administrative certificates. New teacher development is supported by mentoring programs in all Title I schools identified as being in need of improvement and in many other districts as well. Induction and mentoring programs that were previously funded by the State will be instituted again in the districts.

An evaluation system for teachers and principals has always been a locally developed and driven process. At the national level, the SFSF assurances are ushering in new accountability for teacher and principal effectiveness that most surely will be incorporated into the reauthorization of ESEA. In 2010, the State legislature designated future lease funds from school lands for performance pay for teachers in LB 1014 (2010). These new measures require standardization of the process to ensure equity and accountability for teachers and principals.

C. Data Systems

Accurate and appropriate data is essential to make informed decisions, whether about instructional approaches and curriculum decisions, recruiting, hiring and evaluating staff, or the progress of the student, class, school or district. Nebraska instituted a PK-12 student and staff level record system (Nebraska Student and Staff Record System or NSSRS) in the 2007-08 school year. This system is being expanded to include all of the data elements of The America COMPETES Act and turn it into a P-16 source of information. Nebraska has also developed a decision support system, known as the Data Reporting System (DRS) that is currently only available to districts but will open to the public as soon as the FERPA issues are resolved. The DRS will provide facts, statistics and allow for

individual queries to support research and to provide customized data for decision making at all levels in a school system.

D. Support for Persistently Lowest-Achieving Schools

Nebraska has adopted North Central's AdvancEd process to meet the school improvement requirements for accreditation. AdvancEd brings standardization to the school improvement process through its Standards and Indicators and resources. In its ESEA Section 1003(g) School Improvement Grant (SIG), Nebraska is approved to use a variation of the transformation intervention model with Tier III schools. This model, named the Small State Transformation Model, varies in that it does not require replacing the principal and puts greater emphasis on improving teachers who are not demonstrating positive student achievement outcomes. This variation is necessary because the vast majority of the districts in the State have only one building at each level (elementary, middle and high school) so there is not an option to move principals within a district. Small rural communities often have great difficulty recruiting principals. Nebraska proposes to use the Small State Transformation Model with all PLAS not funded through the SIG grants. A chart in Appendix O crosswalks the requirements and permissible activities of the Transformation Model with the Standards and Indicators of North Central's AdvancEd process.

Although not a specific school reform strategy in the four assurances, family and community engagement is necessary for a Bright Future as well as being a requirement of the Transformation Intervention Model for the PLAS. It is an integral part of providing safe, supportive schools and necessary to meet the goals of this plan.

E. Early Childhood

A priority of Bright Futures Initiative is Early Childhood Education. Nebraska has been a national leader in providing special education interventions at the earliest identification and has been providing special education services, birth to age 21, since the early 1970's. The importance of an early solid educational foundation for all students is well known and Bright Futures proposes to

enhance services through this RTTT application.

F. Nebraska Virtual School STEM Academy

In the mid 1990s, utilizing State Lottery funding, school districts experienced a significant build-out of fiber transport and synchronous video technology. Currently the state legislature appropriates State Lottery funding to update infrastructure to a standard across the state. These upgrades assist school districts to leverage a robust statewide education network, lower cost high speed bandwidth and synchronous video technology to provide blended models for distance learning. Nebraska has recently increased graduation requirements for all districts as a condition of accreditation. Increased graduation requirements, however, do not ensure comparable course offerings and options between the smallest rural district (K-12 enrollment of 93 students) and the larger urban districts. A critical new initiative needed for Bright Future is the Nebraska Virtual School STEM Academy. As described in detail in Appendix K, the STEM Academy will enable access for even the smallest school to Advanced Placement (AP) courses and courses in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics while providing support and capacity building for local instructors. In addition to preparing students to be college and career ready, the STEM Academy will help keep students engaged and in school thus helping to improve graduation and college enrollment rates.

G. Restructuring the Nebraska Department of Education

To support Bright Futures, the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) has established a Bright Futures Roundtable of team leaders. Led by the Commissioner and a new Office of School Improvement, the Roundtable includes the team leaders for professional development, teacher/leader effectiveness, school accountability, statewide assessment, curriculum and instruction, technology, federal programs and data systems, equity, and special populations. This Roundtable is responsible for project management of the Bright Futures Initiative and is supported by cross-team groups to ensure a focus on the critical goals in work throughout the NDE. An external Advisory Committee and regular progress reporting will enable communication and information

sharing. NDE has long established partnerships with the intermediate service agencies known as Educational Service Units (ESU) and with the 17 teacher preparation institutions of higher education (IHE) that will be directly involved as described throughout this plan.

Summary

The Bright Futures for Nebraska Students Initiative is broad based in support and unified in purpose. 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 bold changes 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;
- Intervention Systems and Support 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/Principal Evaluation System using student growth as a primary indicator and based on new statewide teacher/principal standards;
- Embedded professional development, mentoring 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.

(A)(1)(ii) Participating District Support

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, 215 of 253 school districts representing over 77% of all students signed the state's Memoranda of Understanding. These participating districts had a high percentage of signatures from School Board Presidents (87%) and local teachers' union leaders (91%).

Included among supporting LEAs are 85% of all school districts, which enroll 77% of all students, and 68% 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 webinars on May 24 and 25, 2010, and discussed in telecasts, meetings and conference calls. The percentage of LEA's committed to implementing the initiative's core programs ranges from 95 to 100%. (*See Appendix B, Bright Futures for Nebraska Students Initiative, Race to the Top by the State of Nebraska, Memorandum of Understanding*)

(A)(1)(iii)

With 85% of the eligible LEA's, including 77% 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	215	100
C. Data Systems to Support Instruction		
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction:		
(i) Use of local instructional improvement systems	215	100
(ii) Professional development on use of data	215	100
(iii) Availability and accessibility of data to researchers	214	100
D. Great Teachers and Leaders		
(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance:		
(i) Measure student growth	214	100
(ii) Design and implement evaluation systems	212	99
(iii) Conduct annual evaluations	212	99
(iv)(a) Use evaluations to inform professional development	214	100
(iv)(b) Use evaluations to inform compensation, promotion and retention	205	95
(iv)(c) Use evaluations to inform tenure and/or full certification	209	97
(iv)(d) Use evaluations to inform removal	213	99

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals:		
(i) High-poverty and/or high-minority schools	209	97
(ii) Hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	210	98
(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals:		
(i) Quality professional development	215	100
(ii) Measure effectiveness of professional development	215	100
E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools		
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	208	97

[Optional: Enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data]

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

Signatures acquired from participating LEAs:

Number of Participating LEAs with all applicable signatures	215		
	Number of Signatures Obtained (#)	Number of Signatures Applicable (#)	Percentage (%) (Obtained / Applicable)
LEA Superintendent (or equivalent)	215	215	100
President of Local School Board (or equivalent, if applicable)	186	215	87
Local Teachers' Union Leader (if applicable)	196	215	91

[Optional: Enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data]

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

	Participating LEAs (#)	Statewide (#)	Percentage of Total Statewide (%) (Participating LEAs / Statewide)
LEAs	215	253	85%
Schools	793	985	81%
K-12 Students	218,017	283,321	77%

Students in poverty	79,381	117,246	68%
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[Optional: Enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data]

Detailed Table for (A)(1)
 This table provides detailed information on the participation of each participating LEA (as defined in this notice). States should use this table to complete the Summary Tables above. (Note: If the State has a large number of participating LEAs (as defined in this notice), it may move this table to an appendix. States should provide in their narrative a clear reference to the appendix that contains the table.)

Participating LEAs	LEA Demographics			Signatures on MOUs			MOU Terms Uses Standard Terms & Conditions? President of Local Teachers Union (if applicable)	Preliminary Scope of Work – Participation in each applicable Plan Criterion																	
	# of Schools	# of K-12 Students in Poverty	# of K-12 Students	LEA Supt. (or equivalent)	President of local school board (if applicable)	President of Local Teachers Union (if applicable)		(B)(3)	(C)(3)(i)	(C)(3)(ii)	(C)(3)(iii)	(D)(2)(i)	(D)(2)(ii)	(D)(2)(iii)	(D)(2)(iv)(a)	(D)(2)(iv)(b)	(D)(2)(iv)(c)	(D)(2)(iv)(d)	(D)(3)(i)	(D)(3)(ii)	(D)(5)(i)	(D)(5)(ii)	(E)(2)		
Name of LEA here				Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA	Yes/ No	Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA		

(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

critera. The narraive and attachments may also include any additional informaion 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 applicaion). 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 narraive 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 applicaion. The narraive that accompanes and explains the budget and how it connects to the State's plan, as completed in Section VIII of the applicaion.

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

- A summary in the narraive 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 narraive)

(A)(2)(i)(a) Strong Leadership and Dedicated Teams

Leadership

The Bright Futures for Nebraska Students Initiative brings together the leadership of the state –

Governor

Governor Heineman is a strong proponent of a quality education for students of all ages in Nebraska and he is working with schools and education leaders to set high academic standards and encourage greater parental involvement in education. A major focus of the Governor since taking office in 2005 has been finding ways for business and education leaders to work together in efforts to strengthen education and create job opportunities for Nebraska graduates. Governor Heineman chairs Nebraska's P-16 Initiative, a coalition of thirty-one (31) Nebraska organizations in education, business, and government dedicated to improving student success rates at all levels. He also serves on the Board of Directors of Achieve, a bipartisan, non-profit organization working with states to improve education.

Commissioner and State Board of Education

The Nebraska State Board of Education and Commissioner of Education, as the constitutional officers responsible for the general

supervision and administration of the Nebraska school system, are committed to lead and support the preparations of all Nebraskans for learning, earning and living. Recently, the State Board of Education increased the graduation requirements in public high schools so that courses meet the highest level of rigor of the state standards in language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Beginning in 2007, the Department of Education began revising these standards to ensure that all students are college and career ready upon graduation. In 2009, the State Board of Education approved Reading standards and Mathematics standards, based upon external validations from Achieve, McRel and other recognized experts that these standards meet the rigor of the Common Core Standards currently being developed. Throughout the past decade, the Department has worked with the Educational Services Units to ensure that professional development was provided to teachers and principals on formative assessment and the use of data to inform instruction on a daily basis in all the classrooms in public schools in Nebraska. The State Board of Education is currently working on creating a new accountability system for public schools that includes growth in student performance along with graduation rates and other indicators to shine the light on schools who need assistance to ensure that all Nebraska students are proficient.

Bright Futures for Nebraska Students Initiative Committee

Nebraska state education leadership is unified in support of this initiative. The Bright Future for Nebraska Students Initiative Committee, includes the Governor, the Chair of the Nebraska Legislature's 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 14 Executive Directors 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 Committee Members and Letters of Support.*)

Educational Service Units

Created by state statute over 40 years ago, Educational Service Units (ESUs) serve as Nebraska's educational service agency (ESA). ESUs provide leadership in professional development, technology integration, network infrastructure, special education, media materials, and distance education/e-learning. The ESUs work in statewide collaboration through the Educational Service Unit Coordinating Council which includes the head administrator from all seventeen of the ESUs. Statewide and local services are led by a professional development network which provides leadership in state and local assessment, school improvement, math and science initiatives, data analysis, and statewide collaboration. These efforts are in response to local school district needs as well as state needs. Recently, this has included the development of professional learning networks to assist school districts identified as persistently lowest-achieving schools. ESUs also work with other educational partners including community colleges, state colleges, and the University system to find unique partnerships in professional development and provide opportunities for students in transition to college and career.

New Teams

For more than a decade, the NDE has had a non-traditional organization with a Leadership Council led by the Commissioner and Deputy Commission and comprised of Team Leaders. (*See Organization Chart in Appendix N*) In addition to the formal teams, the NDE has organized cross-team groups around areas or programs. Collaborative work among teams and cross-team groups has been the way work is accomplished. Bright Futures builds on that strength and creates a Bright Futures Roundtable to oversee and implement this initiative. The Bright Futures Roundtable will be led by the Commissioner and a new senior administrator of School Improvement. The responsibility of the Bright Futures Roundtable will be to coordinate activities, monitor implementation and measure outcomes. The implementation will be guided by clear project timelines that identify dates, strategies, roles and

responsibilities and projected outcomes. At least for the initial year of implementation, the Bright Futures Roundtable will meet for ½ day every week to ensure constant communication and coordination. The Bright Futures Roundtable will provide progress reports at least quarterly to the Governor’s Bright Futures for Nebraska Students Committee and the State Board of Education. The Bright Futures Roundtable will have an Advisory Committee of district, ESU, and policy partner representatives that meet at least quarterly to provide input and review progress.

Members of the Bright Futures Roundtable will include leaders of existing and new teams:

- Statewide Assessment
- Curriculum and Innovation- includes Technology and Career Ed
- Effective Teacher/Leader (new)
- Professional Development (new)
- Teacher Preparation
- Federal Programs
- Intervention Systems and Support (new)
- Special Education
- Equity and Instructional Strategies
- Accreditation
- Early Childhood
- Research and Evaluation (new)
- STEM Academy (new)
- Data Systems

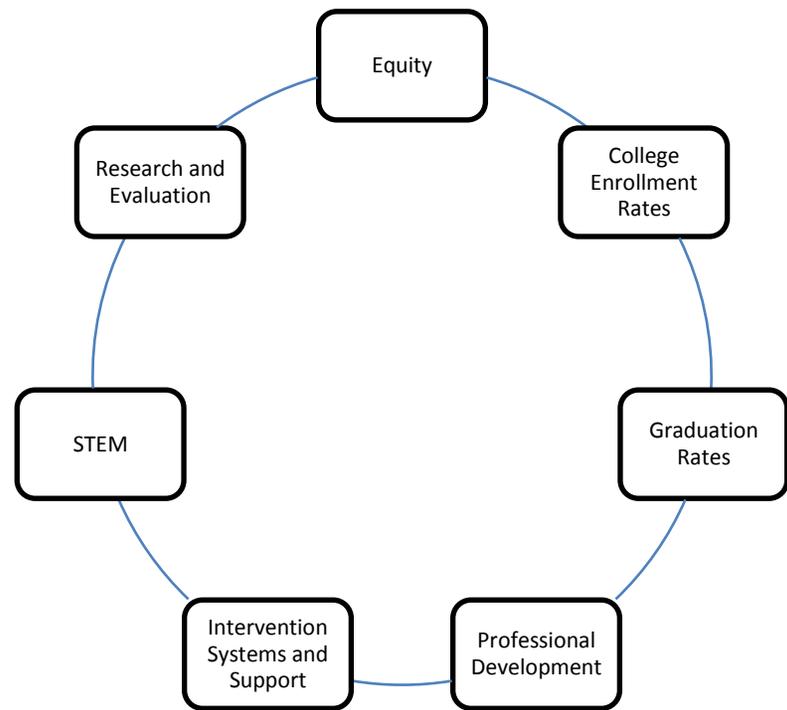
The School Improvement Office will have responsibility for project management of the Bright Futures. This team will include the Research and Evaluation team and two additional program staff assigned the responsibility for ensuring a focus on the goals of increasing college enrollment and graduation rates through the implementation of the Bright Futures initiative and activities.

Other new teams include the Effective Teachers/Leaders as described in Section C, Intervention Systems and Support as described in Section E, STEM Academy as described in Appendix K, and the Research and Evaluation team. The Research and Evaluation team will measure the progress and the impact of the Bright Futures initiative, oversee all evaluation and research on projects within Bright Futures, serve on the P-16 Data Systems governance group for coordinating research between the NDE and the postsecondary, and provide materials for professional development, School Intervention Specialists, districts and schools seeking information on various topics.

Cross-team Groups

NDE will also establish cross-team work groups that will involve staff from throughout the Department who can contribute to and share the work on each area. The cross-teams are modeled after the Federal Programs Group that has successfully operated for almost 8 years by bringing together members from four teams to integrate NCLB programs. This group designed and used a consolidated application for all formula NCLB programs and the integrated monitoring that follows. The cross-team groups are:

- Intervention Systems and Support



- STEM Academy
- Professional Development
- Research and Evaluation
- College Enrollment Rates
- Graduation Rates
- Equity

Reorganizing the Work of NDE Staff

Nebraska is also reorganizing the work of the staff of the Department. NDE staff from throughout the Department will serve as Resource Coordinators and one will be assigned to each persistently lowest achieving school (PLAS). While all NDE professional staff work with districts and schools in some capacity, their work usually does not allow for a strong relationship to develop, particularly at the school level, and seldom does their work focus on improving schools. Resource Coordinators are a way to tap the expertise and experience of NDE staff to benefit schools, build relationships, provide individualized assistance, and broker other NDE resources. A pilot project has been underway for two years to use NDE staff as Resource Coordinators for Title I schools identified to be in school improvement. The Resource Coordinators serve as liaisons to the schools, work with the local school improvement team to coordinate services between the Department, the Educational Service Units and the districts. An evaluation of this pilot project, while still underway, is already providing indications of district and school support for the assistance as well as a closer relationship with the NDE and ESUs. Resource Coordinators will be assigned to each identified PLAS to assist with selecting an intervention model or to coordinate assistance as the school and district decides. The costs for the work of the Resource Coordinators will be funded through the ESEA Section 1003(g) SIG administrative funds and the RTTT funds proposed in this application. (Also see Section F of this application)

(A)(2)(i)(b) Support Participating Districts

While the entire NDE stands ready to assist participating districts, a unified approach is necessary to focus and coordinate assistance as needed by each district. Each of the areas of this initiative includes the provision of support and technical assistance to participating districts or staff. The Bright Futures Roundtable will be responsible for coordinating and unifying these activities.

The new Research and Evaluation Director and cross-team group will have responsibility for assistance to NDE staff and participating districts in identifying promising practices, evaluating effectiveness, and disseminating information. The Director will be the primary liaison to the comprehensive centers, regional labs and research and evaluation centers in the higher education agencies.

The identification of the needs of participating districts will come from several sources. NDE staff from the Office of School Improvement will be working directly with participating districts through the approval and monitoring of district plans for use of RTTT funds. The Bright Futures Advisory Council will also be a source of information on project needs as a whole.

NDE will be providing an annual networking conference for all persistently lowest-achieving schools receiving ESEA Section 1003(g) School Improvement Grants. This networking conference, if successful in identifying what works well in turning around schools, will be expanded to include more schools than PLAS. The Research and Evaluation team will do the evaluation and determine if expansion is appropriate.

Participating districts will be submitting a four-year application for RTTT funding with funds awarded on an annual basis. Continued funding after the initial year is dependent on

- a) Progress demonstrated toward meeting the achievement outcomes and other goals
- b) Progress made in implementing the plan included in the application, and

c) Timely and appropriate use of funds.

Section F of this application identifies new positions within the NDE called School Intervention Specialists who will be on a new team called Intervention Systems and Support. The roles and responsibilities of the School Intervention Specialists include identifying, providing or assisting the schools to secure the technical assistance needed to implement the specific requirements and permissible activities of the intervention model selected by the school, and to assist with the annual networking conference of all PLAS.

(A)(2)(i)(c) Grants Management

Nebraska will use its online grants management system (GMS) to streamline the application process and automate the payment process for participating districts receiving RTTT funds. The GMS is currently used for formula and competitive grants for ARRA, NCLB, IDEA, Perkins and Early Childhood. The “common look and feel” of the GMS makes submission of plans and applications easy for districts. The GMS is accessed through the secure NDE Portal. The GMS includes an automated payment system that uses electronic fund transfer directly to recipients from the State’s Administrative Services. The GMS has passed all state and federal audits for security and appropriate accounting processes.

Participating districts will receive their allocation of RTTT funds based on their proportionate share of Title I funds. Districts will decide on the use of those funds from the following “allowable uses”.

Allowable Uses of Race To The Top Funds

<u>Allowable Uses of Race To The Top Funds</u>		
<p>Standards and Assessments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporating standards and aligning curriculum • Instructional strategies • Formative assessments • Professional development 	<p>Teachers and Leaders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional growth and development • Mentoring and induction programs • New teacher and principal evaluation systems • Incentives for effective teacher to move to high minority or high poverty schools 	<p>STEM Academy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scholarships for students to enroll in approved STEM college credit courses and enrichment activities • Professional development • Online instructional resources library • Scholarships for teachers to enroll in approved graduate credit courses in STEM • Local school learning coach stipends • Adoption of approved on-line courses already developed by NE schools • Professional learning community activities and other STEM related professional development • Use of clearinghouse and data tracking system for courses
<p>Data Systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data stewards • Use of data to support instruction 	<p>Low-performing Schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any of the requirements of the Small State Transformation model or any of four intervention models 	<p>Early Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employ early childhood specialists • Access to specialized training • Learning materials and resources to enhance early childhood environments

Review and approval of participating district applications will be a joint effort the School Improvement Team's program specialists and the team leader of the allowable use areas. On-site monitoring of projects will be the responsibility of their program specialists and of the STEM Academy staff for those schools participating in the STEM Academy. Monitoring of expenditures is an integral part of the GMS and will be conducted by an additional staff person for Financial Services who will also hold responsibility for monitoring overall management of the RTTT funds for participating districts and for the NDE.

By involving the Bright Futures team leaders in the review and approval process of the RTTT applications they will have identified the districts and areas of need. This information will be shared with the ESU for each district to support coordination of services.

(A)(2)(i)(d) Use of Funds

Nebraska's state legislature and leadership have provided financial support to districts through state aid. Unlike other states, most financial support from the state is not earmarked for specific activities at the state level. This method of funding education leaves the allocation of support for services, like technology and data systems, to the districts rather than appropriate state funds for the NDE to provide grants to districts or provide direct services. The State has provided specific funds to the intermediate service agencies (Educational Service Units) to provide professional development and other core services.

The following chart identifies the current resources and sources of funding for each of the areas of this initiative and for the goals of this plan.

	State	Federal	ARRA as reported by districts	Private	ESU core services
Standards and Assessments	X	X	X		X
Teacher/Leader					
• Professional Development	X	X	X		
• Teacher scholarships	X				X
Data Systems	X	SLDS	X		X
• Technology	X	ESEA	X		X
Low-performing Schools		ESEA			
STEM		ESEA			
Early Childhood	X	IDEA, ESEA	X	X	
Goal: Increase achievement and close gaps					
• English Language Learners	X	ESEA	X		
• Students with Disabilities	X	IDEA	X		
• Students in poverty		ESEA	X		X
• Drop-out prevention		ESEA	X		
• Avenue Scholars				X	
Goal: Increase graduation rates and college going rates					
College going rates		Career Ed	X	HSTW	
Avenue Scholars				X	

(A)(2)(i)(e) Sustainability

The keys to success of the Bright Futures for Nebraska Students Initiative are the collaboration and partnerships of all major agencies involved in education in the State and the reorganizing of the work of the NDE. These are not dependent on RTTT funds and will become institutionalized if proven effective. Many of the major activities are building on requirements of the four assurances of the State Fiscal Stabilization Funds (SFSF). As the period of funding unfolds, the NDE will need to be mindful of the timelines and the information gained from the research and evaluation of projects and activities to determine future needs and resources. 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. 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.

(A)(2)(ii)(a) Support of Stakeholders

As noted earlier, Nebraska state education leadership is unified in its support of this initiative. The Governor's Bright Future for Nebraska Students Governor's Committee, described in (A)(2)(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 committee throughout the project period (and possibly afterwards) to make certain the involvement and ongoing support of all relevant parties. In addition to receiving and reviewing regular progress reports, the 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 committee and hence to project operation. 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.

(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) Progress in Reform Areas

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, in every Nebraska high school;
- Improving Nebraska's college-going rank to the top-10 tier nationally;
- Providing affordable access for Nebraska students to attend Nebraska's postsecondary institutions;
- Improving time to degree completion and increase the graduation rates of Nebraska's postsecondary institutions; and
- Providing all students with the science, technology, and math skills needed to succeed in postsecondary education or the 21st century workforce; and increase the number and diversity of individuals who pursue careers as educators and professionals in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and math.

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

(A)(3)(i) Progress over the years

Rigorous Standards and Assessments

Nebraska strengthened its standards and assessments systems in recent years by adopting new standards in Reading, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies; moving to a new statewide assessment system, developing a new state accountability system; and recently adopted a new college and career preparation core graduation requirement. State legislation in 2007 required the revision of standards that are being benchmarked against nationally and internationally-recognized standards and have been found to be consistent with the level of rigor outlined in the American Diploma Project. The Reading (2008) and Math (2009) standards revisions are finished , Science standards will be completed for adoption in 2010, and the Social Studies standards revision process is beginning.

Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-760.03 (Reissue 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 has occurred in 2010 with mathematics occurring 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 and State funds will be used to effectively implement this new system along with major investments of NDE staff time and effort.

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 that must include courses with the highest level of rigor of standards in Nebraska school districts by the 2014-2015 school year. Nebraska's governor approved the change on January 14, 2010, and the rules became effective on January 19, 2010. The requirements will be implemented for all students over

the next few years.

Over the past decade, Nebraska has focused NCLB funds on building teacher and principal capacity to align curriculum to standards, develop informative classroom-based assessments, and to use assessment data to improve instruction. A coordinated and sustained partnership with the Nebraska Department of Education and Educational Service Units implemented this effort. All school districts in the state were involved. This partnership will now be refocused on implementing the new standards and assessments.

Over the past six years Nebraska has worked extensively to increase student achievement by building capacity in classroom teacher's knowledge and skills in the areas of reading, mathematics and science education. The Reading First grant offered statewide professional development and technical assistance. All K-3 teachers, as well Title I and K-12 special education teachers who taught reading, were eligible to attend the Reading First Summer Institutes and over 8,000 teachers took advantage of this opportunity. The institutes focused on the essential components of reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and reading comprehension strategies, and the use of scientifically-based instructional materials, strategies and programs. In addition, professional development included training in screening, diagnostic, and classroom-based assessments.

The Nebraska Mathematics Professional Development Series (NMPDS) has impacted over 1,100 teachers in 207 public school districts, 329 public school buildings and 21 private schools. This series included a Grade K-6 program and a Middle/High School program. NMPDS is supported by a Nebraska Mathematics & Science Partnership grant, funded by the NCLB Act of 2001. This on-going program is dedicated to enhancing the required skills and knowledge teachers need in order to teach complex topics in algebra, geometry and data analysis. Using research based mathematics materials the series sessions are implemented through direct instruction, exploratory experiences and interaction between the participants. The sessions also utilize Teacher Leaders in

Mathematics (TLM) as facilitators for Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) of participants of four to six members. In addition, all Middle/High School teacher participants use a web-based communication system which allows the participants to share their learning and ideas digitally.

In science Nebraska has provided the KICKS (Keep Improving Content Knowledge and Skills) Institutes. The goal of KICKS has been to increase teachers' content knowledge and skills in science guided by the Nebraska Science Education Standards. There have been special institutes for chemistry, physics, environmental science, earth science, Elementary Science and Elementary Inquiry. Hundreds of teachers have taken KICKS institutes through this process. KICKS has also been provided through the Nebraska Mathematics & Science Partnership grant, funded by the NCLB Act of 2001.

Use of ARRA Funds

One hundred (100) Nebraska school districts report using State Fiscal Stabilization Funds 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.

Great Teachers and Leaders

Nebraska has implemented several successful strategies to improve teacher quality in the state. The following chart, from the State of the Schools Report, shows that, overall, 98.81% of Nebraska's teachers meet NCLB's highly qualified teacher requirements. In 2008-09, only one of the teachers in the NCLB's core academic courses was teaching on a provisional certificate. This represents .00567% of the 17,639 NCLB teachers in the state.

NCLB Content Areas	2007 - 2008		2008 - 2009	
	Number of courses	Percent NCLB Qualified	Number of courses	Percent NCLB Qualified
CIVICS AND GOVERNMENT	1,432	99.79%	1,415	99.79%
ECONOMICS	319	97.49%	339	99.71%
ELEMENTARY	7,485	99.92%	7,672	99.90%
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	16,957	97.66%	16,650	98.64%
FOREIGN LANGUAGES	4,279	98.90%	4,358	99.13%
HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY	6,357	98.38%	6,188	99.00%
MATHEMATICS	11,092	96.85%	11,007	97.81%
NATURAL SCIENCES	8,551	98.46%	8,509	98.97%
SELF-CONTAINED	345	98.84%	317	98.11%
VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS	13,927	99.53%	14,244	99.70%
Overall Count/Average	70,744	98.42%	70,823	98.81%

From 2003-2009, Nebraska concentrated on building capacity of teachers through professional development and the use of assessment cohorts to develop assessment literacy and leadership. The cohorts were coordinated through the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Professional development throughout the state was a joint effort of the Department of Education and the ESUs, supported through professional development grants to school districts, with No Child Left Behind assessments funds, up to \$3.5 million per year. ESUs utilized state core services funding to provide professional development to teachers and principals.

In addition, there were multiple efforts and partnerships throughout the State to provide support and training for teachers and principals. Just a few examples are provided below:

The Nebraska Council of School Administrators (NCSA)

Emerging Administrator Program: Admission to the program is by (a teacher's) expression of interest in the principalship and by that building principal's recommendation. The program uses mentoring and seminars to provide the information and support for the prospective principal.

Networking with New Principals Program: This is designed for first year principals and includes group meetings, individual consultations, and other communications with the participant. Major objectives include: expanding knowledge of leadership practices; increasing access to challenging opportunities; creating opportunities to discuss educational issues and providing honest and constructive feedback.

The Nebraska Leadership Initiative: This is a partnership among the NCSA, the Nebraska Department of Education and the Nebraska Educational Service Units. The Initiative provides professional development opportunities for principals and school district administrators based upon best practice and research related to school improvement, school leadership and leading in an effective school. The overall goal is to improve the skill sets of principals to lead an effective school and to improve learning opportunities for students.

The University of Nebraska

National Center for Research on Rural Education (R2Ed) at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln addresses the unique needs of rural educators to improve student learning in reading, science and mathematics. More than 500 Nebraska teachers participate in this

research through training, one-on-one coaching, and practicing new research-based methods in their classrooms.

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln **Center for Science, Mathematics & Computer Education** (CSMCE) provides graduate level programs and professional development activities for teachers of math and science so that these teachers are able to significantly strengthen the math and science education of the K-12 students they teach. Examples of programs supported through CSMCE are Math and Science Teachers for the 21st Century and NU-Teach.

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln **MAET**, Masters of Arts with an Emphasis in Elementary Teaching, is an alternative 14-month M.A. degree program that leads to certification in elementary education for the State of Nebraska. This 44 credit hour program is designed for qualified graduate students who have earned a bachelor's degree *outside the field of education* and who can commit to an intensive and accelerated pathway to a career in the teaching profession.

Several hundred teachers and principals have completed the **Classroom Assessment** program offered by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. In this program, teachers and principals have learned how to use the data they collect more effectively and they have received training in effective assessment techniques at the classroom, building, and district level. In addition, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln has supported the development of effective teachers and leaders through such activities as the **School Improvement Specialist Certificate Program**, the **Professional Development Leadership Certificate Program**, and a completely on-line **P-12 Principal Leadership Program**.

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln **NebraskaMATH** is a partnership with Lincoln Public Schools, Grand Island Public Schools, Papillion-La Vista Public Schools, the Omaha Public Schools and all 14 rural Educational Service Units. The partnership works to educate and support students and teachers at critical junctures, with an overall goal of improving achievement in mathematics for all

students and narrowing achievement gaps of at-risk populations. Three specific programs are part of NebraskaMATH: (1) Primarily Math, an initiative for K-3 teachers; (2) Nebraska Algebra, an initiative for Algebra I teachers; and (3) New Teacher Network, an initiative for new secondary teachers of mathematics. In addition, NebraskaMATH offers a Summer Institute supported by local funds to continue the program created by Math in the Middle.

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln through the **Math in the Middle** program educated and supported teams of outstanding middle-level (grades 5-8) mathematics teachers to become leaders in their schools, districts and Educational Service Units. Through their experience in Math in the Middle, teachers built strong mathematics content knowledge and developed the ability to conduct action research about their teaching practices.

Use of ARRA Funds

One hundred sixty (160) Nebraska school districts reported using State Fiscal Stabilization Funds 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.

Robust Data Systems

Nebraska materially improved its statewide longitudinal data system beginning in 2003 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 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); and
- 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).

Assisting districts to build and manage data for the state longitudinal data system has been and continues to be a joint effort of the ESUs (using state provided technology infrastructure and core services funds) and the Department. For several years, NCLB assessment funds were granted to districts through the Assessment and Reporting Management for STARS (ARMS grants) and through grants to the ESUs to provide on-going technical assistance and professional development to the school staff in their regions. The NCLB Title II, Part D (Enhancing Education Through Technology) funds are used by districts for improving their data

systems and supporting quality data collection and reporting.

Use of ARRA Funds

One hundred (100) Nebraska school districts reported using State Fiscal Stabilization Funds to implement/upgrade student information systems and 116 districts reported using the funding to improve overall data quality.

School Turn-Around

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. NCLB Section 1003(a) funds have supported Title I schools in their improvement efforts.

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 2002, Nebraska 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.

Use of ARRA Funds

One hundred sixty-seven (167) Nebraska school districts reported using State Fiscal Stabilization Funding 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)(a) Increasing Achievement

From 2003 to 2008, on the basis of assessments required and approved under the ESEA, Nebraska students made steady progress increasing the percentage of students meeting state reading, mathematics, science, and writing standards every year. According to the 2009 State of the Schools Report Card, from 2000 to the present, student performance in reading and math increased while the demographics of the student population became increasingly more diverse. The overall percent proficient in reading rose from 75% to 93% and in math, the increase was from 73% to 92%. In 2000, English Language Learners comprised only 3% of the total

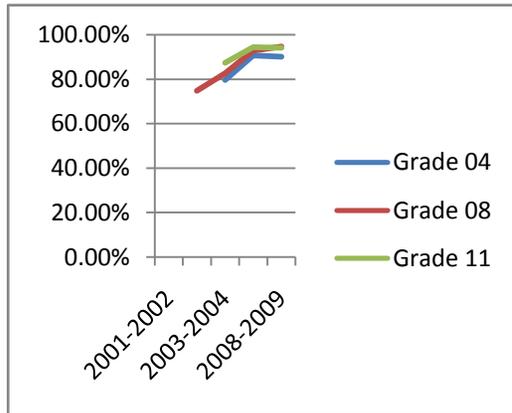
student population and today, that percentage has doubled to more than 6%. During this time the percent of students in poverty rose from 30% to 38%. Also notable, the percentage of the total student population reported as “White, not Hispanic” decreased from 82% to 76%.

Student performance by subgroup from 2003 to 2009, as reported for NCLB and reported in the table below, clearly shows tremendous improvement in performance. While the highest gains are in the subgroups that were farthest from the AYP State Goals at the beginning, this is evidence of the impact of standards and high expectations for all students.

Student Performance						
Group	Elementary		Middle School		High School	
	Reading	Math	Reading	Math	Reading	Math
American Indian/Alaskan Native	+15	+12	+19	+31	+23	+30
Asian or Pacific Islander	+8	+6	+10	+9	+18	+25
White, not Hispanic	+9	+11	+12	+14	+14	+22
Black, not Hispanic	+22	+22	+27	+32	+32	+47
Hispanic	+20	+22	+28	+34	+34	+47
Low-Income	+18	+20	+22	+26	+27	+33
Students with Disabilities	+25	+26	+36	+39	+39	+38
English Language Learners	+35	+31	+38	+44	+35	+43

Nebraska has had a statewide test in writing since 2001. While not an ESEA assessment, writing is used as the Other Academic Indicator for determining adequate yearly progress at grades 4 and 8. The chart shows the improvement over these years.

Overall Writing Performance Percentages for All Students



NAEP results from 2000 to 2007 show the State’s scores are consistently equal to or greater than the national scores in both reading and math.

National Assessment of Education Progress - READING								
Grade	2002		2003		2005		2007	
	National	State	National	State	National	State	National	State
Grade 4	217	222	216	221	217	221	220	223
Grade 8	263	270	261	266	260	267	261	267
National Assessment of Education Progress - MATHEMATICS								
Grade 4	224	225	234	236	237	238	238	239
Grade 8	272	280	276	282	278	284	280	284

These gains in student performance are attributable, in large part, to the concentrated efforts in every district to build the capacity of

classroom teachers and principals to understand and use aligned curriculum, instruction and assessment. This was a joint effort of the Department of Education, the ESUs and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. A second contributing factor was the development of materials and training by NDE curriculum, Career Education, Special Education and even Early Childhood staff to cross-walk content standards throughout the K-12 curriculum. Specific training in understanding and incorporating content standards and assessment was emphasized in Reading, Math and Writing. While other states were using their NCLB assessment funds to purchase tests, Nebraska was building the local capacity to build technically sound assessments as part of the teaching and learning in the classroom.

In addition to the statewide professional development on standards and assessments, there were and still are multiple efforts targeting specific populations or strategies to improve instruction such as: a highly successful NCLB Reading First program in many schools; a “train the trainers” model for McREL’s Instructional Strategies That Work for classroom teachers to reach English Language Learners in the regular classroom; an extensive statewide training and implementation of Response to Intervention as a joint effort between the Department of Education; the ESUs and the University of Nebraska- Lincoln; use of NCLB funds through the various programs for disadvantaged students (Title I), English Language Learners (Title III), migrant students (Title I), homeless students (Title X), neglected or delinquent (Title I) and services such as 21st Century Learning Centers, early childhood programs, etc.

(A)(3)(ii)(b) Decreasing Achievement Gaps

Nebraska demonstrated significant progress in closing achievement gaps from 2002 to the present for Hispanic students, African-American students, ELL students and students with disabilities. For example, in 2002-03, the reading proficiency levels of African-American and Hispanic elementary students were respectively 20% and 15% below their white peers. By 2008-09, 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 2002-03, but only 5% lower in 2008-09. The proficiency gap between Hispanic students and white students in 2002-03 was 16% in 2002-03, but only 3% in 2008-09. In 2002-03, the reading performance gap between elementary school English language learners and white students were 35%, but by 2008-09 the difference had been reduced to 9%.

In 2002-03, the reading performance gap between elementary school students with disabilities and white students was 30%, but by 2008-09 the difference had been reduced to 14%. Similar gains were made in elementary school mathematics scores. In 2002-03, the mathematics performance gap between elementary English language learners and white students was 26%, but only 6% in 2008-09. In 2002-03, the mathematics performance gap between Students with Disabilities and white students was 27%, but only 12% in 2008-09. 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 eighth 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 eighth grade mathematics students was 40 points and in 2009 the gap decreased to 29 points. Hispanic eighth graders made similar progress in reading. In 2003, the gap between Hispanic and white eighth 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 eighth graders in reading proficiency was 30 points in 2003 and 28 points in 2007.

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 fourth 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 fourth grade math was 22 points in 2003 and 21 points in 2009. *(See Appendix D, Nebraska Progress on NAEP reading and math scores and AYP percentages 2003-2009).*

(A)(3)(ii)(c) Increasing High School Graduation Rates

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 American (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-Americans (68.7%) and Native Americans (67.4%) remain 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 will use the adjusted cohort rate method starting in 2010-11. *(See Appendix E, Excerpts from 2009 Nebraska Higher Education Progress Report)*

Nebraska has initiated several policies and practices to support graduation opportunities for students. Rule 17 *(Regulations*

Governing the Approval of Alternative Schools, Classes, or Programs for Expelled Students) requires districts to offer alternative educational opportunities to students who are expelled. Rule 18 Interim Program Schools were developed to ensure students earn high school credit for course work completed while in out-of-home placements including detention centers, health facilities and programs from private providers. Rule 18 schools, now numbering 18 in 23 different sites, serve students with the greatest risk of not completing their high school education.

The state has effectively used Career and Technical Education funds and programs to keep students on track for graduation. Districts across the state are or have instituted alternative programs, credit recovery programs, community service programs, after school centers such as the 21st Century Community Learning Centers, and joined with the ESUs and community colleges to provide these services. An example of a partnership between the University of Nebraska and school districts to encourage college enrollment is NCPA. The **NEBRASKA College Preparatory Academy (NCPA)** works with first-generation and low-income students and families in Grand Island and Omaha, Nebraska, to prepare and graduate qualified students with both a high school and college degree. Scholars graduating from the academy, meet basic eligibility requirements to attend the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. They are eligible for financial aid for the full direct cost of attendance.

Districts have also joined networks like the High Schools That Work (HSTW) program. Currently 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.

Perhaps the most widely used resource in the state for credit recovery and alternative education is the Nebraska Independent Study

High School. It provides credit acceleration opportunities, course offerings to fill in curriculum gaps and an open enrollment feature with more than 100 core and elective course offerings in a state, regional and internationally accredited program. It allows students to work, at their own pace, year-round and has served for over 80 years as a fully accredited alternative to a local high school environment.

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 (70 total points)

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

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.

for adoption.

For Phase 2 applicants:

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

Recommended maximum response length: Two pages

(B)(1)(i) Common Core Standards

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 State 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*)

(B)(1)(ii) Standards Adaption and Implementation

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). After 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 State Standards in the August of 2010. 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.

Professional Development

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. To insure classroom implementation, these materials will be accompanied by

***Standards and Assessments:
Key Contributions to Bright Futures***

- Adopt the common core standards
 - work with national groups and
 - close match with Nebraska’s revised standards
- Collaborate with other states in a consortia to develop assessments for the common core standards
- Provide training in unpacking standards and aligning curriculum

training sessions, hands-on sessions, and extensive professional development. 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.

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, alongside NDE staff, will conduct curriculum integration workshops with teams from local school districts. This will insure an “unpacking” of the standards in each and every teacher’s classroom. 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. The direct classroom connection is critical, and these steps will assure that connection.

Due to the rural nature of many school districts in the state, however, students do not always have access to all curriculum 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. The new Nebraska Virtual School will offer students a full set of high school 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 there were greater access to AP courses. 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 STEM Academy Proposal)*

***Nebraska Virtual School STEM Academy:
Key Contributions to Bright Futures***

- Provide a statewide approach to increasing STEM capability and college and career readiness
- Create equal access to a complete high-quality, rigorous STEM curriculum instructed by highly effective teachers
- Establish a caring and supportive learning environment for students including tutors and local learning coaches/mentors
- Assist schools in meeting increased graduation requirements
- Collaborate with educators to implement professional development for local school teachers in STEM knowledge and pedagogy

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

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

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

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

Evidence for (B)(2):

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

Recommended maximum response length: One page

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

Nebraska is strongly committed to improving the quality of its assessment systems. 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. It will be upon this assessment

literacy that will ensure the classroom connection of the new consortium assessment.

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 administered an online reading test, NeSA-R, in 2010. A NeSA-Mathematics test was field tested in 2010 and will be operational 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. The RTTT resources will be used in the professional development to assure the classroom connection is made with the new standards and assessment.

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 through computer adaptive testing. In addition, the consortium will build formative and interim benchmark assessment, providing diagnostic information to be used in planning for instruction.

Nebraska proposes to join the SMARTER Balance consortium 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 computer adaptive 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 a lead state in the SMARTER Balance 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 32 states will build a coherent system of assessments (all aligned with the Common Core), but will share an item bank of adaptive items across the 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. The SMARTER Balance states will focus on computer adaptive testing, formative assessment, teacher involvement, and authentic tasks measuring 21st century skills.

Nebraska and the other SMARTER Balance 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 and a common summative test. 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, SMARTER Balanced Consortium Memorandum of Understanding and Member*

States)

Each state in the SMARTER Balance 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.

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.

(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) Transition to New Standards and Assessments

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. These tools will be accompanied with extensive professional development to ensure the connection to each classroom.

This integration of the Common Core Standards into each participating local school district curriculum will be accomplished with the assistance of the regionally located Educational Service Units. The ESUs have a long-standing tradition of providing professional development to local school districts. All teachers will be taught how to “unpack” standards to get to the skills inside the standards. If teachers identify these skills, they can teach to the skills and intervene if necessary. Within one year of adopting the Common Core Standards, each ESU will conduct curriculum integration workshops with teams from participating local school districts.

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. 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 STEM courses. This is a critical first step that begins upon the adoption of the Common Core.

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.

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.

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.

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 the SMARTER Balance states.

Standards and Assessment		
<u>Implementation Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Persons Responsible</u>
August 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt Common Core Standards. 	State Board of Education
August 2010-March 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt Common Core Standards and integrate into local curriculum. • Participate in the benchmark testing system. 	Districts
August 2010-March 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	Nebraska Department of Education, STE Academy, district and Educational Service Unit staff
August 2011- Dec. 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	Nebraska Department of Education staff and Nebraska teachers and ESU staff, vendor staff and local educators from consortium partner states

	the vendor software platform.		
December 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial administration of the formative assessment using the online platform. 	Districts	
March 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administer first of the quarterly benchmark tests common tests. 	NDE, ESU, and Vendor staff, district teachers and administrators, Department of Education staff and local educators from consortium partner states	
March-April 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generate first “early warning” diagnostic reports for students, parents, and teachers. 	NDE, ESU, and Vendor staff, district teachers and administrators, Department of Education staff and local educators from consortium partner states	
August 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish baseline performance results on Common Core Standards for all districts participating with a special emphasis on the lowest performing schools. 	NDE, ESU, and Vendor staff, district teachers and administrators, Department of Education staff and local educators from consortium partner states, STEM Academy	
March 2012-2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop the 18 hour graduate cohort, “Leading the Common Core” through the University of Nebraska. 	NDE, 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.

Recommended maximum response length: Two pages

(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system:

The 2010-2011 school year will mark Nebraska’s fourth full year of collecting data using a state longitudinal data system. The Nebraska Student and Staff Record System (NSSRS) was originally built to collect data on PK-12 students and staff, including data on performance standards for Nebraska’s unique classroom based assessment system known as STARS. Nebraska’s classroom based assessment is being phased out and replaced with a new Nebraska statewide assessment (NeSA) in Reading (2009-10), Mathematics (2010-11) and Science (2011-12). In 2009 the Nebraska P-16 Initiative adopted a goal to build a prekindergarten thru postsecondary student data system by September 30, 2011. A formal memorandum of understanding has been developed to govern the sharing of student data. Together, the Nebraska Student and Staff Record System and the Nebraska Statewide Assessment will serve as Nebraska’s master database for tracking statewide student enrollment in the public school system including postsecondary institutions.

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)	Nebraska has assigned the NDE Student ID to over 495,283 students in PK-12. This system will be extended into postsecondary by September, 2011.
E2. Student-level enrollment, demographic, and program participation information	The PK – Postsecondary system will include enrollment and demographic data on all public students.
E3. Student-level information about the points at which	The PK-postsecondary system currently captures information

<p>students exit, transfer in, transfer out, drop out, or complete P-16 education programs</p>	<p>pertaining to student transfer and completion PK-12 and will be expanded to capture similar postsecondary information.</p>
<p>E4. The capacity to communicate with higher education data systems</p>	<p>The memorandum of understanding governing data exchange between PK-12 and postsecondary was an important first step. The next step is to define the data elements for each data set to be exchanged, followed by incorporation into the Nebraska Student and Staff Record System</p>
<p>E5. A state data audit system assessing data quality, validity, and reliability</p>	<p>This element is fully implemented in the state data system. Nebraska has been nationally recognized for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing a data quality initiative which provides training to school district staff. • Conducting state data conference in 2008, 2009, and 2010. • Implementing a data audit system making program staff responsible for quality data • Implementing an automated data validation and verification system that allows districts to view their data in ways that make error detection and correction easy.
<p>E6. Yearly test records of individual students with respect to assessments under section 1111(b) of the</p>	<p>This element is fully implemented. Records for individual students will be collected in the current classroom-based</p>

Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965	assessment system until the implementation of the Nebraska State Accountability System.
E7. Information on students not tested, by grade and subject	This element is fully implemented. Collected in the current classroom-based assessment system until the implementation of the Nebraska State Accountability System.
E8. A teacher identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students	The Nebraska system has a unique teacher identifier. The ability to match teachers to students will be implemented in the 2010-11 school year.
E9. Student-level transcript information, including information on courses completed and grades earned	The ability to capture student-level transcript information will be implemented in the 2010-11 School year.
E10. Student-level college readiness test scores	This element is fully implemented. Nearly 76% of Nebraska seniors have taken the ACT, the highest percentage in the nation. The individual ACT scores are loaded into our student record 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	NDE matches Nebraska graduate file with the <i>National Student Clearinghouse</i> to determine Nebraska College going rate; however information on enrollment in remedial courses at the postsecondary level is not yet available.

<p>E12. Data that provide other information determined necessary to address alignment and adequate preparation for success in postsecondary education.</p>	<p>The Career Education (Perkins) program performance measures and the expectations of a longitudinal program analysis are being used in 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 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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As part of this application Nebraska is requesting funding to fully implement The America COMPETES Act elements including:

-Link PK-12 to Postsecondary Student Information

-The Postsecondary Student Information will leverage the existing Nebraska Student and Staff Record System (NSSRS) processes, procedures, hardware, and software.

- Extend the NDE Student ID into Postsecondary

Nebraska will expand this license to allow assigning NDE Student IDs to postsecondary students not already having been assigned an NDE Student ID during their PK-12 educational experience (e.g. postsecondary transfers-in from out of state). Each Nebraska public postsecondary institution will assign NDE Student IDs using the same system and processes currently used by public districts for PK-12 students. The NDE Trainer Team will provide training to staff at postsecondary

institutions on the eScholar Uniq-ID[®] for Students system.

- Incorporate Postsecondary Student Data into the NSSRS

NDE currently licenses the eScholar Complete Data Warehouse[®] for PK-12 (CDW-PK12) for use by NSSRS. Additionally, NDE will license the eScholar Complete Data Warehouse[®] for Postsecondary (CDW-PS) and will utilize existing NSSRS hardware and software in support of this outcome. NDE will be responsible for coordinating with eScholar to extend the CDW-PS based on the requirements determined necessary to incorporate student-level data from Nebraska public postsecondary institutions pertaining to demographics, enrollment, credits earned, and academic awards. NSSRS Data Manager will be used to submit data and NSSRS Validation will be used to ensure that data submitted is correct. The NDE Trainer Team will provide training on the NSSRS Data Manager and NSSRS Validation systems to staff at postsecondary institutions.

Linking Student and Teacher Course Information

Nebraska will be able to match teachers and students by expanding the current eScholar data model in order that a given student is linked to the particular teachers primarily responsible for providing instruction in various subjects. The courses that each student completes and the grades they earn will be captured on the *Student Grades* template. Each course and section will be identified through NDE's existing course taxonomy and will require the addition of a "section" identifier for each course. Using the same course/section identifier, school districts will use the *Course Instructor Snapshot* template to identify the individual teaching each section of each course.

Detailed requirements for this activity will be developed by adapting the current eScholar templates and NSSRS template instructions with assistance from an external advisory committee comprised of representatives from all sectors of Nebraska's education system. The NDE School Personnel and Curriculum (SPC) committee will propose a process and prepare documentation

for approval by the NSSRS Executive Committee and then reviewed by the external Data Advisory Committee. This activity will involve development of a training program and the expansion of public reporting facilities.

Creating a new NDE Staff ID

A requirement of the *America COMPETES Act* is a teacher identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students. A reliable staff identifier system is critical to many of the outcomes identified in this application. Nebraska's current staff identification process utilizes individual Social Security Numbers (SSN). Funding requested in this application will eliminate the use of SSN to identify a teacher by utilizing the eScholar Uniq-ID[®] for Staff system to generate the new NDE Staff ID.

Migrating to the new NDE Staff ID will affect many NDE systems. In particular, the NDE Teacher Certification system must be updated to incorporate the NDE Staff ID even though it will continue to maintain a SSN for each staff person as required by state statute as part of Nebraska's teacher certification application process. However, SSN will no longer be used to identify staff in NSSRS staff reporting. Other NDE systems, documentation, and NSSRS template instructions will also require modification to replace SSN with the new NDE Staff ID.

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

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.

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) Accessing and using State data:

Nebraska’s Data Systems Plan

Nebraska’s Data System Plan contains three major initiatives: (a) completion of the state’s longitudinal data system (Nebraska Student and Staff Record System or NSSRS) to meet all of the reporting requirements of the SFSF assurances; (b) Accessing and Using Data, and (c) Using Data to Improve Instruction. As the infrastructure supporting all activities within the Bright Futures Initiative, the data system builds on a solid foundation and expands to new collections and uses of data.

Nebraska believes strongly in designing data systems to support instruction. With 253 school districts spread over 77,000 square miles, Nebraska has developed partnerships that help to provide the brightest possible future for students through a collaborative approach to state data systems that includes districts, Educational Service Units, postsecondary institutions working with the NDE.

Partnership Roles in the State Data System			
<p>School Districts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a secure, accurate, and complete student and staff record system in accordance 	<p>Educational Service Units:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training to school districts in the use of data for school improvement • Support local student and 	<p>Postsecondary Institutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign a memorandum of understanding for sharing student data with PK-12 • Provide student data to the 	<p>Department of Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a state longitudinal data system • Establish standards for defining, collecting,

<p>with state and federal regulations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement best practices to collect and maintain high quality data • Provide required data in support of state and federal education programs • Use local and state data sources to continuously improve their schools • Provide information to their communities on the performance of their students 	<p>staff information systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve as the liaison between NDE and local school districts • Provide training in the use of instructional improvement systems 	<p>PK-Postsecondary data system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support school districts in developing instructional improvement systems • Develop research and evaluation projects in support of Nebraska education 	<p>maintaining and reporting data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop state-level systems for reporting education data • Develop the state requirements for continuous improvement of schools
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While Nebraska has not yet fully implemented the required elements of the America COMPETES Act, significant progress has been made in designing systems to access and use state data to improve instruction. Nebraska will complete its SLDS Consistent with the Requirements and Timelines of the State Fiscal Stabilization Funds. 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.

This portion of the Nebraska RTTT application will demonstrate how strong partnerships provide high quality data to ensure a bright future for Nebraska students. Nebraska will also use RTTT funding for two important initiatives:

Accessing and using data by expanding the new Data Reporting System [(C)(2)] to:

- accommodate expanded data required in the SFSF assurances and America COMPETES
- enable school districts to control access to members of regional and state support networks
- present data in a way that will support instructional improvement efforts

Using data to improve instruction by expanding and refocusing existing training networks [(C)(3)] to:

- increase the use of instructional improvement systems
- improve professional development and technical assistance
- improve data quality
- improve and disseminate research

The development of Data Systems meets the aim of the Bright Futures in standardizing processes not only in the elements and information collected but also in the data collection systems. The primary data collection systems are:

- The Nebraska Student and Staff Record System (NSSRS): The NSSRS is the master system for tracking Nebraska public school students from prekindergarten through postsecondary education. Beginning in 2006, school districts used the NSSRS to assign a unique student identifier to PK-12 students. Since 2007, the system has collected comprehensive data on all public school students, including performance, demographic, enrollment and program participation data. In 2009-10 the Nebraska Statewide Assessment System was implemented and will be phased in over the next two years. The NSSRS also

serves as the primary data base of Nebraska educators. Staff data is collected using the same methodology as student data thus minimizing the need for dual training.

- Consolidated Data Collections (CDC): As Nebraska developed the NSSRS and the NeSA, a third system was developed to collect and maintain all data not related to individual students or teachers. The CDC serves as the master table of districts and schools and as well as the repository for other critical data elements.
- School Finance Data System: This is a detailed system for collection financial receipt and expenditure data on Nebraska school districts. This system utilizes data from the NSSRS to distribute state aid to schools.
- Grants Management System: The GMS was developed in 2003 for the collection maintenance, analysis and payment of most of the state and federal grant programs managed by NDE.

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

Nebraska's plan for accessing and using state data is to improve and access to, and use of, the State's longitudinal data system by expanding the Data Reporting System to include new data and dashboards targeted to supporting continuous improvement efforts.

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 (NSSRS) available to stakeholders through a public-facing website beginning in December 2009. Through a series of 13 dashboards and 64 reports, the new DRS system enables stakeholders to 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.* The focus of this expansion will be twofold. First, the system will be redesigned to enable school districts to authorize ESUs, NDE or postsecondary representatives to access their data to assist in continuous improvement efforts. Second, NDE and its contractor will create a new series of dashboards that will consolidate school improvement data into an easy to access and use set of reports in support of instructional improvement efforts.

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, 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) Using data to improve instruction

In the second initiative of the Data Systems Plan, Nebraska will increase state, regional and local capacity to use data to inform instruction by ensuring implementation of instructional improvement systems and expanding support for the continuous improvement process by:

Using data to improve instruction by expanding and refocusing existing training networks [(C)(3)] to:

- increase the use of instructional improvement systems
- improve professional development and technical assistance
- improve data quality
- improve and disseminate research

To be accredited in Nebraska, all districts are required to have a school improvement process. In partnership with Educational Service Units, Nebraska has adopted the AdvancEd model for the improvement school improvement process. The seven standards at the center of the AdvancEd model are: 1. Vision and Purpose, 2. Governance and Leadership, 3. Teaching and Learning, 4. Documenting and Using Results, 5. Resources and Support Systems, 6. Stakeholder Communications and Relationships and 7. Commitment to Continuous Improvement. Nebraska currently supports local schools and districts in the

use of instructional improvement systems through a series of workshops called Leadership for Continuous Improvement. The state proposes to continue and expand this critically important statewide effort. Over the past two years nearly 800 educators from 253 school districts participated and have benefited from the workshops. The workshops use 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.

The RTTT finding will support the use of the AdvancEd model by expanding the very successful network of trainers and expanding their curriculum to include the use data to improve instruction. Local school districts will have an option to use their share of the RTTT funding to support both their data stewards and their local school improvement coordinators.

Professional development

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. Expanding the DRS to provide the data specifically needed to support not only administrative but also instructional decisions. Nebraska will use RTTT funding to maintain and refocus the duties of the current four data trainer positions with four

additional full time school improvement trainers to support all of the state's school districts. The goal of the expanded training network will be to meet requirements outlined in items (i) and (ii) above. The state training network will work closely with the Educational Service Units staff to tailor programs to meet the specific data and instructional improvement needs of school. Each trainer will have significant technical experience and experience working with Nebraska schools. Two trainers will cover the western part of the state, two the central portions and four trainers, located at NDE headquarters in Lincoln, will cover the state's more populous eastern region. NDE has also established a very successful help desk program to support school districts in meeting state and federal reporting requirements. The eight positions described herein will also supplement the NDE helpdesk.

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 districts in the development and submission of state required data, in order to ensure that data is of the highest quality. The four current trainers, supported by the NDE help desk have conducted workshops across the state to help districts improve overall data quality. Based on guidelines from the National Forum on Education Statistics, the trainers developed a data quality curriculum to facilitate the creation and use of best practices in local schools. In addition to expanding the statewide training network, Nebraska proposes to expand this important initiative by allowing participating districts to use RTTT funds to support the function of the "Data Steward". Data Stewards 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. In combination, the statewide training network, the data stewards and the local school improvement coordinators, Nebraska will create a national model for supporting the use of data for instructional improvement.

Support Research

Increasingly, Nebraska is utilizing the SLDS to support research. Under FERPA guidelines, NDE has released data files for research and analysis to the Mid Continent Regional Lab, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Teachers College, the Nebraska Center for Youth, Families and Schools and other organization. Nebraska provides timely state data access to researchers through the reporting components of its SLDS, but the expansion of the DRS will significantly enhance the amount of data and simplify access. The DRS's "Advanced Inquiry" feature allows users to manipulate data using advanced "cube" technology. In addition, NDE is creating a Research and Evaluation team in the Office of School Improvement as described in Section (A)(2). This team will be a part of the P-16 research governance group to approve and coordinate research efforts using P-16 data. The team will also be conducting research and evaluation of the activities in the Bright Futures Initiative and coordinating evaluations of the various activities. The Nebraska Student and Staff Records System contain information on all of the student types identified in Race to the Top's data criterion. 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).

<p>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.</p>	Actual Data: Baseline (Current school year or most recent)	End of SY 2010-2011	End of SY 2011-2012	End of SY 2012-2013	End of SY 2013-2014
(Enter measures here, if any.)					

(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) Alternative Routes

There are no state statutes addressing alternative routes to certification. The Nebraska Department of Education's Rule 21, (Regulations for the Issuance of Certificates and Permits to Teach, Provide Special Services, and Administer, Section 005.27) outlines the process for issuing one of the alternative routes, Transitional Teaching Certificate. Recent changes to Rule 21 have been approved by the State Board of Education and have received final approval from the Governor. The changes in Section 005.17-19 authorize the issuance of a Career Education Teaching Certificate as a replacement for the existing Trades Certificate and must be requested by the school district in which the faculty member will be teaching career education courses. This certificate does not require the applicant to meet the teacher education requirements for a regular certificate.

Section 005.20-22 addresses a new Dual Credit Teaching Certificate that is available to applicants employed as a teacher by a postsecondary educational entity and authorizes the applicant to teach courses offered by the postsecondary entity and approved by a local school system both for high school credit and postsecondary credit.

Nebraska public schools employ approximately 23,286 teachers and 873 principals. There are 17 institutions of higher education that prepare educators for employment based on Nebraska's certification requirements. These institutions graduate approximately 1500 graduates annually. Although some of these graduates become employed in other states, the majority remain in Nebraska. As a result, there is not a high level of need for alternative certification programs, although there are several programs operating in the state.

(D)(1)(ii) Transitional Certification

Regulatory provisions for alternative routes to certification for teachers and principals are found in Rule 21, Issuance of Certificates and Permits to Teach, Provide Special Services, and Administer in Nebraska Schools. Sections 005.26-28 describe these provisions. Those provisions are:

005.26 Transitional Teaching Certificate. The transitional teaching certificate shall be valid for teaching only in the Nebraska school system requesting the issuance of such certificate. The transitional teaching certificate shall expire on August 31 of the year following the year of issuance or renewal.

005.27 Transitional Teaching Certificate Additional Requirements. Each applicant for a transitional teaching certificate shall:

005.27A Fulfill the requirements in Sections 005.01A through E, and Sections 005.01I through K;

005.27B Submit a written request for the issuance of such certificate from the superintendent of schools or the governing body of the school system in which the applicant intends to teach which includes documentation that the school system or governing body has not found a fully qualified teacher for the position;

005.27C Have at least a baccalaureate degree which includes at least three-fourths of the course requirements for preparation in the endorsement area, pursuant to 92 NAC 24, Regulations for Certificate Endorsements, that addresses the teaching position to be filled by the applicant;

005.27D Have an assessment of his/her transcripts completed by a certification officer in a standard institution of higher education and a plan developed for completion of an approved initial teacher certification program;

005.27E Submit a written plan from the school system for mentoring and supervision of the applicant;

005.27F Complete a pre-teaching seminar offered by an educational service unit or standard institution of higher education that includes information and skill development in the areas of diversity, classroom management, curriculum planning, and instructional strategies prior to assuming responsibility for the classroom; and

005.27G Submit a written agreement with a teacher education program from a Nebraska standard institution of higher education to complete the program for an initial teaching certificate which includes a commitment by the standard institution to provide at least one (1) supervisory visit each semester to the school system and classroom of the applicant.

005.28 Transitional Teaching Certificate Renewal Requirements. Each applicant for renewal of a transitional teaching certificate shall fulfill the requirements in Sections 005.27A through E and submit a transcript documenting completion of at least six (6) semester hours annually towards completion of the plan identified in Section 005.27D. A transitional teaching certificate may be renewed for a maximum of five (5) years provided the applicant makes sufficient progress as provided by this section.

There are several alternative pathways in which individuals can become certified to teach. They include: *Transition to Teaching*, which is a program for people with baccalaureate degrees or greater that are focused on content area(s) that are available as endorsements on Nebraska Teaching Certificates. This program is offered through several institutions, with the majority of the candidates completing the program at the University of Nebraska-Kearney (UNK) and is designed to provide teachers for schools that have been unable to hire a fully qualified teacher. The elements of this program include:

- A request for issuance of a Transitional Teaching Certificate from the school system wishing to hire the applicant who intends to teach;
- The applicant must hold a baccalaureate degree which includes at least three-fourths of the course requirements for the endorsement being sought;
- A plan provided by the employing school system for mentoring and supervising the applicant;
- Completion by the applicant of a pre-teaching seminar that includes information and skill development; and a written agreement with a teacher education program to complete the program required for a regular certificate; and
- A mentoring and supervision program plan provided by the employing school system plus regular monitoring/assistance visits from the institution providing the program.
- The program at UNK provides an 18 credit hour online professional education sequence which candidates complete in three six credit hour modules while they are teaching. This option is very attractive to candidates who are hired by schools that are not located in close proximity to a campus which provides teacher education programs.

There are 92 teachers who are currently utilizing the Transition to Teaching certificate. Approximately 25 individuals enter the program each year and generally complete the program and attain a regular certificate within three years. *Number of teachers that successfully completed the program in the previous academic year (2008-09) was 27.*

University of Nebraska at Omaha's Teacher Academy Project (UNO-TAP) is a program that involves the collaboration of school districts in the metropolitan Omaha area. Through an application process, individuals who hold an undergraduate degree in a major related to secondary education (7-12) content areas are selected by participating schools to work in the school 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. *Number of teachers that successfully completed the program in the previous academic year (2008-09) was 20.*

Post-Baccalaureate Teacher Preparation Programs: Several other Nebraska teacher preparation institutions offer programs which allow individuals who hold a baccalaureate degree in an endorsable content area to complete a teacher preparation program at the graduate level. These programs typically require individuals to complete professional education coursework comparable to that of a traditional undergraduate program. However, the coursework may be accomplished in a nontraditional sequence that usually allows for completion in a compressed time frame. *Number of teachers that successfully completed the programs in the previous academic year (2008-09) was 73.*

Nebraska also has provisions for certification of teachers and administrators that resemble alternative programs but are designed to assist schools that are having difficulty finding fully qualified teachers. These are generally the smaller, rural school districts where recruiting educators is most difficult. The provisions include Provisional Commitment certificates for both teachers and administrators. Provisional teachers are granted these certificates if they have completed one-half of the pre-student teaching requirements and three-fourths of the subject matter content requirements for an endorsement. Annual renewal of the certificate is based on progress toward completing the requirements for a regular certificate. The certificate is renewable if the individual completes at least six hours of credit during the year for course work which fulfills some or all of the remaining program requirements. **In 2009-10 there are 22 individuals teaching on the Provisional Commitment Teaching Certificate and most of them will be fully qualified for a regular certificate in 2010-11.**

The Provisional Commitment Certificate for Administrators is similar to the Provisional Commitment Teaching Certificate in that applicants must have completed at least 50% of the credit hours required for completion of an approved program for the endorsement of principal or curriculum supervisor, or 75% of the program for superintendent. This certificate is also renewable annually with completion of at least six hours of credit during the year for coursework which fulfills some or all of the remaining course requirements.

Both of the Provisional Administrative certificates are utilized primarily in the rural areas of the state where recruiting qualified administrators is most difficult. **There are currently 42 administrators employed in Nebraska public school districts on the provisional administrative certificate. Most of these individuals will complete their remaining requirements by 2010-11.**

There are other programs which Nebraska considers as alternative pathways to teacher certification. They include the following: Dual Credit Program, Career Ladder Program/Indigenous Roots Teacher Education Program, Native Speaker Program, and the Career Education Certificate Program. Descriptions of each are found below.

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

Career Ladder Program/Indigenous Roots Teacher Education Program (University of Nebraska Lincoln (UNL)): This is a federally funded program designed to increase the number of Native American teachers prepared 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**. Candidates are selected from among paraprofessionals serving schools with Native students. UNL provides courses free of charge to the candidates, as well as

other support necessary for them to complete their degrees.

Native Speaker Program (Rule 10, Regulations and Procedures for the Accreditation of Schools): This 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. **There are approximately 3 to 4 teachers instructing students under this option.**

Career Education Certificate (Program is outlined in 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 this certificate will result in a Career Education Certificate, which is expected to be implemented in the Spring of 2010 and will include revised areas of specialization for expanded career education areas. **In 2009-10, there are 27 individuals are teaching in Nebraska public schools with this certificate.** College coursework is not required for renewal of this certificate.

The total number of teachers newly certified statewide in the previous academic year (2008-09) was 2,043. Nebraska teacher preparation programs graduated 1,680 individuals in 2008-09. Data are not available on the number of newly certified principals.

Educator Preparation		
<u>Implementation Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Persons Responsible</u>
2013-14	Publish initial Educator Preparation Report Card	NDE Teacher/Leader Team
Summer 2012	Annual Teacher Preparation Summit involves district and higher education staff from teacher preparation programs to formulate and implement changes that assure quality preparation programs, support of new teachers/principals and the achievement of students	NDE Teacher/Leader Team, Teacher Preparation higher education
Summer 2013	Annual Teacher Preparation Summit involves district and higher education staff from teacher preparation programs to formulate and implement changes that assure quality preparation programs, support of new teachers/principals and the achievement of students	NDE Teacher/Leader Team, Teacher Preparation higher education
Summer 2014	Annual Teacher Preparation Summit involves district and higher education staff from teacher preparation programs to formulate and implement changes that assure quality preparation programs, support of new teachers/principals and the achievement of students	NDE Teacher/Leader Team, Teacher Preparation higher education

(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 illustrates that shortages occur primarily in small, rural districts located throughout the state.

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 annual Teacher Shortage Survey has been 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 that 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

Nebraska's only two existing alternative certification programs have been operational for some time and generally are at capacity. Race to the Top funds will be used to expand their programs to meet the changing 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. RTTT funds are being requested to assist with modification and compression of this program. The University of Nebraska at Kearney will assume sustainability at the end of the 4 year period.

Additional RTTT resources will also 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 the 4 year period. The UNO-TAP and other post baccalaureate programs in the state are important resources for addressing Nebraska's teacher supply needs by providing an alternative entry into the teaching profession. Other Nebraska post-baccalaureate programs also provide options for individuals with non-teaching college degrees to enter the teaching profession. Unfortunately, Nebraska has no resources available to assist these programs, other than their own institutional budgets.

Equitable Distribution of Teachers		
<u>Implementation Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Persons Responsible</u>
Oct. 2010 – Dec. 2010	Establish interim criteria and selection process for Great Teacher/leader participants	NDE Teacher/Leader Team, ESU and district representatives
Jan. 2011 – May 2011	Recruit initial cohort of teachers and principals	NDE Teacher/Leader Team, ESU and district representatives
Summer 2011	Place initial cohort for the 2011-12 school year	NDE Teacher/Leader Team, ESU and district representatives
May 2012	Evaluate initial year, recruit for 2012-13 school year	NDE Research and Evaluation Team
Jan. 2012-May 2012	Recruit new cohort of teachers and principals based on results of field testing of new Teacher and Principal Performance System	NDE Teacher/Leader Team, ESU and district representatives
2012-13	Place new cohort of teachers and principals who have been identified as effective	NDE Teacher/Leader Team, ESU and district representatives
May 2013	Evaluate initial year of effective teachers and principals, recruit for 2013-14 school year	NDE Research and Evaluation Team
Aug. 2013 – May 2014	Place additional cohort of teachers and principals identified as effective	NDE Teacher/Leader Team, ESU and district representatives

D)(2)(i) Measuring Student Growth

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 student 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

***Effective Teachers/Principals:
Key contributions to Bright Futures***

- Develop teacher/principal standards
- Develop and implement a statewide teacher/principal evaluation system based in part on instructional outcomes
- Support induction and mentoring programs for beginning teachers /principals
- Provide continuous professional development
- Implement teacher/principal performance-defined certification renewal
- Provide support and accountability for teacher/administrator preparation programs

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 improvements:

Assessment Quality Ratings: Reading	
2001	16.71% of the districts did not meet assessment quality ratings in reading.
2006	100% of the districts met assessment quality ratings in reading.
Assessment Quality Ratings: Mathematics	
2001	33.70% of the districts did not meet assessment quality ratings in mathematics.
2006	100% of the districts met assessment quality ratings in mathematics.

Student Performance Ratings: Reading	
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.
Student Performance Ratings: Mathematics	
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 their assessment data to improve instruction. Local districts have focused on the instruction of the state standards, classroom-based assessment, and using data for instructional improvement.

Nebraska is now making the transition from the locally based system to a system of statewide assessment. State legislation finalized in 2007-08 via Nebraska State Statute 79-760, moves Nebraska to a new state testing system, which is the Nebraska State Accountability System – NeSA. The first operational test for reading is scheduled for implementation in 2010, mathematics in 2011, and science in 2012. As a result of the new assessment system, a new accountability system is also under development. The state anticipates that this new accountability system, built upon individual student scores generated through centralized state testing will provide greater accountability and significantly increase the number of schools identified as needing improvement.

The new accountability system under development will use the NeSA results and 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. High school assessment occurs in grade 11, with high school growth determined by measuring the 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 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 students and schools needing 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. Student achievement outcomes will be a major component of the teacher and principal evaluation system.

(D)(2)(ii) Teacher and Principal Evaluation Systems

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. It is clear 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. Nebraska is proposing 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.

Model Teacher /Principal performance appraisal templates will be developed as the basis for their annual evaluation process. These performance appraisals will be based on student achievement outcomes and professional teacher/principal standards and associated indicators. Nebraska is also

proposing the development of a statewide system of professional development support for addressing teachers and principals' 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. All districts will be required to evaluate teachers and principals on the new system described below. 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 principals) 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 principal 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 new Nebraska statewide model. Danielson identifies four domains for professional practice: Planning and Preparation, Classroom Environment, Professional Responsibilities, and Instruction.

Omaha Public Schools (OPS), which is 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 administrators. 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, their 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-tenured teachers are covered under the plan, with more attention given to pre-tenured faculty. Teachers who are struggling in any category are provided assistance.

While the OPS' system as a 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, using a "less-paper intensive" approach in order to facilitate implementation in all Nebraska schools. Fourth, it will require modification to assure that the Nebraska Professional Teacher Standards to be developed and implemented as a result of RTTT funding, are infused and are an integral part of the process. The OPS model is a viable foundation for the development of the Nebraska statewide teacher appraisal model. It provides assistance to teachers who are not performing up to standard, by identifying areas that need improvement and by engaging them in their own improvement efforts, and ultimately providing administrators with information for promotion and retention decisions.

Nebraska's Teacher and Leader evaluation models, which will be based on Nebraska Teacher/Principal standards will be designed with a minimum of two 'tracks' for both teachers and leaders. RTTT funds are being requested to support the development of the performance appraisal system for both groups of educators.

- **Beginning/New to the Profession Teachers** (non-tenured teachers). Nebraska has a 3-year probationary period for teachers. The evaluation model, in combination with mentoring/induction strategies proposed in this application, will provide focused support for beginning professionals and evaluation criteria which recognize the unique growth and support needs of beginning teachers to assume their roles as

teachers. (Teachers are considered probationary until they have been in the same district for three years. Experienced teachers who change districts are also considered probationary for the first three years in that district.)

- **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** (accomplished). Consideration will be given to development of a 3rd track which will be available for 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 roles of 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/superintendents); more standardized appraisals; review of the 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 Teacher/Principal 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 confirms that performance evaluation is not an event, but rather is the basis for further growth and development in subsequent years. Although teacher/principal evaluations will include measurement of student achievement outcomes as a primary factor for informing continuing employment, improvement requirements to maintain employment, and/or promotion decisions, the evaluations 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 in utilizing the new statewide assessment model as a professional growth and recertification tool.

As noted earlier, 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 process requires that the development of the systems proposed in this application (evaluation/performance appraisal process, the Professional Teacher and Principal 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 from 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 that is 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 at least one-year's growth for each year of instruction is proposed 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 measures 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 activities 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 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 previously 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 also 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, NDE proposes 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. Work 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 Principal 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 is based on 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.

Teacher Principal Standards and Evaluation Systems		
<u>Implementation Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Persons Responsible</u>
Oct. 2010 – Dec. 2010	Teacher and Principal Standards Development	NDE Directors, IHE, Nebraska educators and organization representatives
Jan 2011	Standards adopted	State Board of Education
Dec. 2010 – May 2011	Teacher and Principal Performance Evaluation Systems developed	NDE Directors, IHE, Nebraska educators and organization representatives
May 2011	Begin Training for principals, superintendents and	NDE and ESU staff

	supervisors	
Aug. 2011 – May 2012	Field test new Performance Evaluation systems	Participating districts
Aug. 2011 – May 2012	Continue training during field testing	NDE and ESU staff
May 2011	Analyze results from field test, modify system as needed	NDE Research and Evaluation team, Teacher Leader Team, ESU and district and organization representatives
August 2012	Begin full implementation of new Teacher and Principal Evaluation System	NDE Teacher Leader team and districts

(D)(2)(iii) and (iv) Evaluations and Use of Results

Nebraska will require an annual evaluation process, based upon the proposed model, for all teachers and principals in Nebraska school districts. This step will require significant discussion and involvement with Nebraska stakeholders in the development and implementation processes of the models since these decisions have previously 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 six 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 identify resources for assistance in overcoming the deficiencies, and follow-up evaluations

and assistance. Formal observations and progress checks will be conducted at least two 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.

Because recertification will be based on professional development, standards and a point system must be developed and utilized by the Nebraska Educator Certification Office. A stakeholder group of representative educators will policy partners will develop a point system for the recertification process. RTTT funding is requested for support of the group’s work in developing the system and appropriate for the variety of certificates available to educators across Nebraska.

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. 					
(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 currently collected.						
General data to be provided at time of application:						
Total number of participating LEAs.		215				
Total number of principals in participating LEAs.		774				
Total number of teachers in participating LEAs.		19,954				
[Optional: Enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data]						
Criterion	Data to be requested of grantees in the future:					
(D)(2)(ii)	Number of teachers and principals in participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems.					

(D)(2)(iii)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.	

⁴ Note that for some data elements there are likely to be data collection activities the State would do in order to provide aggregated data to the Department. For example, in Criteria (D)(2)(iii), States may want to ask each Participating LEA to report, for each rating category in its evaluation system, the definition of that category and the number of teachers and principals in the category. The State could then organize these two categories as effective and ineffective, for Department reporting purposes.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Recommended maximum response length: Three pages

(D)(3)(i) Equitable Distribution

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 as part of teacher/principal evaluations will not be available until 2013-14 and based on this data. In the interim, NDE propose development and implementation of a plan to identify and encourage selected veteran teachers and administrators (Great Teachers and Leaders) 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 program 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 that these high quality teachers and leaders are strategically placed.

Participants in the Great Teachers and Leaders program will be identified or nominated by colleagues and will receive incentives for working in identified schools and for assisting those schools to improve. In addition to **financial incentives provided by the school districts**, the participants will be provided access to professional development opportunities. Working condition incentives for interim and final project participants who accept assignment to work 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 other participants.

Nominated individuals for the Great Teacher and Leaders (GT&L) program must meet the following criteria: positive annual evaluations that document evidence of professional growth throughout their careers; exhibit evidence of contributions to the school as a teacher leader;

have a minimum of five years experience; and provide evidence of their understanding of, and focus on, improving student achievement outcomes. Priority will be given to teacher/administrator teams to work in persistently lowest-achieving schools.

Individuals selected for participation may also serve on a GT&L steering committee to assist with continuing development and implementation of the model in SY2013-14. The steering committee will work with the School Intervention Specialist (See Section E), with an intent, where appropriate, to utilize expertise and experiences of this group to inform and assist with the work.

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 in (D-2).

Leadership and support for individuals participating in the GT&L initiative are critical. Best practice/research-based strategies will be identified by the steering committee and implemented. Although the professionals identified as great teachers/administrators are ideal for working with low performing schools, access to professional development to address unique school needs and to assist with local school staff development will be very important.

(D)(3)(ii) Hard to Staff Subjects and Speciality Areas

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 the 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). For science teachers, 98.97% are NCLB highly qualified (88 courses of 8,509 total science courses are not taught by a highly qualified teacher). Approval and accreditation data, based on 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 at 88.26%. The science percentage is lower because Nebraska teachers may obtain a 'field endorsement' or a 'subject endorsement.' It is not uncommon for candidates to complete a subject endorsement in a science area (Biology, Chemistry, Earth Science, and Physics) rather than a 'field' endorsement in Natural Science or Physical Science which prepares them to teach the full range of science courses. Consequently, teachers may hold a subject endorsement but will be given additional assignments in other science areas because of their science background. It is difficult for smaller and more rural schools to attract a field-endorsed teacher.

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. The change in graduation requirements, which is raising the amount of course work in mathematics and science students must complete in order to meet these graduation requirements will significantly increase the need for teachers in these areas that are already in designated as national shortage 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 only 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, the teacher needs will probably continue to grow, based upon the aging Nebraska teaching force and an increasing emphasis and demand to prepare 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 STEM Academy. The school is more completely described in *Appendix K, Nebraska Virtual School and STEM Academy Proposal*.

Nebraska will also develop and implement a system for recruiting college math and science majors 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-16 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, the creation of a STEM Center at a Nebraska teacher preparation institution is proposed. Selection of the site will be through a competitive proposal basis, with the successful institution addressing the following components:

- Research and planning that leads 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, teachers, administrators 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;

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

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).					
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).					
Percentage of teachers in schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are ineffective.					
Percentage of teachers in schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are ineffective.					
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).					
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).					

Percentage of principals leading schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are ineffective.					
Percentage of principals leading schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are ineffective.					
[Optional: Enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data]					
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).	193				
Total number of schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice).	747				
Total number of teachers in schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice).	4609				
Total number of teachers in schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice).	15323				
Total number of principals leading schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice).	187				
Total number of principals leading schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice).	586				
[Optional: Enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data]					
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)(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]	
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).	
Total number of schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice).	
Total number of teachers in schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice).	
Total number of teachers in schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice).	
Total number of principals leading schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice).	
Total number of principals leading schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice).	
[Optional: Enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data]	
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.					
Percentage of science teachers who were evaluated as effective or better.					
Percentage of special education teachers who were evaluated as effective or better.					
Percentage of teachers in language instruction educational programs who were evaluated as effective or better.					
[Optional: Enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data]					
General data to be provided at time of application:					
Total number of mathematics teachers.	1439				
Total number of science teachers.	1232				
Total number of special education teachers.	935				
Total number of teachers in language instruction educational programs.	350				
[Optional: Enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data]					
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) Linking Teachers to Students and to Teacher Preparation Program

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

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

and graduates' relationship to their students' achievement outcomes. This strategy will require significant upgrades to the state's current data system to assure that information regarding teacher education preparation institutions can be linked to teacher certification and school personnel information and 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 a Teacher Education Accountability (TEA) ad hoc committee which includes representatives from teacher preparation programs, NDE teacher education and certification staff who will collaborate with NDE Data Center staff to develop business rules for appropriately linking teachers to their preparation programs. The TEA 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. The first annual Educator Preparation Program Report Card will be made publicly available based upon 2013-14 data. This Report Card will be made available on the NDE Website. The SY 2012-13 data will provide baseline information which can be used to establish appropriate performance expectations for purposes of state educator preparation program approval decisions. By that time, *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 first annual Educator Preparation Program Institution Report Card will be published after these upgrades to the data system are complete and when sufficient data is available 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 educator preparation institutions. This transparency will enable preparation programs to carry out meaningful self-assessments, help school districts make more informed hiring decisions and help state leaders evaluate and support preparation programs, including providing support consistent with the recommendations listed below.

Although Nebraska has for several years focused on P-16, conversations have not yet resulted in significant change in the higher education realm, and especially not in 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-16 educational system.

A Teacher/Principal Preparation Statewide Summit on improvement of teacher education programs will be held annually to strengthen the skills of new educators, based on concerns expressed by school districts throughout the state. Nebraska will provide opportunities for existing educator preparation programs to incorporate stronger field-based experiences, program evaluation/accountability structures, and strengthen connections between higher education faculty and school-based practitioners as a result of the Summit conversations.

The Greater Nebraska Schools White Paper, *Teacher Preparation* (3/1/09) was developed by administrators seeking to articulate ways that teacher preparation programs could better prepare new teachers for today's classrooms. (*See Appendix H, Teacher Preparation a White Paper, Greater Nebraska Superintendents*). These documents call for upgrading and increasing new teachers' knowledge and skills related to student assessment, technology, student diversity, standards and instructional strategies, and for increased clinical experiences which utilize comprehensive and measurable educator standards.

To address this issue, NDE proposes the creation of an annual Teacher/Principal Preparation Program Improvement 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 areas such as the following:

- **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 (UNK) 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 coupled with 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 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 interested Nebraska educator preparation institutions.

- **Increase Supports for Beginning Educators.** Development and implementation of strategies that foster collaboration between the higher education institutions and the districts is needed to establish common 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 educator. A preparation program must prepare individuals for a range of expectations, but it is very difficult to prepare individuals for the specific setting in which they will be employed or for the rigors of being a fulltime educator. Districts express concerns about “new hires” not being 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 schools that are hiring are particularly important for effective induction and mentoring. Some institutions offer significant support/mentoring for 1st year teachers/administrators. One Nebraska institution provides a ‘warranty’ on new graduates, but graduate follow-up processes are not uniform or highly developed as a basis for a statewide system of support. Some schools provide well-developed induction/mentoring programs, but the system of support for new teachers is not uniform or highly developed.

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 Teacher/Principal standards. New-to-the-profession educators need to 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 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; and
- Changing expectations about the quality and quantity of field-based experiences, along with expectations from K-12 stakeholders for preparation programs to be more responsive to evolving needs and priorities in 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 teacher and administrator graduates who are well-prepared to work with Nebraska students to help them

accomplish Nebraska’s goal for high student achievement outcomes. Funds in this proposal are requested to provide for statewide meetings for educator 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.	NC	*	*	**	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.	NC	*	*	**	30%
[Optional: Enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data]					
General data to be provided at time of application:					
Total number of teacher credentialing programs in the State.	17				
Total number of principal credentialing programs in the State.	8				
Total number of teachers in the State.	25603				
Total number of principals in the State.	961				
[Optional: Enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data]					

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

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

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

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

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

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

be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Recommended maximum response length: Five pages

(D)(5)(i) and (ii) Professional Development

NDE will work with the ESUs and their school districts to develop a high quality statewide: (1) professional development system; and (2) mentoring and induction programs 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 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 system for professional development and continuous school improvement. 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 currently 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; but, 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 provide support to this goal are involved in the development and delivery of a statewide system of support. This includes, for example, the National Center for 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. 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 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;

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 6 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 for travel and resource acquisition to deliver high quality regional in-service in focus areas (onsite or via technology delivery), targeted individual school services, or PLN activities, all of 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 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 collaboratively develop a Graduate Follow-up/Induction model high quality induction/mentoring system to support

beginning teachers and principals. The state's Educational Service Units and the Educator Preparation programs are 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 principals through onsite activities and/or cohort groups. Educator Preparation programs are also in a position to identify issues, contribute to the development of appropriate strategies, and to modify their programs to reflect knowledge gained from implement of the system.

Research supports beliefs 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 becoming 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, instead of reliance on additional college courses; and
- 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 (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.

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. (Enter measures here, if any.)	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

(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)

The Nebraska Constitution under Article VII, Section 2, provides that the State Department of Education shall be composed of a State Board of Education and a Commissioner of Education. The State Department of Education shall have general supervision and administration of the school system of the state and of such other activities as the Legislature may direct. The Nebraska Legislature has enacted several statutes authorizing the State Board and Commissioner to act with respect to the operation of school districts. Section 79-318(5)(c) states that the State Board of Education shall through the Commissioner establish rules and regulations which govern standards and procedures for the approval and legal operation of all schools in the state and for the accreditation of all schools requesting accreditation. The State Board establishes the standards and expectations that all districts must meet in order to be accredited and remain in operation through Rule 10: Regulations and Procedures for the Accreditation of Schools, Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 10.

Neb. Rev. Stat. Section 79-703(4) requires all public schools in the state to be accredited and subsection (5) indicates that it is the intent of the Legislature that all students shall have access to all educational services required of accredited schools. Section 79-703(1) requires that all public schools in the state meet quality and performance based approval and accreditation standards prescribed by the State Board of Education. The section continues with the statement that accreditation standards shall be designed to assure effective schooling and quality of instruction regardless of school size, wealth, or geographic location.

Rule 10: Regulations and Procedures for the Accreditation of Schools, Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 10 contains the following language:

014.06 All public school systems are required by state statute to be accredited. If, after consultation with school officials, the

	Commissioner determines that public school systems have any uncorrected violations, he or she shall make the applicable following recommendations to the Board:
014.06A	A PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM having an uncorrected violation of a requirement with no written plan under Section 014.05A shall be recommended for ACCREDITATION ON PROBATION for the following school year.
014.06B	A PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM having a written plan under Section 014.05A and having the same uncorrected violation after September 1 shall be recommended for ACCREDITATION ON PROBATION for the current school year.
014.06C	A PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM ON PROBATION continuing to have the same uncorrected violation after February 1 shall be recommended for NONACCREDITATION for the following school year and shall be subject to loss of authority to operate and reassignment of territory to other school districts.”

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) Identifying PLAS

Nebraska has received approval for the definition of persistently lowest-achieving schools, notified each district involved and posted the list on the NDE homepage. Waivers were approved to extend the graduation rate used in the definition to include schools with graduation rates of less than 75% over a three year period. A second approved waiver allows Nebraska to include the lowest-performing secondary schools that are Title I eligible, but not served, in Tier III if there is not at least 30 students (minimum-size) in the "all students" group.

In this initial year, 52 schools in 33 districts were identified. The list of PLAS for the 2009-10 school year and the approved definition are posted on the NDE homepage. Although annual targets have been established, these are provisional at best as Nebraska assessments in Reading and Math are changing over the next two years. The timeline is to have the persistently lowest-achieving schools identified, along with the schools identified to be in school improvement, corrective action and restructuring, by August of each school year. As Nebraska transitions to the new statewide tests in Reading (2010) and Math (2011), the identification of PLAS will be dependent upon standard setting processes and State Board approval which may cause delays. With a new assessment we anticipate there will be additional schools identified to be PLAS in the future.

(E)(2)(ii) Intervention Systems and Support Plan

From 2004-05 to 2008-09, 50% of the Title I schools and 100% of the Title I districts identified as being in school improvement, corrective action or restructuring have transitioned out of school improvement status. These schools and districts all used some of the strategies included in the requirements of the four intervention models. However, since the requirements were not specified at that time, it is not possible to attribute this success to the use of any one of the four intervention models. In other words, because there was no standard framework for intervention, we do not know what worked to move these schools to make AYP and move out of school improvement status.

Nebraska’s plan for supporting the districts in turning around the PLAS is an integral part of Bright Futures for Nebraska Students and critical to reaching the goals of increasing achievement, decreasing achievement gaps, and improving graduation and college going rates. It is called the Intervention Systems and Support and starts within the NDE with additional staff, new roles and responsibilities, includes partnerships with other agencies, and standardizes the process for turning around schools. Schools identified as persistently lowest-achieving can select any of the four intervention models including a variation of ARRA’s transformation model called the Small State Transformation Model (SSTM).

***Intervention Systems and Support:
Key Contributions to Bright Futures***

- State level leadership, support, and technical assistance
- Support and resources for districts to serve and turnaround their identified schools
- Professional development on identifying and implementing research-based, evidenced-based, and/or promising practices

Nebraska’s plan for supporting the PLAS institutes a new position of a senior administrator called the Director of Intervention Systems and Support in the reorganization of NDE. This new administrator will be a member of the Bright Futures Roundtable, the team leaders who share responsibility for coordinating support and resources for the Bright Futures for Nebraska Students Initiative

[See (A)(2)]. The administrator will also lead a cross-team group of other staff members from throughout the NDE that will include:

- The Title I Interventions Project Manager – (new position under ESEA Section 1003(g) School Improvement Grant)
- Director of the Systems Intervention Specialists and Resource Coordinator (new)
- Teacher/leader staff person – (new proposed under the Effective Teachers/Leaders)
- Family/Community Liaison (new member of ISS team)
- Early Childhood – existing staff
- Response to Intervention Specialist – existing staff
- English Language Learner specialist – existing staff
- P-16 and Career Education – existing staff
- Equity and Diversity – existing staff
- Title I State Director - existing staff

Nebraska is also reorganizing the work of the staff of the Department. NDE staff from throughout the Department will serve as Resource Coordinators and one will be assigned to each PLAS. While all NDE professional staff work with districts and schools in some capacity, their work usually does not allow for a strong relationship to develop, particularly at the school level, and seldom does their work focus on improving schools. Resource Coordinators are a way to tap the expertise and experience of NDE staff to benefit schools, build relationships, provide individualized assistance, and broker other NDE resources. A pilot project has been underway for two years to use NDE staff as Resource Coordinators for Title I schools identified to be in school improvement. The Resource Coordinators serve as liaisons to the schools, work with the local school improvement team to coordinate services between the Department, the Educational Service Units and the districts. An evaluation of this pilot project, while still underway, is already providing indications of district and school support for the assistance as well as a closer relationship with the NDE and ESUs. Resource Coordinators will be assigned to each identified PLAS to assist with selecting an intervention model or to

coordinate assistance as the school and district decides. The costs for the work of the Resource Coordinators will be funded through the ESEA Section 1003(g) SIG administrative funds and the RTTT funds proposed in this application.

To provide an organized system of support for the PLAS, NDE will add new staff with expertise in school support, integrate services throughout the Department with a cross-team group focused on intervention that includes Title I's Intervention Project Manager for PLAS, coordinate the work of the Resource Coordinators described above, and strengthen partnerships and connections with the ESUs, higher education, comprehensive centers and regional labs. This coordinated approach will ensure that PLAS receive the assistance they need through a central source.

The five new School Intervention Specialists (SIS) are responsible for identifying, providing, or assisting schools to secure, the technical assistance needed to implement their intervention model. The SIS will serve as the point of contact from NDE for the local school Intervention Project Managers. Nebraska is requiring each district receiving an ESEA School Improvement Grant to have an Intervention Project Manager. The Intervention Project Manager will be a full- or part-time district employee (or contracted employee with the district) depending on the size and needs of the school. The position will be at the school level and will be a required expenditure for each district receiving a grant. The responsibilities of the Intervention Project Manager will include working with the school principal and district administrators to assist with coordinating implementation activities, conduct ongoing evaluation of progress, ensure appropriate collection and management of data for reporting progress on the goals established for student achievement and leading indicators, and coordinate and report progress to the NDE through monthly meetings with the Title I Interventions Project Manager. Participating districts electing to use their Race To The Top funds to implement one of the intervention models will also be required to have an Intervention Project Manager. The local school Intervention Project Manager, Title I Intervention Project Manager, the School Intervention Specialists, and the Resource Coordinators form a powerful team to assist each PLAS fully implement their intervention model.

Should any PLAS have difficulty implementing their intervention model and fail to show sufficient progress in the annual review needed for continued funding, a School Intervention Specialist will be assigned to co-lead, with the local Intervention Project Manager and district administrators, the implementation of the intervention model. Nebraska currently does not have legislative authority to directly intervene in schools, although such legislation is being proposed. The struggling PLAS will agree to the School Intervention Specialists' participation as a condition of receiving continued funding under ESEA School Improvement Grants [Sections 1003(a) and (g)] or Race To The Top.

Intervention Models

The amount of funds received under ESEA Section 1003(g) SIG do not begin to fully fund the Tier I and Tier II schools much less the Tier III schools. Nebraska proposes to also use their ESEA Section 1003(a) funds to serve more Tier I and Tier II Title I schools that were identified to be in school improvement, restructuring or corrective action. Participating districts can elect to use their RTTT funds to implement any of the four intervention models in ARRA or a variation of the transformation model called the Small State Transformation Model (SSTM). In its ESEA Section 1003(g) School Improvement Grant (SIG), Nebraska is approved to use this variation of the Transformation Intervention model with Tier III schools. This model varies in that it does not require replacing the principal and puts greater emphasis on improving teachers who are not demonstrating positive student achievement outcomes. The vast majority of the districts in the State have only one building at each level (elementary, middle and high school) so there is not an option to move principals within a district. Small rural communities often have great difficulty recruiting principals. Nebraska proposes to use the Small State Transformation Model with all PLAS not funded through the SIG grants. Participating districts can also use their RTTT funds to support any of the required or permissible activities of the Small State Transformation model if they do not receive an ESEA School Improvement Grant under Section 1003(g) or 1003(a).

Whichever intervention model the PLAS selects, the improvement efforts must be integrated and coordinated with district improvement efforts. Nebraska has adopted North Central’s AdvancEd process to meet the school improvement requirements for accreditation. The Small State Transformation Model’s requirements are all a part of the AdvancEd Standards and Indicators although SSTM is more specific as to the content and process that must be used. A chart in Appendix O crosswalks the requirements of the Transformation Model with the Standards and Indicators of North Central’s AdvancEd process.

Intervention Systems and Support Activities and Timelines

The Intervention System and Support plan is to provide leadership, develop capacity, coordinate and provide support at the NDE, regionally through the School Intervention Specialists and the Resource Coordinators. The activities in this plan are annual and on-going throughout the four years of the grant.

Intervention Systems and Support		
Timeline	Activity	Persons Responsible
Sept. – Dec.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify PLAS • SIG and RTTT applications review and approval • Hire/assign School Intervention Specialists and Resource Coordinators • Begin monthly meetings of the local 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal Programs and Data Systems Team • NDE staff as identified in Section (A)(2) • SIS and RC Director • ISS Administrator, Title I IPM and Director of the SIS and RC

	Intervention Project Managers, Title I IPM, SIS and RC	
Jan. – May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly meetings of the local Intervention Project Managers, Title I IPM, SIS and RC • Technical assistance as requested • PLAS Networking Conference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISS Administrator, Title I IPM and Director of the SIS and RC • SIS • ISS Director and Title I Intervention Project Manager
May – Aug.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly meetings of the local Intervention Project Manager, Title I IPM, SIS and RC • Annual review of the SIG and RTTT projects to determine continuation funding – progress must be shown in achievement goals and implementation plans plus timely use of funds • Assist with annual local review and reporting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISS Administrator, Title I IPM and Director of the SIS and RC • NDE staff and Research and Evaluation Team • SIS

	requirements for SIG, RTTT and SFSF	
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Evidence

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

Nebraska’s history on Title I schools identified to be in school improvement, corrective action or restructuring shows that 50% of these schools and 100% of the identified districts have improved and are no longer identified as being in need of improvement. Nebraska has used the requirements in Title I for school improvement plans and the Title I System of Support. Each school and district has implemented components of the transformation model, including in some instances, replacing the principal as a part of their plan, but there is no data to indicate that any one school implemented all of the requirements of these new intervention models.

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.	NA	10	10	10	10

Through concentrated support and multiple resources provided in the Intervention System and Support Plan, Nebraska's goal is to decrease the number of Title I schools identified to be in school improvement, restructuring, or corrective action and the number of Title I eligible, but not served, PLAS by 10 each year. With the transition to a new single statewide test rather than locally developed assessments, it is not possible to accurately predict the impact on student performance at this time. Initial results from the new Reading test will not be available until July 2010.

(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) Support for Public Education

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	<u>\$4,981,312,200</u>	<u>\$5,037,442,681</u>
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) Equitable Funding

As reported in the 2010 edition of Quality Counts, "The nation as a whole earned a grade of B for school-finance equity. West

Virginia led the nation with an A-minus, a grade earned by five other states: Arkansas, Iowa, **Nebraska**, Utah, and Wisconsin.”
(State Policies that Pay, April 2010, EPE Research Center, p. 23)

Nebraska’s state legislature and leadership have provided financial support to districts through the state aid formula. Unlike most other states, financial support from the state is not earmarked for specific activities at the state level. This method of funding education leaves the allocation of support for services to the districts rather than appropriate state funds for the NDE to provide grants to districts or provide direct services. The State focuses resources on targeted areas like poverty and Limited English Proficiency through changes in the State Aid formula with allowances and adjustments as described in the response to (F)(i)(i). Categorical funding is provided for Special Education services and for Gifted Education.

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 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 aid for operational support to school districts where formula need exceeds local formula resources. Nebraska developed the construct of “needs minus resources” construct in LB 1059 in 1990. Although the formula has been modified on the “needs” side of the equation, the underlying construct in the TEEOSA has been to negate the impact of property values on school district spending per pupil. Recent modifications to the “needs” calculation endeavor to direct resources to schools with high concentrations of poverty through allowances, adjustments and a need stabilization factor described below.

The four major components of formula need are basic funding, allowances, adjustments and a need stabilization factor and each component can be linked to a specific equity goal. Generally both horizontal and vertical equity issues are addressed by each element of the formula need. Horizontal equity driven policies address minimizing financial disparities between similarly situated

school districts and similarly situated students. In Nebraska's case, horizontal equity is addressed through using comparisons of districts with similar conditions and situations in the needs calculation and by addressing wealth neutrality by filling the gap between local "needs" and "resources." Vertical equity policies generally provide greater resources for districts with justifiably higher costs including numbers of at-risk students using poverty as a proxy. Nebraska's formula also accounts for a variety of other circumstances including scale, limited English proficiency, and other necessary input costs including transportation. Several of these components are detailed in the following paragraphs.

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. Basic funding addresses horizontal and vertical equity by comparing like-sized school districts and therefore accounts for scale. This approach allows Nebraska to address the needs of the smallest and the largest districts in the state under the same policy.

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. Nebraska's allowances take essentially two forms. The original form of allowance was directed at recognizing district by district costs associated with identifiable costs such as transportation. The state recognized the need to recognize actual

costs of transportation in the original TEEOSA in 1990. However, by 1996 it was apparent that funds needed to be targeted at poverty and English language learner needs. In 1997, Nebraska opted to implement weightings to address poverty and ELL (among others). These weightings were effective in identifying the potential additional needs however, the weighting mechanism allowed districts to use such funds in an unrestricted manner. Ultimately, it was possible that districts were receiving funds for poverty students without directing those funds at the target groups. The most recent development of allowances for poverty and limited English proficiency (LEP) also requires districts to submit poverty and LEP plans to ensure that funds are directed to such students. This policy is a form of categorical need that requires districts be accountable for providing the services outlined in their local plans. There are several unique applications of funding policies that now allow Nebraska to better target state funds to high needs schools. Districts may direct funds to districts for school improvement in poverty areas and the policy environment in Nebraska is supportive of using the allowances to encourage reforms.

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. Adjustments in the Nebraska policy framework are similar as allowances except that adjustments generally represent an infusion of state funds. The one exception is the local choice adjustment which essentially caps the needs for small school districts that geographically able to consider reorganization with a neighboring district. Adjustments allow the state to incent or influence school district behaviors. Again, the policy mechanism demonstrates the sophistication of the state policy framework and conceivably could be modified to address student achievement. Originally, the class size allowance was an adjustment which allowed the state to infuse funding to initially address the policy issue.

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 increases statewide formula need about 0.4 percent. Needs stabilization addresses several concerns about rapid or unintended consequences which occur when the state modifies the formula including the sudden or unexpected impacts due to new components of the policy.

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, prorate motor vehicle, and local fine/license fees. When local needs exceed local resources, the state funds the gap. Ultimately, this satisfies the wealth neutrality goal. Nebraska is constitutionally prohibited from “power equalizing” or taking local property tax receipts from a local district. However, the vast majority of Nebraska's state funds are effectively delivered as equalized funding.

LB 545 and LB 5, 2009 Neb. Laws, moderated previously enacted formula increases in order to prepare for a projected economic turndown. In order to prepare for a projected economic turndown. However, the reductions were done in the context of meeting state equity goals. *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) Charter Schools

Nebraska statutes are silent with regard to charter schools, however it is not silent relative to conditions that allow for innovation in schools. 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) Charter School Laws

Not applicable.

(F)(2)(iii) Charter School Accountability

Not applicable.

(F)(2)(iv) Charter School Facilities

Not applicable.

(F)(2)(v) Innovative Public Schools

Independent Study High School (ISHS) The University of Nebraska–Lincoln Independent Study High School provides a complete distance curriculum to 2,500 high school students in Nebraska, throughout the United States, and in 135 countries. ISHS has Nebraska’s largest international student body, graduating an average of 200 diploma students per year from all over the world and the nation.

The innovative and independent nature of ISHS courses serves the diverse needs of students, schools, and learning centers. Students can enroll anytime, take five weeks to one year to complete a course, study independently at their own pace, or follow a set class schedule. Students can enroll in individual courses and transfer those credits to their high school; or they can earn an accredited high school diploma that meets college admission requirements and/or prepares them for a career.

The Independent Study High School is an alternative for individual students, including competitive and Olympic athletes, career

performers and entertainers, homeschooled students, non-traditional students, students traveling with their parents, students living overseas, or students of military families. Schools and learning organizations enroll their students in ISHS courses for credit recovery or to augment their own curriculum, offer low enrollment courses, address teacher shortages, provide solutions for extended student absences, alleviate scheduling conflicts, and help students graduate on time. The independent and flexible format helps schools and learning centers meet student's educational needs.

Continuously accredited by the Nebraska Department of Education since 1967, the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement since 1978, and the Commission of International and Trans-Regional Accreditation since 2003, ISHS is a special purpose public school under RULE 10 (section 013.04) of the Nebraska Department of Education Regulations and Procedures for the Accreditation of Schools. The ISHS has the flexibility to define its own instructional models and associated curriculum to meet the highest academic standards, select and replace staff based on performance measures, implement new structures and formats, and control its budget.

All ISHS teachers are certificated and endorsed in their subject areas and experienced in teaching at a distance. ISHS offers a rigorous college preparatory curriculum of over 100 core and elective courses, ranging from foundational and exploratory to Advance Placement courses.

Accountability is based on student achievement and through alignment with academic and course development standards. ISHS diploma students take all state assessments. ISHS students' ACT and SAT scores are above national averages. Courses align with national and Nebraska state academic standards. Core courses are all approved by the National Collegiate Athletic Association. The high school has also chosen to meet, and in many cases exceed, the iNACOL National Standards of Quality for Online Courses. The College Board has approved all Advanced Placement courses.

Educational Opportunities

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 create 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 known 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 limitations. 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) Significant Reform Conditions

P-16 Council

In 1998, Nebraska was one of the first states in the nation to launch a comprehensive P-16 initiative. Through the years, this initiative has aligned curriculum in Language Arts and Mathematics, coordinated activities and shared information. Governor Heineman instituted the P-16 Executive Committee, a coalition of thirty-one (31) Nebraska organizations in education, business, and government. The P-16 Council meets regularly and has jointly developed a set of goals to guide the education of students at all levels in Nebraska.

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, in every Nebraska high school;
- Improving Nebraska's college-going rank to the top-10 tier nationally;
- Providing affordable access for Nebraska students to attend Nebraska's postsecondary institutions;
- Improving time to degree completion and increase the graduation rates of Nebraska's postsecondary institutions; and
- Providing all students with the science, technology, and math skills needed to succeed in postsecondary education or the 21st century workforce; and increase the number and diversity of individuals who pursue careers as educators and professionals in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and math.

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.

Categorical Funding Policies in High Priority Areas (LB 988): Passed in 2008, LB 988 modified the Nebraska school finance formula to create an accountability mechanism for poverty and limited English proficiency allowances. Local districts are required to submit poverty and LEP plans in order to qualify for the allowances. Although the mechanism is new, the policy has effectively

changed an unrestricted use of funds generated for poverty and LEP to a categorical need program that requires accountability. This better allows targeting of such funds and allows for evaluation of programs implemented by districts. Additionally, the policy ensures that such funds are targeted at schools and students in need of the additional funds rather than run the risk that such funds would simply be distributed throughout a district.

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 a 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.

II. COMPETITION PRIORITIES

Priority 1: Absolute Priority -- Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

To meet this priority, the State's application must comprehensively and coherently address all of the four education reform areas specified in the ARRA as well as the State Success Factors Criteria in order to demonstrate that the State and its participating LEAs are taking a systemic approach to education reform. The State must demonstrate in its application sufficient LEA participation and commitment to successfully implement and achieve the goals in its plans; and it must describe how the State, in collaboration with its participating LEAs, will use Race to the Top and other funds to increase student achievement, decrease the achievement gaps across student subgroups, and increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers.

The absolute priority cuts across the entire application and should not be addressed separately. It is assessed, after the proposal has been fully reviewed and evaluated, to ensure that the application has met the priority.

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 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

Priority 3: Invitational Priority – Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes (*not scored*)

The Secretary is particularly interested in applications that include practices, strategies, or programs to improve educational outcomes for high-need students who are young children (prekindergarten through third grade) by enhancing the quality of preschool programs. Of particular interest are proposals that support practices that (i) improve school readiness (including social, emotional, and cognitive); and (ii) improve the transition between preschool and kindergarten.

The State is invited to provide a discussion of this priority in the text box below, but such description is optional. Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful must be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Recommended maximum response length, if any: Two pages

Innovations for Improving of Early Learning Outcomes

Expanding access to high quality, comprehensive early learning opportunities is a high priority for Nebraska as it is widely recognized as contributory to later school and life success. This is particularly true for children growing up in settings of poverty.

The state proposes three key goals in response to this invitational priority:

Goal One: Partner with 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 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 that they 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 childhood providers in areas of the state in which Nebraska's persistently lowest achieving schools operate, have access to high quality professional development that improves 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's learning experiences prior to school entry have an impact of on their school performance and life success. 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)

Approximately 14,900 low income
Nebraska children are receiving child
care services each month through the
Child Care Development Block Grant
subsidy. 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).

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 settings, particularly those serving low income
populations. Many of the persistently lowest-achieving schools are surrounded by child care
settings in need of improvements of quality. Effectively increasing the learning and development of
children in child care settings must be instituted in Nebraska, designed as a three pronged,
comprehensive approach.

Project Description

Goal One - The first component of Nebraska's Early Learning 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 lowest-
achieving schools and that have licensed, or license exempt child care within their service area will

Early Childhood Opportunities: Key contributions to Bright Futures

- Expand opportunity for professional development and technical assistance (effective curriculum, assessment, family engagement, program quality, effective teachers/leaders)
- Support partnerships and technical assistance to enhance quality in community- and school-based programs for PLAS and high poverty districts

be eligible to participate and receive funding. 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. Guidance for recruitment and selection of the Early Learning Specialists will be provided by NDE's Office of Early Childhood. These Specialists will also be provided technical assistance around effective transition practices, family and community engagement strategies and training regarding coaching strategies.

Each Early Learning 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 others 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 impacted will be 240 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 succeeded by new enrollees, the total number of children to be served over the life of this grant would be 384 children. A sustained effect would also be predicted as the skills of staff in the early childhood programs would be intact.

The technical assistance and training provided to the Early Learning Specialists will be arranged and delivered by the Nebraska Department of Education's Office of Early Childhood/Early Childhood Training Center (ECTC). Oversight of the implementation of Goal One rests with the Co-administrators of the Office of Early Childhood. This support for the local Early Learning Specialists will include focused training, ongoing follow-up and continuing networking opportunities with professional development personnel affiliated with the Early Learning Connection's Early Childhood Professional Development Partnership (ECPDP) in their region. (See Appendix L, Early Learning Connection

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 staff in the designated care/early learning settings (homes and centers) will have the benefit of training offered in various formats by the regional ECPDP and followed by the embedded professional development of individual coaching offered by the Early Learning Specialists. All training will be aligned to Nebraska's Core Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals. The Core Competencies are included in Appendix L. Every opportunity will be taken to align these competencies with the attributes of teacher/leader effectiveness as described elsewhere in this application for the K-12 system.

In return for this investment in capacity, the local Early Learning Specialists will be expected to educate teachers, administrators and community leaders regarding evidence based transition practices. The Specialists will also facilitate appropriate transition plans for children within the community as they enter school and move through the early grades. The Early Learning Specialists will become part of a statewide Early Learning Connection coaching cadre and will be required to receive rigorous training in evidence based coaching techniques, training developed and sponsored by the ECTC. Reflective and focused coaching is regarded as an emerging and effective evidence-based strategy to improve the environment and educational practices in settings for young children.

All identified school districts will have employed a Specialist within 6 months of the award. These Specialists will receive initial training within the first year. Outreach/recruitment of stakeholders begins in year one. 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. 100 % of children in participating Early Education and Care programs will have transition plans by the end of year two and annual updates thereafter. 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.

Goal Two - The second component of the Early Learning 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 intentional curriculum that is aligned with the Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines and will additionally participate in the Results

Matter Early Childhood Program Quality, Child and Family Outcomes Framework. [See Appendix M, Results Matter]

Training of participating program staff will be provided through a variety of formats, including distance learning, face-to-face group training and through individual coaching from the Early Learning Specialist. All training will be aligned to Nebraska's Core Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals as previously described for Goal One.

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

- Each program will choose one of three *Results Matter-designated* 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. These child outcomes will be tracked longitudinally when included in Nebraska Student and Staff Record System P-16 data systems.
- Participating early childhood education classrooms and family childcare homes will be evaluated through the use of a program quality measure, Environment Rating Scale appropriate to the setting (ERS).
- An assessment to determine the quality of language and literacy teaching will be used in each center-based classroom or family childcare home.
- Incentives will be provided for staff in participating programs, acknowledging the limited resources often providing obstacles to implementing quality improvements. A detailed report by the United States Census bureau listed the median income of child care workers in the United States is \$17,450. Early education and care providers generally receive very low wages, therefore 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, participating LEA's will have access to funding to offer stipends to early education and care providers to augment their income in order to improve the quality of the learning environment.

- 100% of available training will be aligned by date of training delivery. 100% of early learning providers will use designated child assessment tools, participating annually in Nebraska Results Matter Reliability Check to insure fidelity of implementation. Child outcome data will be collected and utilized for instructional planning by 100% of early learning providers. Program quality data will be used by Local Specialist and early learning provider to target improvement efforts.
- 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. Program quality data will be used by local Early Learning Specialist and early learning provider to set goals and target improvement efforts.

The Office of Early Childhood Co-administrators will have implementation oversight for Goal Two. All training offered within the activities of this project will be arranged through or developed by the Early Childhood Training Center.

Goal Three - The third component of this Early Learning quality initiative is to strengthen Nebraska's statewide Early Learning Connection, the 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. ECTC also coordinates and supports the work of regional partnerships. Goal Three implementation oversight will also be provided by the Office of Early Childhood co-administrators.

An additional .5 FTE (identified as the Professional Development Coordinator) for coordination and technical assistance at the state level will be funded through this proposal, with assignment to occur within the beginning 6 months of the grant. This dedicated staff time will provide greater assurance of an effective refinement and enhancement of the state's early childhood professional development system. This additional time will also be focused on the redesign of the regional delivery system that will be described below. The role will also include responsibility for the contracts/grants management of awards to Educational Service Units. Technical assistance will be offered to the coordinators in these regional entities as well as to the LEA's Early Learning Coordinators described in Goals One and Two of this proposal. The state level Professional Development Coordinator will also work closely with the NDE Early Childhood Specialists to support local and regional activities described throughout the Early Learning section of this application.

Regionalized delivery of professional development is currently accomplished through NDE grant-funded Early Childhood Professional Development Partnerships (ECPDP's) and Regional Training Coalitions (RTC's). Early Childhood Professional Development Partnerships are housed at and administered by selected Educational Service Units. Regional Training Coalitions are also grant funded but housed at and administered by community-based entities. The ECPDP's employ a full time Coordinator who can provide technical assistance to schools, child care providers and Head Start staff, and also facilitate 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. Both the ECPDP's and RTC's recruit local stakeholders who pool their resources to determine local professional development needs and leverage funding to provide an array of professional development for early childhood professionals.

This initiative will convert Regional Training Coalitions to Early Childhood Professional Development Partnerships during year one of this grant through grant awards to designated Educational Service Units. 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. To accomplish this conversion, additional FTE will be added to areas with the highest populations of

low income children. The transition toward Early Childhood Professional Development Partnerships throughout the state and the strengthening of current partnerships will be targeted in areas which serve school districts with highest numbers of children in families with low incomes. This enriched system for early childhood professional development will be aligned and articulated where possible with the K-12 supports that are described elsewhere in this application.

The effectiveness of this Early Learning system's building capacity to support professional development and technical assistance that influence early childhood program quality, teacher/leader effectiveness and that ultimately impacts more positive early learning child outcomes will be monitored through annual reporting to the Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council (ECICC), a Governor-appointed state advisory committee.

Evaluation Processes

This Early Learning initiative will be evaluated in the following ways:

- A state level evaluator, hired by NDE on a contractual basis, will analyze the data to determine effectiveness of the program and will provide annual evaluation reports regarding the results. Evaluator will analyze all data in consultation with NDE.
- Children in participating child care programs will be part of the Nebraska *Results Matter* System.
 - A process will be implemented, as provided through establishment of the P-16 Data System, for tracking of child progress longitudinally.
 - 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 education and care providers will collect child progress data.
- Participating programs will engage in the Nebraska *Results Matter* system.
 - Participating early childhood classrooms and family childcare homes will be evaluated by designated reliable observers 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.

- Evaluator will observe and analyze coaching behaviors of local Early Learning Specialists. Evaluator will analyze all data in consultation with NDE.
- Professional development and technical assistance activities will be documented and evaluated.
 - ⊖ ECPDPs and ECTC will collect data regarding participation in professional development and technical assistance activities.
 - ⊖ Evaluator will observe and analyze coaching behaviors of EC specialists.

Timeline for Goal 1:

- 1-6 months for districts to advertise, interview and hire Early Learning Specialists.
- Training will be provided to Local Early Learning Specialists regarding effective transition practices during the first year of the grant.
- Early Learning 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 (to include Early Learning Specialists and designated others) will be scheduled for months 7-12 of grant and monthly training or networking for the life of the 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 Learning Specialist and ECPDP's and supported by the state level Professional Development Coordinator 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:

- Assessment of training needs will be completed within first 2 months of grant – prior to dissemination of training.
- A system of tracking child/student progress will be determined within the first year, as designated by the state's P-16 Data System decisions.
- Curriculum and assessment tool will be chosen in months 7-12.

- Training for implementation of curriculum and assessment and data-driven instructional decisions 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. Annual reporting of the Early Learning quality initiative during months 0-48.
- ECTC is in operation currently. Guidance will be provided to ECPDP’s and local specialists from beginning of grant through month 48 (and after). .5 FTE of dedicated Professional Development Coordinator for this Early Learning quality initiative will be assigned in month one.
- Identified ESU’s will advertise, interview and hire Early Childhood Professional Development Coordinators in months 1-3.
- ECPDP’s will be reconfigured 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.

Priority 4: Invitational Priority – Expansion and Adaptation of Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems *(not scored)*

The Secretary is particularly interested in applications in which the State plans to expand

statewide longitudinal data systems to include or integrate data from special education programs, English language learner programs, early childhood programs, at-risk and dropout prevention programs, and school climate and culture programs, as well as information on student mobility, human resources (*i.e.*, information on teachers, principals, and other staff), school finance, student health, postsecondary education, and other relevant areas, with the purpose of connecting and coordinating all parts of the system to allow important questions related to policy, practice, or overall effectiveness to be asked, answered, and incorporated into effective continuous improvement practices.

The Secretary is also particularly interested in applications in which States propose working together to adapt one State's statewide longitudinal data system so that it may be used, in whole or in part, by one or more other States, rather than having each State build or continue building such systems independently.

The State is invited to provide a discussion of this priority in the text box below, but such description is optional. Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful must be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Recommended maximum response length, if any: Two pages

(Enter text here.)

Priority 5: Invitational Priority -- P-20 Coordination, Vertical and Horizontal Alignment

(not scored)

The Secretary is particularly interested in applications in which the State plans to address how early childhood programs, K-12 schools, postsecondary institutions, workforce development organizations, and other State agencies and community partners (*e.g.*, child welfare, juvenile justice, and criminal justice agencies) will coordinate to improve all parts of the education system and create a more seamless preschool-through-graduate school (P-20) route for students. Vertical alignment across P-20 is particularly critical at each point where a transition occurs (*e.g.*, between early childhood and K-12, or between K-12 and postsecondary/careers) to ensure that students exiting one level are prepared for success, without remediation, in the next. Horizontal alignment, that is, coordination of services across schools, State agencies, and community partners, is also important in ensuring that high-need students (as defined in this notice) have access to the broad array of opportunities and services they need and that are beyond the capacity of a school itself to provide.

The State is invited to provide a discussion of this priority in the text box below, but such description is optional. Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful must be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Recommended maximum response length, if any: Two pages

(Enter text here.)

Priority 6: Invitational Priority -- School-Level Conditions for Reform, Innovation, and Learning *(not scored)*

The Secretary is particularly interested in applications in which the State’s participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) seek to create the conditions for reform and innovation as well as the conditions for learning by providing schools with flexibility and autonomy in such areas as—

- (i) Selecting staff;
- (ii) Implementing new structures and formats for the school day or year that result in increased learning time (as defined in this notice);
- (iii) Controlling the school’s budget;
- (iv) Awarding credit to students based on student performance instead of instructional time;
- (v) Providing comprehensive services to high-need students (as defined in this notice) (*e.g.*, by mentors and other caring adults; through local partnerships with community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and other providers);
- (vi) Creating school climates and cultures that remove obstacles to, and actively support, student engagement and achievement; and
- (vii) Implementing strategies to effectively engage families and communities in supporting the academic success of their students.

The State is invited to provide a discussion of this priority in the text box below, but such description is optional. Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful must be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Recommended maximum response length, if any: Two pages

(Enter text here.)

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

Attachment Title	Relevant Selection Criterion	Relevant Narrative Page #
Appendix A, Governor's RTTT Steering Committee Members and Letters of Support	(A)(1)(i); (A)(2)(ii)	12, 36
Appendix B, Bright Futures for Nebraska Students Initiative, Race to the Top by the State of Nebraska, Memorandum of Understanding	(A)(1)(ii)	19
Appendix C, Detailed Participating LEA Table for Criteria (A)(1)	(A)(1)	12
Appendix D, Nebraska progress on NAEP reading and math scores and AYP percentages 2003 – 2009	(A)(3)(ii)(b)	51
Appendix E, Excerpts from 2009 Nebraska Higher Education Progress Report	(A)(3)(ii)(c)	53
Appendix F, Common Core Memorandum of Agreement, Participating States, International Benchmarking Evidence and Draft Standards	(B)(1)(i)	57
Appendix G, MOSAIC Memorandum of Agreement and Balanced Assessment Memorandum of Agreement	(B)(2)(i) and (ii)	62
Appendix H, Teacher Preparation a White Paper, Greater Nebraska Superintendents	(D)(4)(i) and (ii)	124
Appendix I, Growth in Education's Share of State Appropriations from 2008-2009	(F)(1)(i)	150
Appendix J, Tax Equity and Education Opportunities Support Act Certification of 2009/10 Aid	(F)(1)(ii)	151
Appendix K, Nebraska Virtual School and STEM Academy Proposal	(A)(1), (B)(1) and (2), (D)(2) and (3) and Competitive Priority 2 (STEM)	12, 57, 62, 100, 114
Appendix L, Nebraska's Core Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals	Early Learning Invitational Priority	169
Appendix M, Results Matter in Nebraska	Early Learning Invitational Priority	172
Appendix N, Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) Organization Chart	(A)(2)(i)(a)	25
Appendix O, Crosswalk of AdvancEd and Transformation Model	(E)(2)	140

Budget Part I: Summary Budget Narrative

Nebraska seeks funds for activities in four major areas and two priority areas: standards and assessment, data systems to support instruction, great teachers and leaders, turning around the lowest achieving schools early childhood, and the Nebraska Virtual School STEM Academy. 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. **NOTE: A budget narrative is provided detailing the administrative costs for this proposal but these costs are not included in the Budget Summary. The NDE will cover all administrative costs for this RTTT project.**

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. Initial efforts in these reform 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 and state funds to advance Nebraska's reform and build upon efforts already begun.

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 Governor's Bright Future for Nebraska Students 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. RTTT funds allocated to participating districts based on their share of Title I funds will be managed, like other NCLB grants, through the Department's online Grant Management System. NDE has

established processes and procedures for monitoring, auditing, collecting and reporting for federal grants including the additional reporting requirements of ARRA.

Budget Part II: Project-Level Budget Table

Summary Totals

Budget Part II: Project-Level Budget Table					
Project Name: Summary Totals					
Budget Categories	Project Year 1 (a)	Project Year 2 (b)	Project Year 3 (c)	Project Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
1. Personnel	\$2,865,202	\$3,018,642	\$3,084,268	\$3,097,191	\$12,065,303
2. Fringe Benefits	\$970,402	\$1,012,649	\$1,033,452	\$1,023,449	\$4,039,952
3. Travel	\$454,402	\$444,170	\$398,811	\$368,725	\$1,666,108
4. Equipment	\$340,732	\$16,296	\$16,296	\$16,296	\$389,620
5. Supplies	\$398,774	\$353,872	\$316,902	\$181,951	\$1,251,499
6. Contractual	\$3,329,717	\$2,385,211	\$2,790,050	\$2,573,702	\$11,078,680
7. Training Stipends	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$200,000
8. Other	\$813,384	\$537,693	\$538,792	\$515,891	\$2,405,760
9. Total Direct Costs (lines 1-8)	\$9,222,613	\$7,818,533	\$8,228,571	\$7,827,205	\$33,096,922
10. Indirect Costs*	\$733,711	\$641,941	\$676,793	\$642,677	\$2,695,122
11. Funding for Involved LEAs	\$404,000	\$404,000	\$404,000	\$404,000	\$1,616,000
12. Supplemental Funding for Participating LEAs	\$10,360,324	\$8,864,474	\$9,309,364	\$8,873,882	\$37,408,044
13. Total Costs (lines 9-12)	\$20,720,648	\$17,728,948	\$18,618,728	\$17,747,764	\$74,846,088
<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 Administration: In-kind Contribution

Budget Part II: Project-Level Budget Table					
Project Name: Project Administration-NDE					
Budget Categories	Project Year 1 (a)	Project Year 2 (b)	Project Year 3 (c)	Project Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
1. Personnel	\$314,586	\$320,878	\$327,295	\$333,840	\$1,296,599
2. Fringe Benefits	\$155,874	\$156,818	\$157,781	\$158,763	\$629,236
3. Travel	\$65,000	\$65,000	\$65,000	\$65,000	\$260,000
4. Equipment	\$35,670	\$10,320	\$10,320	\$10,320	\$66,630
5. Supplies	\$4,035	\$4,035	\$4,035	\$4,035	\$16,140
6. Contractual					
7. Training Stipends					
8. Other	\$10,035	\$10,035	\$10,035	\$10,035	\$40,140
9. Total Direct Costs (lines 1-8)	\$585,200	\$567,086	\$574,466	\$581,993	\$2,308,745
10. Indirect Costs*	\$46,710	\$47,325	\$47,952	\$48,592	\$190,579
11. Funding for Involved LEAs					
12. Supplemental Funding for Participating LEAs					
13. Total Costs (lines 9-12)	\$631,910	\$614,411	\$622,418	\$630,585	\$2,499,324

**Budget Part II: Project Level Budget Narrative
Project Administration – In-Kind Contribution**

(1) Personnel

Senior Administrator to oversee all activities and administer the program. Staff will be hired at a Senior Administrator (Level 50) position within the Nebraska Department of Education. Salary is based on 50% of the maximum pay grade for this classification (\$83,559). Salary increases for each subsequent year are included at approximately 2%.

Research/Evaluation Specialist to assist the program with research and evaluation activities and prepare needed reports. This person will be paid hired at the Ed Specialist IV (Level 48) position within the Nebraska Department of Education. Salary is based on 50% of the maximum pay grade for this classification (\$62,136). Salary increases for each subsequent year are included at approximately 2%.

Education Specialist II will include two persons hired at (Level 46) to monitor the work of the project, both within the Nebraska Department of Education and with the participating school districts. Salary for each is based on 50% of the maximum pay grade for this classification (\$50,342). Salary increases for each subsequent year are included at approximately 2%.

Contract Specialist will manage all contracts associated with this proposal. This person will be hired at the Office Associate IV (Level 42). Salary is based on 50% of the maximum pay grade for this classification (\$35,847). Salary increases for each subsequent year are included at approximately 2%.

Project Office Associate will provide office support for the positions listed above. This person will be hired at Level 40 at 50% of this classification (\$32,360). Salary increases for each subsequent year are included at approximately 2%.

Financial Services Specialist will assist the staff with expenditures and budgets, prepare financial reports, and provide information to staff and school districts. This person will be hired

at Level 46 at 50% of this classification (\$50,342). Salary increases for each subsequent year are included at approximately 2%.

Total salary costs for the proposed personnel are: Year One: \$314,586; Year Two: \$320,878; Year Three: \$327,295; Year Four: \$333,840. The total for the four years is: \$1,296,599.

Fringe Benefits

Total benefits for these employees are: Year One: \$155,874; Year Two: \$156,818; Year Three: \$157,781; Year Four: \$158,763. Total cost for the fringe benefits for the four years is estimated at \$629,236.

Travel

Anticipated expenditures for travel include the Senior Administrator and one additional staff member to national meetings; travel throughout the state for the Education Specialists to monitor activities and attend meetings held throughout the state is estimated at \$25,000 annually with a four year total of \$100,000.

Travel will also be required of the project advisory committee, which will meet quarterly. Committee members will be distributed across the state and each meeting is estimated to cost \$10,000. If four meetings are held each year, the travel cost for these meetings is estimated to be \$40,000 per year for a total of \$160,000 over the duration of the project.

Office Expenses

Office space for 4 professional staff @ \$1935 per staff member and 2 support staff @\$1290 per person totals \$10,320 per year, equaling \$41,280 for the duration of the project. Office equipment for each of six staff members @\$3,375 totals \$20,250. Data processing hardware is estimated at \$850 per staff member for a total of \$5100. Total office expenses over the duration of the project are \$66,630.

Operating Expenses

Operating expense guidelines for the Nebraska Department of Education per person include communication (\$320) annually for local service, \$1275 annually for medium usage, \$500

annually for supplies, and \$250 annually for other expenses. The total per person for operating expense is \$2345 per person. Total operating expenses annually for the six employees equals \$14,070. Total operating expenses for the duration of the project are \$56,280.

Total administrative expenses for this project equal \$2,499,324.

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	\$430,926	\$432,045	\$433,186	\$434,350	\$1,730,507
2. Fringe Benefits	\$26,195	\$26,363	\$26,534	\$26,709	\$105,801
3. Travel	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$400,000
4. Equipment	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$10,000
5. Supplies	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$20,000
6. Contractual	\$751,139	\$752,617	\$754,623	\$756,049	\$3,014,428
7. Training Stipends	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$200,000
8. Other	\$12,500	\$12,500	\$12,500	\$12,500	\$50,000
9. Total Direct Costs (lines 1-8)	\$1,378,260	\$1,381,025	\$1,384,343	\$1,387,108	\$5,530,736
10. Indirect Costs*	\$116,940	\$117,175	\$117,457	\$117,692	\$469,264
11. Funding for Involved LEAs					
12. Supplemental Funding for Participating LEAs					
13. Total Costs (lines 9- 12)	\$1,495,200	\$1,498,200	\$1,501,800	\$1,504,800	\$6,000,000

Budget Part II: Project-Level Budget Narrative

Project Name: Standards and Assessments

Associated with Criteria: (B)

Personnel: This section consists of two primary parts: one FTE has been budgeted for the next four years. This new hire would be used to coordinate the RTTT project from both the NDE level as an overall project manager, 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 2,500 teachers across the state for a total of \$375,000.

Fringe Benefits: Fringe benefits for the one FTE has been budgeted over the four year grant.

Travel: The travel amount would cover travel for the grant project manager 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 one new hire.

Supplies: The supplies will cover mailings, materials, and office costs for establishing a new office, 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 \$450,683 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 \$250,380 annually for psychometric and testing services assuring technical quality of the Common Core formative and benchmark assessments. The last \$50,076 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 Summary Table:
Data Criterion (C): Data Systems to Support Instruction**

Budget Categories	Project Year 1	Project Year 2	Project Year 3	Project Year 4	Total
1. Personnel	361,135	390,479	398,509	360,447	1,510,570
2. Fringe Benefits	178,471	193,457	196,592	169,548	738,068
3. Travel	70,995	69,544	64,245	61,922	266,706
4. Equipment	33,800	0	0	0	33,800
5. Supplies	21,750	19,414	20,175	20,618	81,957
6. Contractual	1,444,878	198,414	555,117	375,000	2,573,409
7. Training Stipends	0	0	0	0	
8. Other	15,188	16,514	17,173	16,310	65,185
9. Total Direct Costs (lines 1-8)	2,126,217	887,822	1,251,811	1,003,845	5,269,695
10. Indirect Costs	177,856	75,465	106,404	85,327	445,052
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)	2,304,073	963,287	1,358,215	1,089,172	5,714,747
14. Funding Sub granted to Participating LEAs (50% of Total Grant)	0	0	0	0	0
15. Total Budget (lines 13-14)	2,304,073	963,287	1,358,215	1,089,172	5,714,747

Data Criterion (C): Data Systems to Support Instruction

Project 1: Implementing America COMPETES Act Elements:

1.1 Link PK-12 to Postsecondary Student Information:

Nebraska will develop a contract with each of the public postsecondary institutions in Nebraska in order to clearly set forth the expectations of each institution. The details of the contracts will be worked out during the requirements gathering phase and contained in the Memorandum of Understanding. At a minimum, the contracts will detail the required planning, training, ongoing support, template development, data submission and reporting. For the purposes of the application, the three-year value of the contracts will be \$50,000 for each of the thirteen institutions. Each institution will be expected to identify one Project Leader and one Project Leader Alternate. The total amount for contract with postsecondary institutions is \$650,000.

NDE currently owns the license to the eScholar Uniq-ID[®] for Students and eScholar Complete Data Warehouse[®] for PK-12 products. The license does not include assigning an NDE Student ID to postsecondary students or for eScholar Complete Data Warehouse[®] for Postsecondary (CDW-PS), which is required for postsecondary institutions to report student data to NSSRS. Included in the contractual line above in Year 1 is the one time license fee of \$578,284 to extend the NDE Student ID and data warehouse into Nebraska postsecondary institutions. The budget also includes \$127,219 for maintenance and support in Year 2 and Year 3.

Budget for 1.1 Link PK-12 to Postsecondary Student Information:

Categories	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
Personnel					
Fringe Benefits					
Travel					
Equipment					
Supplies					
Contractual	1,228,284	127,219	127,219		1,482,722
Other					
Training Stipends					
Total	1,228,284	127,219	127,219		1,482,722

1.2 Linking Student and Teacher Course Information:

The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) already holds the license to the eScholar templates that will be required for the student to teacher connection via course information. NDE only seeks support for the Data Advisory Committee meetings and the external advisory group to develop business rules for appropriate use of data connecting to teachers and students.

The Data Advisory Committee consists of twenty external members and eleven NDE staff. The committee will meet twice in Year 1, once with a face-to-face meeting and once with a phone conference. In year 2 they will meet twice, once with a face-to-face meeting and once with a phone conference. In year 3 they will meet once by phone conference. NDE seeks funding to support the two face-to-face meetings.

The external advisory group consists of twelve external members and three NDE staff. This group will meet monthly for the first six months, one face-to-face and five conference calls. They will meet three times during the second six months of Year 1, once face-to-face and two conference calls. This group will meet twice in Year 2 and Year 3, one face-to-face and one conference call. The external advisory group will consist of representatives of the Nebraska State Education Association (NSEA), school principals, district superintendents, teachers, and NDE staff.

Budget for 1.2 Linking Student and Teacher Course Information

Categories	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
Personnel					
Fringe Benefits					
Travel	15,692	12,039	4,452		32,183
Equipment					
Supplies	2,000	350	350		2,700
Contractual					
Other					
Training Stipends					
Total	17,692	12,389	4,802		34,883

1.3 Creating a new NDE Staff ID:

NDE must purchase the license for the eScholar Uniq-ID[®] for Staff system. This is identified above in Year 1 costs. The Year 1 cost is \$180,000. Maintenance and support will be \$40,700 for both Year 2 and Year 3.

NDE will contract half-time with an Application Developer Senior to update the Teacher Certification and legacy tables to accommodate the new NDE Staff ID. This contractor will update the reports and outputs to include NDE Staff ID for NCLB Qualified Teachers as well as for Approval and Accreditation. NDE staff will create an extract from the eScholar Uniq-ID[®] for Staff. The contractor will then develop an import process for NDE Staff ID into the Teacher Certification system. The portion of the Contractual line for this contract is: Year 1 costs \$36,594, Year 2 costs \$30,495 and Year 3 costs \$12,198.

NDE will hire one full-time Program Specialist I (pay grade 44) for the second six months in Year 1 and full-time in Year 2 and Year 3. This person will research and resolve NDE Staff ID issues in NSSRS and in Teacher Certification system. This individual will also assist with staff issues related to the Student and Teacher Course Information (B) outcome. This person will incur travel expense to participate in the annual NDE Data Conference.

Budget for 1.3 Creating a new NDE Staff ID:

Categories	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
Personnel	21,477	44,028	45,129		110,634
Fringe Benefits	12,047	26,011	28,105		66,163
Travel	250	250	250		750
Equipment	4,225	0	0		4,225
Supplies	1,420	0	0		1,420
Contractual	216,594	71,195	52,898		340,687
Other	691	1,436	1,493		3,620
Training Stipends	0	0	0		0
Total	256,704	142,920	127,875		527,499

Budget detail for Project 1: Implementing America COMPETES Act Elements:

1) Personnel:

Personnel: The following requested personnel will be hired as employees of the project.	% FTE	Base Salary	Project Total
NDE will hire one full-time Program Specialist I (pay grade 44) for the second six months in Year 1 and full-time in Year 2 and Year 3. This person will research and resolve NDE Staff ID issues in NSSRS and in Teacher Certification system. This individual will also assist with staff issues related to the Student and Teacher Course Information.	1.0	42,954	110,634

Salary increased each year by 2.0% from the base salary of the first year.

2) Fringe Benefits:

Fringe benefits for the personnel identified above.	% FTE	Fringe Benefits	Project Total
Program Specialist I	1.0	24,094	66,163

- The basis for cost estimates or computations:

An increase of 15% for each year figured on the 2% salary increase and added to the previous year's benefit cost.

3) Travel:

Travel: Expenses for coordinator to attend workshops and conferences.	Travel	Total Travel during the Project
This cost covers all travel in project 1, including all employees and task force members..	1,053	4,471

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 computer, monitors, office furniture, chairs, file cabinets, etc will be needed.	4,225	Computer including monitor, office furniture	4,225

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 \$3,420. Total project cost for supplies is \$5,987.

6) Contractual:

In order to link PK-12 to Postsecondary student information, NDE will write a support contract with each public postsecondary institution in Nebraska. NDE will also contract with eScholar to expand the NDE Student ID into postsecondary education (detail above). The purchase of a license and support agreement for the eScholar UniqID for Staff and a half-time contract with an applications developer senior are also included here (detail above).

7) Training Stipends: None

8) Other:

Rental of office space of \$1381 per FTE per year and an increase of 4% per year is reported on this line. Total project cost is \$3620.

9) Total Direct Costs: See worksheet below.

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: See worksheet below.

Budget Summary, Project 1: Implementing America COMPETES Act Elements:

Categories	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
Personnel	21,477	44,028	45,129	0	110,634
Fringe Benefits	12,047	26,011	28,105	0	66,163
Travel	15,942	12,289	4,702	0	32,933
Equipment	4,225	0	0	0	4,225
Supplies	3,420	350	350	0	4,120
Contractual	1,444,878	198,414	180,117	0	1,8723,409
Training Stipends	0	0	0	0	0
Other	691	1,436	1,493	0	3,620
Total Direct Costs(line 1-8)	1,502,680	282,528	259,896	0	2,045,104
Indirect Costs	127,369	24,015	22,091	0	173,475
Funding for Involved LEA's	0	0	0	0	0
Supplemental Funding for Participating LEAs	0	0	0	0	0
Total Costs (line 9-12)	1,630,049	306,543	281,987	0	2,218,579

PROJECT 2: Expanding and Improving Data Reporting Systems

A primary focus of the Nebraska RTTT application is to improve access to and use of data. Since 2001 Nebraska has published a state report card called the *State of the Schools Report (SOSR)*. As part of a 2007 SLDS grant, Nebraska also developed a new data reporting system (DRS). The current system features 13 dashboards and 64 different reports that have greatly expanded stakeholder access to Nebraska education data. As Nebraska extends the state longitudinal data system to include all elements from the America COMPETES Act, the DRS and the SOSR will need to expand concurrently. In addition to expanding the breadth of the reporting systems, we also intend to improve their functionality by allowing local school districts to assign different levels of access in the DRS to their data for trainers who are assisting them in their instructional improvement activities.

1) Personnel:

Personnel: The following requested personnel will be hired as employees of the project.	% FTE	Base Salary	Project Total
Project Coordinator: NDE will hire a half time project manager to oversee the activities to expand the Data Reporting System. This person will develop a request for proposal and oversee the procurement process. This person will oversee all activities of the DRS expansion. This position will be hired at pay grade 47 with a starting salary of \$28,522.	.50	28,522	117,555

Salary increased each year by 2.0% from the base salary of the first year.

2) Fringe Benefits:

Fringe benefits for the personnel identified above.	% FTE	Fringe Benefits	Project Total
Project Coordinator	.50	13,190	53,281

- The basis for cost estimates or computations:

An increase of 15% for each year figured on the 2% salary increase and added to the previous year's benefit cost.

3) Travel:

Travel: Expenses for coordinator to attend workshops and conferences.	Travel	Total Travel during the Project
Project Coordinator	1,053	4,471

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 computer, monitors, office furniture, chairs, file cabinets, etc will be needed.	4,225	Computer including monitor, office furniture	4,225

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 \$1,410. Total project cost for supplies is \$5,987.

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. Expansion of the Data Reporting System will include: Creation of an additional 12 new dashboards

- Creation of 56 new reports
- Redesign of the system to include secured access to organizations (e.g. ESU staff developers, NDE staff and researchers)
- Creation of new training modules

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 be needed in the last two years of the project and will cost a total of \$750,000.

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 \$8,795.

9) Total Direct Costs: See worksheet below.

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: See worksheet below.

Project 2 Budget: Expanding and Improving Data Reporting Systems

	Categories	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
1	Personnel	28,522	29,092	29,674	30,267	117,555
2	Fringe Benefits	13,190	13,276	13,363	13,452	53,281
3	Travel	1,053	1,095	1,139	1,184	4,471
4	Equipment	4,225	0	0	0	4,225
5	Supplies	1,410	1,466	1,525	1,586	5,987
6	Contractual	0	0	375,000	375,000	750,000
7	Training Stipends	0	0	0	0	0
8	Other	2,071	2,154	2,240	2,330	8,795
9	Total Direct Costs (line 1-8)	50,471	47,083	422,941	423,819	944,314
10	Indirect Costs	3,931	4,002	35,950	36,025	79,908
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)	54,402	51,085	458,891	459,844	1,024,222

PROJECT 3: Expand and Refocus Existing Training Networks

The purpose of this project will be to enhance the use of and support for instructional support systems. The evidence provided for (C) (3) (in the application narrative) identifies the need to further expand support for LEAs in implementing and using these systems. To enhance support for districts, this project proposes maintaining and refocusing the work of the current training network of four trainers with two additional FTE. This application requests support for a training network of six FTE.

1) Personnel:

Personnel: The following requested personnel will be hired as fixed term employees of the project.	% FTE	Base Salary	Project Total
<p>Trainers: This project requests funding to hire six full time trainers to support local schools in the use of instructional improvement systems, the improvement of data quality and reporting state education data. The trainers will support schools in the adoption of the AdvancEd model which is described in the project narrative. The training will utilize the seven Standards for Effective Schools from the <i>National Study of School Evaluation</i>. The trainers will be well versed in assisting LEAs in implementing the indicators that are part of the <i>Leadership for Continuous Improvement</i> 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 six Program Specialist III positions will be at pay grade 46 with an individual base salary for year one of \$51,856,</p>	6.0	51,856	1,282,381

Salary increased each year by 2.0% 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.	6.0	25,539	618,624

- The basis for cost estimates or computations:

An increase of 15% for each year figured on the 2% salary increase and added to the previous year's benefit cost.

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 conduct training, workdays and conferences.	Travel for Seven 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.	9,000	229,302

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 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:** 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 \$52,770.

9) **Total Direct Costs:** See worksheet below.

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:** See worksheet below.

Project 3 Budget: Expand and Refocus Existing Training Networks

Categories	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
1 Personnel	311,136	317,359	323,706	330,180	1,282,381
2 Fringe Benefits	153,234	154,170	155,124	156,096	618,624
3 Travel	54,000	56,160	58,404	60,738	229,302
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	0	0	0
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)	573,066	558,211	568,974	580,026	2,280,277
10 Indirect Costs	46,556	47,448	48,363	49,302	191,669
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)	619,622	605,659	617,337	629,328	2,471,946

PROJECT 4: Improving Data Quality in School Districts (Sub grants to participation LEAs)

This project describes possible uses for the funding that will be sub granted to participating LEAs. Under the sub grants, LEAs will be encouraged to support the data steward and school improvement coordinator functions. Data Stewards serve their administrator by ensuring that the statistical information reviewed by senior staff represents data that have been entered accurately and collected systematically. The local school improvement coordinators focus on the use of data to improve instruction. Furthermore, both the Data Stewards School Improvement coordinators enhance the information reporting process through staff development and collaboration with the various offices and programs responsible for producing data and information.

This project will provide participating LEAs with funding in each of the first two years of the RTTT grant to implement best data practices to improve the quality of data that is provided to the state and eventually shared with the public. This might include:

- Appoint a local Data Steward.
- Appoint a School Improvement Coordinator
- Attend the Annual NDE Data Conference
- Attend strategic and/or tactical data quality training.
- Implement best practices in data collection and use.
- Adopt the AdvanEd model for use of data to improve instruction

1) Personnel: None

2) Fringe Benefits: None

3) Travel: None

4) Equipment: None

5) Supplies: None

6) **Contractual:** None

7) **Training Stipends:** None

8) **Other:** None

9) **Total Direct Costs:** None

10) **Indirect Costs:** None

11) **Funding for Involved LEAs:** None

12) **Supplemental Funding for Participating LEAs:** None

13) **Total Costs:** None reported here

Project 4: Improving Data Quality in School Districts

	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	0	0	0	0	0
4	Equipment	0	0	0	0	0
5	Supplies	0	0	0	0	0
6	Contractual	0	0	0	0	0
7	Training Stipends	0	0	0	0	0
8	Other	0	0	0	0	0
9	Total Direct Costs(line 1-8)	0	0	0	0	0
10	Indirect Costs	0	0	0	0	0
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)	0	0	0	0	0

Budget Part II: Project-Level Budget Table

Project Name: Great Teachers and Leaders

Budget Part II: Project-Level Budget Table					
Project Name: Great Teachers and Leaders					
Budget Categories	Project Year 1 (a)	Project Year 2 (b)	Project Year 3 (c)	Project Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
1. Personnel	\$167,171	\$224,437	\$212,764	\$191,948	\$796,320
2. Fringe Benefits	\$78,325	\$86,915	\$85,164	\$82,042	\$332,446
3. Travel	\$99,750	\$92,250	\$59,750	\$34,000	\$285,750
4. Equipment	\$14,000	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$18,500
5. Supplies	\$27,500	\$53,000	\$27,000	\$18,000	\$125,500
6. Contractual	\$698,000	\$1,008,480	\$1,085,610	\$1,047,953	\$3,840,043
7. Training Stipends					
8. Other	\$34,740	\$34,740	\$34,740	\$34,740	\$138,960
9. Total Direct Costs (lines 1-8)	\$1,119,486	\$1,501,322	\$1,506,528	\$1,410,183	\$5,537,519
10. Indirect Costs*	\$93,966	\$127,485	\$127,927	\$119,738	\$469,116
11. Funding for Involved LEAs					
12. Supplemental Funding for Participating LEAs					
13. Total Costs (lines 9-12)	\$1,213,452	\$1,628,807	\$1,634,455	\$1,529,921	\$6,006,635

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 members 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 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 2%.

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

A total of \$796,320 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 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 2% increases for subsequent years.

Activities include 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 as well as Hard to Staff Schools

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.

Work with Nebraska Teacher Preparation programs to develop STEM recruitment and support strategies for teacher preparation candidates. Serve as NDE liaison with the Virtual School – STEM Academy and Governor’s P-16 STEM Goal.

- 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 \$31,068	25% FTE \$15,845			\$46,913
D-2 Performance Appraisal Coordinator	50% FTE \$31,068	50% FTE \$31,689	50% FTE \$32,323	25% FTE \$16,485	\$111,565
D-2 Teacher Certification Redesign Coordinator	25% FTE \$15,534	50% FTE \$31,689	50% FTE \$32,323	50% FTE \$32,969	\$112,515
D-2 Teacher Certification Analyst	n/a	100% FTE \$33,009	100% FTE \$33,667	100% FTE \$34,341	\$101,017
D-2 IT Staff	33% FTE \$20,505	66% FTE \$41,829	66% FTE \$42,666	66% FTE \$43,519	\$148,519
D-2 Support Staff	50% FTE \$16,180	50% FTE \$16,504	50% FTE \$16,834	25% FTE \$8,585	\$58,103
D-3 Equitable Distribution Coordinator & Hard to Staff Programs	10% \$6,214	10% \$6,338	10% \$6,466	10% \$6,595	\$25,613
D-5 Coordinator for Professional Development and Mentoring System	75% \$46,602	75% \$47,534	75% \$48,485	75% \$49,454	\$192,075

2) Fringe Benefits

\$332,446 is allocated for fringe benefits for activities described in D1-5 for Years 1-4.

Benefits for D1-5 are \$78,325 in year one, \$86,915 in year two, \$85,164 in year three, and \$82,042 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 \$285,750 is requested for travel for Years 1-4.

D-1 For stakeholder travel to attend meetings to develop expanded survey on teacher shortages 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	35 individuals (state association rep, NDE &	Year 1 -\$8,750	Total

certification system (recertification based on performance appraisal system, new categories of certificates)	ESU staff, practitioners, teacher educators) x 1 meeting-Year 1 35 x 2 meetings-Year 2 35 x 1 meeting-Year 3	Year 2 - \$17,500 Year 3 - \$8,750	\$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 @ \$3,000 per meeting	Total: \$24,000
D-4 Teacher/Principal Preparation 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 @ \$25,000 per year.	Total: \$100,000
D-4 Teacher/Principal Preparation 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 \$11,500 is requested for Years 1-4, plus furniture at a cost of \$7,000. The total for equipment and furniture is \$18,500.

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 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 year. A total of \$125,500 is requested for Years 1-4.

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 \$3,840,043 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 participants and for associated faculty needs to increase capacity		Year 1-4 @\$20,000 per each year.	Total: \$80,000
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-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 2-4 of project. (1 FTE estimated at \$80,000 plus benefits per year plus 2% salary increase annually). Operating/travel/meeting expenses estimated @ \$20,000 per year.	Year 1 - n/a Year 2 - \$324,000 Year 3 - \$329,520 Year 4 - \$335,121 Travel expenses = \$60,000	Total: \$1,048,641
D-3 In-service for Great Teacher Leader program 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-4 Establish a steering committee and hold a statewide meeting to identify models for quality expanded field-based experiences. Implementation of expanded field-based experience models for teacher candidates, including Professional Development Schools.	Five 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. Institutions will work with districts to develop collaborative support structure.	Year 1-\$125,000 Year 2-\$125,000 Year 3-\$150,000 Year 4-\$150,000	Total: \$550,000
D-4 Implementation of collaborative Graduate Follow-	Five institutions	Year 1-\$50,000 (includes	Total: \$100,000

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 are available).		development of foundational model and modifications for individual institutions, development of resources) Year 3-\$50,000 (support for continuation, refinement and evaluation)	
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 for Mathematics, Reading/Writing, Science, Social Studies, Educator Development and Support, and Diverse Learners/Instructional Strategies. One person for each focus area who will serve the state.	6 Focus Area staff located in ESUs x \$40,000 (50% time + benefits) for each Focus Area.	Year 1-4 @\$324,000 per year + salary increases of 2%.	Total: \$1,335,402
D-5 Travel for ESU staff and for district staff to attend regional activities	Staff from each of 6 regional offices @ \$12,000/region	Year 1-4 @\$72,000 per year.	Total: \$288,000
D-5 Resource acquisition for local school dissemination to support work of ESU staff for focus areas.	Approximately \$12,000/year per 6 regions=\$72,000 per year.	Year 1-4 @\$72,000 per year.	Total: \$288,000

7) Other

Funds are requested for Years 1-4 for Virtual and other Statewide Meeting Expenses and Communication costs (\$108,000); office furniture to accommodate additional staff (\$7,000) is included in equipment and will be purchased in Year 1; office space rental Years 1-4 estimated at 4 FTE x \$1,935 per year (\$30,960)

8) Total Direct Costs

Total direct cost for this project is \$5,537,519. The direct costs per year follow:

Year 1 – \$1,119,486; Year 2 - \$1,501,322; Year 3 - \$1,506,528; Year 4 - \$1,410,183.

9) Indirect Costs

The indirect cost rate is calculated at 8.5%.

Year 1- \$93,966; Year 2- \$127,485; Year 3-\$127,927; Year 4-\$119,738. The total indirect cost is \$469,116.

10) Funding for Involved LEAs: None for this project

Budget Part II: Project-Level Budget Table

Project – School Turn Around

Budget Part II: Project-Level Budget Table

Project Name: School Turn Around

Budget Categories	Project Year 1 (a)	Project Year 2 (b)	Project Year 3 (c)	Project Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
1. Personnel	\$495,032	\$504,933	\$515,031	\$525,331	\$2,040,327
2. Fringe Benefits	\$255,059	\$256,509	\$258,023	\$259,569	\$1,029,160
3. Travel	\$165,567	\$165,567	\$165,567	\$165,567	\$662,268
4. Equipment	\$276,000	\$12,296	\$12,296	\$12,296	\$312,888
5. Supplies	\$17,555	\$17,555	\$17,555	\$17,555	\$70,220
6. Contractual	\$322,700	\$322,700	\$322,700	\$322,700	\$1,290,800
7. Training Stipends					
8. Other	\$32,000	\$32,000	\$32,000	\$32,000	\$128,000
9. Total Direct Costs (lines 1-8)	\$1,563,913	\$1,311,560	\$1,323,172	\$1,335,018	\$5,533,663
10. Indirect Costs*	\$109,473	\$110,437	\$111,424	\$112,431	\$443,765
11. Funding for Involved LEAs					
12. Supplemental Funding for Participating LEAs					
13. Total Costs (lines 9-12)	\$1,673,386	\$1,421,997	\$1,434,596	\$1,447,449	\$5,977,428

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

1. Personnel Salaries

Personnel funding plans for one full time Administrator, one full time Director, six consultants, two Staff Assistants.

Expenditures	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
SALARIES <i>for State Leadership</i>	495,032	504,933	515,031	525,331	2,040,327
~Administrator (1.00)	65,359	66,666	68,000	69,359	269,384
~Director (1.00)	55,926	57,045	58,185	59,349	230,505
~Consultants (6.00)	302,052	308,093	314,255	320,540	1,244,940
~Staff Assistants (2.00)	71,695	73,129	74,591	76,083	295,498

2. Fringe Benefits

Expenditures	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
FRINGE BENEFITS <i>for State Leadership</i>	255,059	256,509	258,023	259,569	1,029,160
~Administrator	28,084	28,280	28,480	28,684	113,528
~Director	26,584	26,716	26,887	27,062	107,249
~Consultants	153,833	154,740	155,664	156,607	620,844
~Staff Assistants	46,558	46,773	46,992	47,216	187,539

3. Travel

Travel costs are needed for state leadership activities, including instate & out-of-state travel for the Administrator-1, Director -1, and Consultants-6

Expenditures	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
TRAVEL <i>for State Leadership</i>	165,567	165,567	165,567	165,567	662,268
~Instate & Out-of-State for Administrator-, Director-, Consultants	165,567	165,567	165,567	165,567	662,268

4. Equipment

Expenditures	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
EQUIPMENT <i>for State Leadership</i>	276,000	12,296	12,296	12,296	312,888

~Furniture, Computer hardware & software updates	276,000	12,296	12,296	12,296	312,888
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5. Supplies

Expenditures	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
SUPPLIES <i>for State Leadership</i>	17,555	17,555	17,555	17,555	70,220
Supplies for 10 staff	17,555	17,555	17,555	17,555	17,555

6. Contractual

Contracts and subcontracts will be used for supporting evidence based practices, sub-grants to selected ESUs, model programs for LEAs, staff development activities, consultants to work with low performing schools, and other purposes.

Expenditures	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
CONTRACTUAL	322,700	322,700	322,700	322,700	1,290,800

7. Training Stipends

None planned.

8. Other

Other expenses include Advisory Council Meetings, including meals, site fees, lodge, and mileage, task forces as needed, and other general expenditures.

Expenditures	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
Other	32,000	32,000	32,000	32,000	128,000

9. Total Direct Costs

Year One	Year Two	Year Three	Year Four	Total
1,563,913	\$1,311,560	1,323,172	1,335,018	5,533,663

10. Indirect Costs

Year One	Year Two	Year Three	Year Four	Total
\$109,473	110,437	111,424	112,431	443,765

11. Funding for Involved LEAs

None.

12. Supplemental Funding for Participating Districts

None

13. Total Cost

Year One	Year Two	Year Three	Year Four	Total
1,673,386	1,421,997	1,434,596	1,447,449	5,977,428

Budget Part II: Project-Level Budget Table

Project Name: Early Learning

Associated with Criteria: Invitational Priority

(Evidence for selection criterion (A)(2)(i)(d))

Budget Categories	Project Year 1 (a)	Project Year 2 (b)	Project Year 3 (c)	Project Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
1. Personnel	31,398	32,026	32,667	33,320	129,411
2. Fringe Benefits	8,362	8,456	8,552	8,650	34,020
3. Travel	5,490	4,209	4,209	2,196	16,104
4. Equipment	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
5. Supplies	5,000	5,000	3,000	3,000	16,000
6. Contractual	113,000	103,000	72,000	72,000	360,000
7. Training Stipends	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
8. Other (ESU's for ECPDPs)	250,000	250,000	250,000	250,000	1,000,000
9. Total Direct Costs (lines 1-8)	413,250	402,691	370,428	369,166	1,555,535
10. Indirect Costs*	13,876	12,979	10,236	10,129	47,220
11. Funding for Involved LEAs	404,000	404,000	404,000	404,000	1,616,000
12. Supplemental Funding for Participating LEAs	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
13. Total Costs (lines 9-12)	831,126	819,670	784,664	783,295	3,218,755

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.

BUDGET PART II: PROJECT-LEVEL BUDGET NARRATIVE

Instructions:

For each project the State has proposed in its Budget Summary Narrative, the Department strongly recommends that the State submits the following information for each budget category.

1) Personnel

- The position is .5 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 the Regional Training Coalitions (part time coordination currently) into Early Childhood Professional Development Partnerships (full time coordination) and the ongoing support of the entire network of ECPDP’s that together with the NDE’s Early Childhood Training Center constitute the framework of the early childhood professional development system known as the Early Learning Connection.

Personnel: The following requested personnel will all be hired as employees of NDE for the RTTT project.	% FTE	Salary Year 1	Salary Year 2	Salary Year 3	Salary Year 4	Total
Professional Development Coordinator (1)	50%	31,398	32,026	32,320	33,320	129,411

2) Fringe Benefits

- \$ 34,020 is allocated for fringe benefits.

3) Travel

- The Professional Development Coordinator will meet with all ECPDP coordinators throughout the state and will need to periodically visit the each area to monitor their success and provide on-site support and technical assistance.
- 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 \$70.00 per night and meal expenses of

\$36.00 per day. The average cost of a trip is calculated at \$183. The budget includes 12 trips per year for the Professional Development Coordinator. ($\$183 \times 12 \times 4 = \$8,784$)

- Early Childhood Education Specialists who work at the Nebraska Department of Education and provide technical assistance to school district Early Learning Specialists will be traveling to meet with the local district staff, early education and care staff and the Early Learning Specialist hired for this Race to the Top initiative. Trips for NDE Early Childhood Specialists are budgeted in the same way as those for the Professional Development Coordinator. A total of 18 trips are budgeted for year one since each Local Early Learning Specialist will need significant support in the first year. Fewer trips (eleven trips for years two and three) by NDE Specialists are budgeted in subsequent years since local Early Learning Specialists will require less outside assistance.

Travel: Average cost of trip is \$183	# Trips	\$ per Trip	Total
Professional Development Coordinator	48	\$183	\$8,784
NDE Early Childhood Specialists	40	\$183	7,320

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 training supplies of resource books, training materials and supplies.

6) Contractual

- A total of 360,000 will be contracted for this project.

- Trainers will be contracted to deliver training to the local Early Learning Specialist in the area of effective coaching techniques.
 - Coaching training is being estimated at \$12,000 in year one. This amount will include-1 trainer 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; also budgeting costs for contracted space. (Goals 1, 2)
- Training in the use of effective early childhood curriculum and assessment, including the use of assessment data, 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, training materials, and foodservice for participants. (Goal 1)
 - Additionally, in year two, \$30,000 and in each of years three and four, \$25,000 has been budgeted for focused training as determined by local needs, in addition to the opportunities outlined above. Contracts will be with trainers who have expertise in early childhood mental health (social-emotional-behavioral), classroom environments, early literacy and numeracy, family engagement, early childhood leadership, or other early learning specialty areas. Contracts will be individually written based on identified need in areas across the state. An allocation of approximately \$1000 per day per trainer is budgeted. (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 Learning Specialist (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 Learning Specialists in evidence based coaching techniques to be used with participating early education and care providers.	Coaching training	in year one 13,000	\$13,000
Early Childhood Curriculum and Assessment training (including use of data for instructional decision-making) 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, family engagement	\$3000 in year 2, and \$12,000 in each of years 3 and 4.	\$27,000
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 in this project

8) Other

- Grant awards will be provided to designated 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 1,555,535. The direct costs per year follow:

Year 1 413,250

Year 2 402,691

Year 3 370,428

Year 4 369,166

10) Indirect Costs

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

Year 1- 13,876

Year 2- 12,979

Year 3- 10,236

Year 4- 10,129

11) Funding for Involved LEAs

- Five Local Early Learning Specialists will be hired by PLAS or high poverty schools. Salary and benefits for each specialist is budgeted at \$70,000 for a total of \$350,000 per year. Over the life of the grant the total amount budgeted for this item is \$1,400,000. The Early Learning Specialists will use evidence-based 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 Learning Specialist for operations related to the work of the Specialists with the local early education and care providers. This item totals \$120,000 for the project. Early Learning Specialists will use the operations money to buy subscriptions to online

child assessments (as designated by Results Matter) for each child in the participating early education and care programs. The operations money will also be used to sub-contract with reliable early childhood program quality observers to assess early childhood environment in the participating early education and care programs.

- Stipends, for purchase of resources, for participating early education and care providers are budgeted at \$800 dollars per year. Thirty (six per LEA) 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 \$96,000.
- There will be a maximum of five LEAs (PLAS and high poverty designated) 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.

Purpose	Activity	Cost	# LEAs involved	Total per year	Project total
Provide coaching and personalized training to education and care providers	Employment of Early Learning Specialists	\$70,000 per specialist per year	Up to 5	\$350,000 per year	\$1,400,000
Provide allocated resources for program activities including purchase of subscriptions to online child assessments, program evaluation, mileage, etc.	Operations	\$6,000 per specialist per year	Up to 5	\$30,000	\$120,000
Provide resources to supplement learning materials	Stipends for early education and care providers	\$800 dollars per year per provider. (30 providers)	Up to 5	\$24,000	\$96,000

12) Supplemental Funding for Participating LEAs

None for this project.

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	\$1,379,540	\$1,434,722	\$1,492,111	\$1,551,795	\$5,858,168
2. Fringe Benefits	\$423,990	\$440,949	\$458,587	\$476,931	\$1,800,457
3. Travel	\$12,600	\$12,600	\$5,040	\$5,040	\$35,280
4. Equipment	\$14,432	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$14,432
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	\$468,956	\$191,939	\$192,379	\$170,341	\$1,023,615
9. Total Direct Costs (lines 1-8)	\$2,621,487	\$2,334,113	\$2,392,290	\$2,321,885	\$9,669,774
10. Indirect Costs*	\$221,600	\$198,400	\$203,345	\$197,360	\$820,705
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)	\$2,843,087	\$2,532,513	\$2,595,634	\$2,519,245	\$10,490,479

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.

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 support for the STEM Academy administrators, teachers, and	100%	\$27,000	\$27,000

<p>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 (E)(2).</p>	100%	\$50,000	\$100,000

<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%	\$44,000	\$660,000
<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 position requires a minimum of five years experience in distance education faculty development, instructional design,</p>	100%	\$45,000	\$45,000

<p>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 supervises and manages the tutoring center, hiring and training tutors, establishing processes and procedures, reviewing the</p>	100%	\$35,000	\$35,000

<p>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 applications and equipment used by the teachers, staff, tutors, and students involved with the STEM Academy. This position</p>	100%	\$45,000	\$45,000

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.			
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.	100%	\$30,000	\$30,000
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.	100%	\$55,000	\$55,000
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.	100%	\$55,000	\$55,000
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>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

<p>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.</p> <p>Ms. Barber has over 30 years experience in distance education curriculum and course development and faculty development.</p>			
<p>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.</p> <p>Ms. Roiné 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.</p>	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	# Trips	\$ per Trip	Total
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<p>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.</p>			
<p>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 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>5 trips in each of Years 1 and 2</p>	<p>\$2,520</p>	<p>\$12,600 per year in each of Years 1 and 2</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</p>	<p>2 trips in each of Years 3 and 4</p>	<p>\$2,520</p>	<p>\$5,040 in each of Years 4 and 5</p>

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.			
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4) Equipment

Equipment: Consistent with University of Nebraska-Lincoln policy, equipment is defined as tangible, non-expendable, personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit.	Cost of Item	Item Description	Total
Severs (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. 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.	\$7,216	Servers	\$14,432

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	Varies by resource	Online Resource Licenses	\$110,000 per year for four years.

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).			
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 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.	Varies by item	Miscellaneous Office Supplies	\$3,000 Year 1 (a 3% increase in each of Years 2, 3, and 4)

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/clerk 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.

- Workstations = \$81,050 Year 1.

Desktop Workstation (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 Workstation (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 Workstations (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 Workstations (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	\$1,200	Networked printer	\$1,200

officed at its facility.			
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

- 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
\$2,621,487	\$2,334,112	\$2,392,290	\$2,321,885	\$9,669,774

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
\$2,843,086	\$2,532,512	\$2,595,634	\$2,519,246	\$10,490,478