



# Connecticut's RACE TO THE TOP Application for Initial Funding

*“Race to the Top is designed to build upon a strong foundation and a firm commitment from all stakeholders.*

*Connecticut has both. Educators, administrators, parents and community leaders are determined to work together to overcome obstacles to learning and position all children for success and a productive future. Our State Department of Education is a proven leader in working with all stakeholders and helping school districts maximize their resources through innovation and cooperation.*

*A well-educated citizenry gives rise to a robust economy, a strong workforce and a quality of life unmatched in the world. This is an investment well worth making today. It is our commitment to our children and to a prosperous future for all. Race to the Top will provide the impetus to upgrade our education system so that we are well positioned in the competitive, global economy and that we can ensure that the American dream will become a reality for all of our students.”*

**M. Jodi Rell**  
Governor, State of Connecticut

*“Connecticut’s Race to the Top proposal describes a multifaceted plan to ensure that all our students graduate with the necessary skills and attributes to succeed in higher education, the workforce, and today’s technological world. Our plan addresses critical issues in teaching and learning, academic standards and data use, and demonstrates a deep commitment from our school systems, businesses, government, higher education and local communities to work together to achieve common goals. The initiatives described in our plan will help to eliminate achievement gaps, lower high school dropout rates, and increase the capacity of teachers and principals to meet the diverse instructional needs of our students. Race to the Top offers Connecticut an unprecedented opportunity to improve curricula and instruction, expand research-based school improvement and develop new ways to help all Connecticut students reach their full potential.”*

**Mark K. McQuillan**  
Commissioner of Education



**APPLICATION FOR INITIAL FUNDING UNDER RACE TO THE TOP**

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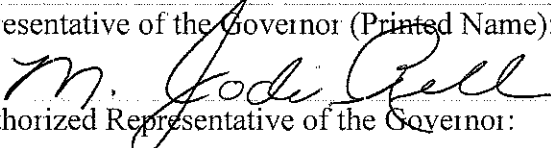

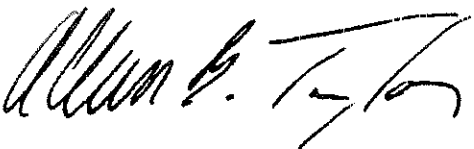
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**I. RACE TO THE TOP APPLICATION ASSURANCES  
(CFDA No. 84.395A)**

Legal Name of Applicant (Office of the Governor):  M. Jodi Rell	Applicant's Mailing Address:  Executive Chambers State Capitol Hartford, CT 06106
Employer Identification Number: 06-6000798	Organizational DUNS: 807851118
State Race to the Top Contact Name: (Single point of contact for communication) Jessica Andrews	Contact Position and Office: ARRA Coordinator and Accountability Officer, Connecticut Department of Education
Contact Telephone: (860)713-6582	Contact E-mail Address: <a href="mailto:jessica.andrews@ct.gov">jessica.andrews@ct.gov</a>
<p>Required Applicant Signatures:</p> <p>To the best of my knowledge and belief, all of the information and data in this application are true and correct.</p> <p>I further certify that I have read the application, am fully committed to it, and will support its implementation:</p>	
Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor (Printed Name): Governor M. Jodi Rell	Telephone: (860)566-4840
Signature of Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor: 	Date: 1/15/10
Chief State School Officer (Printed Name): Dr. Mark K. McQuillan	Telephone: (860)713-6500
Signature of the Chief State School Officer: 	Date: 1/15/10
President of the State Board of Education (Printed Name): Allan B. Taylor	Telephone: (860)275-0225
Signature of the President of the State Board of Education: 	Date: 1/15/2010

**State Attorney General Certification**

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

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

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

State Attorney General or Authorized Representative (Printed Name):

Telephone:

Perry A. Zinn-Rowthorn, Associate Attorney General

(860)808-5315

Signature of the State Attorney General or Authorized Representative:

Date:



1/17/10

## **I. 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](http://www.Recovery.gov). A State or local agency may not use funds under the ARRA for infrastructure investment funding unless this certification is made and posted. (ARRA Division A, Section 1511)
- The State will submit reports, within 10 days after the end of each calendar quarter, that contain the information required under section 1512(c) of the ARRA in accordance with any guidance issued by the Office of Management and Budget or the Department. (ARRA Division A, Section 1512(c))
- The State will cooperate with any appropriate Federal Inspector General's examination of records under the program. (ARRA Division A, Section 1515)

## **Other Assurances and Certifications**

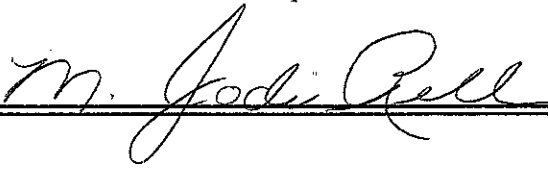
The Governor or his/her authorized representative assures or certifies the following:

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

The State and other entities will comply with the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR), including the following provisions as applicable: 34 CFR Part 74–Administration of Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations; 34 CFR Part 75–Direct Grant Programs; 34 CFR Part 77–Definitions that Apply to Department Regulations; 34 CFR Part

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

SIGNATURE BLOCK FOR CERTIFYING OFFICIAL

Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor (Printed Name):	
Governor M. Jodi Rell	
Signature of Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor:	Date:
	



## Introduction

Connecticut's application for Race to the Top is about the future — the economic, social and knowledge future of our state and of our residents, both young and old.

When we look at ourselves in Connecticut, we see a state with a storied past that includes deeply held beliefs about the independence of communities, considerable comfort in our performance derived from years of top educational rankings, and the perception of great assets whether described in terms of economic wealth or human knowledge.

Yet with increasing clarity and no small measure of pain, we are coming to know that *this* Connecticut story is not the *whole* Connecticut story. Our people are changing and the world is changing around them.

Connecticut's population is becoming older and dramatically more diverse. We now rank eighth in the median age of our population. Connecticut is also markedly more diverse than ever before, with the 11th-highest percentage of foreign-born residents in the nation. At the same time, we have experienced the largest out-migration of working-age adults in the Northeast.

Though we are a small state in geography, our children grow up in communities that range from the wealthiest in the country to the poorest, and 3 in 10 Connecticut children live in families where no parent has full-time, year round work. Though we rank second-highest in the nation in the education level of our families, nearly 1 in 10 adults is functionally illiterate.

Once, the educational performance of our students was among the very best in the nation, but now we own the greatest K-12 achievement gap of any state, a gap that is predictable by race, ethnicity, income and special learning status; a gap that begins early and continues into high school. Far too many of our students enter kindergarten lacking a rich base of readiness skills and then graduate from high school requiring months of remediation before becoming “college and workforce ready.” And even from our most accomplished students, we must expect more if Connecticut is to become and remain globally competitive.

Creating Connecticut's application for Race to the Top has already helped us define our situation more honestly and to articulate a new vision for the future that works for all our students, in every family and every town in which they live and learn. Race to the Top provides both a vehicle and a bridge to get us there.

We know that learning begins at birth and progresses rapidly within the context of relationships with parents and family members. We know that children's academic success is anchored in experiences with their teachers, in classrooms rich in knowledge and high in expectations. And we know that teachers need support, knowledge and feedback from great principals — and from their communities — to perform at the highest level.



We also know from the performance, behaviors and expectations of our students that *we* are not doing all of the right things at the right times in *their* lives to enable and ensure their academic and life success. We know that struggling families and struggling schools want the best for their children, but that some are stuck in ways of behaving that do not promote student growth and learning.

All children can learn and achieve. That is *their* job. *Our* job — as policy leaders, parents and practitioners — is to move Connecticut’s plan for educational success from *fact* to *act*, with honesty, courage and persistence. Though the journey to transformation will be complex and probably bumpy, the goal is straightforward: to ensure that *all* our children acquire and retain a love of learning *and* develop demonstrable mastery in the knowledge, skills and behaviors they need for academic, economic and life success.

### **A Word from the Governor**

“Race to the Top is designed to build upon a strong foundation and a firm commitment from all stakeholders. Connecticut has both. Educators, administrators, parents and community leaders are determined to work together to overcome obstacles to learning and position all children for success and a productive future. Our State Department of Education is a proven leader in working with all stakeholders and helping school districts maximize their resources through innovation and cooperation.

“A well-educated citizenry gives rise to a robust economy, a strong workforce and a quality of life unmatched in the world. This is an investment well worth making today. It is our commitment to our children and to a prosperous future for all. Race to the Top will provide the impetus to upgrade our education system so that we are well positioned in the competitive, global economy and that we can ensure that the American dream will become a reality for all of our students.”

Governor M. Jodi Rell  
January 13, 2010

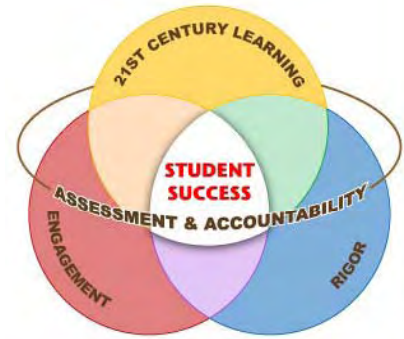
### **A Word from the Connecticut Commissioner of Education**

“Connecticut’s application for Race to the Top funds comes at a highly opportune time for this state’s educational reform agenda. During the past three years (2006-09), Connecticut has launched a series of systemic improvements aimed at supporting the growth of all students while focusing on the learning needs of struggling students within a cluster of communities identified legally as priority school districts. These communities are home to two-thirds of our poorest students, young people whose academic achievement and graduation rates will not prepare them for successful postsecondary education or an economically viable career in Connecticut’s present and future workforce.

The driving force in this effort is the Connecticut Accountability for Learning Initiative (CALI), begun in 2004 as a series of training modules focusing on data driven decision-making, the use of standards-based instruction and effective teaching strategies. At the time, Title I districts and

schools identified in need of improvement were offered access to the training and technical assistance on a voluntary basis. In July 2007, state accountability legislation significantly strengthened this work by requiring the Department to identify low-achieving schools and districts for intensified supervision and direction. On a small scale, the CALI effort encompasses much of what the four Race to the Top assurances envision.

But while CALI focused on specific districts, it was also clear that Connecticut needed to propose standards that are more rigorous for all secondary school students. Following nearly a year of intensive work by a broad group of stakeholders, including the K-20 education leaders and our business and employment sectors, *The Connecticut Plan for Secondary School Reform* was born. This plan envisioned an increase in overall course credits required for graduation; an increase in science, technology, engineering and mathematics-related credits; the development of individualized “student success plans” beginning in sixth grade; completion of student “capstone projects” in upper high school; new partnerships with business and higher education; and more rigorous teacher training, professional development and instruction. Again, many components envisioned by Race to the Top are incorporated in *The Connecticut Plan for Secondary School Reform*.



The overarching context for these two efforts is Section D of this application, where we focus on instructional improvement in its broadest sense. Our plan for “Great Teachers and Leaders” will integrate all the innovations contemplated for secondary school reform, school and district improvement, CALI and more. It will build upon nationally recognized programs and practices that have historically placed Connecticut as a leader in teacher quality, and it will consciously strive to build a new framework for training teachers and administrators during the next decade. Measuring the complexity of student learning with new tools and tapping new technologies to engage students differently are essential factors in our approach.

Five themes underwrite Section D and the evaluation systems that will flow from it:

1. Effectively teaching “next generation” learners who have grown up entirely surrounded by the new technologies of the 21st century — computers, the Internet, hand-held devices, etc. — and who will demand instructors equally able to use these technologies to plan, deliver and evaluate lessons.
2. Effectively leading schools driven by cultures of high expectation and the will to reach all learners, particularly those who have historically lagged behind in student achievement — African-Americans, Hispanics and students with disabilities.
3. Building collaborative, professional learning communities in schools to promote best practices in recruiting, inducting, mentoring, and evaluating teachers and principals.
4. Using data and multiple assessment tools to measure student performance and, by implication, to gauge teacher and leader effectiveness.
5. Adapting instruction and leadership to address the cultural and linguistic needs of Connecticut’s rapidly diversifying student populations and growing numbers of children living in poverty.

These themes not only underwrite past work in the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), but they also animate the specific initiatives in Section D aimed at bringing a high quality workforce to Connecticut's neediest school districts. These initiatives include the STEM Teacher Regional Exchange, the Connecticut Teacher in Residence Program, the Connecticut Math and Science Coaching Academies, and others, such as Developing Tomorrow's Professionals, aimed at distributing teachers more equitably in cities and towns where student achievement has been depressed for years.

Collectively, all these initiatives (and the activities needed to implement them) will form the basis of instructional renewal statewide during the next eight years. As districts undergo the professional development and technical training needed to implement the new curricula for our secondary schools in Part I of the Connecticut Eight-Year Plan; as teachers learn how to coach students through success planning and developing capstone projects; and as schools prepare to restructure time and schedules for ongoing learning, so will all participating LEAs change their behaviors and practices to meet the conditions required to successfully transform our schools.

A renewal of this kind, however, can only occur in a context of widespread collaboration and shared leadership. To this end, we draw readers' attention to the structures and mechanisms the CSDE will put in place to guide the work of building the great teachers and leaders for our next generation of learners. Among these are (1) the Connecticut Institute for English Language Learning; (2) the Connecticut External Expert Advisory Panel; and (3) the Connecticut P20 Council. Together with Connecticut's Regional Educational Service Center (RESC) Alliance, the State Education Resource Center (SERC), and our state universities and community colleges, the infrastructure and capacity needed to carry out the work sketched above is now in place. Unlike other states Connecticut is fully organized and small enough geographically to bring this work to scale."

Dr. Mark K. McQuillan  
Connecticut Commissioner of Education  
January 11, 2010

### **The Bottom Line**

Academic achievement occurs within a tight set of instructional, interpersonal and professional relationships among students, teachers and principals. As important as these relationships are, children and adolescents also bring a rich set of skills, attitudes and dispositions acquired *outside* school. This powerful personal history comes from daily interactions with parents, other family members and peers; it is honed on the streets and playgrounds and reinforced in neighborhoods and community organizations. These experiences can impel students to strive for academic and life success, but they can also pull students away from the cognitive, social and physical opportunities that great schools can provide.

Connecticut's State Reform Plan focuses on creating and sustaining conditions that move teachers, schools and districts *from* a culture of isolation and privately held practice *to* a culture of collaboration and shared work at every level of the school system. The shift to inclusion and shared practice, however, cannot end at the school door or the edges of our playing fields.

The kind of transformation we imagine is to *become* the public school system we need and know we must have. As a department, we must commit seriously to working with families, institutions, and community leaders as they set expectations, shape behavior, and support the achievement of *their* children — *our* students — whether early in their educational careers, in their middle school years, or in high school.

Connecticut began this journey well before the opportunities and challenges of Race to the Top were posed. We have labored hard, over a short time, to craft an agenda for educational success. We believe our agenda will propel continued improvement to the point where, over the next eight years, *few* students experience low levels of academic achievement and virtually *all* students achieve at the highest levels.

Connecticut's application for Race to the Top is about the future, and the future is now.

**Selecting 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)<sup>1</sup> 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 RTTT 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 RTTT plans (including considerations of the numbers and percentages of participating LEAs, schools, K-12 students, and students in poverty) will translate into broad statewide impact, allowing the State to reach its ambitious yet achievable goals, overall and by student subgroup, for— *(15 points)*
  - (a) Increasing student achievement in (at a minimum) reading/language arts and mathematics, as reported by the NAEP and the assessments required under the ESEA;
  - (b) Decreasing achievement gaps between subgroups in reading/language arts and mathematics, as reported by the NAEP and the assessments required under the ESEA;

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix D for more on participating LEA MOUs and for a model MOU.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*Recommended maximum response length: Ten pages (excluding tables)*

**(A)(1) STATE SUCCESS FACTORS**

**(A)(1)(i-iii) Pathway for Achieving Connecticut Education Reform Plan**

Connecticut’s State Education Reform Plan (SERP) is built upon seven essential elements for improving student achievement and success. It is guided by the State Board of Education’s (SBE) *Five-year Comprehensive Plan for Education*; responds to the economic and historical challenges that are unique to Connecticut; and defines the responsibilities of the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) and the 122 local Participating LEAs that have agreed to implement all or significantly all of the initiatives described in our *LEA Memorandum of Understanding* (See Appendix A-329). By addressing the grant’s four education reform areas, SERP aims to drive substantial gains in academic achievement, improve high school graduation rates, and narrow achievement gaps that have persisted in Connecticut for decades. SERP envisions a strong role for all of the constituencies identified in Sections B-F in this application, particularly parents in support of their expanded role in supporting their own child and their interactions with the school around systems reform and responsiveness.

The seven elements of SERP are:

1. Education Reform: Managing for Success [Section (A)(2) of the Scoring Criteria]
2. Standards and Assessments [Section (B) of the Scoring Criteria and the 1<sup>st</sup> reform assurance]
3. Data Systems Development and Use [Section (C) of the Scoring Criteria and the 2<sup>nd</sup> assurance]
4. Great Teachers and Leaders [Section (D) of the Scoring Criteria and the 3<sup>rd</sup> assurance]
5. Turning Around Low-Performing Schools and Districts [Section (E) of the Scoring Criteria and the 4<sup>th</sup> assurance]
6. Choice Programs – Innovative Reform Models [Section (F) of the Scoring Criteria]
7. Sustainability through State Funds Repurposing [Section (A)(2) of the Scoring Criteria and a New Connecticut Specific Assurance.]

Each element of the SERP is summarized below with references to sections elsewhere in the application that offer more detailed information. Also referenced below are each element of this plan that relates to the application’s six scoring categories (including the four assurances) and the LEA memorandum of understanding for participating LEAs.

Finally, the Connecticut application includes activities associated with Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) expansion, outlined in “Competitive Priority 2” on STEM. Information on STEM is incorporated into all relevant elements of Connecticut’s plan. Family engagement, another critical element of systematic reform, is woven into SERP in each of the four assurances.

### **1. Education Reform: Managing for Success**

Despite several significant periods of agency downsizing in the last decade, the CSDE has created a management structure capable of leading, administering and supporting education reform in general and our state reform plan in particular. Among the past three years, the CSDE has reorganized its administrative structure to reflect the state’s new economic realities and to better reflect our own reform work: secondary school reform, the SBE’s five-year plan for the period 2006-2011 for student achievement, and the Connecticut Accountability for Learning Initiative (CALI). CALI is a significant strength for Connecticut; has demonstrated its effectiveness in Connecticut’s neediest LEAs in a short period of time and is one of the pillars of SERP and will be referenced frequently throughout this application. See Appendix A-169 for a complete description of the CALI model and the essential components. In addition, the CSDE has developed, strengthened and formalized many new partnerships with other state agencies, educational service organizations, and the nonprofit, business and philanthropic sectors. Together, these actions create a foundation upon which our Race to the Top (RTTT) application can be managed for success. A detailed look at our management plan follows in Section (A)(2)(i)(a).

### **2. Standards and Assessment**

Connecticut is committed to adopting the national Common Core State Standards and aligned assessments as developed by the Council of Chief School Officers, Achieve and the National Governors Association (NGA) and is on track for SBE adoption by July 2010. It is important to note that the draft standards reveal a strong concordance with Connecticut’s existing K-12 content standards. This will greatly ease the process of aligning the CSDE’s current work with the new national standards, and it will facilitate the process of adoption and use by LEAs across Connecticut, beginning with RTTT Participating LEAs. Details regarding the adoption and transition to common core standards and assessments follow in Section (B).



### **3. Data Systems to Support Instruction and Guide Decision-Making Related to Student Success**

Connecticut fully supports the ever-improving *collection and use* of data as one of the core areas of educational improvement infrastructure. To support this, Connecticut’s education reform agenda and state reform plan ensure compliance with the three core components explicit in the RTTT data systems assurance. First, Connecticut’s Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) will be completed to include the final work on the remaining six America COMPETES requirements that are in progress but not completely accomplished. Second, the CSDE will offer a plan to make data more accessible to a broad group of RTTT defined constituencies, as well as improve timely access to data essential to improving educational policymaking, operation and research. Third, Connecticut will continue its current track efforts — implemented most fully through CALI – to use data-driven decision making at the LEA level to build and operate formal instructional improvement systems. Details regarding data systems to support instruction follow in Section (C).

### **4. Great Teachers and Leaders**

Connecticut’s plan for great teachers and leaders will integrate all the innovations contemplated for the statewide reform plan as well as multi-bureau support for school and district improvement, including CALI. It will build upon nationally recognized programs and practices that have historically placed Connecticut as a leader in teacher quality, and it will build and implement a new framework for training teachers and administrators among the next decade. The RTTT opportunity comes at a time when Connecticut is already building and implementing a comprehensive teacher quality system. Our plan for great teachers and leaders will focus on six elements:

1. Revision of Connecticut’s (1999) *Teacher and Administrator Standards and Evaluation Guidelines*.
2. A new model to measure student growth.
3. A new system to evaluate Connecticut principals and teachers.
4. Statewide professional development for school and administrators/principals.
5. Statewide technology training for teachers, principals and staff: Engaging “Next Generation” Learners.
6. Targeted training for teachers, principals and staff: differentiating instruction for minority student populations.

Details regarding Connecticut’s plan for great teachers and leaders follow in Section (D).

## 5. Turning Around Low-Performing Schools

In July 2007, the Connecticut General Assembly first enacted accountability legislation and then amended the legislation in June 2008 giving the Commissioner of Education and the SBE a significant increase in responsibility and authority to intervene in low-achieving schools and districts. The Commissioner and the SBE have a broad range of actions under their authority to intervene in low-performing schools. These include:

- Requiring operations and instructional audits, directing the use of state or federal funds by the district, providing incentives to attract highly qualified teachers and principals, and directing the transfer of teachers and principals.
- Requiring districts to provide additional training and technical assistance for parents and guardians of children attending a low-performing school, assign a technical support team to the district, and specify model curriculum for local implementation.
- Requiring that an LEA or school provide full-day kindergarten classes, summer school, extended school day, weekend classes, and/or tutorial assistance to its students or professional development to its administrators, principals, teachers and paraprofessional teacher aides if, on any subpart of the third-grade statewide mastery examination, 30 percent or more of the students in any subgroup as defined by the No Child Left Behind Act do not achieve the level of proficiency or higher.
- Identifying schools for reconstitution or management by an entity other than the local board of education.

As suggested earlier, the CSDE has employed CALI as the core intervention process. We have examined the overlap between components of CALI and the four school intervention models specified by RTTT. Components of the CALI module exist in the Title I (g) school intervention models, but these components do not address each requirement in any of the four models. The models that most closely align to the CALI model are the turnaround and transformational models. Our state reform plan will require Connecticut's lowest-performing schools to add to the CALI *additional* requirements from one of the four school intervention models. This work is described more fully in Section (E) of this application. The role of participating LEAs is further detailed in the RTTT LEA MOU (See Appendix A-329).

## **6. Choice Programs – Innovative Reform Models**

Public school choice programs are an integral component of Connecticut's public school system. By offering all students and their families' choices among a range of high-quality public educational programs and settings, Connecticut's education system allows all students the opportunity to attend a school more closely linked to their individual needs and aspirations. The Connecticut SBE adopted a position statement on public school choice on October 7, 2009. In part, it reads: "*The Connecticut State Board of Education believes the wide variety of public school choice programs offered in the state further increases opportunities for all students to learn in a manner that is customized to their needs, interests and abilities.*" As part of the reform plan, Connecticut will continue its strong commitment to school choice by supporting the following school choice programs: interdistrict magnet schools, public charter schools, open choice, interdistrict cooperative grant programs, state technical high schools, and regional agricultural science and technology education centers. This work is described more fully in Section (F) of this application. Additionally, the Connecticut Supreme Court in 1993 ruled that the Hartford School System must be desegregated and by Stipulated Agreement in 2008, 80 percent of the demand for less integrated schooling must be provided by 2012. Voluntary choice, among schools in 39 towns that surround Hartford will allow approximately 10,000 students to access higher performing schools and integrated school settings.

## **7. Sustainability through State Funds Repurposing**

Finally, Connecticut's application has been written with a keen understanding of the fiscal constraints at both the federal and state levels of government. At the state level, we fully understand that Connecticut faces a sizable deficit for the current and next fiscal year, and our economic health will be exceptionally challenging in the next biennial budget. To sustain initiatives begun with four-year federal ARRA funds through RTTT, Connecticut will need, therefore, to examine current educational spending and propose a plan for sustainability anchored in a public process of repurposing existing educational funds. Further, it is the clear expectation of this grant opportunity that each state examine its use of federal education funds across federal agency sources. We propose to elevate the importance of this requirement by making sustainability a formal and important part of Connecticut's grant application. This work is described in detail, in Section (A)(2) of this application.

As you can see from the charts below, the detailed Participating LEA table for (A)(1) within Appendix A-448, and the model memorandum of understanding signed on by the participating LEAs and the CSDE (sample set forth in Appendix A-329), Connecticut's participating LEAs are strongly committed to the state's education reform agenda and to implementing the plan in each of the four reform areas, as evidenced in the MOU, which includes:

- terms and conditions;
- scope of work descriptions requiring Participating LEAs to implement all or significant portions of the state's RTTT plans; and
- appropriate signatures.

As well as the brief scope of work descriptions outlined in the MOU, the CSDE has prepared detailed descriptors to accompany the MOU to further aid LEAs in making their determination to participate. These descriptors outline for LEAs requirements for implementation by reform area and can be found in Appendix A-297.

<b>Summary Table for (A)(1)(ii)(b)</b>		
<b>Elements of State Reform Plans</b>	<b>Number of LEAs Participating (#)</b>	<b>Percentage of Total Participating LEAs (%)</b>
<b>B. Standards and Assessments</b>		
(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	122	100%
<b>C. Data Systems to Support Instruction</b>		
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction:		
(i) Use of local instructional improvement systems	122	100%
(ii) Professional development on use of data	122	100%
(iii) Availability and accessibility of data to researchers	122	100%
<b>D. Great Teachers and Leaders</b>		
(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance:		
(i) Measure student growth	122	100%
(ii) Design and implement evaluation systems	122	100%
(iii) Conduct annual evaluations	122	100%
(iv)(a) Use evaluations to inform professional development	122	100%
(iv)(b) Use evaluations to inform compensation, promotion and retention	122	100%
(iv)(c) Use evaluations to inform tenure and/or full certification	122	100%
(iv)(d) Use evaluations to inform removal	122	100%
(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals:		
(i) High-poverty and/or high-minority schools	122	100%
(ii) Hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	122	100%
(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals:		
(i) Quality professional development	122	100%
(ii) Measure effectiveness of professional development	122	100%
<b>E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools</b>		
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	7*	100%
*For Section E, Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools, only seven Participating LEAs are eligible to participate as Tier I		

<b>Summary Table for (A)(1)(ii)(b)</b>		
<b>Elements of State Reform Plans</b>	<b>Number of LEAs Participating (#)</b>	<b>Percentage of Total Participating LEAs (%)</b>
and Tier II Schools for the school improvement grant.		

<b>Summary Table for (A)(1)(ii)(c)</b>			
<b>Signatures acquired from participating LEAs:</b>			
<b>Number of Participating LEAs with all applicable signatures</b>			
	<b>Number of Signatures Obtained (#)</b>	<b>Number of Signatures Applicable (#)</b>	<b>Percentage (%) (Obtained / Applicable)</b>
LEA Superintendent (or equivalent)	122	122	100%
President of Local School Board (or equivalent, if applicable)	105	122	86%
Local Teachers' Union Leader (if applicable)	59	107	55%

Table A(1)(iii) below provides data about the Connecticut public LEAs that are participating in the RTTT application, individually and aggregated to the state level. Connecticut expects that the implementation of SERP will have a substantial impact on student performance overall and by subgroup, given that the 122 participating LEAs:

- represent 61.9 percent of the state’s total districts, including 30 out of the 32 districts with the most economically disadvantaged populations, and all the state’s Charter Schools, which also serve large proportions of students in poverty;
- include 779 K-12 schools, which is 69.5 percent of the state’s public schools;
- enroll 381,883 K-12 students, which accounts for 69.7 percent of the state’s K-12 enrollment; and
- enroll 87.7 percent of the state’s K-12 students in poverty (defined as 185% of Federal Poverty Level).

Given the large percentage of participating LEAs, K-12 schools and students, particularly those living in poverty who in Connecticut are also very likely to be black, Hispanic, English language learners and/or students with disabilities, the state expects that the initiatives proposed in this application will be highly effective at increasing the achievement of Connecticut’s lowest performing

students. The focused interventions in SERP will build on the recent successes that have resulted in improving the state’s reading and mathematics scores of all students at the elementary and middle school levels and reducing some of the gaps in performance.

The implementation of *The Connecticut Plan for Secondary School Reform*, with its emphasis on academic rigor, student engagement and attainment of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills in a school environment that supports the success of all students, is directed at increasing the persistence of secondary students through middle and high school to graduation, so that graduation rates will increase, student achievement and the numbers of graduates enter college fully prepared to succeed in college-level courses will increase.

<b>Summary Table for (A)(1)(iii)</b>			
	<b>Participating LEAs (#)</b>	<b>Statewide (#)</b>	<b>Percentage of Total Statewide (%)</b> <small>(Participating LEAs / Statewide)</small>
LEAs	122	197	61.9
Schools	779	1,121	69.5
K-12 Students	381,883	548,247	69.7
Students in poverty	152,828	174,223	87.7

In Connecticut, if an LEA chooses, prekindergarten (PK) may be part of the public education program. The data above reflect students in kindergarten through Grade 12; however, had the PK students and schools been included, the counts would increase to 802 schools from 779 schools, to 394,223 students from 381,883 students, and to 157,778 students in poverty from 152,828 students in poverty in the participating LEAs.

The statewide number of schools includes schools operated by the Department of Correction (DOC), the Department of Children and Families (DCF), and the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS). The number of LEAs statewide includes DOC, DCF, DMHAS, three incorporated and endowed academies, and charter schools, all of which are considered an LEA in Connecticut.

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

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

- (a) The State's teachers and principals, which include the State's teachers' unions or statewide teacher associations; and
- (b) Other critical stakeholders, such as the State's legislative leadership; charter school authorizers and State charter school membership associations (if applicable); other State and local leaders (*e.g.*, business, community, civil rights, and education association leaders); Tribal schools; parent, student, and community organizations (*e.g.*, parent-teacher



associations, nonprofit organizations, local education foundations, and community-based organizations); and institutions of higher education.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**(A)(2) LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT**

(A)(2)(i) From the highest levels of state leadership, Connecticut enjoys strong support for the education of its students.

Connecticut’s Governor, the Honorable M. Jodi Rell, serves as co-chair of Education, Early Education and Workforce Committee of the National Governor’s Association and is nationally recognized for her work in early childhood education, dropout prevention, high school reform, and technology education. Preserving maximum funding levels for public schools has been her first priority and guiding principle when allocating state and federal dollars.

The Connecticut legislative delegation provides strong educational leadership in both the State House of Representatives and the State Senate. Legislative Education Committee Co-chairs, State Senator Thomas Gaffey and State Representative Andrew Fleischmann, successfully galvanize bipartisan support for education and innovations that improves teaching and expands learning opportunities for students. Their leadership contributed greatly to the accountability legislation that enhances the authority of the

Commissioner and SBE to intervene in LEAs and schools (including school closure and state takeover) that persistently produce students who fail to meet state standards.

Members of the Connecticut State Board of Education (SBE) are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the state legislature. The SBE meets monthly and organizes its work through four standing committees, and at times, ad hoc committees charged with specific, short-term tasks. By statute, the Board must publish a five-year plan and submit such plan to the legislature. This reform plan, developed with extensive public input, describes the SBE's priorities and expectations for public education over a five-year period. It informs policymakers and guides the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) in the priorities that the SBE expects its policies and the work of the CSDE to advance during the five-year period. It is also the foundation for this RTTT application.

In 2007, the SBE hired Dr. Mark K. McQuillan as Commissioner of Education to provide targeted and sustained administration and leadership to the CSDE as it implemented its goals and managed the resources of the CSDE. This necessitated a reorganization of the CSDE in 2008 to accomplish these goals and to fully execute the authority of the state's new accountability law while meeting the requirements of NCLB. Dr. McQuillan came to Connecticut with more than 30 years of public school experience in Massachusetts, where he served as deputy commissioner in the Massachusetts Department of Education. With the support of the SBE, local superintendents, business and industry leaders, and other stakeholders, Dr. McQuillan has articulated a vision for broad-gauged, systemic reform of Connecticut's schools.

**Goal: The CSDE will garner existing resources and expand the CSDE organizational structure and personnel capable of leading our state's education reform plan.**

During the past three years, the CSDE has reorganized its administrative structure to reflect the state's new economic realities and to better reflect an aggressive reform agenda. See Appendix A-4 and A-5 for the 2007 and 2009 organizational charts as evidence. CSDE has also developed, strengthened and formalized many new partnerships with other state agencies, educational service organizations, and the nonprofit, business and philanthropic sectors. With the creation of the RTTT grant, the CSDE will create an External Expert Advisory Panel consisting of state and national leaders to advise and inform the implementation of the four education areas this grant outlines.

The personnel resources of the SBE are supplemented by a State Education Resource Center (SERC) and an alliance of six regional educational service centers (RESC Alliance) that aid the CSDE in providing and extending information, professional development services, and technical assistance to LEAs, school boards, parents, and other regional and local stakeholders. All LEAs are voluntarily attached to a RESC in their region, and as members of a RESC, gain access to mutually agreed-upon services and those the CSDE requires. The RESC Alliance also helped the CSDE write new legislation in 2008 that would allow the CSDE to award contracts directly to the alliance, as it does with SERC, without having to undergo an extensive state-mandated bidding process. In the past, this process had bogged down the CSDE's ability to provide services, professional development, technical assistance, and training throughout the state. These entities will be primary agents to aid the CSDE in developing and delivering the services and professional development articulated in this RTTT application.

Commitment by additional statewide resources including, but not limited to, parent organizations, teacher and labor unions, business, philanthropies, advocacy groups, faith-based organizations, and civil rights organizations will lend support to this work.

Finally, the CSDE has organized internally to add two new administrative officers to oversee ARRA accountability and assist in implementing the SERP. The CSDE will be further assisted by a P20 Council jointly established by the CSDE and the Connecticut Department of Higher Education. See Appendix A-446 for the Governor's Executive Order for a description of the members and purpose of the P20 Council.

**(A)(2)(i)(a) Key Activity 1: The CSDE will provide for the organizational structure and partnerships needed to successfully implement all the goals outlined in the RTTT application.**

**A. Internal Capacity within the CSDE**

Currently, several work groups have been formed within the CSDE to develop and implement the SERP. These groups, their leaders, and brief histories are described below:

<b>Table (A)(2)(i)(a)1 CSDE Work Groups and Leaders</b>		
<b>Work Group</b>	<b>Group Leader</b>	<b>Status</b>
CSDE ARRA Advisory Committee	CSDE Commissioner	Has met biweekly since March 2009, to implement ARRA funds and coordinate distribution of and accountability for Stabilization Funds
CSDE RTTT Steering Committee	CSDE Deputy Commissioner and Associate Commissioner for Student and Family Support Services	Has met every Friday since September 2009 to prepare and coordinate the writing and outreach efforts needed for the RTTT application
SBE Ad Hoc Committee for Teacher Certification	CSDE Commissioner	Has met once a month since June 2009 to complete the final revisions of the State's 2010 Certification Regulations
RESC Alliance/SERC Steering Committee	CSDE Deputy Commissioner	Has met monthly since 2008, to plan and coordinate professional development activities in the state's six regions
Secondary School Reform (SSR) Planning Committee	CSDE Associate Commissioner for Teaching, Learning and Leadership	Has met every two months with CALI Partner Districts formed into four workgroups to implement the following aspects of the Connecticut Plan for Secondary School Reform

**B. External Partners**

In addition to the internal groups, a large group of external agencies and/or service organizations will also play a critical part in the work of implementing SERP. The external groups, some of whom have already been mentioned, have worked with the CSDE since September 2009 to plan for this grant. The following table presents a sample listing of partners across three sectors: state agencies, service organizations and the nonprofit sector.

<b>Table (A)(2)(i)(b)1 CSDE’s External Partners</b>		
<b>State Agencies</b>	<b>Service Organizations</b>	<b>The Nonprofit Sector</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connecticut Department of Higher Education (CTDHE)</li> <li>• Office of Workforce Competitiveness (OWC)</li> <li>• Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA)</li> <li>• Connecticut Employment and Training Council (CETC)</li> <li>• Commission for Children (COC)</li> <li>• Connecticut Education Network Council (CENC)</li> <li>• Governor’s ARRA Implementation Committee</li> <li>• State Education Resource Center (SERC)</li> <li>• CT Juvenile Justice Adjudication Center (CJJAC)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• American Federation of Teachers (AFT)</li> <li>• Connecticut Education Association (CEA)</li> <li>• Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS)</li> <li>• Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS)</li> <li>• Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE)</li> <li>• The RESC Alliance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund (WCGMF)</li> <li>• Hartford Foundation for Public Giving (HFPG)</li> <li>• Capital Workforce Partners</li> <li>• Bridgeport Coalition Action Committee (BCAC)</li> <li>• Our Piece of the Pie (OPP)</li> <li>• Connecticut Parent Power</li> <li>• Connecticut Math and Science Academy</li> <li>• Connecticut Science Center</li> <li>• Yale University Haskins Reading Laboratory</li> <li>• CT Center for School Change</li> </ul>

All these groups and organizations offer supplementary support, experience and added capacity to our agency when properly coordinated and integrated into the working operations of the CSDE. Many have submitted letters of support for this application.

**C. Race to the Top Management: New Administrative Components**

To bring all these pieces together, integrate the formal divisions of the CSDE, coordinate the work of external partners, and finally, implement and evaluate each initiative called for in SERP, the CSDE will appoint two RTTT project leaders to lead the work of implementing the reform plan. The leaders, both of whom will serve as staff to the Commissioner, will serve on the ARRA Steering Committee, report to the co-chairs of the Steering Committee, and be responsible, respectively, for helping division heads and bureau chiefs organize, implement and facilitate the work of all internal groups and external partners and work groups. RTTT project leaders will also facilitate the engagement of the external expert advisory panel.

The administrative structure for this work is depicted in the table below, including the names of staff currently employed by the CSDE. As one can see in Table (A)(2)(i)(a) RTTT’s four assurances align with all the initiatives or elements called for in the state’s reform plan:

<b>Table (A)(2)(i)(a) RTTT Implementation Management Structure</b>		
<b>RTTT Internal Project Facilitator (New)</b>	<b>RTTT External Project Facilitator (New)</b>	<b>ARRA Project Manager (Andrews)</b>
Report to Steering Committee, Co-Chairs	Report to Steering Committee, Co-Chairs	Report to Commissioner as ARRA Steering Committee Chair
<b>Standards and Assessments</b> <u>Support to:</u> Beaudin, Martinez, Ellsworth, Lucco, Feldlaufer	<b>Standards and Assessments</b> <u>Support to:</u> CAPSS, NESSC, RESC Alliance, SSR Transition Work Group, Our Piece of the Pie, NECC Pilot Project, CTHSS	<b>Standards and Assessments</b> <u>Support to:</u> Governor’s Accountability Team, NESSC Council, CSDE Public Relations Manager Tom Murphy
<b>Data Systems</b> <u>Support to:</u> Beaudin, Ellsworth, Lucco, Mahoney	<b>Data Systems</b> <u>Support to:</u> P20 Council	<b>Data Systems</b> <u>Support to:</u> Mahoney, Beaudin, Ellsworth, Croce
<b>Great Teachers, Leaders</b> <u>Support to:</u> Martinez, Pugliese, Feldlaufer, Russell-Tucker, Flinter, Linabury	<b>Great Teachers, Leaders</b> <u>Support to:</u> P20 Council, SERC, RESC Alliance, CT Commission on Children, Parent Information Resource Center, AFT, CEA, External Partners Steering Committee, ELL Institute, Commissioner of Higher Education	<b>Great Teachers, Leaders</b> <u>Support to:</u> Ad Hoc Committee for Certification, Martinez, Pugliese, Russell-Tucker, Flinter
<b>Turning Around Schools</b> <u>Support to:</u> Martinez, Richards	<b>Turning Around Schools</b> <u>Support to:</u> Collaborating Districts, CAUS, CAS RESC Alliance, SERC, CABE, UCONN	<b>Turning Around Schools</b> <u>Support to:</u> Beaudin, Richards

This small management team will interact with the CSDE’s Cabinet and Administrative Council to carry out the work set forth in the reform plan described in Sections B-F.

#### **D. New Staffing for Divisions and Bureaus in the CSDE**

Besides hiring of two facilitators, three divisions will also add more staff to address the new administrative, financial and accountability provisions required during the four years. An additional 20-25 full-time personnel for administration, administrative support, and technical assistance are projected to be necessary to execute all aspects of the plan. The staffing roster, totaling approximately \$3 million per year for four years is discussed briefly in Section (A)(2)(i)(d) and more completely our proposed RTTT budget. These additional staff members would be hired within the first six months of receiving the grant award.

**(A)(2)(i)(b) Key Activity 2: The CSDE will support LEAs to successfully implement the proposed plans, as well as identify promising practices, evaluating practices, replicating effective practices and intervention when necessary to ensure the State is meeting its goals.**

As described previously, the CSDE went through a recent reorganization that provides for an interdivisional and bureau structure to support participating LEAs, identifying promising practices and holding districts accountable for progress and performance. The divisions work in collaboration to provide the necessary supports and to ensure coherence with reporting requirements, identifying best practices and accountability and monitoring expectations.

The primary divisions and bureaus that will support LEAs to implement the reform plans are the Division of Teaching and Learning and Instructional Leadership – with the Bureaus of Accountability and Improvement, Teaching and Learning and Educator Standards and Certification and the Divisions of Assessment, Research and Technology – with the Bureaus of Student Assessment and Data Collection, Research and Evaluation.

- The Bureau of Data Collection Research and Evaluation is primarily responsible for overseeing compliance with meeting the requirements for timely and accurate data collection and reporting. They have robust audit systems to ensure the quality of data submitted to the department. This will be expanded to include the data components built into the reform plans.
- The Bureau of Student Assessment will work to ensure that LEAs implement the assessment requirements of the plans through the district required test coordinators. It will provide documents for test administration, power point presentations for district

training materials, conduct technical assistance meetings, run quality controls on test data files, and require district verification of student demographics, student participation in assessments, completeness of assessments, and verification of preliminary test results.

- The Bureau of Teaching and Learning will work in collaboration with the Bureau of Student Assessment to ensure that common core standards are provided to districts with training and technical assistance to ensure fidelity of implementation. It will provide the Curriculum Development Guide for districts to self- assess priority areas for development and implementation. The Bureau will pair CSDE consultants with district curriculum coordinators to use the Connecticut Walkthrough Protocol. This Protocol is a powerful tool to inform improvement planning, fidelity of implementation of curriculum and standards and identification of promising practices.
- The Bureau of Accountability and Improvement will expand the requirement from the Connecticut Accountability for Learning Initiative (CALI) to all Participating LEAs to participate in CALI professional development and to institute a three tiered accountability system. This accountability system of district, school and instructional level data teams create professional learning communities that focus on improving instructional practices, evaluating the effectiveness of the practices on student achievement, eliminating ineffective practices and showcasing promising practices.
- The Bureau of Educator Standards and Certification will ensure implementation of the reform plans for effective teachers and leaders. It will monitor implementation of the Teacher Education and Mentoring (TEAM) program through web based and on-site monitoring. They will support districts evaluation of teachers and administrators by collecting evaluation plans, ensuring that plans require student growth as a factor in the plan, and collecting data for implementation of the plans and by reporting data publicly.

The Division of Family and Student Services and Bureaus of Choice, Special Education and Health/Nutrition and Family Services and Adult Education will provide additional support to LEAs in implementation of all aspects of SERP.



- The Bureau of Choice will ensure the implementation of charter schools and other choice programs by monitoring programs, promoting best practices, implementing any new statutory requirements, and overseeing compliance of the charter school requirements.
- The Bureau of Special Education works closely with the Bureau of Accountability and Improvement on monitoring and supporting the achievement of students with disabilities and will assure alignment of IDEA funds to reform plan priorities.
- The Bureau of Health/Nutrition and Family Services and Adult Education will be actively engaged in the development and implementation of the family and student support initiatives outlined in this application. They will work with external partners to develop the professional development activities and design an accountability system to monitor the implementation of family engagement at the LEA level.

The Commissioner's Cabinet will begin the work of programmatic and fiscal alignment of existing state and federal initiatives to effect repurposing and sustainability beyond 2014.

In addition, as part of the support for LEAs and identification of promising practices, the Bureaus will work with a External Expert Advisory Panel, described earlier, to reflect on work that needs to be replicated or eliminated based on student achievement results. The RTTT Plan also calls for external evaluations of professional development activities that will inform the CSDE as to the effectiveness of practices that should be continued and those that should be discontinued.

**(A)(2)(i)(c) Key Activity 3: The CSDE will assure strong effective and efficient fiscal operations and processes for implementing and reporting on the RTTT grant.**

The CSDE administers nearly 50 different federal grants provided through the U.S. Departments of Education and Agriculture through its Division of Finance and Internal Operations, employing 80 employees in various offices and bureaus including the Bureau of Grants Management and Fiscal Services. These programs total more than \$525,000,000 annually. All federal grant programs that the CSDE administers are subject to strict cash management and oversight procedures, including:

- Organizationally to ensure sound fiscal practices, there is separation of duties between the program areas that approve grant awards and the fiscal areas responsible for the disbursement of funds. Even on the fiscal side, there are two bureaus (Grants Management and Fiscal Services) that provide a check and balance on the disbursement, reporting and monitoring of all federal funds.
- Except where specifically prohibited by federal law, the CSDE requires for each grant program detailed budgets from all grantees. Prior to any disbursement, the CSDE must approve the spending plan and ensure compliance within the grant. Grantees are made aware of the CSDE's strict variance policies and the potential for refund.
- Grantees may only request draw downs on a monthly basis. The Bureau of Grants Management reviews the monthly requests for reasonableness and appropriateness.
- For each federal grant, all grantees must file a detailed expenditure report at the end of the state's fiscal year. In addition, the CSDE requires that a certified public accounting (CPA) firm audit the reports.
- For each federal formula grant, the Bureau of Grants Management develops calculation forms that detail all the intermittent steps that ultimately produce the entitlements. In addition, the Bureau of Grants Management reviews all the data elements for accuracy and reasonableness. The Division of Legal and Governmental Affairs and the Office of Internal Audit review the calculation forms for compliance with federal law.
- The Bureau of Accountability and Improvement regularly monitors districts for program compliance with state and federal grant programs.
- The Bureau of Grants Management and the Office of Internal Audit continuously work with school business officials, CPA firms and the state auditors to keep everyone apprised of the CSDE's cash management and monitoring policies.
- Under the management structure outlined in Key Activity 1, the ARRA project leaders will be responsible for the oversight of performance measures tracking and reporting in accordance with the federal requirements.

**(A)(2)(i)(d) Key Activity 4: The CSDE will use RTTT funds to fully implement SERP and will coordinate, reallocate or repurpose education funds from other federal, state or local sources.**

The budget in Appendix A-22 of this application totals nearly \$192 million to be spent over four years. The budget as a whole represents the aggregation of 26 separate budgets. Each project budget supports specific initiatives and activities described in our State Reform Plan. Approximately \$38 million has been set aside for Reform Area 1 (*Standards and Assessments*); \$16 million for Reform Area 2 (*Longitudinal Data Systems*); and \$127 million and \$11 million for Reform Areas 3 and 4 respectively, (*Great Teachers and Leaders* and *Turning Around the Lowest Achieving Schools*).

The budget demonstrates the interrelatedness of Reform Areas 1-4, with initiatives in one area overlapping with others described in separate sections of the application. Despite this overlap, the emphases and priorities of the budget reflect Connecticut's commitment to Reform Area 3 in particular, where the activities, as diverse as they are, are transformative for a state this size.

Two important areas of emphasis in the budget, apart from *Great Teachers and Leaders*, are CALI and The Connecticut Plan for Secondary School Reform, initiatives with long standing in Connecticut's comprehensive five-year plan. All Participating LEAs will be required to complete work related to CALI and *The Connecticut Plan for Secondary School Reform* as well as initiatives related specifically to Connecticut's Race to the Top Education Reform Agenda.

In addition, readers will observe that Connecticut has fully used the flexibility provisions of RTTT fund distribution to provide:

- Additional funding to small Participating LEAs whose allocations under the Title I formula are either nonexistent or too low to encourage meaningful participation.
- Additional funding to participating urban districts that, despite a generous Title I formula allocation, are still in need of financial assistance, particularly if they are to address the staffing demands of Part I of *The Connecticut Plan for Secondary School Reform*;
- Significant funding (\$12 million) for the hiring of additional staff the CSDE needs to administer, manage and evaluate all the State Reform Plan elements.

- Significant funding for the CSDE to offer professional development training.
- Major funding for the purchase of contracted services from professional organizations such as the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS). Of all these service providers, the RESC Alliance is expected to play a major role in implementing this plan in the time required. The strong RESC Alliance is one reason why Connecticut can so easily scale up so many initiatives simultaneously with a clear expectation that our six partners can reach every LEA in the state, as needed.

As conceived throughout, participating LEAs will be free to draw upon their own resources to finance required initiatives, to access those the CSDE provides directly, or to contract for services through their local regional educational service center.

We believe the cost sharing made possible through the budget, the use of the RESC Alliance, and the targeted funding for all initiatives will make for a balanced plan and responsible budget.

These resources include not only agency staff but also funding at the federal, state and local level. Examination of each revenue source for potential supplemental assistance for furthering the RTTT education reform plan has begun, and where appropriate, funding will be channeled to support the reform areas under RTTT. While it is too early to determine the level or amounts that will be targeted from the school improvement, statewide longitudinal data systems, and Title I grant programs, discussions are now focused on aligning efforts to address all four reform areas. When applying for all subsequent federal grants, grantees will be asked to identify where in each grant they address each reform area. In addition, the CSDE has a number of state appropriations that were created specifically to address the areas of reform. These include school accountability (\$1.86 million); longitudinal data systems (\$1.5 million); and teacher standards (\$2.9 million), which funds the new Teacher Education and Mentoring (TEAM) program.

**(A)(2)(i)(e) Key Activity 5: The CSDE will develop a sustainability plan that incorporates fiscal, political, and human capital resources.**

The CSDE developed this application acutely aware of current fiscal constraints at both the federal and state levels of government. At the state level, it is understood that even as Connecticut faces a sizable deficit for the current fiscal year and the next, our economic health will be challenged in the next four years.

To sustain initiatives begun with RTTT funds, the CSDE will consciously examine current spending priorities and propose a plan for sustainability anchored in a public process of repurposing existing educational funds. It is a clear requirement of this application that each state examines its use of federal education funds across federal agency sources. As a result, Connecticut proposes to address this requirement by analyzing spending during the first two or three years of the grant, and determine how, through the combined use of state funds and other federal entitlement grants, we can repurpose our allocations to sustain the gains made during the four-year implementation period of our state reform plan.

Table (A)(2)(i)(e) below depicts the timeline and key activities to develop the plan for how best to sustain our RTTT investment at the end of the four-year period.

<b>Table (A)(2)(i)(e) RTTT Sustainability Plan</b>			
<b>Organizational Unit</b>	<b>Activities Years 1-2</b>	<b>Activities Years 3-4</b>	<b>Activities Years 5-8</b>
<b>CSDE</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use RTTT resources to develop capacity and implement RTTT objectives.</li> <li>2. Review and propose state policy and legislative change to implement and sustain RTTT.</li> <li>3. Use private foundation and P20 resources to educate and gather support from Connecticut’s general public, policy makers, business leaders, educators and students regarding Connecticut’s RTTT plan and its investment needs in years 3-8.</li> <li>4. Coordinate, through partnership with the Connecticut Department of Higher</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In 2012, develop legislative proposals to repurpose existing competitive or discretionary state funding in RTTT “Participating LEAs” (and for RTTT identified activities) to support promising or successful RTTT objectives in 2014 and beyond.</li> <li>2. Propose redesign of existing state discretionary and entitlement grant programs, as appropriate, to support or mirror state and local RTTT objectives.</li> <li>3. Propose changes to the USDOE to permit Connecticut flexibility in its</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pending successful action of the legislature, provide state grants to LEAs to sustain and expand state systems and local participation in RTTT initiated activities.</li> </ol>

<b>Table (A)(2)(i)(e) RTTT Sustainability Plan</b>			
<b>Organizational Unit</b>	<b>Activities Years 1-2</b>	<b>Activities Years 3-4</b>	<b>Activities Years 5-8</b>
	<p>Education, vehicles for sharing RTTT goals, system building and activity financial support, e.g., college-high school partnerships and “Next Generation” teacher preparation skills.</p> <p>5. At the direction and participation of state education policy makers, engage policy, including funding of “choice schools funding and development.”</p> <p>6. Plan, develop and implement an online process where RTTT participating LEAs can easily recommend “no-cost and low-cost” actions, policies or practices which, if implemented, would advance the goals of the initiative.</p>	<p>use of federal grant funds (Title programs, IDEA, etc.) to align state and local funds to effectively supplement and align with RTTT program expenditures.</p> <p>4. Identify for the 2014 Connecticut General Assembly how the “required” and “elective” initiatives of <i>SERP</i> can be sustained through new state grant programs.</p> <p>5. Seek on behalf of the state and LEAs supplemental philanthropic support for most promising, high-priority RTTT initiatives in 2012 and beyond.</p>	
<b>Participating LEAs</b>		<p>6. As part of the annual planning and technical support process between LEA and state, propose alignment of local RTTT program objectives and federal and state grant funding source objectives to reflect increasingly integrated goals and outcomes, supported by integrated funding streams.</p>	<p>2. Identify and fund as appropriate, RTTT initiatives as integral components of local budget, policy and practice, supplemented with federal and state funding, as appropriate.</p>

<b>Table (A)(2)(i)(e) RTTT Sustainability Plan</b>			
<b>Organizational Unit</b>	<b>Activities Years 1-2</b>	<b>Activities Years 3-4</b>	<b>Activities Years 5-8</b>
<b>Involved Districts</b>		7. As part of the annual planning and technical support process between LEA and state, propose alignment of local RTTT program objectives and local, federal and state grant funding source objectives to reflect increasingly integrated goals and outcomes, supported by integrated funding streams.	3. Identify and fund as appropriate, RTTT initiatives as integral components of local budget, policy and practice, supplemented with federal and state funding, as appropriate.
<b>High-Need Participating LEAs (Collaborating Districts)</b>		8. Through technical support from the CSDE, restructure local, state and federal non-RTTT funding to support sustained activities and effective high-priority school improvement activities as represented in RTTT.	4. Identify and fund as appropriate, RTTT initiatives as integral components of local budget, policy and practice, supplemented with federal and state funding, as appropriate.

**(A)(2)(ii)(a-b) Partnerships**

As specified in Section (A)(2)(i)(a), Connecticut is committed to further strengthening its existing partnerships, as well as forging new relationships, with outside stakeholders. Our application includes more than 80 letters of support from various stakeholders summarized below, each supporting the goals and implementation of Connecticut’s plan. All of these groups and organizations listed below offer supplementary support, experience and added capacity to the CSDE. Of note, both state teacher union associations, the

American Federation of Teachers and the Connecticut Education Association, have indicated their support and commitment to working with CSDE and the LEAs to implement Connecticut Reform Plan.

Below is a complete list of stakeholder support, aligned with the categories referenced in the application, along with noted details related to some organizations. See Appendix A-341 for a list of stakeholder support for Connecticut’s application, including copies of letters of support.

**Statewide Teacher Union Associations**

1. Connecticut Education Association
2. AFT Connecticut

**State Legislature Education Committee**

3. State Representative Andrew Fleischmann
4. State Senator Thomas Gaffey

**United States Congress**

5. Connecticut’s Congressional Delegation

**State Charter School Membership Associations**

6. Connecticut Charter School Network
7. Science and Technology Magnet High School of Southeastern Connecticut

**Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs)**

8. Regional Educational Service Centers Alliance

**Education Organizations**

9. The Connecticut Association of Schools
10. Annenberg Institute for School Reform

11. State Education Resource Center
12. Connecticut Academy for Education
13. Connecticut Association of Boards of Education
14. Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents
15. Regional Educational Laboratory at EDC
16. Connecticut Center for School Change
17. Great Schools Partnership
18. Teach for America

**Institutions of Higher Education**

19. State Department of Higher Education
20. Central Connecticut State University
21. Connecticut State University System
22. Connecticut Community Colleges
23. Charter Oak State College
24. Connecticut College
25. Fairfield University



- 26. Gateway Community College
- 27. Goodwin College
- 28. Housatonic Community College
- 29. Manchester Community College
- 30. Naugatuck Valley Community College
- 31. Norwalk Community College
- 32. St. Joseph's College
- 33. Southern Connecticut State University
- 34. Three Rivers Community College
- 35. University of Connecticut
- 36. Lincoln College
- 37. Wesleyan University
- 38. Quinebaug Valley Community College

**Education Foundations**

- 39. Nellie Mae Education Foundation
- 40. Graustein Memorial Fund
- 41. Connecticut Community Foundation
- 42. Fairfield County Community Foundation
- 43. Norwalk Education Foundation

**Parent Organizations**

- 44. Connecticut Parent Teacher Association
- 45. Middlesex County Parent Leadership

- 46. Connecticut Parent Information and Resource Center
- 47. Center on School, Family and Community Partnerships
- 48. African Caribbean American Parents of Children with Disabilities
- 49. Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center
- 50. Parents United for Children of Color
- 51. Student of Color Parent Organization
- 52. Middletown Schools' School Family Partners District Team
- 53. Tawana Bourne: parent

**Community-Based Organizations**

- 54. Aspira of Connecticut
- 55. Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition
- 56. Stepping Stones Museum for Children
- 57. Connecticut Humanities Council
- 58. Meriden Children First

**Science Technology Engineering Math-Related Organizations (STEM)**

- 59. Connecticut Academy of Science and Engineering
- 60. Connecticut Science Center

**Business Community**

- 61. AT&T

- 62. Bridgeport Regional Business Council
- 63. Connecticut Business and Industry Association
- 64. Connecticut Development Authority
- 65. Connecticut Metropolitan Regional Chambers Alliance
- 66. Connecticut's BioScience Cluster - CURE (Connecticut United for Research Excellence)
- 67. Eastern Connecticut Chamber of Commerce
- 68. Manufacturing Alliance of Connecticut
- 69. Northeast Utilities
- 70. UIL Holdings Corporation
- 71. Webster Bank
- 72. US Small Business Administration – Connecticut District Office
- 73. Real World Design Challenge

**State of Connecticut Commissions**

- 74. African-American Affairs Commission
- 75. Commission on Children
- 76. Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission

**Other Critical Stakeholders**

- 77. Connecticut Employment Training Commission
- 78. Office of Workforce Competitiveness
- 79. Urban League

- 80. American Arbitration Association
- 81. Connecticut Health and Educational Facilities Authority
- 82. Islamic Association of Greater Hartford
- 83. United Way
- 84. State of Black Connecticut Alliance

**(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) DEMONSTRATING PROGRESS IN RAISING ACHIEVEMENT**

**A(3)(i)** Connecticut has demonstrated the ability to make progress over the past several years in the four education reform areas, and has used its ARRA and other federal and state funding to pursue such reforms. See below for the progress made in the four reform areas:

#### Improving Data Systems

Connecticut has been working to continually improve its data systems and to meet the 12 America COMPETES requirements as defined in the RTTT Application. Section (C)(1) provides a summary of Connecticut's progress toward meeting each requirement. Six have been fully implemented and six are in progress, with target completion dates of 2011-12 for the remaining six.

#### Standards and Assessments

Connecticut has and will continue focusing on high academic achievement for all students in the areas of English language arts, mathematics and science. Our state has developed curriculum standards, prekindergarten to Grade 8 (including grade-level expectations in English language arts, mathematics and science), provided models for curriculum in mathematics, English language arts (K-8) and algebra. The prekindergarten to Grade 8 curriculum standards for English language arts, mathematics and science offer a continuum of skills and knowledge that build across a child's school career, beginning with prekindergarten as the foundation.

To support districts in using the state's curriculum standards, Connecticut developed the *Connecticut Curriculum Development Guide* (CCDG), an instrument designed to lead the planning, review and development of PK-12 curriculum. Using an inventory of components recommended for all PK-12 curricula, the guide provides a common language and structure for curriculum design in an effort to increase consistency within and among programs, districts, schools, grade levels and subject areas statewide. In 2008, The *Connecticut Walkthrough Protocol Guide* was developed as a companion tool to align with the CCDG. This tool is used to support the state's district and school personnel with school and classroom walkthroughs. Walkthroughs are a powerful tool to inform improvement planning, professional development needs, curriculum revision and instructional practice.

### Great Teachers and Leaders

The last 20 years have provided the CSDE with strong experiences in developing and implementing standards-based, statewide student assessment, beginning teacher assessment and support programs, and rigorous teacher and administrator evaluation guidelines. During the past three years, the CSDE:

1. Revised its Certification Regulations which are currently awaiting SBE approval in February 2010.
2. Revised the *Common Core of Teaching* which embodies the teaching standards that all teachers are expected to use. The leadership standards will be revised beginning in spring 2010.
3. Is currently developing a new beginning teacher induction model (TEAM) to be fully implemented in 2010-11.
4. Intends to use the expertise gained during the last 20 years in developing valid and reliable measures of teacher competence, to further develop a more rigorous, data-driven set of guidelines for teacher and administrator evaluation. Work on this initiative is set to begin in spring 2010.

The newly revised *Connecticut Common Core of Teaching* is the set of standards against which LEAs will evaluate the effectiveness of their teachers. Additionally, the CSDE has plans to revise and update the guidelines for professional development following the revision of the teacher and administrator evaluation documents to move districts from providing “sit and get” professional development to job-embedded learning.

### Turning Around the Lowest Achieving Schools

The CSDE has made significant progress in turning around schools through the establishment of state accountability legislation in 2007 and implementation of the Connecticut Accountability for Learning Initiative (CALI). In addition, students in these schools are making demonstrable academic progress. A complete description is included in Section (E)(2)(ii) and the CALI overview found in Appendix A-169.

**A(3)(ii): Demonstrating Significant Progress in Raising Achievement and Closing Gaps**

When examining student performance over time, from 2003 through 2009 (or the most recent assessment available), Connecticut can document significant improvements by looking at its National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) data and the state assessment data from the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT), administered in Grades 3 through 8, and the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT), administered in Grade 10. Connecticut has full federal approval to use the CMT and CAPT for its ESEA (NCLB) reporting.

**National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)**

Beginning in 2003, NCLB required all states to participate in state-level NAEP. Before that time states could decline participation without penalty. Since the inception of state-level NAEP in 1990, Connecticut has participated in every NAEP administration, including writing and science, although not required to do so under NCLB.

NAEP is the national assessment administered to a representative sample of students to determine the performance of all students in Grades 4 and 8 and of demographic subgroups of students. It represents a “common denominator” assessment to compare the performance of students in the U.S. across states. Students have been tested and reports have been issued for Grades 4 and 8 since the early 1990s. The data presented here summarizes results for 2003 through 2009 in mathematics, for Grades 4 and 8 in Table A(3)(a), and from 2003 through 2007 in reading, for Grades 4 and 8, in Table (A)(3)(b).

NAEP Mathematics

To support Connecticut’s efforts to document that the state has made progress in improving student performance in mathematics overall, and for its subgroups since 2003, CSDE analyzed the NAEP average scale scores for all Grade 4 and 8 students, and for the subgroup used for state reporting. The Connecticut’s NAEP mathematics scores are statistically higher than the national average.

Connecticut has seen more improvement in mathematics than reading on the NAEP. For Grade 4, the mathematics trends in performance are positive over the six-year time frame for all students and for every subgroup. For Grade 8, the trends are positive for all students and all subgroups except English Language Learners (ELL). The NAEP mathematics data also indicate:

- The 2009 Grade 8 average scale score is statistically higher than all previous years, while the 2009 Grade 4 score is statistically higher than 2003.
- Over the six-year period, scores for all students and all subgroups were highest in 2009 for both grades, reversing some downward trends between 2003 and 2007.
- Between 2007 and 2009, the increase in scales score of free or reduced-price lunch eligible students exceeded noneligible students; black and Hispanic students exceeded the increase for white students; ELL students exceeded non-ELL students; and students with disabilities exceeded nondisabled students for both grades.

The data suggest that there is some narrowing of the achievement gap among subgroups in mathematics.

In the tables below, please note the following acronyms: Students with Disabilities (SD) and English Language Learners (ELL).

<b>Table A(3)(a): Comparison of Connecticut NAEP Mathematics Scores for Grades 4 and 8, 2003 to 2009</b>											
<b>GRADE 4 NAEP MATHEMATICS: Average Scale Score by Student Group</b>											
<b>Year</b>	All students	Eligible for F/R Lunch	Not Eligible	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/Pacific Islander	ELL	Not ELL	SD	Not SD
2009	245	225	253	253	222	227	257	216	246	222	248
2007	243	222	252	252	220	223	255	211	245	216	246
2005	242	223	249	250	219	223	253	215	243	220	245
2003	241	220	250	250	217	223	249	211	242	219	243
<b>GRADE 8 NAEP MATHEMATICS: Average Scale Score by Student Group</b>											
<b>Year</b>	All students	Eligible for F/R Lunch	Not Eligible	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/Pacific Islander	ELL	Not ELL	SD	Not SD
2009	289	263	298	298	261	263	305	240	290	256	293
2007	282	256	292	293	255	254	307	227	285	245	287
2005	281	255	292	293	249	254	292	242	282	248	285
2003	284	260	292	293	255	259	296	241	285	252	288

NAEP Reading

Improving instruction in reading has been more challenging for Connecticut. While Connecticut’s 2007 Grade 4 and 8 NAEP average scale scores for all students are higher than the national average, the NAEP reading results for 2003 to 2007 provide little



evidence that reading performance has improved in either Grade 4 or Grade 8. The 2009 results have not yet been released. Table (A)(3)(b) contains the NAEP reading data.

The data suggest that:

- Black students constitute the only subgroup with a positive trend in reading performance for both grades, although their subgroup performance continues to be among the lowest performing.
- There is little evidence of narrowing the achievement gap in reading, except a slight decline in the gap between white and black students.

<b>A(3)(b): Comparison of Connecticut NAEP Mathematics Scores for Grades 4 and 8, 2003 to 2009</b>											
<b>GRADE 4 NAEP READING: Average Scale Score by Student Group</b>											
<b>Year</b>	All students	Eligible	Not Eligible	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/ Pacific Islander	ELL	Not ELL	SD	Not SD
2007	227	201	239	238	203	203	244	185	229	190	232
2005	226	202	235	234	201	203	236	193	227	189	230
2003	228	205	238	238	201	206	231	‡	229	192	232

<b>GRADE 8 NAEP READING: Average Scale Score by Student Group</b>											
<b>Year</b>	All students	Eligible	Not Eligible	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/ Pacific Islander	ELL	Not ELL	SD	Not SD
2007	267	243	275	276	246	243	272	216	269	232	272
2005	264	243	272	272	240	245	279	‡	265	231	269
2003	267	245	275	275	244	244	282	‡	267	229	272

‡ Reporting standards not met

### **Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT)**

Connecticut has administered the CMT since 1986 (now in its fourth generation) to assess mathematics and reading. Before 2005, only Grades 4, 6 and 8 were tested in the fall; from 2006 on, Grades 3 through 8 were tested in the spring. To satisfy the NCLB reporting requirements, Connecticut annually reports the percentage of students scoring at or above the state's proficient level. Since 2006, approximately 250,000 students have taken the CMT annually. CMT results are presented in the tables below. The data are aggregated across all six grades.

#### *CMT Mathematics*

The mathematics CMT across all six grades assesses students' knowledge and skills in four areas: (1) numerical and proportional reasoning; (2) geometry and measurement; (3) algebraic reasoning; and (4) statistics and probability. Table (A)(3)(c) provides data from 2003 to 2009. The data show positive trends in CMT mathematics, consistent with the NAEP results. The percentage of students tested who scored "at or above proficient" from 2003 to 2009 has increased for all students and for each subgroup, with most of the largest changes in performance occurring between 2008 and 2009. Between 2003 and 2009, the proportion of Connecticut students scoring at or above the proficient level increased by 5.6 percentage points. As a point of reference, each percentage point increase from one year to the next indicates that about an additional 2,500 students reached proficiency across the state from the previous year. In comparing subgroup performance, the percentage point increase (in parentheses) is greater for:

- students eligible for free or reduced-price meals (9.8) than those who were not eligible (5.2);
- black (11.0) and Hispanic (10.8) students than white (4.3) students;
- ELLs (9.4) than non-ELLs (5.9); and
- special education students (15.5) than for non-special education students (3.9). (Note: A Modified Assessment pilot was administered for the first time in 2009 to a small number of special education students who did not take the standard CMT.)

The trends suggest some systematic decrease in the disparity in performance among subgroups.

<b>Table (A)(3)(c): Comparison of CMT Mathematics Scores from 2003 to 2009</b>										
<b>CMT MATHEMATICS: Percentage at/above Proficient by Student Groups</b>										
<b>Year</b>	All students	Eligible for F/R Lunch	Not Eligible	White	Black	Hispanic	ELL	Not ELL	SD	Not SD
2009	85.0	67.5	92.9	92.8	66.0	67.0	49.0	86.7	58.3	87.6
2008	82.2	62.7	90.9	90.7	61.3	63.1	45.1	84.0	44.4	87.0
2007	81.2	61.0	89.5	90.0	59.1	60.6	44.7	82.9	43.1	86.0
2006	79.3	57.7	88.1	88.5	55.3	57.2	46.9	80.9	40.8	84.4
2004	78.3	56.2	86.4	87.4	53.4	55.7	45.5	79.5	39.3	83.2
2003	79.4	57.7	87.7	88.5	55.0	56.2	39.6	80.8	42.8	83.7

### *CMT Reading*

Table (A)(3)(d) summarizes the CMT reading results. The reading CMT consists of reading comprehension test and a *Degrees of Reading Power* test at each grade. The reading trends in performance also are positive for all students and most of the subgroups. However, the greatest increase in percentages of students scoring at or above the proficient level occurred between 2008 and 2009, after flat performance from 2003 to 2007. Between 2003 and 2009, the proportion of Connecticut students scoring at or above the proficient level increased by 4.8 percentage points. In comparing subgroup performance, the percentage point increase is greater for:

- students eligible for free or reduced-price meals (7.8) than those who were not eligible (5.1);
- black (7.7) and Hispanic (8.6) students than white (4.4) students;
- ELLs (5.5) than non-ELLs (5.3); and
- special education students (13.2) than for non-special education students (2.8). (Note: A modified assessment pilot was administered for the first time in 2009 to a small number of special education students who did not take the standard CMT.)

While some of the gains in reading were not as large as for mathematics, there is still evidence that gaps in performance among subgroups have begun to close.

<b>Table (A)(3)(d): Comparison of CMT Reading Scores from 2003 to 2009</b>										
<b>CMT Reading: Percentage at/above Proficient by Student Groups</b>										
<b>Year</b>	All students	Eligible for F/R Lunch	Not Eligible	White	Black	Hispanic	ELL	Not ELL	SD	Not SD
2009	78.0	55.1	88.1	87.8	56.6	53.4	24.7	80.4	45.5	80.7
2008	74.4	49.7	85.5	84.9	51.5	48.5	20.9	77.0	32.0	79.8
2007	73.5	48.0	84.0	84.2	49.3	46.3	20.4	76.0	30.7	78.9
2006	73.7	48.0	84.2	84.2	49.5	46.6	27.6	76.0	31.3	79.3
2004	71.6	45.8	81.1	81.7	47.1	43.9	25.9	73.3	29.4	77.0
2003	73.2	47.3	83.0	83.4	48.9	44.8	19.2	75.1	32.3	77.9

### **Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT)**

The CAPT has been administered since 1995 and is now in its third generation. CAPT assesses Grade 10 students in mathematics, reading, writing and science. Approximately 45,000 Grade 10 students take the CAPT annually.

#### *CAPT Mathematics*

The mathematics CAPT, using constructed response and grid-in items, assesses Grade 10 students' knowledge and skills in four areas: (1) numerical and proportional reasoning; (2) geometry and measurement; (3) algebraic reasoning; and (4) statistics and probability. Overall, the trends in mathematics achievement are positive between 2003 and 2008, with small declines between 2008 and 2009. While there continue to be large differences in subgroup performance, some trends suggest the gap is decreasing in Connecticut high school student performance. Between 2003 and 2009, the proportion of Connecticut students scoring at or above the proficient level increased by 4.1 percentage points. Comparing performance among subgroups, the percentage point increase (in parentheses) is greater for:

- students eligible for free or reduced-price meals (9.5) than those who were not eligible (6.5);
- black (6.9) and Hispanic (12.2) students than white (5.0) students;
- non-ELLs (4.6) than ELLs (4.4); and
- non-special education students (4.4) than for special education students (3.4).

The trends suggest that while districts have had some success in reducing the disparity in performance between economically disadvantaged students and their more affluent counterparts, and among racial and ethnic subgroups, they have been more challenged in reducing gaps between students whose native language is English and students for whom it is not, and between special education and non-special education students.

<b>Table (A)(3)(e): Comparison of CAPT Mathematics Scores from 2003 to 2009</b>										
<b>CAPT MATHEMATICS: Percentage at/above Proficient by Student Groups</b>										
<b>Year</b>	All students	Eligible for F/R Lunch	Not Eligible	White	Black	Hispanic	ELL	Not ELL	SD	Not SD
2009	78.4	51.9	87.4	89.2	46.3	54.3	35.8	79.8	42.7	82.6
2008	79.7	53.4	88.3	90.3	49.5	54.8	35.3	81.1	43.5	83.7
2007	77.2	48.8	85.9	88.4	43.3	50.5	34.0	78.6	39.0	81.5
2006	77.9	51.3	85.4	88.3	45.9	51.1	37.7	79.2	40.1	82.3
2005	75.7	47.6	82.5	85.9	44.5	46.7	36.5	76.8	36.5	80.3
2004	76.4	48.2	82.3	86.3	41.9	46.1	34.5	77.6	38.5	81.0
2003	74.3	42.4	80.9	84.2	39.4	42.1	31.4	75.2	39.3	78.2

### *CAPT Reading*

Table (A)(3)(f) displays the CAPT reading results from 2003 to 2009. The reading CAPT consists of two components: (1) reading for information; and (2) response to literature. Both consist entirely of extended-response items. Like mathematics, the overall trends are positive between 2003 and 2008, with small declines between 2008 and 2009. Similar patterns in subgroup performance to those illustrated for mathematics hold for reading subgroup performance. Between 2003 and 2009, the proportion of Connecticut students scoring at or above the proficient level increased by 3.9 percentage points. In comparing subgroup performance, the percentage point increase (in parentheses) is greater for:

- students eligible for free or reduced-price meals (9.3) than those who were not eligible (5.7);
- black (6.9) and Hispanic (11.4) students than white (4.4) students;

- ELLs (7.8) than non-ELLs (4.3); and
- Special education students (8.6) than for non-Special education students (2.7).

The trends suggest districts have had success in reducing the disparity in reading performance among these subgroups at the high school level.

<b>Table (A)(3)(f): Comparison of CAPT Reading Scores from 2003 to 2009</b>										
<b>CAPT READING: Percentage at/above Proficient by Student Groups</b>										
<b>Year</b>	<b>All students</b>	<b>Eligible for F/R Lunch</b>	<b>Not Eligible</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>ELL</b>	<b>Not ELL</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Not SD</b>
2009	81.8	59.8	89.3	90.0	60.0	62.3	35.1	83.2	49.0	84.7
2008	82.7	60.4	90.0	91.0	60.9	61.7	38.0	84.0	47.3	86.6
2007	79.7	54.9	87.3	88.6	54.4	57.2	37.7	81.0	40.3	84.2
2006	79.9	57.4	86.1	87.8	57.0	57.3	39.0	81.1	39.5	84.5
2005	79.5	55.1	85.5	87.5	55.5	56.4	39.7	80.6	41.5	84.0
2004	79.1	55.5	84.0	86.6	54.4	54.5	37.8	80.1	39.0	83.9
2003	77.9	50.5	83.6	85.6	53.1	50.9	27.3	78.9	40.4	82.0

**Graduation Rates**

Connecticut is collecting the data necessary to calculate the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate; however, the data are not publicly available as of this writing. Connecticut originally agreed to the National Governors’ Association (NGA) Compact graduation rate with plans to release this rate with the graduating class of 2010. The recently released Title I guidelines also called for the addition of the four-year adjusted cohort rates, and therefore the process began to ensure data were in place to calculate the graduation rate earlier than anticipated. Because this is a new formula for Connecticut’s graduation rate, the plan is to release these data to LEAs to

show data for their district and each high school their graduation rate for the graduating class of 2009. The graduation rates for the class of 2009, using the four-year adjusted cohort method, are under way. Because this is the first time this calculation has been conducted, additional time has been required to validate student-level data and address technical issues.

Until the four-year, adjusted cohort rate is available, Connecticut uses a modified cohort rate, based on aggregate school- and district-level data, the U.S. DOE approved for use in its federal accountability system. This calculation, A divided by B, is as follows:

*A. the number of June 2010 four-year graduates with a regular diploma*

divided by:

*B. number of June 2010 graduates plus number of 2009-10 12th-grade dropouts; plus number of 2008-09 11th-grade dropouts; plus number of 2007-08 10th-grade dropouts; plus number of 2006-07 ninth-grade dropouts.*

The state graduation rate is reported in the Consolidated State Performance Report, and the state graduation rate for special education students is also required under IDEA in the State Performance Plan. The rates are based on the modified cohort graduation rate, also called our “transitional” rate, under the ESEA.

The trend line in graduation rates for all students and for the designated subgroups is positive from 2003 to 2007. Between 2003 and 2007, the statewide graduation rate increased to 92.1 percent from 89.0 percent, for a total of 3.1 percentage points. In comparing subgroup performance, the percentage point increase (in parentheses) is greater for American Indian (12.4), Asian American (5.3), black (6.6) and Hispanic (6.8) students than white (3.5) students. The improvement in graduation rate for special education students is 15.4 percentage points over the five-year period of time.



<b>Table (A)(3)(g): Connecticut Graduation Rates for the Class of 2003 through 2008</b>							
<b>Class of</b>	<b>All Students</b>	<b>American Indian</b>	<b>Asian American</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Special Education</b>
2008	92.1	*	*	*	*	*	79.4
2007	92.4	95.4	96.3	87.6	79.8	95.5	77.2
2006	92.2	91.4	96.0	86.0	79.4	94.9	73.5
2005	91.2	87.7	94.1	87.3	82.4	93.3	67.7
2004	89.8	88.7	94.2	82.7	73.5	93.4	63.2
2003	89.0	83.0	91.0	81.0	73.0	92.0	61.8

Data for some subgroups (\*) were not reported in 2008, because the CSDE was transitioning to a new method of calculating the graduation rate. This change resulted in a data issue with the aggregate dropout data by race we have historically used to produce the modified cohort graduation rate. Data by these subgroups will be reported in the future using the new method.

#### **Actions Contributing to Increases in Student Performance: Connecticut Accountability for Learning Initiative**

The CSDE has undertaken numerous initiatives since 2003 to improve student learning outcomes. Many districts have been challenged to develop and implement PK-12 curriculum with benchmark assessments, curriculum-based assessments and pacing guides. In support of Connecticut districts, the CSDE has also created the *Connecticut Curriculum Development Guide*. This guide is an instrument designed to lead the planning, review and development of PK-12 curriculum. Using an inventory of components recommended for all PK-12 curriculum, the guide provides a common language and structure for curriculum design in an effort to increase consistency within and among programs, districts, grade levels and subject areas statewide.

With a sharp focus on the quality of instruction delivered in classrooms, the CSDE created and disseminated several documents for districts. These documents include: *Connecticut Walkthrough Protocol Guide*; *Connecticut's Benchmark Assessments for Language Art and Mathematics*; *Connecticut's Pacing Guides for Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science*; and *Connecticut's Curriculum Frameworks for Language Arts, Mathematics and Science*.

Further, in the last two years, the SBE has revised several policy statements regarding mathematics, English language arts and science to align them with the curriculum standards in those areas. Reflecting the importance of the early years, stronger alignment has also been made between preschool and kindergarten. *Connecticut's Preschool Framework* consists of content standards and performance standards (indicators) in each of four domains. This is further supported by *Connecticut's Preschool Assessment Framework* which is a curriculum embedded tool for assessing 3- and 4-year-olds in their classrooms. Connecticut has also developed standards for *Early Learning* which include grade level expectations for the year before kindergarten and the *Connecticut Early Childhood Performance Development Guide*.

The CSDE established the CALI to provide professional development and coaching in 2004 to accelerate the learning of all students and to close the achievement gap. The CALI initiative is based on the findings of nationally recognized researchers including Dr. Douglas Reeves, Dr. Michael Smoker, Dr. Robert Marzano, Dr. Richard Elmore and Dr. John Simpson. This work provides evidence that schools with high rates of poverty and high percentages of ethnic minorities in their student populations can achieve high academic performance. In 2007, this work was significantly strengthened to become Connecticut's Reform Model with the passage of state accountability legislation (see Section E 1). The foundation for the initiative is based on: a clear focus on achievement; a standards-based curriculum that emphasizes the core subject areas of reading, mathematics and writing; use of data to inform instructional and leadership decisions; frequent assessment of student progress; an emphasis on research-based effective teaching strategies; collaborative teams focused on student learning; and holding all adults accountable for student achievement. The CALI model, including a schematic representation of the CALI Theory of Action is fully described in Appendix A-169.

**(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.<sup>1</sup>

*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.*

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

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

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

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

For Phase 1 applicants:

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

For Phase 2 applicants:

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

*Recommended maximum response length: Two pages*

### **(B)(1) DEVELOPING AND ADOPTING COMMON STANDARDS**

**(B)(1)(i)** Connecticut is committed to adopting the Common Core State Standards. In May 2009, Governor M. Jodi Rell and Chief State School Officer, Commissioner Mark K. McQuillan, signed the Common Core State Standards Memorandum of Agreement issued by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors' Association (NGA) Center for Best Practices, in partnership with Achieve, ACT and the College Board, committing Connecticut to the process of developing and adopting a common core of rigorous, internationally benchmarked standards in English language arts and mathematics aligned to college and workforce readiness. See Appendix A-322 for the signed Memorandum of Agreement. This national initiative includes 48 states, two territories and the District of Columbia. See Appendix A-336 for press release indicating the number of states that have signed on.

**(B)(1)(ii)** When the initial draft of the high school exit Common Core State Standards was released during the summer of 2009, the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) Bureau of Teaching and Learning convened committees to review these draft documents. The feedback was electronically provided through the process the CCSSO and NGA established for those states participating in the consortium. During the review process, it was noted that there was a high agreement between the Common Core State Standards and Connecticut's current state standards in English language arts and mathematics.

Connecticut is in the process of establishing statewide committees comprised of English language arts and mathematics professionals from K-12, higher education and business communities to review and align Connecticut's standards, by grade, to the final version of the Common Core State Standards. These committees will make modifications, if necessary, to ensure that Connecticut's standards align with the Common Core State Standards. The committees' work will be shared to solicit input from a broad range of stakeholder groups (classroom educators, building principals, local education agency (LEA) administrators, students, parents, civic and business leaders, and other key constituents) to make the transition to the new common standards and assessments. In addition, engagement and collaboration with the State's higher education leaders and faculty will be essential in order to ensure that college- and career-ready standards will have traction with the post-secondary community.

A final version will be brought to the Connecticut State Board of Education (SBE) for discussion in June 2010 and final adoption in July 2010 prior to the required August 2, 2010, date set forth in this application. Board approval is the final and legal process for adoption and no legislative action is required for adoption in Connecticut.

After the SBE has adopted the Common Core State Standards for mathematics and English language arts, the CSDE will disseminate the newly adopted standards to all stakeholders and make the standards available to the public on the state's Web site. Connecticut is already on track to implement the new Common Core State Standards and assessments through *The Connecticut Plan for Secondary School Reform* and the K-8 Benchmark System. The emphases of these initiatives are consistent with the federal focus on rigorous Common Core State Standards. Section (B)(3) of this application addresses the full plan including goals, activities and timelines.

**(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) DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING HIGH-QUALITY ASSESSMENTS**

**(B)(2)(i-ii)** Connecticut is committed to the adoption of common high quality assessments that reflect the depth and breadth of the national Common Core State Standards.

Valid and reliable assessments are an essential component of an integrated system of rigorous performance standards, curriculum, instruction and continual educator development for state, LEA, and school accountability systems. These systems are designed to improve the performance of all students, particularly subgroups of students who historically have been performing at levels that did not prepare them to graduate from public high schools or, if they did, to be successful in higher education and the workforce. A comprehensive, integrated and cohesive structure of formative, benchmark and summative assessments, and performance tasks provides educators with a critical set of tools. These assessments are aligned to the rigorous curriculum standards and educators can use them to measure students' progress, diagnose where learning has broken down, and plan instruction to move all students to higher levels of understanding.

Connecticut is one of 36 states that has signed a memorandum of understanding to participate in a state consortium to develop a balanced system of assessments for evaluating student achievement in meeting the common core standards, which is being spearheaded by Maine Governor Sue Gendron and coordinated by the Council of Chief State School Officers. See Appendix A-328 for a signed memorandum of understanding. The emphasis of the consortium's work will be to ensure that:

- Assessments are managed as part of a tightly integrated system that also includes standards, curriculum, instruction and teacher development.
- Assessments provide evidence of how well students perform on challenging tasks that prepare them for college and the 21st century workforce.
- Assessments provide information to continually improve how teachers teach and what students learn.
- Teachers are involved in developing curriculum and assessments and are trained to reliably score assessments.
- Assessments and accountability systems are developed with a focus on improving the quality of learning and the continual improvement of schools.
- Accountability systems include multiple measures to evaluate students and their schools.
- Technology contributes to higher quality assessments and improved information systems to support accountability.

In addition, the CSDE is a member of the New England Secondary School Consortium (NESSC) with the Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont State Departments of Education and the Great Schools Partnership. See Appendix A-338 for the NESSC Letter of Support. The NESSC has been working closely to design and plan a variety of secondary school improvement strategies to bring greater coherence to secondary school education in New England, and promote best practices, school innovation and forward-thinking educational policy in the region. The Great Schools Partnership has developed a letter of intent for the consortium states, which specifies that they agree to collaborate to:

- adopt the CCSSO and NGA Common Core State Standards;
- work collaboratively to develop common high-quality, performance-based assessments to more accurately measure student learning and provide evidence that students are being prepared for the demands of college and the 21st century workforce; and
- apply for the Race to the Top Assessment Grant as a consortium of states when the guidance is released by the federal government.

In addition to the Common Core State Standards, the CSDE will endorse and promote the International Society for Technology in Education's National Educational Technology Standards for Students, Teachers, and Administrators (NETS-S, NETS-T, NETS-A). These internationally embraced standards address technology and other essential 21st century skills.



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

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

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

*Recommended maximum response length: Eight pages*

**(B)(3) SUPPORTING THE TRANSITION TO COMMON STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENTS**

On December 3, 2008, the SBE approved *The Connecticut Plan for Secondary School Reform*. (See Appendix A-295 for a summary of *The Connecticut Plan for Secondary School Reform*.) The four key themes of *The Connecticut Plan for Secondary School Reform* are:

1. *Student engagement*, reflecting improvements not only in instructional delivery, but also in school climate.
2. *21st Century Skills* required for future success in college and careers, based in particular on the work of the Partnership for 21st Century Skills.

3. *Rigorous expectations*, reflected in higher high school graduation requirements and higher, more clearly articulated expectations.

4. *Accountability* in the form of multiple assessments linked to Connecticut's standards and frameworks, ranging from common formative assessments to end-of-course exams.

Because there is a strong concordance between the emerging national Common Core State Standards, Connecticut's existing content standards and the elements of *The Connecticut Plan for Secondary School Reform*, Connecticut is already on track to launch the state's plan to help LEAs transition to the new common standards and assessments. The emphases of Connecticut's plan are consistent with the federal focus on rigorous common standards that the NESSC is positioned to adopt and its planned work to develop a comprehensive, cohesive, balanced system of assessments for evaluating student progress toward meeting those standards. Once the NESSC Council and Connecticut State Board of Education have adopted the Common Core State Standards, Connecticut will work with the other consortium members to develop common performance assessments for these standards and collaborate on the development, field testing, scoring and reporting of results of student performance on those tasks. Connecticut will reach out to all its stakeholders (classroom educators, building principals, LEA administrators, students, parents, civic and business leaders, and other key constituents) to make the transition to the new common standards and assessments. In addition, engagement and collaboration with the State's higher education leaders and faculty will be essential to ensure that college- and career-ready standards will have traction with the post-secondary community.

### **Goals**

In working with its participating RTTT LEAs, Connecticut will take the necessary steps to make certain that all its students have access to instructional programs that are consistently rigorous and of high quality across the state to ensure that high school graduates are equipped with college- and career-ready skills. Connecticut has eight goals with respect to helping its public LEAs make the transition to the new standards and assessments, while implementing *The Connecticut Plan for Secondary School Reform*. These goals translate into the expectations described below:

1. Educators, parents and the general public must be educated and come to understand how mathematics and English language arts standards are changing what all students should know and be able to do at each grade level and as graduates of the state's public high schools, and that parents are supported in the role they play in student success.
2. Practicing educators, through in-service professional development, and students training to become educators, through pre-service training programs, must also understand the new standards and have the professional knowledge and skills to implement curricula based on the new standards.
3. Practicing educators, through in-service professional development, and students training to become educators, through pre-service training programs, who teach in the Common Core disciplines, will be expected to score constructed-response, extended-response, and performance tasks reliably.
4. Teachers and administrators be able to utilize assessment data well enough to draw valid inferences from it to improve their curriculum and the instruction of individual students.
5. Educators are involved in state curriculum framework development activities, assessment item development, and the scoring of assessment items and tasks, must gain a deeper understanding of the standards and use that knowledge to continually improve curriculum and instruction so that all students perform at high levels.
6. As secondary school students engage in curricular and instructional programs, based on rigorous high quality standards and formative and summative assessments, they too must develop a clear understanding of what they are expected to know and be able to do, and are able to monitor their own progress toward meeting those standards.
7. The participating LEAs accountability system to evaluate students and schools will be based on multiple measures that include a combination of curriculum-embedded components, such as performance tasks, large-scale state assessments measuring student achievement level and growth, and completion of a Capstone Project. This culminating performance-based project allows students to focus on an area of interest, and demonstrate 21st century skills and content understandings mapped to their Student Success Plans, including research skills and the ability to communicate their findings in written and oral presentations reviewed by the public.

8. Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) coursework will be more heavily emphasized in all schools.

**Key Activities**

Staff members from the CSDE bureaus charged with curriculum, assessment, school improvement, teacher development and supports to families will engage in activities and draw in constituents from other units in the agency, LEAs, counterparts from other consortium states, and higher education, as needed, to support the transition to common state standards and related assessments. For each activity, timelines or beginning dates are given. Each activity is matched to one or more of the eight goals described above. Goal numbers will appear after each activity’s timeline.

**1. Develop curriculum frameworks for common K-12 standards, by grade, which the NESSC and state boards of education will formally adopt, and make them available to the public LEAs, higher education institutions and the public.**

Key frameworks-based curriculum units, starting with Grades 6-12 and then subsequently for prekindergarten-Grade 5, will be developed and posted on CTcurriculum.org. These *key units* will be designed to deliver identified learning within required and recommended courses across the core subject areas. The *content* of the key units will be linked to content and 21st century skill frameworks; contain embedded common formative assessments, scoring devices and scored benchmark (anchor sets of) student work; include explicit connections to careers; and, be illustrated through video clips of effective instruction, commissioned by targeted mini-grants to LEAs and to individual teachers.

*Note:* CTcurriculum.org is a uniquely powerful, web-based tool for developing, vetting, benchmarking and searching for exemplary curriculum units with embedded assessments linked to standards and frameworks. This open-access system has recently been improved to facilitate collaborative work, districtwide and statewide standard-setting, the scoring and online presentation of multimedia student work to illustrate expectations, and the posting of digital video illustrating successful teaching episodes connected to units and standards. In Connecticut’s recent Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems application, funds were requested to expand the features and LEA-level customization.

**Timeline:** July 2010 through June 2011 (Goal 1, 2 and 6)

**Responsible Parties:** CSDE, Division of Teaching, Learning and Instructional Leadership

**2. Create a digital curriculum and assessment library, housed in CTcurriculum.org, which provides materials that LEAs, schools and teachers can use to build curriculum with model syllabi for courses, sample lessons, interventions that work well for instructing English language learners and students with disabilities, and classroom assessments.**

The process to develop and refine key curriculum units will include the following:

- Update CTcurriculum.org to enable collaborative benchmarking and calibration of teacher expectations.
- Deliver professional development for prospective unit writers.
- Outline key elements of unit design.
- Digitize and upload student work.
- Offer skilled unit writers mini-grants to develop and pilot model key units that will serve as exemplars. Grantees will submit scored student work with their units.
- Offer additional mini-grants, as necessary, to individuals or teams who possess the skills to create intervention strategies for struggling learners.
- Teams of CSDE staff, teachers and higher education faculty will review and edit draft units, select anchor sets and upload units with scored student work to CTcurriculum.org.
- Teacher preparation programs will involve future teachers in calibration activities, centered on key units, to help them establish high but attainable expectations for student work.

As key units are tested and accepted, and teachers are identified whose students attain high levels of achievement — as demonstrated in the student work that they upload to CTcurriculum.org — the CSDE and its higher education partners will identify and collect *video documentation of successful instruction* in those units.

The state’s online database of standards-based curriculum units and assessments described earlier, CTcurriculum.org, will be augmented to include *home learning activities* that are aligned with standards. Recent reviews of the research indicate that family

engagement in home-learning activities actually contributes more to student achievement than does traditional parent involvement at school. CSDE will work with local schools to develop and pilot home learning activities with particular attention to developing activities that are easy to implement, fun for families and students and culturally responsive. These activities will be a resource for schools' parent engagement plans and will support School-Parent Compacts as required under Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Title 1.

**Timeline:** Beginning September 2012 and ongoing thereafter (Goal 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6)

**Responsible Parties:** CSDE, Division of Teaching, Learning and Instructional Leadership, and Division of Family and Student Support Services.

**3. Create a web-based information site for LEAs to inform parents and the community about the standards, assessments and accountability system.**

Parents report in national surveys that they have little information about their children's curriculum and lack strategies for supporting learning. Empowering parents to support learning outside of school is a critical strategy for reducing Connecticut's achievement gap. This new Web site will contain links to information that is written in parent-friendly language that describes what students should know and be able to do, by grade, for mathematics and English language arts initially, and then for other disciplines. It will also include assessment handbooks that provide samples of the types of items or activities that will be used to assess student performance, and samples of authentic, high-quality student responses. In addition, there will be links to activities that parents can engage in with their children outside of school to foster the development of mathematical and language skills and competencies, as well as other resources to support and enhance learning. The site will include a link to the state's federally funded Parent Information and Resource Center where parents will find opportunities for workshops as well as a toll-free phone number for assistance.

**Timeline:** Beginning September 2011 and ongoing thereafter (Goal 1, 4 and 6)

**Responsible Parties:** CSDE, Division of Teaching, Learning and Instructional Leadership, and Division of Family and Student Support Services.

**4. Integrate electronic Student Success Plans (a component of *The Connecticut Plan for Secondary School Reform*) into the state longitudinal data system so that school professionals can help students monitor their progress in meeting grade-level and graduate standards.**

Beginning in Grade 6 and continuing through high school, each Connecticut student will participate in the development of a Student Success Plan. The plan incorporates the student's individual interests and abilities, and establishes an individualized program of study that will help every student stay interested in school and set and achieve post-high school educational and career goals. Many family/student supports, as described in *The Connecticut Plan for Secondary School Reform*, will be necessary to ensure that all students graduate from high school with the skills and understandings that are desired. LEAs will need to provide remedial support in a timely and effective manner and create and expand programs that help students stay interested and involved in school. These programs may include mentorships, peer and adult tutoring, computer-based supports, after-school and weekend programs, school-based health programs, differently paced and/or modularized courses, and other options. The key is that a variety of strategies must be implemented to help all students achieve.

To assist LEAs in achieving this important goal, Participating LEAs will have the opportunity to partner with the National Academy Foundations of Schools or Hartford's Our Piece of the Pie (a Hartford-based youth development agency) to design alternative programs for high school students in danger of dropping out or in need of high quality options for pursuing careers in health, business, advertising or other 21<sup>st</sup> century professions. Participating LEAs may also choose to partner with the Connecticut Technical High School System to implement a trial apprentice trade program to supplement core educational curriculum in their home school and sustain student engagement in career related activities. See Connecticut's Race to the Top Memorandum of Understanding Descriptors in Appendix A-297 for further information about these programs.

**Timeline:** Beginning September 2011 and ongoing thereafter (Goal 1, 4 and 6)

**Responsible Party:** CSDE Division of Assessment, Research and Technology.

**5. Involve LEA staff in item and task development, field testing, and scoring open-ended items and performance tasks. Conduct regional professional development activities in scoring constructed-response and extended-response items, and performance tasks for teachers.**

Professional development will be offered statewide through the Regional Educational Service Center (RESC) Alliance to train teachers to teach rigorous statewide standards on key units, with special outreach to teachers in LEAs with large numbers of high-need students. Committees of Connecticut teachers will be trained to develop constructed-response and extended-response items and performance tasks, including applying the Principles of Universal Design (a proprietary design compliance construct) to ensure access for students with disabilities and English language learners. Training will also be provided to district staff members in scoring constructed- and intended-response items and performance tasks using rubrics so that there is consistency.

Committees of Connecticut teachers will be trained to develop selected, constructed and extended items and performance tasks, including applying the principles of universal design to ensure access to students with disabilities and English language learners.

Training will also be provided to district staff members in scoring constructed and extended response items and performance tasks using rubrics so that there is consistency.

**Timeline:** Beginning September 2011 and ongoing thereafter (Goal 3, 4 and 7)

**Responsible Party:** CSDE Division of Assessment, Research and Technology.

**6. Develop high-quality model formative and summative assessments, as well as performance tasks that address the full range of standards. Create rubrics for scoring and identify examples of high-quality student work to include as components of model curriculum modules for mathematics and English language arts.**

To assure that consistent course content is presented throughout the state, the state will provide *model curricula* for eight of the core course requirements: Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, Statistics & Probability, Biological/Life Sciences, English I, English II and American History. Participating LEAs will pilot selected model curricula. Teaching and learning of 21st century skills will be integrated into each of the model curricula. Additionally, the state will provide formative assessment instruments that complement



each model curriculum, to help teachers focus on student areas of need. Expert teachers, higher education faculty and researchers will participate in the development of the designated model curricula, formative assessments, sample lessons and end of course exams for the designated courses.

**Timeline:** July 2011–June 2012 initial development, ongoing training thereafter (Goal 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7)

**Responsible Parties:** CSDE Division of Teaching, Learning and Instructional Leadership and Division of Assessment, Research, and Technology.

**7. Create a system of online benchmark assessments, aligned to the new Common Core State Standards pacing guides, so LEAs can pilot the new assessments and use them to chart their own progress toward meeting the Common Core State Standards.**

As a member of NESSC, Connecticut is well prepared and committed to developing and implementing high-quality assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards. Connecticut currently has a fully federally approved system of grade-level standards and assessments [Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) and Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT)] in place for mathematics, reading and writing for Grades 3 through 8 and 10, and for science in Grades 5, 8 and 10. These state assessments include a combination of selected-response and constructed-response items, along with performance tasks.

The state recognizes that a high-quality assessment system integrates *summative* assessments with *formative* assessments for learning. These assessments provide teachers with feedback to help them diagnose how well students learn, so that they can adjust instruction and help students monitor their progress. In addition, *benchmark* assessments are used to monitor students’ mastery and retention of instructional standards over time, and help students and their parents understand whether the child is on track to meet the grade-level requirements. The document *Connecticut’s Initiative to Support a Comprehensive Assessment System: Guidelines for Implementing Formative Assessment at the District Level* outlines the integration of these types of assessments into a cohesive system. To this end, Connecticut has been working with LEAs to develop, pilot and administer the online Connecticut Benchmark Assessments System (CBAS), for Grades 3 through 8 in mathematics and reading, to provide LEAs with sets of interim assessments

that they could use to monitor student progress toward meeting grade-level standards over the course of a school year. The state made CBAS available this year to all LEAs on a voluntary basis. It is also working with one of its RESCs to develop a series of developmentally appropriate interim assessments for kindergarten through Grade 2 in the areas of literacy, numeracy and science, which will be made available to LEAs in 2010.

**Timeline:** Beginning September 2011 and ongoing (Goal 2, 3, 4 and 7)

**Responsible Parties:** CSDE Division of Teaching, Learning and Instructional Leadership and Division of Assessment, Research, and Technology.

**8. Develop educator training programs to prepare new and continuing educators in collaboration with the Connecticut state higher education institutions, including the College-High School Partnerships pilot program. The RESC Alliance will help implement the new standards and assessments in the mathematics and English language arts curriculums.**

Working with Connecticut higher education institutions and the RESC Alliance, Connecticut will develop a plan and implement a comprehensive training program to prepare new and continuing educators to successfully implement framework-based curriculum units based on the newly adopted Common Core State Standards. Emphasis will be placed on including effective Tier I Scientifically Research Based Intervention (SRBI) strategies to address the needs of at-risk populations and high-ability students.

The College-High School Partnerships pilot program will prepare cohorts of teachers and faculty members from paired colleges and high schools to implement *The Connecticut Plan for Secondary School Reform*. The pilot program is intended to integrate all features of other partnership programs currently underway in the state, including faculty exchanges, as a way of transitioning Connecticut's higher education institutions into the new course demands of the *The Connecticut Plan for Secondary School Reform* and the state's new requirements for admission to state colleges starting in 2016.

**Timeline:** Beginning September 2012 and ongoing (Goal 2).

**Responsible Party:** Division of Teaching, Learning and Instructional Leadership

**9. Expand rigorous and meaningful opportunities for all students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). (Note: Each of the initiatives that follows is currently under way, and will continue or be expanded throughout the grant period), (Goal 8).**

*The Connecticut Plan for Secondary School Reform* calls for increased emphasis on STEM skills. In the plan, credit requirements are clustered into groups. Cluster 1 is the STEM cluster. Increased credit and specific course requirements for both math and science have been included, with four credits in mathematics and three in science required for graduation. The cluster also includes a requirement for at least one more credit in science, technology, engineering or mathematics, with the flexibility to add additional credits in these areas to accommodate student interests and goals as established in their individualized Student Success Plans.

Model curricula being developed under *The Connecticut Plan for Secondary School Reform* will assure that consistent course content is presented throughout the state. The curricula have been and will be developed by expert teams of mathematics educators, higher education faculty, and researchers, to assure that the content, skills and understandings students learn in school is what colleges and universities expect students to know. Model curricula will be provided for eight of the core course requirements, five of which are in the STEM areas: Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, Statistics & Probability, and Biological/Life Sciences. The Algebra I model curriculum has been completed and is currently being piloted. A biotechnology course called BIO21 will also be made available to schools to offer to students as an alternative to traditional biology courses. BIO21 is being successfully piloted during the 2009-10 year, and addresses traditional biology standards in the context of biotechnology. Teaching and learning of 21st century skills has been and will continue to be integrated into each of the model curricula. Additionally, the state will provide formative assessment instruments that complement each model curriculum, to help teachers focus on student areas of need. For younger students, model curricula will be created in Scientific Inquiry and Experimentation for Grades 6-8.

The development, acquisition and use of 21st century skills, including technology, is one of the foundational structures of *The Connecticut Plan for Secondary School Reform*. The use of standard computer-based applications for practicing skills, gathering and

analyzing information, producing a variety of products, conducting research on the Internet, and developing portfolios of best work are integral to the lifelong learning process for each student.

As part of a joint initiative of the CSDE, the State Library, and the Connecticut Commission for Educational Technology, all students and teachers in Grades 6-8 are provided with access to online interactive multimedia science resources, including videos, simulations, virtual experiments and other engaging science activities. All the resources are tied directly to Connecticut standards for science. Student assessments are also included in the resources.

Connecticut currently has a large number of in-school and after-school initiatives to promote interest and achievement in STEM subjects. These include:

- *Project Opening Doors* (a 2007 grant of \$13.2 million grant to help fund training and incentive programs for Advanced Placement and pre-AP courses and exams for the next six years);
- *Connecticut Building a Presence for Science Network* (an electronic network of science educators in all schools, colleges and informal science centers to support implementation of standards-based science programs throughout the state);
- *AT&T Learning Connection* (a new resource for teachers, parents, and students to help improve science education in Connecticut);
- *Connecticut Girls and Technology Network* (a statewide volunteer collaborative of educators, policy and business people who engage middle-school girls in hands-on experiences that expose them to the variety of educational and vocational options involving technology);
- *Connecticut Pre-Engineering Program (CPEP)* (programs that encourage young students to pursue careers in the fields of mathematics, science, engineering and technology; CPEP targets underrepresented minority and women students at the upper elementary, middle and high school levels in Connecticut's larger urban LEAs through hands-on programs in its after school, Saturday, Summer Enrichment, mentor and in school programs for students);
- *BioBus* (a custom-designed mobile laboratory delivering bioscience to students at their schools);

- *Boehringer Ingelheim Science Quest (BI SciQ)* (a hands-on program aimed at stimulating interest in science through engaging, quality science curricula and experiences for Connecticut’s elementary school classrooms; BI SciQ is a comprehensive six-eight week science program that includes curricula, teacher training, and a mobile laboratory);
- *Center for 21st Century Skills: Connecticut Innovation Academy* (a curriculum designed to develop students' academic skills, transferable skills and knowledge of technology careers through the creation of an information technology Research and Design project);
- *Connecticut Career Choices* (a workforce development initiative focused on the implementation of curriculum aligned with both industry and state standards; included are visits/speakers, company visits/tours, job shadowing experiences for students, teacher externships, and a Tech Expo);
- *Connecticut Innovation Challenge* (a comprehensive information technology research and design project that challenges students to use technology to think creatively and work collaboratively); and
- *Project Lead the Way* (a four-year sequence of courses that, when combined with college preparatory mathematics and science courses in high school, introduces students to the scope, rigor and discipline of engineering and engineering technology before entering college).

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

**(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**

Connecticut’s State Education Reform Plan (SERP) will assure compliance with the three core data system components explicit in the application’s data systems assurance. First, Connecticut’s Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) will be completed to include the final work on the remaining six America COMPETES requirements that have not yet been completely accomplished. Second, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) will offer a plan to make data more accessible to a broad group of Race to the Top (RTTT) defined constituencies, as well as to improve timely access to data essential to improving educational policymaking, operations and research. Third, we will continue our current professional development plan implemented primarily through the Connecticut Accountability for Learning Initiative (CALI) — to use data-driven decision making at the LEA level to build and operate formal instructional improvement systems.

Statewide actions to be taken as part of our state reform plan include developing a student growth measurement model; completing SLDS modules linking teacher and principal records to student information; developing a professional development system that enables educational professionals as well as parents and community organizations to better use available data; creating a Virtual

School District database to track the progress of our underachieving students regardless of where they are being educated; and supporting development of the Connecticut Virtual Education Research Network to better engage with academic and applied researchers related to the challenges of and effective programming for high-need students.

Connecticut has accomplished six of the 12 America COMPETES requirements and has made significant progress in implementing the six remaining requirements, which will be completed in the 2011-12 school year. Responses to each requirement are listed below.

### **Evidence**

#### **1. Unique SASID**

Yes, for P-12. Under Connecticut General Statute (CGS) 10-10a, the CSDE is required to assign public, prekindergarten through Grade 12 students a state-assigned student identification number (SASID). See CGS 10-10a in Appendix A-244 for a complete copy of this statute. In 2002, Connecticut implemented the Public School Information System (PSIS) and, beginning in 2005, assigned every public school student in the state a SASID. Annually, each new student entering the public school systems is assigned a SASID. In addition, in 2007, the statute expanded to include all preschool students who were in nonpublic school programs who received state and/or federal funds. The CSDE developed and implemented the prekindergarten information system (PKIS), which is used to collect information about 3- and 4-year-old children enrolled in nonpublic preschool programs, such as the Department of Social Services early childhood programs, Head Start and Even Start. These data collections are the first essential steps to permit the State to track students longitudinally and to monitor educational programs.

#### **2. Student demographic, enrollment and program participation information**

Yes. The PSIS collects prekindergarten through Grade 12 enrollment data for students attending Connecticut public schools, demographic information (gender, race/ethnicity, free/reduced-price lunch status, special education status, English language learner status, date of birth), and program information for students enrolled in the state's public schools and publicly-funded school programs. The SASID is included in every state data file collected at the individual student level (assessment, discipline, special education, etc.). The PKIS contains the same demographic information as the PSIS.

**3. Student transition information (enter, exit, transfer, dropout, graduate) P-16 education**

Yes, P-12/P-16 in progress. The PSIS has a register/unregister module that is real time. When a student leaves a school/LEA, the LEA unregisters that student and specify a reason for leaving. LEAs must register new entrants into the PSIS when they arrive. This allows the State to track student transfer patterns within and across LEAs. The system does not contain postsecondary education information. The CSDE received a second Institute of Educational Sciences (IES) grant (Phase II) in August 2009 to support the development of a data interoperability framework, which will permit the sharing of data between the CSDE, the state's Department of Higher Education (DHE) and the Department of Labor (DOL). A memorandum of agreement (MOA) with each entity has been developed for this project. The CSDE, with the DHE and DOL, submitted a new application for an IES grant for improving its SLDS on December 4, 2009, to expand and accelerate this work.

**4. Capacity to communicate to higher education data systems**

In progress, not currently completed. The development of the data interoperability framework among the CSDE, DHE and DOL, under the Phase II IES grant, will lay the groundwork for developing a vehicle for communicating with the state's public higher education data systems.

**5. Audit system to ensure data quality**

Yes. The CSDE applies a set of validation rules to the data before they can be formally accepted for all data collections. The CSDE does statistical checking and produces reports for LEAs that identify outliers in their data, including significant changes from the previous year, as well as missing data. LEAs must address their data exceptions prior to the CSDE officially accepting their data. The CSDE also invokes penalties under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), where applicable, for those data LEAs do not submit in a timely and accurate fashion.

**6. Yearly test records for assessment required under the ESEA**

Yes. The CSDE maintains test records for all required assessments and the SASID is a field in all state assessment files. Connecticut has a fully federally approved system of grade-level standards and assessments [Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) and



Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT)] in place for mathematics, reading and writing for Grades 3 through 8 and 10, and for science in Grades 5, 8 and 10. It also has an alternate assessment (Skills Checklist) system for the state's most significantly cognitively disabled students, based on alternate achievement standards in the same subjects and grades. These form the foundation of the state's approved accountability plan under NCLB. During 2008-09, the CSDE piloted assessments based on modified achievement standards (MAS) in mathematics and reading for a second group of students with disabilities; this will become part of the operational assessment system in 2009-10 and will undergo the federal peer review process. In addition, the CSDE has piloted an online system of grade-level Connecticut Benchmark Assessment System (CBAS) tests for Grades 3 through 8 in mathematics and reading, which teachers may use to chart student progress against the grade-level expectations identified in the pacing guides for the state's curriculum frameworks. CBAS was made available to all Connecticut public LEAs in September 2009.

**7. Information on students not tested by grade and subject**

Yes. The student assessment file contains SASIDs for each student tested so the State can identify annually by grade and subject any students not tested.

**8. Teacher identifier to match students to teachers**

In progress. In 2008-09, the State upgraded its educator certification system and, in addition to collecting the Social Security number of each certification applicant, also assigned a unique educator identification number (EIN), which will be included in the CSDE's upgraded annual certified staff data file of the professional staff members who work in the state's public schools and programs in late 2010. To match mathematics and language arts teachers to their students, the EINs will be included in the testing file for the 2010 administration of the CMT and CAPT. The Phase II IES grant will pilot an application matching teachers to students and preliminary information should be available in 2011-12.

**9. Student-level transcripts containing courses and grades**

In progress, not currently completed. The CSDE will be adopting National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) course codes and conducting a pilot matching students to courses to teachers as a Phase II IES grant component. The grant will be used to develop and

pilot a scheduling module that will connect teachers to students, create a transcript of the courses students took, and explore integrating the grades students earn. This will create the state's capacity to track student course-taking patterns and grades by LEA, school and teacher. The IES grant application submitted in December 2009 is directed at statewide implementation.

**10. Student scores on college readiness tests [Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), Advanced Placement (AP)]**

Yes. The state receives individual student results for the SAT and AP tests annually for Connecticut public school graduates. To improve efficiency, the CSDE is in discussions with the College Board to improve the state's data and is requesting that it add a field to its registration form for the SASID, since to date, the SASID is not part of the form that students must complete to register for these assessments. Currently, the CSDE is able to connect these college readiness assessments to the SASID, and then to other data in our system, by creating a pseudo-identifier using first name, last name, date of birth and high school/LEA.

**11. Transition data from secondary to higher education, including remedial course-taking**

In progress, not currently completed. The DHE is receiving funds from the Phase II IES grant to match the PK-12 longitudinal data to postsecondary and workforce data. The CSDE has developed an MOA with the DHE and DOL to collaborate on this work, and the DHE has established an MOA with the state's DOL. The linking of student longitudinal data from PK-12 to college, and then to the state's workforce, will permit researchers to examine which programs are most effective in preparing students for success beyond secondary schools. An initial task will be to establish an ongoing Interoperability System Council to govern the exchange of data and plan research activities. The primary objectives of the project were identified earlier in this document under Requirement #3.

**12. Data on the alignment and adequacy of student preparation for postsecondary education**

In progress. As the state's PK-20 Council evolves, one of the key roles of the Interoperability System Council will be to identify research studies that will inform stakeholders how well students who enter either postsecondary education or the workforce are prepared for success, and if they are not, what skills and competencies they are lacking.

## State 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.<sup>1</sup>

*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**

The CSDE has long embraced the value and power of the use of data to drive education reform. Therefore, our plan for increasing the accessibility to data to the public; using data to inform and engage our stakeholders; and using data to improve efforts in areas such as policy, instruction, operations, management, resource allocation and overall effectiveness has been integrated into the CSDE’s work for several years now. Additionally, the state legislature adopted Public Act 09-241 in the 2009 Regular Session of the General Assembly, which requires the CSDE to provide state student-level education data to tax-exempt nonprofit organizations operated for educational purposes within 60 days to ensure that the state’s data are accessible to its stakeholders (see CGS 10-10a(e) in appendix A-244). Our overarching goal is to continue and improve these efforts.

**Goal 1: Continue and expand access to Connecticut’s standardized assessment results from the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) in Grades 3 through 8, and the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) in Grade 10, available to the general public, parents, and school and LEA personnel to provide decision-makers with data necessary to improve overall program effectiveness.**

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

**Activities:** The CSDE will continue to provide the public access to student performance data on its CTReports public Web site (<http://www.ctreports.com/>) aggregated at the state, LEA and school levels, by grade and subject area (reading, writing, mathematics, and science) over time. There are status measures (performance levels such as Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, Goal and Advanced) and vertical scale scores to measure growth across grades and years. These data can also be disaggregated by gender, race/ethnicity, eligibility for free/reduced-price lunch, special education status and English language learner status.

Via the CTReports Web site, designated LEA staff members, such as principals and teachers, have password-protected access to the secure CTReports Web site and can access individual student-level data. Analytic tools are available for LEA staff to examine their students' performance to improve instruction and curricular programs. These data can be downloaded and merged with LEA-level data, such as benchmark and formative assessments or curricular interventions. Assessment staff members will also continue to conduct workshops on using the testing data during the school year and provide resources for teachers and parents.

Consistent with Connecticut's State Fiscal Stabilization Fund Phase II Application, to improve access and use of these data to improve instruction the State will additionally require LEAs to provide student growth data on their current students and the students they taught in the previous year. The CSDE will provide these data to reading/language arts and mathematics teachers in grades in which the State administers assessments in those subjects in a manner that is timely and informs instructional programs.

While the State does not deliver student test results directly to individual teachers, as shown above, the infrastructure is in place and the State already provides the means for the LEAs to make this information available to their teachers. To facilitate this process, and ease the burden on the LEAs, the State will collect the names of mathematics and language arts teachers for each student in the tested grades and include them in the electronic assessment data files that it makes available to LEAs and schools, so that the teachers will be linked to their students who participated in testing. Because of this work, LEAs and their teachers will have access to teacher level reports based on the March 2011 administration of the CMT and CAPT.

**Implementation Timeline and Responsible Parties:**

- September 2010: CSDE includes a field in its 2010 statewide testing file for each student’s mathematics and language arts teacher in the LEA that provided the information, on a voluntary basis.
- January 2011: For the tested grades, all LEAs provide the testing vendor the names of each student’s mathematics and language arts teacher.
- June 2011: The testing vendor generates a “teacher report” that teachers can access online for the students they taught in 2010-11.

Staff from the Bureau of Student Assessment at the CSDE will continue to work with the testing vendor, Measurement Incorporated, to maintain and enhance the public state assessment results Web site, including, but not limited to, working with them and LEA test coordinators to identify the mathematics and language arts teacher of each student tested.

**Goal 2: Continue to provide and improve access to education data collected by the CSDE to the public, including parents, and to school and LEA personnel via the data warehouse and associated data dissemination tools.**

**Activities:** In 2005, the Connecticut State Department of Education applied for and received a grant from the Institute for Education Sciences/U.S. Department of Education to construct a statewide longitudinal data system (SLDS). Subsequent to the grant award, the State of Connecticut allocated \$4.3 million for two years for the further development of the SLDS. Since 2005, the CSDE contracted with an outside vendor to develop the SLDS, which will streamline the data collection process and enable CSDE to better meet the needs of both State and federal reporting requirements. Of equal importance, the SLDS will use decision support dissemination tools to meet the increasing demands for education data from our constituents, thus enabling our stakeholders to access information from a central data warehouse to make more informed education decisions based on timely and accurate information.

In February 2010, we will deploy the first iteration of the enhanced public Connecticut Education Data and Research (CEDaR) site. This site will allow internet users to access CSDE’s aggregate school and LEA data from the data warehouse to perform basic search and compare functions. The online reports will be available in both a traditional report fashion or by using a visual approach, such as an array of graphing capabilities. The secure dissemination of student, staff and facility data through a web-based portal to state, LEA and school administrators is one of the most salient features of an SLDS. The CSDE anticipates this function will be fully

developed and available by May 2010. Through the secure portal, the bureau will provide CSDE and LEA leaders, principals, teachers and others with the ability to control, query and summarize educational data in a secure, user-friendly environment. The portal will additionally include the ability to provide for in-depth analysis of student performance on state standardized tests, additional student-level variables (e.g., discipline, attendance), and aggregate facility and LEA information.

**Implementation Timeline and Responsible Parties:** In February 2010, the enhanced CEDaR Web site will be made available to school and LEA personnel and the public, including parents. Staff from the Bureau of Data Collection, Research and Evaluation, the Bureau of Grants Management, and the Bureau of Information Technology, at the CSDE, will work with the vendor Choice Solutions Group to implement the enhanced CEDaR Web site and maintain it thereafter.

**Goal 3: Continue to implement the Connecticut Accountability for Learning Initiative (CALI) data-driven decision making (DDDM) component to ensure LEAs are using available education data to inform practice.**

**Activities:** Using data to inform policy and practice is a key component of the CSDE's CALI program. CALI is designed to provide a comprehensive model for instructional improvement, based on the use of data, at the LEA and state level. The key components of the CALI training and technical assistance that support the use of data to improve instruction includes:

- Data-Driven Decision Making (DDDM): ongoing review of data by LEA leaders, building leaders and teachers to determine the strengths in areas that need improvement at the LEA and school level; and
- Data Teams: ongoing analysis of data from state, benchmark and common formative assessments to identify strengths and weaknesses in student learning (particularly in areas in reading, mathematics, and science), and to identify instructional strategies that will best address student learning objectives in the classroom.

CALI currently has 15 CALI partner LEAs with whom the CSDE has been intensively involved since 2007. Each CALI Partner District is required to have LEA-, school- and classroom-level data teams and to participate in ongoing professional development and on-site technical assistance in CALI. The state team assigned to each LEA works with the LEA data team to monitor the effectiveness of the data teams. Standards have been identified for each team and state-designed rubrics are used to assess effectiveness and provide ongoing feedback for improvement.

**Implementation Timeline and Responsible Parties:** This is an ongoing activity. CSDE staff members from the Bureau of Accountability and Improvement will expand the work to all participating LEAs to implement CALI.

**Goal 4: Provide training to school and LEA personnel around the use of the enhanced Connecticut Education Data and Research (CEDaR) Web site for accessing and analyzing education data.**

**Activities:** Regional training sessions, conducted by CSDE staff members from the Bureau of Data Collection, Research and Evaluation, will teach CSDE constituents how to access the enhanced CEDaR Web site and how to use the various data tools to meet their needs, whether policy or research related.

**Implementation Timeline and Responsible Parties:** The anticipated timing for the training sessions is summer 2010, and annually thereafter. CSDE staff members from the Bureau of Data Collection, Research and Evaluation and the Bureau of Grants Management will be responsible for conducting the training sessions.

**Goal 5: Determine the level of use of CEDaR and areas for improvement via surveys of school and LEA personnel.**

**Activities:** The CSDE is interested in the utility of the data tools it is providing its constituents. Therefore, the CSDE’s Bureau of Data Collection, Research and Evaluation will survey its constituents to determine the level of use of the CEDaR Web site, how CEDaR is used, and areas of improvement.

**Implementation Timeline and Responsible Parties:** The first survey will be administered in the fall of 2010 and annually thereafter. CSDE staff members from the Bureau of Data Collection, Research and Evaluation will develop and administer the survey, collect the results and analyze them to inform future activities.

<b>Performance Measures</b> 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**

**(C)(3)(i)** The CALI described appendix A-169 is designed to provide a comprehensive model for instructional improvement and accountability based on the use of data at the state, LEA, building and classroom level. The use of data teams at the LEA, school and instructional levels builds capacity to use data to improve instruction from a variety of resources including:



*Data Systems to Support Instruction (C)(3)(i)*

- state, LEA and school assessment data from the statewide longitudinal data system (SLDS);
- LEA and school benchmark assessment data from the state benchmark assessment system;
- state, LEA and school data on a variety of leading indicators as identified in the district improvement plan (DIP) and school improvement plan (SIP) from the SLDS (e.g., drop out, graduation, attendance, truancy, student mobility, discipline, special education);
- LEA and school student data collected at the local level (i.e., LEA-developed benchmark assessments, teacher attendance, student involvement and results from AP courses, students attending postsecondary education, students who drop out and enter into adult education system);
- LEA and school adult data collected at the local level (i.e., staff attendance, staff years of experience, staffing demographics, retention of staff, office referrals);
- LEA and school qualitative data collected at the local level (parent participation, parent satisfaction, student satisfaction, community surveys); and
- instructional data collected at the grade or course level (benchmark assessments, common formative assessments, end-of-term and end-of-year course exams, group scoring of student work, progress on implementation of effective teaching strategies, progress monitoring data for students receiving Scientific Research-Based Interventions (SRBI)[Response to Intervention (RTI)].

The CALI accountability framework will be expanded to RTTT Participating LEAs. Each Participating LEA will be required to have a District Improvement Plan (DIP) with a limited number of high leverage, measurable targets. Data used to set and monitor targets come from both the state and LEA data system as described above. In addition, data on adults in the system, such as attendance, qualifications, office referrals, years of experience and student progress, are analyzed and used in setting targets. Each LEA is required to have an LEA data team that meets monthly to monitor implementation and progress on the DIP based on interim measures in the DIP. Each school is required to develop a State Improved Plan (SIP) aligned to the DIP based on an analysis of data

for the school. Each school is required to have a School Level Data Team that meets on a monthly basis to monitor implementation and progress on the SIP. The SIP strategies and activities are implemented through instructional or grade-level data teams that meet regularly, at least twice monthly. The effectiveness of the LEA, school and instructional data teams is monitored using rubrics for effective data teams at each level. In addition, two schools in each LEA have a data team facilitator designed to coach the school- and instructional-level data teams, as well as an executive coach to work with the leadership team in implementing the accountability system.

Besides state and LEA data, the CSDE has implemented two new programs this year designed to provide rapid time access to school and classroom level data to inform instruction and need for supports. These programs include the Connecticut Benchmark Assessment System (CBAS) and the K-2 Assessment Consortium.

The Connecticut Benchmark Assessment System (CBAS) is based on the grade-level expectations (GLE) for mathematics and the assessment strands for reading, which are defined in the CSDE's Sequenced Mathematics Grade-Level Expectations in Grades 3-5, the Mathematics Curriculum Pacing Guides for Grades 6-8, and the Grades 3-8 Reading Comprehension GLEs and Pacing Guide system for benchmark assessments is composed of 18 tests that mark achievement from the fall of Grade 3 to the spring of Grade 8 in mathematics and reading comprehension. CBAS results are available to teachers almost immediately following the administration of the assessment. Total mathematics and reading comprehension scores and mathematics GLE or reading comprehension strand raw scores are reported. Teachers can use the results to answer the question:

*“In a timely fashion, have students learned the important and testable material in the CSDE's Sequenced Mathematics GLEs in Grades 3-5, the Mathematics Curriculum Pacing Guides for Grades 6-8, and the Grades 3-8 Reading Comprehension GLEs and Pacing Guide?”*

The long-term goal for the CBAS project is to produce a large bank of items classified for specific educational objectives. The expectation is that teachers will be able to use the item bank to produce customized assessments that can be administered at the LEAs' convenience to provide immediate information to teachers regarding student performance relative to state defined standards.

The K-2 Assessment Consortium project is a joint effort of the CSDE and the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC). The goal of this project is to bring together practitioners and experts in early childhood instruction and assessment to explore current practices in formative assessment in literacy, math and science for our schools' youngest learners. The consortium will work to identify unmet needs in this area and develop developmentally appropriate formative assessment materials and protocols in specific content areas for the early elementary grades. The project's focus in the first year is appropriate formative assessments in math and science for Grades K-2. The consortium is composed of representatives from LEAs, the CSDE and the regional educational service centers (RESCs). This includes practicing early childhood teachers (K-2); early childhood coordinators; and math, science and language arts specialists familiar with early childhood curriculum. The representatives who compose the consortium are meeting six times per year to work on writing protocols for assessment administrations, piloting, editing, revising and finalizing created assessments and formats, developing administration procedures and data analysis protocols, and creating a Web site to host the final assessment products.

**Reform Goal:** The CSDE will support the participating LEAs and their schools by requiring participation in CALI professional development and technical assistance on using data, and establish a three-tiered accountability system (LEA-, school- and instructional-level data systems) to 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.

**Key activities, timelines and parties responsible:**

1. Each participating LEA will submit a measurable district improvement plan with annual targets with their 90-day RTTT application.
2. Each participating LEA will create an LEA data team to monitor implementation of the DIP upon approval by the CSDE.
3. Each participating LEA will require each school to align school improvement plans with the DIP within six months.

4. The Bureau of Accountability and Improvement (BAI) will work with the Regional Educational Service Center (RESC) Alliance and the State Education Resource Center (SERC) to increase the capacity of CALI trainers and technical assistance providers within three months.
5. The BAI will work with the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS) to increase its capacity to provide executive coaches to principals and leadership teams in schools in the participating LEAs within three months.
6. The BAI will develop a formal quality assurance program for CALI with dedicated professional staff within six months.
7. Each school in the participating LEAs will be required to create a school data team and instructional data teams within six months.
8. Each LEA and school will submit a request for service (RFS) professional development plan for CALI training, on an annual basis, for approval by the CSDE. This will include a request for executive coaches for principals and data team facilitators for school and instructional data teams within three months and annually.
9. The participating LEAs in collaboration with the BAI will monitor the effectiveness of the LEA-, school- and instructional-level data teams using state-created rubrics within one year of establishing data teams.
10. Central office administration, principals and teachers will participate in CALI training and on-site technical assistance as identified in their DIPs, SIPs and RFS applications and approved on an annual basis.
11. The BAI will expand the use of the Technical Assistance Services Tracking (TAST) system to all participating LEAs within three months.

**Performance Measures:**

- Each participating LEA and school will establish LEA-, school- and instructional-level data teams.
- Each participating LEA and school will meet the annual student performance targets as identified in their DIP and SIP.
- Each participating LEA will meet the annual indicators for adult actions (including participation in CALI professional development activities) as identified in their DIP, SIP and the TAST system.

(C)(3)(ii) The training on using data was designed with the Leadership and Learning Center and is provided through an extensive network of staff development experts in the RESCs and SERC Alliance and the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS). Each LEA completes a request for service application annually to plan for the state-sponsored professional development needed. The state technical assistance team assigned to the LEA approves the training plan. The core of the training is delivered through a series of training models and follow-up, on-site technical assistance in schools. The modules include:

- **Data-Driven Decision Making (DDDM):** ongoing review of data by LEA leaders, building leaders and teachers to determine the strengths in areas in need of improvement at the LEA and school levels.
- **Data Teams:** ongoing analysis of data from state, benchmark and common formative assessments to identify strengths and weaknesses in student learning, and to identify instructional strategies that will best address student learning objectives in the classroom. NOTE: Each of the 15 CALI partner LEAs are required to have LEA-, school- and classroom-level data teams and to participate in ongoing professional development and on-site technical assistance in the CALI initiative. The state team assigned to each LEA works with the LEA data team to monitor the effectiveness of the data teams. Standards have been identified for each team and state-designed rubrics are used to assess effectiveness and provide ongoing feedback for improvement.

To assist with the implementation of data teams, the CSDE has funded 30 “demonstration” schools in the partner LEAs (see section (A)(3). Each demonstration school is provided an external data team facilitator to provide training, technical assistance and feedback on using data to inform instruction. In addition, the CSDE has two statewide assessment projects designed to assist schools with using formative and benchmark assessments with students.

- **Making Standards Work:** aligning school and LEA expectations to state standards and developing classroom-based instruction and assessments to improve student performance.
- **Effective Teaching Strategies:** applying research-based effective instructional strategies identified in “Classroom Instruction that Works” (Marzano et al. 2001) and nonfiction writing (Reeves 2004) to develop lesson plans that best meet student needs.

- **Common Formative Assessments:** focuses on the development and use of periodic or interim assessments that are administered to all students in a grade level or course several times during the quarter, semester, trimester or entire school year.
- **Scientific Research Based Instruction:** Connecticut’s model for Response to Intervention (RTI), which builds on evidence-based instruction; early identification; and intervention based on universal screening. SRBI provides for ongoing monitoring of student progress; data-driven decision making; and developing individualized effective teaching strategies on ongoing diagnostic assessment of students who do not make progress with individualized intervention.
- **Technical Assistance Service Tracking (TAST) System:** The BAI tracks the participation of all staff in CALI training and technical assistance through the TAST system. This system will be expanded to all participating LEAs.

Each of the training modules has multiple levels of training including basic training (open to anyone; 2-3 days long); certification training (designed as a train-the-trainers model to build capacity in LEAs to provide their own training; 2-3 days long) and a leadership module that supports the principal or central office team in leading and monitoring implementation of CALI.

**Goal:** The CSDE will support the participating LEAs and their schools by requiring participation in CALI professional development and technical assistance on the use of data and establish a three-tiered accountability system (LEA-, school- and instructional-level data systems) to support continuous instructional improvement.

**Key activities, timelines and parties responsible**

See key activities, timelines and parties responsible listed in (C)(3)(i)

**Performance Measures**

See performance measures listed in (C)(3)(i)

**(C)(3)(iii)**

**Goal 1:** Ensure data from the statewide longitudinal data system (SLDS) are available and accessible to researchers.

**Activities:** As noted under (C)(2) Connecticut will deploy its new data dissemination Web site, CEDaR, which will provide public access to all education data the CSDE collects, aggregated to the school, LEA and/or state levels. Also noted in (C)(2) is the adoption of Public Act 09-241 in 2009, which requires the CSDE to provide within 60 days state student-level education data to tax-exempt nonprofit organizations operated for educational purposes.. This statute as noted in Section 10-10a(e) in Appendix A-244 provides an additional means for researchers to gain access to education data should it not be available on CEDaR.

**Implementation Timelines and Responsible Parties:** CEDaR will deploy in February 2010 under the direction of CSDE staff members from the Bureau of Data Collection, Research and Evaluation, the Bureau of Grants Management, and the Bureau of Information Technology.

**Goal 2:** Ensure data from local instructional improvement systems are available to researchers.

**Activities:** As part of the required detailed work plan, the participating LEAs will need to assure that any data from their local instructional improvement system that is NOT part of the SLDS (e.g., local benchmark assessments, student satisfaction surveys) will be shared upon request, and include in their work plan the contact person at the LEA level for coordinating and responding to such data requests.

**Implementation Timelines and Responsible Parties:** The assurance will be made at the time the work plan is submitted, and data requests will be responded to within a reasonable time. Responsible parties include the LEA staff person noted in the work plan. The CSDE will approve LEA work plans and will ensure that this component is included.

**Goal 3:** Use data from the local instructional improvement systems and the SLDS as a means to determine the effectiveness of the CALI Theory of Action and make these results publicly available.

**Activities:** The CSDE issued a competitive request for proposals for an external evaluation of CALI 18 months ago. This evaluation, which RMC Research Corporation is conducting, is in the final stages of a two-year evaluation. The evaluation included a

review of data from various sources, including statewide evaluation and student data, local student performance data, review of data from the TAST system, and qualitative data from extensive interviews and focus groups with state, LEA central office and school staff, as well as site visits and observations to LEAs and schools. The evaluation is designed to determine the effectiveness of the CALI Theory of Action and:

1. To what extent and degree of fidelity is CALI being implemented at the LEA and school levels in LEAs identified in need of improvement, corrective action or restructuring under NCLB?
2. Do the components/interventions support each other? If so, how and to what degree?
3. What impact is CALI having on LEA, school, teacher and student performance?

A summary from the interim report from September 30, 2009, is included in appendix A-99. Some brief highlights from the evaluation are promising and include:

“This first phase of the evaluation focused at the LEA level, where leaders have worked in earnest and made progress in reaching fidelity. The fifteen CALI Partner Districts that are knowledgeable of CALI buy-in to the CALI model as a viable way to bring about school and district improvement and have participated in CALI activities to a degree of depth.”

“Fidelity of implementation is extremely important at the school level simply because it is in the interactions of teachers and students in classrooms that improvement will ultimately happen or not. The partnership between districts and their schools in reaching fidelity in using data-driven improvement is the real arena of change, and the second phase of the evaluation will seek insights into how implementation occurs at this level.”

“The CALI components and interventions support one another in the model as designed. CALI is fundamentally a data-driven, continuous improvement model.... As conceptualized the CALI components and interventions are cohesive and coherent.”

The CSDE will use the findings of the final evaluation report to further enhance and refine CALI. The CSDE will use the resources of the RTTT to issue, within one year, a competitive request for proposals to evaluate the effectiveness of CALI implementation and progress in closing the achievement gap.



**Implementation Timelines and Responsible Parties:** CSDE staff members from the Bureau of Accountability and Improvement will oversee the evaluation process. The final evaluation report is expected in March 2010.

**(D) Great Teachers and Leaders (138 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) PROVIDING PATHWAYS FOR TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS**

**D(1)(i)** Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) section 10-145b(c) authorizes the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) to offer teacher certification for candidates who have successfully completed an alternative route to certification (ARC). See also CGS sections 10a-10a, 10a-19d, and 10-155d in the Appendix at pages A - 294 and A - 271 for additional statutory authority to provide ARC programs in Connecticut. CGS 10-145b(c) defines the requirements for alternative route candidates to obtain certification and provides for the issuance of a 90-day temporary permit to any individual who successfully completes a Connecticut ARC program in elementary education, middle grades education, secondary academic subjects, special subjects or fields, special education, early childhood education and administration and supervision (see CGS 10-145b(c) at p. A-266).

**Authorized ARC Providers**

Under state law, providers both within and independent of Connecticut's institutions of higher education are authorized to offer ARC programs (see CGS 10-145b(c) at p. A-266).

Pursuant to sections 23 and 46 of Public Act 86-1 of the May Special Session, the General Assembly first authorized the Connecticut Department of Higher Education (DHE) to develop an alternative route to certification program, upon the CSDE approving the program. The DHE has successfully offered such programs since 1988. The General Assembly subsequently authorized the DHE to expand its ARC program offerings in 2001, pursuant to section 6 of Public Act 01-1 of the June Special Session. In 2006, pursuant to section 25 of Public Act 06-135, the legislature specifically authorized the DHE to develop an ARC program for (1) school administrators and superintendents, and (2) early childhood education teachers (see CGS 10-155d at p. A-271).

Pursuant to section 2 of Public Act 09-01 of the June 19, 2009 Special Session, CGS 10-145b(c) was revised to expand the types of entities authorized to offer an ARC program to include the Department of Higher Education, Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs), and private teacher or administrator training organizations (see CGS 145b(c) at p. A-266).

Connecticut currently offers eight ARC programs for teacher certification. Four are offered by providers independent of the State's institutions of higher education. See Table (D)(1)(ii)(a) below for a summary of Connecticut ARC programs and the type of providers that offer such programs.

Each ARC program must address the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) standards that require high quality instruction in pedagogy and addressing the needs of all students in the classroom, including English language learners and special needs students. In addition, as laid out in further detail below, all ARC programs in Connecticut satisfy the four remaining criteria for alternative route to certification programs, as defined in this application:

- Each is selective in admissions
- Provide supervised, school-based experiences and ongoing support
- Significantly limit required coursework or have course test-out options
- Award the same level of certification as traditional programs

#### **Candidate Selection Criteria**

As stated above, CGS 10-145b(c) defines the requirements for alternative route candidates to obtain certification and allows a 90-day temporary permit to be issued to any individual who successfully completes a Connecticut ARC program. Therefore, Connecticut's ARC programs have adopted the following requirements for the 90-day temporary permit as the minimum selection criteria for each of its candidates:

- Each candidate must hold a bachelor's degree from an institution of higher education accredited by the Board of Governors of Higher Education or regionally accredited. Candidates must have a major or closely related major in the subject area for which they are seeking certification, or in the case of secondary or special subject or field endorsement area, possesses at least the minimum total number of semester credit hours required for the content area. Of note, section 10 of Public Act 09-01 of the June 19, 2009 Special Session provides one exception to this requirement. On and after July 1, 2010, the State Board of Education must allow applicants seeking teacher certification in subject shortage areas to substitute an excellent score on subject area assessments in lieu of the subject

area major requirement for certification. See section 10 of Public Act 09-01 of the June Special Session at page A-455 in the Appendix and CGS 10-145b(c)(1)(B)(i) at page A-267.

- Each ARC candidate must possess an undergraduate college overall grade point average of at least “B,” or if the candidate has completed at least 24 hours of graduate credit, possesses a graduate grade point average of at least “B” (see CGS 10-145b(c)(1)(B)(v) at p. A-268).
- Each ARC candidate must present supporting evidence of appropriate experience working with children (see CGS 10-145b(c)(1)(B)(vi) at p. A-268).

In addition to the above selection criteria, to obtain certification ARC candidates must also meet the testing requirements pursuant to subsection (b) of section 10-145f of the CGS, which requires all candidates for teacher certification to successfully complete the Praxis I and Praxis II exams in the content area they are seeking certification (see CGS 10-145f(b) at p. A-268 and 10-145b(c)(1)(B)(ii) at page A-267).

### **Supervision of Candidates**

Once an ARC candidate successfully completes the ARC program, the candidate is issued a temporary 90-day certificate, or, beginning in the 2010-11 school year, a “resident teacher certificate.” This type of certificate serves as a substitute for the typical full-time student teaching required of traditional certification programs, and requires that the ARC candidate be provided supervised, school-based experiences and ongoing support.

The employing agent of a local or regional school board must request in writing a temporary 90-day certificate on behalf of the ARC candidate. In making the request, the employing agent for the board must attest to the existence of a special plan for supervision of the temporary 90-day certificate holder (see CGS 10-145b(c)(1)(A) at p. A-267). See also 10-145d-414 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies at page A-460 in the Appendix for further information on the approval of a temporary 90-day certificate. In addition, pursuant to section 10-145b(c)(1)(C)(2) of the CGS, each ARC candidate serving under a temporary 90-day certificate is

required to participate in a beginning support and assessment program, pursuant to section 10-220a, which the CSDE specifically designed for holders of temporary 90-day certificates.

In June 2009, the Connecticut General Assembly adopted legislation to allow ARC candidates to be issued a resident teacher certificate to allow ARC candidates to work within the public schools for one full year prior to completing the ARC program. See section 13 of Public Act 09-01 of the June 19, 2009, Special Session at page A-455 in the Appendix for a complete copy of this legislation. Under the resident teacher certificate, the legislation requires that the ARC candidate work “under the supervision of the superintendent of schools or of a principal, administrator or supervisor designated by such superintendent who shall regularly observe, guide and evaluate the performance of assigned duties by such holder of a resident teacher certificate.” As with the temporary 90-day certificate, upon successful completion of the one-year residency, the candidate will be issued a three-year initial certificate.

#### **Limited Coursework Requirements**

As stated above, to enroll in an ARC program ARC candidates are required to have only a bachelor's degree with a major either in or closely related to the certification endorsement which the candidate is seeking, or in the case of secondary or special subject or field endorsement area, possesses at least the minimum total number of semester credit hours required for the content area. In addition, if an ARC candidate seeks to teach in a subject shortage area, pursuant to section 10 of Public Act 09-01 of the June 19, 2009, Special Session, on and after July 1, 2010, the subject major requirement may be waived entirely if the candidate achieves an excellent score on the subject area assessment (Praxis II). See section 10 of Public Act 09-01 of the June 19, 2009, Special Session at page A-455 in the Appendix for a complete copy of this legislation.

All the ARC programs in Connecticut are noncredit bearing programs that are shorter in duration than traditional teacher preparation programs. Generally, full-time ARC programs last from five to 10 weeks over the summer. For example, the Department of Higher Education’s summer ARC program is nine weeks long. Teach for America’s ARC program requires five weeks of training. By the end of these summer sessions, ARC program participants are eligible for the temporary 90-day certificate to begin working in a classroom. Part-time, weekend ARC programs may last for one school year or less. For example, the Department of Higher

Education's part-time ARC program runs from late October into mid-May, meeting for about 10 hours a weekend, three or four weekends a month.

**Level of Certification upon Completion**

Pursuant to 10-145b(c)(3), when an ARC candidate successfully teaches under a temporary 90-day permit for the 90-day period, upon the CSDE's receipt of a proper application, the individual is eligible for a three-year initial certificate equivalent to any traditional program candidate who completes a minimum of 10 weeks of full-time student teaching. Similarly, under the new resident teacher certificate, an ARC candidate will be eligible for the three-year initial certificate upon successfully completing a year under the certificate, as long as the candidate has successfully completed the ARC program and has submitted a proper application to the CSDE (see section 13 of Public Act 09-01 of the June 19, 2009, Special Session at p. A-455).

**D(1)(ii)** Currently, Connecticut has eight alternative route program providers for teachers. In fiscal year 2008-2009, 323 teachers successfully completed certification through these ARC programs, which equals 15 percent of the total number of teachers certified in that year. Of the 323 ARC completers, almost all (296) attended programs operated by providers other than institutions for higher education.

Connecticut currently has no ARC programs to prepare principals. However, the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC), an independent provider, has a pending application for the approval of an advanced certificate program in intermediate administration and supervision (the certification that is required to serve as a principal). The approval visit for this program will occur in spring 2010, and this program will be presented to the State Board of Education for formal approval in June 2010. If approved, the program will admit candidates beginning in fall 2010.

Table D(1)(ii)(a) summarizes the current ARC programs offered in Connecticut and the "Connecticut Approved Educator Preparation Programs". See Appendix A - 239 for additional information about these programs.

<b>Table D(1)(ii)(a)</b>			
<b>Name of Program</b>	<b>Provider Type</b>	<b>Certification Type</b>	<b>Completers SY 08-09</b>
Teach for America	Independent organization	Initial certificate: Multiple subjects	70
Area Cooperative Education Services	Regional educational service center	Advanced endorsements in TESOL/Bilingual and Library Media	1
Capitol Region Education Council	Regional educational service center	Advanced endorsement in Special Education	9
Capitol Region Education Council	Regional educational service center	Advanced endorsement in Intermediate Administration-pending approval	To start Fall 2010
CT ARC Program	Department of Higher Education	Initial certificate: Multiple subjects	216
Charter Oak State College	Public higher education institution	Initial certificate: Early childhood Education, Birth-K	10
Albertus Magnus College	Private higher education institution	Advanced endorsement: Remedial reading	14
Quinnipiac University	Private higher education institution	Advanced endorsement: Middle/secondary mathematics	3
Eastern Connecticut State University	Public higher education institution	Advanced endorsement: Early childhood education, PreK-third grade	0

**D(1)(iii)** For 20 of the past 21 years, the CSDE has surveyed local LEAs to determine teacher and administrator shortage areas. Most recently, in March 2009 the CSDE produced a Data Bulletin Fall Hiring Report summarizing the vacancy and employment data from fall 2008 and providing comparative data over the past two decades. The complete Data Bulletin on teacher shortage areas is included in the Appendix at page A-313. Since 1991, the total number of teacher and administrator positions in Connecticut has grown



from 41,733 to 52,544. Similarly, annual positions to be filled rose to 4,830 from 1,281. Of note, in 1991, 27 percent of these positions were part-time, while in 2008 just 8 percent were part-time.

In the latest year of data (fall 2008), 93.5 percent of vacancies were filled by October of the school year, leaving 312 of these remaining vacant. Of these, 219 were vacant due to the inability of the LEA to find a qualified candidate. A summary of shortage areas for the fall of 2008 is shown below:

<b>Table (D)(1)(iii) Connecticut PK-12 Shortage Areas and Status</b>		
<b>Subject</b>	<b>Number of Positions Available</b>	<b>Number of Positions Remaining Vacant, No Qualified Person Found</b>
Bilingual Education (PK-12)	34	6
Special Education (1-12)	566	34
English	364	10
Mathematics	314	16
Music	160	10
Science	322	7
Speech and Language	131	23
Technology Education	35	2
World Languages	265	25
Library Media Specialist	68	12
Intermediate Administrator	253	12

In Connecticut, alternative route programs are initially approved for shortage areas only. The CSDE will develop a plan to evaluate preparation and ARC programs to research increasing preparation of teachers in the above shortage areas, taking into account new incentives that may be needed to attract new candidates. It should be noted that the matter of principal shortage is not due to a

shortage of certified candidates. In the 2008-2009 school year, approximately 3000 administrators obtained certification. The shortage reflects the challenge districts face in attracting candidates to apply and take positions as principals due to concerns that many candidates have relating to salary and working conditions. Race to the Top grant funds will be used to contract with an evaluator to research these questions relating to preparation and incentives in these shortage areas, subject to collective bargaining.

On an annual basis, Connecticut currently takes a series of actions to assist LEAs to address these vacancies, including:

- Seeking U.S. Department of Education designation of official shortage areas, enabling Stafford and Supplemental Loan students who teach in one of these areas to possibly qualify for deferral of loan repayments.
- Through the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority, the CSDE designates shortage areas that enable a teacher in a Priority School District or in a subject-matter shortage area, to qualify for mortgage assistance.
- LEAs may also use state-defined shortage area designations to re-employ teachers who are then exempt from the statutory pension earnings limit (see CGS 10-183 in the Appendix at p. A-272).

In addition, as part of the State's Reform Plan under this application, the CSDE will also implement a series of new programs in order to assist LEAs to increase the number of effective teachers in the state's high poverty and/or high minority schools, as further discussed in section D(3) of this application.

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

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

- (i) Establish clear approaches to measuring student growth (as defined in this notice) and measure it for each individual student; (5 points)
- (ii) Design and implement rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation systems for teachers and principals that (a) differentiate effectiveness using multiple rating categories that take into account data on student growth (as defined in this notice) as a significant factor, and (b) are designed and developed with teacher and principal involvement; (15 points)
- (iii) Conduct annual evaluations of teachers and principals that include timely and constructive feedback; as part of such evaluations, provide teachers and principals with data on student growth for their students, classes, and schools; (10 points) and
- (iv) Use these evaluations, at a minimum, to inform decisions regarding— (28 points)
  - (a) Developing teachers and principals, including by providing relevant coaching, induction support, and/or professional development;
  - (b) Compensating, promoting, and retaining teachers and principals, including by providing opportunities for highly effective teachers and principals (both as defined in this notice) to obtain additional compensation and be given additional responsibilities;
  - (c) Whether to grant tenure and/or full certification (where applicable) to teachers and principals using rigorous standards and streamlined, transparent, and fair procedures; and
  - (d) Removing ineffective tenured and untenured teachers and principals after they have had ample opportunities to improve, and ensuring that such decisions are made using rigorous standards and streamlined, transparent, and fair procedures.

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

*Recommended maximum response length: Ten pages*

**(D)(2) IMPROVING TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL EFFECTIVENESS BASED ON PERFORMANCE**

**State Reform Plan and Key Goals**

Connecticut's education reform agenda is heavily dependent on the quality and effectiveness of its teachers and principals. Professional development, attracting and retaining high-quality educators, and ensuring that staff evaluations are correlated with student achievement are essential to success. Knowing the importance of these factors, Connecticut has already begun to build and implement a comprehensive teacher quality system. This system is designed to provide:

1. New incentives to attract people, principally undergraduates, into the profession.
2. A revised, state regulatory framework for awarding teachers and administrators certificates to practice in Connecticut, based on such factors as coursework, a range of assessments, and experience.
3. Strong teacher preparation programs that will lead to certification in all areas of teaching and administration, as prescribed by the new regulatory framework.
4. New protocols for *mentoring* both beginning teachers and new principals and other administrators.
5. New protocols for *supervising and evaluating* all teachers and all administrators in Connecticut.
6. New models for developing teachers' *professional competencies* through continuing education requirements (CEUs) and/or additional coursework at the undergraduate or graduate levels.

Throughout Sections D2-D5 of this application, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) describes the components of Connecticut's ambitious plan to cultivate effective teachers and leaders. This plan will guide the State's efforts to improve instructional quality, boost academic achievement, and narrow the achievement gaps that persist in the State's public schools. This plan describes ways to measure student growth, develop and build a highly effective workforce, strengthen Connecticut's K-12 partnerships with higher education, and increase public and parental understanding of comprehensive educational reform in Connecticut during the next decade.

The State's plan for great teachers and leaders will focus on six elements:

*1. Revision of Connecticut's (1999) Teacher and Administrators Standards and Evaluation Guidelines*

This document and others related to it (see Table (D)(2) below) must now be revised with the full involvement of key stakeholders. The new guidelines, to be implemented in 2012, will need to be sufficiently detailed with clear, reliable procedures and multiple measures of teacher and principal performance.

<b>Table (D)(2)(a) Introduction to Great Teachers and Leaders Status Update on Connecticut Regulatory and Policy Work Now in Progress</b>			
<b>Document</b>	<b>Last Publication Date</b>	<b>Current Status</b>	<b>Anticipated Publication Date</b>
<i>Certification Regulations</i>	1998	Revised. To go to the State Board of Education in February 2010 for approval	September 2010
<i>Common Core of Teaching (CCT)</i>	1999	Revised. To go to the State Board of Education for approval in February 2010	April 2010
<i>Common Core of Leading</i>	2009	Adopted and issued in 2009	Complete, 2009
<i>Connecticut School Leader Standards</i>	1999	Revision to be completed over calendar 2010	January 2011
<i>Evaluation Guidelines for Teachers and Administrators</i>	1999	Revision to be completed within one year	June 2011

*2. A New Model to Measure Student Growth*

The CSDE must, in consultation with nationally prominent measurement experts, define student growth in ways that parents and the public can easily understand and that teachers and administrators can reliably use.

*3. A New System to Evaluate Connecticut Principals and Teachers by 2012*

A system for supervising and evaluating each group must now be designed, written, piloted and validated, drawing on what the CSDE have learned from research, and Connecticut’s past work as a state. The system that CSDE will design must provide pertinent data to make policy decisions about teachers and principals, document performance more thoroughly than in the past, and publicly and transparently report schoolwide and districtwide data to parents and the public at large.

*4. Statewide Professional Development for School and Central Office Administrators*

This system, moreover, must be tied to a multiyear initiative to train principals and central office administrators in how to fairly and appropriately implement new protocols for supervising and evaluating teachers and building principals. Considering the mean age of most principals in Connecticut is 55, large numbers of educators will need this training. CSDE data clearly forecast principal shortages by 2015 if Connecticut is not proactive in recruiting, training and supporting new principals. As the CSDE suggest later, it is imperative that Connecticut design and implement a mentoring program for principals that is comparable to the new Teacher Education and Mentoring (TEAM) program enacted into law in 2009 by the Connecticut General Assembly. See Appendix A - 456 for a full description about 2009 legislation about TEAM.

*5. Statewide Technology Training for Teachers, Principals and Staff: Engaging “Next Generation” Learners*

If teacher and principal evaluations are to be grounded in realities of learning in a 21st century context, the CSDE plan must also focus on teaching and assessing “next generation” learners who have grown up with computers and the Internet as integral parts of their daily lives. Both teachers and principals must become proficient in current, cutting-edge technologies for both instructional and administrative purposes. Many of Connecticut’s teachers, especially in our high schools, have not been trained sufficiently to make full use of the new tools of instruction and software now available online.

*6. Targeted Training for Teachers, Principals and Staff: Differentiating Instruction for Minority Student Populations*

Finally, if teacher and principal evaluations are to reflect the changing characteristics of the learners now in our classrooms, then Connecticut must redouble its efforts to train teachers to differentiate instruction effectively for greater numbers of immigrant, special needs, non-English-speaking students and other disadvantaged student populations. Improving instruction for these students, especially Connecticut's English language learners, is an essential part of narrowing Connecticut's achievement gaps. Training of the kind envisioned, moreover, is also a necessary part of filling the knowledge gaps among thousands of teachers who have not been adequately prepared to reach *all* students — students who need *many* alternative forms and modes of instruction if they are to meet with success.

**Key Goals for (D)(2):**

1. Implementation of a new, comprehensive system by 2013 for supporting, supervising and evaluating teachers and administrators/principals, to be developed by the State Board of Education in collaboration with external partners and LEAs, based on:
  - *The Common Core of Teaching* (2010);
  - *Connecticut's Guidelines for Teacher Evaluation and Professional Development* (1999);
  - *The Common Core of Leading* (2009);
  - multiple measures of assessment (including student growth);
  - current best practices in Connecticut; and
  - statewide report indicators required by Race To The Top (RTTT).
2. Skilled use of the new evaluation system by LEAs to conduct annual evaluations to inform decisions around compensation, promotion, retention, tenure and removal, continuing education, and professional development.

**Key Activities/ Responsible Parties:**

**D2(i)** *Establish clear approaches to measuring student growth (as defined in this notice) and measure it for each individual student.*

*To complete this activity, the CSDE will support the participating LEA's ability to measure student growth by:*

1. Expanding its ability to track student progress from preschool (includes any prekindergarten receiving state or federal funding) through public K-12 programs through a Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) for all participating LEAs. Through the IES SLDS grant, the CSDE will begin work to build a secure data store linking state student and teacher data, and include the following data variables:
  - a. student demographic information, including attendance and disciplinary records;
  - b. student Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) performance;
  - c. student/class and/or teacher ID (to match a student to a teacher);
  - d. teacher demographic information; and
  - e. teacher certification and preparation information, years of experience, etc.

Race to the Top funds will help accelerate and expand implementation of this project.
2. Providing the capacity to allow LEAs to integrate local measures of student performance, such as scores on standardized tests for grades that are not currently tested at the state level and other formative and benchmark assessment results, into the SLDS, based on the pending receipt of the phase III Institute of Educational Sciences (IES) SLDS grant.
3. Supporting the implementation of the Connecticut Benchmark Assessment System to include all participating LEAs across the state. Currently, the state has an online system of grade-level benchmark assessments for Grades 3 through 8 in mathematics and reading, which is piloted in 11 LEAs. Teachers may administer the assessment three times per year to chart student progress against the grade-level expectations identified in the pacing guides for the state's curriculum frameworks.



4. Collaborating with the Capitol Region Education Council to develop a series of developmentally appropriate interim assessments for kindergarten through Grade 2 in the areas of literacy, numeracy and science, which will be made available to districts in 2010.
5. Supporting the implementation of the “vertical scales” in the participating LEAs and other interested LEAs throughout the state. The Connecticut Mastery Test vertical scales were developed to measure growth (or change) across grades (i.e., from Grade 3 to Grade 4, from Grade 4 to Grade 5, etc.) on tests that have different characteristics and items, but have similar content. The vertical scales were constructed so that each vertical scale score represents the same theoretical achievement level, whether derived from a Grade 3, Grade 4, Grade 5, Grade 6, Grade 7 or Grade 8 CMT scale score. A vertical scale can be used to interpret growth for individual students, schools or school districts and for various subgroups (e.g., ethnicity, lunch status, special education).

**Timeline:**

The CSDE will have the supports and resources in place for a student growth model to be operational at the LEA level during the 2011-2012 school year.

**D2(ii)** *Design and implement rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation systems for teachers and principals that (a) differentiate effectiveness using multiple rating categories that take into account data on student growth (as defined in this notice) as a significant factor, and (b) are designed and developed with teacher and principal involvement; (15 points)*

These comprehensive evaluation systems for teachers and administrators/principals will be built on core constructs from the revised *Guidelines* and other accompanying policy documents found in table (D)(2)(b).

<b>Table (D)(2)(b)</b>	
<b>Core Constructs in Revised Policy Documents: Teaching, Leading and Evaluating</b>	
<b>Connecticut Common Core of Teaching</b> (to be adopted in 2010)	<b>Connecticut Common Core of Leading</b> (adopted and issued in 2009)
<p><i>Six key domains:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Content Knowledge</li> <li>2. Classroom Environment, Student Engagement</li> <li>3. Planning for Active Learning</li> <li>4. Instruction for Active Learning</li> <li>5. Assessment for Learning</li> <li>6. Professional Responsibilities and Leadership</li> </ol>	<p><i>12 standards:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Educated Person</li> <li>2. The Learning Process</li> <li>3. The Teaching Process</li> <li>4. Diverse Perspective</li> <li>5. School Goals</li> <li>6. School Culture</li> <li>7. Student Standards and Assessment</li> <li>8. School Improvement</li> <li>9. Professional Development</li> <li>10. Staff and Professional Development, School Improvement</li> <li>11. Organization, Resources, School Policies</li> <li>12. School-Community Relations</li> </ol>
<b>Evaluation Guidelines for Teachers and Administrators</b> (published in 1999, to be reissued in June 2011)	
<p>LEA evaluation and professional plans must address the following nine criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Affirm the clear links among teacher evaluation, professional development and improved student learning, and employ <i>Connecticut's Common Core of Teaching, The Connecticut Framework: K-12 Curricular Goals and Standards</i>, the CMT/CAPT Assessments, as well as locally developed curriculum standards, as the basis for establishing learning goals at the district and school levels.</li> <li>2. Employ <i>Connecticut's Common Core of Teaching</i> as Connecticut's definition of effective teaching to underscore essential linkages among the competencies identified in the <i>Common Core of Teaching</i>, a district's teacher evaluation and professional development plan, and improved student learning.</li> <li>3. Ensure the districtwide teacher evaluation and professional development plan provides opportunities for educators to receive Continuing Education Units (CEUs) based on work directly related to district goals and objectives for students.</li> <li>4. Include a clear, written statement describing the connections among teacher evaluation, curriculum development, professional development and student assessment.</li> <li>5. Provide opportunities for self-evaluation by teachers.</li> <li>6. Recognize peer assistance as integral to the ongoing support of teachers in improving teaching and learning.</li> <li>7. Provide for the training of administrators about the evaluation criteria established by the local school district.</li> <li>8. Provide for the allocation of time to facilitate teacher evaluation, collaboration and professional growth.</li> <li>9. Provide for both individual and collaborative evaluation and professional development.</li> </ol>	

**Key Activities/Timelines/Responsible Parties**

1. *Building the Teacher Performance System.* Connecticut is no stranger to the work of developing innovative, performance-based systems to measure teachers' performance. Connecticut's 1988 Beginning Educator Support and Training (BEST) program stood as a standard of excellence. The BEST program was recently redesigned and reconfigured into a new beginning teacher mentoring program called Teacher Education and Mentoring (TEAM), described in more detail in section D(3). Building upon this new program, the CSDE now plans to develop a separate, supervisory program based on the same domains specified in TEAM, but squarely grounded in the process of supervising and evaluating teachers' performance via classroom observations agreed-on measures of student growth, and other measures. Such other measures may include peer reviews, student/parent evaluations, or effective use of student success plans. The CSDE's development team and external partners will determine the range and variety of these other measures during the next year.

<b>Development of New Evaluation System for Teacher Effectiveness</b>		
<b>Benchmark</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>
Develop guidelines and policies for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) New statewide system of teacher evaluation and professional development based on the Common Core of Teaching (2010).</li> <li>2) Methods of measuring teacher efficacy that can be monitored by the CSDE and reported quantitatively on an annual basis.</li> <li>3) Performance criteria and rubrics ranging from "emerging to highly effective" for guiding evaluation decisions about teacher efficacy, using student growth measures as a significant criterion and a decision guide to determine how one "measure" should be weighted, contrasted with, or compared with other measures of performance beyond observation.</li> <li>4) Statewide data reporting system to collect annual teacher</li> </ol>	Begin 2010. Complete by February 2011	<p>The CSDE will be the primary agency overseeing development and implementation of the key goals.</p> <p>The six regional educational service centers (RESCs) will be the secondary parties responsible for deliverables related to training and external support for LEAs</p> <p>Other cooperative entities, private or public professional organizations or foundations such as the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS), the Connecticut Association of Public</p>

<b>Development of New Evaluation System for Teacher Effectiveness</b>		
<b>Benchmark</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>
evaluation data based on the methods and performance criteria established. 5) Professional development and training for supervisors and administrators/principals targeted at both supporting the development of teachers and evaluating them rigorously for effectiveness.		School Superintendents (CAPSS), Institutions of Higher Education (IHE), teacher unions (American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and Connecticut Education Association (CEA), and others will be invited to become partners in the implementation of this plan.
Roll out plan and prepare for piloting with select Participating LEAs	March through August 2011	CSDE, RESCs, LEAs
Pilot implementation with select Participating LEAs	September 2011 through June 2012	CSDE, RESCs, LEAs
Full implementation with all participating and involved districts	2012-2013 school year	CSDE, RESCs, LEAs

2. *The Principal Performance System.* The CSDE will develop and implement new administrator/principal evaluation methods and criteria. To accomplish this, the state's school leadership standards document developed in 1999 will first be reviewed and updated to ensure that high standards are being set for the next generation of learners. Methods identified for evaluating administrators will include use of student growth measures and multiple sources of data, including but not limited to:

- achieving school improvement goals and adequate yearly progress (AYP) on an annual basis;
- supporting teacher efficacy through the use of data-driven decision-making by teachers to improve student learning;
- developing structures for and teacher skills to address the learning needs of students with disabilities, English language learners and students in need of interventions;
- maintaining a safe and positive school climate;
- building internal capacity, developing distributed leadership (using teacher leaders) and a collaborative culture;
- developing and increasing parent and community involvement; and
- developing and retaining high numbers of effective teachers.

<b>Development of New Evaluation System for Administrator/Principal Effectiveness</b>		
<b>Benchmark</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>
<p>Develop guidelines and policies for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) New statewide system of administrator/principal evaluation and professional development based on the revised <i>1999 Connecticut School Leader Standards</i>, the <i>Connecticut Common Core of Leading</i> (2009).</li> <li>2) Methods of measuring administrator/principal efficacy based on criteria above that can be monitored by the CSDE and reported quantitatively on an annual basis.</li> <li>3) Performance criteria and rubrics ranging from “emerging to highly effective” for guiding evaluation decisions about administrator/principal efficacy, using student growth measures as a significant criterion.</li> <li>4) Statewide data reporting system to collect annual administrator/principal evaluation data based on the methods and performance criteria established.</li> <li>5) Training for LEA superintendents and administrators targeted to supporting and evaluating school based administrators/principals.</li> <li>6) Compensation system that would provide building-level performance pay for administrators of schools exceeding student growth expectations, subject to collective bargaining, where applicable.</li> </ol>	<p>Begin 2010. Complete by February 2011</p>	<p>The CSDE will be the primary agency overseeing development and implementation of the key goals.</p> <p>Connecticut’s six RESCs will be the secondary parties responsible for deliverables related to training and external support for LEAs/districts</p> <p>Other cooperative entities, private or public professional organizations or foundations such as CAS, CAPSS, IHE, teacher unions (AFT and CEA), and others will be invited to become partners in the implementation of this plan.</p>
Roll out plan and prepare for piloting with select Participating LEAs	March through August 2011	CSDE, RESCs, LEAs
Pilot implementation with select Participating LEAs	September 2011 through June 2012	CSDE, RESCs, LEAs
Full implementation with all participating and involved districts	2012-2013 school year	CSDE, RESCs, LEAs

3. The CSDE and RESCs will develop and implement professional development to support the new teacher and administrator/principal evaluation systems using the following strategies:

- Job-embedded and summer training for supervisors and administrators/principals who evaluate teachers based on the new evaluation plan, the specific methods for evaluating and the performance rubric. Training will be piloted and then implemented statewide, giving priority to the participating LEAs but making it available to administrators in all LEAs.
- Follow-up training and external coaching for administrators in the use of the process and monitoring consistency and accuracy of implementation.
- Focused monitoring of evaluation activities for selected districts and others needing external support in implementing the new teacher/administrator evaluation process and criteria.
- Central office training for LEA-level administrators (superintendents, assistant superintendents, etc.) who evaluate the efficacy of principals and vice principals. Training will be focused on the implementation of the process and the application of the administrator/principal performance criteria.
- Annual data collections from participating and involved districts on the results of using the new evaluation system. Focused monitoring and external coaching will be provided if data indicates the need for state monitoring or intervention, or if the LEA requests such support.

All administrators in Connecticut are required to have a minimum of 15 hours of training in teacher evaluation. To ensure consistency and reliability of the application of the teacher evaluation process (methods), analysis of student growth data, and the application of the performance rubric, the Connecticut State Board of Education plans to require that all practicing administrators evaluating teachers must complete the new training based on the new teacher evaluation plan and performance rubric. [Further details on professional development can be found in Section (D)(5)].

**Timeline:** March 2011 and ongoing thereafter

**D2(iii)** *Conduct annual evaluations of teachers and principals that include timely and constructive feedback; as part of such evaluations, provide teachers and principals with data on student growth for their students, classes, and schools; (10 points)*

**Activities/Timelines/Responsible Parties**

As described in section (D)(2)(ii), the CSDE will be developing and implementing a teacher and administrator/principal evaluation system to be consistently monitored in all Participating LEAs. Connecticut will use the RTTT application definitions of effective and highly effective teachers and principals in creating this evaluation system. The CSDE will require Participating LEAs to annually evaluate all teachers and principals and report data into the data systems established to monitor teacher effectiveness and report target data in 2012-13 and 2013-14. In addition:

- The CSDE will develop a statewide data reporting system to collect annual teacher and administrator/principal evaluation data based on the methods and performance criteria established.
- The CSDE will analyze and report on teacher and administrator/principal performance statewide.
- To ensure that LEAs conduct evaluations annually, the CSDE will develop an electronic data collection process to monitor individual teacher and aggregate evaluation data for each LEA.
- LEAs will be able to use the system to track their own data and the CSDE will monitor the progress of the district in its reporting of the data on evaluation.
- The CSDE will require the review and approval of all plans and conduct focused monitoring with school districts on the implementation of the teacher and administrator evaluation processes to identify needed supports, training, external coaching or data analysis expertise.
- The CSDE will provide on an ongoing basis data on student growth based on state standardized tests, aggregated and disaggregated, as well as other measures that can be tracked at the state level.

**Timeline:** These activities will commence in March 2011 and continue thereafter.

**D2(iv)(a)** *Developing teachers and principals, including by providing relevant coaching, induction support, and/or professional development*

**Activities/Timelines/Responsible Parties**

1. The CSDE will monitor LEA evaluation data as it relates to each LEA's capacity to ensure sufficient teacher leadership and coaching; to ensure effective implementation of the statewide TEAM program to induct beginning teachers; and to ensure that evaluation data is used to design and guide school-wide, individual or team-based professional development. See Section (D)(5) for additional detail.
2. Through focused monitoring protocols, the CSDE will review how effectively each district's evaluation system and professional development are working to support teachers and principals and beginning teachers in particular. The protocols will also examine how relevant professional development programs focus on the analysis of student learning data to improve instruction or better support students in need of instructional or behavioral interventions.
3. Based on student growth data used in the evaluation process, the teacher and administrator will jointly plan professional development needs. State guidelines for professional development will encourage models that are already in use in districts that have implemented the CALI in which collaboration and job-embedded training are integral components [as further defined in (D)(5)].
4. The CSDE will develop and implement a mentoring program for new administrators/principals, supporting them in the first years as school based administrators. Regional partners, the RESCs, will facilitate regional support sessions and will serve as the coordinators of external coaching for new administrators, using IHE educational leadership faculty to support and develop new school-based leaders. Regional support sessions will also provide opportunities for critical, needs-based professional development, focused on student learning and supervision of curriculum and instruction [as further defined in (D)(5)].

**Timelines:** These activities will commence in September 2010 and continue thereafter.



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

**Activities/Timelines/Responsible Parties**

1. With the input of key stakeholders (e.g., Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS), Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPS), et al.), the CSDE will develop a framework for designing compensation systems that can, through collective bargaining, be agreed upon and adopted locally by each district/LEA. The new framework may include guidance for such things as team- or building-level performance pay for teachers and administrators whose students exceed performance expectations in any given year; stipends for mentoring beginning teachers in the summer; stipends for serving on district-wide data teams; stipends for demonstrated acquisition of relevant skills and knowledge; or other such constructs. At a minimum, the CSDE will provide guidance on such topics as:

- levels of cooperation required and relinquishing of previous, traditional positions and policies in order to achieve system reform;
- linkages between the evaluation process, improved student performance, and a compensation system for teachers and administrators; and
- linkages between the compensation system with goals to support recruitment and retention, particularly differentiated pay for teachers taking on additional leadership responsibilities.

2. The CSDE will first look to the New Haven Public School contract recently negotiated with the New Haven Federation of Teachers as a springboard to further support, and to promote linking school reform, improved student achievement, and teacher evaluation to a fair and appropriate compensation system for teachers and administrators.

3. Finally, the CSDE will also support and encourage salary reform based on differentiated assignments or staffing (teacher leaders, team leaders, coaches, curriculum leaders, etc.) rather than the accumulation of credits beyond the master's degree.

**Timelines:** 2012-2013

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

**Key Activities/Timelines/Responsible Parties**

The CSDE will work with stakeholders, including external partners, to review and discuss conditions for tenure based on identified criteria for teacher effectiveness. As such

- LEAs must ensure that they have a sound teacher and administrator/principal evaluation system based on state professional standards, and teachers and administrators will need to clearly demonstrate that they can lead students to learn and achieve at high levels and to show growth over specific, predetermined timeframes.
- Connecticut's current statutory authority Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) 10-151 will continue to outline the due process requirements for both LEAs and "teachers."
- To ensure fairness, the CSDE in collaboration with stakeholders, will develop effective evaluation processes, instruments, criteria and training; ensure consistency of standards statewide, and wherever possible streamline processes that are historically time-consuming and labor intensive.
- Further, through data collection and focused monitoring, the CSDE will ensure transparency of both the implementation and analysis of teacher and administrator evaluation processes.

**Timelines:** Beginning 2010 and ongoing thereafter

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

**Activities/Timelines/Responsible Parties:**

- The CSDE will include in the new teacher and administrator evaluation guidelines specificity for implementation and enforcement of "intensive" evaluation phases for teachers and/or administrators whose performance is significantly below acceptable levels of performance.

- The LEAs will need to provide focused and intensive supervision for individuals identified for the “intensive” phase on a frequent and ongoing basis, for a specific timeframe. The intensive phase will also require significant peer professional development opportunities.
- Further, the CSDE will make external coaching available through initiatives such as the Teacher-in-Residence Master Teacher Program [see (D)(3)] to LEAs that need assistance with implementing the intensive phase. This will involve experienced, objective external evaluators to assist in supervision efforts. If efficacy is not demonstrated within the specified timeframe, state guidelines will outline the steps for termination of tenured or non-tenured teachers and principals.

**Timelines:** Beginning in 2010 and ongoing thereafter

<b>Performance Measures</b> 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
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>General goals to be provided at time of application:</b>	<b>Baseline data and annual targets</b>				
(D)(2)(i)	Percentage of participating LEAs that measure student growth (as defined in this notice).	Not available				
(D)(2)(ii)	Percentage of participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems for teachers.	Not available				
(D)(2)(ii)	Percentage of participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems for principals.	Not available				
(D)(2)(iv)	Percentage of participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems that are used to inform:	Not available				
(D)(2)(iv)(a)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing teachers and principals.</li> </ul>	Not available				
(D)(2)(iv)(b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compensating teachers and principals.</li> </ul>	Not available				

(D)(2)(iv)(b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promoting teachers and principals.</li> </ul>	Not available				
(D)(2)(iv)(b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retaining effective teachers and principals.</li> </ul>	Not available				
(D)(2)(iv)(c)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Granting tenure and/or full certification (where applicable) to teachers and principals.</li> </ul>	Not available				
(D)(2)(iv)(d)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Removing ineffective tenured and untenured teachers and principals.</li> </ul>	Not available				
<p>[Optional: Enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data]</p> <p><i>Baseline and Target Teacher Performance Data</i></p> <p>The State does not currently collect data from LEAs on teacher or principal evaluations. Under the SFSF and RTTT grant, CSDE plans to collect baseline data in June 2012 from the pilot of the teacher and administrator evaluation system. Following the collection of baseline data, the CSDE will establish targets for subsequent years.</p>						
<b>General data to be provided at time of application:</b>						
Total number of participating LEAs.		122				
Total number of principals in participating LEAs.		759				
Total number of teachers in participating LEAs.		31,950				
The number of principal also includes vice principals and assistant principals.						
<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Data to be requested of grantees in the future:</b>					
(D)(2)(ii)	Number of teachers and principals in participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems.					

(D)(2)(iii) <sup>1</sup>	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.

<sup>1</sup> 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 CSDE. 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 CSDE 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 purpose of the State's Teacher Equity Plan.

*Recommended maximum response length: Three pages*

**(D)(3) ENSURING EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF EFFECTIVE TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS**

**(D)(3)(i-ii)**

**Evidence**

Connecticut uses the definition for high poverty and high minority that is provided in section 1111(h)(1)(c)(viii) of the ESEA.

*High Poverty* is defined for each school by the percentage of students eligible for free/reduced price meals. Each school was assigned to a quartile based on the percentage of students in poverty.

*High Minority* LEAs were assigned to a quartile based on the percentage of minority students as reported in the state's Public School Information System.

**Context**

Several issues have been identified as barriers to equitable distribution of teachers and administrators in Connecticut. These include:

- Late seasonal hiring practices employed by high poverty and high minority LEAs, which creates the situation where the smaller LEAs have already hired most of the candidates graduating from the highly regarded teacher preparation institutions.
- Retention of teachers in these high poverty and high minority LEAs is three to five years when newer teachers seek a position in a less stressed suburban LEA.
- Tenure and seniority discourages highly effective teachers/principals from changing LEAs later in their career when they have developed their teaching strategies and skills.
- Low numbers of effective teachers being produced by traditional preparation programs in the identified shortage areas.

Many state initiatives currently under way are designed to address equitable distribution concerns. These include:

- Legislation passed in 2005 allows appropriately certified retired teachers to return to teach in a shortage area and earn full salary without affecting their retirement for up to two years. (See CGS 10-183v(b).)

- Alternative routes to certification programs have been approved during the last 20 years to address the state-identified shortage areas.
- Mortgage assistance program in Connecticut’s high-poverty and high-minority LEAs for teachers who purchase a home in those LEAs.
- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with India, China and Spain to allow teachers from these countries to work under an international teacher permit for up to three years in high-poverty/high-minority LEAs. These teachers, who are both experienced and hold a master’s degrees or higher, are recruited specifically in shortage areas including math, science and world languages.

### **Goals**

The key goals of our plan to distribute teachers and leaders equitably are:

1. To provide equitable access and thus increase the number of highly effective teachers and principals (as defined in this RTTT notice) working in high-poverty and high-minority LEAs — through financial incentives, targeted interventions, specialized programs, and changes in state policy.
2. To increase the number and percentage of effective teachers in hard-to-staff subjects (e.g., math, science, special education, etc.) — again, through financial incentives, specialized programs, and changes in state policy.

### **Key Activities**

Connecticut’s plan for great teachers and leaders strives to distribute effective teachers and principals to communities through a variety of program and policy initiatives. Some of the initiatives described below are currently state funded, but the vast majority will require new funding through RTTT. Besides striving to place teachers and administrators in the LEAs where they are needed most, these initiatives are also designed to work as a system of support for teacher evaluation, professional development, and continuing education:



*1. Teacher Education and Mentoring (TEAM) Program*

New legislation has just been passed regarding the implementation of a newly designed teacher induction program, TEAM will pair mentor teachers with beginning teachers during their first two years of teaching to enhance their teaching skills and improve their teaching practice. This new program will be fully implemented beginning fall 2010 and will serve as a major building block in Connecticut's comprehensive system for inducting, mentoring and evaluating professional teaching staff. The details of TEAM include:

- Each beginning teacher will be required to complete five professional growth modules during the two-year period in the following *Common Core of Teaching* (CCT) domains: classroom management, planning lessons, instructing, assessing students' understanding and achievement, and professional responsibilities.
- Each module will include the completion of a reflection paper that must be deemed by the LEA or regional review committee as successfully completed for all five modules before the beginning teacher can be awarded a provisional teaching certificate (the second-tier certificate in Connecticut's three-tier certification system).

To view the legislative language authorizing the TEAM program, see Section 37 of Public Act 09-06 of the September Special Session in the Appendix, A - 460.

*2. The Connecticut Institute for the Teaching of English Language Learners*

CSDE will collaborate with the Haskins Reading Lab, Eastern Connecticut State University, the United States Department of Education supported New England and the Islands – Regional Education Laboratory, the Commission for Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs, and other groups to design the state's first public-private organization dedicated to the research and teaching of immigrant students and English language learners in Connecticut's public schools. The center will be supported by state funding, foundations, grants, and revenues earned through training programs conducted for public school teachers and administrators. Teachers in LEAs with high proportions of underperforming ELL students — who are either recent immigrants to the United States or children from

non-English speaking families — will attend training initiatives planned by the institute and delivered through the lab or the Regional Educational Service Center (RESC) Alliance. Specific details will include:

- Workshops in areas such as language acquisition, early literacy development, language assessment, working with students learning English for the first time, and/or job-embedded training in classrooms enrolling significant numbers of non-English speakers.
- Using state funding to provide for training, coaching, software purchases, and materials customized to the language populations being served.

*3. Legislatively Developed Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Teacher Regional Exchange*

Once legislation has been passed by the General Assembly to determine the terms and conditions for implementing this program, participating LEAs — preferably in groups of two urban and two suburban/rural LEAs — will form consortiums to revise their contracts to permit the hiring of a team of eight to 12 new or experienced secondary math and science teachers to serve Grades 6-12. These teachers will serve in the four LEAs for a period of six years, teaching in each LEA two to three years, based on the LEAs' common plan. This program will require a combination of local and state funding, as well as a willingness of local unions to engage in the collective bargaining needed to secure the common new features in their local contracts. The details include:

- LEAs will establish common contract language to permit the hiring of these shared personnel, who will be paid at a rate equal to the average of the four LEAs' salaries, relative to step and track.
- Participating teachers, known as Connecticut STEM Leaders, will receive initial signing bonuses of \$5,000, and thereafter every two years, plus an additional stipend of \$3,000 to lead statewide professional development activities organized by the RESC Alliance each summer of employment.
- Teachers selected must serve a minimum of six years, and may reapply at the end for another three-year term.
- At the conclusion of the six-year cycle, teachers will be free to return to the LEA of their first choice where they will continue to earn the average of the four LEAs' salaries, relative to step and track for an additional three years **or** the selected LEA's salary, whichever is higher.

- Each teacher will be considered tenured in all four LEAs at the end of the fourth year, and will be free to retain the benefits package of whichever LEA they choose in their final year of the program.

#### *4. Teacher-in-Residence Master Teacher Program*

Another new program to assist with providing effective teachers to high poverty/high minority LEAs will be the Teacher-in-Residence Master Teacher program. This program will be a state-administered program in which master level teachers will be “loaned” to the CSDE for 80 percent of their teaching week from a participating LEA. The details include:

- The master teacher continues to be paid by the LEA and accrue seniority and other benefits at his/her normal rate. Through a contract with the state, the sending LEA will be provided financial reimbursement for the equivalent of a replacement beginning teacher’s salary for the year that the master teacher is released.
- Master teachers will continue to provide 20 percent of his/her time to the public LEA in which they are employed to offset the “fringe costs” of the replacement teacher; during this time, the master teacher can be used to teach a class, re-write curriculum, serve as a teacher leader to mentor or coach new teachers in the LEA or work on other projects that would meet the needs of the LEA.
- The 80 percent of the master teacher’s time purchased with grant funds will be used to coach teachers in the high poverty/high minority schools and provide high-quality professional growth opportunities for newer teachers in the shortage area subjects.

#### *5. Connecticut Signing Bonus Matching Fund (for shortage areas)*

Participating LEAs will be encouraged to use grant funds for signing bonuses to attract and retain effective teachers in high poverty/high minority LEAs in the top identified shortage areas of STEM, special education and English. As documented by the Center for Teaching Quality, the compensation system needs to attract new teachers, particularly in hard-to-staff assignments. The details include:

- Consideration will be given to practices by the Hartford and Bridgeport public schools where signing bonuses (\$5,000 in Hartford) and higher initial placement on the salary schedule to teachers of subjects deemed “critical needs” (Hartford and Bridgeport).
- An additional bonus will be paid to those same teachers who successfully complete three and five years of teaching within Connecticut’s high poverty/high need LEAs.

*6. Advanced Placement (AP) Course Expansion*

Project Opening Doors (POD) is a nationally recognized program supported by grants from the National Mathematics and Science Initiative (NMSI) based in Texas that provides training programs and incentives for students and teachers who successfully take AP examinations in math, science or English. Participating LEAs will be called upon to participate in POD, **or its equivalent**, and will receive funding to expand the number of courses available to disadvantaged students in their schools. Currently, several collaborating LEAs are already involved in POD, but alternative approaches, such as those pursued in the West Hartford Public Schools, will serve as acceptable variations of a program aimed at recruiting more disadvantaged students into taking more challenging courses, while expanding the range of options in high schools where AP courses are too narrow. Evidence clearly suggests that students will rise to the challenges of AP courses and will far exceed expectations if only encouraged to enroll.

*7. State Level Policy Reforms*

The CSDE and State Board of Education will research and discuss with critical stakeholders how best to redesign state policies related to providing flexibility for hiring and transferability of teachers and principals. Such policies may:

- Expand existing statute that allows retired teachers, without penalty, to return to a shortage area classroom, so that retired teachers may return to teach in a high-poverty or high-minority LEA and earn full salary for two years. See CGS 10-183v(b), the existing statute, in the Appendix, A - 272.
- Revise Connecticut’s tenure statute to allow tenured teachers and principals who have been evaluated as highly effective for the previous three years to transfer into a high-poverty or high-minority LEA and maintain their status as tenured, thus waving

the current requirement in statute which requires two years of teaching within a district to obtain tenure. See CGS 10-151(a), the existing statute, in the Appendix, A - 270.

- Develop contractual language flexibility for transferability of seniority when moving to a high-poverty or high-minority LEA.

#### *8. Expansion of On-line Course Availability*

In addition to these initiatives and policy reforms, the CSDE will take steps to expand the availability of online courses to participating LEAs. Online courses offer a way for students to access high quality teachers and content that may not otherwise be available at their schools. In hard-to-staff areas like mathematics, science and world languages, online courses in particular provide a vehicle delivering high-quality and rigorous educational experiences. Online courses may also serve to fill the needs of students in many of Connecticut's small districts where there are often insufficient numbers of students to allow for the allocation of a teacher. This is often the case with advanced level courses.

On November 4, 2009, the State Board of Education adopted a resolution to put forth a legislative proposal for the 2010 Regular Session of the General Assembly to require LEAs to have an approved policy for granting credit for online courses. See the signed Resolution dated November 4, 2009 in the Appendix, A - 465. These policies must provide a mechanism to assure that courses are (1) rigorous, connected directly to Connecticut standards and equivalent in content to a course that might be taught face-to-face; (2) engaging to students; and (3) taught by an instructor skilled in teaching in an online environment.

Students without home computers and Internet access who wish to take online courses (who are from urban participating LEAs) will be invited to participate in the Tech-4-All-CT program. This program, funded by the Connecticut General Assembly for the past two years, provides refurbished high-end computers, high-speed Internet access, training for parents or caregivers, and help desk support to low income families in Connecticut.

Finally, as yet one more way to expand online learning for Connecticut students:

1. The CSDE will provide LEAs guidance for creating online course policies. (Summer-Fall 2010)
2. All LEAs will create and adopt policies for granting credit for online coursework. (SY 2010-11)

3. The CSDE will inform LEAs of options for online course providers, including the Connecticut Virtual Learning Center (CTVLC), a variety of PK-12 nationally recognized providers, the Connecticut Distance Learning Center (CTDLC) and other higher education institutions in the state. (Beginning Fall 2010)
4. Professional development sessions will be offered to all LEAs to prepare and support students for success in online courses.
5. Students in need are matched with the Tech-4-All-CT program. (Fall 2010)
6. Funding for online courses is provided through in-kind, RTTT LEA funds, and local LEA funds.

**Timelines**

The planning and implementation schedule for initiatives 1-8 are delineated below:

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Planning Period</b>	<b>Implementation Date</b>
1. TEAM Mentoring Program	Complete	September 2010
2. ELL Institute	June 2010	September 2011
3. STEM Regional Teacher Exchange	June 2010	September 2011
4. Master Teacher in Residence	June 2010	September 2011
5. Signing Bonus	June 2010	September 2010
6. AP Course Expansion	Complete	September 2010
7. State-Level Policy Reform	June 2010	September 2011
8. Online Course Expansion	June 2010	September 2011

**Responsible Parties:**

1. The CSDE will be the primary agency overseeing development and implementation of the key goals and activities/initiatives outlined above.
2. The RESC Alliance will be the secondary parties responsible for deliverables related to training and external support for LEAs.

3. Other cooperative entities, private or public professional organizations or foundations such as the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS), the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAS), Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) and others will be invited to become partners in the implementation of this plan.
4. These responsibilities will be designated upon notification of the award of RTTT funds, and the amount awarded.

<b>Performance Measures for (D)(3)(i)</b>	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
<i>Note: All information below is requested for Participating LEAs.</i>					
<b>General goals to be provided at time of application:</b>	<b>Baseline data and annual targets</b>				
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]

**Baseline and Target Performance Data**

Data regarding the percentages of highly effective teachers and principals will depend on the development and implementation of a new system of teacher and principal evaluation. Currently the state does not collect data from LEAs on teacher or principal evaluation. Under the RTTT grant, CSDE plans to develop systems to annually collect and report teacher and principal evaluation outcomes.

Therefore, the 2013-14 school year will be the first year Connecticut will be able to assure that participating LEAs, including high-poverty, high-minority LEAs, have highly effective teachers and principals.

**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).	283
Total number of schools that are low-poverty, low-minority or both (as defined in this notice).	178
Total number of teachers in schools that are high-poverty, high-minority or both (as defined in this notice).	11,195
Total number of teachers in schools that are low-poverty, low-minority or both (as defined in this notice).	7,993
Total number of principals leading schools that are high-poverty, high-minority or both (as defined in this notice).	296
Total number of principals leading schools that are low-poverty, low-minority or both (as defined in this notice).	181

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



<b>Data to be requested of grantees in the future:</b>					
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.					
<p>Performance Measures for (D)(3)(ii)</p> <p>Note: All information below is requested for Participating LEAs.</p>	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 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.					
The State does not currently collect data from LEAs on teacher or principal evaluation. Under the RTTT grant, the State plans to develop systems to annually collect and report teacher and principal evaluation data.					
General data to be provided at time of application:					
Total number of mathematics teachers.	2156				
Total number of science teachers.	2004				
Total number of special education teachers.	4130				
Total number of teachers in language instruction educational programs.	3337				
<p>[Optional: Enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data]</p> <p>The number of mathematics and science teachers include those teachers certified and assigned to teach these subjects at the middle and high school levels. Elementary grade level science and math is typically taught by certified elementary school teachers. Connecticut defined teachers in language instruction education programs as those teachers certified and teaching reading/language arts.</p>					
Data to be requested of grantees in the future:					
Number of mathematics teachers in participating LEAs who were evaluated as effective or better in the prior academic year.					
Number of science teachers in participating LEAs who were evaluated as effective or better in the prior academic year.					
Number of special education teachers in participating LEAs who were evaluated as effective or better in the prior academic year.					
Number of teachers in language instruction educational programs in participating LEAs who were evaluated as effective or better in the prior academic year.					

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

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

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

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

*Recommended maximum response length: One page*

**(D)(4) IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL PREPARATION PROGRAMS**

**(D)(4)(i-ii) Reform Plan Conceptual Framework**

The pre-service component for future educators is critical to meeting the needs of the “next generation” of learners. Higher education institutions must collaborate with school districts to rethink the way universities prepare educators. Only substantive changes in the structure and design of preparation programs along with tighter linkages to districts where professors and PK-12 staff can collaborate to develop experimental learning and engagement activities will produce change agents and advocates for reform (Merchant and Shoho, 2006). Such activities must be grounded in authentic and job-embedded learning opportunities with the expectation that state-of-the-art technology will be used to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners. These same technologies must also be used for data-driven decision making to plan and carry out targeted instructional interventions, or directly

assessing how well teachers add value to student achievement — as measured via benchmark assessments, demonstration projects, or other measures, such as end-of-course examinations or student portfolios (National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, 2009).

Connecticut's plan for great teachers and leaders is directly supported in the revised *Regulations Concerning State Educator Certificates, Permits and Authorizations*, which are set for intent to adopt by the Connecticut State Board of Education in February 2010. With an anticipated implementation date of 2014, the regulations require preparation programs to train aspiring teachers and leaders to meet the needs of the next generation of learners. The regulations set higher standards by establishing expectations for more applied training of teacher candidates based on the learning needs of PK-12 students and pre-service competencies that focus on the following: the development and characteristics of learners, especially those with diverse learning needs; evidence-based instruction and behavior management; effective assessment and use of learning data to inform instruction; expanded training in literacy for elementary and early childhood candidates; and prerequisite training in general education for special educators.

To better inform efforts around quality preparation, the CSDE has been working for the last three years to develop a data analysis framework that would allow the CSDE and higher education institutions to look more broadly at student achievement and growth data linked to the preparation institutions of teachers. The CSDE has been working with the University of Connecticut on a pilot program as part of the Teachers for a New Era Grant (TNE) from the Carnegie Foundation.

The CSDE is developing a secure analysis of state student and teacher data in these areas:

- a. student demographic information;
- b. student Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) performance;
- c. student/class and/or teacher ID (to match a student to a teacher); and
- d. teacher demographic information; and
- e. teacher prep information, endorsements, years of experience

This work targets seven pilot school districts, thus linking student performance data with teacher preparation data. The work on this project will inform the CSDE's efforts toward improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs.

## **Goals**

The CSDE will:

1. Link teacher preparation data to the Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) in which the CSDE will associate a pattern of student growth by certification areas of teachers and by teacher and principal preparation institutions in Connecticut.
2. Identify programs that are successful at producing effective teachers and principals (as defined in this notice) and explore options to expand these programs.

## **Key Activities**

The CSDE can currently follow and track students from preschool (includes any prekindergarten receiving state or federal funding) through public K-12 programs through Connecticut's SLDS. The SLDS has been populated with historical and current data on student academic performance as measured by such standardized assessments as the CMT, Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) and Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), along with demographic information about students, their attendance and disciplinary records. Accordingly:

1. Pending receipt of the Phase III IES SLDS grant, the CSDE will provide the capacity to allow LEAs to integrate local measures of student performance, such as scores on standardized tests for grades not currently tested at the state level, and other formative and benchmark assessment results into the SLDS.
2. The CSDE will develop the technical capacity to link public school students to the teachers and courses they take while that teacher was assigned the specific students.
3. Through the certification system database, the CSDE will further connect the SLDS with data on teachers and administrators prepared by Connecticut institutions and programs and those prepared out-of-state.
4. Using the SLDS and educator preparation data from the certification system, the CSDE will review and report, on an institution basis, a pattern of student growth for all educators and educators by certification area grouping, prepared by that institution.

Linking the teacher preparation data within the SLDS would provide the CSDE with the opportunity to conduct longitudinal research on the quality of preparation programs and create reports that are publicly accessible via CSDE's Web site.

5. The CSDE also plans to publicly report, and link if possible, the Title II Higher Education and Opportunity Act (HEOA) institutional report card and state report card data.

6. Using Title II HEOA regarding the licensure assessment pass rates [Praxis, Foundations of Reading, Connecticut Administrator Test (CAT), etc.] of candidates completing educator preparation programs, the CSDE will redefine and increase accountability measures for its educator preparation programs to determine if they are "at risk" or "low performing." Criteria and data to be considered in developing a quality index as well as determining at-risk or low-performing programs will include:

- licensure assessment pass rates by endorsement area;
- follow-up surveys of new teachers and their principals about the quality of the preparation program;
- percentages of candidates completing their programs in shortage areas;
- link to growth measures over time for a school where significant numbers of program completers are teaching;
- hours of school-based experiences (practica, internships, student teaching, etc.) particularly in reading and literacy;
- hours of school-based experiences working with student with disabilities;
- hours of school-based experiences working with students with limited English proficiency; and
- level of involvement in schools (in-kind, grant work, research, professional development, etc.) assisting in reforming practice and support efforts to improve student learning.

7. To the extent possible, the CSDE will use this data to inform the approval and accreditation process for educator preparation programs. Programs designated as low-performing will be intensively reviewed to determine if state-level approval should be denied. Further, effective preparation programs will be encouraged and supported to increase their training programs, particularly in shortage areas.

8. Using the National Expert Advisory Panel outlined in Section A of this application, the CSDE and the National Expert Advisory Panel will examine the research on effective teacher preparation programs. This group will also examine the data on effective teachers and principals and the programs within Connecticut where they were prepared to identify successful programs. Based on this review, the CSDE will develop strategies to expand successful programs that prepare future teachers and administrators.

**Timeline for Implementing Activities**

- Target date to begin linking the data: September 2012
- Target date for publicly reporting the data: September 2014

**Responsible Parties**

- The CSDE will be fully responsible for the SLDS and for the reports made publicly available via the CSDE's Web site.
- The CSDE will collaborate with the Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) and other non-IHE providers to evaluate and improve efficacy of preparation programs.

Other professional organizations, such as the Connecticut Association of Schools, the Connecticut Education Association, the Connecticut Federation of Teachers, and the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents, will be engaged in providing consultative support to improving efficacy of teacher and administrator preparation programs.

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
<b>General goals to be provided at time of application:</b>	<b>Baseline data and annual targets</b>				
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.					
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.					
[Optional: Enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data] These data are not available at the time of this application.					
<b>General data to be provided at time of application:</b>					
Total number of teacher credentialing programs in the State.	20				
Total number of principal credentialing programs in the State.	7				
Total number of teachers in the State.	45,528				
Total number of principals in the State.	1,849				
[Optional: Enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data] The total number of principals in the State includes vice principals and assistant principals.					
<b>Data to be requested of grantees in the future:</b>					
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) PROVIDING EFFECTIVE SUPPORT TO TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS****(D)(5)(i) Context**

Connecticut has many strong initiatives that provide effective data-informed professional development, coaching, induction and common planning and collaborative time for teachers and principals. Many of these opportunities are job-embedded. The CSDE will use Race To The Top (RTTT) grant funding to expand the capacity of essential professional development programs to all participating local education agencies (LEAs) and, funds permitting, to involved LEAs. The following initiatives are all part of the SERP. As noted earlier, the state will fund some already in place, such as TEAM, but RTTT will fund others. The 11 initiatives described below are categorized according to their intended audiences and differentiated by an asterisk (\*) if they are *required*, as opposed to optional.

Intended Audience: Principals and Teachers

1. The Connecticut Accountability for Learning Initiative (CALI)\*
2. Teaching and Assessing Next Generation Learners\*
3. Parent Leadership Training\*
4. Fostering Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Intended Audience: Teachers

5. Teacher Education and Mentor (TEAM) Program\*
6. Elementary and Middle School Math and Science Coaching Academy
7. Science Center Instructional Math Curriculum and Assessment Project Grades 4-6
8. Teacher Leader Academies
9. State Professional Guidelines for Continuing Education Units (CEUs)\*

Intended Audience: Principals

10. New Principals Mentoring Program and Performance Portfolio
11. Executive Coaching for Demonstration Schools

\* Required

**Overview**

The **Goals, Key Activities, Timelines, and Persons Responsible** for initiatives 1-11, will be attached to each synopsis provided below:

**Audience: Principals and Teachers**

1. *The Connecticut Accountability for Learning Initiative (CALI)*. (Appendix A – 169 provides a comprehensive overview of CALI and is the basis for this professional development design. The extensive array of professional development activities to implement CALI are all designed to improve the quality of teaching and learning. These activities were developed in collaboration with Leadership and Learning Center, the Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs) and the State Education Resource

Center (SERC). Each training module has two levels: basic and certification. The certification training is designed to build the capacity in each participating LEA to conduct its own training with fidelity.

The modules include the following:

- Data-Driven Decision Making
- Making Standards Work
- Effective Teaching Strategies
- Common Formative Assessment
- Best Practices in Educating English Language Learners
- Improving School Climate to Support Student Achievement
- Leading Change and Getting Everyone on Board
- Paraprofessional Overview for CALI
- Scientific Research Based Interventions (Connecticut RTI model)
- Coaching Instructional Data Teams
- Coaching Effective Teaching Strategies
- School Climate for Leaders
- School Improvement Planning

### **Goal**

Each participating LEA will participate in the CALI trainings to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to improve the quality of instruction and learning at the classroom level.

### **Key Activities**

- Work with the RESC/SERC Alliance and SERC to increase the capacity of CALI trainers and technical assistance providers within three months.
- Each school in the participating LEAs will be required to create a school data team and instructional data teams.
- Review LEAs' Request for Service (RFS) Professional Development Plan for CALI training, on an annual basis. This will include a request for executive coaches for principals and data team facilitators for school and instructional data teams.
- Monitor the effectiveness of the LEA, school and instructional level data teams using state created rubrics within one year of establishing data teams.

2. *Teaching and Assessing Next Generation Learners.* All teachers and administrators in Connecticut must become intimately acquainted with the new technologies of instruction, the power of the Internet, and the essential role data must play in promoting human development and learning. This initiative aims to ensure that every teacher and administrator in Connecticut attain basic fluency in each of these areas, particularly as they pertain to engaging and evaluating students at each stage of development, PK-12, and in turn, as they undergo evaluations of themselves under the new comprehensive evaluation system planned for teachers and principals in 2012.

A robust, four-year program of professional development is planned for all participating LEAs. The program will include these learning modules:

- A. *Great Teaching in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – Overview:* Incorporating 21st century skills, technology teaching tools, NETS-S and NETS-T (National Educational Technology Standards for Students and Teachers).
- B. *Education and the Internet:* Using Connecticut Education Network resources, online learning environments, Moodle; managing technology-integrated learning environments.
- C. *Subject Specific Technology Integration:* Investigating technology tools and resources specifically designed for learning mathematics, science, English/language arts, social studies.
- D. *Using Student Data:* Collecting, managing and analyzing data to inform instruction and advance achievement; formative and benchmark assessment tools.
- E. *Project-Based Learning and Capstone Projects:* Creating authentic and meaningful learning activities, supporting project-based learning.
- F. *Student Success Plans:* Coaching, mentoring and monitoring.

An additional module will be available for administrators and teacher leaders:

G. *21st Century Supervision and Evaluation*: National Educational Technology Standards for Administrators (NETS-S), (NETS-T), (NETS-A) supporting technology-integrated classrooms, evaluating project-based and technology-integrated learning.

Teachers from participating LEAs will engage in one or two modules each year. Besides intensive multiday summer sessions for each module, online learning communities will be created to provide support and continued learning opportunities for teachers throughout the year. Teams of teachers from schools will be encouraged to attend sessions together, thereby offering additional school-based support from colleagues.

### **Goals**

- Teachers in participating LEAs will increase their use of a variety of technologies to enhance teaching and learning in their classrooms.
- Teachers and administrators in participating LEAs will effectively use data to inform instructional decisions.
- Administrators in participating LEAs will support and evaluate the use of technology and project based learning in their schools and LEAs.
- Select teachers in participating LEAs will design and implement project-based learning activities and effectively support students in designing and completing capstone projects.

### **Key Activities**

- Modules A, B, C, D, E, F and G above, are created and piloted.
- Presenters are selected and trained in using the technologies and in presenting the modules.
- Marketing resources are prepared (web site, e-mail lists, brochures) and made available to participating LEAs to publicize professional development of modules.
- Teachers and administrators in participating LEAs attend professional development regionally and in LEA.
- Modules are reviewed and updated to incorporate emerging technologies.

- Online supports for teachers and administrators are established and populated.
- Teachers successfully complete the modules and receive various technologies to use in their classrooms.
- Initiative evaluation conducted.

3. *Parent Leadership Training or Equivalent.* To improve the success of all students, Connecticut's plan invests in key strategies to promote teacher and administrator/principal effectiveness. One of these strategies is building teachers and administrators/principals capacity to meaningfully engage families in support of their children's learning. The CSDE established an award-winning professional development and technical assistance program of School-Family-Community Partnerships based on the work of Dr. Joyce Epstein of Johns Hopkins University and the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS). The model, used extensively throughout the nation, is based on a comprehensive framework of the types of involvement that research has shown to support productive relationship between schools and families. The model has been implemented in partnership with the state's federally funded Parent Information and Resource Center (CT PIRC).

### **Goal**

Each participating LEA will participate in the School-Family-Community Partnership trainings to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to collaborate with all parents to support student success.

### **Key Activities**

- Staff of the RESC Alliance will be trained by both CSDE and the CT PIRC to build capacity in the Alliance in order to provide training to participating schools and LEAs following the National Network of Partnership Schools Action Team model and in the Welcoming Walkthrough and Title 1 School-Parent Compacts.
- Participants will attend training offered by the National Network of Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins University.
- The CSDE will provide technical assistance for development of school action plans for family engagement that align with school improvement plans (SIPs)
- CSDE will also:
  - Provide on-site coaching and technical assistance to participating schools and LEAs.

- Hire a family engagement lead consultant to coordinate training and technical assistance system.
- Engage national experts to assist the CSDE in building an accountability system for parent engagement. The accountability system will assess school and LEA fidelity to parent engagement requirements in Title 1 of ESEA.

4. *Initiatives to Foster Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.* The majority of Connecticut’s racial and language minority students reside in seven of the state’s 169 cities and towns. Conditions related to how LEAs are funded, the decline of Connecticut’s urban centers, inadequate teacher preparation focused on effectively teaching linguistically and racially isolated students; and deep-seated disadvantages within families and communities across Connecticut – all affect how disadvantaged students perform in school. The State Education Reform Plan (SERP) will expand engagement around these issues and conditions at all levels including policy, administration and classroom services and support to students. It will also draw upon a nationally recognized program entitled *Courageous Conversations about Race*. This initiative will assist those with responsibility to influence student learning in diverse communities with the skills required to professionally engage inquiry about the impact of race and culture on learning, and to apply knowledge and strategies that improve learning and career outcomes for racial and language minority students.

### **Goal**

To acknowledge the historically sensitive aspects of race on developing policy and programs to equalize outcomes and foster change for individuals, racial groups and schools.

### **Key Activities**

- Facilitate LEAs’ understanding and ability to lead discussions and monitor the impact of race on system accountability.
- Assist schools in meeting the unique needs of racial minorities to effect school success.
- Assist the CSDE and LEAs in developing effective partnerships with community organizations and civil rights organizations around establishing and maintaining educational equity within Connecticut’s diverse student groups.



The planning and implementation schedule for initiatives 1-4 are delineated below:

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Planning Period</b>	<b>Implementation Date</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>
1. The Connecticut Accountability for Learning Initiative (CALI)	2010	2010	CSDE, the six Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs), and State Education Resource Center (SERC)
2. Teaching and Assessing Next Generation Learners	2010	2010 and Ongoing	CSDE, RESCs, SERC
3. Parent Leadership Training	2010	2011	CSDE, RESCs, SERC, National Network of Partnership Schools
4. Fostering Equity, Diversity and Inclusion	2010	2010	CSDE in partnership with LEAs, higher education and businesses

**Audience: Teachers**

5. *Teacher Education and Mentor (TEAM) Program.* The TEAM program will pair mentor teachers with beginning teachers during their first two years of teaching to enhance their teaching skills and improve their teaching practice. Each beginning teacher will be required to complete five professional growth modules during the two-year period in the following Common Core of Teaching (CCT) domains: classroom environment and student engagement, planning for active learning, instruction for active learning, assessment for learning, and professional responsibilities. This program will be fully implemented beginning fall 2010. This initiative, by design, is targeted to support new teachers in developing effective skills in classroom environment and engagement, instruction, assessment and professional responsibilities, including collaboration and teacher leadership. The RTTT grant will not fund this initiative, but it is an essential component of Connecticut's reform plan in this area.

**Goal:**

The CSDE will develop the Teacher Education and Mentor (TEAM) program to support the induction of beginning teachers.

**Key activities**

- Develop and implement TEAM Coordinating Committee (TCC) training for each LEA's TCC.

The planning and implementation schedule for initiatives 5-9 are delineated below:

- Provide mentor update training and initial training for new mentors.
- Pilot modules 1 and 2 in spring 2010 and modules 3, 4 and 5 in fall 2010.
- Monitor the completion of required documents by beginning teachers and the mentor/mentee time for appropriate payment of mentor services and implementation of the program.

6. *Elementary and Middle School Math and Science Coaching Academy*. The CSDE has used federal funds to support qualifying projects and partnerships between higher education institutions and LEAs under the Mathematics Science Partnership grant program. The grant program focuses on developing math and/or science instructional coaches to work with peers and ensure effective content pedagogy and curriculum. Coaches help teachers to understand state academic content standards and to use evidence-based instruction and assessment practices. Coaches are trained through academies that provide academic coursework in math and science, targeted training in effective STEM pedagogy, and best practices in coaching peers. School principals of the coaches are engaged in school-based activities with external coaches who regularly observe, confer and support school-based efforts to improve instruction, curriculum and analysis of student learning data related to the math/science curriculum.

**Goal**

Selected LEAs will increase the number of math/science coaches in their LEAs.

**Key activities:**

- The CSDE, in collaboration with institutions of higher education and RESC staff development personnel, will develop the Elementary and Middle School Math and Science Coaching Academy.
- The CSDE and LEAs will assign instructional coaches to their assignments.
- The CSDE in collaboration with LEAs will identify and contract surrogate teachers as substitutes for school-based coaches to ensure continuity of instruction.
- The CSDE in collaboration with LEAs will identify full-time math/science instructional coaches for funding in partnership/selected LEAs in 2013-14 for LEAs committing to full-time coaches once grant funding ends.

7. *Connecticut Science Center Instructional Math Curriculum and Assessment Project Grades 4 – 6.* The Connecticut Science Center will collaborate with CSDE staff members to develop learning units aligned with state science standards in Grades 4 to 6. These learning units will engage students in classroom- and museum-based inquiry explorations that motivate their interest in and abilities to think and work like scientists. The learning units will be linked to state-of-the-art exhibits, student workshops and teacher professional development offered at the newly opened Connecticut Science Center in Hartford. This initiative includes subsidies to enable students to work on portions of the learning units at the museum with support of expert staff and scientists.

This innovative partnership between formal and informal science educators builds on the Connecticut Science Center’s mission “to increase public engagement in science, enhance public science content knowledge and skills acquisition, increase STEM and science education career awareness, foster minority participation and achievement in science, and to promote science as a means for understanding how the world works.”

The broad goal of this initiative is to provide Connecticut educators and students with high-quality science curricular materials and museum support that will improve the quality of science teaching and learning in the elementary grades. By providing a real-world structure for learning science content and critical thinking skills, this museum-school partnership will inspire elementary students’ interest in pursuing advanced STEM study and careers.

In addition, this initiative will provide students in disadvantaged schools with opportunities to participate in authentic science research experiences using state-of-the-art equipment and exhibits housed at the science center.

**Goal**

To provide Connecticut educators and students with high-quality science curricular materials and museum support that will improve the quality of science teaching and learning in the elementary grades.

**Key activities**

- Develop quality criteria and template for nine science units (three in each of Grades 4, 5 and 6) aligned to state and national science standards.
- Develop museum visit components of the learning units.

- Field test and revise units to validate appropriateness and impact.
- Develop web-based professional development around effective implementation of learning units.
- Establish an interactive web-based user network where educators can access the learning units and exchange ideas for enhancements and modifications (2013). Conduct unit-related instructional visits to Connecticut Science Center.

8. *Teacher Leader Academies.* Connecticut’s RESCs provide teacher leader academies for aspirants interested in school administration. Cooperative Education Services (CES) has been working with teacher leaders who aspire to enter school administration. The Academy for Teacher Leadership at CES provides a professional learning opportunity for exemplary teachers already displaying the potential to become teacher leaders. This group of teacher leaders will develop essential leadership competencies — consensus building, resolving conflicts, facilitation and presentation skills, and more — while continuing to do what they love most: teach children. After completing the Academy for Teacher Leadership at CES, participants will be able to assist their LEAs in implementing important school improvement initiatives. The RTTT grant will not fund this initiative, but it is an essential component of Connecticut’s plan in this area.

**Goal**

Continue CSDE’s collaboration with CES on their Teacher Leader Activities.

**Key Activities**

- Provide technical support as needed to CES to continue the academy for school administrators.
- Upon adoption of the revised certification regulations, the CES program will be recognized as an approved professional development program for awarding a teacher leader endorsement to the Academy completers.

9. *Revise State Professional Development Guidelines for Continuing Education Units.* The CSDE will convene a group of stakeholders involving many LEAs to review and make appropriate revisions to the professional development/continuing education units (CEUs) guidelines. The current guidelines were last revised in 1999. CSDE will encourage the move from “sit and get” professional development to job-embedded learning that focuses on: (a) gathering, analyzing and using data; (b) designing instructional strategies for improving student engagement and achievement; (c) differentiating instruction for all students including

those who are English language learners or students with disabilities; and (d) creating environments of trust where data can be discussed openly and used to inform instructional and curricular decisions.

Additionally, these guidelines will include the criteria for LEAs to develop and implement quality professional development and supports as tied to student growth and needs. The CSDE will hire an outside evaluator to measure, evaluate and improve the effectiveness of the supports offered at both the LEA and state level. The data produced from this evaluation process will be used to inform future professional development offerings. The State Board of Education will consider this data to determine whether or not the currently required 90 hours for CEUs needed to renew a person's five-year professional certificate (third tier of certification) should include demonstrated acquisition of skills and knowledge models. Grant funds will be allocated under section (D)(2), which focuses on the development of state guidelines for teacher and administrator evaluation and professional development and the use of student growth measures to determine the efficacy of teachers and principals.

**Goal**

The CSDE will revise the *State Professional Development Guidelines* by January 2011.

**Key activities**

- Convene a group of stakeholders, including LEAs, to revise the professional development guidelines.
- Seek to move from traditional “sit and get” professional development to job-embedded Professional Development Model.
- Hire an external evaluator to measure, evaluate and improve the effectiveness of professional development supports and make recommendations for the CEU requirement to maintain professional certification.

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Planning Period</b>	<b>Implementation Date</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>
1. Team Education and Mentor (TEAM) Program	2010	Fall 2011 and ongoing	CSDE, and the six Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs)
2. Elementary and Middle School Math and Science Coaching Academy	2010	Fall 2011 and ongoing	CSDE and LEAs
3. Hartford Science Center STEM Curriculum Assessment Projects Grades 4-6	2010	2011 and ongoing	CSDE, Connecticut Science Center, Master Science Teachers, national curriculum developers, website designers and regional science education experts
4. Teacher Leader Academies		ongoing	CSDE and CES
5. State Professional Guidelines for Continuing Education Units(CEUs)	2010	January 2011	CSDE

### **Audience: Principals**

*10. Administrator Mentorship and Performance Portfolio.* The CSDE will develop a new induction program for beginning administrators that will involve mentoring for year 1 and 2 administrators, and require the completion of a developmental portfolio demonstrating knowledge to effect positive change in student achievement and growth. This initiative will be funded under (D)(2)(ii) as part of the state guidelines for teacher and administrator evaluation and professional development. Therefore, this initiative will be integrated as part of the larger reform plan focused in ensuring Great Teachers and Leaders statewide.

### **Goal**

By May 2012, the CSDE will develop the Administrator Mentorship and Performance Portfolio induction program for new principals hired on or after July 1, 2012.

### **Key activities**

- The CSDE will convene a stakeholder group of educators representing LEAs, RESC staff, teacher unions, administrators and superintendents to revise administrator evaluation and professional development guidelines.
- The CSDE will convene a stakeholder group to design a new principal induction program that involves mentoring and completion of a developmental portfolio focused on improvement student academic achievement and growth.

- The CSDE will convene a stakeholder group to design a new principal induction program that involves mentoring and completion of a developmental portfolio focused on improvement student academic achievement and growth.
- Implement the new administrator mentorship and performance portfolio for all new administrators by July 2012.

*11. Executive Coaching for Demonstration Schools.* Acknowledging that it would take a minimum of two to three years to see significant achievement gains in the LEAs and schools, the CSDE funded two demonstration schools in each partner LEA and an additional seven schools in supported LEAs (see Section E.). The purpose of the demonstration schools is to highlight that with an increase in resources, implementation of the CALI model would result in increased student achievement and closing of the achievement gap. The demonstration schools were given an executive coach for the principal and leadership team, a data team facilitator to work with the school and instructional level data teams, and stipends for release time for teachers to work in collaborative professional learning communities. The Executive Coaching Program focuses on the instructional and organizational leadership capacity of principals to increase student achievement. Coaching for the demonstration schools is provided through a contractual relationship with Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS). The CSDE has staff members assigned to work with CAS on the identification of potential coaches (e.g., retired school administrators), placement of coaches, training and networking of coaches, monitoring of coaching activities, data collection and evaluation of the coaching program.

**Goal:**

Participating LEAs and their schools will participate in CALI professional development and technical assistance, executive coaching, and implement a three-tiered accountability system.

**Key activities**

- Work with CAS to increase its capacity to provide executive coaches to principals and leadership teams in schools in the participating LEAs.
- Develop a formal quality assurance program for CALI with dedicated professional staff.
- Work with LEAs to create a school data team and instructional data teams.

- Review each LEA's Request for Service (RFS) Professional Development Plan for CALI training. This will include a request for executive coaches for principals and data team facilitators for school and instructional data teams.
- Monitor the effectiveness of the participating LEA, school and instructional level data teams using state-created rubrics within one year of establishing data teams.
- Central office administration, principals and teachers will participate in CALI training and on-site technical assistance as identified in their DIPs, SIPs and RFS applications and approved on an annual basis.

The planning and implementation schedule for initiatives 10-11 are delineated below:

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Planning Period</b>	<b>Implementation Date</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>
10. Administrator Mentorship and Performance Portfolio	2010	2011 and ongoing	CSDE, RESCs, teacher unions, administrators and superintendents
11. Executive Coaching for Demonstration Schools	2010	2010 and ongoing	CSDE, RESCs

(D)(5)(ii) CSDE will contract with outside evaluators to collect data, analyze and report on impact of the above initiatives on school improvement and, more importantly, growth in student achievement. Activities will include:

- Requiring evaluators to work over the next three years with the Division of Teaching, Learning and Instructional Leadership to complete a meta-analysis of professional development statewide and
- Produce a report by fall 2014 with recommendations for changes in the CEU requirement for teachers and administrators.

Within one year, the Bureau of Accountability and Instruction will issue a competitive request for proposal to evaluate the effectiveness of CALI implementation and progress in closing the achievement gap.



**(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) INTERVENING IN THE LOWEST-ACHIEVING SCHOOLS AND LEAS**

Pursuant to Section 10-223e of the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS), which the state legislature first adopted in 2007 and subsequently revised in 2008, the State Board of Education (SBE) has the authority to intervene directly in both the state's persistently lowest-achieving schools and local education agencies (LEAs). See CGS 10-223e in Appendix A-274 for a complete copy of the accountability statute.

Subdivision (2) of subsection (c) of section 10-223e authorizes the SBE to provide intensified supervision and direction to any school or LEA identified as in need of improvement and requiring corrective action pursuant to the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). The SBE may take any of the following actions to improve student performance:

(A) require an operations audit to identify possible programmatic savings and an instructional audit to identify any deficits in curriculum and instruction or in the learning environment of the school or LEA;

(B) require the local or regional board of education for such school or LEA to use state and federal funds for critical needs, as directed by the SBE;

(C) provide incentives to attract highly qualified teachers and principals;

(D) direct the transfer and assignment of teachers and principals;

(E) require additional training and technical assistance for parents and guardians of children attending the school or a school in the LEA and for teachers, principals and central office staff members hired by the LEA;

(F) require the local or regional board of education for the school or LEA to implement model curriculum, including, but not limited to, recommended textbooks, materials and supplies approved by the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE);

(G) identify schools for reconstitution, as may be phased in by the Commissioner, as state or local charter schools, or schools based on other models for school improvement, or for management by an entity other than the local or regional board of education for the LEA in which the school is located;

(H) direct the local or regional board of education for the school or LEA to develop and implement a plan addressing deficits in achievement and in the learning environment as recommended in the instructional audit;

(I) assign a technical assistance team to the school or LEA to guide school or LEA initiatives and report progress to the Commissioner of Education;

(J) establish instructional and learning environment benchmarks for the school or LEA to meet as it progresses toward removal from the list of low achieving schools or LEAs;

(K) provide funding to any proximate LEA to an LEA designated as a low achieving LEA so that students in a low achieving LEA may attend public school in a neighboring LEA;

(L) direct the establishment of learning academies within schools that require continuous monitoring of student performance by teacher groups;

(M) require local and regional boards of education to (i) undergo training to improve their operational efficiency and effectiveness as leaders of their LEAs' improvement plans; and (ii) submit an annual action plan to the Commissioner of Education outlining how, when and in what manner their effectiveness shall be monitored; or

(N) any combination of the actions described in this subdivision or similar, closely-related actions.

Acting through the Commissioner of Education and the CSDE, the SBE has used this authority by working with the 15 LEAs participating in the Connecticut Accountability for Learning Initiative (CALI) that are referred to as Partner Districts (LEAs). **The CSDE has employed the following sanctions:**

1. Conducted instructional and financial assessments at the LEA level and in schools in need of improvement in year three or beyond.
2. Required the LEA superintendent and board of education chair to make a presentation on results of the LEA assessment to a CSDE Ad Hoc Committee on Accountability.
3. Assigned CSDE staff and an external consultant to work in identified LEAs.
4. Required revision of the district improvement plan (DIP) facilitated by CSDE staff with LEA stakeholder participation.
5. Required alignment of school improvement plans (SIP) to the district improvement plan.
6. Required the LEA to secure approval of the district improvement plan by the State Board of Education.
7. Required formation of a LEA accountability system and creation of LEA-, school- and instructional-level data teams.
8. Required completion of a request for service application (RFS) and participation in CALI training.
9. Required the identification and implementation of two demonstration schools in each LEA.
10. Set aside a portion of state education funds to be directed by the CSDE to support the implementation of the district improvement plan.
11. Conducted two annual monitoring visits to monitor implementation of the DIP.
12. Provided for attendance of CSDE staff at monthly LEA data team meetings to work on implementation of the DIPs.

In addition to the above sanctions involving all CALI Partner LEAs:

- two LEAs were assigned an external consultant to work with their local board of education;
- one LEA was required to complete a comprehensive evaluation of its special education programs and services; and the CSDE assisted one LEA with identifying an interim superintendent for a two-year period to develop and implement a DIP and the accountability system.

**(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) TURNING AROUND THE LOWEST-ACHIEVING SCHOOLS**

**(E)(2)(i)** The CSDE has already identified the persistently lowest-achieving schools (as defined in the notice) using a detailed methodology as outlined in the Appendix. See Methodology for Selection of Persistently Lowest Achieving Schools in Appendix A-334.

Application of this detailed methodology resulted in identification of 18 schools as constituting the lowest 5 percent among low-achieving Title I schools (Tier I). In addition, five non-Title I high schools were identified in Tier II. A list of the Tier I schools follows. A complete list of the Tier I, Tier II and Tier III schools is included in Appendix A-472.

Title I	Elementary or Secondary	District	School	District Name	School Name	Year of Improvement	2009 Unadjusted Math	2009 Unadjusted Reading	2009 Average Unadjusted (math & reading)
Yes	Secondary	282	60	Stamford Academy	Stamford Academy	3	14.3	9.5	11.9
Yes	Elementary	93	51	New Haven School District	Urban Youth Center Middle School	6	11.5	14.8	13.2
Yes	Elementary	64	19	Hartford School District	Milner Core Knowledge School	9	27	14.2	20.6
Yes	Elementary	64	6	Hartford School District	Burns Latino Studies Academy	6	32.8	14.2	23.5
Yes	Secondary	64	63	Hartford School District	Weaver High School	7	17.5	31.6	24.6
Yes	Elementary	244	61	Area Cooperative Educational Services	Collaborative Alternative Magnet School	4	29	23.1	26.1
Yes	Elementary	64	1	Hartford School District	Sand School	6	27.8	25.8	26.8
Yes	Elementary	64	51	Hartford School District	Fox Middle School	6	28.3	28.7	28.5
Yes	Elementary	64	52	Hartford School District	Quirk Middle School	6	31	26.3	28.7
Yes	Elementary	15	1	Bridgeport School District	Barnum School	6	36.6	25.3	31.0

*Turning Around the Lowest Achieving Schools (E)(2)(i-ii)*

Title I	Elementary or Secondary	District	School	District Name	School Name	Year of Improvement	2009 Unadjusted Math	2009 Unadjusted Reading	2009 Average Unadjusted (math & reading)
Yes	Elementary	89	9	New Britain School District	Northend School	2	35.4	26.9	31.2
Yes	Elementary	15	26	Bridgeport School District	Roosevelt School	6	42.1	20.7	31.4
Yes	Elementary	89	3	New Britain School District	Chamberlain School	6	37	26.1	31.6
Yes	Elementary	93	4	New Haven School District	Katherine Brennan School	3	39.2	26.9	33.1
Yes	Elementary	64	28	Hartford School District	Dr. Ramon E. Betances School	5	46.2	20	33.1
Yes	Elementary	15	41	Bridgeport School District	Dunbar School	6	37.9	28.6	33.3
Yes	Elementary	64	30	Hartford School District	Sanchez School	6	46.1	21	33.6
Yes	Elementary	163	1	Windham School District	Natchaug School	3	45.2	23	34.1

**(E)(2)(ii)** The CSDE is well positioned to support LEAs in turning around schools based on its history and results with CALI and its reform plan to support LEAs in incorporating one of the four school intervention models: turnaround model, restart model, school closure or transformation model.

**State Historic Performance on School Turnaround**

The CSDE is well positioned to support LEAs in turning around schools based on its history and results with CALI. Acknowledging that it would take a minimum of two to three years to see significant achievement gains in the LEAs and schools, in addition to participation in CALI and the required three-tiered accountability system, the CSDE funded two demonstration schools in each of the CALI Partner Districts. The purpose of the Demonstration Schools was to showcase that with an increased influx of

resources and supports, implementation of the CALI model would result in a quicker increase in student achievement and closing of the achievement gap. The demonstration schools were given increased resources, including an executive coach for the principal and leadership team, a data team facilitator to work with the school- and instructional-level data teams, and stipends for release time for teachers to work in collaborative professional learning communities.

As part of its intervention in the 15 CALI Partner LEAs, the SBE exercised its authority under the state accountability legislation and took steps to sanction districts in the manner described previously in Section (E)(1).

Each of the 15 CALI Partner LEAs has set specific goals based on three-year student outcome targets to measure whether state and LEA learning expectations have been achieved using annual academic and nonacademic data (i.e., disciplinary offense data, dropout rate, survey data and attendance data) and indicators that measure the specific actions taken by adults to affect student achievement outcomes (e.g., 100 percent of faculty and support staff will participate on instructional data teams). The State will measure progress based on the CALI Partner LEAs achieving the targets set in their plans.

In many instances, LEAs have replaced staff members or principals as part of restructuring, but this was not a requirement. As part of school restructuring, LEAs provided high-quality, job-embedded professional development designed to ensure that staff members are equipped to facilitate effective teaching and learning, and promoted the continuous use of student data to inform and differentiate instruction. Some LEAs established schedules and strategies to increase instructional time for students. All LEAs were required to identify time for collaboration and professional development for staff. CALI focused on leader effectiveness through professional development, executive coaching, and monitoring the effectiveness of the LEA and school data teams.

This past year, within the 15 CALI Partner LEAs, **five schools participating in CALI were removed** from the federal In Need of Improvement status: Middletown — Lawrence School; New Haven — King Robinson Magnet School and Sheridan Communications and Technology Magnet School; Waterbury — Hopeville School; and Windham — Sweeney School (three of these five schools were demonstration schools).



An **additional 36 schools** in the CALI Partner LEAs implementing the CALI model that had not made adequate yearly progress (AYP) in the previous year, **made** AYP or Safe Harbor. Eight of these schools were demonstration schools. They are as follows: Bridgeport — Hall, Hallen, Longfellow and Winthrop Schools; Danbury — Great Plain, Park Avenue, Roberts Avenue and Rogers Park Middle School; East Hartford — Goodwin School; Hartford — Dwight and Simpson-Waverly Schools; Meriden — Hanover, Israel Putnam and Roger Sherman Schools; New Britain — Diloreto and Vance Schools; New Haven — Ross Woodward, Betsy Ross Arts Magnet, Cooperative High, Metropolitan Business High, and Sound School; New London — Harbor and Nathan Hale Schools; Norwalk — Cranbury, Roton Middle and Silvermine Schools; Norwich — Bishop, Huntington, Teachers Memorial Middle and Thames River Academy; Stamford — Scofield Middle and The Academy of Informational Technology; and Waterbury — Kingsbury, Maloney Interdistrict Magnet, Rotella Interdistrict Magnet, and Cross Schools.

Some highlighted examples of specific progress in the demonstration schools for the 2008-09 school year:

Ansonia — Meade School: Every Grade 3-5 made at least a 4-percentage-point gain in percentage of students performing at or above proficiency in math. Ansonia Middle School: Every Grade 6-8 made at least a 13-percentage-point gain in percentage of students performing at or above proficiency in math.

Danbury — Roberts Avenue: Grades 3 and 4 made at least a 5-percentage-point gain in percentage of students performing at or above proficiency in math; every Grade 3-5 made at least a 14-percentage-point gain in percentage of students performing at or above proficiency in reading. The school also made Safe Harbor.

Meriden — John Barry School: Every Grade 3-5 made at least a 4-percentage-point gain in percentage of students performing at or above proficiency in math; Grades 3 and 4 made at least a 4-percentage gain in percentage of students performing at or above proficiency in reading. Roger Sherman School: Grade 3 made a 16-percentage-point gain in percentage of students performing at or above proficiency in math; every Grade 3-5 made at least an 8-percentage-point gain in percentage of students performing at or above proficiency in reading.

New Britain — Vance School: Grades 3-5 made at least a 9-percentage-point gain in percentage of students performing at or above proficiency in math; Grades 4 and 5 made at least a 6-percentage-point gain in percentage of students performing at or above proficiency in reading. The school also made Safe Harbor.

New London — Harbor School: Grades 3 and 4 made a least an 8-percentage-point gain in percentage of students scoring at or above proficient in math; Grade 4 made a 28-percentage-point gain in percentage of students scoring at or above proficiency in reading. The school also made Safe Harbor. Nathan Hale School: Grades 3 and 4 made a least a 5-percentage-point gain in percentage of students scoring at or above proficient in math; Grade 4 made a 6-percentage-point gain in percentage of students scoring at or above proficiency in reading. The school also made Safe Harbor.

Norwalk — Silvermine Elementary: Every Grade 3-5 made at least a 4-percentage-point gain in percentage of students performing at or above proficiency in math; every Grade 3-5 made at least a 5-percentage-point gain in percentage of students performing at or above proficiency in and reading. The school also made Safe Harbor.

Norwich — Samuel Huntington School: Grade 3 made a 20-percentage-point gain in math and an 18-percentage-point gain in reading. The school also made Safe Harbor and has been removed from “In Need of Improvement” status.

Windham — WB Sweeney School: Grades 3 and 4 made at least a 14-percentage-point gain in percentage of students performing at or above proficiency in math; Grades 3 and 4 made at least an 11-percentage-point gain in percentage of students performing at or above proficiency in reading. The school also made Safe Harbor.

In 2008-09, the CSDE identified an additional seven LEAs that were in year 3 or greater in need of improvement for a subgroup of students. These LEAs are referred to as the Supported Districts. With support from CSDE, these LEAs completed a self-assessment using the Decision Support Architecture Consortium Framework II (DSAC II), which was developed collaboratively with the Council of Chief State School Officers and Center on Leadership in Technology. These LEAs were required to use the self-assessment results to revise their district improvement plans. They also were offered access to the CALI training modules and each LEA was awarded one demonstration school. Seventeen schools in the supported districts that had not made AYP in the past year made AYP or Safe

Harbor. Three of the seven demonstration schools made AYP or Safe Harbor. They are as follows: Bristol — Bingham, Jennings, Mountain View, Northeast Middle and South Side schools; Hamden — Hamden Middle and Ridge Hill schools; Manchester — Buckley and Keeney schools; Naugatuck — Andrews Avenue, Central Avenue, Salem and Western schools; Windsor — John F. Kennedy and Poquonock schools; and Connecticut Technical High School System — Eli Whitney and Ella Grasso schools.

<b>Approach Used</b>	<b># of Schools Since SY2004-05</b>	<b>Results and Lessons Learned</b>
The state has not yet implemented one of the four school intervention models as described in this notice (see note below).	N/A	N/A

Note: Components of the Connecticut Accountability for Learning Initiative can be found in the four school intervention models but do not address each requirement in any of the models. The models that most closely align to the CALI model are the turnaround and transformational models.

The **lessons learned** from the state’s implementation of restructuring schools under NCLB and implementation of the CALI reform model include:

1. The requirements for restructuring schools under NCLB alone were not sufficient to turn around low-performing schools.
2. Restructuring or turnaround needs to be done in the context of systemic change within the LEA.
3. A comprehensive reform model needs to align with the state, the LEA and the school to create and sustain change.
4. At times, to overcome systemic barriers, there must be external pressure from the state to move a change agenda forward at the LEA and school level.
5. The restructuring or turnaround needs to have an identified accountability model overseeing implementation.
6. Resources need to be allocated to sustain priorities in the restructuring or turnaround.
7. Restructuring or turnaround needs to have strong leadership at the LEA and building level.
8. Districts and schools need to move from a practice of isolation to collaboration.

9. Priority goals of the restructuring or turnaround need to be established by a strong stakeholder group, including parents and union representation.
10. Professional development needs to be of high quality and integrated into classroom work.
11. There needs to be modeling of the fidelity of implementing standards-based curriculum and effective teaching strategies.
12. There needs to be ongoing evaluation and research of interventions to allow for continuous improvement of the model and efficient use of resources.
13. For true systemic change, there needs to be a significant redesign of the school day and expansion of the school year.

### **State Reform Plan**

The CSDE is fully prepared to support LEAs in incorporating one of the four school intervention models: turnaround model, restart model, school closure or transformation model. The CSDE has already begun planning for the use of the four intervention models in addition to CALI with the use of the Section 1003(g) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) School Improvement Grant (SIG). The goal is to increase the current requirements for LEAs participating in CALI to address the requirements for one of the four school intervention models for the lowest-performing 5 percent of schools. The CSDE has developed a vision, mission and theory of action to take CALI to the next step for systemic change. Appendix A-169 provides a full description of CALI demonstrating the capacity to support change at the LEA level, including the implementation of one of the four intervention models. The CSDE has completed a formal overview of the requirements of the grant for LEAs and met with them individually to identify the schools in the LEA that will be eligible as Tier I and Tier II schools. In addition, the CSDE will provide funding to select districts to implement a Longer School Year Initiative, which will allow these districts to plan and experiment with different schedules, program designs, and the community partnerships necessary to provide more learning time for secondary students.

### **Goal**

The CSDE will implement CALI and the requirements of the SIG intervention models in Connecticut's lowest-achieving 18 schools.

**Key Activities and Timelines**

1. Met with the Partner District’s “Committee of Practitioners” to receive feedback on the federal grant application for SIG — January 12, 2010.
2. Will submit Title I waivers to extend the grant period for three years — by February 8, 2010.
3. Will hire staff consultants with expertise in school turnaround to manage the grant and develop a grant-monitoring system — February 2010.
4. Will develop evaluation criteria for SIG in January 2010.
5. Will develop a monitoring system for LEA grants by February 2010.
6. Will work with Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs) and the State Education Resource Center (SERC) to plan for expansion of CALI training and technical assistance — January 2010.
7. Will meet with LEAs identified with Tier I and Tier II Schools to outline requirements in each of the four improvement models and CALI — January 2010.
8. Will identify for the Tier III Schools the requirements for those seeking funds to become Demonstration Schools — February 8, 2010.
9. Will submit the federal application — February 8, 2010.

**Responsible Parties**

The Bureau of Accountability and Improvement (BAI) will release the LEA applications upon receiving federal approval. Districts will be given six weeks to submit grant applications. The CSDE expects to review and approve grants within four weeks of the LEA grant deadline for submission. The BAI will assign technical assistance staff to each awarded LEA and school to begin planning in spring 2010 for fall implementation. The BAI will identify executive coaches to work in each of the 18 schools. The BAI will identify data team facilitators to work in each of the 18 schools. The BAI will establish a professional learning community with the principals and coaches of the 18 schools. Future schools will be identified annually based on an analysis of state assessment data.

**(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) MAKING EDUCATION FUNDING A PRIORITY**

**(F)(1)(i)** The percentage of total revenues that Connecticut made available to support elementary, secondary and public higher education for FY 2008 and FY 2009 were virtually flat at **23 percent**. Overall, from FY 2008 to FY 2009, the state’s support in these education areas increased by almost \$126.6 million, or 3.25 percent. Additionally, during this time period, the State did not waiver from its deep commitment to maintaining the infrastructure of public education. For example, through the Connecticut State

Department of Education’s (CSDE) school construction grant program, approximately \$700 million in each year of the biennium was provided to the school districts for building improvements and new construction. Despite the increase in education revenues, due to Connecticut’s economic downturn in FY 2009 and various state and federal safety net requirements, the state did have a slightly disproportionate increase in many of its welfare and social services programs (i.e., Medicaid, Medicaid Part D, Husky (children’s medical care) and housing for the homeless), which effectively rendered education expenditures as flat for this time period.

<b>Table (F)(1)(i)</b>		
<b>State Revenues for Elementary, Secondary and Public Higher Education as a Percentage of Total State Revenues</b>		
	<b>FY2008</b>	<b>FY2009</b>
A. State Revenues for Elementary, Secondary and Public Higher Education	\$3,892,795,885	\$4,019,380,727
B. Total State Revenues	\$16,627,447,407	\$17,234,854,884
C. Education Revenues as a Percent of Total Revenues (Item A / Item B)	23.41%	23.32%

**(F)(1)(ii)** For fiscal year 2009-10, almost \$3 billion has been appropriated to the CSDE for grant programs supporting elementary and secondary education, including preschool programs and construction activities. See the CSDE Budget for FY 2010 and FY 2011 in the Appendix at page A-22 for further detail on these appropriations. Of that amount, nearly \$2.6 billion, or 87 percent, is distributed through an equalizing formula in which the distribution is affected by towns’ ability to support education (wealth) and student need.

Under state equalization, the wealthier the town and lower the student need, the lower the state funding. Conversely, the poorest towns with the highest student need will generally receive the highest rates of state support. While state funding formulas support a number of town wealth definitions, they are all predicated on the following underlying premises:

- Wealth is determined based on a town’s property tax base and the income of its residents.
- The property tax base is the value of taxable real and personal property (net grand list) at 100 percent fair market value and is called the equalized net grand list (ENGL).

Property tax base is used because it is the form of wealth taxed by Connecticut towns. Both definitions of wealth also use income because the income taxes are paid from, has an important effect on town taxing capacity. Student need is measured through the numbers and concentrations of poverty, English language learners, and in some instances, student performance.

### **Connecticut's Major Equalized Funding Formulas**

For 2009-10, there are nine state grants totaling nearly \$2.6 billion whose distribution is driven by equalization. The nine grants fit into two major funding distributions: Education Cost Sharing (ECS) and Categorical Reimbursements.

#### *Education Cost Sharing (ECS)*

The ECS grant, which has been in existence since 1989-90, continues to be Connecticut's primary education equalization aid program. With funding set at \$1.9 billion in 2009-10, ECS will account for well over 50 percent of the total state contribution to public elementary and secondary education. Under the fully funded ECS formula, LEAs are entitled to a percentage of the state's foundation multiplied by an LEA's "need students." See Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) 10-262i in the Appendix at page A-277. The foundation is currently set at \$9,687. Need students represent resident students weighted for Title I poverty and English language learners. The percentage of the foundation that a town is entitled to is based on town wealth. For 2009-10, the percentage of the foundation that the state funds ranges from 9 percent for the wealthiest towns to 91 percent for the poorest town.

Table (F)(1)(ii)(a) shows the effect of ECS equalization by comparing the wealthiest and poorest District Reference Groups (DRGs). LEAs are grouped into DRGs based on the characteristics of students' families. LEAs in a DRG have similar median family incomes, percentages of families below the poverty level, percentages of single-parent families, percentages of families with non-English home language, percentages of parents with a bachelor's degree, and percentages of families in white collar or managerial occupations. DRG A represents those LEAs with the highest income and education levels and the lowest poverty levels. Conversely, DRG I has the lowest income and educational levels and the highest poverty. Coincidentally, the seven LEAs that compose DRG I are also the same LEAs that would fall under the definition of High-Need LEAs when using Title I poverty as a percent of 5 through 17 population. While no LEA in Connecticut serves 10,000 children in poverty, there are seven LEAs in which Title I poverty constitutes at least 20 percent of the student age population.



<b>Table (F)(1)(ii)(a)</b>				
<b>2009-10 ECS Grant per Pupil for DRG A, DRG I/High Need LEAs and Statewide Average</b>				
<b>DRG</b>	<b># LEAs</b>	<b># Resident Students (October 2008)</b>	<b>ECS grant per pupil</b>	<b>DRG I to DRG A and State Ratios</b>
A (Wealthiest)	9	30,578	\$358	
I (High-Need LEAs)	7	96,582	\$7,551	21.1
State	166	553,066	\$3,417	2.2

The ratio of the ECS grant per pupil gap between the wealthiest and poorest DRG is in excess of 21 times. On a per pupil basis, the ECS grant per pupil in the high-need LEAs (DRG I) is more than double the state average.

#### *Categorical Reimbursements*

The state has a number of categorical grants that reimburse LEAs for local tax dollars expended in eligible program areas. These grants include adult education, school construction, public and nonpublic pupil transportation, and health services to private not-for-profit schools. See CGS 10-71, CGS 10-285a, CGS 10-266m and CGS 10-217a in the Appendix beginning at page A-241. The state-support percentage assigned to an LEA will depend on LEA wealth and the range of state support percentages. Below are the current ranges of state support percentages:

<b>Table (F)(1)(ii)(b)</b>		
<b>Proportion of State Categorical Reimbursement by LEA Wealth Ranking</b>		
	<b>Start Range (Highest Wealth Rank)</b>	<b>End Range (Lowest Wealth Rank)</b>
Pupil Transportation	0%	60%
School Construction	20%	80%
Adult Education	0%	65%
Health Services	10%	90%

In every case, the higher the wealth rank, when sorted in descending wealth order, the lower the state support percentage. For example, the LEA with the highest wealth (i.e., the wealthiest LEA) receives the lowest percentage, and the LEA with the lowest wealth receives the highest percentage.

*Targeted State Aid*

For 2009-10, in addition to the nearly \$2.6 billion in equalized state education aid, there is an additional \$246 million in target grants for areas such as charter schools, magnet schools, school readiness, Head Start, family resource centers, interdistrict cooperation and attendance programs, breakfast initiative, and summer and after school programs. See CGS 10-66bb, CGS 10-264l, CGS 10-16p(c), CGS 10-16n, CGS 10-4o, CGS 10-266aa, CGS 10-266w, and CGS 10-16x in the Appendix beginning at page A-241. While the distribution formulas under these programs are not necessarily equalized, the nature of these programs tends to skew heavily toward the distribution to the students in the State's poorest and neediest LEAs.

*Targeted State Aid for High Poverty Schools*

In Connecticut, state funding formulas are generally LEA-based rather than school-based. The effects of heavy equalization and targeted aid at the LEA level ensure that the neediest schools, located within the poorest LEAs, will receive their appropriate and commensurate share of state funding. However, there are two important state funding initiatives targeted at the poorest schools rather than at the LEA level: School Breakfast and Early Childhood Education. See CGS 10-266w and CGS 10-16p(d) in the Appendix beginning at page A-241.

Connecticut supplements the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)-funded breakfast programs in those schools where at least 40 percent of the lunches served are free or at reduced price. For 2009-10, the state anticipates supporting over 10 million breakfasts in 408 high poverty schools. Connecticut also funds early childhood programs to the 18 LEAs with the highest numbers or concentrations of poverty and remedial performance. In that program, the state provides funding at the LEA level for more than 8,000 3- to 5-year-olds. In addition, there are also early childhood grants for those LEAs that are not among the 18 LEAs already funded and who have elementary schools where at least 40 percent of the lunches served are free or at reduced price. Under that program, for 2009-10, the state will fund an additional 800 3- to 5-year-olds in 64 programs.

*The Effects of Equalized State Funding Formulas*

The \$2.85 billion of equalized and targeted aid represent more than 95 percent of state elementary and secondary education aid. The eligibility and distribution of these funds take into account wealth, student need, and the desire to allocate a disproportionate share of state aid to those towns that can least afford to support education given their poverty and student need.

<b>Table (F)(1)(ii)(c) State Funding per Pupil for DRG A, DRG I and Statewide 2003-04 and 2008-09</b>		
<b>DRG</b>	<b>2003-04</b>	<b>2008-09</b>
A (Wealthiest)	932	806
I (High-Need LEAs)	8,454	11,980
State	3,936	5,276
DRG I to DRG A Ratio	9.07	14.86
DRG I to State Ratio	2.15	2.27

Table (F)(1)(i)(c) reveals not only the wide funding differential between the wealthiest and poorest DRGs, but also that state funding continues to increase the share to the poorest and neediest LEAs, from nine times to nearly 15 times during the past five years. Additionally, the gap between the high-need LEAs (DRG I) and the state average continues to widen.

<b>Table (F)(1)(ii)(d) 2008-09 Revenue Shares for Education Expenditures for DRG A, DRG I and Statewide</b>			
<b>DRG</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Local</b>	<b>Federal/Other</b>
A (Wealthiest)	4.41%	94.13%	1.46%
I (High-Need LEAs)	62.50%	27.21%	10.29%
Statewide	30.43%	64.53%	5.04%
DRG I to DRG A Ratio	14.17%	0.29%	7.05%
DRG I to State Ratio	2.05%	0.42%	2.04%

For 2008-09, the State funded the poorest DRGs' share of education in excess of 62 percent compared to only 4.4 percent for the wealthiest LEAs, a gap of more than 14 times.

**(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*

In an effort to close the state’s achievement gap and ensure that all students have the opportunity to access high-quality programs based on their educational needs and interests, Connecticut supports a robust Public School Choice initiative that has been in existence for over 50 years. Described in detail in F(2)(v) and F(3) below, interdistrict magnet schools are the cornerstone of the Public School Choice initiative and, like charter schools in other states across the nation, magnet schools play a significant role in dozens of districts. Connecticut now supports 60 magnet schools across the state. However, charter schools are growing in popularity and now play an expanding role in accomplishing the goals of the State Education Reform Plan (SERP).

**(F)(2) ENSURING SUCCESSFUL CONDITIONS FOR HIGH-PERFORMING SCHOOLS**

**(F)(2)(i)** The Connecticut State Board of Education (SBE) is authorized to grant charters for both state and local charter schools in accordance with the provisions laid out in Section 10-66bb of the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS), which was originally enacted by the state legislature in 1996. See a complete copy of the charter school statutes, CGS 10-66aa to 10-66ll, in the Appendix beginning at page A-252. Pursuant to Section 10-66aa of the CGS, a charter school is defined as a public, nonsectarian school established under a charter granted pursuant to the provisions of Connecticut law, organized as a nonprofit entity which acts as a public agency and operates independently of any local or regional local board of education in accordance with the terms of its charter and the provisions of the statutes.

Both *state* and *local* charter schools operate in Connecticut. Pursuant to 10-66aa of the CGS, a “state charter school” is a new public school authorized by the SBE. CGS 10-66aa defines a “local charter school” as a public school or part of a public school that is converted into a charter school and is approved by the local or regional board of education of the LEA in which it is located and authorized by the SBE. For the 2009-10 school year, there are currently 18 state charter schools operating in Connecticut and no local charter schools.

The Connecticut General Statutes do not place an explicit cap on the number of charter schools that the SBE may approve. Currently, the SBE may only grant charters “within available appropriations,” pursuant to CGS 10-66bb(a). However, on January 6, 2010, the SBE adopted a resolution to put forth a legislative proposal for the 2010 Regular Session of the General Assembly to strike this language, which prohibits the SBE from only approving state charter schools “within available appropriations.” See the SBE Resolution dated January 6, 2010, in the Appendix at page A-461.

Each state charter school currently receives a per pupil grant from the state for \$9,300 (see CGS 10-66ee(c)(1) at p. A-259). Pursuant to CGS 10-66ee(c)(1), the LEA where the student who attends the state charter school lives is responsible for special education costs. For local charter schools, state statute requires the local or regional board of education of the LEA where a student enrolled in a local charter school lives to pay to the fiscal authority for the charter school for each such student the amount specified in its charter, including the reasonable special education costs of students requiring special education (see CGS 10-66ee(b) at p. A-258).

All charter schools in Connecticut are required to receive, in accordance with federal law and regulations, any federal funds available for the education of any pupils attending public schools (see CGS 10-66ee(i) p. A-260). Charter schools are also eligible, to the same extent as boards of education, for any grant for special education, competitive state grants and grants pursuant to Sections 10-17g (a bilingual education grant program) and 10-266w (the school breakfast grant program) of the CGS (see CGS 10-66ee(g) p. A-260).

State law currently restricts the enrollment levels of new state charter schools to 250 students (or 300 students in schools that offer Grades K-8) or 25 percent of the enrollment of the LEA in which the state charter school is located, whichever is less (see CGS 10-66bb(c) at p. A-258). Currently, those state charter schools which have “a demonstrated record of achievement” may, upon application to and approval by the SBE, enroll up to 85 students per grade, within available appropriations (see CGS 10-66bb(c) at p. A-259). Pursuant to the resolution the SBE adopted on January 6, 2010, mentioned above, the SBE proposed to eliminate the per grade enrollment cap of 85 students for those schools with a demonstrated record of achievement. See the SBE Resolution dated January 6, 2010, in Appendix p. A-461.

Charter schools may enter into cooperative arrangements for the provision of school accommodation services, programs or activities in the same manner that local or regional school boards may do so (see CGS 10-66ee(m) at p. A-261). This provision allows charter schools to share school facilities and offer a fuller educational program, including AP courses, a full college counseling program, and a robust athletics and extracurricular program.

**(F)(2)(ii)** *Approval of Charter Schools*. Section 10-66bb of the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) governs the application process for new charter schools. A summary of the process for the approval of a state charter school and a local charter is laid out below, as each type of charter school has a slightly different approval process. In both processes, however, applicants must include in their application a plan to promote a diverse student body and a means to assess student performance. See CGS 10-66bb(d) in the Appendix at page A-253 for a complete list of the charter school application requirements. In addition, the SBE shall give preference to applicants that will serve students who live in the state’s priority school districts or in an LEA where 75 percent or more of the

enrolled students are members of racial or ethnic minorities (see CGS 10-66bb(c) at p. A-253). Table (F)(2)(ii)(a) below summarizes the outcome of the applications for charter schools made in Connecticut over the past five years.

*Summary of State Charter School Approval Process* (see CGS 10-66bb(f) at p. A-255). An application for the establishment of a state charter school shall be (1) submitted to the SBE for approval, and (2) filed with the local or regional board of education in the LEA in which the charter school is to be located. The State Board shall: (A) review the application; (B) hold a public hearing on the application in the LEA in which such state charter school is to be located; (C) solicit and review comments on the application from the local or regional board of education for the LEA in which such charter school is to be located and from the local or regional boards of education for LEAs that are contiguous to the LEA in which such school is to be located; and (D) vote on a complete application not later than 75 days after the date of receipt of such application. The SBE may condition the opening of such school on the school's meeting certain conditions that the Commissioner determines to be necessary and may authorize the Commissioner to release the charter when the Commissioner determines such conditions are met. Charters shall be granted for a period of up to five years and may allow the applicant to delay its opening for a period of up to one school year for the applicant to fully prepare to provide appropriate instructional services.

*Summary of Local Charter School Approval Process* (see CGS 10-66bb(e) at p. A-254). An application for the establishment of a local charter school shall be submitted to the local or regional board of education of the LEA in which the local charter school is to be located. The local or regional board of education shall: (1) review the application; (2) hold a public hearing in the LEA on the application; (3) survey teachers and parents in the LEA to determine if there is sufficient interest in the establishment and operation of the local charter school; and (4) vote on a complete application not later than 60 days after the date of receipt of such application. If the application is approved, the SBE shall forward the application to the SBE. The SBE shall vote on the application not later than 75 days after the date of receipt of such application. The SBE may condition the opening of such school on the school's meeting certain conditions determined by the Commissioner of Education to be necessary and may authorize the Commissioner to release the charter when the Commissioner determines such conditions are met. The SBE may grant the charter for the local charter school for a period of



up to five years and may allow the applicant to delay its opening for a period of up to one school year for the applicant to fully prepare to provide appropriate instructional services.

<b>Table (F)(2)(ii)(a)</b>					
<b>State of Connecticut Charter School Applications</b>					
	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Number of Applications Made in State	0	6 *	1 **	0	0
Number of Applications Approved	0	1	1	1	0
Number of Applications Denied	0	1	3	0	0
Number of Charter Schools Closed	0	1	0	0	0
<p><u>Reasons for denials:</u></p> <p>In 2006-07, one charter school application was submitted after the due date.</p> <p>In 2007-08, two charter school applications were denied for the following reasons: financial, governance, curriculum, and student assessment. The third school was denied for curriculum and student assessment reasons.</p> <p>* Six state charter school applications were made in the 2006-07 school year. One was approved and one was denied in the 2006-07 school year. Four applications were made at the end of the 2006-07 school year. As a result, these applications were reviewed in the 2007-08 school year; one was approved and three were denied.</p> <p>** One state charter school application was made in the 2007-08 school year. It was reviewed and approved in the 2008-09 school year.</p>					

*Monitoring and Accountability of Charter Schools.* Connecticut law requires that charter schools demonstrate their success and comply with the law to operate (see CGS 10-66bb(g) and CGS 10-66bb(h) at p. A-255). In fact, the SBE may deny the renewal of a charter or revoke a charter if a school fails to adequately demonstrate student progress or comply with applicable laws and regulations. Therefore, as a matter of agency policy, the CSDE regularly monitors all of the state charter schools currently in operation in Connecticut, to ensure that the statutory requirements laid out in 10-66bb(g) and (h) are being met. As a part of these monitoring activities, charter schools undergo informal visits that occur on a yearly basis, as laid out in Table (F)(2)(ii)(b) below. The Commissioner has the authority, pursuant to Section 10-66bb(h) of the CGS, to place a school on probation **at any time:** (1) the school has failed to

(A) adequately demonstrate student progress, (B) comply with the terms of its charter or with applicable laws and regulations, (C) achieve measurable progress in reducing racial, ethnic and economic isolation, or (D) maintain its nonsectarian status; or (2) the governing council has demonstrated an inability to provide effective leadership to oversee the operation of the charter school or has not ensured that public funds are expended prudently or in a lawful manner. A charter school placed on probation must file a corrective action plan and comply with the plan for the probationary period, which may be up to one year (see CGS 10-66bb(h) at p. A-255). The probationary period may be extended for an additional year. The Commissioner must notify parents or guardians of students attending the charter school of the reasons for the school’s probationary status, and may require the school to file interim reports on matters relevant to the probation (see CGS 10-66bb(g) at p. A-255).

<b>Table (F)(2)(ii)(b)</b>					
<b>Monitoring and Accountability Activities Required by the CSDE</b>					
<i>Site Visits and Reports</i>	<i>1st Year</i>	<i>2nd Year</i>	<i>3rd Year</i>	<i>4th Year</i>	<i>5th Year</i>
Informal site visit	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Review of school fundamentals visit and report	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Corrective action plan follow-up and report	No	Yes	If needed	If needed	If needed
Comprehensive site visit and report	No	No	Yes	No	No
Renewal site visit	No	No	No	Round I	Round II

*Charter Renewal.* The SBE may renew charters for up to five years, upon application, in accordance with Section 10-66bb(g) of the CGS. The SBE may commission an independent appraisal of a charter school’s performance as part of this renewal and consider the results of any such appraisal in determining whether to renew a charter (see CGS 10-66bb(g) at p. A-255). The SBE may decline to renew a charter if (1) sufficient student progress has not been demonstrated; (2) the governing council has not been sufficiently responsible for the operation of the school or has misused or spent public funds in a manner detrimental to the educational interests of its students; or (3) the school has not been in compliance with applicable laws and regulations (see CGS 10-66bb(g) at A-255).

As a matter of agency policy, CSDE staff members conduct site visits at charter schools seeking renewal. The purpose of the visit is to determine compliance with the requirements of CGS section 10-66bb(g) in an effort to provide recommendations to the Commissioner and the SBE about the charter school seeking renewal. Besides verifying the responses detailed in the charter renewal application submitted to the CSDE and ensuring that the charter school is complying with the law, CSDE staff members review the educational model and curriculum of the charter school, interview school stakeholders and evaluate how the charter school is accomplishing its mission.

*Charter Revocation.* Pursuant to CGS section 10-66bb(i), the SBE may revoke a charter if a school has failed to (1) comply with the terms of probation, including the failure to file or implement a corrective action plan; (2) demonstrate satisfactory student progress, as determined by the commissioner; (3) comply with the terms of its charter or applicable laws and regulations; or (4) manage its public funds in a prudent or legal manner. Unless an emergency exists, the SBE must provide the governing council of the charter school a list of the reasons for the revocation, and an opportunity to demonstrate compliance with all the requirements for the retention of its charter (see CGS 10-66bb(i) at p. A-256). If an emergency exists, the SBE may revoke the charter and provide the governing council with a subsequent opportunity to demonstrate compliance.

*Charter School Closure, Non-Renewal and Revocation History.* Cross Cultural Academy of Arts and Technology, which opened its doors in September 2006 serving 50 students in Grades 5-6, was forced to close in May 4, 2007, due to insufficient funds. The school was unable to maintain expenses within its budget and was unable to secure private donations required for its continued operation. Its board relinquished its charter to the CSDE on May 25, 2007.

Four additional state charter schools have closed since 1999:

- The SBE revoked Village Academy's (New Haven) charter in the first week of school in 1999-2000.
- Ancestors Community High School (Waterbury) closed at the end of school year 2000-01.
- Charter Oak Preparatory Academy (New Britain/Hartford) closed on February 1, 2002.
- The SBE did not renew Brooklawn Academy's (Fairfield/Bridgeport) charter in 2003.

*Annual Reporting.* The governing council of a charter school must annually submit a school profile to the Commissioner of Education, as required of each local and regional school board in the state, and as described in subsection (c) of CGS section 10-220 (see CGS 10-66cc(a) at p. A-257). In addition, pursuant to CGS section 10-66cc(b), the governing council of a charter school must annually submit to the Commissioner of Education: (a) the educational progress of students in the school; (b) the financial condition of the school, including a certified audit statement of all revenues and expenditures; (c) accomplishment of the mission and any specialized focus of the charter school; and (d) the racial and ethnic composition of the student body and efforts taken to increase the racial and ethnic diversity of the student body (see CGS 10-66cc(b) at p. A-257).

*Charter School Student Population.* As mentioned above, pursuant to CGS section 10-66bb(c), the SBE is instructed to give preference to applicants for charter schools that will serve students who reside in a priority school district pursuant to CGS section 10-266p or in an LEA where 75 percent or more of the enrolled students are members of racial or ethnic minorities, and to applicants for state charter schools that will be located at a work-site or that are institutions of higher education. In Connecticut, 15 of 18 charter schools (83 percent) are located in priority school districts. In addition, in determining whether to grant a charter, the SBE shall also consider the effect of the proposed charter school on the reduction of racial, ethnic and economic isolation in the region where it is to be located, the regional distribution of charter schools in the state, and the potential of over-concentration of charter schools within an LEA or in contiguous LEAs (see CGS 10-66bb(c) at p. A-253).

Pursuant to CGS section 10-66bb(d), each charter school application shall include, among a number of other requirements, a description of the student admission criteria and procedures to promote a diverse student body and ensure that the school complies with the provisions of CGS section 10-15c and that it does not discriminate on the basis of disability, athletic performance or proficiency in the English language, provided the school may limit enrollment to a particular grade level or specialized educational focus. See the Appendix page A-471 for a table with data on student enrollment of high-need students in the charter schools and traditional public schools in Bridgeport, Hartford and New Haven.

*Student Achievement.* The monitoring process described in detail above is designed to give the Commissioner and SBE sufficient information and authority for proper oversight of the charter school initiative and to give individual charter schools the opportunity to demonstrate the accomplishment of their unique educational mission and the stability of their organization. The two charts below are a representative sampling of 2009 student achievement comparisons in Grade 8 and Grade 10, among three of the highest-need Connecticut cities and their corresponding charter schools. With the exception of Grade 8 writing and Grade 10 science in Bridgeport charter schools, all charter schools in Grades 8 and 10 included in the sampling below exceed the student achievement performance gains of their LEA counterparts in each content area: mathematics, reading, writing and science.

<b>Table (F)(2)(ii)(c) Charter School Host LEAs/Charter Schools</b>					
<b>Grade 8, 2009 Student Achievement Report</b>					
<b>LEA/ Charter School</b>	<b>Number of Students Tested</b>	<b>Mathematics % At/Above Proficiency</b>	<b>Reading % At/Above Proficiency</b>	<b>Writing % At/Above Proficiency</b>	<b>Science % At/Above Proficiency</b>
<b>Bridgeport</b>	1332	55.1	46.5	64.1	40.0
3 Bridgeport Charter Schools	154	77.8	51.5	62.7	44.3
<b>Hartford</b>	1466	53.8	51.4	63.5	38.3
1 Hartford Charter School	23	87.0	91.3	91.7	62.5
<b>New Haven</b>	1128	65.1	58.5	61.4	44.7
2 New Haven Charter Schools	103	97.2	70.7	92.0	64.3
<b>Grade 10, 2009 Student Achievement Report</b>					
<b>*LEA /Charter School</b>	<b>Number of Students Tested</b>	<b>Mathematics % At/Above Proficiency</b>	<b>Science % At/Above Proficiency</b>	<b>Reading % At/Above Proficiency</b>	<b>Writing % At/Above Proficiency</b>
<b>Bridgeport</b>	1083	35.5	32.0	44.2	57.4
1 Bridgeport Charter School	35	42.9	29.7	57.1	75.7
<b>New Haven</b>	1204	46.2	42.8	56.4	67.9
2 New Haven Charter Schools	81	72.0	72.9	82.1	87.8

\* There are currently no Hartford charter schools serving high school students.

**(F)(2)(iii)** As stated previously, pursuant to CGS section 10-66ee(c)(1), as amended by section 36 of Public Act 09-6 of the 2009 September Special Session, the per pupil grant for charter school students for the 2009-10 school year is \$9,300. The state pays this grant directly to the fiscal authority of the state charter school (see CGS 10-66ee(c) at p. A-259). The local or regional board of education for the LEA where the student attends a charter school lives is required to pay for special education costs for that student (see CGS 10-66ee(c)(2) at p. A-249). In addition, the local or regional board of education of the LEA where the charter school is located is required to provide transportation services for students of the charter school who live in the LEA, unless the charter school makes other arrangements for such transportation (see CGS 10-66ee(f) at p. A-260). For students attending a charter school in an LEA other than where that student lives, a local or regional board of education may provide transportation services, and if it elects to provide such transportation, shall be eligible for reimbursement for the reasonable costs of such transportation, pursuant to section 10-266m (see CGS 10-66ee(f) at p. A-260).

Charter schools in Connecticut are required to receive, in accordance with federal law and regulations, any federal funds available for the education of any pupils attending public schools (see CGS 10-66ee(i) at p. A-260). Charter schools are also eligible, to the same extent as local and regional boards of education, for any grant for special education, competitive state grants and grants pursuant to sections 10-17g and 10-266w of the CGS (see CGS 10-66ee(g) at p. A-260). These state grants include funding for technological improvements, student nutrition, family resource centers, reading and reducing racial isolation. Charter schools may also raise additional private income, which in several cases substantially increases funding to these schools (see CGS 10-66ee(j) at p. A-260).

During the 2008-09 school year, charter schools received \$9,391 per student in state funding, including grants in addition to the above referenced charter school grant. Conversely, the average funding received by a local and regional school board from the State was \$4,300 per pupil. Therefore, in the 2008-09 school year, on average the charter school per pupil grant from the state represented more than 218 percent of what was provided to traditional public schools. The fact that the state funded charter schools at a substantially higher rate is not unique to 2008-09. As shown in the table below, since their inception in 1997-98, charter schools have consistently received higher rates of state support than the traditional public schools.

<b>Table (F)(2)(iii)(a)</b>					
<b>State Funding per Pupil for Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools</b>					
<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Charter Schools Funding per Pupil</b>	<b>Average Traditional Public School Funding per Pupil</b>	<b>Charter School Funding as a % of Traditional Public Schools (Col 1/Col 2)</b>	<b>Charter Schools' Enrollment</b>	<b>Traditional Public Schools' Enrollment</b>
1997-98	\$5,313	\$2,770	191.81%	1,117	513,489
1998-99	\$5,194	\$2,962	175.35%	1,870	522,337
1999-2000	\$5,397	\$3,026	178.35%	2,139	530,300
2000-01	\$5,843	\$3,118	187.40%	2,428	537,421
2001-02	\$5,554	\$3,214	172.81%	2,594	543,825
2002-03	\$7,039	\$3,214	219.01%	2,237	548,245
2003-04	\$7,609	\$3,226	235.86%	2,279	552,299
2004-05	\$7,547	\$3,342	225.82%	2,692	552,403
2005-06	\$7,760	\$3,549	218.65%	2,927	551,387
2006-07	\$8,140	\$3,681	221.14%	3,580	548,827
2007-08	\$8,744	\$4,114	212.54%	4,019	544,477
2008-09	\$9,391	\$4,300	218.40%	4,479	539,032

The above table only compares *state* funding. Even when including federal funding, however, for 2008-09, the charter school funding per pupil reflected 208 percent on a per pupil basis of what was funded to the traditional public schools: \$10,387 for charter schools as compared to an average \$4,985 for traditional public schools. Also, when adding local and other revenues to the state and federal funding, on a per pupil basis charters schools still reflect 92.3 percent of the traditional public schools per pupil expenditures: \$12,939 for charter schools as compared to an average of \$14,016 for traditional public schools.

<b>Table F(2)(iii)(b)</b>			
<b>Comparison of Revenue Share of State, Local and Federal Funding</b>			
	<b>Charter Schools</b>	<b>Traditional Public Schools</b>	<b>Charter School Funding as a % of Traditional Public Schools</b>
<b>State Funds</b>	\$9,391	\$4,300	218.40%
<b>State and Federal Funds</b>	\$10,387	\$4,985	208.37%
<b>All Revenue Sources</b>	\$12,939	\$14,016	92.32%

*It should be noted that in all of the above analyses, the state per-pupil figures include funding for special education and home-to-school-to-home transportation, two mandates that do not apply to the charter schools. If those funding streams were excluded from the analyses, the difference between charter school per-pupil funding and traditional public school funding would be even less.*

In terms of the local, state and federal support for charter schools, the table below summarizes the 2008-09 revenue shares. Overall, the state share for charter schools is nearly 2.5 times greater than the public LEAs’ average. State, federal and other revenues support nearly all of the charter schools operations compared with 35 percent for traditional public LEAs.

<b>Table F(2)(iii)(c)</b>				
<b>Comparison of Revenue Share of State, Local and Federal Funding</b>				
	<b>Local Revenues</b>	<b>State Revenues</b>	<b>Federal/Other Revenues</b>	<b>Total Revenues</b>
<b>Charter Schools</b>	0.72%	73.37%	25.91%	100.00%
<b>Traditional Public Schools</b>	64.52%	30.43%	5.05%	100.00%

Finally, the total appropriation for charter schools is \$48,152,000 for 2009-10 and \$53,117,200 for 2010-11. For 2009-10, the charter school appropriation amounts to about 2 percent of the CSDE’s General Fund appropriation, yet student enrollment in charter schools constitutes less than 1 percent of the state’s total student enrollment. Of note, the charter school line item has grown by over \$32 million in the past eight years, a 210 percent increase. In contrast, over that same time, charter school student enrollment increased by 110 percent.



**(F)(2)(iv)** While charter schools in Connecticut are generally not eligible for grant assistance under the traditional school construction grant program that is available to local and regional school boards, Connecticut has provided charter schools with funding for facilities and other related supports since 2002.

CGS section 10-66hh authorizes the Commissioner of Education to establish a grant program to assist state charter schools in financing charter school building projects, general improvements to school buildings, and repayment of debt incurred for building projects (see CGS 10-66hh at p. A-261). This statutory provision was first enacted in 2001 and has since been extended approximately every two years by the state legislature to continue this grant program. On January 6, 2010, the SBE adopted a resolution to put forth a legislative proposal for the 2010 Regular Session of the General Assembly to extend the applicability of 10-66hh of the CGS for *each* fiscal year so that the legislature does not need to amend the language every two or three years. See the SBE signed Resolution dated January 6, 2010 in Appendix at page A-461.

Since 2002, Connecticut has provided \$14.5 million in funding for charter school building projects. In 2005, a separate bond fund was established specifically for the purpose of charter school building projects and improvements. This provision was extended in 2007 and is codified in statute at CGS section 10-66jj (see CGS 10-66jj at p. A-262). Of note, in November 2009, the CSDE requested an additional \$5 million in funding from the State Bond Commission to issue additional grants for the purpose of Charter School Building Projects. This request is still pending.

In addition, in 2005 the General Assembly created a pilot school construction grant to provide a grant to one state charter school to buy and renovate a building for use as a charter school facility (see CGS 10-285h at p. A-285). Amistad Academy, located in New Haven, Connecticut, applied for this grant on November 30, 2005. Its application was approved for a \$31.5 million project, with the school's costs eligible for reimbursement by the state at a rate of 78.5 percent. Amistad Academy is currently working with the CSDE's Bureau of School Facilities to finalize the details of the project and begin the construction phase.

To provide funding for charter schools beyond school building projects, the CSDE also awards funding to charter schools for technology infrastructure (see CGS 10-262n(d)(2) at p. A-279). Charter schools were paid over \$130,000 from 1999 through 2007 for this purpose, with the majority of the money (\$50,000 in each year) paid out in 2001 and 2003. In October 2007, the CSDE asked the State Bond Commission to approve additional funding for Technology Infrastructure. That request includes approximately \$65,000 for charter schools (three schools, specifically); however, the request is still pending.

The state does not impose any facility-related requirements on charter schools that are stricter than those applied to traditional public schools. Of note, pursuant to 10-66hh of the CGS, charter schools are treated as priority school districts for the purpose of making grants for “general improvements to school buildings” (see CGS 10-265h(a) at p. A-285). For the purpose of “school building projects,” Section 10-66hh of the CGS refers to the definition in Section 10-282 of the CGS, which applies to traditional public schools (see CGS 10-282(3) at p. A-291).

**(F)(2)(v)** Connecticut enables LEAs to operate innovative, autonomous public schools through CommPACT schools and interdistrict magnet schools.

### **I. CommPACT Schools**

CommPACT schools were authorized by the state legislature in 2007 and are governed by CGS section 10-74g, included in the Appendix at page A-265. The schools are a product of an initiative led by the University of Connecticut’s Neag School of Education in collaboration with the American Federation of Teachers-Connecticut, Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents, Connecticut Association of Urban Superintendents, Connecticut Education Association, and Connecticut Federation of School Administrators, to provide alternative supports for urban schools whose students are underperforming. The name CommPACT symbolizes the commitment required by the partners within each school including community members, parents, administrators, children and teachers.

CommPACT schools are LEA-sponsored alternative schools staffed by faculty that come together voluntarily to redesign the core programs and working conditions for managing school operations. A CommPACT School is an existing public school reorganized by teachers and administrators to maximize shared decision-making and collaboration. In exchange for accountability to the LEA, the local and regional school board is required to permit the CommPACT School autonomy in governance, budgeting and curriculum (see CGS 10-74g at p. A-265). They are managed by a partnership of LEA administrators, school representatives, teachers, community leaders and parents. Currently, there are eight CommPACT schools operating in five cities across the state.

*Instructional Models and Associated Curriculum.* The University of Connecticut's Neag School of Education serves as the hub for the CommPACT schools initiative by coordinating supports both within and across network schools. The Neag School is a resource for research-based practices — proven programs, curricula and school-reform models. Often, the materials and strategies employed by schools have not been sufficiently field-tested to determine which types of school environments they work best in or how well they address specific student needs and/or learning styles. The Neag School provides field-based assistance and annually evaluates each school's progress. By conducting audits of the school, surveying the administrators, teachers, students, parents and the community to identify the school's target needs, the Neag School provides each CommPACT School with a menu of research-proven programs to close the achievement gap. An award from the NEA Foundation funds this research. Schools then select a customized set of supports, including but not limited to: Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports (PBIS), the reform model of Accelerated Schools Plus (ASP), the Atlas Learning Communities reform model and the Schoolwide Enrichment Model.

Since a CommPACT school is managed by a partnership involving its LEA administrators, school representatives, teachers, community leaders and parents, decision-making is shared, which leads to a shared vision, mission and ownership, and, in turn, enhances the teaching and learning experience for all of those involved. The team within that school makes decisions about which teaching methods and materials best suit the students and needs of a CommPACT school.

*New Structures and Formats for the School Day and Year.* The LEAs' collective bargaining agreements cover CommPACT teachers. However, teachers in a CommPACT school may agree to alter parts of the agreement if they believe it will improve student

learning. Flexibility in hours, school calendar and other issues have proven to increase efficiency, and, most important, has led to increased collaboration in schools by better using the distribution of time.

*Staff.* Critical to a CommPACT school's foundation is the required buy-in. The principal and 90 percent of the teachers and LEA administrators must accept the requirements of becoming a CommPACT school.

*Student Enrollment.* CommPACT schools operate under existing local school attendance policies, drawing students as they would have before achieving CommPACT status.

*Student Achievement Accountability.* While the CommPACT school project is in its second year of operation, schools have made significant gains in parent and community engagement, improved student behavior and revamping of curriculum primarily in areas of literacy and mathematics. Each site has implemented Growth Curve Models of measuring student achievement growth, and next year the project should be able to document student growth on a range of academic and social measures including statewide achievement tests, as well as additional measures tailored to the school environment.

## **II. Interdistrict Magnet Schools**

As state above, magnet schools play an important role in Connecticut's Public School Choice initiative. The first regional magnet school opened in Connecticut in 1991. Currently there are 60 magnet schools operating in the state. Over \$148 million was appropriated for magnet school operating grants for the 2009-10 fiscal year, which makes up over 6 percent of the CSDE's General Fund appropriation.

Pursuant to Section 10-264l of the CGS, "an interdistrict magnet school program" means a program that "(i) supports racial, ethnic and economic diversity, (ii) offers a special and high quality curriculum, and (iii) requires students who are enrolled to attend at least half-time" (see CGS 10-264l at p. A-283). A variety of entities are authorized to operate an interdistrict magnet school, including a local and regional board of education, a regional educational service center, a public or private college or university, and a third-party not-for profit corporation that the Commissioner approves (see CGS 10-264l(a) at p. A-283). Interdistrict magnet schools are eligible to receive grant assistance from the state for both the operation of the magnet school program as well as for grants for facilities (see

CGS 10-264h and CGS 10-264l at p. A-281 and A-283). However, in considering whether to approve an application for a grant for an interdistrict magnet school, statute requires the Commissioner to consider, among other factors, whether the program offered by the school is likely to increase student achievement and reduce racial, ethnic and economic isolation (see CGS 10-264l(b)(2) at A-284).

The make-up, duties and responsibilities of the governing board members are designed uniquely by each magnet school to capitalize on the special theme and focus of the school. The governing board for a magnet school may consist of participating LEAs, business and industry partners, parents and representatives of higher education. Duties may include: hiring of administrative staff, school operations, curriculum design, building design, budget and transportation.

*Enrollment.* Magnet school seats are generally made available to all students in the region who are interested, however, if applications exceed the number of available seats, a lottery may be conducted. In its operations plan, a magnet school is required to include a written commitment for participation from the LEAs that will participate in the school (see CGS 10-264h(b) at p. A-282). If after accommodating students from participating LEAs an interdistrict magnet school operator has unused student capacity, any interested student may enroll directly into the program (see CGS 10-264l(j) at p. A-285). In addition, the governing authority for Interdistrict Magnet schools must enroll students from more than one participating LEA to remain eligible for state funding (see CGS 10-264l at p. A-283). Such governing authority shall also maintain such a school enrollment so that at least 25 percent but not more than 75 percent of the students enrolled are pupils of racial minorities (see CGS 10-264l(a) at p. A-282).

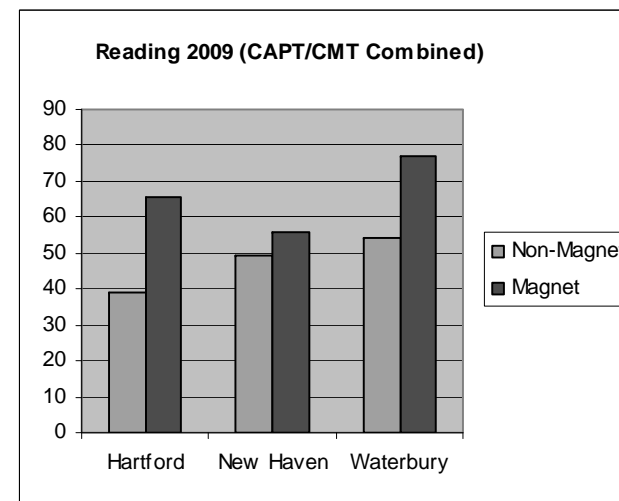
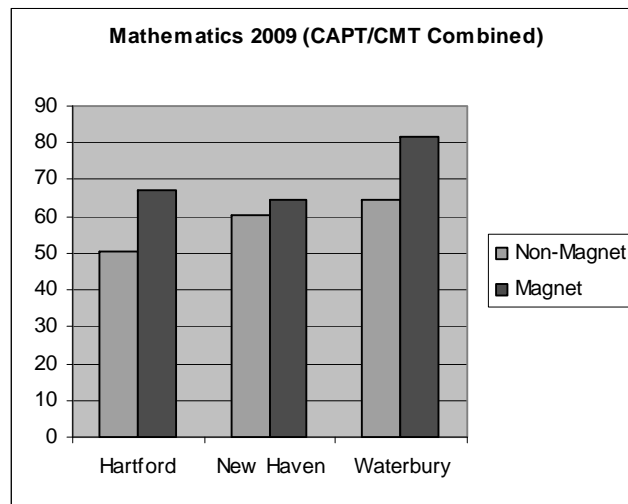
*Instructional Models and Associated Curriculum.* By definition, an interdistrict magnet school must offer a “special and high-quality curriculum,” which helps the school attract students from outside the LEA in which the school operates (see CGS 10-264l(a) at p. A-282). These exciting and innovative schools provide educational opportunities for students who benefit from a range of themes or teaching philosophies that include performing arts, mathematics, science and technology, international studies, early childhood and multicultural education.

*Staff.* All interdistrict magnet schools shall conform with the same laws and regulations applicable to public schools (see CGS 10-264l(a) at p. A-283). Therefore, staff in magnet schools may be selected by their interest and experience in the school’s unique program.

Magnet school staff generally work longer hours and have more planning time built into their schedules compared to regular public school staff.

*New Structures and Formats for the School Day and Year.* As stated above, the magnet school day and year vary depending on programmatic needs. Magnet school work calendars are designed to accomplish their mission. Examples include longer school day; before and after school programs; extended school years; vacation week programs; and college-style scheduling.

*Student Achievement.* Due to the strong emphasis on increasing student achievement, magnet schools continually use various evaluation methods to assess student performance and adjust the school curriculum and instruction. Examples of magnet school performance are detailed in the charts below, which compare students in magnet schools and non-magnet schools who have met or exceeded the proficiency standard on Connecticut’s statewide assessments in mathematics and reading.



Magnet schools provide thousands of Connecticut students with an innovative approach to public education and opportunities for success in school and their world beyond the schoolhouse doors.

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

The extent to which the State, in addition to information provided under other State Reform Conditions Criteria, has created, through law, regulation, or policy, other conditions favorable to education reform or innovation that have increased student achievement or graduation rates, narrowed achievement gaps, or resulted in other important outcomes.

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

Evidence for (F)(3):

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

*Recommended maximum response length: Two pages*

**(F)(3) DEMONSTRATING OTHER SIGNIFICANT REFORM CONDITIONS**

Beyond what has already been described in this application, Connecticut provides for several additional programs and support in an effort to increase student achievement, state graduation rates and narrow achievement gaps, among other outcomes.

**I. Public School Choice**

The SBE has long been a supporter of school choice as part of its commitment to closing the achievement gap and ensuring that all students have the opportunity to access high-quality programs based on their educational needs and interests. Public school choice programs are an integral component of the state's public school system. Public school choice programs have been found to directly and positively affect levels of parental involvement and student attendance, achievement, motivation and community engagement. In addition, public school choice programs have increasingly engaged in partnerships with public or independent institutions of higher education, including community colleges, to prepare students for postsecondary educational opportunities. In Hartford, public school choice is an effective tool for meeting the Supreme Court Order to educate the children of Hartford in less-segregated settings.

Connecticut currently offers the following public school choice options, in addition to interdistrict magnet schools and public charter schools that have been described at length above:

- *The Open Choice program* provides interdistrict enrollment options for parents and students from large urban school systems and surrounding suburban LEAs on a space-available basis. The purpose of the program is to improve academic achievement; reduce racial, ethnic and economic isolation or preserve racial and ethnic balance; and provide a choice of educational programs for students enrolled in the public schools (see CGS 10-266aa at p. A-288).
- *Interdistrict Cooperative Grant Programs* focus on the academic improvement of students in diverse educational settings and promote an understanding of diversity among the program participants. The programs include a host of educational fields, including themes such as mathematics, science, environmental studies, visual and performing arts, future teachers, world languages, writing, international studies, and marine science. This grant program also supports summer residential programs at universities and colleges that provide academically challenging courses for students from different backgrounds and communities (see CGS 10-74d at p. A-265).
- *Connecticut Technical High Schools* allow students in Grades 9-12 to learn a trade technology while earning a high school diploma. Students select an area of specialization after participating in a ninth-grade exploratory program. Students attending technical high schools are prepared to attend two- and four-year colleges and for immediate productive employment. They can also earn college credit during their high school years through articulation programs with community colleges. These schools offer full-time, part-time and evening programs and serve high school students and adults (see CGS 10-95 at p. A-266).
- *Regional Agricultural Science and Technology Education Centers* serve secondary students in regional centers located in comprehensive high schools around the state. Each center includes instruction in agricultural science and technology education, prepares students for entry-level employment or higher education, and develops leadership and employability skills. Programs may include instruction in plant and animal science, agricultural mechanics, aquaculture, agribusiness, food science, natural resources and the environment. Acceptance into the program is based on students' career interests (see CGS 10-64 at p. A-251).



High academic achievement is a fundamental expectation in schools of choice as market dynamics dictate that few students will voluntarily choose a school that does not challenge students to achieve at high levels. Public charter schools and interdistrict magnet schools routinely outpace the standardized test scores of the nearby central city, and typically meet or exceed statewide averages in mathematics, reading and writing. Open choice programs, by offering student the opportunity to learn side by side with students of other cultures and economic strata, provide a school setting where schoolwide achievement is typically high and where some students feel they can better actualize.

In addition, students who attend public schools of choice are much more likely to stay engaged and less likely to drop out compared to students in regular education settings. The following factors contribute to student retention: school's theme; smaller size; sense of community among students of similar interests; and specific interventions by schools to prevent dropping out. Interdistrict magnet and charter schools collectively have nearly one-third of the dropout rate of their comparison urban center. The way in which charter and magnet high schools address dropouts is a part of the iterative site review process by the CSDE. Common methods/programs include the *Responsive Classroom* and *Positive Behavioral Support* models.

## **II. Drop-Out Prevention**

The CSDE has recently begun targeting 21 LEAs where CSDE data revealed a need for continued focus on assisting more students to complete school. These LEAs were provided opportunities to learn about current research and practices associated with school dropout issues and participate in a facilitated exercise to help each LEA to examine their own local data, current initiatives, gaps in services and strategies to expand their response to the dropouts in their LEA. As a result, each of the 21 selected LEAs has developed an initial action plan with strategies to reduce the dropout rate by supporting students to remain connected to their education, their schools and communities. Moving forward, these select LEAs will meet with one another and share data results, best practices and lessons learned as they work to reduce their dropout rates. Small planning grants have been made available to these LEAs to amplify opportunities for continued dialogue across LEA lines and with the CSDE staff.

### **III. Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI)**

LEAs need to continue to make family engagement and parent leadership training activities available in their communities. One such program, the Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI), is a nationally recognized program developed by the Connecticut Commission for Children. The institute provides leadership training for parents and families on a wide range of topics, including important competencies at being an effective parent, spouse, and actively engaged citizen in one's community. Through RTTT funding, this training will be expanded for families in the participating LEAs. Up to eight regional community-based institutes per year will be held for parents to enable their development as change agents, advocates for their children and individuals who promote school practices that increase student achievement.

### **IV. Developing Tomorrow's Professionals (DTP)**

DTP is a program predominately aimed at adolescent minority males. The program provides specific information to participants and encourages the practice of essential life skills associated with mitigating the effects of racism along with the barriers cited above. School principals are required to support students in taking higher level courses and exercise school leadership. Students learn to use the full resources of the school to support personal learning and plan course-taking sequences leading to higher education requirements for college enrollment and career goal attainment. Each student is mentored by an enrolled successful minority college student and a career businessman or professional.

This program has been overwhelmingly successful for the 60-80 minority males that participate each year. The DTP has proven to foster school success, prevent school dropout, increase college attendance and connect participants with careers, including public school teaching. Through RTTT funding, the CSDE expects to increase the opportunity for participation, especially among districts with high concentrations of minority male students and conduct a program evaluation to validate its success and recommend ways for program improvement.

In 2009, at the request of parents and schools districts, the CSDE was encouraged to expand the program to support the development of initiatives to increase minority female student success. The initiative proposes to address: school academic performance, access to post-secondary professional careers, life skills development, and generational and cross-generational mentoring/networking. Planning for this program will be accelerated and objectives further defined with funding from RTTT.

## COMPETITION PRIORITIES

**Priority 2: Competitive Preference Priority -- Emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM).** *(15 points, all or nothing)*

To meet this priority, the State's application must have a high-quality plan to address the need to (i) offer a rigorous course of study in mathematics, the sciences, technology, and engineering; (ii) cooperate with industry experts, museums, universities, research centers, or other STEM-capable community partners to prepare and assist teachers in integrating STEM content across grades and disciplines, in promoting effective and relevant instruction, and in offering applied learning opportunities for students; and (iii) prepare more students for advanced study and careers in the sciences, technology, engineering, and mathematics, including by addressing the needs of underrepresented groups and of women and girls in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

*The competitive preference priority will be evaluated in the context of the State's entire application. Therefore, a State that is responding to this priority should address it throughout the application, as appropriate, and provide a summary of its approach to addressing the priority in the text box below. The reviewers will assess the priority as part of their review of a State's application and determine whether it has been met.*

*Recommended maximum response length, if any: One page*

Those implementing the ideas presented in Connecticut's proposal deeply understand that scientific, technological, engineering, and mathematical literacies are essential for success in the world of today and tomorrow. With state, federal, foundation, and community support, Connecticut has demonstrated this strong commitment to STEM education through the planning and implementation of multiple programs to improve teaching of STEM subjects, increased opportunities for students to participate in STEM courses and STEM after school programs, and the creation of over two dozen innovative STEM-focused charter and magnet schools. Connecticut's proposal describes many initiatives (some currently underway and some planned) that create even more fertile learning environments and additional learning opportunities to ensure that all students graduate STEM literate.

STEM initiatives are integrated throughout our proposal, and include the following:

- *A statewide technological infrastructure and network that will enable many of the proposed activities to be implemented and expanded (A2- **Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans**);*
- *More rigorous and extensive requirements and standards for mathematics, science, and technology; model end of course assessments in math and science courses; expansion of STEM course electives, programs, and resources that immerse students in STEM careers and engaging activities; and emphasis on higher-level science and mathematics courses in our Advanced Placement initiative (**B - Standards and Assessments**);*
- *Use of formative, benchmark, and summative assessment data to identify areas of student need to be used to modify instructional and school-wide efforts (**C- Data Systems to Support Instruction**); and*
- *Efforts to strengthen preservice and inservice teachers' and administrators' abilities in teaching, supporting and evaluating STEM classes and in using technology as a tool for teaching and learning (**D- Great Teachers and Leaders**).*

An index for finding these STEM related activities in our proposal follows:

- *Section (A)(2)- Connecticut Education Network, science multimedia materials*
- *Section (B)- Standards: Common Core (mathematics) and International Society for Technology in Education; The Connecticut Plan for Secondary School Reform: STEM Cluster, Model curricula, end of course assessments, STEM elective requirement; STEM Programs during and after school, Science Center Curriculum, online courses,*
- *Section (C)(2)- Goals 1 and 3, (C)(3) Benchmark Assessment System (mathematics)*
- *Section (D)- Next Generation Teachers and Leaders, Middle School Science Project STEM teachers, STEM Regional Teacher Exchange, The Elementary and Middle School Math and Science Coaching Academy*