

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

The extent to which—

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

(ii) The participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) are strongly committed to the State’s plans and to effective implementation of reform in the four education areas, as evidenced by Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) (as set forth in Appendix D)<sup>1</sup> or other binding agreements between the State and its participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) that include— *(45 points)*

- (a) Terms and conditions that reflect strong commitment by the participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) to the State’s plans;
- (b) Scope-of-work descriptions that require participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) to implement all or significant portions of the State’s 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;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A(1)(i) *Comprehensive and Coherent Reform Agenda*. The New Hampshire Department of Education (NHDOE) has a long history of collaborating with districts, state associations, institutions of higher education and non-profit organizations to build political will, to bring new practices into the State, and to extend the Department's capacity to lead successful reform initiatives. Its size, collaborative nature, focus on support rather than compliance, and frequent interactions with the field through regular meetings, networks, and systems of support provide it with the advantage of more quickly identifying promising practices and using the existing infrastructure to expand local efforts statewide.

For example, a group of three linked professional organizations, the NH School Administrators Association, the NH Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Network, and the High School Principals Network have worked together in regional groups of superintendents, curriculum supervisors brought together high school principals as a professional community poised to explore common issues and take action in their schools to address dropout prevention, increase the graduation rate and use strategies to ensure rigorous, personalized learning for all students. Through their work they shared and implemented various strategies and interventions such as: competency-based assessments, New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) motivation strategies, school climate, alternative learning plans, homework policies, standards-based teaching and grading and job-embedded professional development. The results of their work have led to improvement in teacher performance and student achievement as evidenced by results on course competency assessments, NECAP results, examples of teacher and student work, classroom observations and student portfolios, and a reduction in the dropout rate.

Since June 2009, when the current Commissioner was appointed, she and SEA staff have held numerous conversations with all education stakeholders about the opportunity to engage in the state's Race to the Top initiative (RttT). The discussions have engendered statewide engagement and generated ideas that have created the framework for New Hampshire's RttT initiative by identifying:

- What is working well and can be expanded;

- What new strategies are needed to ensure that all students have a quality education, graduate from high school prepared to persist in college and/or pursue a financially sustaining career; and
- What are the best evidence-based sources of research and practice information to inform the development of the NH approach.

NH is a local control state with an expectation on the part of its communities for autonomy in educational decision making that is informed by research and best practice. NH's Race to the Top application will continue to foster local choice but also ensure change funded through RttT by putting in place a non-negotiable requirement to focus on implementation of practices with the strongest evidence base and to put in place a continuous improvement approach of evaluation initiatives, sharing results with the field and working on an agenda that increases support for effective practices and ceases to support practices and programs that do not demonstrate improvement in student success. The components of the state approach, such as the NH Innovation Networks, will help enact this requirement to increase academic progress and narrow achievement gaps. Each project funded through RttT will be part of the evaluation and feedback loop. The proposed work introduces new initiatives, but also builds on efforts that are already changing outcomes for students in the state, e.g., use of Performance Plus data analysis tools by teachers and leaders to make instructional and programmatic decisions, enhanced implementation of the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) that maintains high standards for student achievement, increased math and science requirements for graduation, dropout prevention initiatives, extended learning opportunities and a focus on high school transformation.

***Goals, Theory of Action and Model for Educational Transformation.*** Students are at the core of NH's vision for enacting reform through Race to the Top. The goals of the State's transformation agenda are focused on student success, and are both targeted and systemic. The NH mission is to support the ongoing development of a comprehensive and coherent statewide education system focused on personalized learning, instructional rigor and high levels of cognitive demand for all students. Through a continuous cycle of action, reflection, research and refinement, the schools and LEAs of the State will develop the educational personnel and

systems needed for sustained improvement of its schools through implementation of research-based policies and practices.

NH's RttT initiative is designed around the four American Reform and Recovery Assurances (ARRA) for education reform:

1. *Standards and assessment;*
2. *Data systems to support instruction;*
3. *Great teachers and leaders; and*
4. *Turning around the lowest-achieving schools.*

The State's vision has twin goals. The first is that all NH students will graduate from high school prepared to persist in college and/or pursue a financially sustaining career. The second is to build an educational system that supports the development of civic and personal responsibility for all students and creates human and social capital to grow and strengthen NH's global economic position in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. To achieve these goals students must increase their learning and achievement, and schools and the State must work to narrow the achievement gap for identified subgroups of students, including those who are traditionally underserved. The RttT initiative will draw upon leading thinkers and reformers who have credibility nationally, within the state and regionally for their work in the four education reform areas.

With full support from the Governor's office, local education agencies, professional organizations, human service agencies, higher education institutions, and community groups, the State has developed a set of expected outcomes and a theory of action (see Figure 1) that guide its Race to the Top strategy. These outcomes are to:

- Increase the percentage of students who annually meet state standards and growth targets;
- Decrease the achievement gap for all groups especially English language learners and students with disabilities;
- Increase the graduation rate, while decreasing the dropout rate;
- Increase the percentage of students enrolling and completing postsecondary degrees or credentials;
- Improve teacher and leader preparation programs;

- Ensure equitable distribution of highly effective teachers and leaders; and
- Expand the use of proven practices, using evidence to determine what approaches are working and bring them to scale.

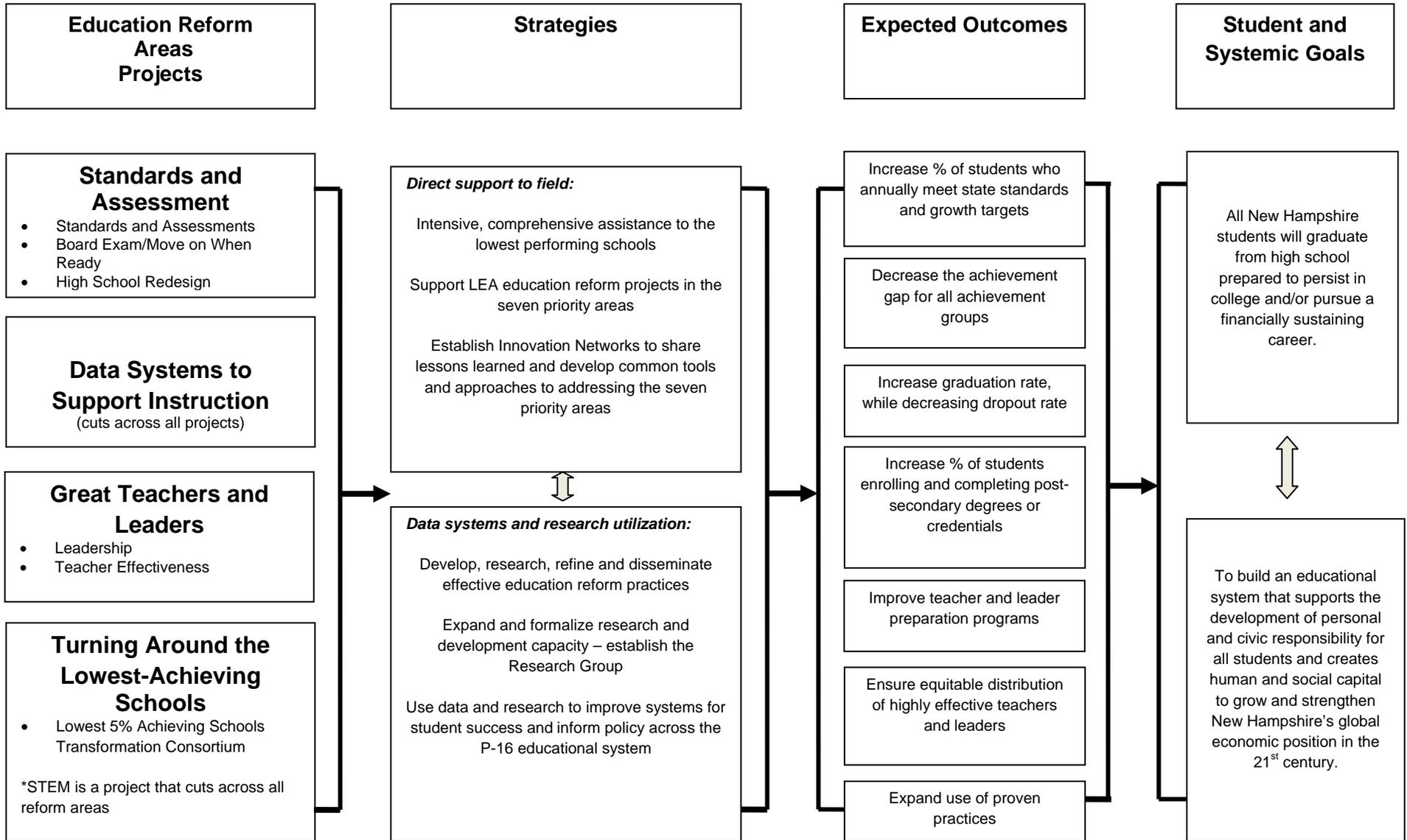
More specific targets are proposed for each of these outcomes in the relevant sections of this proposal.

In its theory of action NH has identified seven strategic levers, which align with the four reform areas, by which to achieve its expected outcomes and overall goals:

- Turning around the lowest-achieving schools;
- Standards and assessment;
- Board Exam/Move on When Ready;
- High school transformation;
- Leadership;
- Great teachers and leaders; and
- Science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

In establishing the seven program levers and the theory of action, the Department Directors consulted research from the Institute of Education Sciences, including The What Works Clearinghouse and Doing What Works ([dww.org](http://dww.org)). Specific topics of investigation included support for improvement and leadership, change and school turnaround (Fullan, 2008, 2007, 2003; IES, 2008; Dailey, et.al, 2005; Waters, J., Marzano, R., 2006, 2005; Marzano, R., Waters, T., McNulty, B., 2005). NHDOE staff and stakeholders consulted with the Regional Education Laboratory-NEI, The New England Comprehensive Center and the National Content Comprehensive Centers for evidence to support particular strategies and approaches. For example, resources on equitable distribution of teachers and evaluation of teacher effectiveness (Goe, et.al, 2008) came from the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality. The overall approach to implementation of planned changes is informed by Fixsen's research on implementation (Fixsen, et. al, 2005).

**Figure 1. New Hampshire’s Theory of Action for Educational Transformation**



Each of these seven levers represents an RttT project and, while tied to one of the reform areas, each project in actuality cuts across several of them. NH has a long track record of major reform efforts and regional collaborations in a subset of these reform areas and seeks to increase the rigor and comprehensive approach to them through its RttT initiative (see Figure 2).

In support of these priority areas, NH will implement these key strategies:

- Provide intensive, comprehensive assistance to the lowest-achieving schools;
- Support LEA education reform projects in the four priority areas;
- Establish seven Innovation Networks to share lessons learned and develop common tools and approaches to addressing the priority areas;
- Develop, research, disseminate and refine effective education practices;
- Expand and formalize research and development capacity in the Research Group; and
- Use data and research to improve systems for student success and inform policy across the State's P-16 educational system.

The collaborative work with districts, schools, professional associations and other groups will increase the tools, approaches and resources available—as well as the development of the capacity to sustain the high level of performance after the funding for the Race to the Top is completed.

From experience and research, improvement is most likely to occur in settings where certain conditions exist, fueling the likelihood of longer term success. Among these conditions are increased instructional rigor and cognitive demands on students, appropriate student support systems, climate and culture, personalized learning, student engagement, rigorous professional learning and public will.

The effectiveness and impact of these proposed innovations to increase student learning and achievement leading to graduation for all students will be continually monitored and assessed by the collection, analysis and use of data to inform classroom practice, district-wide and statewide initiatives and policy. Through its RttT initiative, four new full-time staff positions will be added to the NH Department of Education.

**Figure 2: New Hampshire’s Current and Proposed Work in the Education Reform Areas**

Education Reform Area	Existing	Moving Toward
Standards and Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New England Common Assessment Program</li> <li>• NECAP standards</li> <li>• Enhanced assessments for students with disabilities</li> <li>• Arts literacy standards</li> <li>• Performance-based assessments with the New England Secondary Schools Consortium</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Common core standards</li> <li>• Common assessments (member of Balanced Assessment Consortium and ACHIEVE’s Consortium)</li> <li>• Board Exam/Move On When Ready Network</li> <li>• Tier 2 districts’ projects to inform common work</li> <li>• High School Transformation Network</li> <li>• Standards and Assessment Network</li> </ul>
Data Systems to Support Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statewide data warehouse</li> <li>• Performance Pathways tools and training</li> <li>• Educator Information System (EIS)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interoperability of statewide databases, e.g., Department of Health and Human Services (early childhood), postsecondary, and EIS</li> <li>• Expand use of data to determine effectiveness of programs and practices and to inform policy</li> </ul>
Great Teachers and Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional development plans for educators and master plans for districts</li> <li>• State educator certification standards</li> <li>• Alternative certification</li> <li>• Updated program approval standards</li> <li>• Individual LEA and professional organization initiatives in leadership, mentoring/coaching, and math and science partnerships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective teacher and leader standards</li> <li>• Implementation of standards in K-16</li> <li>• Statewide evaluation model for teachers and leaders with a significant factor being student growth</li> <li>• More cohesive, coherent model for mentoring/coaching and induction of teachers and leaders</li> <li>• Link student achievement to professional development plans</li> <li>• Tier 2 districts’ projects to inform common work</li> <li>• Teacher Effectiveness Network</li> <li>• Leadership Academy and Network</li> <li>• STEM Network</li> </ul>
Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Differentiated statewide system of support for schools in need of improvement</li> <li>• Specific strategies, e.g., data roundtables with schools in need of improvement, Focused Monitoring, Response to Intervention, Root Cause Analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intensive support for subset of schools, with specific required activities</li> <li>• External partners</li> <li>• Transformation Consortium (of 10 LEAs)</li> </ul>
<p>Data gathering, analysis and use            Research to determine effective practices and programs            Dissemination of effective practices and programs</p>		

Promising practices, vetted by NH's Research Group will be disseminated to schools and districts, used to repurpose future state funding and guide actions of the statewide Innovation Networks and the School Transformation Consortium. The lead researcher will be contracted with an outside vendor. Data will be provided to policymakers and other stakeholders at all levels to build public will to continue to enhance the environment for educational transformation over time. Other key functions to ensure effective oversight and implementation of NH's RttT strategies, a director of Teacher and Leader Effectiveness, a director of STEM, and administrative support for these functions, will be contracted with outside vendors.

(A)(1)(ii)(a) *LEA Commitment.* Each of NH's 35 participating LEAs have signed a Memorandum of Understanding in which they agreed to participate in implementing all or a significant portion of the State's reform plan (see Appendix A-1). The subset of LEAs with the persistently lowest-achieving schools have selected their school's turnaround model and signed a second Memorandum of Understanding pertaining to the model (see Appendix A-2). Of the 35 districts, 10 will implement all elements of the plan and 25, those developing projects specific to one or two education reform areas, will address between 75 and 100 percent of the plan.

If the State determines that any of these LEAs is not meeting its goals, timelines, budget, or annual targets, or is not fulfilling other applicable requirements, the State will take appropriate enforcement action. This could include putting the LEA on reimbursement payment status, temporarily withholding funds, or disallowing costs.

A(1)(ii)(b) *Scope of Work.* The 35 Participating LEAs and other LEAs which are or may become involved LEAs, as well as other stakeholder groups and associations, are strongly committed to involvement in the State's plans. The following section describes how the State will involve the participating LEAs and others in meaningful ways structured to learn from what is known about implementation (Fixsen, 2005) and successful engagements in the State's past initiatives.

***Tiers of Engagement.*** To achieve the overarching goals for both student success and the transformation of the educational system, the State of NH will provide or broker services for districts and schools in three tiers of engagement (Figure 3):

- ***Tier 1:*** Intensive and comprehensive services for the 10 persistently lowest-achieving LEAs under MOU's with the Department;
- ***Tier 2:*** Targeted levels of intensity for participating districts that are involved in LEA efforts and Innovation Networks based on areas of identified need and/or project requirements. These projects are in the following areas:
  - Provide intensive, comprehensive assistance to the lowest performing schools;
  - Support LEA education reform projects in the four priority areas;
  - Establish seven Innovation Networks to share lessons learned and develop common tools and approaches to addressing the priority areas;
  - Develop, research, disseminate and refine effective education practices; Expand and formalize research and development capacity in the Research Group; and
  - Use data and research to improve systems for student success and inform policy across NH's P-16 educational system.
- ***Tier 3:*** Support for all schools and districts in the state that will be focused on major state initiatives that are key to the overall reform strategy, such as common core standards, enhanced assessments and tools and other practices that are identified for scale up.

In essence, all LEAs and stakeholders, whether official participants at the beginning of Race to the Top or not will ultimately benefit from the efforts of the endeavor. A description of the process employed in determining the persistently lowest-achieving schools is in Section E.

*Tier 1 Engagement.* Key stakeholders in each district (superintendent, the school board chair, and presidents of the teachers' unions) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding stipulating the district's involvement (see Appendix A-1). Each school and district will be matched with a vetted external partner who will guide, coordinate and manage the school's transformation with support from the Department and other specialized resources, as needed. Districts and particular schools will only participate at this level if they agree to make bold changes in all education reform areas as specified, and are looking for a rapid turnaround in the learning and achievement of their students.

**Figure 3: Alignment of New Hampshire Strategies with Education Reform**

Strategies with Field	Participating Tiers	Description
<p><b><u>Strategy 1:</u></b> Provide intensive, comprehensive assistance to the persistently lowest-achieving schools (cuts across all four reform areas)</p>	<p><b><u>Tier 1:</u></b> Intensive, comprehensive support to 10 lowest achieving LEAs which address the transformation agenda</p>	<p><b><u>Each LEA will:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work with an external partner and engage in a four-year, transformational model</li> <li>▪ Replace the building principal(s)</li> <li>▪ Engage in targeted professional development supports:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ 18-month leadership academy</li> <li>➢ Four-year mentoring and induction program</li> <li>➢ Using data workshop/institute series</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Collaborate in the development of a state teacher and leader evaluation system and participate in the pilot model</li> <li>▪ Pilot the expansion of the statewide longitudinal data system</li> <li>▪ Participate in the Transformation Consortium</li> <li>▪ Participate in one or more of the Innovation Networks</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Strategy 2:</u></b> Support LEA education reform projects</p>	<p><b><u>Tier 2:</u></b> Focused support to participating LEAs with proposed district initiatives in one or more of the reform areas</p>	<p><b><u>LEA will participate in:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ One of the proposed initiatives:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ High school reform projects</li> <li>➢ Board Exam/Move on When Ready</li> <li>➢ Teacher effectiveness projects</li> <li>➢ Leadership effectiveness projects</li> <li>➢ Standards and assessment projects</li> <li>➢ STEM projects</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ One or more of the Innovation Networks</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Strategy 3:</u></b> Establish Innovation Networks to share lessons learned and develop common tools and approaches (cuts across all four reform areas)</p>	<p><b><u>Tiers 1 and 2: Year 1:</u></b> Focused participation of participating LEAs</p> <p><b><u>Tier 3: Years 2 – 4:</u></b> General participation of all LEAs in NH</p>	<p><b><u>LEAs will have opportunities to participate in:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ **Network specific activities, i.e., in-person and on-line communities, workshops, institutes, and online courses</li> <li>▪ **Cross-cutting network activities</li> </ul> <p><i>** See Figure 1 on page 33 Professional Development Matrix for New Hampshire Innovation Networks for description of content specific to each network.</i></p>
<p><b><u>Strategy 4:</u></b> Provide all district support (cuts across all four reform areas)</p>	<p><b><u>Tier 2: Years 3 - 4:</u></b> General participation in initiatives previously not involved in</p> <p><b><u>Tier 3: Years 3 - 4</u></b> General participation by all LEAs in activities</p>	<p><b><u>LEAs will have opportunities to participate in:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Teacher and leader evaluation systems</li> <li>▪ Mentoring and induction model</li> <li>▪ Board Exam</li> <li>▪ Leadership academy</li> <li>▪ Innovation Networks</li> </ul>

**Continuous Support and Feedback Loop:**

*Using data and research to refine and improve systems*

Each LEA and school has agreed to: 1) be assigned an external partner, whose focus will be on instruction, student engagement and coordination of reform efforts in the school; 2) replace principals, who have led the school for two or more years; 3) participate as a team (principal, district leader, and/or lead teacher) in an 18-month leadership academy, focused on instructional leadership; 4) engage agreed-upon teachers in a four-year induction and mentoring program; 5) participate in professional learning experiences focused on understanding and using Performance Plus data tools for decision making in classrooms and schools; 6) involvement in the development and piloting of the state teacher and leader evaluation models in year 3; and 7) pilot the expansion of the statewide longitudinal data system, including an early warning system for dropout prevention that is supported by funding from the National Governors Association. Schools and districts will be required to set annual goals and targets focused on improving student achievement. The NHDOE, along with the external partner, will review quarterly progress reports with school and district staff and conduct an annual evaluation. Funding decisions in subsequent years for the school and district will be based on progress toward their identified outcomes (see Appendix A-3 for a list of Tier 1 LEAs and schools).

In the 10 districts with persistently lowest-achieving schools, work will be initiated in a maximum of two schools per district. Preference for intensive services will be extended to a participating district's persistently lowest-achieving schools first, then to other Title 1 schools in that district, and finally to schools in other Title 1 districts in the state. The purpose of this plan is to concentrate resources and efforts in a particular locale, develop a critical mass of effective practitioners in these schools, turn them around, and engender what Malcolm Gladwell calls "social epidemics" that will build momentum toward a tipping point in the LEAs in the Transformation Consortium.

The *second tier of engagement* will be with participating LEAs, consortia of LEAs, institutions of higher education and/or professional organizations that submitted proposals for specific innovative work aligned with one or more of the education reform areas (see Appendix A-4 for a list of Tier 2 LEAs and organizations and the focus of their proposed projects).

Currently there are 25 LEAs proposing initiatives at the Tier 2 level. They will pilot approaches that will be evaluated for their impact and effectiveness on student achievement by the Research Group, led by a contracted, independent lead researcher and involving contracted services from outside research and evaluation groups as part of a coherent research agenda. The research agenda will be developed in conjunction with the NHDOE and advisors consisting of representatives from LEAs, higher education, professional organizations and research organizations. This Research Group with the NHDOE will be given the responsibility for a research agenda and the ability to conduct studies and contract out evaluation and research on Race to the Top's initiatives. Findings from these studies will continually inform ongoing and future work in each education reform area at the State and local level. If a district, consortia or organization is involved in a project that aligns with an initiative at the state level, those projects will participate in the initiative's network facilitated by Department staff or a designated provider. This approach will be one component of the feedback system that is intended to bring forward evidence, garnered along a continuum from the field-initiated pilots to the Innovation Networks and the Transformation Consortium. This feedback system will continuously inform all state and local practitioners as to what is working and what is not, so that specific components of the State's approach can be continuously improved. This feedback will ensure that learning and data from those innovations will inform the state work and practitioners as well as support the State's reform agenda.

The *third tier of engagement* represents services and tools provided by the Department and external providers to all schools and LEAs. At this tier, schools, LEAs, institutions of higher education and professional organizations can participate in the Innovation Networks and will be engaged in professional development work in the common core, data use, assessment and teacher and leader initiatives that are part of the overall state plan. As results emerge from the work being done at the intensive Tiers 1 and 2 with participating districts, it will be shared with all schools and districts in Tier 3 through involvement strategies including webinars and forums, research briefs and continuation of the strategies in the previous tiers. It is anticipated that work done to adopt the Common Core, the dissemination of new assessment systems, including the NH Growth Model, the planned roll out of the results of the work to implement a state model for teacher/principal training, induction, mentoring and evaluation and the findings from the pilot

work done with Board Examinations and high school redesign will be made available to all in Years 3 and 4, through involved district funds under RttT.

Across the tiers seven key strategies will be utilized. Each strategy is described below and discussed in more detail in subsequent sections of this application.

**Strategy 1:** *Intensive, Comprehensive Assistance to the Lowest-Achieving LEAs.* Each of the 10 lowest-achieving LEAs and their schools will be matched with an external partner who will guide, coordinate and manage the school's transformation with support from the Department and other specialized resources, as needed. These schools will be making bold changes in all four education reform areas, and will participate in the research agenda.

**Strategy 2:** *Support LEA Education Reform Projects.* NH will use Race to the Top funds to support and research the progress and effectiveness of innovative pilot projects developed by consortia of districts that have been proposed through proposals and MOUs with NHDOE. These initiatives were selected based on their match with the State Transformation Plan and the ability for the initiative to meet criteria including: Projects must be research-based and aligned with the conditions for school transformation or one of the four education reform areas, and be rigorous and innovative. Project implementation will be supported in a variety of ways through contracted service providers in each of the seven project areas. Projects will be subjects of evaluation and research and will continue or be improved as evidence from the Research Group becomes available.

**Strategy 3:** *Establish Innovation Networks.* Innovation Networks of schools, LEA's, colleges, universities and professional organizations will be continued or established to share lessons learned and provide vehicles for researching and implementing models, assessing their effectiveness, sharing findings, and promoting proven practices statewide. Networks will be supported in the budget and will be involved in the Research Group's evaluation and research agenda.

**Strategy 4: *Develop, Research, Refine and Disseminate Effective Education Reform Practices.***

NH will continue to build on its successful practices, based on current information about connection of practices to student success, e.g., literacy and numeracy plans; expansion of science, technology, and mathematics; extended learning opportunities (ELOs) and high school transformation; expanded time to learn; and enhanced assessment technology projects. The research group along with others will review research and evaluation and work to codify and scale up effective practices in a manner in which others can implement them in their own setting. Through the RttT initiative, NH will implement a rigorous and innovative reform agenda by engaging stakeholders in adopting the common core standards; creating a performance-based educator evaluation system linked to student achievement including career ladder standards; implementing transformation models in the lowest-achieving LEAs and schools; providing a leadership academy for principals of the lowest-achieving schools; instituting a three-year induction/mentoring program for teachers; building the capacity of teachers and leaders to analyze and use formative and summative data to make informed decisions regarding curriculum and instruction; improving preparation programs with particular emphasis on increasing prospective elementary teachers' content knowledge in math, science and technology; and enhancing its longitudinal data system to link teacher performance and student achievement.

**Strategy 5: *Expand and Formalize Research and Development Capacity.*** With the increased capabilities afforded by a more robust longitudinal data system and the statewide Research Group, the state has the capability to study the effectiveness of the instructional and leadership practices being piloted and implemented by districts and consortia. The State, through the Research Group's vetted research agenda, will issue RFP's to conduct rigorous research of the key strategies, field initiatives and work being conducted in each of the four reform areas. Findings will be shared broadly and be accessible for others to use in influencing policy and practice at the state and local level. STEM will be targeted by this group to provide information to the lead school district on research-based practices. This Research Group unit would also develop feedback loops and assess the State's annual progress toward its expected outcomes. Departmental reorganization will create a sustainable model. Support from the REL-NEI will be sought as an external, independent source of support for the research agenda.

**Strategy 6:** *Use Data and Research to Improve Instruction and Inform Policy Across the P-16 Educational System.* Pending receipt of funding for enhancing its longitudinal data system, New Hampshire has forged agreements to link student data with the Department of Health and Human Services (preschool data), the University System of New Hampshire, the Community College System of New Hampshire, and the state's private colleges. It is linking its newly implemented Educator Information System (EIS) to student performance data for the purpose of informing evaluation, promotion, tenure and compensation practices, and has requested funds to back fill data on teachers in the EIS. A major focus of this strategy is to enhance the capacity of education personnel and, in some cases, students in LEAs and schools to use data from common formative and benchmark assessments to inform rapid action, such as changes to instructional practices and school policies that do not work, and to intervene quickly when students do not reach learning targets.

(A)(1)(ii)(c) *LEA Leadership Commitment.* As displayed in Table A-1, 100 percent of the superintendents in the 35 participating LEAs have signed the Memorandum of Understanding. Of the 35 districts, 97 percent of the school board presidents and 49 percent of the presidents of the teachers' unions in the districts have agreed to the terms of the MOU. One union, which represents the majority of districts in the state, has been supportive and involved in the development of the plan, but the second has concerns about the development and implementation of a statewide evaluation plan (see Appendix A-5 for a letter of support from all involved including the teachers' union president in Nashua).

(A)(1)(iii) *Broad Statewide Impact.* The 35 LEAs in New Hampshire that are participating in Race to the Top represent 21 percent of the districts in the state, and their 163 schools make up 36 percent of the schools statewide. The student population in these districts (78,506) equals 41 percent of the state's K-12 students, and 53 percent of students in poverty statewide. In this small and rural state, many of the participating LEAs are indeed rural and small, and the population overall is also small. But the record of student success to date is positive, and continuing to proceed in a positive direction, and the needs for the supports (in each of the key reform areas) to ensure the next round of success are high. The Department's long history of collaboration with districts and key stakeholders and the initiative's design will lead to increased implementation of promising practices identified by research.

As part of its Race to the Top initiative, the State is setting the following ambitious yet achievable goals, overall and by subgroup, for increasing student achievement in reading and language arts, as reported by NAEP and the assessment required under ESEA (New England Common Assessment Program):

***NAEP, Mathematics***

Student Groups	Mathematics			
	Grade 4		Grade 8	
	Percentage At or Above Proficiency, 2009	Goal for Percentage At or Above Proficiency, 2014	Percentage At or Above Proficiency, 2009	Goal for Percentage At or Above Proficiency, 2014
All NH Students	56	75	33	44
Asian	61	81	53	71
Hispanic	21	28	17	23
Black	15	20	12	16
White	50	67	50	67
English Language Learners	12	16	5	7
Socio-Economically Disadvantaged	22	29	17	23
Students with Disabilities	19	25	9	11

***NAEP, Reading/Language Arts***

Student Groups	Reading/Language Arts			
	Grade 4		Grade 8	
	Percentage At or Above Proficiency, 2009	Goal for Percentage At or Above Proficiency, 2014	Percentage At or Above Proficiency, 2009	Goal for Percentage At or Above Proficiency, 2014
All NH Students	41	59	37	49
Asian	45	60	40	53
Hispanic	17	23	14	19
Black	14	19	12	16
White	32	43	38	51
English Language Learners	7	9	4	5
Socio-Economically Disadvantaged	17	23	15	20
Students with Disabilities	13	17	7	9

*New England Common Assessment Program, Reading*

Student Groups	Grades 3-8		Grade 11	
	Index Targets 2009-10	Index Targets 2013-14	Index Targets 2009-10	Index Targets 2013-14
All NH Students	91	100	89	100
Asian	91	100	89	100
Hispanic	91	100	89	100
Black	91	100	89	100
White	91	100	89	100
English Language Learners	91	100	89	100
Socio-Economically Disadvantaged	91	100	89	100
Students with Disabilities	91	100	89	100

*New England Common Assessment Program, Mathematics*

Student Groups	Grades 3-8		Grade 11	
	Index Targets 2009-10	Index Targets 2013-14	Index Targets 2009-10	Index Targets 2013-14
All NH Students	88	100	72	100
Asian	88	100	72	100
Hispanic	88	100	72	100
Black	88	100	72	100
White	88	100	72	100
English Language Learners	88	100	72	100
Socio-Economically Disadvantaged	88	100	72	100
Students with Disabilities	88	100	72	100

NHDOE is setting the following targets for projected graduation and dropout rates:

*Projected Graduation Rates, 2013-2014*

Groups of Students	At or Above Proficiency, 2003	Goal for At or Above Proficiency, 2014
All NH Students	87.9%	90.8%
Asian	94.0%	98.6%
Hispanic	79.3%	84.4%
Black	78.9%	82.2%
White	88.2%	93.2%
English Language Learners	n/a	n/a
Socio-Economically Disadvantaged	n/a	n/a
Students with Disabilities	n/a	n/a

*Projected Dropout Rates, 2013-2014*

	<b>2003-04</b>	<b>Goal for 2013-14</b>
All NH Students	3.8%	1.5%

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

<b>Elements of State Reform Plans</b>	<b>Number of LEAs Participating (#)</b>	<b>Percentage of Total Participating LEAs (%)</b>
<b>B. Standards and Assessments</b>		
(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	35	100%
<b>C. Data Systems to Support Instruction</b>		
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction:		
(i) Use of local instructional improvement systems	35	100%
(ii) Professional development on use of data	35	100%
(iii) Availability and accessibility of data to researchers	35	100%
<b>D. Great Teachers and Leaders</b>		
(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance:		
(i) Measure student growth	35	100%
(ii) Design and implement evaluation systems	35	100%
(iii) Conduct annual evaluations	35	100%
(iv)(a) Use evaluations to inform professional development	35	100%
(iv)(b) Use evaluations to inform compensation, promotion and retention	14	40%
(iv)(c) Use evaluations to inform tenure and/or full certification	18	51%
(iv)(d) Use evaluations to inform removal	35	100%
(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals:		
(i) High-poverty and/or high-minority schools	17	49%
(ii) Hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	19	54%
(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals:		
(i) Quality professional development	35	100%
(ii) Measure effectiveness of professional development	35	100%
<b>E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools</b>		
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	10	100%

In (E)(2), the number of participating LEAs represents the participating districts with the identified persistently lowest-performing schools.

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

<b>Signatures acquired from participating LEAs:</b>			
Number of Participating LEAs with all applicable signatures			
	<b>Number of Signatures Obtained (#)</b>	<b>Number of Signatures Applicable (#)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b> (Obtained / Applicable)
LEA Superintendent (or equivalent)	35	35	100%
President of Local School Board (or equivalent, if applicable)	35	34	97%
Local Teachers' Union Leader (if applicable)	17	35	49%

One local union has submitted a letter of support, which is contained in Appendix A-2.

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

	<b>Participating LEAs (#)</b>	<b>Statewide (#)</b>	<b>Percentage of Total Statewide (%)</b> (Participating LEAs / Statewide)
<b>LEAs</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>21%</b>
<b>Schools</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>476</b>	<b>36%</b>
<b>K-12 Students</b>	<b>78,506</b>	<b>192,811</b>	<b>41%</b>
<b>Students in poverty</b>	<b>20,156</b>	<b>37,913</b>	<b>53%</b>

New Hampshire defines students in poverty by the number of students who are free and reduced lunch eligible. The statewide figure presented above does not include children in kindergarten or charter schools.

**Detailed Table for (A)(1)**

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

Participating LEAs	LEA Demographics			Signatures on MOUs			MOU Terms Uses Standard Terms&Conditions?	Preliminary Scope of Work – Participation in each applicable Plan Criterion															
	# of Schools	# of K-12 Students	# of K-12 Students in Poverty	LEA Supr. (or equivalent)	President of local school board	President of Local Teachers Union		(B)(3)	(C)(3)(i)	(C)(3)(ii)	(C)(3)(iii)	(D)(2)(i)	(D)(2)(ii)	(D)(2)(iii)	(D)(2)(iv)(a)	(D)(2)(iv)(b)	(D)(2)(iv)(c)	(D)(2)(iv)(d)	(D)(3)(i)	(D)(3)(ii)	(D)(5)(i)	(D)(5)(ii)	(E)(2)
Name of LEA here				Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA	Yes/ No	Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA	Y/ N/ NA
Alton School District	1	586	109	Y	Y	N	Yes	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	NA
Amherst School District	3	1,547	50	Y	Y	Y	Yes	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	NA	
Andover School District	1	228	32	Y	N	N	Yes	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA
Barrington School District	2	924	127	Y	Y	N	Yes	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA
Bedford School District	6	4,122	115	Y	Y	N	Yes	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	NA
Brookline School District	2	641	27	Y	Y	N	Yes	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	NA
Concord School District	10	5,119	1,194	Y	Y	Y	Yes	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA
Epping School District	3	973	160	Y	Y	Y	Yes*	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Farmington School District	3	1,454	538	Y	Y	Y	Yes*	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Franklin School District	5	1,400	628	Y	Y	N	Yes*	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

	LEA Demographics			Signatures on MOUs			MOU Terms Uses Standard Terms&Conditions?	Preliminary Scope of Work – Participation in each applicable Plan Criterion															
	# of Schools	# of K-12 Students	# of K-12 Students in Poverty	LEA Supt. (or equivalent)	President of local school board	President of Local Teachers Union		(B)(3)	(C)(3)(i)	(C)(3)(ii)	(C)(3)(iii)	(D)(2)(i)	(D)(2)(ii)	(D)(2)(iii)	(D)(2)(iv)(a)	(D)(2)(iv)(b)	(D)(2)(iv)(c)	(D)(2)(iv)(d)	(D)(3)(i)	(D)(3)(ii)	(D)(5)(i)	(D)(5)(ii)	(E)(2)
Participating LEAs																							
Governor Wentworth Regional District	8	2,605	697	Y	Y	Y	Yes	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	NA	
Hinsdale School District	3	654	192	Y	Y	Y	Yes*	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Hollis School District	2	733	14	Y	Y	N	Yes	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	NA	
Hollis Brookline Cooperative	2	1,366	50	Y	Y	N	Yes	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	NA	
Kearsarge Regional School District	7	1,966	234	Y	Y	Y	Yes	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA
Laconia School District	5	2,251	887	Y	Y	N	Yes	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	NA	
Littleton School District	3	843	295	Y	Y	N	Yes	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	NA	
Manchester School District	22	15,992	5,900	Y	Y	Y	No	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Marlboro School District	1	167	44	Y	Y	Y	Yes	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	NA	
Mascenic School District	5	1,203	278	Y	Y	Y	Yes	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	
Merrimack Valley School District	7	2,737	520	Y	Y	N	Yes	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	
Milton School District	3	651	225	Y	Y	Y	Yes*	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Mont Vernon School District	1	257	11	Y	Y	Y	Yes	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	NA	
Nashua School District	20	12,346	3,604	Y	Y	N	Yes*	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Pembroke School District	4	1,720	325	Y	Y	Y	Yes	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	NA	

	LEA Demographics			Signatures on MOUs			MOU Terms Uses Standard Terms&Conditions?	Preliminary Scope of Work – Participation in each applicable Plan Criterion																
	# of Schools	# of K-12 Students	# of K-12 Students in Poverty	LEA Supt. (or equivalent)	President of local school board	President of Local Teachers Union		(B)(3)	(C)(3)(i)	(C)(3)(ii)	(C)(3)(iii)	(D)(2)(i)	(D)(2)(ii)	(D)(2)(iii)	(D)(2)(iv)(a)	(D)(2)(iv)(b)	(D)(2)(iv)(c)	(D)(2)(iv)(d)	(D)(3)(i)	(D)(3)(ii)	(D)(5)(i)	(D)(5)(ii)	(E)(2)	
Participating LEAs																								
Pittsfield School District	3	613	205	Y	Y	Y	Yes*	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Portsmouth School District	6	2,600	504	Y	Y	Y	Yes	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA
Raymond School District	3	1,490	359	Y	Y	Y	Yes	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA
Rochester School District	11	4,631	1,608	Y	Y	N	Yes	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA
Somersworth School District	4	1,777	562	Y	Y	Y	Yes*	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Souhegan School District	1	943	27	Y	Y	Y	Yes	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA
Tamworth School District	1	206	70	Y	Y	N	Yes	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA
Winchester School District	1	439	188	Y	Y	Y	Yes*	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Windham School District	5	1,696	58	Y	Y	N	Yes	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA
Winnisquam School District	5	1,606	319	Y	Y	Y	Yes	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA

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

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

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

- (a) Providing strong leadership and dedicated teams to implement the statewide education reform plans the State has proposed;
- (b) Supporting participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) in successfully implementing the education reform plans the State has proposed, through such activities as identifying promising practices, evaluating these practices' effectiveness, ceasing ineffective practices, widely disseminating and replicating the effective practices statewide, holding participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) accountable for progress and performance, and intervening where necessary;
- (c) Providing effective and efficient operations and processes for implementing its Race to the Top grant in such areas as grant administration and oversight, budget reporting and monitoring, performance measure tracking and reporting, and fund disbursement;
- (d) Using the funds for this grant, as described in the State's budget and accompanying budget narrative, to accomplish the State's plans and meet its targets, including where feasible, by coordinating, reallocating, or repurposing education funds from other Federal, State, and local sources so that they align with the State's Race to the Top goals; and
- (e) Using the fiscal, political, and human capital resources of the State to continue, after the period of funding has ended, those reforms funded under the grant for which there is evidence of success; and

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

- (a) The State's teachers and principals, which include the State's teachers' unions or statewide teacher associations; and
- (b) Other critical stakeholders, such as the State's legislative leadership; charter school authorizers and State charter

school membership associations (if applicable); other State and local leaders (e.g., business, community, civil rights, and education association leaders); Tribal schools; parent, student, and community organizations (e.g., parent-teacher associations, nonprofit organizations, local education foundations, and community-based organizations); and institutions of higher education.

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

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

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

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

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

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

(A)(2)(i) *Provide Strong Leadership*. Since beginning her tenure as Commissioner of Education in June 2009, Virginia M. Barry, Ph.D., along with the entire New Hampshire Department of Education team, has made the creation of a comprehensive system for school reform the Department's number one priority. In July 2009, the Commissioner formed four working cross-departmental committees aligned with the four assurances: High Quality Standards and Assessments, Great Teachers and Leaders, Longitudinal Data Systems, and Turning Around Persistently Lowest-Achieving Schools. Members of the Commissioner's immediate cabinet who are also directors of major departmental divisions took the lead for each group. Working with the New England Comprehensive Center in the fall of 2009, the Department began a full scale strategic planning process, which will be completed in the spring of 2010, examining and redirecting the Department's mission, vision, goals, and values in order to substantially transform the Department into an organization focused primarily on providing leadership, support, and technical assistance in overall educational reform, organized according to the four areas of education reform.

In the spring of 2009, a statewide advisory was convened for the purpose of ensuring stakeholder input on all ARRA education grants, including Race to the Top. The make up of the committee includes leadership from NEA, AFT and the NH School Administrators Association, among other groups, and they are committed to strong participation in leading this grant. The Governor and members of the Legislature, in particular the leaders of education committees in both chambers have supplied strong leadership for the goals of RttT, with the Governor leading the charge on reducing the drop out rate and supporting interagency coordination along with strong involvement of community-based organizations and business (Governor's Summits, 2008 and 2009) (see Appendix A-6 for NH's 2009 Dropout Plan).

It is anticipated that upon award of the Race to the Top funding, the Department will immediately establish four positions to oversee the leadership and operation of the grant. The Race to the Top grant administrator position will provide grant management and oversight, function as a member of the Commissioner's extended cabinet, and report ultimately to the Commissioner and the Governor's Education Staff Liaison. A program auditor, a STEM coordinator and an administrative assistant will support this position. In addition, support from

external partners will be used to co-coordinate the external efforts with research, development, dissemination and the assistance to LEAs in the four education reform areas.

New Hampshire has demonstrated its ability over time to develop successful statewide and regional initiatives. These efforts have ranged from the institution of Performance Plus and its data tools and reports, which have spread in use across the state in the last two years and are now used by almost every school district; passage of legislation in collaboration with the Governor and Legislature; and the institution of “roundtables” or collaborative analysis of outcome data and development of action plans with districts in corrective action or restructuring.

The current work of teams in each of the four areas of education reform from the NH Department of Education, as enriched by resources from many groups and stakeholders, is listed in Appendix A-7. The Department will integrate their efforts into its operating structure to ensure success continuing beyond the grant.

(A)(2)(i)(b) *Supporting Participating LEAs.* After a vetting period to select external partners and consultants, the Race to the Top Director will convene internal staff from the Department, external partners, and key consultants to create a coordinated plan for providing services across the tiers of engagement including all participating districts and eventually expanded in years 2-4 to include other involved LEAs. The plan will incorporate a series of benchmarks for participating districts, which coupled with the MOU will define the plan each LEA will undertake, including progress indicators. NHDOE and external partners will provide several kinds of support to LEAs in the implementation of the State’s reform plan, including: a) identifying the most promising practices through evaluation and research; b) sharing and disseminating these practices, through the Innovation Networks, webinars and professional development offerings through the Regional Centers; c) ceasing ineffective practices and shifting to more effective ones; and d) holding the participating LEAs accountable and intervening where necessary to increase progress toward the goals.

Seminars and ongoing planning meetings—with discussions based on analysis of student achievement data and other indicators, current research and professional literature and successes

and challenges—will be held monthly at the state level. Regular conference calls between the RttT Director and the external partners as well as quarterly reports will ensure that external partners, key consultants and districts are accountable for progress and performance. Within each of the 10 LEAs participating in the Tier 1 Transformation Consortium, the LEAs external partner and the district’s liaison from the Department will convene similar meetings with district and school staff, consultants and parents or community members to ensure that the group maintains a common focus on learning and achievement, uses data to make decisions and plans for scale-up to additional qualifying schools in subsequent years.

In each education reform area, a lead district or key consultant along with Department staff will coordinate the work across a specific network and participating districts’ projects and link them with statewide efforts, e.g., the development of effective teacher standards, when appropriate. For example, the consultant leading the mentoring/induction effort will convene the leads from the four participating districts that are implementing projects related to teacher development. The goals of these groups is to share data on what strategies are having an impact on student achievement, to develop a product that would be beneficial for other districts, and to participate in research and evaluation efforts.

Support to districts will be differentiated according to their needs. The 10 LEAs in Tier 1 Transformation will have the most support. They will be matched with an external partner and required to participate in ongoing activities, e.g., leadership academy, mentoring training, hands-on use of Performance Plus and its tools. In addition, the district may choose to continue to use Focused Monitoring, Response to Intervention or another program that has been proven effective in the school or district as evidenced by an upward movement in student achievement scores and other indicators. Other Tier 2 participating districts will be supported in carrying out their own district improvement initiatives as designed in their proposal and MOU, and will be linked to appropriate networks, e.g., the High School Transformation Network, if they are implementing competency-based assessments in their high school. Membership in these Innovation Networks is open to other LEAs in the state and the Race to the Top director and leadership will work to match the interested LEA with the most appropriate network, depending on their needs and particular focus.

Districts will have access to effective practices identified by the What Works Clearinghouse, and use of the Doing What Work tools and website. The opportunity to look at evaluation data of particular practices and initiatives will be overseen by the state's Research Group and various resources will be tapped including requested studies from the regional educational laboratory (REL-NEI) through its rapid response program and the New England Comprehensive Center and from collaborations among the NECAP states. New Hampshire's statewide, educational culture is one of collaboration. Promising practices are currently shared through the Commissioner's monthly meetings with superintendents, the regional superintendents Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Groups, and professional conferences and meetings. RttT will enable a more concerted effort to vet practices, share practice information and support implementation at various levels more broadly through meetings with lowest-achieving schools, district meetings convened by the external partner and the Department liaison, and various networks at the state level.

*(A)(2)(i)(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.* Under the leadership of the Commissioner of Education, the Race to the Top director will oversee the implementation of the grant, involving the ARRA Committee and the four working cross-departmental committees aligned with the four assurances: High Quality Standards and Assessments, Great Teachers and Leaders, Longitudinal Data Systems, and Turning Around Persistently Low-Achieving Schools.

The Race to the Top director, supported by the current NHDOE staff in each of the four reform areas, will regularly monitor major contractors and district awards through a regular cycle of site visits, monthly program administrator meetings and quarterly in-depth progress reports. The design and reach of progress reports will extend beyond basic ARRA requirements to provide in-depth analysis of project development, implementation and impact on student performance and teacher/leader effectiveness.

The second educational administrator position will provide leadership to the Department's

longitudinal data warehouse team and will oversee the expansion of the State Individual Student Identifier System to early learning programs, colleges and universities, and systems of care, e.g., Juvenile Justice, the Division of Child and Family Services, and the state mental health system.

The third position will be a Grants Auditor, working with the Race to the Top director and Department's Business Administrator, who will provide the ongoing oversight of grants and awards to school districts under Race to the Top, which will be directly connected to major title support (Title I and IIC and D) to schools identified in need of improvement, to assure that coordination between Title I, the School Improvement Grant and Race to the Top is fully comprehensive in scope. This position will be responsible for budget reporting and monitoring, overseeing major contracts funded by Race to the Top. When ARRA was passed and monies awarded to states in the spring of 2009, the Department implemented a new, on-line grants management system to more directly and immediately award grants to school districts. In conformance with ARRA guidance and principles, these awards are made entirely transparent and accessible through approval by the state's Governor and Council on a monthly basis, as well as immediate posting on the New Hampshire Department of Education and New Hampshire ARRA Office websites.

The fourth position, an FTE Administrative Assistant, will provide support to the Director, and the other positions listed above on all administrative tasks. In addition to the internal NHDOE staffing, the Department will contract several key roles including the Research Group Leader, and the specific other expertise needed for each reform area.

(A)(2)(i)(d) *Using Funds for This Grant to Accomplish the State's Reform Plan and Targets.* The budget detailing the use of funds from this grant is included in Budget, Part 1 and is further detailed in the budget narrative (Appendix H). The recent grant guidance provided by the USED has offered NH the support and platform to push reform across the State. In a State that has a high level of local control, the national attention of the turnaround challenge has broadened NH's perspective and provided a national, collegial relationship around school reform. The NHDOE has approached the development of the NH State transformation plan as a comprehensive plan that aligns other Federal, State and local resources and strategies. The previous school and

district turnaround work has always been conducted within the NH Statewide System of Support (SSOS), which involves differentiated levels of support based on student data and school strengths and weaknesses; however, the demands of the schools are now forcing the need for reorganizing NH's efforts in order to maximize the impact on student achievement. The Federal alignment of the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund, Title I School Improvement Grants (SIG) and Race to the Top purpose and guidance has allowed the NHDOE to begin this reorganization effort and increase the intensity of school and district improvement.

The NHDOE is in the process of writing the NH SIG, in which the NHDOE will complement the efforts outlined in the Race to the Top grant. Initiatives such as current leadership professional development, creation of an aspiring principals' academy and the development of a statewide leader and teacher evaluation system will be supported by the goals and objectives of the Race to the Top, School Improvement and other grants. The NHDOE will continue to leverage all other Federal Title grants to best support schools in need of targeted support and resources. NH districts and schools have also agreed to align the use of local funds to support the goals of school turnaround outlined in the NH State plan.

The NHDOE has already begun the process of assessing the current allocation of funds and resources, and is developing a plan to redeploy efforts and resources to best support the NH State plan, promoting dramatic, fast-paced reform efforts.

NHDOE has held discussions with numerous stakeholders across the State, including the Parent Information Resource Center (PIRC) and higher education institutions, and is in the process of incorporating wraparound services/supports to provide comprehensive services to school communities on a full range of education and related needs, e.g., health and nutrition. The alignment of such resources will not only guarantee collaborative approaches to reform, but also assist in the development of a sustainability plan for the work required in continuing to improve the quality of education for NH students.

*(A)(2)(i)(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.* The State of New Hampshire is very well positioned to sustain the major educational reform efforts and initiatives outlined under the RttT grant:

- Education funding: In Fiscal Year 2009, the NH Legislature passed a budget fully funding NH's adequate education formula, and, despite the significant downturn in the economy, maintained this funding for the biennium 2010-2011. In the same year, the state completed a three-step process, where the state was under order to complete its adequacy system, by defining adequacy, costing-out adequacy, and setting the accountability system to assure its maintenance.
- State Goals: Over the last two years, the NH P-16 Council had been developing goals and objectives with the New England Secondary School Consortium (NESSC). The Council has adopted the overarching goal of ensuring that every high school student graduates prepared for success in college, careers and community life, through the achievement of core objectives for Graduation and Dropout Rates, College Enrollment, College Preparation, and College Success (see Appendix A-8).

New Hampshire, as one of the founding states of the NESSC, adopted the overall goals and objectives in 2008, and is engaged in an implementation process to achieve these goals, as a full member of the Consortium. To date, the Consortium has been funded with multiple foundation support (Nellie Mae Education Foundation, Gates Foundation), and it is anticipated that the effort will grow to support "Hot House Schools" demonstrating systemic and substantial redesign in the coming years (see Appendix A-9 for description of NESSC). Just recently, Connecticut was added to the Consortium, and all five Governors and Legislatures have endorsed membership and maintain active leadership on the governing Council for the NESSC. NH Council members include Christen Lavers, Education Advisor to Governor John Lynch, Representative Emma Rous, Chairwoman for the House Education Committee, and Senator Molly Kelly, Chairwoman of the NH Senate Education Committee.

In addition, Governor John Lynch has taken a national leadership position in setting an aspiration of eliminating all high school dropouts in New Hampshire by 2012. He has done this by championing the passage of legislation, which raises the compulsory age of education from 16 to 18 years, and added dedicated state funding to the NHDOE's budget to support dropout prevention activities. This ambitious goal has sharpened the actions and focus on this key indicator. For the school year 2007-2008, one year after the passage of the compulsory age legislation, NH reduced its four-year cohort rate below ten percent (9.7%) and results published just this week show a reduction of the dropout rate to 6.7% for school year 2008-2009. The funds needed to support dropout prevention programs are now in place for the current biennium and are contained in ongoing budget line items.

- **High Quality Standards and Assessments:** Over the last five years, New Hampshire has been a founding member of the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP), made up of four states: NH, Vermont, Rhode Island and Maine. Through this groundbreaking effort, the NECAP states have been able to demonstrate how to construct and maintain a multi-state consortium, reduce and/or maintain costs for state assessment implementation, and demonstrate improvement in student performance. New Hampshire is now applying this know how to membership in four new consortia: the NGA/CCSSO led Common Core Standards Consortium (36 states), the CCSSO-led Balanced Assessment Consortium, the National Center for Education and the Economy (NCEE) led Board Examination/Move On When Ready Consortium (13 states), and the ACHIEVE Consortium (25 states). Inclusion in these several national enterprises will support NH's planned activities which are further detailed in Section B.

Once constructed, NH's model for assessment will be maintained and supported by the NHDOE's Accountability and Assessment Group, with state dedicated funds approved for assessment implementation. NH's Growth Model is now featured as a central part of the NH State Accountability System, and will also be maintained through state funding, once developed via Nellie Mae Education Foundation support. If the Board Examination System in pilot sites through Years 2 and 3 of the RttT grant proves to be a system

worthy of going to scale, it will be the intention of the NHDOE to seek state legislative support to gradually move NH schools into a board examination model for federal and state accountability purposes.

- The plan for building out NH's Teacher and Leader Preparation, Support and Improvement Model is further described in Section D. The key features for sustainability or leveraging outside funds and producing systemic change include:
  - The development of the evaluation model will be based on multiple measures of professional performance, however there will be a substantial connection between teacher and leader performance to student performance to be supported by the development and implementation of the NH student growth model, now under construction, to be based on NECAP results and patterned after the Colorado model. Funding for this effort is being provided by the Nellie Mae Education Foundation and the Center for Assessment staff in Dover, NH is leading the effort.
  - This effort will also include adjusting NH's alternative credentialing system through state rulemaking;
  - In order to ensure full access to effective and highly effective teachers and leaders for students who historically have underperformed and have been underserved, NH will create a software system that will allow us to track educator delivery at the classroom level and link that delivery to student performance, by bridging NH's Performance Plus Student Data System to the new Educator Information System. NH is now piloting course-level monitoring, grades K-12 in five school districts, and shortly this will be brought to scale, as system definitions and linkages to local systems are clarified. Once in place, this system will bolster NH's current critical shortage system, now based on LEA batch reports to the state. State funding will be used to support this effort in part, but the RttT funds are critical to more robust implementation.
  - Currently, NH's teacher effectiveness and credentialing system is supported by educator credentialing fees to the State. It is anticipated that once the overall system is developed, this source of funds will continue to support the system.
  - Federal title monies, along with state school improvement and adequacy payments

will also support ongoing teacher preparation and professional development efforts.

**Transforming NH's Persistently Lowest-Achieving Schools:** The overall approach is to work with a subset of LEAs under Memoranda of Understanding with the districts that currently contain the five percent lowest-achieving schools to engage an external partner to work with the LEA to provide comprehensive supports to fully implement the transformational model of school turnaround with at least one school in each district. As this effort progresses, it will be rigorously reviewed for effectiveness under the research agenda of the Research Group. This work over the course of the four-year grant will provide the staging for legislation moving forward to further provide state level support in turnaround activities. The current State System of Support will evolve to include more robust supports to other schools that demonstrate persistently low performance. This legislative effort will be bolstered by several other of the initiatives proposed under Section E, including a formal review of the conditions of education reform in NH. This staging process including the internal research, the legislative initiative and further utilization of national and international research results available during the grant period will allow the state to align policies and systems needed to support turnaround, demonstrate success in key schools in participating districts and develop political will and organizational capacity to go to scale across the state. NH currently provides a line item for school improvement. As the evidence base solidifies, the NHDOE will look to expand these resources through State, foundation and local funding.

New Hampshire policy makers and much of the public are supportive of the Governor's deep commitment to education. The State is moving beyond a stage of discussion of innovative practices to the development and implementation of school choice programs, including charter schools, virtual learning in high schools and middle schools and high school redesign. The social capital to promote effective school reform is deeply focused on financial decisions being tied to policy decisions with student outcomes as the goal. The collaborative approach developed by NHDOE in the development of the Race to the Top application established a much needed forum of open communication among all stakeholders. Frequently asked questions involving sustainability and the fully debated concept of the "cliff" in accepting federal dollars is part of all conversations focused on identifying successes in our schools and spending our money and

resources on what supports student growth. The combination of political will and school and statewide successes has created an atmosphere of purpose and common sense. The movement to establish a process whereby decisions related to finance are connected to educational policy and the implementation of effective programs will allow for sustainability of the most effective features of the Race to the Top work through state funding, including creating incentives to focus on student success.

Finally, and perhaps one of the most critical elements of sustainability in the State, is the reorganization of the NHDOE. The Department is moving from primarily a compliance organization to one that will seek to offer support to schools in a powerful modeling of continued focus on student learning and success. The ability of the Department to move toward a transformational model is essential in creating a complete reform effort in the state. The four education reform areas have proven to be an effective framework to engage all stakeholders in a meaningful model of transformation.

(A)(2)(ii)(a) *Support from Broad Group Stakeholders to Better Implement Its Plans.* In the spring of 2009, a statewide advisory was convened for the purpose of ensuring stakeholder input on all ARRA education grants including Race to the Top. The makeup of the committee includes representation from the NEA, AFT, and the Association of School Principals. Meetings continued throughout the fall and early winter. Invitations were extended to the teacher unions to discuss specific assurances. While this advisory was ongoing, a Teacher Incentive Fund made up of stakeholders met to craft the Teacher Incentive Fund proposal. The Race to Top Steering Committee met with the teachers' unions and the Association of School Principals to address specific areas of the grant.

(A)(2)(ii)(b) *Implementation of State Reform Plan.* In addition to the state teacher unions/associations, the local superintendents met on a regular basis to give input into the grant proposals. The Commissioner's Meetings and Regional Superintendents' Groups were organized to ensure superintendents were given time to engage in discussions around a specific assurance. There were formal presentations and interactive sessions that provided opportunities for input from the legislative leadership and the Governor's office. Information sessions were held with

the House and Senate Education Committees, as well as the House Finance Committee. Letters of support from a wide range of these stakeholders are in Appendix A-5.

The New Hampshire State Board of Education through the approval process provides oversight to the charter schools. The Charter School Advisory Committee and member association were provided updates via the department's liaison to charter schools.

The Steering Committee met with various business and community groups such as local school boards, economic development councils, the University System provosts and Board of Trustees for the Community Colleges. The NH State Board of Education spearheaded an educational council that represented a variety of stakeholders from early childhood to higher education as well as parent teacher organizations; this group had input into the development of the grant proposal. Several advisory boards, such as the Professional Standards Board and the Council for Teacher Education, have had monthly updates on the ARRA grants including Race to the Top.

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

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

- (i) Make progress over the past several years in each of the four education reform areas, and used its ARRA and other Federal and State funding to pursue such reforms; (5 points)
- (ii) Improve student outcomes overall and by student subgroup since at least 2003, and explain the connections between the data and the actions that have contributed to — (25 points)
- (a) Increasing student achievement in reading/language arts and mathematics, both on the NAEP and on the assessments required under the ESEA;
  - (b) Decreasing achievement gaps between subgroups in reading/language arts and mathematics, both on the NAEP and on the assessments required under the ESEA; and
  - (c) Increasing high school graduation rates.

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

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

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

*Recommended maximum response length: Six pages*

A(3)(i) *Progress in Education Reform Areas.*

*Standards and Assessment.* Over the past several years, the State has made progress in the four education reform areas. Supported by funding from each state, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont (with the recent addition of Maine) have developed and began implementing the New England Common Assessment Program based on agreed-upon standards in 2005-06. This collaboration has led to several additional activities—all of which in conjunction with other initiatives have impacted positively on students’ learning, teachers’ instructional practices, and data-based decisions by leaders and teachers. This led to other collaborative or NH efforts that resulted in the development and implementation of alternative assessments for students with disabilities—Nimble tools (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education); a teacher training institute for arts assessment literacy created and implemented by NH and Vermont (begun in 2005, supported by State, local and federal funds); establishment of competency-based rules in 2007; creation of performance-based assessments with the New England Secondary School Consortium and the development of a growth model with the Center for Assessment (supported by State, Nellie Mae Foundation and local funds); and the investigation of and creation of stakeholder support for a pilot of the Board Exam System (Gates Foundation through the National Center for Education and the Economy). In addition to its membership in NECAP, New Hampshire has been a member of the World Class Instruction, Design and Assessment consortium at the University of Wisconsin.

*Data Systems to Support Instruction.* In 2004, New Hampshire inaugurated its longitudinal data system, which was partially driven by the need for data in the Department’s Follow the Child initiative and the State’s high school transformation efforts. Since that time, the State has established a SASID (2005), created a student data warehouse in 2005-06, provided Performance Plus tools to teachers and administrators since 2007-08, and trained preservice teachers in use of Performance Plus tools in 2007. The Department now has data to answer policy questions and has infused data into its work with districts, e.g., the roundtable discussions with districts in need of improvement. At the local level, most districts have a data manager and use Performance Plus tools to make instructional and programmatic decisions. The monthly regional superintendents’ meetings—Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Groups—begin their discussions with data. Some districts provide parent portals; and one gave log-ins to parents this year, which allowed

them to access the Performance Plus data reports and tools at the state level. Legislation is pending to expand the data warehouse to include pre-K and college-level data. These initiatives have been supported with federal, state and local funds.

*Great Teachers and Leaders.* With support from credentialing fees, the Department updated its certification rules in core content areas, increasing rigor in math and science requirements to align with NECAP; established minimum standards for school program approval that allow for personalization, competency attainment, credit attainment and receiving credit beyond seat time (support to extended learning opportunities); refined its Professional Development Plan; and drafted an updated program approval process that is standards driven, based on students' learning and continuous improvement. With state, in-kind local funds and federal funds, regional professional development centers with a primary focus on integrating technology in classrooms were established. ARRA and Title IID funds were used to award competitive grants to districts with a focus on obtaining the newest technology and how to address learning in the digital age. Federal funds, NCLB Title II-D, supported competitive grants for professional development focused on standards-based integration of technology and the institution of 21<sup>st</sup> century classrooms.

*Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools.* In the spring of 2009, a new law (based on NH Senate Bill 180) created the State's accountability system, which requires a school to demonstrate by the end of the school year that it provides an opportunity for an adequate education by either input- or performance-based measures. As mentioned earlier, the State is currently adding a growth model to this system. A new law, (NH RSA 193.1), which was implemented on July 1, 2009, raised the compulsory age for education from 16 to 18.

The State's System of Support provides differentiated support to districts based on their needs. With information from the data warehouse it has been possible to track the effectiveness of different programs. Among the initiatives that have been implemented by the Department with documented success are focused monitoring – tracking the progress of students with disabilities (IDEA, Title I, SIG and Title II), Response to Intervention (IDEA), leadership training (state, SIG and Title I), and the Department's institution of collaborative roundtables with districts in

need of improvement which start with discussions of student outcome data, supported by State funds. The results of work in these areas is evident in the next section—the overall growth seen in NECAP scores for NH students and for subgroups.

During the past year, the State used some of its ARRA funds to save three Title I and one other position at the Department of Education.

(A)(3)(ii) *Improvement of Student Outcomes Overall and by Subgroup.* Since 2002-03, New Hampshire has made steady progress toward increasing student achievement statewide and across subgroups. On the NAEP, statewide scale scores for fourth grade in mathematics increased from 243 in 2003 to 251 in 2009; for eighth grade, statewide scale scores in mathematics increased from 286 in 2003 to 292 in 2009. When disaggregated for race and ethnicity and by special populations (English language learners, socio-economically disadvantaged students, and students with disabilities), the percentage of students who moved from the below basic level to “at or above basic” or “at or above proficient” for all subgroups ranged from four to nine percent in math (see Appendix A-10).

NAEP scale scores for all NH fourth graders in reading/language arts were 228 in 2003 to 229 in 2007, while the scale scores for eighth grade decreased from 271 in 2003 to 270 in 2007 (Institute of Education Sciences, 2009). Although movement statewide in reading/language arts results for all students from 2003 to 2007 on NAEP was flat, all subgroups experienced increases in the percentages of students that achieved a higher level in fourth grade, though these increases for subgroups remained static in eighth grade (see Appendix A-10). Therefore, there is progress in narrowing the achievement gap for all subgroups, in the earlier grades.

NECAP results paint a similar picture. All subgroups show a decrease in the percentage of students scoring at Levels 1 and 2 (substantially below proficient and partially proficient) in both reading and math and an increase in students moving into Levels 3 and 4 (proficient and proficient with distinction). In almost all cases, the positive decreases or increases in the percentages for subgroups are greater than those for all New Hampshire students (see Appendix A-10).

Since 2002-03, increases in the graduation rates and decreases in the dropout rate have been observed statewide and in subgroups. This year, New Hampshire is moving to a cohort graduation rate, so next fall disaggregated data will also be available for special populations.

**Figure 4. NH Graduation Rates Disaggregated by Race and Ethnicity from 2002-03 to 2007-08**

<b>Group</b>	<b>2002-03</b>	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Total	84.8%	87.9%	+3.1
Asian or Pacific Islander	88.8%	94.0%	+7.2
Hispanic	65.7%	75.9%	+10.2
Black, Non-Hispanic	74.8%	78.9%	+4.1
White, Non-Hispanic	84.5%	88.2%	+5.7
Male	82.8%	86.2%	+3.4
Female	87.3%	89.6%	+2.3

NH has reported dropout data that is consistent with the federal dropout definition since the 2001-02 school year. Since 2007-08, reporting has also included detailed data about these students who exit high school early (i.e. before receiving a diploma). “Early Exit Non-Graduates” include (1) students receiving a GED; (2) non-graduates that enroll in college (full or part-time) by the beginning of the next school year; and (3) true dropouts (i.e. not receiving a GED and not enrolling in college). Statistics for the total of all Early Exit Non-Graduates (Figure 5) are consistent to both earlier NH “dropout” statistics and the federal definition.

From 2002-03 to 2008-09, the annual rate for early exit students declined from 3.8% to 2.3%, with a corresponding decline in the four-year estimated cumulative rate (an estimate of the class cohort rate) from 14.4% to 8.9%, a reduction of more than 1/3. NH’s new detailed data reveals a one-year reduction in the percentage of true dropouts by nearly 1/3 with the estimated cumulative rate decreasing from 9.7% to 6.7%.

NH’s significant progress in the area of dropout reduction is due to many factors, among them the increase in the compulsory age of attendance, the development of extended learning opportunities and the establishment of charter schools.

**Figure 5. Annual and Estimated 4-Year Cumulative Early Exit Rates from 2002-03 to 2008-09 (Comparable to Federal Dropout Definition)**

School Year	Annual Early Exit Percentage Rate	4-Year Cumulative Rate	Number of Students
2003-04	3.8%	14.4%	2,500
2004-05	3.4%	12.9%	2,306
2005-06	3.1%	11.8%	2,129
2006-07	3.2%	12.2%	2,185
2007-08	3.0%	11.3%	1,986
2008-09	2.3%	8.9%	1,505

Running Start, the state’s dual enrollment program, has seen a 61 percent jump in the number of enrollments in college course taking by high school students since 2004-05 (up from 2,922 to 4,703 in 2008-09).

These gains can be attributed to leverage points in the education reform areas.

- *Standards and Assessment:* Co-development of common NECAP standards and assessment processes; efforts of teachers to understand and implement the common standards, aligning their curriculum and instructional practices to them; and competency-based assessment as an innovative way to individualize learning to reach the highest content standards and achieve 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.
- *Data Systems to Support Instruction:* Data available to schools and districts in the state’s longitudinal data system; and Performance Plus tools and training that assist teachers and leaders to use this information along with data they gather in their classrooms and schools to make informed instructional and programmatic decisions.
- *Great Teachers and Leaders:* Collaborative development and implementation of Statewide Literacy (2007) and Numeracy Plans (2010); and an updated program approval process that is standards driven, based on students’ learning and focuses on continuous improvement.
- *Turning Around Persistently Lowest-Achieving Schools:* New Hampshire’s accountability system that employs collaborative roundtable discussions and planning with districts in need of improvement, with data as the foundation; focused monitoring, which has been instituted in districts where there is a gap in achievement between students with

disabilities and those without; Response to Intervention; and use of out-of-school resources and extended time to support students' learning.

- *High School Transformation:* A variety of initiatives aimed at keeping students in school, e.g., extended learning opportunities (ELOs), charter schools that serve disengaged students, efforts to restructure high schools; implementation of Career Pathways Plan of study which outlines a “roadmap” of courses from grades 9 through 20, thus giving options and reducing the need for remediation; and a statewide focus on program and careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.