(A) STATE SUCCESS FACTORS

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

The extent to which—

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(A)(1) STATE SUCCESS FACTORS

Introduction

Trends in Education System Performance

On April 12, 2010, at Connecticut's Legislative Office Building, Cecilia Rouse, member of President Obama's Council of Economic Advisors, addressed the Commission for the Advancement of 21st Century Skills and Careers, commonly known as the "P-20 Council." Established by Governor M. Jodi Rell on January 13, 2009, the P-20 Council's mission aims to support collaboration among four systems – early childhood, K-12, higher education and workforce training – to create an effective education and career pipeline maximizing the number of skilled people in Connecticut with a postsecondary degree or other credential.

> *"Connecticut is at a crossroads. The workforce is aging, as talented young workers are leaving the state and population and job growth are stagnating. Like other northeastern states, Connecticut is transitioning from a manufacturing to a service economy. Connecticut has experienced a large and growing income disparity that impacts the need for healthcare and social services. Poor academic performance in urban schools portends a workforce less prepared to fill the shoes of those retiring and those leaving. Nine percent of Connecticut's adults (240,000 people) are functionally illiterate, a troubling statistic that can underline the next generation's chances for success."*
>
> Connecticut Economic Strategic Plan, October 2009

Dr. Rouse reviewed the history of Connecticut's performance in educational attainment, noting that Connecticut had often led the nation in student performance. Yet, she continued, the historical performance masked more recent trends as Connecticut's ranking nationwide had slipped on a number of important measures, notably, the persistence of large achievement gaps between white, black and Hispanic students at all levels and the growing number of high school graduates who come to community or four-year colleges, ill-prepared to do the academic work needed to earn an advanced degree. Connecticut, the Council learned, was losing its competitive edge and needed to rededicate itself to the difficult work of broad-gauged systemic reform of its educational institutions. As part of its commitment to this purpose, all members of the Council formally signed

nine "guiding principles" that would focus the Council's work over the next decade and serve as the state's first public statement of support for Connecticut's Race to the Top (RTTT) application, Phase 2 (See Appendix (A)(1)(a) Council's "principles").

Our Story

Connecticut is a state of 3.5 million people who reside in 169 municipalities. In October 2009, 563,927 students were enrolled in the state's public PK-12 educational system, representing 90 percent of all PK-12 students. Public school enrollment peaked in 2007 and is expected to decline over the next decade. The state's PK-12 public school students are served in 166 local education agencies (LEAs). Connecticut's public school system includes 551 elementary schools, 160 middle schools, 148 high schools, 17 regional technical high schools and 18 charter schools. In addition, the Connecticut public education system includes six Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs) that also provide educational programming for Connecticut's students and each is linked to a specific group of LEAs based on geography. The state's 18 charter schools are treated as LEAs under Connecticut statute and are eligible to participate in Connecticut's RTTT application.

Each school district operates with its own administrative structure, school board and personnel contracts. All but two boards of education (New Haven and Hartford) are locally elected by the voters. Total funding (state, local and federal) for our public school systems is now close to $9 billion. At the local level, funding for school budgets constitutes a significant portion of municipal expenditures and – in 2010 – is under great stress due to the recession and other economic challenges.

School districts in Connecticut employ about 43,488 teachers at an average age of 43 years. Twenty-four percent were 55 years of age or older in 2008. About 2,000 teachers leave the profession in Connecticut each year. In addition to our certified teachers, Connecticut school districts employ just over 14,000 paraprofessionals to assist and augment the teaching-learning process. These individuals tend to represent more diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds than our teaching force. Together, teachers and paraprofessionals constitute a workforce of some 58,000 individuals across Connecticut communities. Two statewide teachers' unions, Connecticut Education Association (CEA) and American Federation for Teachers – Connecticut (AFT) represent all the teachers in Connecticut.

Student Diversity, Sheff v. O'Neill

Connecticut's public schools serve a significant number of high need students; however, there is great variability in the numbers of high need students by district. Using poverty as the metric (defined by the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) as living in a family with an income at or below 185 percent of the Federal Poverty Level), 31.8 percent of Connecticut students live in poverty and that proportion is increasing. In 2009, just under 73,000 PK-12 students in our public schools lived in families where a language other than English was spoken, with Spanish the predominant non-English language. Just under 30,000 students are formally enrolled as English language learners (ELL) students and some schools serve students representing 30-40 different linguistic backgrounds. Statewide, 36.2 percent of our PK-12 public school students are African American, Hispanic, Asian or Native American, a proportion that continues to increase and place greater pressure on communities statewide to adhere to legal requirements (Connecticut General Statute Section 10-4a) for racial balance in their districts.

The Connecticut Supreme Court in 1996 ruled in Sheff v. O'Neill that the public school students in the City of Hartford attended schools that were racially, ethnically and economically isolated in violation of the Connecticut Constitution and urged the State to promptly remedy the violation. The State's efforts proved unsuccessful until 2008, when the State and plaintiffs entered into a new Stipulated Agreement requiring the development and implementation of a Comprehensive Management Plan as outlined in Appendix (A)(I)(i) based on multiple strategies aimed at meeting the goals of the original 1996 Court ruling. The Five-Year Plan, consistent with the Phase 2 Stipulation and Order included in Appendix (A)(I)(j) set forth annual desegregation goals for Hartford public school students while including enrollment targets each year for such entities as magnet schools, charter schools, public school choice and participation in other regional programs, including the Connecticut Technical High School System and Agricultural Science and Technology Programs. The new Agreement requires that 41 percent of Hartford's minority students will be taught in reduced racially isolated settings by 2012-2013 or that 80 percent of the demand for such opportunity will have been met, as measured by the number of students choosing and enrolling in a racially integrated school. The implications of this landmark case have been felt

by nearly every district in the state making the interdistrict choice and magnet school funding a source of concern if not dismay that too many students have been denied access to a high-quality education for too long simply because of where they live.

Institutions of Higher Education

Enrollment at Connecticut two- and four-year institutions of higher education has been increasing since 1997. Preliminary figures for fall 2009 show a record increase in enrollment rates at public two-year colleges of 7.8 percent over 2008 as compared with a 1.7 percent increase in the state university system and a 0.5 percent increase at the University of Connecticut. Thirty percent of students attending the state's community colleges are African American or Hispanic as compared with just under 15 percent at four-year colleges.

Upon entry in fall 2009, an estimated three quarters (76 percent) of community college enrollees were assessed as needing to take developmental mathematics and/or English. Many of these students had just graduated from high school in the spring and were attending school either full or part-time. According to the Connecticut State University System, over 50 percent of its students assessed as needing to take developmental or remedial mathematics courses. In 2008, 57 percent of students at two-year public colleges returned for a second year, while nearly 80 percent of four-year public college students returned.

Of note, the Connecticut Department of Labor projects that more than 75 percent of the top 100 fastest growing jobs over the next 10 years will require a solid or advanced knowledge of mathematics, science or engineering principles. The growth in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) occupations is projected at 13.5 percent as compared with the state's overall projected employment increase of 8.5 percent. Additionally, with the passage of the national health care reform legislation and Connecticut's own commitment to local health care reform, the demand for services in allied health fields will far exceed these projections.

This "supply side" argument is buttressed by the "demand side" of our current and future economy. Connecticut's high cost of production (wages, energy) and consumption (housing, healthcare) requires higher levels of innovation and value-added products in order for the state to compete globally. The application of technology and advanced research (in areas like nanotechnology, optics,

photonics and bio-science) is required to innovate and advance our production capabilities. The consequence is a need for highly skilled – and STEM-competent – graduates who can fuel the state's economic competitiveness.

Connecticut's Approach to Comprehensive School Reform and the Phase 2 Race to the Top Application

When we prepared our Race to the Top (RTTT) application for Phase 1, a number of reforms – spelled out in the State Board of Education's (SBE) *2006-2011 Comprehensive Five-Year Plan* – were under way, and considerable progress has been made on a number of fronts. (See Appendix (A)(1)(b) for the full plan.) Connecticut's Phase 2 process was aided immeasurably by the opportunity to receive internal and external reviews of our Phase 1 application, including those of the federal reviewers. In addition, we have examined the solid proposals of other states and we have carefully reviewed the U.S. Department of Education's *Blueprint for Reform: the Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (March 2010). For Connecticut, the period between January 19 and the end of May has been a time of intensive work and learning, including passage of landmark legislation, Public Act 10-111, supporting education reform in Connecticut that aligns with the Race to the Top goals and assurances. A complete copy of this legislation, which was signed by Governor M. Jodi Rell on May 26, 2010, is available in Appendix (A)(1)(c).

We believe that the reform agenda outlined below will accelerate student achievement gains over the next four years and that it gives strong evidence that "public education" in Connecticut is itself capable of learning and change over a short period of time.

The bold enhancements to our Phase 1 application, coupled with the solid proposals that were included in that first application, position Connecticut to join the circle of Race to the Top winners – understanding full well that the real winners will be our present and future students.

In Section (A)(1)(i), we summarize the elements that together constitute our reform agenda:

- Connecticut's Vision for Change
- Connecticut's Landmark Legislation to Support Education Reform
- Connecticut's Bold but Achievable Goals for Student Achievement
- Connecticut's Theory of Change

  - Connecticut's Six Levers for Change
  - Three Core Elements: The Connecticut Accountability for Leaning Initiative/Scientifically Research Based Interventions (CALI/SRBI), *The Connecticut Plan for Secondary School Reform* and the P-20 Shared Leadership Council
  - Connecticut's Comprehensive Education Reform Framework
- Connecticut's Education Reform Agenda Goals
- Financing Sustainable Change
- Resource Allocations

(A)(1)(i) ARTICULATING THE STATE'S REFORM AGENDA

Connecticut's Vision for Change

At its heart, Connecticut's plan for comprehensive educational reform is about "success," specifically the academic and personal success of *all* students. Preparation for this success must begin before students stand at the door to kindergarten for what should be, for all, a sustained and grand adventure in learning. And the success we seek does not end as high school seniors walk across the dais to receive their diplomas. Connecticut students must complete their K-12 experience both college- and career-ready, with a base of knowledge, skills and behaviors that will enable them to remain constant learners in a world where dramatic expansion of knowledge is the norm and not the exception. Our current trajectory for educational change predicts that *all* students who enter the 5th grade in 2010 will graduate in 2018 fully college- and career-ready. With financial support from the Race to the Top initiative, coupled with the opportunity to become a member of the resulting Race to the Top cohort of educational change leaders, we plan to accelerate the pace of that change.

As state data analyses have clearly shown, about a third of Connecticut's young students are genuinely "ready for kindergarten" when they begin school. Approximately 80 percent of these "ready" children progress through our K-12 system with high levels of proficiency on state assessments (see Section (A)(3)(ii)). Emerging data from our institutions of higher education indicate, however, that too many of these students are not actually "college-ready" at graduation and require an extensive period of post-secondary remediation in order to enroll in credit-bearing courses.

Our vision for Connecticut's ready students is that their achievement performance will progress from "proficiency" on state assessments to the state's "goal level and beyond." Further, we expect those ready students with exceptional records and competencies will successfully complete more advanced placement courses, participate in dual enrollment programs that allow college courses to be taken in high schools and – based on exceptional records, competencies and examinations – actually graduate as early as the end of 10th grade.

For too many other students, however, this story is not *their* story and Connecticut cannot wait until 2018 to address predictable patterns of non-achievement. Connecticut will aim to largely eliminate the achievement gap in reading and mathematics for students, representing large numbers of minority students, who become 8th graders during the 2013-2014 school year.

Our target goal is that at least 60 percent of African American and Hispanic students who enter high school as freshman in the fall of 2014 will be performing at the ***goal level or above*** *on state achievement tests. Also by the spring of 2014, our goal is for the high school graduation rate among at-risk and vulnerable students to increase from 60 to 80 percent, reducing the gap by half.*

This vision of change cannot be accomplished by the state's 166 LEAs, its excellent charter and magnet schools, its fine Technical High School System or the CSDE alone. The change that Connecticut seeks for all of its students from their pre-school years through postsecondary education must be anchored in an expanding set of partnerships. These partnerships must be inclusive in membership and focused on outcomes. Partners must be willing to share leadership, resources and accountability for results, and publicly confirm that they are committed to a higher set of expectations and much more rigor and engagement at all levels.

The change we seek also cannot be achieved if we retain an "incrementalist's" mindset, although some of the change sought will occur through small steps anchored in communities of practice and continuous improvement. Data on our present and future students coupled with our understanding of the changing and challenging world in which they will live, tell us clearly that it is time for Connecticut to unleash the energy and excellence present abundantly in this land of steady habits and to build "a new way" in education for all of our students, and for those adults who choose to serve as their teachers, leaders and mentors.

Connecticut's 2010 Landmark Legislation to Support Education Reform

The comprehensive education reform bill that supports the RTTT overarching goals and federal assurances – Public Act 10-111 – was approved by the General Assembly during the 2010 legislative session and signed into law by the Governor on May 26, 2010. Not only is the passage of such dramatic educational reform legislation essential to promoting higher levels of achievement for all students

in Connecticut, the process of collaboration that aided its passage is also significant for establishing how we intend to implement each reform element.

This RTTT education reform bill indicates strong support for each assurance within RTTT. It was the product of intensive, lengthy discussions led by the co-chairs of the Connecticut General Assembly's Education Committee who convened numerous meetings with education stakeholders throughout the session, including the CSDE, the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS), the Connecticut Education Association (CEA), the American Federation of Teachers (AFT)-Connecticut, the Connecticut Federation of School Administrators and ConnCAN (an education reform advocacy nonprofit). Below is a listing of the major elements of the RTTT education reform legislation and how it links directly to each of the RTTT assurances. A complete copy of the legislation is included in Appendix (A)(1)(c) and described more fully as referenced in various sections of the application. In brief, Public Act No. 10-111 will:

- Increase the rigor and requirements for high school graduation in Connecticut, with additional coursework in science, mathematics and world languages (Sections (B) and (D))
- Require LEAs to create Student Success Plans and provide adequate student support and remedial services aimed at increasing learning time (Section (E))
- Require all districts to have an advanced placement program and a policy for earning credits through online courses (Section (D))
- Allow districts to participate in a pilot "board examination system" endorsed by the National Center for Education and the Economy (NCEE) (Section (B)(3))
- Require expansion of the Statewide Longitudinal Data System (Section (C))
- Implement a teacher evaluation system linking student and teacher performance, including multiple measures of student growth (Section (D)(2))
- Create a new alternative certification route for school administrators (Section (D)(1))
- Provide authority to the Commissioner of Education to reconstitute local boards of education (Section (E)(1))

- Authorize parent-teacher governance councils in low-performing LEAs with the right to petition for school reconstitution (Section (E)(1))
- Waive enrollment limits for charters with a demonstrated record of high performance and makes the charter school facility grant program permanent (Section (F)(2))
- Establish authority for Innovation Schools within priority school districts. (Section (F)(2))

Connecticut's Bold and Achievable Goals for Student Achievement

Connecticut's Phase 2 RTTT plan has anchored its bold but achievable goals for student achievement in the increased rigor and course requirements of the *Connecticut Plan Secondary School Reform* (see Sections (A) through (E)) and a close analysis of student performance data (detailed in Section (A)(3)). We will continue to pursue the goals highlighted in the bolded subsections below *whether or not* we receive Phase 2 funding. Clearly, however, the opportunity to secure new additional funding coupled with Connecticut's landmark school reform legislation and the reform plan presented here will enable us to accelerate the pace of change, thus benefiting all of Connecticut's present and future students and their eventual employers.

How Are We Faring?

As reported in Section (A)(3), Connecticut was among the highest scoring states on the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Despite this ranking, however, less than half of our 4th and 8th graders scored at or above *proficiency* on the NAEP assessment in mathematics or reading in 2009 and from 2003-2009 there were persistent large differences in performance among subgroups of students.

On our own state Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT), which is administered in grades 3 through 8, approximately 65 percent of test-takers scored at the state's "goal or above" level. **Goal or above** is a higher standard for achievement than the **proficient** level Connecticut uses for NCLB accountability and the determination of adequate yearly progress (AYP). Proficiency in Connecticut represents a minimum level of attainment for our students but does not reflect the level of solid academic achievement that we must now expect of all students, particularly those in our elementary schools, soon to enter our high schools.

Closer examination of the CMT data from 2003-2009 indicates that:

- In *mathematics,* the percentage of students meeting the **goal** standard increased by 7 points.
- In *reading,* the percentage of students meeting **goal** increased by 5 percentage points.
- When comparing the performance of subgroups of students over time, students who are economically disadvantaged score about 40 percentage points *below* their more advantaged classmates.

The Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) is administered to grade 10 students annually. About half of all grade 10 students score at or above goal in mathematics and reading. Between 2003 and 2009, the percentage of students meeting goal on CAPT mathematics and reading remained relatively flat, and English language learners (ELL) the gap in performance between traditionally lower performing subgroups (black, Hispanic, economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities) and higher performing subgroups (white, economically advantaged, non-ELL, non-disabled) subgroups is about 40 points.

Our Goals for Increasing Student Achievement

In 2009, roughly 35 percent of the students in grades 3 through 8 did not meet the state goal in reading and mathematics. We intend that, by 2014, 75 to 80 percent of the students will be performing at goal. As a result, the proportion of students who test at the goal level will need to increase by 2 to 3 percentage points each year, which translates to an additional 5,000 to 7,500 students annually meeting goal. This is an achievable target with an enormous benefit in terms of likely future high school success.

By the spring of 2014, we expect that 60 to 65 percent of our 10th graders will score at the level of goal on the state's CAPT assessment. To achieve this outcome, the percentage of students in grade 10 scoring at CAPT goal will have to increase by an average of 3 to 4 percentage points annually. This is an aggressive but achievable target that we anticipate will also have a positive impact on the readiness of students for post-secondary education.

At the same time, we are committed to challenging higher performing students who are already performing at the goal level with opportunities to continue their strong academic growth. Public Act 10-111, now provides the opportunity for early high school completion for students who demonstrate exceptional competency in required content areas (see Section B-1 for more detail).

Our target for these students is to make college opportunities available much earlier than has been traditionally done in Connecticut. To support early graduation and related options, such as dual enrollment programs and an increase in advanced placement (AP) course enrollment and completion, we must increase the proportion of students who are achieving at a level of goal or above.

Our Goals for Decreasing Achievement Gaps

In order for achievement gaps to be narrowed, the number of students making gains by subgroup at all grades tested must increase at a greater rate than that of its comparison group. Table (A)(3)(a) contains baseline data on the performance of African American, Hispanic and white students in 2009-10 and targets for reducing performance gaps over the next four years. Over the next four years , Connecticut's goal of decreasing the achievement gap between the traditionally higher performing subgroups and the lower performing subgroups is for all students to reach the high levels of performance. We expect that the performance of higher performing subgroups will continue to increase but at a rate of about 1 point a year, while the performance of African American and Hispanic students will need to increase by a substantially larger degree at 4 to 6 points per year, which will then cut the gaps in performance by approximately half.

Our Goals for Increasing Graduation Requirements and Rates

Connecticut has several goals related to high school graduation. The first goal is to increase high school course requirements proposed as part of the *Connecticut Plan for Secondary School Reform* and enacted into law by Public Act 10-111 in May 2010. By 2018, all students will graduate with 25 rather than 20 credits. Second, using the cohort adjusted calculation methodology, the gap in graduation rate between white students and African American and Hispanic students will decrease by half by 2013-2014.

The 2009 overall graduation rate was 79 percent. For white students it was 87 percent compared with 66 percent for African American students and 58 percent for Hispanic students. We expect the graduation rate for white students to continue to increase by 1 percentage point annually, while the graduation rate for African American students will need to increase by 3 to 4 percentage points and the rates for Hispanic students will need to increase by 4 to 5 percentage points.

The following chart summarizes, for each year of the grant, the targets for closing the achievement gaps:

Table (A)(1)(a) Connecticut's Targets for Closing the Achievement Gaps					
	2009-10 (Baseline)	**2010-11**	**2011-12**	**2012-13**	**2013-14**
Reduce the gap in the percentage of students meeting Goal on CMT in mathematics by half.					
African American	**37**	**42**	**47**	**53**	**59**
Hispanic	**39**	**44**	**49**	**55**	**61**
White	**78**	**79**	**80**	**81**	**82**
Reduce the gap in the percentage of students meeting Goal on CMT in reading by half.					
African American	**40**	**45**	**50**	**55**	**61**
Hispanic	**37**	**42**	**48**	**54**	**60**
White	**77**	**78**	**79**	**80**	**81**
Reduce the gap in the percentage of students meeting Goal on the CAPT in mathematics by half.					
African American	**13**	**19**	**25**	**31**	**43**
Hispanic	**17**	**23**	**29**	**35**	**41**
White	**61**	**62**	**63**	**64**	**65**
Reduce the gap in the percentage of students meeting Goal on the CAPT in reading by half.					
African American	**18**	**23**	**29**	**35**	**41**
Hispanic	**21**	**26**	**31**	**36**	**42**
White	**58**	**59**	**60**	**62**	**64**
Reduce the gap in the percentage of students graduating from high school.					
African American	**66**	**69**	**72**	**76**	**80**
Hispanic	**58**	**62**	**67**	**72**	**77**
White	**87**	**88**	**89**	**90**	**91**

Our Goals for Increased College Enrollment and Completion

In March 2010, Connecticut signed onto Complete College America, a national initiative seeking to help states implement a range of strategies that will be necessary to bring about changes in culture and practice to increase postsecondary success. In doing so, Connecticut committed to setting targets for increased postsecondary graduation, in the form of degrees **or** credentials. The Connecticut Department of Higher Education is currently working with the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) to develop a Connecticut-specific tool with which Connecticut can develop realistic targets based on anticipated demographic shifts. In this work, the target setting will be informed by the estimated changes in the state's high school graduation rates by demographics, as well as by President Obama's 2020 goal to move the United States back into a lead role in education. The NCHEMS tool will be complete by mid-May 2010. Initial work on target setting will be accomplished by the Connecticut P-20 Council during the summer of 2010.

A Theory of Change, Linked to Our History

Connecticut's Six Levers for Transformational Change

To aid us in implementing the four assurances that constitute the RTTT theory of change, Connecticut has identified six levers for transforming the system. Each of these levers represents work that is essential to: implement common standards and assessment linked to a robust data system; assure that all students have equitable access to effective teachers and principals; and continue expansion of our innovative models for turning around persistently low-achieving schools. Connecticut's reform levers are: (1) Family and community engagement; (2) Pre-service training and professional development; (3) Teacher, principal effectiveness and accountability; (4) Curriculum innovation, the application of technology to teaching and learning and greater emphasis on STEM competencies; (5) High school, college and workforce alignment; and (6) Financing sustainable change. These levers are operationalized in the CSDE's management structure for RTTT in Section (A)(2) under Partnerships for Change.

Embedded within the six levers are prior strategies and other factors we will continue to pursue to ensure success for all students:

- A solid PK-3 framework for early education in Connecticut with an emphasis on aligning preschool with K-3 in terms of standards, data systems development, professional development and community strategic planning and family support systems
- An increased role of STEM experiences for all students
- Targeted attention to the special needs of students with disabilities, English Learners and other subgroups that constitute Connecticut's significant achievement gaps
- The role of the Knowledge Network drawing upon Connecticut's vast but underutilized higher education and business research sectors

These will be complemented by three core elements of our education reform agenda: (a) the expansion of the *Connecticut Accountability for Learning Initiative* (CALI) to all school districts by 2015; (b) the implementation of the *Connecticut Plan for Secondary School Reform* by 2018; and (c) the introduction of the *P-20 Shared Leadership Council.* The Council will now help guide the state's reform plan in conjunction with six public-private Partnerships for Change. This implementation structure is described in detail in Section (A)(2).

Below, we describe what, from our perspective, is the most important of the three core elements. (For details on the *Connecticut Plan for Secondary School Reform* and the Shared Leadership Council see Sections (A)(2) and (B)(2) respectively).

The Connecticut Accountability for Learning Initiative (CALI/SRBI)

In 2004, the CSDE established CALI to provide professional development and coaching to accelerate the learning of ***all*** students and to close the achievement gap. CALI is based on the findings of nationally recognized researchers including Dr. Douglas Reeves, Dr. Michael Smoker, Dr. Robert Maranon, 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. CALI provides the structure and the instructional strategies to address the needs of the subgroups of students who currently are most

challenged specifically English language learners, students with disabilities, African American and Hispanic students and students who are economically disadvantaged. (See Appendix (A)(1)(d) for a complete overview of CALI).

In 2007, the passage of state accountability legislation significantly strengthened the CALI model, and it has become Connecticut's core process for comprehensive LEA reform (Sections (C)(3), (D)(2), (D)(5),(E)(1) and (E)(2) further address the model). (See section 21 of Public Act 10-111 for a complete copy of the accountability statute, as amended, in Appendix (A)(1)(c)). CALI is based on a clear focus on achievement, a standards-based curriculum that emphasizes mathematics and writing; the 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. Elements of CALI also provide support for identify promising practices, evaluating these practices' effectiveness, ceasing ineffective practices based on data, holding all adults in the system accountable for progress and performance and intervening when necessary.

In addition to CALI but integrally related is a second instructional improvement effort focused explicitly on student learning: Scientific Research Based Interventions (SRBI). In February 2008, the CSDE issued the *Scientific Research Based Intervention (SRBI) Framework* as this state's model for implementation of **R**esponse **t**o **I**ntervention. Appendix (A)(1)(e) provides an Executive Summary of SRBI. In an SRBI framework, students who are not performing adequately based on grade level standards receive interventions at the *time of need.* SRBI eliminates waiting for students to fail and fall further behind. Data are used to determine appropriate instructional levels and methodology and then to monitor students' progress.

The Connecticut SRBI framework is based on three tiers of intervention. Tier I refers to the learning of all students in the core curriculum. Students failing to meet important academic benchmarks or social/behavioral expectations of Tier I core practices are supported with supplemental Tier II short-term interventions matched to their specific needs, with frequent progress monitoring (for example, 8-20 weeks) . These interventions are typically part of a standard treatment protocol, delivered in a standardized format to ensure the fidelity of the interventions. Students who do not respond to Tier II interventions receive more intensive, individualized interventions at the Tier III level. Tier III interventions are based on a problem-solving approach that focuses on a team of teachers

and specialists gathering additional data on student's progress and deficits, developing an intervention plan based on the student's specific needs. Again, progress monitoring is essential to monitor the effectiveness of the interventions.

Together, CALI (which is focused on changing adult behaviors) and SRBI (which is focused directly on student learning) constitute a complete package of instructional improvement processes. Based on the emerging capability of CALI to transform LEAs and schools in need of improvement, Connecticut is confident that this CALI/SRBI combination – with full implementation statewide as part of our RTTT effort – will enable our districts to make dramatic, sustainable improvements in leadership and instruction resulting in demonstrable student success (see Section (E)(3) for current demonstrated progress for CALI.).

Connecticut's Education Reform Agenda Goals

Below, we offer short summaries of how we intend to meet the four assurances required in this application. Elaborated, detailed plans for each assurance are described in Sections (B) through (F).

Assurance 1: Standards and Assessments

Connecticut will adopt both the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) (July 2010) and Common Assessments (once they have been developed and reviewed nationally). We aim to become the 32nd state to adopt College- and Career-Ready Standards and we will also align our K-12 standards to reach preschool and to achieve concordance with college entry requirements.

Assurance 2: 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. The CSDE will implement all data elements now required in the Connecticut landmark education reform legislation cited earlier. Second, the CSDE will implement a series of outreach and communication strategies to make data more accessible to a broad

group of RTTT constituencies, as well as improve timely access to data essential to improving educational policymaking, operation and research. Third, Connecticut will continue its current efforts to implement through CALI the use of data-driven decision making at the LEA level to build and operate formal instructional improvement systems.

Assurance 3: Great Teachers and Leaders

Connecticut's plan for great teachers and leaders will integrate all of 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 will build and implement a new framework for training teachers and administrators over the next decade. The RTTT opportunity comes at a time when Connecticut is already building and implementing a comprehensive teacher quality system with new certification regulations planned for implementation in 2016 (See Section (D)(2)).

Assurance 4: Turning Around Low-Performing Schools

Under strong accountability legislation passed in July 2007, the Commissioner of Education and the State Board of Education (SBE) hold significantly increased authority to intervene in low-achieving schools and districts. The Commissioner and the SBE have a broad range of actions under their authority. These include among others: (a) requiring audits and directing the use of state or federal funds; (b) directing staff assignments and transfers; (c) requiring additional supports for children in low-performing schools; (d) assigning technical support teams and specifying curriculum for implementation; and (e) identifying school for reconstitutions or management by an entity other than the local board of education.

Over the period 2004 through 2009, the CSDE has employed CALI as its core intervention process. In April 2010, Connecticut received a federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) of $26 million dollars that will be allocated, based on approved districts' plans, to the state's lowest performing schools (Tier I and Tier II). The work to implement the SIG grant will be tightly coordinated with Connecticut's RTTT in districts with Tier I and Tier II schools (as defined in Section (E)(2)). Public Act 10-111 will further strengthen

this work by conferring new authority on the SBE to reconstitute boards of education, if reform interventions persist with no signs of improvement.

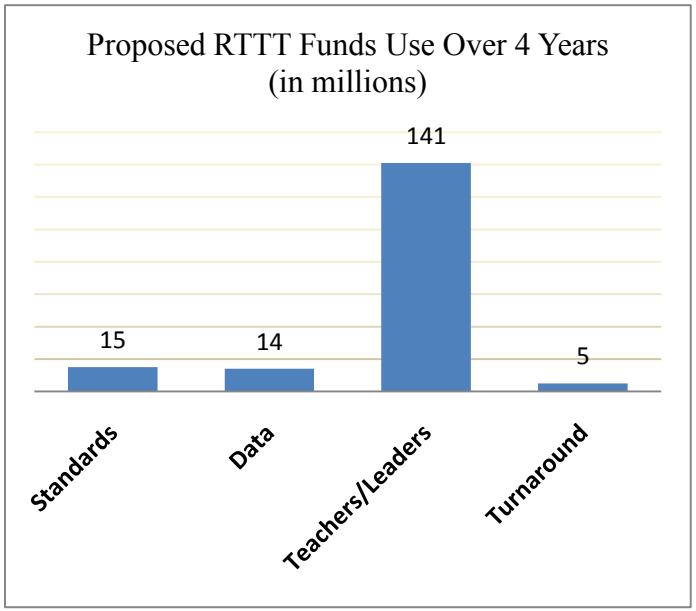
Financing Sustainable Change

To sustain initiatives begun with four-year federal ARRA funds through RTTT, Connecticut will need 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.

To begin this work, the Commissioner of Education has established one of the Partnerships for Change – the Partnership for Financing Sustained Change –to lead this work. This Partnership is co-led by a senior leader at the CSDE with one or more co-chairpersons from CABE, CAPSS, or a non-profit organization. This group will convene first in September 2010 to develop a plan of action and analysis that will result, by December of 2011, in a set of findings describing Connecticut's current educational funding patterns and a set of recommendations for change, including repurposing existing federal and state funding across agencies to focus on expanding and sustaining the conditions resulting in dramatic improvements in student achievement as predicted in this application. For further detail see section (A)(2).

Resource Allocations

If funded under RTTT, Connecticut will receive up to $175 million over the four-year period, 2010-2014. Half of this amount, $87.5 million, will be allocated directly to Title I LEAs to support the state's education reform agenda as outlined in this application and the LEA Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by participating LEAs. In addition to their Title I allocation described above, Title I LEAs participating in RTTT and operate grades kindergarten through 12, will each receive an additional $140,000 over a four-year period. All other LEAs that opt to sign onto the RTTT application will each receive $100,000 over a four-year period (some of Connecticut's districts operate smaller grade ranges, such as grades kindergarten through 5 or 8, or grades 6-12 or 9-12). RESCs and the Connecticut Technical High School System will each also receive $140,000 in this additional allocation of the state portion of RTTT. This use of funds from the state's portion is equal to $24 million. The total amount of RTTT funding allocated directly for LEA use is $111 million (64 percent).



Of the remaining funds, approximately $15 million will be retained by the CSDE for infrastructure and building capacity to support LEAs to ensure success in accomplishing its responsibilities in each of the four reform assurances as described earlier in this section. The balance, roughly $49 million will be utilized to support specific initiatives related to each of the four federal assurances.

The proposed distribution of RTTT funds depicted in the graph shows clearly the extraordinary importance placed on the role of teachers and principals in the educational lives of our students. Nearly 80 percent of RTTT funds will be expended to support the development of Connecticut's teaching and administrative professionals, $141 million out of the total of $175 million requested in this application.

Funds allocated for Great Teachers and Leaders in Assurance 3 include:

- $56 million over four years to promote and expand high-quality 21st century teaching, learning and assessment, including implementation of secondary school reform ($21 million), increased AP courses ($6 million), model curricula development and assessment ($3 million), STEM innovation ($15 million), parent and family engagement ($6 million) and initiatives to foster equity and diversity ($5 million);
- $31 million over four years to develop and support teacher and principal supervision and effectiveness;
- $14 million over four years to support the recruitment and retention of effective and highly effective teachers; and
- $40 million to support the implementation of CALI in all participating LEAs by 2015.

(A)(1)(ii)(a-c) LEA Commitment to Plan and Reform Agenda

As seen early in Section (A)(1)(i), while a small state geographically and in terms of population, Connecticut's educational system is quite complex with LEAs in 166 separate municipal jurisdictions, all except for two with elected boards of education. There is no regional government, and Connecticut counties define maps not legal jurisdictions. Connecticut's towns range in size from just a few thousand people to just over 150,000 residents. This circumstance is important to understanding the student achievement results presented below in Section (A)(1)(ii).

In Connecticut's Phase 1 application, 62 percent of all eligible LEAs signed on to participate in Connecticut's education reform agenda (122 LEAs out of 197). Of note, only 59 local teachers' union leaders signed on. Over the period January through May, communications and participation grew remarkably, resulting in 162 LEAs signing on to RTTT in Phase 2 – 82 percent of the LEAs eligible to participate. In addition, the local union sign-on increased dramatically from the Phase 1 to the Phase 2 submittal – just 48 percent of local unions signed on in Phase 1 versus 87.8 percent of local union sign on in Phase 2. CSDE gained significant participants across all three categories of signatories and virtually all districts that joined Connecticut's Phase 2 RTTT are fully represented by all three leadership groups: superintendents, board of education chairpersons and union leadership. In addition to the

increased signatories, our Phase 2 effort will reach nearly all of the students statewide (95.1 percent) who live in conditions of family poverty (defined in Connecticut's as 185 percent or less of the Federal Poverty Level).

Because the kind of bold reform we envision in Connecticut will require enthusiastic and energetic buy-in at all levels, we believe this new result bodes well for the likelihood of real, sustainable change – to the betterment of our families and students, our teachers and schools and each of the participating communities as whole.

(A)(1)(ii)(a-c)

The terms and conditions, outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in Appendix (A)(1)(f), reflect strong commitment by the participating LEAs and the state to successfully and collaboratively implement Connecticut's RTTT plan for education reform. Connecticut's public policy history in education is one of collaboration between stakeholders. The best reform comes from a process where all relevant parties are at the table and when legitimate differences of opinion are worked out in an atmosphere of mutual trust.

As one can see from the charts below, the detailed table in Appendix (A)(1)(g) and the MOU in Appendix (A)(1)(f), conditional commitment to implement the reform activities is included as an addendum to the MOU. This "Savings Clause" states that the signatories will agree to work together in good faith to implement the areas of Connecticut's RTTT Plan set forth in the Preliminary Scope of Work. Nothing in the MOU, however, should be construed as overriding existing collective bargaining agreements. This is a reasonable statement of respect for existing legal frameworks between LEAs and their local unions. The "Savings Clause" is **not** a declaration of refusal to agree to the requirements of our application, but rather the assertion of bargaining units rights to bargain the implementation of the requirements. Significant changes required in Connecticut's RTTT plan will necessitate deliberate consideration of the established bargaining process so that the resulting agreements can endure beyond the life of the grant and sustain long-term reform.

As previously mentioned in Section A(1)(i), both state teacher unions – the Connecticut Education Association (CEA) and the American Federation of Teachers – Connecticut (AFT), have worked tirelessly with the other stakeholders over the past five months to

gain passage of Public Act 10-111. Upon passage of this landmark legislation, leaders of Connecticut's teacher unions conveyed to the local unions the importance of Connecticut's RTTT plan for all students in Connecticut while strongly urging all members to sign on to the RTTT initiative. The collaboration shown here and the increased numbers of local union presidents' support clearly prove to have been effective. Both the CEA and AFT have signed letters of support for this application saying our RTTT plan is "a plan for success in which all stakeholders feel invested" and that they "will do this work to ensure that all teachers are prepared with the best knowledge and skills and the most effective teaching techniques to reach the learning needs of each and every child."

Participating LEAs are fully committed to working together to implement Connecticut's plan. The increase in signatories, including a significant increase in buy-in from the local teacher union leaders fully demonstrates the support needed to collaborate effectively to execute Connecticut's plan in each of the four areas of reform. Of note, in Hartford, one of our largest urban centers, the Hartford Federation of Teachers, did not sign the MOU due to recent ongoing negotiations with the Hartford Board of Education that could not be resolved in time for the RTTT application. We look to further solicitation of their support once local issues have been resolved in order to assure broad implementation of reform efforts throughout the state.

Readers should note, finally that, every Participating LEA has signed on to implement all aspects of the scope of work that create a comprehensive approach to improving teaching and learning. The scope of work articulated in the MOU in Appendix (A)(1)(f) addresses the components of the four required assurances. Detailed descriptors for each requirement are included in Appendix (A)(I)(h).

Summary Table for (A)(1)(ii)(b) Elements of state Reform Plans	Number of LEAs Participating (#)	Percentage of Total Participating LEAs (%)
B. Standards and Assessments		
(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	0 (162 conditional)	0 (100% conditional)
C. Data Systems to Support Instruction		

Summary Table for (A)(1)(ii)(b) Elements of state Reform Plans	Number of LEAs Participating (#)	Percentage of Total Participating LEAs (%)
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction:		
(i) Use of local instructional improvement systems	0 (162 conditional)	0 (100% conditional)
(ii) Professional development on use of data	0 (162 conditional)	0 (100% conditional)
(iii) Availability and accessibility of data to researchers	0 (162 conditional)	0 (100% conditional)
D. Great Teachers and Leaders		
(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance:		
(i) Measure student growth	0 (162 conditional)	0 (100% conditional)
(ii) Design and implement evaluation systems	0 (162 conditional)	0 (100% conditional)
(iii) Conduct annual evaluations	0 (162 conditional)	0 (100% conditional)
(iv)(a) Use evaluations to inform professional development	0 (162 conditional)	0 (100% conditional)
(iv)(b) Use evaluations to inform compensation, promotion and retention	0 (162 conditional)	0 (100% conditional)
(iv)(c) Use evaluations to inform tenure and/or full certification	0 (162 conditional)	0 (100% conditional)
(iv)(d) Use evaluations to inform removal	0 (162 conditional)	0 (100% conditional)
(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals:		
(i) High-poverty and/or high-minority schools	0 (162 conditional)	0 (100% conditional)
(ii) Hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	0	0

Summary Table for (A)(1)(ii)(b) Elements of state Reform Plans	Number of LEAs Participating (#)	Percentage of Total Participating LEAs (%)
	(162 conditional)	(100% conditional)
(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals:	0 (162 conditional)	0 (100% conditional)
(i) Quality professional development	0 (162 conditional)	0 (100% conditional)
(ii) Measure effectiveness of professional development	0 (162 conditional)	0 (100% conditional)
E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools		
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	0 (6 conditional)	0 (100% conditional)

Summary Table for (A)(1)(ii)(c)			
Signatures acquired from participating LEAs:			
Number of Participating LEAs with all applicable signatures			
	Number of Signatures Obtained (#)	**Number of Signatures Applicable (#)**	**Percentage (%)** (Obtained/Applicable)
LEA Superintendent (or equivalent)	162	162	100%
President of Local School Board (or equivalent, if applicable)	148	162	91.4%
Local Teachers' Union Leader (if applicable)	130	148	87.8%

Section (A)(1)(iii) Translation into Broad Statewide Impact

Table A(1)(iii) provides data about the Connecticut public school districts that are participating in the Race to the Top application, individually and aggregated to the state level. Connecticut expects that the implementation of the state plan will have a substantial impact on student performance overall and by subgroup, given that the 162 participating districts:

- Represent 82.2 percent of the state's total districts that include all seven of the state's large urban districts, 30 out of the 32 districts with the most economically disadvantaged populations and all of the state's charter schools, which also serve large proportions of students in poverty;
- Include 1005 K-12 schools, which is 89.6 percent of the state's public schools;
- Enroll 497,775 K-12 students, which accounts for 90.8 percent of the state's K-12 enrollment; and
- Enroll 165,736 students in poverty, which is 95.1 percent of the state's K-12 students in poverty.

Given the large percentage of Participating LEAs, K-12 schools and students, particularly those living in poverty, the state expects that the initiatives proposed in this application will realize achievement goals for 95 percent of the state's lowest performing students, the vast majority of whom are African American, Hispanic or ELL.

Through the work of the Partnerships for Change, the focused interventions in the plan will build on the recent successes that have resulted in improving the state's NAEP and CMT 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 C*onnecticut Plan for Secondary School Reform* with its emphasis on academic rigor, student engagement, and attainment of 21st 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 and students will enter college fully prepared to succeed in college-level courses.

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

	Participating LEAs (#)	**Statewide (#)**	**Percentage of Total Statewide (%)** (Participating LEAs / Statewide)
LEAs	**162**	**197**	**82.2**
Schools	**1005**	**1121**	**89.6**
K-12 Students	**497,775**	**548,247**	**90.8**
Students in poverty	**165,736**	**174,223**	**95.1**

Note: In Connecticut, if a LEA chooses, pre-kindergarten (PK) may be part of the public education program. The data above reflect students in grades kindergarten through 12, however, had the PK students and schools been included, the counts would increase from 1005 to 1035 schools, from 497,775 students to 512,300 students and from 165,736 students in poverty to 170,829 students in poverty in the participating LEAs. The statewide number of schools includes schools run by the Department of Corrections (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 LEAs in Connecticut.

Appendices Referenced in Section (A)(1)

Appendix (A)(1)(a) - P-20 Council Guiding Principles
Appendix (A)(1)(b) - State Board of Education's 2006-2011 Comprehensive Five-Year Plan
Appendix (A)(1)(c) - Public Act No. 10-111
Appendix (A)(1)(d)- Comprehensive Overview of CALI
Appendix (A)(1)(e) - *Scientific Research Based Interventions (SRBI) Executive Summary*
Appendix (A)(1)(f)- Memorandum of Understanding with Local Education Agencies
Appendix (A)(1)(g)- Table: Local Education Agency Participation
Appendix (A)(1)(h)- Table: LEA MOU Detailed Descriptors

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(A)(2) BUILDING STRONG STATEWIDE CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT, SCALE UP AND SUSTAIN PROPOSED PLANS

(A)(2)(i) Building Strong Capacity

Gubernatorial and Legislative Leadership

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, served as co-chair of Education, Early Education and Workforce Committees of the National Governors Association and is 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 a top priority and guiding principle when allocating state and federal dollars through ARRA and the State's annual Education Cost Sharing (ECS) program.

The Connecticut legislative delegation provides exceptionally 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 galvanized bipartisan support for landmark education reform legislation passed by the Connecticut General Assembly in May 2010 and signed by the Governor. (See Appendix (A)(2)(a) for Governor Rell's May 26,

2010 Press Release). Their leadership also contributed greatly to the 2007 accountability legislation that enhances the authority of the Commissioner and the SBE to intervene in LEAs and schools (including school closure and state takeover) that persistently produce students who fail to meet state standards. In 2009, these co-chairs also sponsored important legislation aimed at enhancing Connecticut's ability to attract and hire talented young teachers from across the New England region through such programs as *Teach for America.*

Connecticut State Board of Education

The CSDE reports to the SBE whose members are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the state legislature. The SBE meets monthly and organizes its work through four standing committees as well as various ad hoc committees charged with specific, short-term tasks. By statute, the SBE must publish a five-year strategic plan that is also submitted to the Connecticut General Assembly. The state's plan, developed with extensive public input, describes the SBE's priorities and expectations for public education over the period 2006-2011, informs policymakers and guides the work of the CSDE.

Connecticut State Department of Education

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. Dr. McQuillan came to Connecticut with more than 35 years of public school experience in Massachusetts, where among other positions 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 that is now embedded in the CSDE's bid for Phase 2 RTTT funding.

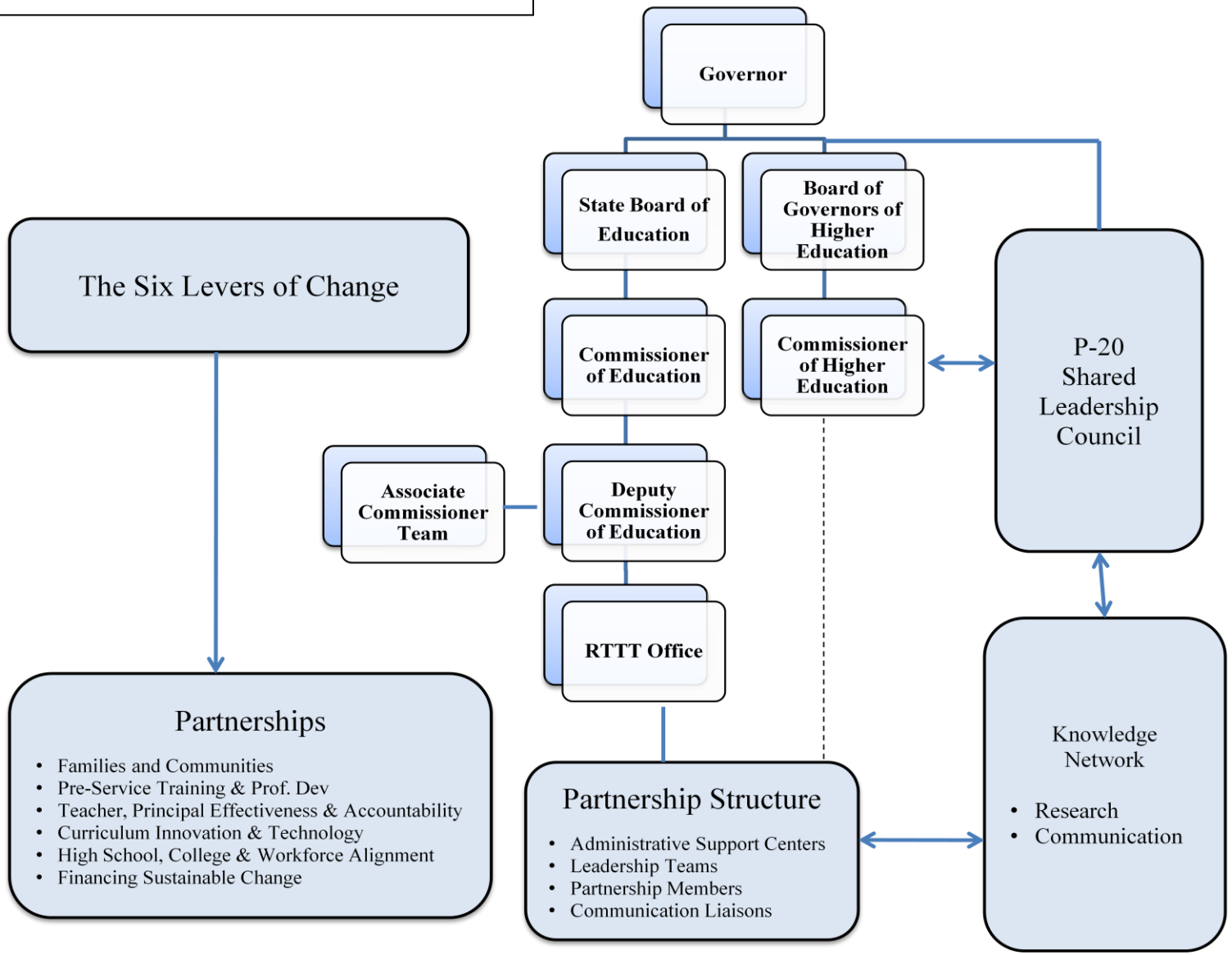
Under the Commissioner's leadership, the CSDE has reorganized its administrative structure to reflect the state's new economic realities and to better reflect an aggressive reform agenda. This reorganization is reflected in Appendix (A)(2)(b) and (A)(2)(c) that outlines the 2007 and 2009 organizational charts, respectively. Over this period, the CSDE has also developed, strengthened and formalized many new partnerships with other state agencies, educational service organizations and the nonprofit, business and

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

State Education Resource Center (SERC) and the Regional Educational Service Centers (RESC) Alliance

The personnel resources of the CSDE are supplemented by the State Education Resource Center (SERC) and an alliance of six RESC Alliance that aid the department in providing information, professional development services and technical assistance to LEAs, school boards, parents and other statewide, regional and local stakeholders. These organizations support LEAs through activities such as identifying promising practices, evaluating these practices' effectiveness and widely disseminating and replicating effective practices statewide. All LEAs are voluntarily attached to a RESC in their region and, as members of the RESC, gain access to mutually agreed-upon services as well as those required by the CSDE. In 2008, legislation was enacted allowing the CSDE to award contracts directly to the RESC 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. The RESC Alliance and SERC will assist the CSDE in developing and delivering the services and professional development articulated in this RTTT application. Public Act 10-111 enacted in May 2010 expands this same procurement flexibility to other state education organizations such as the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS). In support of the changes required to implement Connecticut's RTTT comprehensive reform agenda the CSDE, as described earlier in Section (A)(1), will require a further enhancement of its management structure through the 2009 P-20 Council, six new public-private Partnerships for Change and the Knowledge Network. These entities, in collaboration with the SERC and the RESC Alliance, will hold participating LEAs accountable for progress and performance and provide intervention when necessary. Together, these three leadership structures constitute Connecticut's RTTT leadership and management system as depicted on the next page.

Race to the Top Management Structure



The balance of Section (A)(2)(i) provide the CSDE's goals, activities, timeframe and responsible parties for implementing the management of RTTT in a highly effective and efficient manner. The Commissioner of Education and his cabinet have formulated six goals, summarized in the table below:

Connecticut's Plan to Manage the RTTT Implementation Process Effectively and Efficiently				
Goal	**2010-2011**	**2011-2012**	**2012-2013**	**2013-2014**
Goal 1: New Race to the Top management and leadership structures will be established and functioning well. *This goal addresses:* **(A)(2)(i)(a)**.	Within 60 days of award	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
Goal 2: Divisions and bureaus along with CSDE's senior leadership will administer, support and co-lead components of the Race to the Top plan for comprehensive reform. *This goal addresses*: **(A)(2)(i)(a) and (b)**.	Complete	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
Goal 3: The expansion of CSDE's staff required to support Connecticut's Race to the Top reform agenda will be hired with a minimal time lag upon receipt of the award notification. *This goal addresses*: **(A)(2)(i)(a) and (b)**.	Within 120 days of award	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
Goal 4: The CSDE will ensure strong, effective and efficient fiscal operations and processes for implementing and reporting on the RTTT grant. *This goal addresses*: **(A)(2)(i)(c)**.	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
Goal 5: The CSDE will use RTTT funds to fully implement the proposed reform agenda and will coordinate, reallocate or repurpose education funds from other federal, state or local sources. *This goal addresses*: **(A)(2)(i)(d)**.	Beginning in 2011	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
Goal 6: The CSDE will establish a sustainability plan to continue fiscal support for reforms put into place through the Race to the Top initiative. *This goal addresses:* **(A)(2)(i)(e)**.	Begin work September 2010	Report by December 2011	Executive and Legislative Consideration	Enacted as needed

Section (A)(2)(i): The Detail

(A)(2)(i)(a)

Goal 1: New RTTT management and leadership structures will be established and functioning well
As the result of this goal, the RTTT initiative will be launched in a timely manner with no lag in the establishment of management and leadership structures.

P-20 Shared Leadership Council

With the award of the RTTT grant, the CSDE will look to the P-20 Shared Leadership Council to provide direction and policy oversight of the CSDE's implementation of all aspects of the state's education reform plan. The P-20 Shared Leadership Council will work and collaborate with the SBE and the State Board of Higher Education to oversee many of the accountability requirements of the Race to the Top grant. The chairperson of each board currently serves on the P-20 Shared Leadership Council. The Commissioners of Education and Higher Education co-chair the bi-monthly meetings of the Council. With the P-20 Shared Leadership Council as the umbrella organizational unit for all administrative units assigned to implement RTTT initiatives, Connecticut as a whole will have a comprehensive set of representatives and leaders from public education services agencies, non-profits and foundations working in the state. The CSDE will, by definition, bear the primary responsibility for implementing the RTTT state reform plan, with higher education playing an essential supporting role. The P-20 Shared Leadership Council is exclusively an advisory and policy development body.

Office of Race to the Top and RTTT Management Team

Working through the Deputy Commissioner and his Associate Commissioners' Team (ACT), the Office of Race to the Top will be staffed by a Senior Manager or Bureau Chief, a Program Evaluator, the ARRA Accountability Officer (currently in place) and an Administrative Assistant. The Senior Manager will report directly to the Deputy Commissioner, but will work closely with the ACT and the members assigned to the Partnership Leadership Teams (see below). Responsibilities will include: (a) tracking progress of each goal in the RTTT; (b) receiving policy, practice or program items from the various partnerships and organizing them for action within or beyond the CSDE; (c) examining outcome data for students, programs and the workforce and proposing a Results Based

Accountability template and reporting format for the Appropriations Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly; (d) assisting in creation of the Knowledge Network; and (e) other management or logistics tasks assigned by the Deputy Commissioner.

Partnerships for Change

Members of each of the six Partnerships for Change (see Section (A)(1)(i)) will include statewide and local leaders from inside and outside the K-12 education sector in Connecticut. Sectors represented on the partnerships include the business and employment sector, philanthropy, higher education, early childhood, local government and the nonprofit human services sector. The responsibilities, tasks and products of each partnership are specified in the sections of this application requiring descriptions of *Activities, Timeframes and Responsible Parties.* Each partnership will have access to various support services in the CSDE necessary to provide fiscal, planning and information services to the entire partnership. These support services may be shared with one of the six Administrative Support Centers (see below) asked to assist the CSDE in carrying out its work, serving virtually as an extra administrative unit. Each of the Partnerships for Change will have a Leadership Team as described below.

Administrative Support Centers

Administrative Support Centers will be appointed by the Commissioner of Education to help lead and implement the work of each Partnership for Change. To date, the Commissioner has designated: (a) SERC and the Parent Information Resource Center (PIRC); (b) the RESC Alliance; (c) the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS); (d) the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE), Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS); and (e) the Office of Workforce Competitiveness (OWC) to be the Administrative Support Centers assigned to the six Partnerships for Change delineated above. The primary responsibility of each center will be to assist each Partnership's Leadership Team in planning, coordinating, budgeting and administering the various projects assigned to each Partnership for Change. Each center will be paid a management fee to provide the administrative services envisioned and to assist the Leadership Team and Partnerships for Change in determining who, among the various providers and educational organizations throughout the state, can provide the services associated with implementing the state's Reform Plan.

Leadership Teams

As shown in the organizational chart above, each Partnership for Change shall be led by a Leadership Team consisting of CSDE personnel, a leader from each Administrative Support Center and one to three leaders external to the department and selected by the Commissioner of Education. The convener of each leadership team shall be responsible for organizing and chairing meetings of the statewide committee, coordinating and implementing the work of the CSDE's RTTT Senior Manager and giving direction to the work of each administrative support center, with which the CSDE shall contract for the provision of services related to the projects.

Partnership Members

Members of each statewide Partnership for Change, CEOs, Presidents and Executive Officers representing dozens of educational and non-profit organizations working in Connecticut will constitute the working group of the partnerships under the direction of the Leadership Team. Together with the Leadership Teams, members will ensure that the procedures and policies for effectively carrying out the work associated with each project in the state's reform plan are clearly established and well-communicated to all stakeholders with a vested interest in the work of each group. Members may be tasked to carry out certain projects assigned to the partnership as a whole and members may also serve as a part of the Knowledge Network. The broader function of the Network, however, is purposefully open-ended.

Inter-Partnership and LEA Liaisons

Each partnership will have assigned to it a RESC director and/or his/her designee whose primary responsibility will be to serve as the information leader who will link the Partnerships' and department's activities to the districts and to other stakeholders. The RESC Alliance as a whole and individually through its assigned representatives will coordinate information and ensure communication across the six committees. All information will be managed electronically through a single Web site, housed at the CSDE. The CSDE will contract with the RESC Alliance to engage in the logistical activities described above.

Intra-Committee and CSDE Liaisons

Finally, CSDE Liaisons will serve the same functions as those described above, except the audience will be within the CSDE. Liaisons will be selected from volunteer representatives in the CSDE by each Leadership Team, in collaboration with the Deputy Commissioner and ACT.

Activities:

- The CSDE will organize and convene the first meetings of the Partnership for Change by July 15, 2010, to clarify roles and responsibilities and the major tasks that must be completed by June 2011.
- The CSDE will meet with the Leadership Teams of each partner group by September 1, 2010, to establish meeting calendars and begin planning and scheduling the long-range training initiatives and activities delineated in the state's Reform Plan.

Timeframe: Several of the Administrative Support Centers have already been established and have met over the period January – May 2010. The P-20 Shared Leadership Council will be established in September 2010. The Office of Race to the Top will be established within 60 days of notification of award. All structures will continue through 2014.

Responsible Parties: Commissioner of the CSDE, senior CSDE managers, members of the Shared Leadership Council and the six Partnerships for Change

(A)(2)(i)(b)

Goal 2. Senior leadership within the CSDE will administer, support and co-lead components of the Race to the Top plan for comprehensive reform

As the result of this goal, the RTTT initiative will be fully integrated within the administrative and program functions and bureaus of the CSDE.

Background Information

As described earlier in this section, the CSDE completed a recent reorganization that provides for an interdivisional and bureau structure to support participating LEAs and hold districts accountable for progress and performance. The divisions work

collaboratively and have begun to work with the Partnerships for Change to provide the necessary supports, to ensure coherence with reporting requirements, identify best practices, evaluate best practices statewide, and monitor and hold LEAs accountable for progress and performance. All divisions within the CSDE report to the Deputy Commissioner who, with the Commissioner, sits as a member of the P-20 Shared Leadership Council and coordinates the Race to the Top executive management team through his own leadership team of the Deputy Commissioner and ACT.

Four divisions within the CSDE (and their respective bureaus) will provide support to LEAs as they implement Connecticut's comprehensive reform agenda:(a) Division of Teaching and Learning and Instructional Leadership (with the Bureaus of Accountability and Improvement, Teaching and Learning and Educator Standards and Certification); (b) Division of Assessment, Research and Technology (with the Bureaus of Student Assessment and Data Collection, Research and Evaluation); (c) Division of Family and Student Services (with the Bureaus of Choice, Special Education and Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education); and (d) the Connecticut Technical High School System. Responsibilities of each bureau are summarized in Appendix (A)(1)(k).

Activities:

- The CSDE will organize and convene the first meetings of the Partnership for Change by July 15, 2010, to clarify roles and responsibilities and the major tasks that must be completed by June 2011.
- The CSDE will meet with the Leadership Teams of each partner group by September 1, 2010, to establish meeting calendars and begin planning and scheduling the long-range training initiatives and activities delineated in the state's Reform Plan.

Timeframe: Divisions and bureaus are currently working with some of the Partnerships for Change and external stakeholders to implement initial elements of Connecticut's comprehensive reform agenda and will expand immediately upon receipt of RTTT and continue beyond the life of the grant.

Responsible Parties: Leadership and staff from each division, supervised by the Deputy Commissioner and ACT of the CSDE

Goal 3: The addition of new staff to the CSDE will be completed in a timely manner upon notification of Race to the Top funding.

As the result of this goal, the RTTT initiative will be properly staffed within a minimum period of time, not to exceed 120 days after receipt of funding.

Activities

Besides hiring of positions/contracts for the new Office of Race to the Top, three Divisions within the CSDE will hire other staff to address the new administrative, financial and accountability provisions required during the four years. Approximately 12 to 15 full-time personnel for administration, administrative support and technical assistance are projected to be necessary to execute all aspects of the plan, combined with other non-state positions that will be contracted out to the various administrative agents described above. The staffing roster, totaling approximately $3 million per year for four years is discussed briefly in Section (A)(2)(i)(d) and more completely in our proposed RTTT budget in Appendix (A)(2)(d).

Timeframe: New staff will be hired within 120 days after receipt of RTTT funding

Responsible Parties: CSDE, Connecticut State Department of Administrative Services, Governor's Office of Policy and Management

(A)(2)(i)(c)

Goal 4: The CSDE will assure strong, effective and efficient fiscal operations and processes for implementing and reporting on the RTTT grant.

As the result of this goal, funds will be dispersed in a timely manner and accountability reporting processes will be established and implemented.

Background Information

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 federal programs total more than $525 million annually.

Activities

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, two bureaus, Grants Management and Fiscal Services, 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.
- An accounting (CPA) firm audits 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.
- Each identified bureau overseeing the grant programs appoints a grant manager who works with bureau staff to regularly monitor 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 polices.
- Under the management structure outlined in Goal 2 above, the ARRA Administrative Officer will be responsible for the oversight of performance measures, tracking and reporting in accordance with the federal requirements.

Timeframe: This work will begin immediately upon receipt of federal Race to the Top funding and will continue through 2014

Responsible Parties: CSDE, Deputy Commissioner, Chief Financial Officer, ARRA Administrative Officer and the Division of Finance and Internal Operations

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

Goal 5: The CSDE will use RTTT funds to fully implement the proposed reform agenda and will coordinate, reallocate or repurpose education funds from other federal, state or local sources.

As the result of this goal, state and federal funds will be used to leverage high impact results in support of the RTTT comprehensive reform agenda.

Background Information

The budget set forth in Appendix (A)(2)(d) of this application totals $175 million to be spent over four years. Each project budget supports specific initiatives and activities described in our state Reform Plan. Half of the total of $175 million -- $87.5 million -- will be allocated directly to Title I LEAs to support the state's education reform agenda as outlined in this application and the LEA Memorandum of Understanding signed by participating LEAs. In addition to their Title I allocation described above, Title I LEAs that participate in RTTT and operate grades kindergarten through 12, will each receive an additional $140,000 over a four-year period. As noted earlier, all other LEAs that opt to sign onto the Race to the Top application will each receive $100,000 over a four year period. RESCs and the Connecticut Technical High School System will also receive $140,000 in this addition allocation of the state portion of

RTTT funds. This use of funds from the state's portion is equal to $23.9 million. The total amount of RTTT funding allocated directly for LEA use is $111,360,000 (64 percent).

Activities

- Upon notification of award, the CSDE will establish a chart of accounts for tracking fiscal inputs and outputs of RTTT federal funding.
- The recently awarded federal Title I g School Improvement Grant (SIG) is currently being coordinated with work outlined in Section E-3 to support LEA adoption of school turnaround models.
- State funding for after-school programs is being reviewed in order to re-emphasize a STEM focus wherever appropriate.
- More than $5.5 million in current state funding is also dedicated to the comprehensive reform agenda: 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.

Timeframe: This work has already begun and will continue through 2014

Responsible Parties: The Commissioner of Education, the Deputy Commissioner and ACT

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

Goal 6. The CSDE will establish a sustainability plan that incorporates fiscal, political and human capital resources to continue support for reforms put into place through the RTTT initiative.

As the result of this goal, resources identified in the sustainability plan will be committed to continue support for RTTT change efforts proven to be effective in increasing the achievement of Connecticut students and reducing Connecticut's K-12 achievement gap.

Background Information

In Connecticut's Phase 1 application, we committed to a multi-year process, beginning in 2010-2011 to develop a plan for sustainability without the reliance on new state, local or federal funding. In the period between January and May 2010, we have continued to design a public-private structure to assist us in the task. As described earlier in this section, the Commissioner of Education will establish a public-private Partnership for Financing Sustainable Change to be led by the department's Chief Financial Officer, the Executive Directors for CAPSS and CABE and others with strong background in state and municipal finance.

This group will convene first in September 2010 to develop a plan of action and analysis that will result, by December of 2011, in a set of findings describing Connecticut's current educational funding patterns and a set of recommendations for change, including repurposing existing federal and state funding across agencies to focus on expanding and sustaining conditions that result in dramatic improvements in student achievement as predicted in this application.

Three circumstances make the work of the partnership even more urgent. First, at the state level, Connecticut faces the prospect of major budget deficits in each year of the coming biennium (2011-2012 and 2012-2013). Second, the SBE has created an Ad Hoc Committee on Funding for Public School Choice to review and recommend changes in the state's funding methodologies for charter and magnet schools. That report is due later in December 2010. Finally, on March 5, 2010, the Governor issued an executive order calling for the creation of a commission to study and make recommendations on eliminating Connecticut's achievement gap. The Commission on Educational Achievement is charged with structural, cultural and financial issues underpinning the underperformance of students in rural and urban centers throughout Connecticut. A member of the commission will simultaneously serve as a member of the SBE's Ad Hoc Committee on Funding for Public School Choice to avoid redundancies and enhance communication between the two study groups. Taken together, these inputs to the Partnership for Financing Sustainable Change will ensure a period of timely and highly important deliberation.

Activities

- The Partnership for Financing Sustainable Change will convene in September of 2010 for a 16-month period (with staff support and consultants as needed.

- The Partnership will review existing state and federal competitive and discretionary funding that could be "repurposed" to support promising or successful RTTT programs.
- The Partnership will examine the basis for Connecticut's existing Education Cost System to determine if it could be made more simple, transparent and equitable as related to local needs.
- The Partnership will propose changes to the U.S. Department of Education to permit flexibility in the use of all federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) funding.
- The Partnership will propose policy, regulatory or statutory changes necessary to repurpose existing education (or other) funds to sustain the work of Connecticut's comprehensive reform agenda.

Timeframe: The report of the Partnership for Financing Sustainable Change will be prepared for the Governor, SBE and leadership of the Connecticut General Assembly by January 2012. Executive and legislation action will be sought for implementation of some or all of these recommendations in the 2014-2015 CSDE's budget. The budget for this year is prepared by the executive branch in the fall of 2013 and presented to the Connecticut General Assembly in January 2014. Legislative action must be completed by June of 2014 for SFY 2014-2015.

Responsible Parties: The Partnership for Financing Sustainable Change, Commissioner of Education

(A)(2)(ii)(a-b) Support from a Broad Base of Stakeholders

As specified in Section (A)(2)(i)(a), Connecticut is committed to further strengthening its existing partnerships and forging new relationships, with outside stakeholders. Our application includes more than 100 letters of support from various stakeholders summarized below, each offering supplementary support, experience and added capacity to the RTTT effort. These letters of support, found in Appendix (A)(2)(e), specifically indicate how each stakeholder will add value and impact to the implementation of the reform agenda. For example, several stakeholders indicate their participation as members of one or more of the Partnerships for Change organized by the Commissioner. Of note, both state teachers' union associations, the American Federation of Teachers - Connecticut and the Connecticut Education Association, have indicated their support and their commitment to working with the CSDE, the RTTT Partnerships for Change and the P-20 Shared Leadership Council.

Below is a complete list of stakeholder support groups, aligned with the categories referenced in the application:

Stakeholder Support Groups		
Statewide Teacher Union Associations AFT Connecticut Connecticut Education Association Connecticut Federation of School Administrators ***State Legislature*** Connecticut General Assembly Legislative Black and Puerto Rican Caucus Connecticut General Assembly Education Committee Gubernatorial Candidate Support ***United States Congress*** Connecticut's Federal Delegation United States Congressional Support ***RESCs*** Education Connection Area Cooperative Educational Services Capitol Region Education Council Cooperative Educational Services EASTCONN LEARN	***Education Organizations*** Annenberg Institute for School Reform Connecticut Academy for Education Connecticut After School Network Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, Inc. Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents Connecticut Association of Schools Connecticut Center for School Change Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance Great Schools Partnership Regional Educational Laboratory at EDC State Education Resource Center State Department of Higher Education ***Institutions of Higher Education*** Capital Community College Central Connecticut State University Charter Oak State College College Board Connecticut State University System	***Institutions of Higher Education*** *(continued)* Connecticut Community Colleges Eastern Connecticut State University Fairfield University Lincoln College Middlesex Community College Naugatuck Valley Community College Norwalk Community College Post University Saint Joseph College Stamford Public Schools Southern Connecticut State University Trinity College Tunxis Community College University of Bridgeport University of Connecticut University of Connecticut, Neag School of Education University of New Haven Wesleyan University Western Connecticut State University Yale University

Stakeholder Support Groups		
Education Foundations Nellie Mae Education Foundation Fairfield County Community Foundation New England Secondary School Consortium Norwalk Education Foundation William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund ***Parent Organizations*** African Caribbean American Parents of Children with Disabilities Connecticut Parent Teacher Association Connecticut Parent Information and Resource Center Connecticut Parent Power Family Resource Center, Meriden Middlesex County Parent Leadership Alumni Middletown School's School Family Partners District Team ***Community-Based Organizations*** Achieve Hartford Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition Stepping Stones Museum for Children The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven ***Science Technology Engineering Math-Related Organizations (STEM)*** Connecticut Academy of Science and Engineering Connecticut Science Center Connecticut Commission on Educational Achievement Connecticut Commission for Education Technology	***Business Community*** AT&T Bank of America Barnes Group, Inc. Boehringer Ingelheim Cigna Connecticut Business and Industry Association Connecticut Development Authority Connecticut United for Research Excellence, Inc. Eastern Connecticut Chamber of Commerce Greater Meriden Chamber of Commerce Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce General Dynamics / Electric Boat Middlesex Chamber Northeast Utilities System Pfizer, Inc. Proton Energy Systems Stanley Black and Decker The Computer Company, Inc. The Hartford Travelers UIL Holdings Corporation Webster Bank	***State of Connecticut Commissions*** African-American Affairs Commission Commission on Children Economic and Community Development Employment and Training Commission Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission Workforce Competitiveness ***Other Critical Stakeholders*** Connecticut Coalition for Achievement Now Urban League of Greater Hartford Connecticut NAACP Connecticut Puerto Rican Forum, Inc. Institute for the Hispanic Family New England Secondary School Consortium / Great Schools Partnership Our Piece of the Pie State Advisory Council on Special Education SBE Student Advisory Council United Way of Connecticut Wheeler Clinic

(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.

(A)(3) DEMONSTRATING SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS IN RAISING ACHIEVEMENT AND CLOSING GAPS

(A)(3)(i): Connecticut has demonstrated the ability to make progress over the past several years in the four education reform areas by using federal and state funding to support them. These efforts have contributed to increases in student performance on its state assessments and its position among the highest performing states on grade 4 and 8 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

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 on the remaining six. In 2009, Connecticut received its second Institute of Education Services state Longitudinal Data System Grant. These funds, along with about $3 million in state funds, are directed toward completing the remaining work on Connecticut's state longitudinal data system.

Standards and Assessments

Connecticut has a strong record of focusing on high academic achievement standards for the state's students. The state has developed curriculum standards for pre-kindergarten to grade 8 (including grade-level expectations in English language arts, mathematics and science) and created models for curriculum in mathematics, English language arts (K-8) and algebra. The pre-kindergarten to grade 8 curriculum standards for English language arts, mathematics and science offer a continuum of grade-specific skills and knowledge that build across a child's school career, beginning with pre-kindergarten as the foundation. The state has a plan, which is ready for the adoption of the CCSS when the standards are released.

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 local 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 statewide, within and across subject areas, at district, school and grade levels.

On January 15, 2009, Commissioner Mark McQuillan received notification from the Assistant Secretary of the U. S. Department of Education, Kerri L. Briggs, that Connecticut's standards assessments in grades 3 through 8 (Connecticut Mastery Test) and 10 (Connecticut Academic Performance Test) and science in grades 5, 8 and 10 received *full approval* from the U. S. Department of Education. At the same time Connecticut received *full approval* for its alternate assessment for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, the Skills Checklist, for mathematics, English/language arts and science for the same grades. Connecticut has been working to

continually improve its standards and assessments and reported on all of the 12 indicators included in the Phase 2 State Fiscal Stabilization Funds application. Currently, the state meets six of the indicators and plans in to completely address the other six by September 30, 2011.

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 July 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. Begun developing a new beginning teacher induction model (T.E.A.M.) to be fully implemented in 2010-2011.
4. Made plans 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) with an emphasis on using data and assessment to improve the quality of instruction. As a result, 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)(1)(d).

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

When examining student performance over time, from 2003 through 2009, Connecticut can document significant improvements in mathematics and English language arts (reading and writing) 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.

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

NAEP is the national assessment administered to a representative sample of students to determine the proficiency level 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 across states. Connecticut has participated in every NAEP administration since the inception of state-level NAEP in 1990. Beginning in 2003, NCLB required all states to participate in state-level NAEP. Before that time states could decline participation without penalty. The data presented in Table (A)(3)(a) summarize results for 2003 through 2009 for grades 4 and 8 mathematics and reading and for grade 8 writing in 2002 and 2007.

NAEP Reading and Writing

Table (A)(3)(a) summarizes the results of NAEP Reading and Writing for 2003 through 2009, for grades 4 and 8 reading and for grade 8 writing in 2002 and 2007. Connecticut's 2009 NAEP reading results for all grade 4 students indicate that the state's proficiency rate was 42 percent, which was higher than the national average of 32 percent. Connecticut performance was significantly higher than 43 states and only Massachusetts scored significantly higher than Connecticut. For grade 8 reading, the state's proficiency rate was 43 percent, which was higher than the national average of 30 percent. No state had a greater grade 8 reading proficiency rate than Connecticut, six states (Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Vermont) were not significantly different and 43 states were significantly lower. Although there are large gaps among subgroups, the trend from 2005 to 2009 is positive for most groups.

Table (A)(3)(a): Longitudinal NAEP Results GRADE 4 NAEP Reading and Writing Proficiency Rates By Student Group

Year	All Students	Male	Female	Eligible for F/R Lunch	Not Eligible	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/Pacific Islander	ELL	Not ELL	SPED	Not SPED
Grade 4 NAEP Reading Proficiency Rates By Student Group													
2009	42	38	47	18	52	52	22	15	55	6	44	13	46
2007	41	37	46	13	53	52	15	16	59	8	43	12	45
2005	38	34	43	14	48	47	12	15	49	8	40	10	41
2003	43	38	47	18	53	54	12	18	44	‡	43	12	46
Grade 8 NAEP Reading Proficiency Rates By Student Group													
Year	**All Students**	**Male**	**Female**	**Eligible for F/R Lunch**	**Not Eligible**	**White**	**Black**	**Hispanic**	**Asian/Pacific Islander**	**ELL**	**Not ELL**	**SPED**	**Not SPED**
2009	43	37	48	18	51	51	11	19	64	‡	43	13	46
2007	37	31	43	14	45	46	12	14	45	2	38	8	41
2005	34	28	40	12	42	42	11	13	50	‡	34	11	37
2003	37	31	43	15	45	45	12	14	54	‡	37	6	41
Grade 8 NAEP Writing Proficiency Rates By Student Group													
Year	**All Students**	**Male**	**Female**	**Eligible for F/R Lunch**	**Not Eligible**	**White**	**Black**	**Hispanic**	**Asian/Pacific Islander**	**ELL**	**Not ELL**	**SPED**	**Not SPED**
2007	53	42	63	28	62	63	27	27	52	4	54	18	57
2002	45	35	55	24	54	55	15	17	55	‡	46	13	49

‡ Reporting standards not met. $p<.05$

NAEP grade 8 writing was last tested in 2007. Connecticut's proficiency rate of 53 percent was higher than the national average of 31 percent. No state scored higher than Connecticut and only one state, New Jersey, was not significantly different. Wide gaps also exist in subgroup performance, although the trend line in change from 2002 is positive for most subgroups.

NAEP Mathematics

Table (A)(3)(b) summarizes the grade 4 and 8 mathematics results from 2003 through 2009. Connecticut's grade 4 proficiency rate in mathematics of 46 percent was higher than the national average of 38 percent. Connecticut's students performed as well as or better than students in 45 states and they performed lower than students in four states (Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire and Vermont). Large gaps also exist among subgroups, although the trend line between 2003 and 2009 is positive for all groups. Connecticut's grade 8 mathematics proficiency rate of 40 percent was higher than the national rate of 33 percent. Connecticut's eighth-grade students scored as well as or better than students in 45 states and they performed lower than students in four states (Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey and Vermont). In grade 8, large gaps in performance persist among subgroups; however, there are positive trends among most groups, particularly when we examine the gender gap.

Table (A)(3)(b): Longitudinal NAEP Results GRADE 4 NAEP Mathematics Proficiency Rates By Student Group													
Year	**All Students**	**Male**	**Female**	**Eligible for F/R Lunch**	**Not Eligible**	**White**	**Black**	**Hispanic**	**Asian/Pacific Islander**	**ELL**	**Not ELL**	**SPED**	**Not SPED**
2009	46	49	44	18	58	58	14	18	65	9	48	19	50
2007	45	46	43	16	57	57	15	18	64	6	47	13	49
2005	42	45	40	16	52	53	11	15	57	10	44	14	46
2003	41	45	37	12	54	53	10	15	52	3	42	17	44
Grade 8 NAEP Mathematics Proficiency Rates By Student Group													
Year	**All Students**	**Male**	**Female**	**Eligible for F/R Lunch**	**Not Eligible**	**White**	**Black**	**Hispanic**	**Asian/Pacific Islander**	**ELL**	**Not ELL**	**SPED**	**Not SPED**
2009	40	39	41	13	49	49	10	14	61	6	41	13	43
2007	35	35	34	10	44	44	7	10	61	1	36	9	38
2005	35	35	34	10	44	46	6	10	46	9	35	10	38
2003	35	37	33	12	44	44	7	11	51	11	35	8	39
‡ Reporting standards not met. $p<.05$													

Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT)

Connecticut has administered the CMT since 1986 (now in its fourth generation) to assess mathematics, reading and writing. 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 and a science assessment was added in grades 5 and 8. To satisfy the NCLB reporting requirements, Connecticut annually reports the percentage of students scoring at or above the state's proficient level. However, the state has a more challenging standard, **Goal**, that all students are expected to meet. Since 2006, approximately 250,000 students have taken the CMT annually. CMT results are presented in the tables below. The data are aggregated to report the percentages of students scoring "at or above goal" across all six grades.

CMT Reading and Writing

Table (A)(3)(c) summarizes the CMT reading results. The reading CMT consists of a reading comprehension test and a *Degrees of Reading Power* (DRP) test at each grade. The reading trends in performance also are generally positive for all students and most subgroups. However, the greatest increase in percentages of students scoring at or above the goal level occurred between 2008 and 2009, after flat performance from 2003 to 2007. Between 2003 and 2009, the proportion of all Connecticut students scoring at or above the goal level increased by 5 percentage points. As a point of reference, each percentage point increase per year, from one year to the next, indicates that about an additional 2,500 students reached goal across the state from the previous year.

Table (A)(3)(c): Comparison of CMT READING Scores from 2003 to 2009												
CMT READING: Percentage at/above Goal by Student Groups												
Year	**All Students**	**Male**	**Female**	**Eligible for F/R Lunch**	**Not Eligible**	**White**	**Black**	**Hispanic**	**ELL**	**Not ELL**	**SPED**	**Not SPED**
2009	66	64	68	38	78	77	40	37	11	68	30	69
2008	62	60	65	34	75	74	35	33	10	65	20	67
2007	61	59	64	33	73	73	33	31	9	64	20	67
2006	62	59	65	32	74	74	33	32	15	64	20	67
2004	60	56	64	31	70	71	31	30	14	61	19	65
2003	61	58	65	32	72	73	32	30	10	63	20	66

CMT reading scores also reflect large gaps in performance among subgroups, but most often with the lower performing groups making equal or higher gains. In comparing subgroup performance, the percentage point change is:

- greater for males (6) than females (3);
- equal for students eligible for free or reduced-price meals (6) and those who were not eligible (6);
- greater for black (8) and Hispanic (7) students than white (4) students;
- smaller for ELL (1) than non-ELL (5) students; and
- greater for special education students (10) than for non-special education students (3). (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.)

Table (A)(3)(d) summarizes the CMT writing results. The writing CMT consists of a Direct Assessment of Writing test and an Editing and Revising test at each grade. Overall, the percentage of students scoring at or above goal increased from 61 percent in 2003 to 64 percent in 2009, for an increase of 3 percentage points.

Table (A)(3)(d): Comparison of CMT Writing Scores from 2003 to 2009												
CMT Writing: Percentage at/above Goal by Student Groups												
Year	**All Students**	**Male**	**Female**	**Eligible for F/R Lunch**	**Not Eligible**	**White**	**Black**	**Hispanic**	**ELL**	**Not ELL**	**SPED**	**Not SPED**
2009	64	56	73	40	76	74	41	39	20	66	20	70
2008	63	55	71	37	74	73	39	38	18	65	19	69
2007	63	53	71	38	73	73	39	37	20	65	20	68
2006	62	54	71	37	72	72	39	37	25	64	20	68
2005	62	53	71	37	71	71	37	37	26	63	20	67
2004	63	55	72	38	73	73	39	38	20	65	21	68
2003	61	53	69	36	69	70	37	34	19	62	18	65

CMT writing scores also reflect large gaps in performance among subgroups, with a few cases in the lower performing groups making equal or higher gains that their higher performing counterparts and the patterns were not as consistent as reading. In comparing subgroup performance, the percentage point change is:

- smaller for males (3) than for females (4);
- smaller for students eligible for free or reduced-price meals (4) and those who were not eligible (7);
- greater for Hispanic (5) students than for black (4) and white (4) students;
- smaller for ELL (1) than non-ELL (4) students; and
- smaller for special education (2) students than for non-special education (5) students.

CMT Mathematics

The CMT mathematics test assesses in all six grades 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)(e) 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 goal" from 2003 to 2009 has increased for all students and for each subgroup, with the largest changes in performance occurring between 2008 and 2009. Between 2003 and 2009, the proportion of Connecticut students scoring at or above the goal level increased by 7 percentage points.

Table (A)(3)(e): Comparison of CMT MATHEMATICS Scores from 2003 to 2009

CMT Mathematics: Percentage at/above Goal by Student Groups

Year	All Students	Male	Female	Eligible for F/R Lunch	Not Eligible	White	Black	Hispanic	ELL	Not ELL	SPED	Not SPED
2009	66	66	66	39	78	78	37	39	22	68	31	69
2008	63	63	63	35	75	75	33	36	20	65	23	68
2007	62	62	62	34	74	74	32	34	20	64	22	67
2006	58	59	59	30	70	70	27	30	22	60	20	63
2004	58	58	58	30	68	69	27	29	22	59	20	63
2003	59	59	58	30	69	70	27	30	18	60	20	63

In comparing subgroup performance, the percentage point change is:

- smaller for males (7) than for females (8);
- equal for students eligible for free or reduced-price meals (9) and those who were not eligible (9);
- greater for black (10) and Hispanic (9) students than white (8) students;
- smaller for ELL (4) than non-ELL (8) students; and
- greater for special education students (11) than for non-special education (6) students.

The trends in reading and mathematics are consistent, suggesting some systematic decrease in the disparity in performance among subgroups, except for English language learners. Underperforming groups are making progress, but have a considerable distance to go to perform at the same level as their higher performing counterparts.

Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT)

The CAPT is Connecticut's high school test used for state and NCLB accountability. It 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. An additional 11,000 grade 11 and 12 students retest to meet their local graduation requirements because performance on the CAPT is a legislated requirement for LEAs as a component of their local graduation requirements, but must not be the sole criteria.

CAPT Reading and Writing

Table (A)(3)(f) displays the CAPT reading results, from 2003 to 2009, of the percentage of students scoring at or above goal. The CAPT reading test consists of two components: (1) reading for information; and (2) response to literature. Both consist entirely of extended-response items. Overall, the trends are generally flat between 2003 and 2009. Between 2003 and 2009, the proportion of Connecticut students scoring at or above the goal level only increased by 1 percentage point statewide.

Table (A)(3)(f): Comparison of CAPT READING Scores from 2003 to 2009												
CAPT Reading: Percentage at/above Goal by Student Groups												
Year	**All Students**	**Male**	**Female**	**Eligible for F/R Lunch**	**Not Eligible**	**White**	**Black**	**Hispanic**	**ELL**	**Not ELL**	**SPED**	**Not SPED**
2009	48	41	54	19	57	58	18	21	7	49	14	50
2008	46	41	51	16	55	57	15	18	6	47	11	49
2007	46	39	53	17	54	56	16	18	8	47	11	49
2006	47	41	53	18	54	57	17	19	9	48	10	51
2005	49	42	56	20	56	59	19	21	12	50	13	53
2004	48	42	54	19	54	57	19	19	11	49	13	52
2003	47	39	55	17	53	56	17	18	6	48	13	51

In comparing subgroup performance, patterns were not consistent with NAEP and CMT reading performance for some subgroups. The percentage point change is:

- greater for males (2) than females (-1);
- smaller for students eligible for free or reduced-price meals (2) than non-eligible (4);
- greater for Hispanic students (3) and white students (2) than black students (1);
- the same for ELL (1) and non-ELL (1) students; and
- greater for special education students (1) than for non-special education students (-1).

Table (A)(3)(g) summarizes CAPT writing results from 2003 to 2009. The CAPT writing consists of two interdisciplinary writing, extended-response tasks and an Editing and Revising test. The statewide percentage of grade 10 students scoring at or above goal increased from 53 percent in 2003 to 55 percent in 2009, for a gain of 2 percentage points. The overall trend in writing performance

was somewhat positive between 2003 and 2008, with a decline in 2009 for all subgroups. There are large gaps in student writing performance among subgroups at the high school level and, except for gender, the gaps between lower performing and higher performing subgroups have increased.

Table (A)(3)(g): Comparison of CAPT WRITING Scores from 2003 to 2009												
CAPT Writing: Percentage at/above Goal by Student Groups												
Year	**All Students**	**Male**	**Female**	**Eligible for F/R Lunch**	**Not Eligible**	**White**	**Black**	**Hispanic**	**ELL**	**Not ELL**	**SPED**	**Not SPED**
2009	55	48	62	25	65	66	26	26	8	57	14	60
2008	58	51	65	27	68	69	29	28	9	60	16	63
2007	53	44	62	23	62	63	24	25	9	54	13	58
2006	52	43	62	26	60	62	25	25	15	54	13	57
2005	55	46	65	26	62	65	26	25	13	56	15	60
2004	54	44	63	24	60	64	24	23	9	55	14	58
2003	53	42	63	23	59	61	24	24	7	54	16	57

In comparing the change in subgroup performance between 2003 and 2009, the percentage increase is:

- greater for males (6) than for females (-1);
- smaller for students eligible for free or reduced-price meals (2) than for non-eligible students (6);
- smaller for Hispanic students (2) and black students (2) than for white students (5);
- smaller for ELL students (1) than for non-ELL students (3); and
- smaller for special education students (-2) than for non-special education students (3).

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. Table (A)(3)(h) summarizes CAPT mathematics results from 2005 to 2009. Overall, the trends in mathematics achievement at the goal level are positive between 2003 and 2008, with small declines between 2008 and 2009.

Table A.3.h: Comparison of CAPT MATHEMATICS Scores from 2003 to 2009

CAPT Mathematics: Percentage at/above Goal by Student Groups

Year	All students	Male	Female	Eligible for F/R Lunch	Not Eligible	White	Black	Hispanic	ELL	Not ELL	SPED	Not SPED
2009	48	51	45	17	59	61	13	17	9	49	15	51
2008	50	53	47	18	60	63	15	18	8	52	15	54
2007	45	47	43	14	55	57	11	15	9	46	13	49
2006	46	49	44	16	55	58	11	15	10	48	12	50
2005	47	49	47	17	55	59	13	17	14	49	14	52
2004	46	49	43	15	53	56	10	14	11	47	13	50
2003	45	47	44	13	52	55	10	13	10	46	13	49

Between 2003 and 2009, the proportion of Connecticut students scoring at or above the goal level increased by 3 percentage points. Comparing performance among subgroups, the percentage point change is:

- greater for males (4) than females (1);
- smaller for students eligible for free or reduced-price meals (4) than those who were not eligible (7);
- smaller for Hispanic students (4) and black students (3) than white students (6);
- smaller for ELL (-1) than non-ELL students (3); and
- the same for special education students (2) and for non-special education students (2).

There continue to be large differences in subgroup performance, and many of the trends for subgroups suggest that the gap is increasing in Connecticut high school student mathematics performance.

Graduation Rates

Connecticut is collecting the data necessary to calculate the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate. 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 districts as well as each high school's graduation rate for the graduating class of 2009.

Until the four-year, adjusted cohort rate is fully operational, Connecticut uses a modified cohort rate (2003-08) based on aggregate school- and district-level data, the rate the USDE approved for use in Connecticut's 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. the 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 9th-grade dropouts.

The state graduation rate is reported in the Consolidated State Performance Report (CSPR) 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.

Table (A)(3)(i) compares the modified cohort rate graduation from 2003 to 2009. 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 92.4

percent from 89.0 percent, for a total of 3 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.

Table (A)(3)(i): Connecticut Graduation Rates for the Class of 2003 through 2008

Class of	All Students	American Indian	Asian American	Black	Hispanic	White	Special Education
2009	79.3	66.2	82.4	66.2	58.1	86.8	61.3
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

Note: The statewide graduation rate for the class of 2009 was 79.3 percent. The decline from previous years is due to a change in the calculation methods that were used previous to the NGA rate.

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

Observations

In comparing data over time, the results from NAEP and the CMT suggest that overall Connecticut has made some progress in its elementary and middle schools in improving student performance in reading, writing and mathematics. However, there is much work still to do to continue to move all students to high levels of performance and to reduce the state's persistent achievement gap. Initiatives that have promise in improving student performance must be expanded to change the status quo whereby students who are economically disadvantaged, black, Hispanic, English language learners or who have disabilities consistently perform below their more advantaged counterparts. Some of the initiatives that have already been implemented and will be expanded through Connecticut's RTTT work are described below.

The CAPT results tell a somewhat different story. With little improvement in the percentage of grade 10 students meeting the state 'goal', the challenge at the high school level has been much greater for Connecticut in improving performance and reducing gaps. The *Connecticut Plan for Secondary School Reform* was designed specifically to tackle the high school performance issues raised by CAPT and our unsatisfactory number of remedial courses taken in community colleges statewide. The implementation of the *Connecticut Plan* is a necessary step to ensure that the state's high school graduates are better prepared for college and career success, particularly those who are the most at-risk academically. The *Connecticut Plan* requires districts to develop Student Success Plans for all middle and high school students and implement support systems to ensure that all students can meet the rigorous graduation requirements.

Promising Initiatives, Positive Outcomes

Since 2003, CSDE has worked vigorously to improve student learning outcomes. As a result of our work to implement No Child Left Behind and the SBE's 2006 Comprehensive Plan, many districts have been challenged to develop and implement rigorous PK-12 curricula with benchmark assessments, curriculum-based assessments and pacing guides, with particular attention to early literacy training and reading.

To support Connecticut's districts in developing effective curricula, the CSDE created the *Connecticut Curriculum Development Guide* in 2006. 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 curricula, 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, CSDE has also created and disseminated important documents for districts to reinforce the state's assessment of effective content, process and practice, while reducing the development costs of producing these strategies locally. These documents include: *Connecticut Walkthrough Protocol Guide* (2008)*; Connecticut's Benchmark Assessments for Language Arts and Mathematics* (2009)*; Connecticut's Pacing Guides for Language Arts, Mathematics and Science* (2007)*;* and *Connecticut's Curriculum Frameworks for Language Arts, Mathematics and Science* (2007-2009).

Further, in the last two years, the SBE has developed and revised dozens of policy statements regarding mathematics, English language arts, science, health and ELL instruction science to align them with the curriculum standards and frameworks developed in those areas.

Reflecting the importance of effective instruction in the early years of student development, stronger alignment has also been made between preschool and kindergarten. *Connecticut's Preschool Framework* (2006) consists of content standards and performance standards (indicators) in each of four domains. It is supported by *Connecticut's Preschool Assessment* Framework (2008), 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 includes grade-level expectations for the year before kindergarten and the *Connecticut Early Childhood Performance Development Guide* (2006).

It is significant to note, that as part of our intensified efforts to improve reading and literacy, the SBE made it a matter of policy in 2007 that all teachers by 2009 must take and pass "The Foundations of Reading", a rigorous examination on the science of teaching reading before being certified to practice. This examination, coupled with statewide conferences on reading improvement have, since 2007, all established a renewed sense of urgency to have all students reading at grade level by 4th grade.

Finally and arguably most important, CSDE established the CALI in 2004 to provide embedded professional development and coaching to accelerate the learning of all students and in so doing, close the achievement gap of students in the highest need, lowest performing schools and districts. In 2007, with the passage of state accountability legislation Section 223e (see Section E 1), this work was significantly strengthened to become Connecticut's Reform Model affecting all schools. We believe the upward trends noted earlier, have their roots in the intensive CALI work we have been doing in our most disadvantaged "Partner" districts since 2007 described more fully in Section (E)(2) of the application.

Final Thoughts

Connecticut's NAEP and the CMT results suggest that overall Connecticut has made progress, albeit not enough progress, in its elementary and middle schools in improving student performance in mathematics and reading and we have begun to close our achievement gaps. With the expansion of the initiatives outlined above as components of the state's comprehensive and systemic RTTT plan, Connecticut is poised to meet, within four years, the challenging targets we propose in Table (A)(1)(a), (i.e., cutting the performance gaps in half between white students and their African American and Hispanic classmates).

Meeting our CMT targets for "ready students" at the elementary and middle school levels will ensure that entering high school freshmen will be ready to successfully tackle the rigorous course of study the *Connecticut Plan for Secondary School Reform* (Section A-1) requires for graduation. We expect that with this plan we will build the foundation for likewise cutting the CAPT mathematics and reading gaps and, as well, the gaps in graduation rates between white students and their African American and Hispanic counterparts. As a result, Connecticut's future high school graduates, particularly those who have been the most at-risk academically, will be better prepared to enter college with no need for remediation and successfully complete challenging degree programs. In the end, we expect our graduation rates to rise, our drop-out rates to decline and our students to be better prepared to enter college or the workforce with the skills they will need for success.