



Commonwealth of Kentucky
Race to the Top application

Draft narratives for final review

January 7, 2010

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PRELIMINARY DRAFT RACE TO THE TOP APPLICATION

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Reform area: (A) State Success Factors

Criterion: (A)(1) Articulating State’s education reform agenda and LEAs’ participation in it

Points possible: 65 points

Recommended maximum response length: 10 pages (excl. tables)

Draft date: January 7, 2010

Specifics of criterion (verbatim from application):

The extent to which—

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

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

1. Terms and conditions that reflect strong commitment by the participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) to the State’s plans;
2. 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
3. Signatures from as many as possible of the LEA superintendent (or equivalent), the president of the local school board (or equivalent, if applicable), and the local teachers’ union leader (if applicable) (one signature of which must be from an authorized LEA representative) demonstrating the extent of leadership support within participating LEAs (as defined in this notice); and

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

- (a) Increasing student achievement in (at a minimum) reading/language arts and mathematics, as reported by the NAEP and the assessments required under the ESEA;
- (b) Decreasing achievement gaps between subgroups in reading/language arts and mathematics, as reported by the NAEP and the assessments required under the ESEA;
- (c) Increasing high school graduation rates (as defined in this notice); and

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

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- (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).

Definitions:

Participating LEAs means LEAs that choose to work with the State to implement all or significant portions of the State's Race to the Top plan, as specified in each LEA's agreement with the State. Each participating LEA that receives funding under Title I, Part A will receive a share of the 50 percent of a State's grant award that the State must subgrant to LEAs, based on the LEA's relative share of Title I, Part A allocations in the most recent year, in accordance with section 14006(c) of the ARRA. Any participating LEA that does not receive funding under Title I, Part A (as well as one that does) may receive funding from the State's other 50 percent of the grant award, in accordance with the State's plan.

Graduation rate means the four-year or extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rate as defined by 34 CFR 200.19(b)(1).

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College enrollment refers to the enrollment of students who graduate from high school consistent with 34 CFR 200.19(b)(1) and who enroll in an institution of higher education (as defined in section 101 of the Higher Education Act, P.L. 105-244, 20 U.S.C. 1001) within 16 months of graduation.

Draft narrative outline begins on next page

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Executive summary

Kentucky will lead the nation in the next wave of educational improvement. Since 1990, Kentucky has been a leader nationwide, adopting state standards, intervening in low-performing schools, and pursuing a comprehensive and long-term approach to reform well in advance of other states. Kentucky has re-energized its strategic agenda to accelerate progress in student achievement towards college and career readiness over the 20 years to come. Its focus on tangibly changing teaching practice to increase effectiveness forms the heart of its strategy. In addition to the focus on teacher practice, Kentucky is in it for the long-term and committed to creating innovative solutions that work in rural environments. All initiatives underway or planned, including Race to the Top, feed the same strategy. The passage in early 2009 of Senate Bill 1 (done before the Race to the Top program was announced) is one example of this convergence as it requires the adoption of a new standard and assessment system. Likewise, unified statewide commitment to this strategy, exemplified by the unanimous support of its districts, professional associations, and postsecondary institutions, will support the collaboration necessary to accomplish its goals.

Background on Kentucky's historic approach to reform

The landmark Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990, crafted in response to massive funding inequities across the state, redesigned the entire system of supports and expectations to dramatically improve our students' education, presaging reforms that would go national in later years. The Act equalized funding levels across the state between the most property-poor districts and others through the Support Education Excellence in Kentucky (SEEK) funding scheme; however, it went much further than that as outlined below.

- **Foundational beliefs:** Stated without hesitation “schools shall expect a high level of achievement of all students”
- **Standards and accountability:**
 - Instituted a common set of state standards across seven subject areas
 - Instituted new assessment system tied to new standards, using rich, comprehensive assessment to measure the wide range of skills students need to succeed
 - Instituted school accountability for progress toward universal proficiency

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- Created authority and infrastructure for the state to support and hold accountable low-performing districts and schools in need of improvement (building from 1984 “academic bankruptcy act”)
- **Governance:**
 - Instituted aligned leadership of education system, led by Governor
 - Created Education Professional Standards Board to focus on teacher and principal quality
 - Devolved decision-making to where it matters most – the school – via School Councils and Site-Based Decision Making (SBDM)
- **Service provision:**
 - Began a statewide focus on preschool
 - Provided Extended School Services
 - Provided Family Resource Centers for at-risk youth
- **Innovation:**
 - Focused resources on statewide provision of innovative technologies
 - Experimented with use of ungraded primary

Collaboration amongst stakeholders was evident in the years leading up to KERA. The education and business communities partnered to create a culture of openness to systematic reform and acceptance of the need to improve (led by the Education Coalition in the late-1980s). National experts were engaged in school governance, curriculum and finance to assist the state in designing KERA.

The initial bold commitment to academic excellence demonstrated by the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990 has been augmented further during the past decade. Recent reforms have focused on extending the core themes of KERA and pursuing increasingly more sophisticated strategies. Some examples:

- Then-Commissioner Gene Wilhoit (now head of the Council of Chief State School Officers, CCSSO) he shepherded finance reform, led equity initiatives, designed and implemented assessment and accountability systems, advanced nationally recognized preschool and technology programs, and reorganized the state agency to focus on service and support.

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- From legislation adopted in 2006, beginning in 2008, Kentucky juniors universally take the ACT test, as well as the preceding EXPLORE and PLAN tests, providing valuable signals to students and to the system about their readiness for college and career.
- Partnering with the Wallace Foundation, the state's Education Professional Standards Board and the Colleges of Education have redesigned the teacher Master's program into a Teacher Leader program and the principal preparation program into a post-Master's program. Both are highly focused on practice-based learning.
- Kentucky has focused on ensuring that each school has at least one National Board Certified Teacher (NBCTs). To achieve this goal it provides support to candidates and rewards to those who achieve certification. This has led to Kentucky ranking among the highest in the country, with 1,600+ NBCTs, approximately 4% of the Kentucky teacher workforce.
- Since 2007, Kentucky has had a coordinated approach to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics). Coming from the STEM Task Force, comprised of leaders within the government, business, and education sectors across the Commonwealth, a comprehensive plan guides the state's actions in this regard. Since then, Kentucky has established the partnerships and initiatives described in that plan to further our progress in STEM fields. (For more, see the STEM competitive priority narrative and various STEM-focused efforts throughout the reform conditions and plans that follow.)

Perhaps most importantly, in early 2009 the legislature passed Senate Bill 1. This landmark legislation commits Kentucky to revising its standards to be fewer, clearer, and higher; redesigns the state's accountability and assessment system to meet the new standards; and requires a clear and rich transition plan to the new standards and assessments. (Read more about Senate Bill 1 in the conditions and plans in criteria B – Standards and Assessments). This bill positions Kentucky to be the first in the nation to revise its standards and adopt the Common Core.

These reforms over the past 20 years have borne substantial fruit. For example, among state-funded pre-school programs, in 2007-08 Kentucky's ranked 6th in access for children aged 3 years and 13th for children aged 4. Student achievement has increased on many dimensions.

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National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores continue to rise; for example, from 1992 to 2009 , NAEP 4th grade math scores rose 24 percentage points from 1992 to 2009 and 4th grade reading scores rose 10 percentage points from 1992 to 2007. Many more students take and pass Advanced Placement exams, a leading signal of challenging coursework, and dual credit enrollment is also on the rise. The state’s graduation rate continues to climb, posting a 9 percentage point gain from 1996 to 2006 as measured on the Cumulative Promotion Index (CPI), the fourth largest gain in the nation. And postsecondary enrollment and degree attainment trends have also been steadily increasing. *[Bring in data from CPE here]* (For more detail on Kentucky’s historical performance, see the narrative for criterion (A)(3).)

Perhaps the best insight into the extent of Kentucky’s progress can drawn from comparing its results with those of other states. The most recent NAEP results show Kentucky students scoring above the national average in fourth grade reading and in fourth and eighth grade science, and statistically tied with the nation in eight grade reading and fourth grade mathematics. At the high school level, our juniors meet the ACT’s college readiness benchmarks for English, reading, and science at rates higher the last national sample of high school seniors used for setting test score norms, while lagging only slightly behind in mathematics.

And – this is key – our schools deliver those results even though:

- Kentucky spends 86% of the national average per pupil on education.
- Kentucky has 128% of the national level of children in poverty.
- Kentucky has 110% of the national level of children without a parent who has earned a post-secondary degree.
- Kentucky has 115% of the national level of children without a parent who works full-time year-round.

This has led to the Kentucky Long-Term Policy Research Center conducting third-party research that indicates that Kentucky has gotten more “bang for its buck” than almost any other state, when considering both the demographics of our students and our investments in education.

In short, Kentucky has moved up to and in several instances exceeded the national average by refusing to accept financial and sociological challenges as barriers. To continue that work, we are

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now ready to push past national average and take the lead on delivering new, globally competitive levels of student achievement.

(A)(1)(i) Kentucky’s overarching strategy for reform

To achieve these ambitious goals, Kentucky has developed a similarly ambitious, long-term, comprehensive, focused strategy and is dedicated to pursuing it. It has been 20 years since KERA, and Kentucky’s new strategy is intended for the 20 years to come.

Importantly, the strategy laid out below is not the “Race to the Top” strategy, it is Kentucky’s comprehensive approach to educational excellence. Kentucky has launched an ambitious effort entitled *Transforming Education in Kentucky*, a Governor-led initiative that will ensure the comprehensive strategy stays front and center. The various efforts underway, including Race to the Top and Senate Bill 1, will be fully in service of that strategy.

At the heart of the strategy is a focus on improving teacher practice to increase effectiveness. To reach the level of student achievement that Kentucky seeks, there is simply no other way. On this point, the research base is resoundingly clear:

- An effective teacher is the most important in-school driver of student achievement
- The best school systems in the world focus relentlessly on increasing the quality of teaching practice (as described in the report “How the World’s Best-Performing School Systems Come Out on Top” by McKinsey & Company, 2007)

Every aspect of Kentucky’s strategy aims towards the purpose of strengthening teaching practice across the state, in every classroom and for every child.

Recognizing that the student and the teacher are the locus of the education system, Kentucky has crafted its vision of the education system it aims to create.

Kentucky’s vision

Kentucky is focused on delivering a 21st-century education to every student. Students are the focus at the center of the system, and we want to ensure they have clear knowledge of what they will need to be ready for college, career and

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citizenship. Supporting those students are their teachers, effective and able to help each student learn at high levels. Those teachers are in turn supported by their fellow teachers and principals in schools, who guide the continuous improvement of the learning occurring in the classroom. Parents, families and others in the community provide complementary and essential supports to students and those working in schools to encourage the highest levels of learning. These schools and their principals additionally benefit from the support of districts they are a part of. Districts provide supports to schools and connections to what works elsewhere in the district and beyond. Regional partners, especially regional universities, P-16 councils, and educational cooperatives, support teachers, schools, and districts. Finally, the state sets the environment for all, holding a high bar for success and supporting each district, community, school, teacher and student to succeed.

This up-and-down alignment of the system will ensure that effective teaching practice is well described, well supported, and reinforced at every turn throughout Kentucky's education system. It will enable every Kentucky teacher to be effective, building the following five capacities of teaching practice:

1. Deconstructing state standards into clear student learning targets of more specific knowledge, skills and capacities.
2. Tracking student progress on these knowledge, skills, and capacities through locally-designed formative assessments.
3. Analyzing student needs with rich and accessible state longitudinal data.
4. Developing instruction in collaborative learning communities built around the standards, scaffoldings, assessments, and data analysis noted above.
5. Refining that instruction by tapping into:
 - Ongoing and revitalized networks of practitioners.
 - The universities that train the Commonwealth's teachers and principals
 - Online access to assessment and instruction resources tied to each standard.
 - Additional study in university classes, teacher academies, and other settings as needed.

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Kentucky's path to accomplishing this vision requires concerted action in four interrelated areas. These areas align with the four emphasized federal reform areas (i.e., assurances). To achieve this vision, Kentucky will pursue initiatives that demonstrate that it:

- Expects that all students can and will learn at high levels, codified in internationally benchmarked standards
- Creates great teachers, principals, superintendents and others supporting students, with each challenged to perform at a high level and supported to do so
- Assesses performance of students, staff, schools and approaches, with access to information enabled by an easy-to-use data system
- Provides needed assistance and / or interventions when schools and districts prove to persistently struggle to improve

The details of Kentucky's reform plan will be detailed in subsequent sections, but the main pillars include:

- a) Lead adoption of new standards and balanced assessments, building from the Common Core work;
- b) Establishment of a new Continuous Instructional Improvement Technology System (CIITS) that will provide student data and teaching resources directly to teachers and principals when and where they need it;
- c) Development of a new, state-wide growth model approach to teacher and principal development, support and evaluation;
- d) Substantially increasing capacity, led by the creation of a state-wide "District 180" operated by the Kentucky Department of Education, to turnaround persistently failing schools aggressively.

Importantly, this plan builds from Kentucky's historical successes and aims to take them to the next level. For example, the developed of a new statewide growth model for teacher and principal support and evaluation will build directly from work supported by the Wallace Foundation. Similarly, the Commonwealth's rollout of the new standards and the balanced assessment system will build from professional learning done across the state to increase assessment literacy and quality, grounded in Rick Stiggins' Classroom Assessment For Student

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Learning approach. (*For more on how each plan builds from historical work, see the reform plans in this application.*)

Kentucky recognizes that the creation of such a system cannot be done overnight. Through a relentless focus on continuous improvement, the sophistication of Kentucky's system will increase over time towards this vision. Stakeholders at every level will receive the high degree of support they will need to meet the high challenge presented. In addition, Kentucky is pursuing novel approaches to building the capacity of its system as a whole to deliver against this agenda. This includes a reorientation and redesign of the state Department of Education. It also includes the creation of collaborative regional networks, coordinated by regional organizations (for example, educational cooperatives and / or P-16 councils) along with Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS). (Due to its size, JCPS effectively serves as its own educational cooperative). These networks will in turn have affiliations with centers of higher education that will provide a rich, 360 degree flow of information to effectively move expertise closer to where it needs to be - in and around the schools. (*For more detail on the approach to capacity building, see the narrative text of criterion (A)(2).*)

Why Kentucky's plan uniquely adds to the national conversation

In education, nothing excites as much as the latest fad. Kentucky stands apart from this – it has pursued comprehensive reform for twenty years. Moreover, it plans to focus its work over the next twenty on what clearly matters: increasing the effectiveness of teaching practice across the Commonwealth. It is pursuing this goal using all facets at its disposal. In addition, as 70% of Kentucky students live in rural communities or towns, the Commonwealth will craft innovative solutions that work in those environments, tackling some of the capacity constraints often present. For example, improving teacher effectiveness in rural settings requires finding scalable ways to provide scaffolding and support to far-flung locales. This will create leadership for other rural populations, as well as help determine innovative efforts that are universal and can expand. In short, Kentucky has a *long-term vision*, that is focused on *effective teaching*, and will create innovative solutions for *rural environments*.

(A)(1)(ii) Strong district (LEA) commitment to Race to the Top

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Kentucky's plan is not solely the plan of the Kentucky Department of Education. It is the Commonwealth's plan, writ large. It is obvious but bears repeating: this work will need to change what happens in the classroom for it to have any effect on students' lives. As such, districts, which are much closer to the classroom than the state department, are critical partners on every facet of the plan.

Kentucky is proud of its unified front in support of this Race to the Top application. [XX% *insert final number*] of the 174 LEAs in Kentucky have signed binding agreements with the state to implement the Race to the Top plans if funded, using the baseline language from the MOU suggested in the guidance, which has been further strengthened to specify Kentucky's strategies in each area. Importantly, all of these districts have signed on to all parts of the application. In addition, this support does not just exist at the level of the superintendent. For all districts that have signed on, there is clear support from the superintendent, from the local board of education, and, if applicable, from the leadership of the relevant teachers' association².

Importantly, district commitment to the plan did not come as an afterthought. Districts have been engaged repeatedly and in multi-faceted ways throughout Kentucky's preparation of the application. The Superintendents Advisory Council, Teacher Advisory Group, and Parent Advisory Group all provided ongoing input directly to the Commissioner of Education. A representative set of 10 districts were engaged more deeply via site visits and / or interviews to solicit their input and feedback on Kentucky's emerging plans. Finally, a statewide survey on Race to the Top provided additional input. Stakeholders of all types responded: 128 (74%) of superintendents, 425 (approximately one-third) of principals, and 1,195 teachers; 464 parents as well as a multitude of other community stakeholders also provided their perspectives. Of note is that rates of support amongst superintendents were quite high – 90%+ agreed with the Kentucky vision and strategy. The state will continue to engage districts early and often as the work continues to unfold.

² Kentucky does not have a state law mandating collective bargaining between local school districts and school employees. However, ten school districts have voluntarily recognized the local affiliate of the Kentucky Education Association (and National Education Association) and negotiated master agreements. These ten school districts are among the largest in the state

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Further details on the commitment of LEAs to Kentucky's proposal can be found in the tables below (Summary Tables for (A)(1)(ii)(b) and (A)(1)(ii)(c)), specifying which districts and which leaders in those districts have signed on as Participating LEAs.

(A)(1)(iii) Clear potential for dramatic increases in statewide student achievement

Kentucky's goals for student achievement

Kentucky recognizes, however, that there is still much work to be done. Today's global, knowledge-based economy demands students that are college and career ready, able to succeed in varied environments. Scores on the universal administration of the ACT indicate that 20% meet College Readiness Benchmarks for Math, 33% meet those benchmarks for Reading, and 46% meet those benchmarks for English. Kentucky continues to take the long-term view, working to ensure that every child is prepared to succeed, demanding urgent progress in gains in measurable indicators of student learning and success.

Kentucky has put forth a bold set of plans for the future (further detailed below in this narrative and in subsequent sections of this application). For each, it has set specific performance measures, with clear targets for improved outcomes on each of the specific measures (these can be found in the detail of each section). Given the comprehensive endorsement of the Commonwealth's Race to the Top plan by [*insert final numbers on participating LEAs, e.g., ___ districts representing ___% of students*] in the Commonwealth, progress in achieving the bold plans laid out will dramatically increase student learning and achievement over the coming years. Kentucky has established specific measures of student learning that it will use as indicators of success and as feedback on its strategies. These measures fall into three broad categories:

- Measures of student learning and achievement
- Measures of gaps in learning and achievement between various groups of students
- Measures of successful graduation from the system and transition into postsecondary coursework

[verify all goals with state leadership]

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(A)(1)(iii)(a) Student achievement in reading / language arts and mathematics

Kentucky has established itself as a leader nationwide by establishing a clear goal of college and career readiness for all students upon exit from high school. In 2006, the Kentucky legislature passed Senate Bill 130, which established mandatory participation in the ePAS system and required that for students with low scores on the ePAS tests the high schools implement intervention strategies (e.g., accelerated or remedial learning) for them. This bill arose out of concern for the number of remedial courses needed for freshmen in the college. In 2008, the state began the universal administration of the ACT exam to all juniors in the Commonwealth. An important state goal is to increase the number of students that cross college and career ready thresholds on the ACT, with targets of reaching 80% by 2020, with an interim goal of 55% by 2014.

In addition, the state recognizes that measures of progress at various points in a student's education in advance of high school graduation will be essential as well. The state is currently in the process of revamping its summative assessment and accountability system, with new exams and a new structure set to come online in 2011-12. As an interim measure, and to be converted into the future assessment measures, the state looks towards its National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) for increases in reading and mathematics in the 4th and 8th grades.

Kentucky has set clear goals on these measures:

- On the ACT, increase the number of students that meet ACT college benchmarks in English, Reading, and Mathematics, from today's rates of 46%, 33% and 20% respectively to 70% by 2020, with an interim goal of 50% by 2014
- On NAEP, increase the percentage at or above proficiency as follows:
 - On 4th grade reading: to 60% by 2020, with an interim goal of 55% by 2014;
 - On 8th grade reading: to 55% by 2020, with an interim goal of 40% by 2014;
 - On 4th grade mathematics: to 65% by 2020, with an interim goal of 55% by 2014;
 - On 8th grade mathematics: to 55% by 2020, with an interim goal of 45% by 2014.

(A)(1)(iii)(b) Achievement gaps in reading / language arts and mathematics

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Kentucky is also deeply committed to ensuring that *every student* succeeds. This translates into a focus on reducing achievement gaps where they exist between students of different income levels, races / ethnicities, student with and without disabilities, and language status. Given its status as a largely rural state, Kentucky is particularly focused on reducing income achievement gaps. In addition, Kentucky has pursued specific initiatives focused on reducing racial achievement gaps, particularly between African Americans and their White peers.

Kentucky has set clear goals to reduce current achievement gaps:

- Between low-income students and their higher income peers: Reduced gaps on ACT, NAEP, and revised ESEA assessments from rates of 20 – 30 percentage points today to 10 percentage points by 2020, with an interim goal of 17 percentage points by 2014
- Between African American students and their White peers: Reduced gaps on ACT, NAEP, and revised ESEA assessments from rates of 15 – 25 percentage points today to 8 percentage points by 2020, with an interim goal of 12 percentage points by 2014
- In addition, achievement gaps for other measurable groups (Hispanics, currently a small proportion of students; students with disability; students with English Language Learner status) would decrease by a similar amount

(A)(1)(iii)(c) and (A)(1)(iii)(d) High school graduation and college enrollment and persistence

Kentucky realizes that in today's economy, education cannot and should not end in high school. With a long-term aim to ensure every Kentucky student leaves the K-12 system ready for college and career, the state has set clear goals on measures of attainment and postsecondary success.

- By 2020, 85% of Kentucky students will graduate high-school, with an interim goal 80% by 2014, as measured by a four year adjusted cohort measure (today's best proxy measure is the Averaged Freshmen Graduation Rate (AFGR), which measured 75% in 2008)
- In addition, clear goals will ensure students transition successfully into postsecondary
 - By 2020, college enrollment will reach 80% of exiting high school graduates, with an interim target of 70% by 2014, increasing from today's rate of 55%

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- By 2020, 80% of college-goers will successfully complete one year of postsecondary education, with an interim target of 70% by 2014, increasing from today's rate of **[61% check today's number with data from CPE]**
- By 2020, college remediation rates in the first year of college will fall by 75% from today's rate, with an interim decrease of 50% by 2014

Further detail on specific targets for specific measures referenced above can be found in the table in Appendix X.

Without Race to the Top funding, the Commonwealth of Kentucky would continue to aim for growth in these same measures of performance. It would adjust the targets downward in response to the slower rate at which it would be able to implement the bold plans that will drive these increases in student performance.

As Kentucky has secured the vast preponderance of support from districts across the state, its work will have dramatic effect statewide and not be limited to pockets. The progress towards these goals is expected to start small (as reforms are piloted and put into place), scaling more dramatically as the reforms take root and transform teaching practice.

See the chart below that conveys the projected trajectory of improvement in outcomes for Kentucky's students [*chart to be added based on goals above when finalized*].

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Reform area: (A) State Success Factors

Criterion: (A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up and sustain proposed plans

Points possible: 30 points

Recommended maximum response length: 5 pages (excluding budget and budget narrative)

Draft date: January 7, 2010

Specifics of criterion (verbatim from application):

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.

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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.

Definitions:

Participating LEAs means LEAs that choose to work with the State to implement all or significant portions of the State's Race to the Top plan, as specified in each LEA's agreement with the State. Each participating LEA that receives funding under Title I, Part A will receive a share of the 50 percent of a State's grant award that the State must subgrant to LEAs, based on the LEA's relative share of Title I, Part A allocations in the most recent year, in accordance with section 14006(c) of the ARRA. Any participating LEA that does not receive funding under Title I, Part A (as well as one that does) may receive funding from the State's other 50 percent of the grant award, in accordance with the State's plan.

Draft narrative outline begins on next page

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Introduction and context

The Commonwealth of Kentucky believes the strategy we will pursue is the right work for its students. We are also cognizant that successful implementation will require focused capacity building and extensive collaboration. The proposed strategy includes a thoughtful approach to building and sustaining the capacity we will need, both at the State level and in the field. The proposed strategy also builds from a high level of ongoing collaboration and stakeholder support.

(A)(2)(i):Capacity to implement

Kentucky's approach to ensuring the capacity needed to implement starts from a focus on two core principles:

- The work of everyone at all levels across the Commonwealth will focus on student learning.;
- Two-way collaboration and communication lead to better, more sustainable results than one-way mandates focused on compliance.

Historically, the state Department of Education was well-staffed and provided a high degree of services to those in the field. Eight regional Service Centers were fully staffed to provide targeted professional development. In addition, the state has had, over the years, various field operations designed to provide additional school improvement support to schools and districts. Over recent years, the department's capacity to continue this level of direct service provision to schools, districts, and regions has decreased. In light of these principles and in response to economic realities, the Department is in the process of redesigning its organization and revising its approach to working with the field. In accordance with the strategies outlined in this Race to the Top application as well as the upcoming implementation of Kentucky's Senate Bill 1, this approach develops sufficient capacity at each level of the system. Several elements will define the new approach:

- Redesigning the Kentucky Department of Education by means of cross-functional teams based on a close examination of statewide data indicating a problem of practice; these teams reach through traditional department walls and focus on a core set of processes that enable it to solve problems and provide support to districts and schools across the state;

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- Benchmarking leading state education agency (SEA) processes and best practices with the support of the American Productivity Quality Council and then continually seeking to improve the performance of the Department vis-a-vis these benchmarks;
- Establishing a new program management office within the Department to orchestrate the successful execution of the Commonwealth's reform plan;
- Recalibrating the interaction between the state and LEAs to create space for two-way collaboration and learning, where the Department partners with districts to solve problems of practice and policy;
- Encouraging and fostering additional innovation aligned with the Commonwealth's reform plan at the district level -- and then strategically determining a process for replicating and bringing proven innovations to scale influencing the work in all Kentucky districts;
- Relying on (and supporting) pre-existing regional collaborative networks of practitioners, coordinated in 8 regions as well as Jefferson County Public Schools, to facilitate the flow of knowledge across districts and schools, enabling all institutions participating to be both "teacher" and "student" at different points in time, depending on the issue at hand;

Kentucky has already begun the process of redesigning its Department of Education. In the fall of 2009, the Department formed 6 Work Teams, groups of people working across traditional silos to form complete solutions to critical topics. Importantly, these Work Teams heavily engaged organizations and experts outside of the Department as well, including key state partners such as postsecondary institutions. The following Work Teams were formed:

- Standards
- Assessments
- Professional Learning
- Teacher Effectiveness
- Kentucky Statewide Longitudinal Data System
- School Improvement and School Turnaround

These dedicated teams form the structure that will carry out the strategies put forth in this Race to the Top application. In the first half of 2010, the Department plans to fully redesign its structure, orientation, and -- most importantly -- its core work processes to better enable cross-

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functional collaboration on these critical areas of emphasis and improve its focus on and support for districts and schools in the field. The Department will begin this process with a self-assessment that is set to commence on January 20, 2010. The process will be facilitated by the Center for Innovation and Improvement with support and funding from the Appalachian Regional Comprehensive Center. The process is called Statewide System of Support and has been used successfully in several states. The process is designed to provide a thorough analysis of current objectives, behaviors, and capacities and then develop recommended actions for better efficiency and effectiveness in delivering support.

The Race to the Top will challenge SEAs to operate at unprecedented levels of performance, flexibility, and responsiveness. The Department intends to undertake a systematic comparison of willing peer SEAs with the help of the American Productivity Quality Council to establish process and practice benchmarks. Thereafter, teams within the Department – as well as those within participating peer SEAs – can use this benchmarking to assess and improve critical dimensions of their performance on an ongoing basis. Kentucky’s Commissioner of Education, Dr. Terry Holliday, is steeped in this methodology; indeed, he received the 2009 Grayson Medal for Innovation in Quality from the American Productive Quality Council, and a year earlier he led North Carolina’s Iredell-Statesville school district, in which he then served as Superintendent, to the 2008 Malcolm Baldrige Quality Award. This award was created by an act of Congress in 1987 to recognize companies, organizations, businesses, and other entities that have shown long-term improvement in quality productivity. The same kind of approach to continuous improvement can and should be used by SEAs, especially now that the Race to the Top has both elevated the importance of their roles and established a common set of imperatives that they are working to advance. The Kentucky Department of Education intends to lead the way in this regard.

Another organizational innovation that the Department will undertake to carry out its reform plan is the establishment of a Race to the Top program management office. In addition to driving implementation planning, budget reporting, fund disbursement, monitoring, and performance measurement of the reform plan at the state level and across participating LEAs, this office would also support the identification and replication of promising Race to the Top practices

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across the Commonwealth. The program management office will, among other responsibilities, oversee the establishment of a common online planning tool and corresponding set of processes and practices across all participating LEAs. This tool will capture district and school improvement plans that track all state and federal expenditures as well as create a knowledge management portal for the sharing of best practices. In addition to Race to the Top funds, we expect to draw upon Title I and state school improvement funds to implement this platform.

Kentucky has also begun to recalibrate the interaction between the state and districts. The state aims to be a collaborative partner with districts, providing essential resources and access to best practices. One aspect of this has been to more fully open lines of communication between state leadership and districts. To do so, the Commissioner has established a set of Advisory Groups to provide direct feedback; these include groups for superintendents, for principals, and for teachers. In addition, the Commissioner has ratcheted up the department's communication and responsiveness to the field. Examples here include the Commissioner's blog and Twitter account as well as the ongoing survey of the Department's responsiveness to LEAs and other inquiries. This open communication will enable effective information dissemination and course correction as Race to the Top strategies are implemented.

In addition, the Department intends to cultivate district-led innovation that will advance the Commonwealth's reform plan by inviting interested LEAs to propose additional innovations that they would like to pursue under the aegis of Race to the Top in the scopes of work that the LEAs will be developing for review and approval by the Department. Examples of such innovations could be, for example:

- The development of STEM-focused career pathways;
- Offering a mini-grant to schools to start the Take One program for National Board Certification;
- The use of digital textbooks and online resources aligned to the new standards;
- Community-based initiatives focused on closing achievement gaps for particular populations;

Please note that this is not an exhaustive list, only an illustrative one.

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The district innovation funding will be a very competitive process, and the Department will assess and approve funding for the proposed district innovations based on, among other considerations:

- The quality and comprehensiveness of the LEA's proposed workplan to complete the baseline expectations for all districts participating in Kentucky's reform plan;
- Alignment of the proposed innovation with the elements of the Commonwealth's reform plan;
- The potential impact of the proposed innovation on student achievement and learning based on the available evidence base and the proposed scale of application;
- The LEA's demonstrated ability to carry out initiatives of similar scope in the past;
- The quality of the LEA's performance measurement and evaluation plan to assess the innovation's impact;
- The potential for scaling and replicating the innovation in other districts if / when it is proven to be successful;
- The LEA's readiness and capacity to support knowledge capture and replication efforts.

The Department recognizes that some LEAs will need to devote all of their Race to the Top allocations to carrying out the baseline expectations of the Commonwealth's reform plan. To ensure that all participating LEAs who propose compelling and competitive innovations along the lines described above will be able to carry them out, the Department is budgeting a special fund of \$2,500,000 within its reform plan and will make it available to those LEAs who propose especially promising innovations but are not able to fund them out of their initial allocations due to the work they must do to meet the reform plan's universal expectations.

The state is going to be relying more on regional networks coordinated by capable regional institutions (educational cooperatives, P-16 councils, and the like) and Jefferson County Public Schools. Based on the regional structures which are already in place (including the cooperatives, Jefferson County Public Schools, and regional universities), the state plans to create active networks of practitioners. Today, the regional educational cooperatives encompass the state. With the exception of Jefferson County Public Schools, each cooperative is a membership organization, with districts as the members. District superintendents also serve on the board of

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directors of each cooperative, leading to governance and leadership that supports their needs. Funding flows to cooperatives via membership fees as well as via grants and fee-for-service contracts. In sum, these cooperatives and Jefferson County Public Schools, working in conjunction with their regional P-16 councils, regional universities, and other partners will serve as important loci of regional collaboration amongst member districts.

These networks would be the focus of efforts to share promising practices and coordinate evaluations of practices' effectiveness. From there, the networks in collaboration with the state would be able to cease those practices that are ineffective and more broadly disseminate and replicate those that are highly effective. To make these networks concrete and keep them grounded in work on critical areas, the initial focus in the middle of 2010 will be on the deployment of the new state standards (aligned with the Common Core). In this key role, the networks will be supported by the dedication of one or more Department team members to each regional cooperative and Jefferson County Public Schools to assist with the implementation of new standards and assessments. In this way the Department can support the work in the regions, assist with the sharing of best practices and common approaches across the state, and ensure fidelity of implementation. *(More details on this approach are available in reform plan (B)(3).)*

The state does retain accountability for ensuring LEA progress and performance. The state, led by the Kentucky Board of Education, has used its accountability role in the past, both in temporarily assuming control of low-performing districts (in keeping with KRS 158.785 and our management assistance program) and in increasing levels of monitoring of districts with performance challenges (through the agency's Partnership Assistance Team program). This program provides assistance in the form of teams that include mentors for the superintendent and board of education and highly skilled educational assistance to improve student outcomes.

The state has a team in place and processes aligned to effectively administer Race to the Top and competently implement the proposed strategies. The state has developed a rigorous and detailed budget to support its work in Race to the Top. More details can be found in the budget narrative *(located in X)*.

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Considerable groundwork and existing funding to support this ambitious plan is already established in the state. A few examples include: existing federal and state funding for testing will move to the new assessments that will be developed; the longitudinal data system will use federal grants already secured for many needs, with the Race to the Top funding covering a few strategic additions; the changes in the evaluation system for teachers will build on work already underway that has been funded by the Wallace Foundation; and the teacher preparation reports will implement designs already developed at the Martin School.

As described in detail in the narrative for criterion (A)(1), Kentucky is firmly committed to the strategies proposed in this application, as they provide the roadmap to transforming education in the Commonwealth. Kentucky is setting its strategic agenda for the next twenty years. It will use Race to the Top funding to pursue initial work over the next four years that forms critical parts of that agenda. It has, in each case, designed the initiatives with longer-term sustainability in mind.

(A)(2)(ii) Collaboration and support from stakeholders

The successful pursuit of this strategy can be rightly said to hinge on one word: collaboration. The work since the 1990 Kentucky Education Reform Act has laid a foundation of working together that is likely unrivaled amongst Kentucky's peers. Recent representative collaborations (not exhaustive) include:

- The Kentucky Department of Education, the Council on Postsecondary Education, and the Education Professional Standards Board creating a P-20 compact on data sharing and data systems integration;
- A targeted working group focused on ways to better use teacher compensation to improve teacher quality by recognizing differentiated teacher roles and responsibilities. This group was composed of the Department, the Standards Board, Kentucky Education Association (KEA), Kentucky Association of School Superintendents (KASS), Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, Kentucky Education Cabinet, and the Kentucky School Boards Association (KSBA), and was convened by the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence;

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- Joint adoption of the common core standards by the three key state agency boards: the Kentucky Board of Education, the Council on Postsecondary Education, and the Education Professional Standards Board;
- A strong statewide system of support through an on-going partnership of the Kentucky Department of Education with regional institutions of higher education, local government agencies, philanthropic groups, and other community related organizations

Kentucky is proud of its long history of collaboration.

In regards to Race to the Top, Kentucky has engaged extensively with a broad set of stakeholders to provide their support for and commit to partnering to implement the plans contained herein. A Kentucky Race to the Top Advisory Council has met five times in the past five months to review and provide feedback on the Commonwealth's emerging plan and application. The Advisory Council is comprised of the leadership of key stakeholder groups, representing the following constituencies (full list of organizations and individuals in Appendix X):

- Key state agencies: Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE), Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB), and Kentucky Cabinet on Education and Workforce Development
- Teachers: Kentucky Education Association (KEA)
- Principals: Kentucky Association of School Administrators (KASA)
- Superintendents: Kentucky Association of School Superintendents (KASS)
- School Boards: Kentucky School Boards Association (KSBA)
- School Councils³: Kentucky Association of Schools Councils (KASC)
- Educational Cooperatives: Kentucky Association of Educational Cooperatives (KAEC)
- Parents: Kentucky Parent-Teacher Association (KY-PTA)
- Community: Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence
- Businesses: Partnership at NewCities

³ School Councils are formed under Kentucky's School-Based Decision Making (SBDM) approach to school governance. Each council is composed of two parents (elected by the parents of students attending the school), three teachers (elected by the teachers in the school), and the principal or administrator of the school. Some councils also have specific minority representation requirements. The council role is to set school policy and make decisions outlined in statute which provide an environment to enhance student achievement. *(For more detail, see criterion (F)(2) for an explanation of this innovative approach to school governance.)*

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- Civil Rights: Kentucky Commission on Human Rights (KCHR)

These groups each support and endorse the Commonwealth's Race to the Top application [*confirm with final letters of support*]. Further details of their support can be found in Appendix X; further details on the roles they will play in supporting specific Race to the Top strategies can be found in the respective narratives for each plan.

Additionally, Kentucky has solicited the input and support of stakeholders across the state. In a November survey, open to the public, the state Department of Education received the perspectives of more than 2,400 individuals, including 128 superintendents (74% of the total in the state), 425 principals (35% of the total in the state), and 1,195 teachers (3 % of the total in the state). This survey demonstrated a strong level of support for Kentucky's overarching vision and strategy: 77% agree with Kentucky's forward-looking vision statement. Additionally, in the four reform areas, respondents both recognized the importance of these areas, with 80%+ support, and believe it is important for Kentucky to do work in each area, with 60%+ of respondents seeing room to improve. In looking at specific strategies under consideration, respondents voiced strong support for majority of strategies under consideration. 15 out of 22 strategies under consideration received strong (75%+) support from respondents, with the most prioritized strategies relating to adopting standards and assessments and supporting professional learning for teachers and principals. This input was paired with similar comments from Teacher Advisory Groups and Parent Advisory Groups and encouraged a focus on the strategies outlined in this applicaton.

Kentucky, through its Race to the Top planning process, has built a strong platform of commitment and collaboration on the proposed strategies. The State's previous collaborative efforts highlight a commitment to providing a leadership role to all stakeholders in the planning and future implementation of the strategies proposed and represent a systemic approach to supporting leadership at all levels at the SEA, district, school, and community levels. Through this work, Kentucky will reach out to families and communities, building on the Commonwealth's proven record in effectively implementing large-scale educational movements. The State also is moving to organize the SEA around this work to ensure successful implementation, with an emphasis on a cross-functional approach focused on the "function and purpose" of the work. And, lastly, throughout all efforts in this plan, the Commonwealth strives

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to maintain a delicate balance of adequate oversight, support, and leadership to ensure the vision of this work and the performance measure identified are accomplished. Our values and core beliefs focused on collaboration represent our state's unbridled spirit to improve teaching and learning across the Commonwealth.

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Reform area: (A) State Success Factors

Criterion: (A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising student achievement and closing gaps

Points possible: 30 points

Recommended maximum response length: 6 pages

Draft date: January 7, 2010

Specifics of criterion (verbatim from application):

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.

Instructions for each reform condition criteria (verbatim from application):

State Reform Conditions Criteria are used to assess a State's progress and its success in creating conditions for reform in specific areas related to the four ARRA education reform areas. The State must provide, for each State Reform Conditions Criterion addressed, a description of the State's current status in meeting that criterion, and at a minimum, the information requested as supporting evidence that the State has met the criterion. The State may also submit additional information that it believes will be helpful to reviewers in judging the criterion.

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.

Draft narrative begins on next page

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(A)(3)(i) Progress in four education reform areas

Kentucky has a long history of focus on pursuing effective reforms to increase student achievement. Catalyzed by the passage of the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) in 1990, Kentucky has thoughtfully pursued strategies for the past twenty years. In the past several years, many of Kentucky's efforts have aligned to federal areas of reform focus. In addition, in several instances, Kentucky has targeted ARRA and other federal as well as state funding, to these areas; of particular note here has been Institute of Education Sciences funding for the Statewide Longitudinal Data System as well as Title I School Improvement funding.

Standards and Assessments

As a result of KERA, Kentucky was one of the first states in the country to adopt standards and assessments for accountability.. Importantly, Kentucky took a comprehensive view from the beginning, setting standards for a broad set of subject areas, including but not limited to English and mathematics. Also, Kentucky created assessments that went beyond multiple choice, aiming to understand and make measureable student mastery through the use of constructed response items and through writing portfolios, among other techniques.

Kentucky has continued its leadership in the area of standards and assessments in the past several years. In the spring of 2009, before the Common Core was announced and the details of the Race to the Top fleshed out, the Kentucky legislature and governor collaborated to produce the landmark Senate Bill 1 legislation. This legislation is highly aligned with the federal reform area of standards and assessments; indeed, it catapults Kentucky to the forefront of states in progress in this regard. Senate Bill 1 mandates the revision of standards to meet the following criteria:

- Focus on critical knowledge, skills, and capacities needed for success in the global economy;
- Result in fewer, but more in-depth standards to facilitate mastery learning;
- Communicate expectations more clearly and concisely to teachers, parents, students, and citizens;
- Be based on evidence-based research;
- Consider international benchmarks; and

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- Ensure that the standards are aligned from elementary to high school to postsecondary education so that students can be successful at each educational level.

These criteria match those expected by the federal government. In addition, Senate Bill 1 sets Kentucky on the path to create a new assessment system aligned to the fewer, higher, clearer standards. Finally, the bill establishes a timeline and collaborative approach to the adoption, dissemination, and implementation of these new standards and assessments that will ultimately be driven by a substantial upgrade in teacher capacity. Kentucky will likely be the first state to adopt the new Common Core standards. Kentucky won't stop there, but will adopt similarly revamped standards in five additional subject areas (*see plan (B)(3) for more details*). (See the Appendix "The Next Era in Kentucky Educational Progress" for more detail on the thoughtful and collaborative approach Kentucky has taken to revising standards and assessments to most effectively increase student achievement.)

Kentucky has also begun the hard work of supporting teachers to become assessment literate. During 2009, a total of 852 Kentucky educators participated in seminars titled "Leading Professional Development in Classroom Assessment for Learning" led by Rick Stiggins and his associates. These educators represent 112 school districts, 12 colleges and universities, 5 education cooperatives and 10 statewide organizations; in addition, over 65 leaders from the Kentucky Department of Education attended. This training is ongoing, with an Assessment for Learning Facilitators Network currently being developed and an online needs assessment underway to drive the specific and varied follow-up sessions that will be offered. These 852 trained educators are asked to facilitate ongoing learning teams in schools, colleges and universities to deepen understanding of sound assessment practice and its relationship to student motivation and to learn how to integrate classroom assessment for learning into the teaching and learning process in concrete and specific ways.

These past efforts make Kentucky "ready to implement" essential plans in standards and assessments. See plan (B)(3) for more detail.

Data Systems to Support Instruction

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Kentucky has long been a leader in the use of technology. Kentucky was the first state to implement common statewide financial management and student information systems. Kentucky also has one of the leading virtual programs with the Kentucky Virtual School.

Recently, Kentucky has made significant progress in expanding its data systems. The Commonwealth has pursued the creation of a comprehensive Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) since 2006. This work has been in large part supported by two grants from the federal Institute of Education Sciences, an important stream of federal funding, the first in 2005 and the second in early 2009. Importantly, three key state agencies have collaborated to share data, creating a P-20 compact for doing so: the Kentucky Department of Education, the Council on Postsecondary Education, and the Education Professional Standards Board. In addition, it is piloting instructional improvement systems in X districts, preparing to scale a similar system statewide (*see reform plan (C)(3) for more details here*).

Great Teachers and Leaders

Kentucky believes that improving teaching quality across the Commonwealth, in each classroom for every student, is the most important task of everyone in the education system. Teaching quality is at the center of the Commonwealth's strategy for reform (*see criteria (A)(1) for more*).

In recent years, Kentucky, both at the state level and in pilot districts throughout the Commonwealth, has put in place substantive reforms that will increase the effectiveness of teaching. Statewide, the Education Professional Standards Board has led a process that has effectively redesigned all principal preparation and teacher master's programs. The Standards Board "sunsetting" the accreditation of all programs and required them to adopt model practices shown to lead to increased student achievement (among these is a focus on practicum based learning) in order to regain accreditation. The principal preparation program creates a Kentucky Cohesive Leadership Continuum for Principal Preparation and Professional Growth. The teacher master's has been redesigned as a Teacher Leader program, working in a five-state consortium to develop fourteen courses that address the leadership skills, content and knowledge for teacher leaders.

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In locations across the state, the Department of Education and several districts have partnered with the Wallace Foundation on several initiatives focused on improving teaching effectiveness and school leadership. In addition to the work on principal and teacher leader preparation cited above, this work has had many other strands, including:

- Kentucky Leadership Academy, which provides training aligned to the standards, with work occurring through professional learning communities that focuses on high quality instruction and interventions;
- School Administration Manager program, which reassigns the management duties of the principal so that principals can focus up to 80% of their time on instruction;
- Kentucky Instructional Leadership Team Network, which has involved 50+ districts in the state and 584+ schools and over 6,000 teacher leaders in leadership roles and responsibilities in their school that focus on high quality instruction and improving student achievement;
- Coaching Initiative that trains retired administrators and district personnel to coach principals, principals to coach teachers, teachers to coach teachers, and teachers to coach students;
- Instructional Practices Assessment, which provides school leaders and teachers with a report on the instructional practices being implemented in the school.

The Kentucky Department of Education supports this work through the use of federal Title II Teacher Quality Funds.

Turnaround of Lowest-Achieving Schools

As with the area of standards and assessments, Kentucky has long been a leader in intervening in low-performing schools. Kentucky's history of intervention in such schools predates the federal No Child Left Behind Act, coming as a result of the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990. Kentucky launched the Distinguished Educator program, preparing the most effective educators statewide to serve as supports to schools in need of improvement.

More recently, the Commonwealth has increased the aggressiveness with which it intervenes in low-performing schools. Its Assist and Support School Improvement Success Teams (ASSIST) program provides additional staff that often assume leadership positions in schools to which they

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are staffed. This program is supported by the Highly Skilled Educator program, which evolved from the original Distinguished Educator program. Kentucky focuses its federal Title I School Improvement funds on this program. For many schools, Kentucky's interventions have been successful in raising achievement and building the capacity of schools to sustain the improvement. In the 2009 State Highlights Report produced by the Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, between 1996 and 2006, Kentucky achieved a 9 percentage point graduation rate increase, the fourth highest increase nationwide. Kentucky is prepared to take its turnaround efforts to the next level of effectiveness, as specified in the plan for criterion (E)(2).

(A)(3)(ii) Improvement in student outcomes

(A)(3)(ii)(a) Increasing student achievement on NAEP and on ESEA assessments

Mathematics

On both measures of student performance, Kentucky has seen significant growth in the percentage of students scoring at Proficient or above. On NAEP, percent proficient went from 13% in 1992 to 37% in 2009 for 4th graders (increase of 24 percentage points) and from 10% in 1990 to 27% in 2009 for 8th graders (increase of 17 percentage points). Progress in the most recent years from 2003 to 2009 has continued, especially in the 4th grade.

The state's ESEA assessments show a similar trajectory. Importantly, there was a significant change in the assessment and its scoring between 2006 and 2007, making comparisons of longitudinal data challenging⁴. Across all grades, the percentage of students proficient or above in math increased from 34% in 2003 to 62% in 2009 (increase of 28 percentage points) and from 54% in 2007 to 62% in 2009 (under same testing regime; increase of 8 percentage points).

⁴ Note: Several changes to the assessment program were implemented in 2007, which do not allow direct comparison of Kentucky Core Content Test (KCCT) results from 2006 to 2007. These include the following KCCT changes:

- Based on a revised set of standards (Core Content for Assessment 4.1).
- New assessment design and reporting scale.
- New assessments in reading and mathematics were added to meet grade 3-8 testing requirements of NCLB.
- New student performance cut scores were validated or set during standard setting/validation in summer 2007.

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Graphical demonstration of this notable growth in mathematics proficiency is shown in the chart below.

[to be inserted - line chart showing NAEP 4th grade, NAEP 8th grade, and ESEA all grades (split from 2006 to 2007)]

Reading / English / Language Arts

Kentucky has similarly demonstrated progress on reading / English / language arts, albeit at a slower pace and with more mixed distribution. On NAEP, percent proficient increased from 23% in 1992 to 33% in 2007 for 4th graders (increase of 10+ percentage points) and slightly decreased from 29% in 1990 to 28% in 2009 for 8th graders (decrease of 1 percentage point). Scores in the most recent years from 2003 to 2007 has been mixed, with 4th grade reading increasing 3 percentage points, yet 8th grade reading has declined 6 percentage points.

The state's ESEA assessments show a similar picture. They contain the same caveat as that for the mathematics exams given the many changes in the testing system from 2006 to 2007 (see previous footnote). Across all grades, the percentage of students proficient or above in reading increased from 50% in 2003 to 69% in 2009 (increase of 19 percentage points) and slightly increased from 68% in 2007 to 69% in 2009 (under same testing regime; increase of 1 percentage point).

Graphical demonstration of this growth in reading proficiency is shown in the chart below.

[to be inserted - line chart showing NAEP 4th grade, NAEP 8th grade, and ESEA all grades (split from 2006 to 2007)]

Actions contributing to these improved outcomes

Kentucky has been pursuing a comprehensive strategy designed to increase student achievement across the board. It is not possible to attribute any one change to the increases in performance seen to date – rather, the Commonwealth asserts that it is the comprehensiveness, combined with a relentless focus on student learning and success, that has led to the gains experienced by

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students. Kentucky has put forward the next generation of its strategy (*see plan in criterion (A)(1)*) to continue and accelerate student performance with a similarly comprehensive strategy for the next 20 years.

(A)(3)(ii)(b) Decreasing achievement gaps on NAEP and on ESEA assessments

Kentucky is focused on increasing the performance of all of its students. It is committed to providing equitable education in the following areas:

Mathematics

On the NAEP, progress on achievement gaps was mixed – some widened and some narrowed over the past years.

*Race*⁵: For 4th graders, the Black-White achievement gap increased by 15 percentage points from 1992 to 2009. For 8th graders, the Black-White achievement gap increased by 12 percentage points from 1992 to 2009. In both cases, both groups made gains, with White student gains outpacing those of Black students. Also, in the 8th grade, the gap has recently stopped widening: from 2003 to 2009 there was no significant change in the gap between groups.

Socioeconomic status: For 4th graders, the poverty achievement gap increased by 14 percentage points from 1996 to 2009. For 8th graders, the poverty achievement gap increased by 5 percentage points from 1996 to 2009. In both cases, both groups made gains, with non-low-income student gains outpacing those of low-income students.

Gender: For 4th graders, the gender achievement gap narrowed by 3 percentage points from 1992 to 2009. For 8th graders, the gender achievement gap narrowed by a similar 3 percentage points from 1992 to 2009.

Disability: For 4th graders, the disability achievement gap widened by 11 percentage points from 2000 to 2009. For 8th graders, the disability achievement gap widened by 3 percentage points from 2000 to 2009.

Language status: Kentucky does not have statistically significant sample of English Language Learner students to permit the comparison of achievement levels.

⁵ Kentucky's racial demographics present two racial groups of significant size: Black students and White students.

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On ESEA assessments, progress on achievement gaps was mixed.

Race: Across all grades, achievement gaps remained largely steady. The Black-White achievement gap widened by 2 percentage points from 2003 to 2009. The Hispanic-White achievement gap narrowed by 1 percentage point from 2003 to 2009.

Socioeconomic status: Across all grades, achievement gaps between low-income students and their higher-income peers narrowed by 4 percentage points from 2003 to 2009.

Disability: Across all grades, achievement gaps between students with a disability and those without narrowed slightly by 2 percentage points from 2003 to 2009.

Language status: Across all grades, achievement gaps stayed essentially constant between students with Limited English Proficiency status and those without that status from 2003 to 2009.

[to be inserted - line chart showing achievement gaps for mathematics]

Reading / English / Language Arts

On the NAEP, progress on achievement gaps has been mixed – some widened and some narrowed over the past years.

Race: For 4th graders, the Black-White achievement gap increased by 6 percentage points from 1992 to 2007. For 8th graders, the Black-White achievement gap decreased by 6 percentage points from 1992 to 2007.

Socioeconomic status: For both 4th and 8th graders, the poverty achievement gap did not significantly change between 1998 and 2007.

Gender: For 4th graders, the gender achievement gap widened by 3 percentage points from 1998 to 2007. For 8th graders, the gender achievement gap widened by 5 percentage points from 1998 to 2007.

Disability: For 4th graders, the disability achievement gap widened by 1 percentage points from 2002 to 2007. For 8th graders, the disability achievement gap decreased by 7 percentage points from 2002 to 2007.

Language status: Kentucky does not have statistically significant sample of English Language Learner students to permit the comparison of achievement levels.

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On ESEA assessments, progress on achievement gaps was moderate.

Race: Across all grades, achievement gaps remained largely steady. The Black-White achievement gap narrowed by 1 percentage point from 2003 to 2009. The Hispanic-White achievement gap similarly narrowed by 1 percentage point from 2003 to 2009.

Socioeconomic status: Across all grades, achievement gaps between low-income students and their higher-income peers narrowed by 4 percentage points from 2003 to 2009.

Disability: Across all grades, achievement gaps between students with a disability and those without narrowed slightly by 1 percentage point from 2003 to 2009.

Language status: Across all grades, achievement gaps stayed essentially constant between students with Limited English Proficiency status and those without that status from 2003 to 2009.

[to be inserted - line chart showing achievement gaps for reading / ELA]

Actions contributing to these improved outcomes

Kentucky is focused on reducing achievement gaps. It has created a Partnership for Minority Student Achievement Taskforce. **[need to insert more here about SB 168 and Achievement Gap Coordinators...FROM COMMISSIONER: We have reengaged with the Closing the Gap task force and broadened participation and Commissioner will personally lead the group in develop specific action plan for this goal area with strong accountability measures at state level]**

(A)(3)(ii)(c) Increasing high school graduation rates

Kentucky is committed to pursuing the twin goals of increased student achievement and attainment. High school graduation is a critical step in each student's education towards success.

Kentucky is not yet able to measure graduation rate according to the four-year or extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rate methodologies. It is actively creating the capacity to do so. It has a clear plan in place and a waiver from USED in the intervening years to report according to the Leaver Rate (see appendix X for plan to implement this methodology and USED waiver).

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Kentucky currently does not collect graduation rate data at the level of granularity that would allow disaggregation by subgroup. Kentucky plans on instituting a more detailed collection of data as it switches to the averaged freshman graduation rate for the class of 2009-2010 to allow it to disaggregate by race. With the shift to the four-year adjusted cohort methodology in later years will come the ability to disaggregate by all statistically valid student subgroups.

Regardless of the methodology, however, the data makes clear that Kentucky is making significant progress in increasing the graduation rate. According to the Leaver Rate⁶, Kentucky's graduation rate has improved from 79.7% in 2001 to 84.5% in 2008, an increase of nearly 5 percentage points. According to the Cumulative Promotion Index⁷, an oft-used third-party measure, Kentucky's graduation rate increased from 62.9% in 1996 to 72.0% in 2006, a gain of approximately 9 percentage points that was the fourth largest gain amongst states during that period of time.

Actions contributing to these improved outcomes

As with progress on achievement rates on NAEP and ESEA assessments, Kentucky believes that the Commonwealth's progress in improving graduation rate outcomes is a product of its comprehensive approach to reform. Details of that are summarized above and the next generation of that strategy is available in criterion (A)(1).

In addition, Kentucky has focused particular attention on low-performing schools for some time, beginning in 1984. The Commonwealth's approach to turnaround is described above in (A)(3)(i) and also in reform plan (E)(2). It is this focus on poor performing schools combined with a comprehensive strategy for improvement to which Kentucky attributes the growth in the graduation rate. Importantly, Kentucky aims to build from this success and graduate more

⁶ Kentucky uses a "leaver rate." This rate is an estimate, not an actual calculation, based on a particular class (or cohort) of students. To calculate the leaver rate, the number of graduates is divided by the total number of graduates plus documented dropouts (the sum of dropouts from each grade, 9–12, in the corresponding years that a four-year graduate would have been enrolled in those grades) and other completers

⁷ The CPI represents the high school experience as a process rather than a single event, capturing the four key steps a student must take in order to graduate: three grade-to-grade promotions (9 to 10, 10 to 11, and 11 to 12) and ultimately earning a diploma (grade 12 to graduation).

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students. To do so, it has launched Graduate Kentucky, a first of its kind comprehensive statewide conversation to not only understand why students are contemplating dropping out of school, but to also share ideas and best practices of how communities can play a pivotal role in reducing the dropout rate and creating a strategic vision for keeping our children engaged in school.

[if possible, add steady improvements in % students who enroll college from CPE showing strong increase in enrollment and attainment levels – David is requesting]

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Reform area: (B) Standards and Assessments

Criterion: (B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards

Points possible: 40 points

Recommended maximum response length: 2 pages

Draft date: January 7, 2010

Specifics of criterion (verbatim from application):

The extent to which the State has demonstrated its commitment to adopting a common set of high-quality standards, evidenced by (as set forth in Appendix B)—

(i) The State’s participation in a consortium of States that— (20 points)

(a) Is working toward jointly developing and adopting a common set of K-12 standards (as defined in this notice) that are supported by evidence that they are internationally benchmarked and build toward college and career readiness by the time of high school graduation; and

(b) Includes a significant number of States; and

(ii) — (20 points)

(a) For Phase 1 applications, the State’s high-quality plan demonstrating its commitment to and progress toward adopting a common set of K-12 standards (as defined in this notice) by August 2, 2010, or, at a minimum, by a later date in 2010 specified by the State, and to implementing the standards thereafter in a well-planned way

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

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

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

For Phase 1 applicants:

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

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Bipartisan commitment to fewer, clearer, higher standards

With the passage of Senate Bill 1 in the 2009 session of the Kentucky General Assembly, the Commonwealth is poised at the beginning of a new era in public school expectations, assessment, and accountability. Senate Bill 1 addresses many areas, with a primary focus on statewide adoption of: 1) new Common Core standards in seven subject areas that are fewer, clearer, and higher than current standards; and 2) a balanced assessment system aligned to the new standards. The timeline for Senate Bill 1 calls for the new system to be complete and in use by the 2011-2012 school year. There is much work to be done in order to meet this aggressive deadline.

Developing and adopting the new Common Core standards

In regards to (B)(1)(i), in May 2009, Kentucky was one of the first states to join the multi-state coalition led by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers, which currently has *XX* states participating. (*See supporting documentation and signatures in Appendix XX*). In regards to (B)(1)(ii), Kentucky leads the pack in being prepared to adopt the Common Core. Senate Bill 1 mandates the adoption of new standards, with the first wave focused on reading and mathematics to be done by February 2010, well in advance of the criterion's deadline of August 2, 2010. Kentucky is completely committed to full adoption of the Common Core and is likely to be the first state to adopt. The full timeline for Kentucky's plan to adopt the new standards is also conveyed in Appendix XX.

The direction Senate Bill 1 sets for standards in Kentucky

- Kentucky will adopt and implement internationally benchmarked Common Core standards that focus on critical knowledge and skill, are fewer but more in-depth, communicate expectations for all students more clearly and concisely, and are aligned from elementary to postsecondary so that students can be successful at each education level
- The Commissioner of Education and the President of the Council on Postsecondary Education will ensure that college entry-level course requirements for postsecondary education are aligned with standards for Mathematics and Reading/Language Arts, and

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that eventually the new standards in all subject areas are aligned between PreK-12 and postsecondary

- The Education Professional Standards Board and the Council on Postsecondary Education will coordinate information and professional learning sessions around the new standards for faculty and staff in all undergraduate and graduate teacher and principal preparation programs, and the Department will facilitate the provision of professional learning sessions for existing teachers and administrators on how to integrate the revised content standards and better integrate performance assessment
- The Education Professional Standards Board will require teacher and principal preparation programs to align their curricula with the new standards and instruct students in the use of the new academic content standards in the pre-service programs

Because adoption of the standards is only the first step, the Department and the Council on Postsecondary Education have led several cross-functional work teams that include both internal and external personnel and stakeholder representatives. *(See (B)(3) for detail on the outputs of these work teams and Kentucky's plan to fully implement Senate Bill 1.)*

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Reform area: (B) Standards and Assessments

Criterion: (B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments

Points possible: 10 points

Recommended maximum response length: 1 page

Draft date: January 7, 2010

Specifics of criterion (verbatim from application):

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

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

Evidence for (B)(2):

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

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Bipartisan commitment to a new balanced assessment system

As described in (B)(1), the passage of Senate Bill 1 in 2009 will reset, rationalize, and reinvigorate Kentucky’s assessment system. Given this legislative mandate, Kentucky is committed to working with three consortia of states to develop assessment tools for evaluating the Common Core standards, starting with working principles derived from an examination of successful state systems in the U.S. and high-achieving systems internationally. *(See Appendices XX, XX, and XX for signed Memoranda of Understanding for all three consortia.)*

Consortium 1: State Consortium Developing Balanced Assessments of the Common Core Standards

This consortium has *XX states signed on*, and will undertake the following activities, which are detailed in Appendix XX:

- Support the development of curricular frameworks (once the Common Core standards have been released)
- Create a digital curriculum and assessment library
- Develop state and local assessments (for both formative and summative purposes, and for grades 3-8 and at the high school level)
- Develop moderation and auditing systems for teacher-scored work
- Develop technology to support the assessment system

The Consortium has put forward the following seven “working principles” which Kentucky completely subscribes to:

- 1) *“Assessments are grounded in a thoughtful, standards-based curriculum and are managed as part of a tightly integrated system of standards, curriculum, assessment, instruction, and teacher development.*
- 2) *Assessments elicit evidence of actual student performance on challenging tasks that prepare students for the demands of college and career in the 21st century.*
- 3) *Teachers are involved in the development of curriculum and the development and scoring of assessments.*
- 4) *Assessments are structured to continuously improve teaching and learning.*

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- 5) *Assessment and accountability systems are designed to improve the quality of learning and schooling.*
- 6) *Assessment and accountability systems use multiple measures to evaluate students and schools.*
- 7) *New technologies enable greater assessment quality and information systems that support accountability.*”

The Consortium also envisions state departments playing several critical roles in implementing the balanced assessment system. According to the Consortium, “States working within the Consortium would: 

- *Adopt and augment the Common Core standards as appropriate to their context.*
- *Create and deploy curriculum frameworks that address the standards—drawing on exemplars and tested curriculum models.*
- *Build and manage an assessment system that includes both on-demand and curriculum-embedded assessments that evaluate the full range of standards and allow evaluation of student progress. The Consortium may develop both joint assessments (commonly implemented by states) as well as other assessment tasks and items linked to the standards (and grounded in curriculum units) that can be incorporated into states’ individual assessment plans for formative or summative purposes.*
- *Develop rubrics that embody the standards, and clear examples of good work, benchmarked to performance standards.*
- *Create oversight / moderation / audit systems for ensuring the comparability of locally managed and scored assessment components.*
- *Ensure that teacher and leader education and development infuse knowledge of learning, curriculum, and assessment.*
- *Implement high-quality professional learning focused on examination of student work, curriculum and assessment development, and moderated scoring.”*

The Kentucky Department of Education intends to make these envisioned contributions.

Consortium 2: Summative Multi-State Assessment Resources for Teachers and Educational Researchers (SMARTER)

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This consortium has *XX states signed on*, and will develop a high-quality summative assessment system with the following characteristics (*see Appendix XX for comprehensive list*):

- Aligned to the Common Core standards, mutually adopted by Consortium states
- Includes teachers, school and district administrators, state departments of education and institutions of higher education in the design, administration, scoring, and reporting of the assessments
- Uses online adaptive tests, innovative item design, and open-ended items to assess the full breadth of cognitive demand described by the Common Core standards

Consortium 3: Multiple Options for Student Assessment and Instruction Consortium (MOSAIC)

This consortium and *XX states signed on*, and will build a balanced assessment system of formative and benchmark assessments, including the following tasks (*see Appendix XX for comprehensive list and further detail*):

- Developing and building professional development materials around the instructional integration of the Common Core standards
- Enabling LEA access to the University of Kansas' Computerized Assessments for Learning (CAL) computerized engine
- Developing a benchmark assessment item bank with capabilities for adaptive testing
- Developing hands-on training and workshop modules for educators that focus on user-friendly strategies to make data-informed instructional decisions based upon formative, benchmark, and summative assessment results

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Reform area: (B) Standards and Assessments

Criterion: (B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments

Points possible: 20 points

Recommended maximum response length: 8 pages

Draft date: January 7, 2010

Specifics of criterion (verbatim from application):

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

Definitions:

High-need students means students at risk of educational failure or otherwise in need of special assistance and support, such as students who are living in poverty, who attend high-minority schools (as defined in this notice), who are far below grade level, who have left school before receiving a regular high school diploma, who are at risk of not graduating with a diploma on time, who are homeless, who are in foster care, who have been incarcerated, who have disabilities, or who are English language learners.

High-quality assessment means an assessment designed to measure a student's knowledge, understanding of, and ability to apply, critical concepts through the use of a variety of item types and formats (e.g., open-ended responses, performance-based tasks). Such assessments should enable measurement of student achievement (as defined in this notice) and student growth (as defined in this notice); be of high technical quality (e.g., be valid, reliable, fair, and aligned to standards); incorporate technology where appropriate; include the assessment of students with disabilities and English language learners; and to the extent feasible, use universal design principles (as defined in section 3 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, as amended, 29 U.S.C. 3002) in development and administration.

Interim assessment means an assessment that is given at regular and specified intervals throughout the school year, is designed to evaluate students' knowledge and skills relative to a specific set of academic standards, and produces results that can be aggregated (e.g., by course, grade level, school, or LEA) in order to inform teachers and administrators at the student, classroom, school, and LEA levels.

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Kentucky has a long history of demonstrated, bipartisan commitment to high standards and expectations for all students. As described in the State Success Factors section, Kentucky established clear expectations that all children can learn at high levels and articulated core content standards as a result of the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990, which were most recently revised in 2006. As described in (B)(1) and (B)(2), Senate Bill 1 demonstrates the Commonwealth's commitment to substantial revision of the existing standards and assessments in seven subject areas, as they are powerful tools for measuring student, school, district and state performance. This legislative mandate directs the Kentucky Department of Education ("the Department") and the Council on Postsecondary Education ("the Council") to plan and implement a comprehensive process for revising academic content standards in all areas, and revising the statewide assessment program for implementation in 2011-2012. Senate Bill 1 also includes clear implementation requirements and sequencing, further demonstrating Kentucky's commitment to internationally benchmarked K-12 standards and high-quality assessments.

Following the passage of Senate Bill 1, the Department, the Council, and key implementation partners (including the Education Professional Standards Board, the Kentucky Education Association, the Kentucky School Boards Association, the Kentucky Association of School Councils, the Kentucky Educational Cooperatives, Jefferson County Public Schools, and other key stakeholder groups) collaborated to create high-quality plans for the statewide transition to and implementation of internationally benchmarked K-12 standards and high-quality assessments tied to these standards. These plans include timelines for adoption and dissemination of standards, development of the assessments, a new approach to professional development, and many other key success factors related to Senate Bill 1 implementation. *(See Appendix XX for a list of Senate Bill 1-related work groups and detailed implementation work plans.)*

Furthermore, because Kentucky has invested in the *Classroom Assessment for Student Learning* approach, which enables teachers to build and utilize formative assessment locally through professional learning teams, the Commonwealth is uniquely positioned to deconstruct standards into the foundations of knowledge, reasoning, performance skills, and product development capabilities that form the scaffolding students will climb to each standard. Not only is a framework already in place for scaffolding, but districts statewide already are preparing teachers

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to build their local scaffolding. In addition, the process provides teachers with a key foundation of assessment literacy by teaching them how to link different kinds of learning targets directly to proper classroom and interim assessment methods. More detail on this will follow in Activities 3, 4, and 5.

In a survey that solicited stakeholders' perspectives on Kentucky's Race to the Top application, more than 80% of the 2440 respondents said that future progress in the area of standards and assessments is important or very important. In fact, when asked about the most important strategies Kentucky should pursue, the strategies that were ranked most frequently in respondents' top three were all focused on adopting and implementing high and clear standards and aligned assessments, and providing tools for teachers to be successful in teaching those standards. Therefore, Kentucky has two **key goals** for the transition to and implementation of internationally benchmarked K-12 standards and high-quality assessments tied to these standards:

- 1) The new standards and assessments are *successfully adopted and disseminated statewide*, so that all Kentucky citizens – students, teachers, parents, school leaders, communities, business, etc. – are educated on and understand the new standards and assessments.
- 2) The new standards and assessments are *successfully implemented in all classrooms* so that all students in Kentucky are prepared for success in the 21st century.

In order to meet the Commonwealth's goals with respect to standards and assessments, there are several key activities that will be undertaken over the next few years.

Activity 1: Adopting and disseminating the Math and English/Language Arts standards

In February 2010, the Kentucky Board of Education will adopt the Common Core standards for Math and English/Language Arts. While Senate Bill 1 mandates the revision for five additional subject areas, Math and English/Language Arts will be the first two subjects completed and released by the multi-state coalition. Immediately following adoption, the Department and several partner organizations will educate key stakeholders on the new standards. The following is an abbreviated list of broad-based dissemination and education activities, all of which will be completed by the Department, the Education Professional Standards Board, the Council, and many partner organizations, by April 1, 2010 (*please see Appendix XX for full list*):

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- Conduct press release/conference immediately following joint approval of standards.
- Conduct trainings on orientation/awareness of standards training for Department personnel.
- Communicate with key legislators to articulate the standards work and necessary resources, and meet with editorial boards to discuss standards and answer questions.
- Continue strong partnership with the Prichard Committee, an organization long-dedicated to promoting educational reforms efforts in Kentucky, to facilitate a multi-faceted campaign, as well as an institutionalized leadership development program for parents, to engage key education stakeholders in the changes resulting from Senate Bill 1.
- Work with additional partners like the Kentucky School Boards Association, the Kentucky Association of School Superintendents, the Kentucky Association of School Administrators, the Kentucky Education Association, the Jefferson County Teachers Association, the Kentucky Association of School Councils, Partnership for NewCities, the Kentucky Parent-Teacher Association, and others to create informational webinars and hold town hall meetings at school locations to share standards information with interested stakeholders, and provide brochures and/or other communications pieces, unique to each role group--students, parents, teachers, administrators, business world, the public, etc.--that explain the standards and their importance to be used in print media or on web sites produced by various organizations (utilizing materials and resources from the Council of Chief State School Officers).
- Hold an educator's webinar series for P-12 practitioners and institutions of higher education that includes a crosswalk document comparing new standards to old standards for use with educators in multiple settings, as well as examples of "deconstructing" standards (*as described in Activity 3 below*) using the new approach to formative assessment as described in the next section.
- Work with Kentucky Education Television to create an educators' online learning series (P-12) through the Kentucky Virtual School.
- Develop talking points & awareness resources for school and district use with parent groups and in other face-to-face group meetings amongst education stakeholders, and education-related communicators (i.e. bloggers, Twitter, Facebook, etc.).

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- Develop public service announcements and guest editorials for use by all available media and publications --television, cable channels, school broadcasts, radio, magazines, journals, etc., including:
 - A series of segments on “Kentucky Tonight,” a popular Kentucky Education Television weekly public affairs discussion program, to bring to the forefront the impact new Common Core internationally benchmarked standards and assessments will have on student success and Kentucky’s economic standing in the global economy. Viewers across the state will have an opportunity to call in to the live broadcast and become part of the discussion;
 - Companion articles in *Kentucky Living*, a rural, cooperative magazine and the largest circulated publication in the state, delivered monthly to 487,000 homes and businesses and read by more than 1.26 million people;
 - a series of articles about standards and professional learning in *KY Teacher*, the Department’s publication that is sent directly to every public school teacher and administrator’s home monthly during the school year.
- Post standards and related educational resources on Department and partner agency websites, and other education-related sites (i.e., Kentucky Education Association, Kentucky Education Television, Prichard Committee, colleges / universities), including creating a publicly accessible site on iTunes U K-12, Apple’s service that uses the iTunes Store infrastructure for managing and distributing educational audio and video content with a state department of education hosted site.
- Work with Partnership for NewCities to engage a diversity of citizens, community leaders and public officials across the state in public forums to discuss how the common standards and assessments initiative promotes the economic and social prosperity of communities, regardless of size or location.
- Use existing local and regional P-16 councils that were established to broaden communication between elementary, secondary, and postsecondary educational entities to increase community understanding of the positive impact the Common Core standards and assessments will have on Kentucky families and overall economic competitiveness.

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A November 2009 report from the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, entitled “The Leaky Bucket,” references the significant body of research that links higher education attainment to increased employment opportunities and income, resulting in reduced spending on corrections, Medicaid, and public employee health benefits. With Senate Bill 1, Kentucky committed to adopting and implementing internationally benchmarked standards and aligned assessments as a step toward increasing higher educational attainment statewide. The outreach and education efforts detailed above will ensure that all Kentucky citizens are informed and educated about the new standards, beginning with Math and English/Language Arts, and why these fewer, clearer, higher standards and corresponding assessments are critical to drive educational change in Kentucky to prepare citizens for competing in the global economy and ensure the Commonwealth’s economy flourishes.

Activity 2: Aligning K-12 and postsecondary education around the new standards

Kentucky is committed to a truly P-20 educational system aligned in preparing students for college and career readiness; in 2006, Kentucky was one of the first states to join the American Diploma Project (ADP) – an effort led by Achieve, Inc. to build a coalition of states committed to increasing college readiness. As a result of joining ADP, Kentucky revised the high school graduation requirements to ensure their alignment with the Council’s pre-college curriculum, which involved increasing math requirements. Recently, conversations have also begun around increasing foreign language requirements to align with the pre-college curriculum. The Department, the Education Professional Standards Board, and the Council will continue to work together to ensure P-20 alignment as mandated by Senate Bill 1, completing the following activities in March 2010, all of which are integrated with the overall plan for the transition to the new standards and assessments:

- Convene P-16 Steering Committee for Unbridled Learning Summit (a convening to discuss Kentucky’s education strategy going forward) and determine intersection points with Governor Beshear’s Transforming Education in Kentucky initiative;
- Provide follow-up trainings after Unbridled Learning Summit; hosted by the Council and the Department, these workshops will enhance faculty understanding of the standards and how to align the new standards with post-secondary curriculum;

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- Refocus the Instructional Support Network to include P-16 instructional leaders (i.e. university faculty, the Network, coops, and partners), with continuing P-16 Network activities to include monthly electronic newsletters and webinars to discuss topics of interest and common issues around standards;
- Establish higher education networks or expert teams, including identifying lead faculty to participate in content area networks (*described below in Activity 3*) and trainings based on new standards (initiative led and facilitated by the Council);
- Establish a “Classroom Assessment for Learning” course in colleges of education that supports pre-service teachers’ understanding and implementation of standards and assessments, specifically the impact teacher use of formative assessments to make immediate instructional adjustments has on student learning.;
- Redirect Title II, Part A, funds to support Improving Educator Quality state grants to focus more specifically on job-embedded professional learning in support of implementing the Common Core standards and assessments. The grants will create university/P-12 partnerships that deliver research based professional development programs to teachers.

These coordination and education efforts will ensure that there is increased collaboration between K-12 and all public and private institutions of higher education and ensure that all educators have an understanding of the new standards. In addition, the Educational Leadership Development Collaborative, which consists of 15 Kentucky educational organizations committed to advancing student achievement, will also direct their advocacy and work on these efforts.

Activity 3: Building networks to deconstruct the standards and create high-quality, aligned instructional supports

Preparing for the standards deconstruction process

Once the standards have been adopted in February 2010, they will need to be analyzed and “deconstructed” so that all Kentucky educators are able to translate them into effective instruction for all students. Deconstructing is the process of identifying what students will know and be able to do when they have mastered the standard. The Core Oversight Team (which

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includes Department/Council/Education Professional Standards Board staff, content consultants, faculty, educational cooperative and other agency leads) will establish the protocol for deconstructing the standards by February 2010, and then will facilitate the process with established Mathematics and English/Language Arts work groups who reviewed the Common Core standards (approximately 60 teacher leads, district personnel, university faculty, and Department staff). In March 2010, the Core Oversight Team will work to annotate and calibrate the deconstructing process and learning targets for a strand of the Mathematics and English/Language Arts standards by developing on-line examples using the protocol to deconstruct selected standards as a way to model the process. Then, by May 2010, the Department's Division of Secondary & Virtual Learning will work with Kentucky Education Television to document the deconstructing process and include this documentation in an online module for broader use and trainings. This use of online technology infrastructure will ensure that educators in all areas of Kentucky, even the most geographically remote, will have access to resources for district leadership teams and school-based professional learning teams. As described next, during spring and summer 2010, regional networks will convene to deconstruct all new Mathematics and English/Language Arts standards and identify and create high-quality tools and resources to ensure teachers are supported in the implementation of the standards in every Kentucky classroom.

Establishing content and administrator leadership networks

Leveraging regional networks is at the heart of Kentucky's strategy to ensure full implementation of the new standards and assessment system. Using a network approach enables strong implementation with fidelity by facilitating local practice-sharing and collaboration, establishing mechanisms for continuous communication and follow-up (as opposed to a one-time training session), increasing access to expertise so that questions can be answered more quickly than if they were to be channeled through the Department, and increasing leadership opportunities throughout the education system. The vision for the networks is that each will develop and sustain a professional learning team and community of content area leaders that possess a strong content knowledge base and knowledge of effective pedagogical content skills. Given the Commonwealth's commitment to implementing Senate Bill 1, network participants will engage in a long term study of the revised standards and assessments to identify and design

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high-quality resources for principals and teachers to successfully implement the new standards in every school and classroom.

For every content area, there will be a content area leadership network (e.g., “Science Leadership Network”) which is comprised of nine regional networks, each supporting approximately 50 participants—enough so that every Kentucky district leadership team can send at least an elementary and secondary teacher leader/administrator to each network. These networks will arise out of and be supported by eight regional Educational Cooperatives and a ninth in Jefferson County, served by the Gheens Professional Development Academy. For each of the nine regional networks within each content area network, there will be a small group of lead facilitators (one of the designated team leads, two Department staff people titled “Implementation Coordinators” [e.g., content specialist, Educator Quality field staff, Reading First coach], an Educational Cooperative consultant, and a member of higher education faculty). This will ensure that at least one facilitator at each network site also will be available to act as a coach or mentor as the network participants implement practices in their own schools/districts. Please reference section (A)(2) for more description on the role of Kentucky’s Educational Cooperatives and Jefferson County Public Schools in this regard. In addition, each district will name one educator in each school as the key point of contact with the Department’s network Implementation Coordinators for each content area, who are housed at each network’s hub. These individuals will be responsible for further assuring that timely information from the state agency gets communicated to each and every teacher. This will lead to clarity of message and higher implementation fidelity so that every student will have the benefit of being globally prepared.

By April 2010, the Department will have identified and met with network and design team leads to establish the Core Oversight Team referenced above in Activity XX. This team, which will include representation from all nine networks and a Department staff person (the Network Consultant) and key partners like Kentucky Education Television, is charged to:

- Ensure consistency and coherence among all of the different content / administrative networks by designing plans for the networks and identifying facilitators for each content and administrator network;

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- Review protocols for learning teams to ensure quality control and coherence/consistency for messages surrounding the characteristics of highly effective teaching and learning;
- Identify resources/processes for deconstructing of standards and design of formative assessments;
- Develop leadership experiences for facilitators and participants in the networks;
- Identify and annotate exemplars of student learning and teacher resources to populate the Continuous Instructional Improvement Technology System described in (C)(3).

Additionally, the Core Oversight Team will identify the Department field staff (i.e., Implementation Coordinators), housed at Educational Cooperatives, Jefferson County Public Schools, and/or other educational agencies, to support implementation of school-based professional learning teams. From April to May 2010, the Department will request proposals and select partners to support local professional learning team development focused on local implementation of the work of the content area and administrator networks. These professional learning teams will work with the district representation that is part of the regional content area network, and will provide the local infrastructure for continuous professional learning and collaboration to ensure implementation with fidelity and usage of the supports developed by the content area leadership networks (*more detail below in Activity 4 and in (D)(5)*).

Creating high-quality resources aligned to the new standards and assessments

Beginning in April 2010, the content area leadership networks, led by the Core Oversight Team, will work to create or identify resources and online materials to facilitate learning for a variety of audiences. These resources will include:

- Curriculum mapping
- Vertical and horizontal alignment of instruction
- Formative assessments, measures and benchmarks
- Progress monitoring tools
- Teacher and principal informal observation and formal evaluation information
- Examples of student learning and video/podcasts of university faculty explaining critical concepts in particular content areas

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These resources will be made available through the Continuous Instructional Improvement Technology System (CIITS) for teachers to access directly (*more detail below in Activity 4 and in section (C)(3)*). These resources will be developed and incorporated into the online system on an ongoing basis (through an established vendor), beginning with tools for the new Math and English/Language Arts standards during the summer and fall of 2010.

Activity 4: Ongoing professional learning around the new standards and assessments

Given Kentucky's commitment to Senate Bill 1, and its ambitious implementation timeline for the new standards and assessments, the work above describes how the State will enable successful implementation for all LEAs by establishing a statewide system of professional learning networks. These networks, along with the CIITS, will provide a support system to ensure that all teachers and principals are continuously supported. Additionally, participants in the existing administrators' CEO network will serve as mentors to other superintendents who have not to date been engaged in their work around continuous school improvement efforts. The State will be working with Dr. Tom Gusky, a prominent education researcher, to develop and evaluate effective professional learning models for teachers and principals. While there is more detail on Kentucky's approach to continuous professional learning in (D)(5), the facets of the system most critical to standards and assessments are the networks described above, and the CIITS and professional learning teams as described below.

The Continuous Instructional Improvement Technology System (CIITS)

It is the Commonwealth's vision that every Kentucky teacher will have a full set of tools available at his/her fingertips to improve every student's learning. As a teacher prepares for a lesson, through the CIITS, he/she can access each student's data to identify which concepts need further exploration and attention in the classroom, access exemplary lesson/unit plans, and even view podcasts from master teachers or higher education faculty on key concepts across the standards. This online environment will allow educators to engage in dialogue about educational practice through social networking tools. Teacher use and application of the CIITS in their daily classroom practice will become an important aspect of their ongoing professional learning.

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Once the first set of high-quality, aligned instructional tools have been finalized by the end of August 2010, they will be made available through the CIITS as described in more detail in (C)(3). This instructional improvement system will include the following components:

- **Curriculum module** – provides resources for curriculum mapping and vertical and horizontal alignment of instruction; also allows for cross-walking of the previous Kentucky standards to the new core standards and allows for development of learning progressions and learning targets.
- **Assessment module** – provides rich information on student learning by allowing users to build, deliver, score, and report on assessments for *formative* and *summative* purposes across all relevant levels of assessment use: *classroom* assessment, *interim benchmark* assessment, and annual *accountability* testing; supports assessment *for learning* by putting the results of these frequent assessments into teachers and students hands – increasing the descriptive feedback (and decreasing the evaluative feedback) and helping students and their teachers truly understand what they are learning; also includes standards-based grade book, student portfolios, and multiple measures reporting .
- **Instruction module** – provides instructional strategies, interventions and student learning resources, incorporating existing resources that Kentucky teachers already have and use (e.g., Encyclomedia, Kentucky Learning Depot, Kentucky Virtual Library).
- **Professional Learning module** – provides rich tools for teacher and principal informal observation and formal evaluation, teacher portfolios, and the evaluation of professional learning opportunities themselves; also provides resources such as online learning courses for job-embedded professional development including custom publishing tools to support collaborative development and sharing of local content among professional learning teams and networks.
- **School Improvement module** – allows schools and districts to create, monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of their improvement efforts. The system will allow for continuous improvement planning within schools and across districts. It will also allow school and district audits to be conducted in a more efficient manner and for schools and districts to track results against a variety of data sets.

Professional Learning Teams

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Professional Learning Teams, which are defined as groups of practitioners that meet and continuously connect regarding specific areas of education practice, will be a key component of the *Classroom Assessment for Student Learning* approach. Kentucky has been working closely with Rick Stiggins to establish trained facilitators who will guide and facilitate the work at the school level. With the support of the GE Foundation, Kentucky now has over 850 trained learning team facilitators, and an *Assessment for Learning Facilitators Network* is being developed to provide ongoing follow-up sessions both online and through scheduled meetings of networks throughout the state. These trained educators are asked to facilitate ongoing learning teams in schools, colleges, and universities to deepen understanding of sound assessment practice and its relationship to student motivation and to learn how to integrate classroom assessment for learning into the teaching and learning process in concrete and specific ways. The networks described in Activity 3 are all regional professional learning teams, housed within the local educational cooperatives and Jefferson County Public Schools. While the content area / administration leadership networks will be key for statewide collaboration around the new standards and assessments, individual district level leadership teams and school-level professional learning teams will provide the infrastructure to ensure ongoing professional learning, collaboration, and successful instruction aligned to the new standards in every classroom in Kentucky.

As described above, over the past year the Department has emphasized and advocated for the use of professional learning teams, but full adoption has been variable across Kentucky's districts and school. As professional development is re-conceptualized over the next year (*see (D)(5) for more detail*) it will be very important that all Kentucky schools fully implement the professional learning team structure, with support provided through the Educational Cooperatives and Jefferson County Public Schools (in particular, through the partnerships established with organizations or experts who can support professional learning team implementation). The Department will support districts to provide each school with the guidance and support necessary to build and maintain effective professional learning teams, including meeting agendas and resources from district leadership teams and educational cooperatives and Jefferson County Public Schools. School-based professional learning teams will also provide the forums to discuss student data, professional development, and to implement future initiatives. Because this new

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approach to ongoing professional learning will require a different use of teacher time in many of the Commonwealth's schools, new legislation that is expected to pass in January 2010 (*see Appendix XX*) will enable districts and schools to organize teachers' schedules to support PLT implementation and job-embedded professional learning.

Activity 5: Implementing a balanced assessment system

Through an ongoing partnership with Rick Stiggins, Kentucky has adopted the following definition of a balanced assessment system, recognizing that assessment is, in part, the process of gathering evidence of student learning to inform instructional decisions. Local district assessment systems serve to promote student success when they inform all those decisions that support and verify learning; that is, when the system serves both *formative* and *summative* purposes across all relevant levels of assessment use. Those levels of use include *classroom* assessment, *interim formative* assessment, *benchmark* assessment and *annual accountability* testing. Senate Bill 1 requires the Department to re-conceptualize and rebuild the student assessment system in Kentucky to create a new balanced assessment system. This system will include many types of assessment, including authentic assessment, to ensure that educators, students, parents, and others understand what students are learning and can best support that learning. Key elements of the new system are detailed more thoroughly in Senate Bill 1 and in Appendix XX, but it is worth reprising here the seven working principles from the Plan for a State Consortium Developing Balanced and Comprehensive Assessments of the Common Core Standards, as these principles will guide the Commonwealth's implementation efforts:

1) *“Assessments are grounded in a thoughtful, standards-based curriculum and are managed as part of a tightly integrated system of standards, curriculum, assessment, instruction, and teacher development.*

2) *Assessments elicit evidence of actual student performance on challenging tasks that prepare students for the demands of college and career in the 21st century.*

3) *Teachers are involved in the development of curriculum and the development and scoring of assessments.*

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- 4) *Assessments are structured to continuously improve teaching and learning.*
- 5) *Assessment and accountability systems are designed to improve the quality of learning and schooling.*
- 6) *Assessment and accountability systems use multiple measures to evaluate students and schools.*
- 7) *New technologies enable greater assessment quality and information systems that support accountability.*”

Classroom Assessments – Curriculum-embedded classroom assessments will enable teachers to continuously assess student learning and adjust ongoing teaching to improve students’ achievement of intended educational outcomes. They are not intended for evaluative and accountability purposes. As part of the *Classroom Assessment of Student Learning* approach, teachers will continuously work individually and together in professional learning teams to create classroom assessments that measure student learning of the standards and identify where students have reached mastery and where they are struggling. The basic approach is as follows: start every assessment with a clear purpose, start with a clear learning target, develop a sound assessment for that context, and communicate results effectively. Teachers and students will use these ongoing, embedded assessments to truly understand what students are learning, and to increase student self-assessment and opportunities for students to communicate about their evolving learning. Many Kentucky educators have already attended training sessions on this new approach to formative assessment; further training and follow-up will take place through the professional learning work described above in Activity XX.

Interim Formative Assessments - There is a significant body of research supporting the efficacy of formative classroom and interim assessment as the levels of application that impact student learning. Interim formative assessments will be formative and local, serving to help local faculties understand how each student did in mastering each standard, so they can summarize

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this information to see what standards students struggle to master so they can improve instruction on those standards right away. The State will provide tools and training to ensure that interim formative assessments meet the definitions and parameters described in the Race to the Top plans; districts and schools will have flexibility in determining deployment (i.e., timing and use of data.)

Benchmark Assessments  Benchmark assessments will enable schools, districts, and the Department to take stock of students' understanding of the standards at a few interim checkpoints over the course of the year, so that all levels of the educational system can make informed decisions where adjustment of the teaching and learning approach may be warranted. Given this approach to and purpose for interim assessment, Kentucky's students will take an online, adaptive test at regular intervals which shows progress toward mastery of standards. Some districts are early adopters of such interim assessment tools; once the new standards are adopted, these districts can continue to use these tools and vendors with whom they have existing contracts, as long as the assessments are tied to the new standards and the results of which are comparable across districts statewide. For those districts that do not yet utilize an interim assessment system, the Department will work to identify potential vendors to work with districts to implement this system, partnering with and learning from other states that plan to do the same. For Math and English/Language Arts, these systems will be in place by the fall of 2010 to accompany the statewide rollout and implementation of the new standards.

Annual assessments - Annual assessments will be common, comprehensive, cumulative assessments administered annually to measure students' mastery over the standards taught to them over a sustained period. Thus, they are primarily summative in nature. They will be aligned with the course standards and content, goals and academic expectations, and require students to demonstrate knowledge, comprehension, application, and higher order cognitive skills. These assessments will align with those developed through the work of the multi-state consortium described in (B)(2) and in Appendix XX. Because reading and math are critical instructional components that facilitate student development, the annual assessments of the Common Core standards will be linked to developmental scales in reading and mathematics (i.e., Lexile and Quantile Frameworks). As a result of the linking process, educators can incorporate the results

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into their day-to-day and year-to-year instructional decision-making. And, as supported by the consortium, the Department will support districts interested in implementing locally designed and evaluated assessments that can be used for accountability purposes. The State Board of Education, at its December 9th meeting, approved the use of end of course assessments as a high school achievement measure (please note that given high school scheduling, these exams may not necessarily be annual). The Department is collaborating with Marc Tucker to study deployment of the Center for Education and the Economy's "Tough Choices, Tough Times" proposal through the Board Examination component as part of the end of course review. The creation and adoption of the Common Core assessment system, including end of course assessments, will be complete by January 2012 for implementation in spring 2012.

A necessary precursor to implementing this new balanced system is to *build assessment literacy*. All educators and stakeholders need a common vocabulary in order to understand how a balanced assessment system directly impacts teaching and learning. Assessment literate educators know:

- The content and skills they are assessing
- Why they are assessing
- How best to assess the skill/concept
- How to best provide students with examples of proficient work
- What can potentially go wrong with assessment
- How to avoid the pitfalls

Teachers who are assessment literate are more likely to provide interventions to close learning gaps. To ensure assessment literacy, the following activities will commence in February 2010 (lead by the Department, unless otherwise noted):

- Prepare documents with assessment literacy definitions to be distributed through the Department website to be available for stakeholders to use in various settings;
- Develop/provide webinar series for P-16 educators to understand and implement new approach to formative assessment (i.e., classroom assessments for student learning as described below);

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- Create a crosswalk of the assessment system, including informational packets and placement on the Department website;
- Create an infomercial that can be broadcast on public television and radio that informs stakeholders of the importance of the balanced assessment system to Kentucky;
- Provide training to every District Assessment Coordinator through face-to-face meetings, webinars, and online assessment literacy modules;
- Provide training to regional educational cooperatives and Jefferson County Public Schools through face-to-face meetings, webinars, and online assessment literacy modules;
- Implement a new course for pre-service and graduate level students on effective formative assessments;
- Develop a system for providing in-depth professional learning for teachers and administrators in the use of formative assessment as an ongoing diagnostic means for improving student engagement, differentiation of instruction and instructional improvement.

Activity 6: Increasing access to challenging courses

One challenge facing Kentucky today is that courses required for graduation are not of consistent content and rigor across the state. At the Kentucky Board of Education meeting in December 2009, Commissioner Holliday proposed, and the Board unanimously approved, for the Department to work with the appropriate stakeholders to develop an administrative regulation requiring uniform academic course codes so that at every school across the Commonwealth, each course code will refer to the same standards and content. There is also, however, a need to increase the access to challenging courses in innovative ways, particularly given Kentucky's rural nature. In the Kentucky legislature's 2008 regular session, Senate Bill 2 was passed, requiring a set of activities aimed at increasing all students' access to challenging coursework, particularly in STEM subject areas.

The new standards will be fewer, clearer, and higher, and while Kentucky's educators will be transforming their instruction to align to these new standards, the Commonwealth's rural nature and associated capacity constraints will require more innovative approaches to ensuring all

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students have access to challenging courses to enable them to meet the new standards and graduate ready for college and career. Through each of the programs described below Kentucky will expand the provision of challenging courses (*more detail on each program included in Appendix XX*).

- *AdvanceKentucky* (AdvanceKY) is a joint effort by the Kentucky Science and Technology Corporation and the Department, in partnership with the National Math and Science Initiative that has shown remarkable preliminary gains in diversity of students engaged in Advanced Placement (AP) courses and successful on AP exams. AdvanceKy helps schools use a variety of approaches to boost AP test results, including opening AP classes to more students, counseling students, providing supplies and equipment, providing intensive training for AP teachers and offering financial incentives to teachers for successful student outcomes. While AdvanceKY has been supported by a variety of public and private funding sources, Race To The Top funding will enable the program to expand by adding an additional 20 schools per year over the next four years; an additional 80 high schools brings us to programming in approximately 50% of KY high schools. Furthermore, the focus of this expansion will be rural, high-poverty, and/or high-minority districts and schools.
- *Project Lead the Way* is a nationally-recognized middle and high school curriculum focused on projects and problem-based contextual learning focused on the STEM content areas. Project Lead the Way's aim is to cultivate student interest in pursuing careers in engineering, advanced manufacturing, biomedical sciences, and energy. To ensure continued economic competitiveness, Kentucky needs more students trained and qualified for careers in these areas. Project Lead the Way makes science, math, engineering and technology engaging for students, and encourages those who may have overlooked a STEM career by opening the door of options and opportunities. Project Lead the Way focuses on the development of logical, problem-solving skills, thereby preparing students for STEM-related postsecondary education or the technology workforce. The success of Project Lead the Way depends on integrated partnerships between elementary, middle and high schools, colleges and universities, and the business and government sectors. Similar to AdvanceKY, Project Lead the Way has been supported by both public and private funding sources. Future investment in this program

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will enable systemic investment in effective teaching and new equipment, enabling growth to an additional 250 public middle and high schools within 2 years, bringing the total to 73% of KY schools. The focus of this expansion will be rural, high-poverty, and/or high-minority districts and schools.

- The *Kentucky Virtual School* is a robust online infrastructure to provide a range of online, e-learning services to help schools and teachers meet their goals for high quality teaching, high student performance, and a strong and supportive environment for every child. This virtual platform is especially important in Kentucky due to the state's rural nature and the geographic isolation of many of its citizens. By integrating Kentucky Virtual School services in their programs, districts, schools, and teachers can find new ways to provide:
 - Access to an expanded curriculum for every student
 - Advanced Placement and foreign language courses
 - Options for credit recovery
 - Increased instructional support for at-risk students
 - Expanded choices to meet gifted and talented students' needs
 - Professional development to build instructional capacity

The Department will partner with Kentucky Education Television and existing virtual school collaboratives to expand Math and English/Language Arts online course offerings beginning in summer 2010, so that challenging courses cover all new standards by summer 2011. Additionally, the Department will partner with community colleges to provide community college coursework online by August 2011.

- Finally, Kentucky has instituted the Individual Learning Plan – an innovated, technology-driven student planning program that gives the opportunity for students, parents, and their teachers to devise customized learning paths so that students can realize their full potential. Through an authentic participation in their Individual Learning Plan, students can identify their need for the types of challenging coursework described above, and can learn about the course options they have. The Individual Learning Plan is also a way for students, parents, and teachers to track student performance (e.g., with respect to the Common Core standards as well as ACT scores) and identify the additional supports a student may require to ensure successful learning and progress toward college and career

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readiness. The platform enables students to connect with college admissions offers. The Individual Learning Plan will also be used as a repository for student work samples, and exemplars that may be used to demonstrate mastery of particular content standards.

Kentucky's Governor and First Lady are committed to future public service announcements to continue to grow adoption and usage of the Individual Learning Plan amongst all students statewide.

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Reform area: (C) Data Systems to Support Instruction

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

Points possible: 24 points (2 points per America COMPETES element)

Recommended maximum response length: 2 pages

Draft date: January 7, 2010

Specifics of criterion (verbatim from application):

The extent to which the State has a statewide longitudinal data system that includes all of the America COMPETES Act elements (as defined in this notice).

Instructions for each reform condition criteria (verbatim from application):

State Reform Conditions Criteria are used to assess a State's progress and its success in creating conditions for reform in specific areas related to the four ARRA education reform areas. The State must provide, for each State Reform Conditions Criterion addressed, a description of the State's current status in meeting that criterion, and at a minimum, the information requested as supporting evidence that the State has met the criterion. The State may also submit additional information that it believes will be helpful to reviewers in judging the criterion.

Evidence:

- Documentation for each of the America COMPETES Act elements (as defined in this notice) that is included in the State's statewide longitudinal data system.

Definitions:

America COMPETES Act elements means (as specified in section 6401(e)(2)(D) of that Act):

- (1) a unique statewide student identifier that does not permit a student to be individually identified by users of the system;
- (2) student-level enrollment, demographic, and program participation information;
- (3) student-level information about the points at which students exit, transfer in, transfer out, drop out, or complete P-16 education programs;
- (4) the capacity to communicate with higher education data systems;
- (5) a State data audit system assessing data quality, validity, and reliability;
- (6) yearly test records of individual students with respect to assessments under section 1111(b) of the ESEA (20 U.S.C. 6311(b));
- (7) information on students not tested by grade and subject;
- (8) a teacher identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students;
- (9) student-level transcript information, including information on courses completed and grades earned;
- (10) student-level college readiness test scores;
- (11) information regarding the extent to which students transition successfully from secondary school to postsecondary education, including whether students enroll in remedial coursework; and
- (12) other information determined necessary to address alignment and adequate preparation for success in postsecondary education.

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Introduction and context

Historically, Kentucky has been a leader in education technology infrastructure development, leveraging that common infrastructure to address persistent resource inequities across geographic locations. In the 1990s we invested over \$600M in the creation of the Kentucky Education Technology System (KETS), a statewide IT infrastructure for public schools. **[Insert data from KETS User Readiness Survey on “smart classrooms” statewide (data available in early January).]** Kentucky was also the first state to implement both standardized district financial reporting and student/school management data systems in all districts and schools.

Building from those successes, in 2006 we began the development of the Kentucky Statewide Longitudinal Data System (KY SLDS) with the help of a first round grant from the Institute of Education Sciences (IES). There were two main **goals** for building our statewide longitudinal system:

1. To provide meaningful data to improve instruction and overall effectiveness at all levels of the system
2. To streamline data collection and reporting to save time and resources and to eliminate the resource gaps between districts across the state

The Commonwealth wanted to put critical data in the hands of decision-makers at all levels to focus on improving instruction:

- Teachers could access more complete data to enable differentiated instruction.
- Principals and superintendents could analyze patterns across classrooms and schools to identify core content that students have not yet mastered.
- Curriculum administrators could analyze program effectiveness.
- State administrators could analyze the impact of programs on student achievement to more effectively allocate funding.
- Postsecondary educator training programs could be research centers for continuous teacher training as well as partners in the creation of professional development and teacher retention activities.

Additionally, analyses showed that data collection and management processes at that time were in need of dramatic improvement. Educators across Kentucky spent too much time searching and collecting data from multiple owners, which meant less time devoted to improving

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instruction. Creating one system at the state level would reduce the time burden on districts and generate huge cost savings by avoiding duplicate efforts across the 174 districts. Most importantly, a statewide data infrastructure would mean all districts had access to the same common resources, thereby ameliorating the resource gaps between our small (often rural) districts and our larger (often urban) districts.

(C)(1) Current status of America COMPETES Act elements

Our statewide longitudinal data system has all twelve America COMPETES Act elements:

- (1) a unique statewide student identifier that does not permit a student to be individually identified by users of the system;
- (2) student-level enrollment, demographic, and program participation information;
- (3) student-level information about the points at which students exit, transfer in, transfer out, drop out, or complete P–16 education programs;
- (4) the capacity to communicate with higher education data systems;
- (5) a State data audit system assessing data quality, validity, and reliability;
- (6) yearly test records of individual students with respect to assessments under section 1111(b) of the ESEA (20 U.S.C. 6311(b));
- (7) information on students not tested by grade and subject;
- (8) a teacher identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students;
- (9) student-level transcript information, including information on courses completed and grades earned;
- (10) student-level college readiness test scores;
- (11) information regarding the extent to which students transition successfully from secondary school to postsecondary education, including whether students enroll in remedial coursework; and
- (12) other information determined necessary to address alignment and adequate preparation for success in postsecondary education.

Appendix XX provides evidence in the form of documentation of each of these elements. **[Need to make sure that documentation is straightforward and sufficient to demonstrate each element. Can pull more information into narrative if needed.]**

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Reform area: (C) Data Systems to Support Instruction

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

Points possible: 5 points

Recommended maximum response length: 2 pages

Draft date: January 7, 2010

Specifics of criterion (verbatim from application):

The extent to which the State has a high-quality plan to ensure that data from the State's statewide longitudinal data system are accessible to, and used to inform and engage, as appropriate, key stakeholders (e.g., parents, students, teachers, principals, LEA leaders, community members, unions, researchers, and policymakers); and that the data support decision-makers in the continuous improvement of efforts in such areas as policy, instruction, operations, management, resource allocation, and overall effectiveness.

Instructions for each reform plan (verbatim from application):

The State must provide, for each Reform Plan Criterion that it chooses to address, a detailed plan for use of grant funds that includes, but need not be limited to--

- (1) The key goals;
- (2) The key activities to be undertaken and rationale for the activities, which should include why the specific activities are thought to bring about the change envisioned and how these activities are linked to the key goals;
- (3) The timeline for implementing the activities;
- (4) The party or parties responsible for implementing the activities;
- (5) The information requested in the performance measures, where applicable (see Appendix A), and where the State proposes plans for reform efforts not covered by a specified performance measure, the State is encouraged to propose performance measures and annual targets for those efforts; and
- (6) The information requested as supporting evidence, if any, for the criterion, together with any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers in judging the credibility of the State's plan.

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Introduction and context

From the start the Kentucky Statewide Longitudinal Data System (KY SLDS) was developed to put critical data into the hands of decision-makers at all levels of the system to positively impact instruction and student learning and success. Without rich and accurate data from year to year engaged stakeholders across the state were unable to make informed strategic decisions about how best to improve instruction from the classroom up through the system. With a long history of reform committed to high standards for all students and accountability for their achievement, since 1992 every school in Kentucky has received its student achievement results for every subject broken out by key demographic groups. Yet accurate data and meaningful information were not linked *over time* in a single data system – key factors in the continuous improvement of the Commonwealth’s educational system. With robust data and information over time, stakeholders will be able to make more effective decisions to improve instruction and student performance – teachers will have access to a more complete data set to enable differentiated instruction, principals and superintendents will be able to analyze patterns across classrooms and schools to identify core content students have not yet mastered and program effectiveness, and state administrators will be able to analyze the impact of programs on student achievement to more effectively allocate funding.

Thus, several years ago Kentucky began to build a statewide longitudinal data system that would enable more effective decision-making at all levels of the system. With the help of an award during the first round of grants from the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) in 2005 and a second award in early 2009, the Commonwealth has built a robust statewide longitudinal data system infrastructure that collects, integrates, and stores key data in a statewide data warehouse. This initial funding supported the building of the Kentucky Statewide Longitudinal Data System (KY SLDS) as a K-12 enterprise. The second award is now being used to design the architecture necessary to expand the system to P-20 – integrating data from preschool (including from the Kentucky Early Childhood Data System (KEDS)) through postsecondary. The Kentucky P-20 Data Collaborative – a partnership between the Kentucky Department of Education (the Department), the Council on Postsecondary Education (the Council), and the Educational Professional Standards Board (the Standards Board) – is leading this work.

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With the foundational infrastructure now in place, stakeholders have begun to access that information for use across the state. In Fall 2009, superintendents, district assessment coordinators, and chief information officers began accessing KY SLDS data at the aggregate school and district level, with principal access opened up in December 2009. In early 2010, the district assessment coordinators in every district will have access to individual student level information, to analyze and report out – an important step as we work toward every *teacher* and *principal* having access to their individual students’ data, in accordance with privacy laws, so they can use this data to improve student achievement. Kentucky is also already reporting select KY SLDS data (e.g., ACT scores, summative state test scores, transcripts) through the Individual Learning Plans – online education planning tools that enable middle and high school students, their parents, and their teachers to track their individual progress and preparation for college and career. The Department has begun providing initial online trainings for district administrators in the use of the KY SLDS data. It has also begun the first phase of data steward and management training at the agency level to improve the culture of data use and data-driven decision making across the Department. Data stewards and data managers have been identified across the Department offices and they have begun receiving training in their roles and responsibilities, namely to ensure accuracy of the data collected and reviewed across Department offices and to enhance the information reporting process through staff development and collaboration with the various offices and programs responsible for producing data and information. (*See Appendix XX for a more detailed description of the roles and responsibilities of data stewards and data managers*) Furthermore, the Department is currently developing a process to provide the General Assembly and its research arm access to the KY SLDS and training on the use of the system prior to the 2010 legislative session.

Kentucky submitted an application for the Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act in December of 2009 to continue to advance our data systems work. As the processes for both that grant and a Race to the Top grant are competitive, the plan that follows represents a comprehensive plan for access and use of State data, and includes work contained in the ARRA SLDS grant proposal. (In accordance with written guidance in the United States Education Department’s Addendum #2 to the Frequently Asked Questions, question M-4, Kentucky has built this plan under the assumption that the State will

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not receive these other competitive funds; see budget narrative for further detail.) (*See Appendix XX for Kentucky's complete ARRA SLDS proposal.*)

The **overarching goal** of our past and future work is that stakeholders across Kentucky:

- Access meaningful longitudinal information at any time through an online portal log-in based on their role and needs, and
- Use that information to improve the system and student outcomes for all of our students

Activities

Building on our successes to date, we will engage in three principal **activities** over the next several years to accomplish our goals.

Activity 1: Expand the Kentucky Statewide Longitudinal Data System (KY SLDS)

Robust longitudinal data across the P-20 and workforce environments is a critical enabler of the work across the four reform areas. For example, integrating teacher and principal preparation and certification data from the EPSB with the KDE's K-12 data is a prerequisite for reporting the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs (*for more detail, see (D)(4) reform plan narrative*). KY SLDS data collection can also provide information on the effectiveness of professional learning opportunities by tracking teacher and school leaders' experiences and student, classroom, school, and district progress. Therefore, our robust longitudinal data system is not an end in itself, but rather a critical means that enables the work across our comprehensive reform agenda. The Kentucky Department of Education will work with an existing vendor to expand the KY SLDS. By late 2012 our planned KY SLDS expansion will be complete so that it houses all identified data sources critical to our statewide reform agenda. [Note: All work in this activity is included in Kentucky's ARRA SLDS grant proposal as well.]

Expanding existing sources

The Commonwealth has begun the process of expanding its KY SLDS data collection and storage to include postsecondary data from the Council on Postsecondary Education (the Council) and teacher and principal preparation and certification data from the Educational Professional Standards Board (the Standards Board). To integrate much of the additional data

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into the KY SLDS, however, the data collection capabilities of these agencies must be enhanced and in some cases reengineered. As a result, stakeholders will be able to access student and educator information across the P-20 and workforce environments (in accordance with all privacy laws and regulations) to better understand what is working and what is not. **[Need to check this against final documentation for (C)(1) to ensure it is consistent.]**

Adding new data

In addition to data from the Council and the Standards Board, Kentucky will also integrate preschool data from the Kentucky Early Childhood Data System (KEDS) as well as new student financial aid and workforce data from the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA), the Office of Employment and Training, and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. Furthermore, Kentucky will be continually adding other important P-12 data sources into the KY SLDS and creating new reports that enable stakeholders to improve instruction – such as the Kentucky High School Feedback Report that provides postsecondary achievement information to high schools as feedback on their graduates. This additional data will provide a more complete picture of the success of our students from preschool through college and career.

Ensuring effective data governance and data quality

Kentucky's multi-agency P-20 Data Collaborative will oversee the process of merging P-20 data within the shared repository, create rules governing access to and use of the data, and make it available for reporting, analysis, and research. As additional agencies join the Collaborative there is the need for a review of the existing governance structure to make any needed changes. Kentucky will also be expanding its current data audit processes (including primary and secondary audits at two points in time) to implement a closed-loop data correction process that requires corrections to be made at the point of data entry, resulting in more robust and accurate data in the KY SLDS.

Activity 2: Improve accessibility

As the KY SLDS is expanded to include the necessary additional data, we will simultaneously be completing our Identity Management System to enable role-based access to the wealth of data in the longitudinal data system through the existing online portal. To enable real improvement in

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instruction and student learning and success, teachers and principals need access to longitudinal data – including results on a variety of authentic assessments over time (*See (B)(3) plan narrative for more information on the various types of assessments*) – for their individual students (in accordance with privacy laws), not solely to aggregate data. Currently, such access is possible, but it is a time-intensive manual process to grant that role-based access and introduces too high a degree of insecurity. Our Identity Management System, however, will automate the role identification of each educator and administrator and link him/her to his/her individual students in a secure fashion. All teachers, principals, and superintendents will have access to their individual students' longitudinal data through the existing online portal during the 2010-2011 school year. Once the Continuous Instructional Improvement Technology System (CIITS; *see plan (C)(3) for more information*) is in place, stakeholders will access KY SLDS data through the CIITS. The Department already provides longitudinal reports about student performance, finances, and educators and plans to improve them and create additional ones going forward, based upon the needs of educators and administrators, but tempered by the requirements of FERPA and other legislation that seeks to protect student privacy and rights. [Note: All work in this activity is included in Kentucky's ARRA SLDS grant proposal as well.]

Activity 3: Drive usage

Having a robust longitudinal data system infrastructure and providing access to even the most meaningful and user-friendly data will not by itself ensure that data is being used to drive continuous improvement at all levels of the system. Stakeholders must understand how to access and *use* that data to make better decisions in their current positions. For that reason we are investing heavily in the development and facilitation of professional learning opportunities. These opportunities will focus on how to use the technology to access longitudinal data and most importantly how to then use that data to drive continuous improvement in student learning. Stakeholders need to be able to identify what data they need, how they can get that data, and how they will use the information to improve their decisions. Building on the Department's initial online and data steward trainings, in early 2010 the Department will facilitate the development of professional learning opportunities to be provided through regional networks. (*See (B)(3) and (D)(5) reform plans for more detail on the comprehensive professional learning system, including the role of regional networks of effective delivery of trainings.*) The data steward

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training, for example, now needs to be delivered statewide to change the culture of data usage in local districts and ensure that data quality and validity is addressed from the ground up. The statewide district level training (provided through the regional networks) will include instruction about how to maintain data quality, how to access data from the KY SLDS, and how to effectively using that data to improve student learning at the classroom, school, and district levels. [Note: Some work in this activity is included in Kentucky's ARRA SLDS grant proposal, while other elements are specific to this Race to the Top application – *See Budget Narrative for specific information on what is included in ARRA SLDS grant and which pieces are only included in the Race to the Top*]

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Reform area: (C) Data Systems to Support Instruction

Criterion: (C)(3) Using data to improve instruction

Points possible: 18 points

Recommended maximum response length: 5 pages

Draft date: January 7, 2010

Specifics of criterion (verbatim from application):

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

- (i) Increase the acquisition, adoption, and use of local instructional improvement systems (as defined in this notice) that provide teachers, principals, and administrators with the information and resources they need to inform and improve their instructional practices, decision-making, and overall effectiveness;
- (ii) Support participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) and schools that are using instructional improvement systems (as defined in this notice) in providing effective professional development to teachers, principals and administrators on how to use these systems and the resulting data to support continuous instructional improvement; and
- (iii) Make the data from instructional improvement systems (as defined in this notice), together with statewide longitudinal data system data, available and accessible to researchers so that they have detailed information with which to evaluate the effectiveness of instructional materials, strategies, and approaches for educating different types of students (e.g., students with disabilities, English language learners, students whose achievement is well below or above grade level).

Definitions

Instructional improvement systems means technology-based tools and other strategies that provide teachers, principals, and administrators with meaningful support and actionable data to systemically manage continuous instructional improvement, including such activities as: instructional planning; gathering information (e.g., through formative assessments (as defined in this notice), interim assessments (as defined in this notice), summative assessments, and looking at student work and other student data); analyzing information with the support of rapid-time (as defined in this notice) reporting; using this information to inform decisions on appropriate next instructional steps; and evaluating the effectiveness of the actions taken. Such systems promote collaborative problem-solving and action planning; they may also integrate instructional data with student-level data such as attendance, discipline, grades, credit accumulation, and student survey results to provide early warning indicators of a student's risk of educational failure.

Participating LEAs means LEAs that choose to work with the State to implement all or significant portions of the State's Race to the Top plan, as specified in each LEA's agreement with the State. Each participating LEA that receives funding under Title I, Part A will receive a share of the 50 percent of a State's grant award that the State must subgrant to LEAs, based on the LEA's relative share of Title I, Part A allocations in the most recent year, in accordance with section 14006(c) of the ARRA. Any participating LEA that does not receive funding under Title I, Part A (as well as one that does) may receive funding from the State's other 50 percent of the grant award, in accordance with the State's plan.

Instructions for each reform plan (verbatim from application):

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The State must provide, for each Reform Plan Criterion that it chooses to address, a detailed plan for use of grant funds that includes, but need not be limited to--

- (1) The key goals;
- (2) The key activities to be undertaken and rationale for the activities, which should include why the specific activities are thought to bring about the change envisioned and how these activities are linked to the key goals;
- (3) The timeline for implementing the activities;
- (4) The party or parties responsible for implementing the activities;
- (5) The information requested in the performance measures, where applicable (see Appendix A), and where the State proposes plans for reform efforts not covered by a specified performance measure, the State is encouraged to propose performance measures and annual targets for those efforts; and
- (6) The information requested as supporting evidence, if any, for the criterion, together with any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers in judging the credibility of the State's plan.

Draft narrative begins on next page

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Introduction

The Commonwealth of Kentucky seeks to ensure that every child is taught by an effective teacher in a school led by an effective principal. Kentucky recognizes the significant impact teachers and principals have on student learning and the importance of providing a variety of resources to ensure they have the knowledge, skills and tools to improve student learning and close achievement gaps. To insure that Kentucky's educators have access to a broad range of high-quality data and instructional resources, the Commonwealth will expand the use of technology across the entire school system. Such technology would meet several pressing needs. Senate Bill 1, passed during the 2009 Kentucky State Legislative Session, requires that the Kentucky Board of Education (the Board) disseminate to local school districts and schools a model curriculum framework which is directly tied to the goals, outcomes, and assessment strategies developed pursuant to Senate Bill 1. In addition, teachers and principals need information on their students' learning and about their own professional practice as it relates to student achievement. For decades Kentucky has worked to ensure equitable resources across all districts, crafting solutions that work in urban and rural environments alike. Kentucky is committing to making access to robust information and high-quality resources available to all, not dependent on geographic location or district size.

To achieve the goal of providing every child access to effective teachers and instructional leaders bold and comprehensive steps need to be taken. Technology must become the widely accepted and used vehicle for improving instructional practice and increasing student learning. Kentucky has successful models to build from such as the online Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) – where students, parents, and teachers access individual student information to monitor their preparation for high school graduation and beyond. (*See (B)(3) narrative plan for further description*). The state must go further, however, to provide educators with an instructional improvement system that provides school districts and schools with a coherent set of interconnected tools and resources. This system must support curriculum planning, multiple indicators of student progress, effective teacher practice, job-embedded professional learning and strong instructional leadership. The instructional improvement system must enable teachers and principals to use data to understand student needs, deliver appropriate instruction, and improve outcomes for all students.

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Stakeholders across the state see the need for critical work in this area. Over 80% of those surveyed agreed that future progress in data systems was important or very important for the Commonwealth. Almost 90% of those surveyed strongly agreed or agreed that implementing instructional improvement systems in schools and districts to provide teachers and others with “rapid time” data on student performance will contribute to increased student learning.

The Kentucky Department of Education (the Department) will build the Continuous Instructional Improvement Technology System (CIITS) – an online platform that will put key information and resources at the fingertips of teachers, principals and administrators. The system will link to already existing proven resources – such as Encyclomedia, the Kentucky Learning Depot, and the Kentucky Virtual Library – as well as include newly developed materials. It will be linked with the Kentucky Statewide Longitudinal Data System (KY SLDS) which provides access to a wide range of longitudinal data elements and reports that can be used to inform classroom practice and improve student learning. To make data from the KY SLDS more usable we will make it more relevant as a job-embedded resource for teachers, Department staff and researchers. Already available data include, for example, assessment items; student demographics; student performance; and teacher demographics such as experience, rank salary, courses taught, and certifications. *(See (C)(2) reform plan for information on the expansion of KY SLDS).*

The CIITS will support the continuous improvement process by connecting teachers and principals to curriculum, assessment, instruction, professional learning, and evaluation resources in one place. CIITS will be a complete set of tools to improve instructional effectiveness, providing educational decision makers with comprehensive data about student instructional outcomes, teacher effectiveness, and leadership (all in accordance with privacy laws) to inform continuous improvement. We believe that interconnectedness (i.e. systems communicating with each other to provide seamless access to data to inform actions and providing tools and resources to support those actions) is a hallmark of a comprehensive continuous improvement system.

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The CIITS will include the following: [*We need to clearly establish where / how data from the KY SLDS will be accessible (e.g., in Assessment Suite, throughout where applicable)*]

- **Curriculum module** – provides resources for deconstructing the new standards, cross-walking between the new standards and previous standards, mapping the curriculum to align with the new standards, and aligning instruction vertically and horizontally across and within grade levels
- **Assessment module** – provides rich information on student learning by allowing users to build, deliver, score, and report on assessments for *formative* and *summative* purposes across all relevant levels of assessment use: *classroom* assessment, *interim benchmark* assessment, and annual *accountability* testing; supports assessment *for learning* by putting the results of these frequent assessments into teachers and students hands – increasing the descriptive feedback to help students and their teachers truly understand what they are learning; also includes a standards-based grade book, student portfolios, and multiple measures reporting
- **Instruction module** – provides a wide range of tools pertaining to instructional strategies (e.g., videos of highly effective lessons), interventions, and student learning resources, incorporating existing resources that Kentucky teachers already have and use (e.g., Encyclomedia, Kentucky Learning Depot, Kentucky Virtual Library) with newly created resources
- **Professional Learning module** – provides teachers and principals with electronic anytime access to all the inputs into their individual efficacy / growth portfolios, including informal observations, self reflections, performance tasks, scores on the rubrics and ratings categories, local evidences inputted by teachers and principals, etc. (all in accordance with privacy laws and regulations); teachers will also be able to access customized resources and professional learning opportunities themselves that align with the portfolios and professional growth needs, e.g., resources such as online learning courses for job-embedded professional development including custom publishing tools to support collaborative development and sharing of local content among professional learning teams and networks
- **School Improvement module** – allows schools and districts to create, monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of their improvement efforts. The system will allow for

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continuous improvement planning within schools and across districts. It will also allow school and district audits to be conducted in a more efficient manner and for schools and districts to track results against a variety of data sets

A fully developed instructional improvement system must connect these sometimes isolated activities by providing a unified platform with tools and resources to support all phases of the continuous improvement process. Given that the continuous improvement process touches students, teachers, and instructional leaders, the Continuous Instructional Improvement Technology System (CIITS) will provide an integrated way to access and analyze numerous sources and kinds of information, including varied and rich student assessment data to assess mastery of standards, teacher lesson plans and instructional pacing, assessment blueprints and item banks, measures of teacher/principal effectiveness (*See (D)(2) plan for more detail*) and on-demand professional learning for teachers and instructional leaders.

Activities

There are three key activities in which the Commonwealth will engage to ensure every teacher and principal in Kentucky accesses and uses the information and resources they need to improve instruction and student achievement.

(C)(3)(i) Activity 1: Development and rollout of the Continuous Instructional Improvement Technology System (CIITS)

The first step in providing teachers and principals with the interconnected set of information and resources to improve student achievement is to build the online instructional improvement system platform itself. The Kentucky Department of Education (the Department) has initiated the procurement process and anticipates that a contract will be awarded in Summer 2010. The CIITS infrastructure will be complete by mid-2011.

The Department will begin immediately to develop content to populate the system. In February 2010, the Department will begin to facilitate the development of content connecting curriculum, assessment, instruction, and professional learning – led by the appropriate Department offices (e.g., Office of Teaching and Learning to lead the content development around the new standards and assessments). The Mathematics and English/Language Arts sections of the Curriculum and

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Assessment modules will be piloted in the 2010 – 2011 school year in accordance with the rollout of the new standards (*see reform plan narrative (B)(3) for more information on the standards rollout*), once the Senate Bill 1 deployment teams have completed deconstructing the standards and developing aligned instructional supports. The next wave of resources, primarily focused on instructional tools, data access and analysis, and professional development, will be loaded into the system once the infrastructure is complete in mid-2011. (*See reform plan narratives (B)(3) and (D)(2) for more detail on the specific content to be developed*). The Department will roll out access to the CIITS to select pilot districts on a voluntary basis (chosen based on their existing levels of collaboration and willingness) during the 2011-2012 school year. The pilot districts will provide valuable feedback to the Department as it makes improvements to the CIITS during the spring and summer 2012 before full statewide rollout during fall 2012. Because of their continuing extraordinary support, the Department will collaborate with its partners (the Prichard Committee, the Kentucky Parent-Teacher Association, the Kentucky Association of School Councils, the Kentucky Education Association, the Kentucky Association of School Superintendents, and others) to communicate with their members around the purpose and benefits of the CIITS. By fall 2012 all teachers, principals, and district administrators will have role-based access to the CIITS. *[Is this timing accurate?]*

(C)(3)(ii) Activity 2: Professional learning around access and use of the CIITS

Access to the right technology, information, and resources is not sufficient unless teachers and principals know how to use them in their day-to-day work to continuously improve instruction and student learning. For this reason our second key activity entails a significant investment in professional learning opportunities for teachers, principals, and district administrators to integrate the CIITS into their work so it becomes “an integral part of the way we do things.”

We will utilize 9 regional networks across the state, each led by a four person leadership core facilitated by and housed at the regional Education Cooperative (or the network housed within Jefferson County Public Schools) (*See (A)(2), (B)(3) and (D)(5) for more detail*), to implement a capacity building model and develop an in-state network of over 400 statewide master trainers who will deliver scalable professional development to local schools, school councils, and districts focused on:

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- 1) how to use the CIITS platform and tools,
- 2) how to use data to understand student needs and inform instruction, and
- 3) how to use instructional data in professional learning teams to support continuous improvement.

Each of the 9 regions will have a KDE CIITS Implementation Coordinator for the four year period to lead the implementation of the CIITS and relevant training across all districts in the state. In each regional network training will be provided to the administrators and teacher leaders that comprise the network who will then be able to lead the efforts in their respective districts. Furthermore, training and support around using data to improve instruction and the CIITS specifically will be integrated into the revamped teacher (Kentucky Teacher Internship Program, KTIP) and principal (Kentucky Principal Internship Program, KPIP) induction programs. Going forward, all new teachers and principals, as well as those who transfer from other states, will receive the training and support necessary to access and use the system.

The Department will facilitate the development of the training during 2010-2011 for roll-out with the CIITS in pilot districts in summer 2011 in advance of the pilot year. The training modules will be rolled out in all the regional networks across the state along with the full rollout of the CIITS in summer 2012 in preparation for statewide rollout to all districts in fall 2012.

[This timeline needs to align with Activity 1 timeline in the event that one changes]

(C)(3)(iii) Activity 3: Researcher access to data from the KY SLDS and CIITS

The wealth of data and resources in the KY SLDS and the CIITS will be accessible to researchers in order to evaluate the success of various materials, strategies, and approaches to educating the diverse groups of students across the Commonwealth. While educators will be continuously evaluating the effect of their instruction on student learning through the various levels of assessment referenced in Activity 1, third party evaluations will provide invaluable insights into what is working and not working across classrooms, schools, and districts.

Kentucky will partner with select researchers each year to ensure they have secure access to KY SLDS and CIITS data to evaluate identified programs, instructional materials and strategies, and more (in accordance with all relevant privacy laws). “Researchers” will include Department curriculum (and other) consultants who will be looking at the impact of instructional activities

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and professional learning activities which may be posted on the system. This will allow for a rating system so teachers will know which of these activities are most effective with different groups of students and in different situations.

Additionally, the Department, the Council on Postsecondary Education, and the Education Professional Standards Board will work together in early 2010 to ensure that Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) are included in the development and piloting phases of the CIITS through their partnerships in the regional networks. Going forward, IHE researchers will be a key source of input and research to inform the continuous improvement of the CIITS itself. Through a Request for Proposals process (same comprehensive process including other work such as standards, professional learning, etc.), the Department will create contracts with IHE researchers most interested in helping the State determine what supports work best to improve teacher effectiveness and student learning. Successful proposals will include analysis of the quantitative data available through the CIITS as well as qualitative data (for example, teacher and principal surveys and analysis of teacher evaluation documentation all provided in accordance with privacy laws, to inform our understanding of teacher use of the CIITS and resulting changes in practice).

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Reform area: (D) Great Teachers and Leaders

Criterion: (D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals

Points possible: 21 points

Recommended maximum response length: 2 pages

Draft date: January 7, 2010

Specifics of criterion (verbatim from application):

The extent to which the State has—

- (i) Legal, statutory, or regulatory provisions that allow alternative routes to certification (as defined in this notice) for teachers and principals, particularly routes that allow for providers in addition to institutions of higher education;
- (ii) Alternative routes to certification (as defined in this notice) that are in use; and
- (iii) A process for monitoring, evaluating, and identifying areas of teacher and principal shortage and for preparing teachers and principals to fill these areas of shortage.

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

Evidence for (D)(1)(i), regarding alternative routes to certification for both teachers and principals:

- A description of the State's applicable laws, statutes, regulations, or other relevant legal documents, including information on the elements of the State's alternative routes (as described in the alternative route to certification definition in this notice).

Evidence for (D)(1)(ii), regarding alternative routes to certification for both teachers and principals:

- A list of the alternative certification programs operating in the State under the State's alternative routes to certification (as defined in this notice), and for each:
 - The elements of the program (as described in the alternative routes to certification definition in this notice).
 - The number of teachers and principals that successfully completed each program in the previous academic year.
 - The total number of teachers and principals certified statewide in the previous academic year.

Instructions for each reform condition criteria (verbatim from application):

State Reform Conditions Criteria are used to assess a State's progress and its success in creating conditions for reform in specific areas related to the four ARRA education reform areas. The State must provide, for each State Reform Conditions Criterion addressed, a description of the State's current status in meeting that criterion, and at a minimum, the information requested as supporting evidence that the State has met the criterion. The State may also submit additional information that it believes will be helpful to reviewers in judging the criterion.

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Definitions:

Alternative routes to certification means pathways to certification that are authorized under the State's laws or regulations, that allow the establishment and operation of teacher and administrator preparation programs in the State, and that have the following characteristics (in addition to standard features such as demonstration of subject-matter mastery, and high-quality instruction in pedagogy and in addressing the needs of all students in the classroom including English language learners and student with disabilities): (a) can be provided by various types of qualified providers, including both institutions of higher education and other providers operating independently from institutions of higher education; (b) are selective in accepting candidates; (c) provide supervised, school-based experiences and ongoing support such as effective mentoring and coaching; (d) significantly limit the amount of coursework required or have options to test out of courses; and (e) upon completion, award the same level of certification that traditional preparation programs award upon completion.

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Introduction and context

Alternative certification options for teachers and principals have been possible in Kentucky since *[insert date]*. There are currently seven defined alternative routes to teacher and administrator certification for those who have demonstrated exceptional work and/or educational experiences. The Education Professional Standards Board (the Standards Board), in existence since 1990, is the state agency that establishes standards and procedures for the alternative route options.

(D)(1)(i) Legal, statutory, or regulatory provisions that allow alternative routes to certification, particularly for providers in addition to institutions of higher education

There are seven options for alternative certification in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. All seven alternative routes, including those provided by private contractors, must meet rigorous state accreditation standards and adhere to Kentucky's high quality bar for teacher and principal preparation programs. *(See Appendix XX for further description of each option, including specific application and program requirements)*. Based on language in KRS 161.028 (included in Appendix XX) the Standards Board has the authority to:

“Promote the development of one or more innovative, nontraditional or alternative administrator or teacher preparation programs through public or private colleges or universities, private contractors, the Department of Education, or the Kentucky Commonwealth Virtual University and waive administrative regulations if needed in order to implement the program.”

Therefore, Kentucky does allow for the inclusion of other providers operating independently from institutions of higher education (e.g., districts, regional cooperatives, outside providers) to provide alternative routes in Kentucky. Programs operating outside of Kentucky's borders must be NCATE accredited. As shown below in the descriptions of the seven options as well in more detail in Appendix XX, these alternative routes meet all five of the characteristics defined in this application:

- (a) Providers can be a wide range of institutions, including both institutions of higher education and other providers operating independently from institutions of higher education

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- (b) Routes are selective in accepting candidates
- (c) Routes provide supervised, school-based experiences and ongoing support such as effective mentoring and coaching
- (d) Routes significantly limit the amount of coursework required or have options to test out of courses
- (e) Routes, upon completion, award the same level of certification that traditional preparation programs award upon completion.

The seven alternative route options in Kentucky include the following:

- Option 1: Exceptional Work Experience Certification – certification for persons with exceptional work experience (at least ten years) in the area in which the certification is being sought; after successful completion of the Kentucky Teacher Internship Program, candidates receive regular professional certificates
- Option 2: Local District Training Program Certification – certification through a local district training program instead of a college / university teacher preparation program
- Option 3: College Faculty Certification – certification of professionals from postsecondary institutions with a master’s or doctoral degree in the academic content area for which the certification is sought and a minimum of five years of full-time teaching experience in the academic content area for which certification is sought
- Option 4: Adjunct Instructor Certification – certification of adjunct instructors who have expertise in areas such as art, music, foreign language, drama, science, and other specialty areas and whom the local board of education employs in part-time positions as adjunct instructors and may not be deemed “highly-qualified” under NCLB
- Option 5: Veterans of the Armed Forces – certification of veterans of the Armed Forces with at least ten years of active duty service, service credited toward armed services retirement, or a combination thereof, as well as a bachelor’s degree in the content area or closely related area for which the certification is sought
- Option 6: University-Based Alternative Route to Certification – certification through alternative university programs that enroll students in a post-baccalaureate teacher preparation program concurrently with employment as a teacher in a local school district

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- Option 7: Institute Alternative Route to Certification – certification of persons in fields other than education to teach in elementary, middle, or secondary programs not limited to teaching in shortage areas; candidates must have a bachelor’s degree with an academic major in the area in which certification is sought or a professional or graduate degree in a field related to the area in which certification is sought; candidates receive a one year temporary provisional teaching certificate and must complete a 240 or 180 hour institute prior to teaching or during the first year of the provisional certificate 

Options 2 and 7 specifically allow for alternative route providers other than universities *[Is this correct?]*. All seven routes are selective in accepting candidates (*See Appendix XX for detailed information on the selectivity of each option*) All alternative routes require that candidates participate in the Kentucky Teacher Internship Program and upon successful completion of that program award a regular professional teaching certificate.

[Need to add detail explaining how the options meet the other two criteria (c) and (d) above]

(D)(1)(ii) Alternative routes to certification (as defined in this notice) that are in use

During the 2009-2010 school year, 10% of Kentucky’s current teachers and 6% of Kentucky’s current principals were certified through alternative routes. 90% of the current Kentucky teachers certified through alternative routes came through Option 6, 3% came through Option 2, and the remaining teachers were spread in small numbers across the other options. 100% of the current Kentucky principals certified through alternative routes came through Option 6.

During the 2009-2010 school year, 17% of Kentucky’s new teachers (with no previous experience) and less than 1% of new principals came through alternative routes. Of the 450 new teachers certified through alternative routes, 93% came through Option 6 programs, 4% came through Option 2 programs, and the others were spread across the other options. The one new principal certified through an alternative route came through Option 6. Further detail by option and by specific certification type can be found as evidence in Appendix XX.

(D)(1)(iii) Process for monitoring, evaluating, and identifying areas of teacher and principal shortage and for preparing teachers and principals to fill these areas of shortage.

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Kentucky's current process for monitoring, evaluating, and identifying areas of teacher and principal shortage is largely done at the district level. Critical shortages are calculated as a percentage of the Full Time Equivalent (FTE) teaching positions for all teachers in Kentucky. A combination of the following unduplicated FTEs may be used to calculate teaching shortage areas in FTEs and the percentage of total FTEs: (a) teaching positions that are unfilled; (b) teaching positions that are filled by teachers who are certified by irregular, provisional, temporary, or emergency certification; and (c) teaching positions that are filled by teachers who are certified but who are teaching in academic subject areas other than their area of preparation. The number of full-time equivalent (FTE) teacher positions in the shortage area is then converted into a percentage using the number of FTE teaching positions for all teachers in the state. There is a total 5% designation limit that assists with the elimination process. The most current data available is used. [*Previous sentences to "Critical shortages..." are not clear. Need to specify how this information is helpful in meeting criteria.*] Teachers and principals are prepared to fill these areas of shortage through specialized programs.

Many of the teachers and principals that enter the profession through alternative routes fill positions in critical shortage areas. One such existing example is UTeach – a program that encourages math and science majors to enter the teaching profession by offering an integrated degree plan, financial assistance, and early teaching experiences for undergraduates, sponsored by the National Math and Science Initiative. Another existing example is Teach Kentucky – a program that recruits new teachers to Kentucky schools to primarily teach in critical shortage areas (e.g., middle school math and science) and requires a high score on the Praxis exams to be accepted. Teach Kentucky currently has teachers in five school districts (Jefferson County, Oldham, Shelby, Spencer and Carroll) and a retention rate of 73%. A final existing program model is the ACES program in Jefferson County – an 18-month district-based certification program in Jefferson County that requires teaching candidates to also commit to teach in Jefferson County Public Schools for three years in the following areas: Elementary Education, Math (Middle and High), Science (Middle and High), and dual certification (Middle and High). [*Need some sense of numbers going through each program annually*]

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Going forward, the Department and the Standards Board are committed to addressing shortage areas. The Standards Board will pursue expansion of high-quality (as determined by effectiveness of teacher and leader graduates) alternative routes provided by institutions operating independently of universities. To do so, the following activities will be undertaken:

- Better publicize Options 6 and 7 by sharing alternate route information at state, regional and national conferences, and improving information available on the Standards Board's alternative certification website.
- Partner with proven high-quality alternative certification programs like Teach For America and Teach Kentucky, with a focus on critical shortage areas (*further detail on the plans to partner with these organizations is included in the (D)(3) plan*).
- Develop new turnaround specialist certification and processes for developing teacher and principal turnaround specialists to staff turnaround schools. This new certification will be based on a model like New Leaders for New Schools that is based on actual field experience.
- Increase the visibility of the most effective preparation programs by developing a system to capture and store information related to all alternative route programs regarding their relative effectiveness in preparing teachers and principals. This information will be integrated with similar information for all traditional route programs to ensure that increasing proportions of new teachers and leaders are prepared through the most effective alternative and traditional routes (*please note that further detail on the plans to reach this goal is included (D)(4) around teacher and principal preparation program effectiveness*).

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Reform area: (D) Great Teachers and Leaders

Criterion: (D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance

Points possible: 58 points

Recommended maximum response length: 10 pages

Draft date: January 7, 2010

Specifics of criterion (verbatim from application):

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

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

Definitions (verbatim from application):

Participating LEAs means LEAs that choose to work with the State to implement all or significant portions of the State's Race to the Top plan, as specified in each LEA's agreement with the State. Each participating LEA that receives funding under Title I, Part A will receive a share of the 50 percent of a State's grant award that the State must subgrant to LEAs, based on the LEA's relative share of Title I, Part A allocations in the most recent year, in accordance with section 14006(c) of the ARRA. Any participating LEA that does not receive funding under Title I, Part A (as well as one that does) may receive funding from the State's other 50 percent of the grant award, in accordance with the State's plan.

Student growth means the change in student achievement (as defined in this notice) for an individual student between two or more points in time. A State may also include other measures that are rigorous and comparable across classrooms.

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Highly effective principal means a principal whose students, overall and for each subgroup, achieve high rates (e.g., one and one-half grade levels in an academic year) of student growth (as defined in this notice). States, LEAs, or schools must include multiple measures, provided that principal effectiveness is evaluated, in significant part, by student growth (as defined in this notice). Supplemental measures may include, for example, high school graduation rates; college enrollment rates; evidence of providing supportive teaching and learning conditions, strong instructional leadership, and positive family and community engagement; or evidence of attracting, developing, and retaining high numbers of effective teachers.

Highly effective teacher means a teacher whose students achieve high rates (e.g., one and one-half grade levels in an academic year) of student growth (as defined in this notice). States, LEAs, or schools must include multiple measures, provided that teacher effectiveness is evaluated, in significant part, by student growth (as defined in this notice). Supplemental measures may include, for example, multiple observation-based assessments of teacher performance or evidence of leadership roles (which may include mentoring or leading professional learning communities) that increase the effectiveness of other teachers in the school or LEA.

Instructions for each reform plan (verbatim from application):

The State must provide, for each Reform Plan Criterion that it chooses to address, a detailed plan for use of grant funds that includes, but need not be limited to--

- (1) The key goals;
- (2) The key activities to be undertaken and rationale for the activities, which should include why the specific activities are thought to bring about the change envisioned and how these activities are linked to the key goals;
- (3) The timeline for implementing the activities;
- (4) The party or parties responsible for implementing the activities;
- (5) The information requested in the performance measures, where applicable (see Appendix A), and where the State proposes plans for reform efforts not covered by a specified performance measure, the State is encouraged to propose performance measures and annual targets for those efforts; and
- (6) The information requested as supporting evidence, if any, for the criterion, together with any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers in judging the credibility of the State's plan.

Draft reform plan begins on next page

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Introduction and context

Over the past decade there has been a growing consensus across the nation on the critical importance of teachers and principals to our students' learning and success. Research has shown that teachers are the single most important school-level factor in driving improvements in student learning. Indeed, in one study, high-need students taught by highly effective teachers for three years in a row outperformed students taught by ineffective teachers over the same period by as much as 50 percentile points. (The New Teacher Project, *The Widget Effect*). The power of an effective principal has also been well documented. Leithwood and Riehl (2003) conclude that school leadership has significant effects on student learning, second only to the effects of the quality of curriculum and teachers' instruction. Case studies of exceptional schools indicate that school leaders influence learning primarily by galvanizing effort around ambitious goals and by establishing conditions that support teachers and that help students succeed (Togneri and Anderson, 2003).

Armed with this information, Kentucky has pursued a number of strategies to increase the effectiveness of our teachers and principals. Several of our districts, in partnership with the Kentucky Department of Education (the Department) and with funding from the Wallace Foundation, have worked to identify the characteristics of highly effective teaching and to capture videos of teachers exemplifying those characteristics to share across the Commonwealth. Another area of focus has been on principal leadership, where we have provided many principals with School Administration Managers (SAMs) to enable them to focus on instructional leadership first and foremost. The Wallace Foundation commissioned an 18 month independent study examining the change of time use by participating principals in 300 schools from eight states (PSA, 2009). The study concluded that, as a result of having these Managers in place, principals changed their daily practice and use of time leading to significant increases in time spent on instructional leadership. Currently, the Department and four district partners are developing model walkthrough, observation, and evaluation tools for teachers and principals that align to a growth model orientation to educator development. Our continued objective cutting across all of this work remains to increase the effectiveness of our teachers and leaders in order to dramatically improve student learning and success.

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Our prior work has made it clear, however, that broad based efforts to improve teacher and principal effectiveness will not move the needle on student achievement if they are not targeted to the individual needs of those educators. Teachers and principals need transparent and actionable data on their students' performance and growth as well as their own professional practice and growth. To improve student achievement, teachers and principals need information on how each student is currently performing, and where there are naïve conceptions or misconceptions in their understanding or gaps in their knowledge and / or skills that need to be addressed. Similarly, teachers and principals must have accurate formative information on their performance, including areas of strength and areas for improvement, to then access targeted and effective supports,.

Our current system does not embed performance information to support professional growth. As such, in some instances the evaluation of teacher and principal practice happens in isolation from the work of teaching and leading. Evaluations today result in [*X% - insert data*] of teachers rated “satisfactory,” providing them with little useful information to improve their own practice and the achievement of their students. Our plan will transform evaluation from an isolated occurrence that generates little actionable information to a regular process that provides teachers and leaders with the robust and transparent information they need to grow as professionals.

Kentucky believes in a comprehensive approach to professional growth and evaluation. As such, though the focus of our work in this plan is on teachers and principals, Kentucky is committed to developing a comprehensive system of evaluation that includes K-12 teachers and principals as well as preschool teachers, superintendents, boards of education, and school councils. This comprehensive system of evaluation will be nested so that the evaluation of each role group is tied to the effective support and performance of those that group is managing – for example, principal evaluation will be fully consistent with and reinforce the role expected of teachers in teacher evaluations, much as superintendents' evaluation will be aligned with enabling principals to be successful in their role. In this way the comprehensive system of evaluation ensures both support and accountability are in place at each level of the system. Kentucky has many of the building blocks in place for such a comprehensive approach:

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- Kentucky already has an established infrastructure to support evaluation of preschool teachers by trained staff using the CLASS instrument.
- The Kentucky School Boards Association has developed an instrument for superintendent evaluation that is currently being used in 88 of our 174 districts.
- The Kentucky Association of School Councils has similar evaluation tools that are voluntary for school councils. The Kentucky Association of School Superintendents, the School Boards Association, and the Association of School Councils are partnering with the Department of to identify the common set of components as a part of the evaluation of superintendents, boards of education and school councils. The School Boards Association is open to a change to the certified evaluation regulation to require that Superintendents be evaluated using instruments that contain at a minimum the agreed upon common components.
- Two educational cooperatives involving tens of districts each have begun to train their superintendents to do instructional rounds. Richard Elmore and others have developed a process—similar to the medical rounds used in teaching hospitals—called “instructional rounds”. The basic process superintendents within cooperatives are being trained to use is that regional educators meet at regular intervals, usually monthly, each time in a different schools. They are asked to address a “problem of practice” the school has identified to solve, such as improving student learning in mathematics or literacy, within the context of the school’s “theory of action”.

This comprehensive system of accountability and performance evaluation will ensure that all parts of the system are aligned to the common goals of improved educator effectiveness and increased student learning.

Vision

Our **goal** is to dramatically improve student learning through the strong professional growth of the teaching and leading professions. To do so, Kentucky will use authentic growth models that include significant measures of student learning for evaluation and development. The State will also measure working conditions to ensure that levels of support for classroom teachers, principals, and superintendents to lead their work are sufficient.

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The growth models the Commonwealth plans to implement depend on the right supportive context to function. They are intertwined with work outlined elsewhere in this application, particularly in the Standards and Assessments plans. Briefly, they depend on an established set of core standards with clear approaches to assessment for understanding each student's mastery of each standard. As preconditions, Kentucky's growth models will require the following elements to be in place:

- Each school and district must have clearly defined achievement expectations as codified in fewer, clearer, higher core standards. In addition, these standards will need to be organized and deconstructed into logical, easy-to-understand progressions of student learning (*more detail in plans (B)(1) and (B)(3)*);
- Each school and district must have a balanced assessment system that includes classroom, interim, and annual assessments all serving formative or summative purposes depending on the instructional context (*more detail in plans (B)(2) and (B)(3)*);
- Each teacher, principal, school, and district must have sufficient assessment literacy to ensure that all assessments in the balanced assessment system are of sufficient quality (*more detail in plan (B)(3)*);
- Finally, each school and district must assess the state of its supportive environments to ensure that working conditions provide the right context for educators to succeed

The Commonwealth, as detailed in the plans referenced above and in this plan, is working to ensure that all three elements exist in districts across the state, dedicating much of its professional learning focus to do so.

The growth models, depicted in the graphic below [**to be inserted**], includes the following key components, ultimately resulting in a more effective pool of educators statewide:

[insert revise visual to reflect revised approach to supporting professional growth and evaluation]

To take each step in turn (more detail on each can be found in subsequent sections of this plan):

- Firstly, key performance information will be collected to inform and improve the effectiveness of individual teachers and principals and of the system as a whole. To 

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assess the effectiveness of *individual teachers and principals*, multiple indicators of student learning that demonstrate student growth and mastery of specific standards will be combined with observation and reflection on the instructional practices intended to result in student mastery. More broadly, to measure the effectiveness of the *system*, information collected from parent and student surveys as well as through a working conditions survey will provide valuable insight into the system's effectiveness. Such measures will speak to the effectiveness of the system in supporting teacher and principal growth, communicating with families, providing wrap-around services for students, and more.

- Second, utilizing the key performance information for individual educators, teachers and principals will be assessed in relation to professional standards on a formative and summative basis to measure professional effectiveness and support professional growth. Formatively, this collaborative process with their supervisor will yield actionable information to guide further professional development. Summatively, educators will present electronic portfolios, built through use of the CIITS (*see plan (C)(3)*). Teachers and principals can add to their electronic portfolio through self-assessment and feedback and can include other local evidences (as developed and detailed through LEA scopes of work).. These portfolios will be assessed against standards with multiple performance ratings. Each educator will be able to access information, from formal evaluations to frequent classroom walkthroughs, anytime on the online CIITS.
- Third, with individual evaluations complete, there will be a wealth of transparent and actionable performance information available to inform decisions at the system and at the individual educator levels regarding professional learning, career paths, and differentiated compensation (for effective teachers who assume leadership roles and additional responsibilities). In addition, these data will also provide additional information in the current processes for tenure conferral and dismissal. (Note that that the inclusion of this additional information in no way over-rides or changes the existing processes for tenure conferral and dismissal.)
- Finally, LEAs will make make decisions based on the individual needs of teachers and principals and the State will use summary data to improve effectiveness of our system as

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a whole and identify support needs that the state and preparation programs can address, leading to increased overall effectiveness of our teachers and leaders statewide.

As described in more detail in the activities that follow, the state will lead the development of a model process and standards, supporting local implementation by districts.

Our plan to implement the teacher and principal growth models includes four main **activities**:

(D)(2)(i) Activity 1: Measuring student growth through multiple indicators

Student learning is the central goal of our education system and thus the critical indicator of our relative success or failure. Multiple measures of student learning that demonstrate significant student growth will be a significant factor in teacher and principal evaluations. For teachers, measures of student learning will be collected for each teacher's individual students. For principals, performance assessment will include the growth in measures of student learning across all classrooms in his/her school.

Kentucky's approach to measuring student learning is grounded in its approach to assessment. That approach, detailed in (B)(2) and (B)(3), will ensure that educators know where each student is at any point in time on the progression of standards. Kentucky envisions three different uses of measures of student growth as it relates to the teacher and principals growth model evaluation system:

1. Demonstration of significant student growth towards student mastery, through multiple measures of student learning and growth
2. Educator use of formative assessments to inform instruction

Demonstration of significant student growth towards mastery

Assessment results are vital inputs as they demonstrate the gains in learning at any particular student has made relative to the high standards Kentucky has set. Building from its focus on core standards and its balanced assessment system, Kentucky defines student growth as the increase in the number of relevant standards that a student has mastered. Evidence of student growth (for an educator, for a school, for a district, for the state), and therefore instructional effectiveness, is thus the change in the proportion of students mastering each relevant standard.

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The index of student achievement is the percent of standards that each student has mastered. By building from the standards, this approach can aggregate up as needed without losing the granularity that is essential to understanding student learning. For example, the percent mastering each standard can be summarized across standards to compile evidence of school or district effectiveness; this can also be done for all students or students within relevant subgroup. Finally, normative interpretations of student performance are easy to accomplish, as local educators can compare their percents mastering standards to their own previous percents (indicating improvement in their effectiveness) or to percents achieved by their peers (in appropriate norm groups).

Evidence to demonstrate student growth towards mastery of standards will necessarily take many forms. It will include benchmark assessments and annual assessments (*described in more detail in (B)(3)*) as well as student exhibitions, pre- and post-assessment data, portfolios of student work, or other measures. Kentucky will also use developmental scales in reading and mathematics (e.g., Lexile and Quantile Frameworks developed by Metametrics) that will demonstrate student growth, linking to the standards to easily drive improvements in instruction. Taken together, these multiple measures will create a rich profile of student learning and growth. Importantly, the measures will not look at simple measures of proficiency, but will instead shed light on the growth students experience in meeting additional standards. As such, these growth measures will not serve as a disincentive for teachers to serve high-need student populations.

The details of the specific measures of student learning for inclusion in the growth instrument will be developed in the first year of development of the growth model instrument, with deep and ongoing participation by teachers and principals. The State has plans to form an accountability commission that would approve growth measures for accountability and clarify any possible regulatory or statutory changes needed [*check for accuracy*].

Educator use of formative assessments

Kentucky believes that the use of data to guide instruction is vital to improve student learning at the greatest possible pace. Teachers will have rapid time student performance data at their fingertips. Formative data will come both from classroom-embedded assessments as well as

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interim assessments FOR learning (more detail in (B)(3)). The research and stakeholders throughout Kentucky concur that teacher's use of formative data to inform instruction and change teaching practices as a result is key to improving student learning. Assessing teachers' use of data in this way will ensure that they are appropriately tracking progress and taking measures to address areas of students needs.

Principals, in partnership with school councils where appropriate, will support teachers in the use of the formative assessments, and determine appropriate instructional supports (e.g., coaching, mentoring) in response to the formative data.

Implementation timeline and responsible parties

Kentucky has several ongoing strands of work that will inform the determination of teacher and principal effectiveness measures, one of which is multiple measures of student learning.

- For teachers, the Kentucky Instructional Leadership Team Network initiative is a partnership of four districts who are beginning the development of a 360 degree teacher continuous professional growth instrument . This model will serve as the basis for further development and piloting of these measures of learning during the year that begins in Fall 2010.
- For principals, a 360 degree principal continuous professional growth instrument is currently being developed and will be similar refined and piloted in multiple districts during Fall 2010. Additionally, Jefferson County Public Schools participated in the field test of the Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education (VAL-ED) and two districts are currently implementing VAL-ED, an instrument that is a 360 degree evidenced-based assessment of leadership behaviors. Kentucky is considering incorporating VAL-ED or something materially similar as part of its comprehensive principal evaluation system.

For both teachers and principals by the end of School Year 2010-11, a refined and detailed list of multiple measures of student learning will be completed for incorporation into the growth model evaluation system.

(D)(2)(ii) Activity 2: Designing and implementing new growth model systems for teachers and principals

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Student growth is the ultimate goal of our education system and the professional growth of teachers and principals is critical to that goal.

In reference to subcriterion (D)(2)(ii)(a) and as mentioned above, the new evaluation system will include both:

- Multiple measures of student learning and growth AND
- Measures that provide actionable feedback on specific teacher and principal behaviors that lead to improved student learning

The combination of these measures will allow each teacher and principal to understand their performance in relation to educator standards, as described in a quality index.

Incorporation of multiple measures of student learning and growth

With the three required elements related to Standards and Assessments in place and with student growth defined as described above, teachers will be assigned responsibility for collecting and reporting to their principal evidence of their own effectiveness in terms of student learning success. Each teacher or principal can accumulate her or his evidence in their electronic “efficacy portfolio,” fully integrated with the CIITS and developed automatically through routine use of the software. Teachers and principals can add to this portfolio as part of their self-assessment. Such a portfolio would have several types of information:

- List of achievement standards
- Instructional procedures used to promote student learning in those terms
- Evidence of the positive impact of those procedures on student learning (selected by the teacher)

For example, day-to-day classroom assessment evidence can be used by teachers and students in collaboration to help students successfully ascend the scaffolding leading up to each standard. These would constitute formative applications of assessment FOR learning. Teachers could use such evidence to establish the efficacy of their daily instruction. Or the teacher and principal could collaborate in planning for teacher development if results indicated it is needed. Further, summative classroom assessment evidence could be mustered by teachers for use in preparing their year-end report, for example, by showing increasing proportion of students mastering required standards. In addition, teachers could make their case for deserving positive evaluations

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by citing evidence of their own professional growth in the form of increasing student success as reflected in interim or annual assessments.

Kentucky considers multiple measures of student learning and growth to be a vital element of a teacher or principal's effectiveness. As such, these measures will constitute a significant factor in the determination of effectiveness. The exact number is under development and will be refined as part of crafting the detailed LEA scopes of work, but will range between 30% and 50%.

Incorporation of specific teacher and principal behaviors that lead to improved student learning
In addition, in order to enable professional growth, teachers and principals need a clear understanding of the behaviors and characteristics that constitute effectiveness at different performance levels. The Kentucky Instructional Leadership Team Network is developing teacher and principal continuous professional growth instruments that will generate the following by May 2010 and be refined and piloted in the Fall of 2010:

- List of indicators of teacher and principal effectiveness (building upon current work and pertinent research, including best-practice models for instructional practice)
- Rubrics for the indicators of teacher and principal effectiveness
- Continuum of the indicators of teacher and principal effectiveness (defining specific indicators expected at various points along the developmental continuum across four rating categories)
- Customized observation and feedback protocols based on indicators of teacher and leader effectiveness

From these models, LEAs will have the opportunity to further detail their approach in their scope of work. Each district would either be part of development of statewide instrument or LEA would have to locally develop an instrument that meets reliability and validity measures. For example, each LEA could customize walkthrough instruments and observation instruments as long as data uploads to CIITS meet state standards.

These tools will serve as the basis for the state-developed model and standards. The standards will articulate common expectations for effective teaching and leading from the beginning

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through advanced performance levels. The State will provide potential examples of evidences that meet those standards. LEAs will have flexibility as they finalize their scope of work to develop local evidences, able to but not required to use the State developed versions. .. As with other areas of the Race to the Top plans, this work will be heavily supported by the regional networks, who will help facilitate and support this work (*described in more detail in (A)(2), (B)(3), and (D)(5)*).

Elements of the growth model evaluation system

With multiple indicators of student learning combined with a rich understanding of teacher and principal practice, Kentucky will assess educator performance as described below.

To assess *teacher* performance against those clearly defined expectations, Kentucky will assess against five component areas:

- Demonstrate leadership
- Establish a respectful environment for a diverse population of students
- Know the content they teach
- Facilitate learning for their students
- Reflect on their practice

[is this the right type of information here or are the components different?]

To assess performance on the *principal* continuum, Kentucky will assess against six component areas, built from the research-based Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education (VAL-ED):

- High Standards for Student Learning
- Rigorous Curriculum
- Quality Instruction
- Culture of Learning & Professional Behavior
- Connections to External Communities
- Performance Accountability

The specific measures in each of these categories will be informed by pilot work underway and detailed over the initial years of state model development.

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For both teachers and principals, the result of the assessment will be a summative rating category that is the aggregate of the individual's performance on each of the standards. Kentucky will have five categories: Ineffective, Developing, Proficient, Accomplished, and Distinguished.

For promoting teacher growth, periodic interim reviews that are collaborative between the teacher and principal of the accumulating portfolio evidence could trigger evaluations of the teacher's strengths and plans for improvement if and when needed. In this same spirit, teammates in professional learning communities can compile evidence from common interim assessments to assist each other in promoting professional improvement. For professional accountability, each teacher would be charged with presenting their final portfolio at the end of the year making as strong a case as they can that they met their professional responsibilities; that is, evidence that they carried out appropriate instruction and that their students attained new levels of academic excellence. Teachers can work with their supervisor to design, carry out data collection, and assemble their own evidence of impact.

Thus, the assessment results from the growth model system could be used to support ongoing teacher development (formative applications) and to make evaluative judgments (summative applications) as required.

In regards to subcriterion (D)(2)(ii)(b), Kentucky is deeply committed to the ongoing involvement of teachers and leaders in the development of these models. To date, the Kentucky Instructional Leadership Team Network is involving large numbers of their teachers, principals, education partner organizations and professors of teacher and principal preparation programs in the process by soliciting their input on the indicators of teacher and principal effectiveness, the rubric creation, and the continuum development. Going forward, further work to refine, pilot, and implement this model will similarly engage deeply and regularly with teachers and principals.

In addition, through finalizing the scope of work for each LEA, the involvement of teachers and principals in the statewide development of standards and evidences will be required. It will be

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paired with local flexibility to customize evidences as long as they meet reliability and validity measures. Work on both of these fronts will be heavily supported by the regional networks, who will help facilitate and support this work (*described in more detail in (A)(2), (B)(3), and (D)(5)*).

Implementation timeline and responsible parties

The Kentucky Department of Education recently secured approval from the Kentucky Board of Education in its December 2009 Board meeting to develop a common statewide model and standards of evaluation based on a growth model approach. The Department will complete its white paper in January 2010, which will articulate its vision for the comprehensive model and standards of teacher and principal evaluation and support. This vision will in turn become an important part of its legislative agenda as it seeks to revise the existing teacher evaluation statute. (*See Appendix XX for proposed revisions to the following Kentucky statute: KRS 156.557,704 KAR 3:345 Certified Personnel Evaluation.*)

As referenced above, the initial development of the teacher and principal continuous professional growth instruments will be complete in May 2010. The teacher continuous professional growth instrument is being piloted in the four partner districts, while the principal continuous professional growth instrument is being piloted in multiple districts including the twelve districts with the School Administration Manager program. Further refinement and piloting of these approaches will occur at the state and local level during School Year 2010-11.

(D)(2)(iii) Activity 3: Conducting annual evaluations of teachers and principals and providing timely feedback, including student growth results, to each educator

Once the growth model systems are in place and the multiple measures of student learning determined, teachers and principals will receive a flow of actionable information over the course of the year as they participate in performance observations and as their students complete informal and formal assessments. The multiple performance measures detailed above as part of the new growth model systems will provide a holistic picture of each teacher's and principal's performance against the professional standards.

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All teachers will have annual authentic performance assessments that provide formative feedback to them on their performance. In addition, teachers will receive a standards-based summative evaluation, at a frequency that depends on their tenure. Pre-service teachers, teachers in their internship, and probationary (pre-tenure) teachers would all receive summative evaluations annually. Teachers with tenured status would receive a summative evaluation once every three years. This approach strikes the right balance in directing limited administrator capacity for evaluation to teachers that need it most. The summative assessment (including an overall assessment relative to the five rating categories mentioned above) based on the rubric and the wealth of rich information collected over the year to support that evaluation. This assessment is intended to assist teachers and principals to assess their performance and set targets for growth over the year to come. They will work in conjunction with their administrator to determine those growth targets.

Teachers and principals will have access to their performance information and annual evaluations *at any time* by logging onto the Continuous Instructional Improvement Technology System (CIITS). Through this online portal, every teacher and principal can view their performance data and feedback. On the CIITS they will also have access to a wealth of high-quality resources and professional learning opportunities to support their individual professional growth. Such access will only be done in a way that effectively protects teacher and principal privacy; the sole intent of providing this access is to improve the ability of teachers and principals to grow in response to the data. *(See (B3) and (D5) reform plan narratives for more on the resources and professional learning opportunities that will be available, and (C)(3) reform plan narrative for more on the CIITS infrastructure)*

Implementation timeline and responsible parties

Following the completion of the initial development in May 2010, and further refinement and pilot work with partnership districts beginning in fall of 2010, Kentucky will roll out the new growth-based evaluation systems to all of the participating districts in Race to the Top. Those districts will implement the new evaluation systems during the 2011-2012 school year and provide critical feedback to the Department as it evaluates and improves the systems. The implementation of this system will be further detailed in the LEA scope of work, with LEAs

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determining which local evidences they will develop as part of this process. Any districts who have decided not to participate in the Race to the Top grant will then be required to adopt the model statewide evaluation system or develop one of their own that meets the Commonwealth's rigorous requirements during the 2011-2012 school year. Performance evaluation information will be accessible through the CIITS portal as of mid-2012, fully meeting all confidentiality needs with the state pulling summary information only.

[need to add content on reliability training and inter-rater reliability training]

A critical piece of the implementation plan for the new growth-based evaluation system will be the provision of professional learning around how the new systems will work, the rationale behind it, and the benefits of the changes to all involved stakeholders. The Commonwealth will solicit support and assistance from LEAs and from school councils to design the professional learning needed to implement with high fidelity the new evaluation systems, as well as the CIITS (using rapid time data to inform decision making), which will be critical to the implementation of the statewide model and standards for evaluation. Once the design of the professional learning opportunities is complete, LEAs will receive training based on a regional deployment structure supported by educational cooperatives and Jefferson County Public Schools as well as their affiliated universities. *(See (D)(5) reform plan narrative for more information on the regional network structure)*

(D)(2)(iv) Activity 4: Using the growth model results to support professional growth

With the wealth of meaningful and transparent performance information resulting from the new growth model systems, educators and administrators will be able to use that information to make decisions that will ultimately result in a more effective statewide pool of practitioners. It will provide teachers with the vision of high quality teaching embodied in the standards and the steps leading to success in achieving that vision embodied in the rubrics. It will enable teachers to experience a high degree of professional respect through goal-setting and professional growth planning processes. It will also provide the support necessary for teachers to take risks and pursue innovation. The targeted decisions they will be empowered to make fall into four general categories:

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(D)(2)(iv)(a) Learning opportunities to advance the professional growth of all teachers and principals

Teacher and principal evaluations based on the growth rubrics will identify individual teacher and principal professional development needs – which can then be supported through targeted learning opportunities. All of the various State, regional, and local programs to improve instruction will be aligned to the common set of expectations defined by the growth models. Teacher learning will be supported through coaching, mentoring, Kentucky Teacher Internship Program, professional learning tems regional universities and colleges of education, and the CIITS, which together will provide a coherent system of support aligned to the same expectations for effective teaching. Principals and school councils will be able to identify trends across their schools and provide targeted opportunities for professional growth. The provision of high-quality professional learning targeted at identified professional growth needs will increase the overall effectiveness of the pool of practitioners statewide.

Specifically, the Kentucky Teacher Internship Program and Kentucky Principal Internship Program (an established but currently dormant program) induction programs for new teachers and principals as well as new hires from other states will be restructured to align with the newly defined growth rubrics for teachers and principals, enabling a seamless system of evaluation and support over their careers. Aligned with the systems of evaluation and support, completion of the Kentucky Teacher Internship Program and the Kentucky Principal Internship Program will increase the extent to which they are a meaningful milestone in a beginning teacher or principal's career. To graduate from the Kentucky Teacher Internship Program and Kentucky Principal Internship Program, beginning teachers and principals will be required to demonstrate a base level of effectiveness as demonstrated through the annual evaluation system. Failure to successfully complete their internship programs within two years will continue to result in the denial of a Kentucky certificate to teach. Beginning principals will be awarded their Level 2 certification after completing their internship program. In order to deliver aligned high-quality evaluation and support to all participating teachers and principals, the Educational Professional Standards Board will be expanding and reengineering their data systems to capture the detailed data necessary by fall 2010. This detailed data will enable coaches and mentors to better tailor

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candidates' professional learning to their development needs. These changes will ensure that induction truly equips new teachers and leaders for success and a seamless transition from preparation into the classroom.

(D)(2)(iv)(b) Differentiated compensation and career advancement aligned to performance

Our effective and highly effective teachers and principals are our greatest resource in improving student learning. We want to reward them for their effectiveness and provide them opportunities for career advancement without leaving the classroom / school. A collaborative working group convened by the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence and including the Department and the Kentucky Education Association worked in 2007 to develop differentiated compensation options. The following career path options tied to differentiated pay available to effective teachers and principals build from that work:

- *School-level teacher leaders* including new teacher mentors, peer reviewers, instructional coaches, on-site professional development facilitators, and math and science lead teachers will be paid a salary add-on in the \$2,500-\$3,500 range and would work a longer school year
- *Highly effective teachers and principals in high-poverty and/or high-minority schools (See (D)(3) reform plan narrative for more information)*
- *Effective teachers in hard-to-staff subject areas* will be reimbursed for the cost of the coursework or other training needed to achieve certification in a shortage area and will receive a salary supplement for participation in approved summer professional development *(See (D)(3) reform plan narrative for more information)*
- *Teachers with high levels of instructional expertise* will be rewarded for their participation in high-quality coherent professional development by moving lanes on the salary schedule (instead of for having accumulated a certain number of credits) – teachers could also demonstrate instructional expertise through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards' (NBPTS) Take One process
- *National Board Certification* will continue to be rewarded and encouraged through salary increases and fee reimbursements

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- *Instructional coaches, curriculum specialists, and other coaches / mentors* including mentors for teacher interns and principal interns approved by the Professional Standards Board
- *Educational Recovery teachers and principals in Academy / Residency models* will earn additional certification (at no cost to them) in the specific skills needed in turnaround environments and will then teach in / lead a turnaround school (*See (E)(2) plan narrative for further detail*)

(D)(2)(iv)(c) Tenure as a meaningful milestone in an educator's career

Kentucky has a four year probationary period, after which teachers must earn tenure status to remain teaching. Current practice does not consistently award tenure transparently and in regard to objective measures of teacher effectiveness, for both probationary teachers that have demonstrated effectiveness and those that have not. Our vision going forward is to make tenure a more meaningful milestone in a teacher's career based on demonstrated performance on the new growth-based evaluation system. To do so, performance data drawn from the growth model will inform the administrator's decision about the conferral of tenure. That is, while the established process for granting tenure will remain the same, the *practice* of granting tenure will improve based on better information about a probationary teacher's effectiveness. To support this practice, the Commonwealth will help districts by setting clear and meaningful performance criteria for awarding tenure and setting guidelines for fair and humane dismissal processes, in both instances ensuring that any changes are fully consistent with the currently established due process for tenure conferral and dismissal.

Importantly, no *policy* changes (to the tenure statute or to teacher due process) are required to improve the extent to which tenure is a meaningful milestone. Kentucky is advantaged relative to other states in that it has a four year window in which it can assess a probationary teacher's effectiveness (as opposed to the too narrow window of two years present in many other states).

Separately, the Education Professional Standards Board will revise its renewal of certification criteria to include demonstrated effectiveness as a requirement to renew certification.

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(D)(2)(iv)(d) Fair and transparent release processes for consistently ineffective teachers and principals

Kentucky legislation currently allows superintendents and principals to dismiss non-tenured and tenured teachers based on ineffective performance. However, [*insert number – X%*] of tenured teachers are actually released each year, often as a result of the significant documentation required, the burden placed on principals, and the lack of a clear determination of a teacher's effectiveness. The implementation of our new growth-based evaluation systems will largely address this barrier by providing principals and superintendents with a wealth of meaningful and transparent performance information on their teachers and principals over the course of the year. There will be no surprises since each teacher and principal will know exactly where he/she stands and what he/she can do to improve. It will allow those teachers and principals that are effective in meeting the standards to continue to grow as determined by their specific needs and interests, setting goals and designing improvement plans.

In the small percentage of cases where an ineffective teacher's or principal's performance does not improve, the Commonwealth will support the fair dismissal of those educators, consistent with established just cause and due process rights. The new growth model system will empower superintendents and principals to have sufficient information to determine effectiveness and enable them to provide differentiated support. In addition, it will provide evidence of systemic support (or the lack thereof). Where teachers and principals are not able to make progress or who demonstrate that they can't achieve the standards through this system will be held accountable and that this could lead to dismissal. In such cases when a principal is concerned about a particular teacher's performance, the principal has the discretion to notify the teacher of these concerns, place them in a time-limited improvement process with support, and remove them if they don't demonstrate improvement over this period of time. The same is true for principals. Of important note here again is that there are no changes envisioned to policy, including relevant statutes and teachers' just cause and due process rights – these represent changes in practice only.

Additionally, as mentioned above in (D)(2)(iv)(c), with four years worth of meaningful student and educator performance data and the provision of high-quality supports, principals will be

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empowered to make more transparent tenure decisions at the end of a probationary's teacher's fourth year.

Implementation timeline and responsible parties

Better decisions around targeted and aligned professional learning will be made (following the guidelines developed by the State) as the growth models are rolled out as pilots during the 2010-2011 school year and more broadly in 2011-12 to help teachers improve their instruction and student performance, supported by principals and school councils. Better decisions in terms of practice around differentiated roles and compensation, tenure, and dismissal will require multiple years of teacher / principal data to be valid and reliable and will be implemented after the second year of performance evaluations are complete in 2013.

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Reform area: (D) Great Teachers and Leaders

Criterion: (D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals

Points possible: 25 points

Recommended maximum response length: 3 pages

Draft date: January 7, 2010

Specifics of criterion (verbatim from application):

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

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

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

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

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

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

Definitions:

High-poverty school means, consistent with section 1111(h)(1)(C)(viii) of the ESEA, a school in the highest quartile of schools in the State with respect to poverty level, using a measure of poverty determined by the State.

High-minority school is defined by the State in a manner consistent with its Teacher Equity Plan. The State should provide, in its Race to the Top application, the definition used.

Highly effective principal means a principal whose students, overall and for each subgroup, achieve high rates (e.g., one and one-half grade levels in an academic year) of student growth (as defined in this notice). States, LEAs, or schools must include multiple measures, provided that principal effectiveness is evaluated, in significant part, by student growth (as defined in this notice). Supplemental measures may include, for example, high school graduation rates; college enrollment rates; evidence of providing supportive teaching and learning conditions, strong instructional leadership, and positive family and community engagement; or evidence of attracting, developing, and retaining high numbers of effective teachers.

Highly effective teacher means a teacher whose students achieve high rates (e.g., one and one-half grade levels in an academic year) of student growth (as defined in this notice). States,

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LEAs, or schools must include multiple measures, provided that teacher effectiveness is evaluated, in significant part, by student growth (as defined in this notice). Supplemental measures may include, for example, multiple observation-based assessments of teacher performance or evidence of leadership roles (which may include mentoring or leading professional learning communities) that increase the effectiveness of other teachers in the school or LEA.

Effective principal means a principal whose students, overall and for each subgroup, achieve acceptable rates (e.g., at least one grade level in an academic year) of student growth (as defined in this notice). States, LEAs, or schools must include multiple measures, provided that principal effectiveness is evaluated, in significant part, by student growth (as defined in this notice). Supplemental measures may include, for example, high school graduation rates and college enrollment rates, as well as evidence of providing supportive teaching and learning conditions, strong instructional leadership, and positive family and community engagement.

Effective teacher means a teacher whose students achieve acceptable rates (e.g., at least one grade level in an academic year) of student growth (as defined in this notice). States, LEAs, or schools must include multiple measures, provided that teacher effectiveness is evaluated, in significant part, by student growth (as defined in this notice). Supplemental measures may include, for example, multiple observation-based assessments of teacher performance.

Instructions for each reform plan (verbatim from application):

The State must provide, for each Reform Plan Criterion that it chooses to address, a detailed plan for use of grant funds that includes, but need not be limited to--

- (1) The key goals;
- (2) The key activities to be undertaken and rationale for the activities, which should include why the specific activities are thought to bring about the change envisioned and how these activities are linked to the key goals;
- (3) The timeline for implementing the activities;
- (4) The party or parties responsible for implementing the activities;
- (5) The information requested in the performance measures, where applicable (see Appendix A), and where the State proposes plans for reform efforts not covered by a specified performance measure, the State is encouraged to propose performance measures and annual targets for those efforts; and
- (6) The information requested as supporting evidence, if any, for the criterion, together with any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers in judging the credibility of the State's plan.

Draft reform plan begins on next page

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Introduction

Kentucky has a long history of focusing great attention on the needs of low-income and minority students. The Kentucky Education Reform Act enacted in 1990 examined policies and practices to ensure that all students have access to a quality education. Since that time, Kentucky has emphasized closing the achievement gap among disaggregated groups of students, with much focus on increasing the quality and diversity of the educator workforce (see Appendix XX, *Kentucky's State Plan on Equitable Teacher Quality* for detail on ongoing initiatives.)

- Kentucky has consistently met No Child Left Behind (NCLB) targets for the equitable distribution of “highly-qualified” teachers. In fact, our latest Highly Qualified Summary Report shows that at Kentucky’s high-poverty and high-minority schools, 98.7% and 98.4% of courses, respectively, are taught by highly-qualified teachers.
- Furthermore, in a study by Regional Education Laboratories, 81% of teachers receiving Minority Educator Recruitment and Retention Scholarship have stayed in teaching.
- Kentucky has required, via statute and enshrined in Senate Bill 168, active monitoring of achievement gaps and the creation of action plans to address them.
- In addition, Kentucky has a national model for equitably funding LEAs across the state, with high-need / high-poverty districts receiving more funds on a per pupil basis (described more fully in (F)(1)(ii)). This serves to level the playing field, helping high-need LEAs and high-need schools to attract and support effective teachers and principals. *[Add national studies that document KY has the most equitable formula in the nation]*
- Kentucky has also focused intently on recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers in critical shortage areas and specifically in high-poverty, high-need Kentucky school districts through its several Transition to Teaching grants – a program that is a partnership with the Kentucky Department of Education and the USED to recruit and retain highly-qualified paraprofessionals, recent college graduates and mid-career professionals to teach in critical shortage areas specifically in high-poverty, high-need Kentucky school districts

However, the NCLB definition of “highly-qualified” is based on certification and background qualifications only, and does not incorporate measures tied to effectiveness. Going forward, Kentucky will shift to using a definition of demonstrated teacher effectiveness (as detailed in

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(D)(2)), rather than highly-qualified, to truly ensure high-need students have equitable access to the most effective teachers and principals.

While past equitable distribution efforts have shown success, Kentucky is prepared to take bolder actions to ensure that the most effective teachers are serving the students who need them most.

The Commonwealth has two **key goals** related to equitable distribution:

- 1) (D)(3)(i): Students in high-poverty and/or high-minority schools are served by highly-effective teachers and principals at equal or higher rates than other students
- 2) (D)(3)(ii): There is a sufficient supply of effective teachers for hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas (as defined in Appendix XX)

Kentucky will undertake several activities to pursue the goals listed above.

Activity 1: Requiring and supporting equity-focused data reports from LEAs

As described in (D)(2), the revamped teacher and principal evaluation systems and growth models within them will provide data on effectiveness levels of teachers and leaders. The Kentucky Department of Education, by providing templates and data analysis support, will empower each participating LEA to create an annual report called the “Teacher and Leader Effectiveness Growth Index Report / Educator Effectiveness Report” that presents data on educator growth and effectiveness in a clear and transparent manner. A sample report is included in Appendix XX. Each report will include:

- On (D)(3)(i), highly-effective teachers and principals for high-poverty and/or high-minority schools
 - For teachers: School-level aggregate data on the number and percentage of teachers across the five rating categories (*See (D)(2) for more detail on the rubrics and ratings categories*) for all schools (as identified in the growth model, assessed in relation to teacher standards), identifying those schools that are high-poverty and/or high-minority.
 - For principals: The percentage of high-poverty and/or high-minority schools that are led by principals in each of the five ratings categories (*See (D)(2) for more detail on the rubrics and ratings categories*) as compared with the percentage of

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non-high-poverty and/or non-high-minority schools led by principals in each of the same five ratings categories in the growth model .

- On (D)(3)(ii), effective teachers for hard-to-staff subject areas, the reports will also include data for hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas, including the breakdown of teachers across the five ratings categories in the growth model and the number of vacancies for each type of position (e.g., by subject area). Continuously tracking, analyzing, and publicly reporting these metrics will ensure LEAs are focused on more and better strategies to equitably distribute teachers and principals.

Furthermore, the Department will provide these data to LEAs to support ongoing decision-making related to career paths and compensation (see (D)(2) for further detail).

Reports will be possible to create and be supported by the Department in a timeline that matches the development of the growth model system described in detail in (D)(2). Thus, some LEAs that are serving as pilots of that system will be able to calculate such reports for the end of School Year 2010-11. Other LEAs will create such reports according to the rollout of the growth models more broadly.

Activity 2: Identifying, recruiting, and retaining effective teachers and principals in classrooms and schools where they are needed most

The Department will support LEAs' implementation of equitable distribution strategies focused on identifying, recruiting, and retaining the most effective teachers and principals in high-poverty and/or high-minority schools, hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas, and turnaround schools.

Strategies for (D)(3)(i) Highly-effective teachers and principals for high-poverty and/or high-minority schools

As described in (D)(2), participating LEAs will adopt teacher and principal growth models that identify the most effective practitioners based on multiple measures, including student learning as a significant factor. The Department recognizes that effectiveness may be partially driven by the context, and will endeavor to ensure that identified effective educators have the skills required to succeed in high-need environments. As part of the second phase of the pilot programs

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conducted to develop the growth models, the Department will invite participating LEAs to develop pilot programs to test approaches to attract and retain highly-effective teachers in high-poverty and/or high-minority schools. Kentucky recognizes that within our State and across the nation we do not yet have solid evidence of what works to recruit and retain effective educators and leaders in high-poverty and high-minority schools. Therefore, the Commonwealth seeks to spur innovative ideas in these pilot districts by empowering local educators and administrators to design and propose equitable distribution strategies and incentives. Such strategies and incentives could be financial or nonfinancial or a combination of both – for example, creating special programs in high-poverty and/or high-minority schools where highly effective teachers teach ninth graders (a critical transition year) and loop with them into tenth grade, receiving targeted professional development and a salary bonus over the two years. Another district might instead propose to offer student loan forgiveness or housing incentives to a cohort of highly effective teachers / principals in high-poverty and/or high-need schools.

The Department will then assess the LEAs' proposals along the following four criteria (informed by the development of similar criteria related to differentiated compensation referenced in (D)(2) and in Appendix XX).

1. District commitment to assessing and improving teacher working conditions – research suggests that financial incentives alone will not attract and retain enough highly-effective teachers to substantially improve achievement in high-need schools. Successful programs will need to address poor working conditions (including but not limited to safety and support in the workplace as well as individual teacher beliefs about whether they believe they can make an effective difference) to better support all teachers and to ensure that the program, including the pay incentive, is sufficient to attract and retain highly effective educators.
2. Willingness to couple the pay incentive with other strategies to improve performance – it is important to recognize that attracting highly-effective teachers and principals alone will not turn around struggling schools. Adequate curriculum materials and resources and appropriate staff development are also needed.
3. Quality of program design – districts would have to show that their proposed incentive program included:

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- specific, objective criteria defining which schools would be eligible
 - specific criteria for determining which teachers would be eligible for the incentives. These should include selection criteria that would assure that highly-effective teachers and principals are being attracted and retained
 - meaningful incentive amounts. Any financial incentives proposed should be large enough to provide at least a 10 percent increase in a teacher's/principal's salary
 - input from those affected in the design process, i.e., practicing teachers/principals
 - highly-effective professional development aimed at improving instruction
4. District willingness to evaluate the success of the incentive program – districts must commit to working with researchers to assess program impact measures, including teacher reactions, changes in vacancy, retention, and turnover rates, improvements in indicators of teacher effectiveness, and improved student learning.

Strategies for (D)(3)(ii) Effective teachers for hard-to-staff subject areas

In parallel to the approach described above, LEAs with significant shortages in hard-to-staff subject / specialty areas (with STEM-subject areas being highest priority) and language instruction educational programs, can also apply to conduct pilots to develop recruitment and retention strategies for those hard to staff subject areas. One idea the Department is particularly interested in is around the development of “mobile expertise” within rural districts, so that via technology and in-person meetings, master teachers in certain subject areas can support the professional learning team leaders at other schools who may not have the same level of experience. For example, a master geometry teacher is offered a financial incentive to spend the first Friday of every month at another school to attend that school's geometry professional learning team and coach the team leader there. The collaboration around teacher compensation referenced above and described in (D)(2) identified the following two types of incentives for the Department to support:

1. Reimbursement for the cost of coursework or other training needed to achieve certification in a shortage area
2. A salary supplement for teachers who are fully state certified and who are assigned to teach in a shortage area, conditional on their participation in summer professional

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development programs aimed at improving content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge

In addition to these pilots, as part of the Department's work related to No Child Left Behind, we have been and will continue to educate LEAs on the importance of hiring practices in recruiting and hiring the most effective teachers, particularly for the schools and classrooms described above. An example of this training comes through the partnership of the Department, the Kentucky Education Association, the Kentucky Association of School Councils, the Kentucky Association of School Administrators, and the Kentucky Association of School Superintendents to conduct ongoing trainings with school councils and district HR personnel to ensure that the hiring timeline enables enough time for the best teachers and principals to be recruited, hired, and placed where they are needed most.

Timeline

As described in (D)(2), initial development of the growth model system is underway and will be developed and initially piloted by end of School Year 2010-11. The Request for Proposals process to obtain proposals from LEAs for equitable distribution pilots will occur during summer 2010, with the first round of pilots beginning in fall 2010. The first set of results indicating which practices and strategies are most promising will be collected in summer 2011, with a more robust set of results available by summer 2012. At that point, the Department and the pilot districts will implement a plan to codify the more effective models and expand them statewide.

[Note: alongside these pilots, the turnaround plans described in (E)(2) will also lead to successful approaches to attract and retain highly-effective teachers (e.g., the "Educational Recovery Specialist" role) in turnaround schools, many of which are also high-poverty and/or high-minority.]

Activity 3: Increasing the supply of teachers and leaders for high-need classrooms and schools

In addition to the approach described above, which seeks to recruit and retain teachers and leaders who have already demonstrated effectiveness, the Department will pursue strategies to

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increase the supply, through both traditional and alternative routes, of teachers and leaders for both high-poverty and/or high-minority schools and hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas. As noted in (D)(1), the Department, the Education Professional Standards Board, and the Council on Postsecondary Education are working together to form partnerships with high-quality, national and local alternative certification programs like Teach For America and Teach Kentucky, as well as new partnerships with regional universities that can help fill the critical shortages in the Commonwealth's high-poverty rural districts.

- We are working with Teach For America to recruit, train, coach, and mentor 30 new teachers a year to teach critical shortage subjects in schools in Eastern Kentucky. These teachers will participate in a rigorous Institute that meets the Standards Board requirements and receive intensive coaching and mentoring during their first two years teaching from Teach for America
- Jefferson County Public Schools has worked extensively with Teach Kentucky to bring highly talented college graduates into the teaching profession, particularly in areas of critical shortages such as math, science and special education. The program has been highly effective with a teacher retention rate double that of Teach for America. This program will be expanded over the next three years.
- The Department, Education Professional Standards Board, and the Council on Postsecondary Education will reach out to postsecondary institutions, and, through an RFP process that will take place during spring and summer 2010, select those that propose new intensive preparation programs in the rural areas of Kentucky (e.g., residency models that train and induct cohorts of teachers to enter high-poverty rural schools and are focused on developing innovative teaching strategies in schools with very scarce resources). The new programs will be developed by Jan 2011, ready to recruit candidates and fully launch in the fall of 2011. ***[Will this be funded by RTTT completely, Title II, or a combination?]***
- Also, the Council on Postsecondary Education recently received \$1.1M in federal funding through the Improving Educator Quality grant which will fund several projects, many of which are focused on math and science (see Appendix XX for more detail.)

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The Department and the Education Professional Standards Board will jointly work to evaluate these programs during their first few years (see (D)(4) for more detail on the Quality Performance Index system to evaluation teacher and principal preparation programs) to ensure that only those that lead to more highly-effective and effective teachers are re-accredited.

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Reform area: (D) Great Teachers and Leaders

Criterion: (D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs

Points possible: 14 points

Recommended maximum response length: 1 page

Draft date: January 7, 2010

Specifics of criterion (verbatim from application):

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

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

Definitions:

Student growth means the change in student achievement (as defined in this notice) for an individual student between two or more points in time. A State may also include other measures that are rigorous and comparable across classrooms.

Effective principal means a principal whose students, overall and for each subgroup, achieve acceptable rates (e.g., at least one grade level in an academic year) of student growth (as defined in this notice). States, LEAs, or schools must include multiple measures, provided that principal effectiveness is evaluated, in significant part, by student growth (as defined in this notice). Supplemental measures may include, for example, high school graduation rates and college enrollment rates, as well as evidence of providing supportive teaching and learning conditions, strong instructional leadership, and positive family and community engagement.

Effective teacher means a teacher whose students achieve acceptable rates (e.g., at least one grade level in an academic year) of student growth (as defined in this notice). States, LEAs, or schools must include multiple measures, provided that teacher effectiveness is evaluated, in significant part, by student growth (as defined in this notice). Supplemental measures may include, for example, multiple observation-based assessments of teacher performance.

Instructions for each reform plan (verbatim from application):

The State must provide, for each Reform Plan Criterion that it chooses to address, a detailed plan for use of grant funds that includes, but need not be limited to--

- (1) The key goals;
- (2) The key activities to be undertaken and rationale for the activities, which should include why the specific activities are thought to bring about the change envisioned and how these activities are linked to the key goals;
- (3) The timeline for implementing the activities;
- (4) The party or parties responsible for implementing the activities;
- (5) The information requested in the performance measures, where applicable (see Appendix A), and where the State proposes plans for reform efforts not covered by a specified

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- performance measure, the State is encouraged to propose performance measures and annual targets for those efforts; and
- (6) The information requested as supporting evidence, if any, for the criterion, together with any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers in judging the credibility of the State's plan.

Draft reform plan begins on next page

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Introduction and context

Kentucky has worked over the years to increase the effectiveness of its teacher and principal preparation programs. The Education Professional Standards Board (the Standards Board), established in 1990, “...in full collaboration and cooperation with its education partners, promotes high levels of student achievement by establishing and enforcing rigorous professional standards for preparation, certification, and responsible and ethical behavior of all professional educators in Kentucky.” Of particular note in this area are two efforts:

- Since May of 2001, the Kentucky’s Educator Preparation Programs report card (the Report Card) has been in place to provide stakeholders a snapshot of the quality of teacher preparation programs throughout the Commonwealth in any given year (see Appendix XX for full Report Card history and description).
- The Standards Board has already approved policies to “sunset” all teacher-leader master’s and principal preparation programs. Beginning on December 31, 2010 the Standards Board will “sunset” the accreditation of all its teacher-leader master’s programs. All principal preparation programs will “sunset” on December 31, 2011. To regain accreditation, these programs must revamp their program models to meet high standards of best practice, including a strong focus on practical experience.

(D)(4)(i) Measuring and reporting preparation program effectiveness

The Report Card is Kentucky’s mechanism for publicizing the effectiveness of its preparation programs. One previous component of the Report Card mentioned above is the Quality Performance Index (the Index) rating, which was suspended by the Standards Board in 2007 due to concerns associated with the components of the calculation as measures of program quality (see Appendix XX for description of formerly-reported Index.) The Standards Board stands ready to redesign the Index, now the Effective Educator Preparation Index (EEPI) and the Effective Principal Preparation Index (EPPI), to create a single numerical indicator of program quality to enable a publicly-released ranking of teacher and principal preparation programs according to the effectiveness of their graduates. It has identified the formulas required and done preliminary analysis; with limited future work, this idea can go to scale with very rapid impact.

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The redesigned Indices will merge multiple inputs into an algorithm that results in a single score for each program within a broader “unit” (i.e., a special education teacher program), as well as an aggregate score for the “unit” (i.e., a college of education). Among these inputs will be multiple measures of student learning (as described in the teacher and principal growth models explained in (D)(2)). Additionally, the educator Index will include data from an evaluation of preservice teacher competence and effectiveness as measured by an instrument that will meet standards of psychometric *rigor* and also provide evidence of substantive *relevance* to policy decisions about improvement of teacher quality (more information on this project in Appendix XX). Because the data from the teacher and principal growth models will be an input into the Index, the Report Card will also be able to include which preparation programs produce the highest percentages of effective and highly-effective teachers and principals. (See (D)(2) narrative for more description on the teacher and principal growth models). The Effective Educator Preparation Index and the Effective Principal Preparation Index will include both quantitative (e.g., average scores on Praxis tests) and qualitative (e.g., outcomes of the New Teacher Survey) indicators. For a complete list of the effectiveness indicators that will be included in the Indices, see Appendix XX. [*Several commentators have asked about qualitative mechanisms of measuring teacher effectiveness (e.g., site visit and interviews with key stakeholders, surveys of the graduates, surveys of principals who have hired these teachers, surveys of human resource and curriculum support staff, and surveys of the faculty of the institution). Are any of these going to be included?*]. [*Will teacher retention information, post preparation, be included?*]

The Standards Board will work with the Kentucky Statewide Longitudinal Data System team to ensure that the postsecondary data necessary for the Indices is included in the data system (see Appendix XX for full list of the Indices elements and necessary data). The Standards Board will have finalized the new educator Index algorithm by December 31, 2011, and the principal Index by June 30, 2012, and will test the calculation for a subset of preparation programs (the preparation programs whose data is most easily linked with the longitudinal data system will be included first; however, the Indices will not be included in the Report Card until all programs can be included.) By 2011, all preparation program data, including alternative certification routes, will be linked with the longitudinal data system and the first Report Card including the revised Indices ranking will be released.

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(D)(4)(ii) Approach to expanding effective programs

Once the Indices have been revised, the teacher and principal preparation “market” will have annual reports that show which preparation programs’ graduates are most effective. *[Address comment from reviewer about wanting to make sure we don’t discourage a higher ed institution from placing new teachers in challenging settings, ECE, etc.]* On the demand side, the Report Cards will enable prospective teachers and principals to choose programs that most effectively prepare them, and LEAs can focus recruitment efforts on these programs as well. On the supply side, in addition to providing data so that these market dynamics result in more effective programs, the Standards Board will revise the reaccreditation process so that programs must meet a minimum quality threshold to be reaccredited.

Additionally, Kentucky has plans to increase the clinical experience that pre-service teacher candidates receive in their programs. At its January meeting, the Standards Board will be appointing a Committee to Review Admission and Clinical Experiences to explore: (1) current best practices on the selection of high quality candidates into the teaching profession, and (2) how to best provide high quality clinical experiences for both traditional candidates and those seeking initial certification through an alternative route. By June 2010, this committee is expected to bring recommendations for change in current regulations and policy so that all of Kentucky’s teacher and principal preparation programs are selecting candidates who possess the skills, knowledge, and dispositions, as well as providing the high quality clinical experiences proven to be highly effective teachers. The new Report Card with the Effective Educator Preparation Index and the Effective Principal Preparation Index will permit the Commonwealth to monitor each program not just once every seven years (as now is the case) but continuously.

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Reform area: (D) Great Teachers and Leaders

Criterion: (D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals

Points possible: 20 points

Recommended maximum response length: 5 pages

Draft date: January 7, 2010

Specifics of criterion (verbatim from application):

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

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

Instructions for each reform plan (verbatim from application):

The State must provide, for each Reform Plan Criterion that it chooses to address, a detailed plan for use of grant funds that includes, but need not be limited to--

- (7) The key goals;
- (8) The key activities to be undertaken and rationale for the activities, which should include why the specific activities are thought to bring about the change envisioned and how these activities are linked to the key goals;
- (9) The timeline for implementing the activities;
- (10) The party or parties responsible for implementing the activities;
- (11) The information requested in the performance measures, where applicable (see Appendix A), and where the State proposes plans for reform efforts not covered by a specified performance measure, the State is encouraged to propose performance measures and annual targets for those efforts; and
- (12) The information requested as supporting evidence, if any, for the criterion, together with any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers in judging the credibility of the State's plan.

Definitions (verbatim from application):

Participating LEAs means LEAs that choose to work with the State to implement all or significant portions of the State's Race to the Top plan, as specified in each LEA's agreement with the State. Each participating LEA that receives funding under Title I, Part A will receive a share of the 50 percent of a State's grant award that the State must subgrant to LEAs, based on the LEA's relative share of Title I, Part A allocations in the most recent year, in accordance with section 14006(c) of the ARRA. Any participating LEA that does not receive funding under Title

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I, Part A (as well as one that does) may receive funding from the State's other 50 percent of the grant award, in accordance with the State's plan.

High-need students means students at risk of educational failure or otherwise in need of special assistance and support, such as students who are living in poverty, who attend high-minority schools (as defined in this notice), who are far below grade level, who have left school before receiving a regular high school diploma, who are at risk of not graduating with a diploma on time, who are homeless, who are in foster care, who have been incarcerated, who have disabilities, or who are English language learners.

Student achievement means—

(a) For tested grades and subjects: (1) a student's score on the State's assessments under the ESEA; and, as appropriate, (2) other measures of student learning, such as those described in paragraph (b) of this definition, provided they are rigorous and comparable across classrooms.

(b) For non-tested grades and subjects: alternative measures of student learning and performance such as student scores on pre-tests and end-of-course tests; student performance on English language proficiency assessments; and other measures of student achievement that are rigorous and comparable across classrooms.

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Introduction and context

A robust professional learning system to support teachers and principals is critical to ensure that all students across the Commonwealth are served by effective educators. Combined with a powerful growth-based performance evaluation system (*described in (D)(2)*), targeted, high-quality professional learning supports will boost the overall effectiveness of our teachers and leaders, thereby playing a critical role in improving student outcomes. Kentucky's education stakeholders agree; in a survey conducted to solicit stakeholders' perspectives as the Kentucky Department of Education ("the Department") prepared Kentucky's Race to the Top application, 90% of the 2440 respondents agree or strongly agree that high-quality professional learning opportunities for teachers and principals aligned with their growth needs will contribute to Kentucky's performance around teacher and principal effectiveness and increase student learning.

Kentucky's approach to professional learning has been informed by teachers, principals, researchers, providers, and past experience. This new comprehensive, professional learning system encompasses teacher and principal preparation, induction, ongoing professional learning, collaboration, and continuous improvement. Furthermore, this professional learning system will be a critical implementation and training mechanism to ensure that the professional learning required to successfully implement the many pieces of the Commonwealth's comprehensive reform agenda (e.g., deconstructing and implementing the new standards and assessments, using student data to inform instruction, improving teacher and leader effectiveness, and implementing new turnaround approaches) takes place and key strategic elements are adopted with fidelity.

Kentucky's **goal** is to provide effective supports and learning opportunities through a coordinated professional learning system for teachers and leaders so that they are able to continuously improve their practice and increase student learning based on each of their unique needs and goals. This system will not be static – it will be continuously evaluated and improved to ensure that the supports provided teachers and leaders truly result in increased student learning. The following activities detail how the State intends to meet these goals with respect to professional learning for teachers and principals.

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(D)(5)(i) Activity 1: Revising the State’s approach to professional learning

Historically, Kentucky has not undertaken a singular approach to professional learning, but rather, LEAs and school councils have each selected their own vendors and approaches. This has resulted in a disparate set of trainings, materials, methods, and ultimately, variable impact across these professional learning models in terms of increasing teacher and principal effectiveness. Going forward, the State will support LEAs and school councils to access high-quality professional learning opportunities for teachers and principals, with a focus on those that have evidence of effectiveness in leading to increased student learning. The Department, by strengthening the professional learning infrastructure as part of the Common Core standards and assessments implementation, will provide districts with a hybrid model for professional learning that combines technology-based and in-person professional learning experiences and supports. Districts and school councils can then utilize this infrastructure to leverage change in their own systems. Furthermore, through the CIITS (*see section (C)(3) for more detail*), there will be a database of effective professional learning opportunities and programs that can be accessed for individual teacher, school, or district needs based on student learning data. Many districts will therefore be able to share effective professional learning strategies through the this platform.

Strengthening the system of networks

As described in (B)(3), the transition to the new Common Core standards and aligned assessments will be the leading edge of the State’s network-based approach to professional learning. Across the Commonwealth, existing networks housed at and supported by the eight regional Educational Cooperatives and the Gheens Professional Development Academy in Jefferson County will be leveraged to ensure LEAs have access to one of nine professional learning networks (*see (A)(2) for more detail on capacity building and the role of the Educational Cooperatives, and Appendix XX for a graphical representation of the system of networks*). These existing network infrastructures currently address several areas, from collective curriculum purchasing to principal training. Going forward, the networks will be strengthened and refocused on teacher and principal professional learning, starting in February 2010 with the work required to transition to the new standards. The aim of this network structure is to provide support for LEAs so that all teachers have access to effective professional learning. The Network Coordinator, a new position at the Department, will be the primary point-of-contact and

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coordinator of the networks. The Commonwealth will begin with two types of statewide systems of networks to support LEAs with the provision of effective professional learning for teachers and principals (though the Department will reassess the structure and revise or augment the approach should the need arise):

1. *Content area leadership networks* will be most critical for the transition to the new standards. Each content area leadership network is comprised of nine regional networks, each with a four-person leadership corps that includes a designated team lead, two Department staff people (titled “Implementation Coordinators,” e.g., content specialists, Educator Quality field staff, Reading First coaches), an Educational Cooperative consultant, and a higher education faculty member. Because Kentucky is committed to implementing new standards and assessments in seven subject areas, there will eventually be seven content area networks. The Core Oversight Team, a state-level team that includes content specialists from the Department’s Office of Teaching and Learning, will design, guide (i.e., provide support in the form of training/information/resources to all network lead facilitators), and provide feedback on the work of all new and established networks in order to ensure a coordinated and consistent focus with Characteristics of Highly Effective Teaching and Learning (*see Appendix XX*). This team will also work to gather information from LEAs and the field, identify best practices, and highlight those best practices so that all networks may build upon them.
2. The *administrator leadership network* is similarly comprised of nine regional administrator networks. These regional networks and the overarching administrator leadership network build upon the superintendent networks and partnerships with colleges and universities already established through the Educational Cooperatives, and the superintendent “CEO network,” which the Department is expanding through a partnership with the Kentucky Association of School Superintendents. Utilizing networks of administrators will enable collaboration, best-practice sharing, statewide quality control and implementation of new initiatives with fidelity. For more rural districts, with less access to resources and fewer in-house experts due to remote geographies and smaller size, this network approach will supplement district capacity with the expertise, experience, knowledge, and tools from other districts and regions of the Commonwealth.

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In addition to this statewide approach comprised of regional networks, individual district level leadership teams and school-based professional learning teams will also be critical for collective problem-solving, best-practice sharing, and collaboration within districts.

1. Each *district leadership team* will be comprised of the superintendent, Science teacher leaders, Math teacher leaders, English/Language Arts teacher leaders, Social Studies teacher leaders, administrative leaders, and instructional supervisors. These personnel will attend the regional networks for their content area, and will plan for scaling to all schools and classrooms in the district, and all network participants are expected to commit to the network and the district leadership team for a minimum of 3-5 years to build capacity, continuity, and sustainability. [Note: most districts already have these teams in place, currently referred to as “instructional leadership teams.” Their work will be refocused on the transition to the new Common Core standards in early 2010.]
2. The district leadership teams will support school leaders (e.g., principals, teacher leaders) with implementation in every school and classroom. *School-based professional learning teams* as described in (B)(3) will be collaborative teams that ensure that teachers have access to, understand, and utilize the resources provided by the regional and statewide networks to inform their instruction, particularly around alignment and implementation of the new standards and assessment system. Furthermore, it is through these teams that teachers will continue to learn and adopt the *Classroom Assessment for Student Learning* diagnostic approach to teaching that places the collaborative analysis of student work and the individualization of instruction at the center of professional learning efforts. Professional learning teams will be school-based hubs for professional learning and support, including collaboration amongst staff with varied expertise and experience levels, time for common planning, data review, mentoring and coaching.

The Department will establish the content leadership networks and the administrator leadership network, with networks’ leadership selected, by May 2010. Additionally, as part of the Race to the Top initiatives described in (B)(3), the Department will provide resources to districts to differentiate schools’ needs depending on where they are with implementation of professional learning teams. Through Race to the Top, Title I, and Title II funding sources, incentives and

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grant funding will also be provided to districts to ensure all schools have effective professional learning teams for Math and English/Language Arts by August 2011.

Providing data and resources through the Continuous Instructional Improvement Technology System (CIITS)

Because research shows that job-embedded professional learning is more effective than models where practitioners are removed from their schools (*see Appendix XX for relevant research*), the content leadership networks will identify and develop the tools and supports to populate the CIITS, which will connect teachers and principals to curriculum, assessment, instruction, professional learning, and evaluation resources. This will result in a plethora of high-quality resources – some newly-created by practitioners, postsecondary faculty, and content experts through the Common Core standards and assessments implementation work, and some created by outside providers of professional learning experiences and material. (*See (C)(3) for detail on the technology infrastructure, (B)(3) for the system of support for curriculum, assessment and instruction, and (D)(2) for information on how the teacher and principal growth model data are integrated into this system.*) Because we know that continuous learning is key for teachers and leaders to be highly effective, and high-quality supports are necessary to enable continuous learning, the CIITS will provide this support in the following ways (this list is not comprehensive):

- Provide continuous access to proven strategies and resources
- Support collaboration through online communities
- Share knowledge of experts in content areas such as Math, Science and English/Language Arts without teachers having to leave their classrooms
- Provide examples from action research from classrooms and schools just like theirs
- Provide online access to postsecondary courses

For individual teachers, the CIITS will provide the tools, resources, and data (i.e., formative assessment and other student learning results) needed to inform their professional growth plans. For school-based professional learning teams, the CIITS provides resources aligned to each standard that teachers can use to guide their discussions, as well as data tools to help teachers analyze student learning together at the classroom- or school-level. (*See (B)(3) and (C)(3) for detailed implementation timelines for the CIITS.*)

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Legislative changes to support this new professional learning system

To enable the necessary allocation of time for learning amongst these networks, the Department will work with the legislature in January 2010 to pass a revised statute for teacher and principal professional development, which changes the structure and approach to professional development statewide (*see Appendix XX for revised statute*). Legislation currently requires teachers to complete 24 hours per year of professional development tied to their professional growth plan. Principals are currently required to complete 21 leadership credits per year. The proposed legislation will remove the hour requirement and make professional development an embedded part of the teacher's workday. This change will allow for professional learning teams to drive the agenda more aggressively and focus on the problems of practice in their schools in a "just in time" manner.

(D)(5)(i) Activity 2: Providing professional learning experiences for successful implementation of all new initiatives

The coordinated professional learning system described above (and in (B)(3)) will be built and piloted through the transition to the new standards and aligned assessments. In addition to this work, the professional learning infrastructure established will enable successful implementation of the following statewide initiatives detailed in other parts of Kentucky's proposal:

- a) Professional learning to support data-driven instruction (*reference (C)(2) and (C)(3) for more detail*) – As the (C)(2) and (C)(3) plans describe, teachers, principals, and other stakeholders will need access to high-quality professional learning opportunities around the following topics that include both the access to and the strategic use of data:
 - a. How to access and use the Kentucky Statewide Longitudinal Data System (KSLDS)
 - b. How to analyze and use the data in the KSLDS to make decisions to improve student achievement
 - c. How to access and use the CIITS
 - d. How to analyze and use data from the technology system to improve instruction and student achievement in classrooms

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- b) Professional learning to support implementation of new evaluation system and growth models (*reference (D)(2) for more detail*)– As the (D)(2) plans outline, Kentucky will be implementing a new statewide approach to teacher and principal professional growth and evaluation. This new approach will result in more feedback on teacher and principal practice and impact on student learning, as well as an increased focus on continuous improvement. District leadership teams will guide school-level professional learning teams to collaborate, guided by statewide common agendas, to adopt, fully implement and utilize, and refine the evaluation system and growth models. Professional learning teams will provide “low stakes” environments for teachers and principals to discuss the growth models and how to best leverage these new data and tools to improve practice, as well as any issues or challenges that arise specific to the new standards and assessments. Additionally, the CIITS will provide the following, to ensure each teacher’s and principal’s professional development needs are met:
- a. Allow decision makers to make support decisions for teachers and principals based on observation and evaluation data, alongside student outcomes data.
 - b. Provide multiple data points on teacher and principal effectiveness, needs, and competencies that allow decision makers to provide appropriate coaching, induction, common planning and collaboration supports.
 - c. Ensure special resources for new (or weak) teachers are included to support induction.

(D)(5)(i) Activity 3: Creating a residency model

Kentucky is ready to take a bold step and rethink teacher induction. The Education Professional Standards Board (“the Standards Board”) will explore the benefits of a two-year clinical residency/induction model for preparing new teachers, with the goal of preparing teachers for effective practice in the Commonwealth’s hard-to-staff subject and specialty areas and high-poverty / high-minority schools by significantly increasing the amount of time the teacher candidate has in a real classroom under the supervision of a highly-effective teacher. Many teachers cite a lack of support as one reason why they would not relocate to one of these types of schools or classrooms, and the current twelve-week student teacher model does not provide ample time to translate academic pedagogical instruction into actual skills that will help the new

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teacher be effective during his or her first year of teaching. Additionally, the current model of student teaching has inconsistent expectations regarding the experiences of the teacher candidate and the qualifications and responsibilities of the supervising teacher. While it is important for all teachers to receive academic pedagogical theory, new teachers' instructional and classroom management skills are too often insufficient and result in new teachers feeling underprepared for their first placement as a new teacher.

Professional Learning Schools

Kentucky's undergraduate teacher residency program will be built around Professional Learning Schools, which represent strong partnerships between local districts and colleges or universities nearby. Professional Learning Schools will serve several purposes, benefiting the local district, the college / university, and most importantly, the students at the school. Professional Learning Schools will do the following:

- Provide tasks for teachers participating in the residency program ("teacher residents") that yield experiences in all aspects of the classroom within the normal school calendar
- Provide opportunities for teacher residents to collaborate through professional learning teams facilitated by master teachers
- Serve as a laboratory environment to try new adaptive and innovative approaches to teaching and learning
- Enable continuous evaluation and participation from university researchers in identifying what works, particularly with respect to high-need student populations
- Learn from and build upon existing examples of district-higher education partnerships, such as the signature partnership at Atkinson Elementary in Jefferson County

Kentucky's approach to teacher residency

The Standards Board and the Department will partner to launch a set of pilots to develop undergraduate teacher residency programs. The structure of the approach is as follows:

- During their Sophomore year, undergraduates can apply to the residency program; the program will be selective, only accepting the most committed, promising candidates
- During the summer before the residency begins and the summer in between teacher residents' Junior and Senior years, K-12 and university educators will host a summer

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immersion academy where candidates would experience a content and pedagogical workshop approach, with specific sessions designed to address the needs of rural and urban settings, and different student segments

- In their Junior year, teacher residents will participate in two semesters of student teaching, working closely with a master teacher and participating in a professional learning team with other teacher residents and master teachers focused on support (e.g., best practice sharing, collective problem-solving, instructional practice development)
- In their Senior year, teacher residents will follow a four day teaching work week, plus one day focused on coursework or a reflective practice seminar to hone instructional practices and work with other teacher residents and mentors in professional learning teams. Tasks will be developed using teacher work sample methodology that will guide the teaching part of the residency and document the specific level of competency of the teacher candidate
- Upon undergraduate completion, the districts housing Professional Learning Schools will place the practicing educators as teachers of record, and graduates will begin participation in the Kentucky Teacher Internship Program (in which all new teachers participate for their first year of teaching)

In Summer 2010, the Department, the Standards Board, and the Council on Postsecondary Education, will work together to develop a request for proposals from partnerships between districts and institutions of higher education, and then identify six programs to pilot (two elementary school, two middle school, and two high school). Successful proposals will include the following elements:

- Roles and responsibilities for all partner organizations, including research and teaching faculty at the institution of higher education, teachers and principals of Professional Learning Schools, and the partner district staff
- Plan to establish Professional Learning Schools (building upon existing partnership schools where applicable), including necessary training for existing staff
- Curricular amendments to ensure teacher residents complete requirements for Bachelor's degrees within the time period of the residency, and preliminary samples of the tasks and learning experiences to be included in the residency curriculum

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- Plan for summer immersion programs, including outlines of the goals and modules
- Learning agenda with key questions to be addressed by ongoing research by university faculty

In the 2011-2012 school year, the six pilots will launch, and the first cohort of teacher residents will be selected (to begin placement in a Professional Learning School in Fall 2012). University researchers and other evaluation providers will collect information on the progress of the pilots, and will begin conducting an evaluation of the pilots in 2014 once the first cohort of residents graduates and begins their full-time placement. 

(D)(5)(ii) Activity 4: Evaluation and improvement of teacher and principal professional learning

With respect to sub-criterion (D)(5)(ii), Kentucky will take a “return on investment” approach to evaluating professional learning. Generally, this will mean assessing the impact of teacher and principal professional learning models on student learning. The Commonwealth is committed to identifying which professional learning opportunities most effectively increase student learning. The CIITS will be a great tool; it will enable continuous evaluation and improvement of the new professional learning system and approach. The CIITS will have the following characteristics:

- Includes tools for classroom walkthroughs and student formative and summative assessment, enabling the state, district, and principals to assess the impact of professional learning, coaching, and pre-service interventions in terms of teacher and principal practices as well as student learning
- Extensive reporting mechanisms allow district and state leaders to be constantly evaluating the effectiveness of teaching, resources, assessments, professional learning, and technology for continuous improvement
- Specific tools are being developed to support Kirkpatrick’s four levels of professional development evaluation – teacher satisfaction, application of learning, impact on student scores, ROI (*see Appendix XX for more detail*)

The CIITS will be developed and rolled out to all schools by late 2011; given this, the Department will conduct the first evaluation of the State-provided professional learning system in 2012, after a full year of data has been collected.

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Beyond the State-provided professional learning resources and infrastructure, LEAs and school councils may contract with additional providers. LEAs and school councils will also evaluate then these additional professional learning experiences to ensure that all are increasing the effectiveness of teachers and principals. The providers or methods identified as most effective can then be highlighted in the CIITS so that more schools access these high-quality professional learning experiences. Thus, the CIITS will enable the development of a continuously evolving and expanding database of professional learning approaches, models, and examples that have been tried, tested, and evaluated by LEAs across the state. For rural LEAs with fewer resources to try new approaches, this database will provide critical information to ensure that professional learning funding and time are spent in the ways and with the programs that most effectively increase student learning. 

Through participation in state and regional networks, LEAs will develop the capacity to expand and establish partnerships designed to foster collaborative professional learning opportunities. Utilizing the shared expertise of teachers and leaders, LEAs can create innovative strategies to increase student achievement through teacher and leader effectiveness. This collaborative effort may be facilitated through superintendent networks, professional learning teams and/or distance learning opportunities.

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Reform area: (E) Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

Criterion: (E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs

Points possible: 10 points

Recommended maximum response length: 1 page

Draft date: January 7, 2010

Specifics of criterion (verbatim from application):

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

Evidence for (E)(1):

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

Definitions:

Persistently lowest-achieving schools means, as determined by the State: (i) Any Title I school in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring that (a) Is among the lowest-achieving five percent of Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring or the lowest-achieving five Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring in the State, whichever number of schools is greater; or (b) Is a high school that has had a graduation rate as defined in 34 CFR 200.19(b) that is less than 60 percent over a number of years; and (ii) Any secondary school that is eligible for, but does not receive, Title I funds that (a) Is among the lowest-achieving five percent of secondary schools or the lowest-achieving five secondary schools in the State that are eligible for, but do not receive, Title I funds, whichever number of schools is greater; or (b) Is a high school that has had a graduation rate as defined in 34 CFR 200.19(b) that is less than 60 percent over a number of years. To identify the lowest-achieving schools, a State must take into account both (i) The academic achievement of the "all students" group in a school in terms of proficiency on the State's assessments under section 1111(b)(3) of the ESEA in reading/language arts and mathematics combined; and (ii) The school's lack of progress on those assessments over a number of years in the "all students" group.

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Introduction and context

Kentucky’s Kentucky Revised Statute (KRS) 160.346 enables the Kentucky Department of Education (“the Department”) to intervene in the Commonwealth’s persistently lowest-achieving schools. KRS 158.780 and KRS 158.785 enable the Department to intervene in LEAs. (*Statutes are included in Appendix XX.*)

Intervention in lowest-achieving schools

According to KRS 160.346, passed [insert date], the Department has the ability to intervene in persistently low-achieving schools by requiring the School Based Decision Making (SBDM) council and principal to relinquish their traditional roles of governance, decision-making, and administration. In such instances this authority is transferred to the local district or to the State based on the recommendations of a scholastic audit of the school and an accompanying audit of the district. If the audits reveal that the district lacks the capacity to handle the transfer of governance, the state provides direct oversight to the turnaround.

Intervention in LEAs in need of improvement

KRS 158.780 enables the Kentucky Board of Education to intervene in a local school district:

“If the Kentucky Board of Education believes that the pattern of a lack of efficiency or effectiveness in the governance or administration of a school district warrants action, it shall conduct an administrative hearing in compliance with KRS Chapter 13B. If it is determined that the pattern does warrant action, it shall declare the district a "state assisted district" or a "state managed district" and the state board shall then assume control of the district as set forth in this section and KRS 158.785.”

KRS 158.785 details the actions steps for this intervention [insert action steps].

[do we need to address district “status”? i.e., from criterion: LEAs that are in improvement or corrective action status]

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Reform area: (E) Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

Criterion: (E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools

Points possible: 40 points

Recommended maximum response length: 8 pages

Draft date: January 7, 2010

Specifics of criterion (verbatim from application):

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

(i) Identify the persistently lowest-achieving schools (as defined in this notice) and, at its discretion, any non-Title I eligible secondary schools that would be considered persistently lowest-achieving schools (as defined in this notice) if they were eligible to receive Title I funds; and (5 points)

(ii) Support its LEAs in turning around these schools by implementing one of the four school intervention models (as described in Appendix C): turnaround model, restart model, school closure, or transformation model (provided that an LEA with more than nine persistently lowest-achieving schools may not use the transformation model for more than 50 percent of its schools). (35 points)

Evidence for (E)(2) (please fill in table below):

•The State’s historic performance on school turnaround, as evidenced by the total number of persistently lowest-achieving schools (as defined in this notice) that States or LEAs attempted to turn around in the last five years, the approach used, and the results and lessons learned to date.

Definitions:

Persistently lowest-achieving schools means, as determined by the State: (i) Any Title I school in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring that (a) Is among the lowest-achieving five percent of Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring or the lowest-achieving five Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring in the State, whichever number of schools is greater; or (b) Is a high school that has had a graduation rate as defined in 34 CFR 200.19(b) that is less than 60 percent over a number of years; and (ii) Any secondary school that is eligible for, but does not receive, Title I funds that (a) Is among the lowest-achieving five percent of secondary schools or the lowest-achieving five secondary schools in the State that are eligible for, but do not receive, Title I funds, whichever number of schools is greater; or (b) Is a high school that has had a graduation rate as defined in 34 CFR 200.19(b) that is less than 60 percent over a number of years. To identify the lowest-achieving schools, a State must take into account both (i) The academic achievement of the “all students” group in a school in terms of proficiency on the State’s assessments under section 1111(b)(3) of the ESEA in reading/language arts and mathematics combined; and (ii) The school’s lack of progress on those assessments over a number of years in the “all students” group.

There are four school intervention models referred to in Selection Criterion (E)(2): turnaround model, restart model, school closure, or transformation model. Each is described below.

(a) Turnaround model.

(1) A turnaround model is one in which an LEA must--

(i) Replace the principal and grant the principal sufficient operational flexibility (including in staffing, calendars/time, and budgeting) to implement fully a comprehensive

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approach in order to substantially improve student achievement outcomes and increase high school graduation rates;

(ii) Use locally adopted competencies to measure the effectiveness of staff who can work within the turnaround environment to meet the needs of students,

(A) Screen all existing staff and rehire no more than 50 percent; and

(B) Select new staff;

(iii) Implement such strategies as financial incentives, increased opportunities for promotion and career growth, and more flexible work conditions that are designed to recruit, place, and retain staff with the skills necessary to meet the needs of the students in the turnaround school;

(iv) Provide staff with ongoing, high-quality, job-embedded professional development that is aligned with the school's comprehensive instructional program and designed with school staff to ensure that they are equipped to facilitate effective teaching and learning and have the capacity to successfully implement school reform strategies;

(v) Adopt a new governance structure, which may include, but is not limited to, requiring the school to report to a new "turnaround office" in the LEA or SEA, hire a "turnaround leader" who reports directly to the Superintendent or Chief Academic Officer, or enter into a multi-year contract with the LEA or SEA to obtain added flexibility in exchange for greater accountability;

(vi) Use data to identify and implement an instructional program that is research-based and "vertically aligned" from one grade to the next as well as aligned with State academic standards;

(vii) Promote the continuous use of student data (such as from formative, interim, and summative assessments) to inform and differentiate instruction in order to meet the academic needs of individual students;

(viii) Establish schedules and implement strategies that provide increased learning time (as defined in this notice); and

(ix) Provide appropriate social-emotional and community-oriented services and supports for students.

(2) A turnaround model may also implement other strategies such as—

(i) Any of the required and permissible activities under the transformation model; or

(ii) A new school model (*e.g.*, themed, dual language academy).

(b) Restart model. A restart model is one in which an LEA converts a school or closes and reopens a school under a charter school operator, a charter management organization (CMO), or an education management organization (EMO) that has been selected through a rigorous review process. (A CMO is a non-profit organization that operates or manages charter schools by centralizing or sharing certain functions and resources among schools. An EMO is a for-profit or non-profit organization that provides "whole-school operation" services to an LEA.) A restart model must enroll, within the grades it serves, any former student who wishes to attend the school.

(c) School closure. School closure occurs when an LEA closes a school and enrolls the students who attended that school in other schools in the LEA that are higher achieving. These other schools should be within reasonable proximity to the closed school and may include, but are not limited to, charter schools or new schools for which achievement data are not yet available.

(d) Transformation model. A transformation model is one in which an LEA implements each of the following strategies:

(1) Developing and increasing teacher and school leader effectiveness.

(i) Required activities. The LEA must--

(A) Replace the principal who led the school prior to commencement of the transformation model;

(B) Use rigorous, transparent, and equitable evaluation systems for teachers and principals that--

(1) Take into account data on student growth (as defined in this notice) as a significant factor as well as other factors such as multiple

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observation-based assessments of performance and ongoing collections of professional practice reflective of student achievement and increased high-school graduations rates; and

(2) Are designed and developed with teacher and principal involvement;

(C) Identify and reward school leaders, teachers, and other staff who, in implementing this model, have increased student achievement and high-school graduation rates and identify and remove those who, after ample opportunities have been provided for them to improve their professional practice, have not done so;

(D) Provide staff with ongoing, high-quality, job-embedded professional development (*e.g.*, regarding subject-specific pedagogy, instruction that reflects a deeper understanding of the community served by the school, or differentiated instruction) that is aligned with the school's comprehensive instructional program and designed with school staff to ensure they are equipped to facilitate effective teaching and learning and have the capacity to successfully implement school reform strategies; and

(E) Implement such strategies as financial incentives, increased opportunities for promotion and career growth, and more flexible work conditions that are designed to recruit, place, and retain staff with the skills necessary to meet the needs of the students in a transformation school.

(ii) Permissible activities. An LEA may also implement other strategies to develop teachers' and school leaders' effectiveness, such as--

(A) Providing additional compensation to attract and retain staff with the skills necessary to meet the needs of the students in a transformation school;

(B) Instituting a system for measuring changes in instructional practices resulting from professional development; or

(C) Ensuring that the school is not required to accept a teacher without the mutual consent of the teacher and principal, regardless of the teacher's seniority.

(2) Comprehensive instructional reform strategies.

(i) Required activities. The LEA must--

(A) Use data to identify and implement an instructional program that is research-based and "vertically aligned" from one grade to the next as well as aligned with State academic standards; and

(B) Promote the continuous use of student data (such as from formative, interim, and summative assessments) to inform and differentiate instruction in order to meet the academic needs of individual students.

(ii) Permissible activities. An LEA may also implement comprehensive instructional reform strategies, such as--

(A) Conducting periodic reviews to ensure that the curriculum is being implemented with fidelity, is having the intended impact on student achievement, and is modified if ineffective;

(B) Implementing a schoolwide "response-to-intervention" model;

(C) Providing additional supports and professional development to teachers and principals in order to implement effective strategies to support students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment and to ensure that limited English proficient students acquire language skills to master academic content;

(D) Using and integrating technology-based supports and interventions as part of the instructional program; and

(E) In secondary schools--

(1) Increasing rigor by offering opportunities for students to enroll in advanced coursework (such as Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate; or science, technology, engineering, and mathematics courses, especially those that incorporate rigorous and relevant project-, inquiry-, or design-based contextual learning opportunities), early-college high schools, dual enrollment programs, or thematic learning

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academies that prepare students for college and careers, including by providing appropriate supports designed to ensure that low-achieving students can take advantage of these programs and coursework;

(2) Improving student transition from middle to high school through summer transition programs or freshman academies;

(3) Increasing graduation rates through, for example, credit-recovery programs, re-engagement strategies, smaller learning communities, competency-based instruction and performance-based assessments, and acceleration of basic reading and mathematics skills; or

(4) Establishing early-warning systems to identify students who may be at risk of failing to achieve to high standards or graduate.

(3) Increasing learning time and creating community-oriented schools.

(i) Required activities. The LEA must--

(A) Establish schedules and implement strategies that provide increased learning time (as defined in this notice); and

(B) Provide ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement.

(ii) Permissible activities. An LEA may also implement other strategies that extend learning time and create community-oriented schools, such as--

(A) Partnering with parents and parent organizations, faith- and community-based organizations, health clinics, other State or local agencies, and others to create safe school environments that meet students' social, emotional, and health needs;

(B) Extending or restructuring the school day so as to add time for such strategies as advisory periods that build relationships between students, faculty, and other school staff;

(C) Implementing approaches to improve school climate and discipline, such as implementing a system of positive behavioral supports or taking steps to eliminate bullying and student harassment; or

(D) Expanding the school program to offer full-day kindergarten or pre-kindergarten.

(4) Providing operational flexibility and sustained support.

(i) Required activities. The LEA must--

(A) Give the school sufficient operational flexibility (such as staffing, calendars/time, and budgeting) to implement fully a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student achievement outcomes and increase high school graduation rates; and

(B) Ensure that the school receives ongoing, intensive technical assistance and related support from the LEA, the SEA, or a designated external lead partner organization (such as a school turnaround organization or an EMO).

(ii) Permissible activities. The LEA may also implement other strategies for providing operational flexibility and intensive support, such as--

(A) Allowing the school to be run under a new governance arrangement, such as a turnaround division within the LEA or SEA; or

(B) Implementing a per-pupil school-based budget formula that is weighted based on student needs.

If a school identified as a persistently lowest-achieving school has implemented, in whole or in part within the last two years, an intervention that meets the requirements of the turnaround, restart, or transformation models, the school may continue or complete the intervention being implemented.

Instructions for each reform plan (verbatim from application):

The State must provide, for each Reform Plan Criterion that it chooses to address, a detailed plan for use of grant funds that includes, but need not be limited to--

- (1) The key goals;

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- (2) The key activities to be undertaken and rationale for the activities, which should include why the specific activities are thought to bring about the change envisioned and how these activities are linked to the key goals;
- (3) The timeline for implementing the activities;
- (4) The party or parties responsible for implementing the activities;
- (5) The information requested in the performance measures, where applicable (see Appendix A), and where the State proposes plans for reform efforts not covered by a specified performance measure, the State is encouraged to propose performance measures and annual targets for those efforts; and
- (6) The information requested as supporting evidence, if any, for the criterion, together with any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers in judging the credibility of the State's plan.

Draft reform plan begins on next page

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Kentucky has a twenty-year history of moving low-achieving schools to higher levels of student achievement and significantly closing achievement gaps. Over this period, the Kentucky Department of Education (“the Department”) has undertaken several initiatives that have built on each other in this regard. **[Insert number]** schools have fallen into the state assistance category since 1994, and Department efforts over a single cycle were sufficient to move **[Insert number]** of them out of state intervention within two years. *[Note the criteria asks for evidence from past five years. We can keep the data in the preceding sentence but should add sentence with breakdown in past five years. Dr. H also mentioned connecting this with the charter section (?)]*

The starting point for Kentucky’s school improvement efforts was the Kentucky Education Reform Act reform in 1990, which established the Distinguished Educator program, in which a cadre of highly effective teachers and principals were identified and “loaned” to the Department for a period of up to three years. Distinguished Educators were then deployed to schools needing improvement, to identify the needs of the students in those schools, and to serve as instructional coaches and mentors to implement changes to improve learning. In 1998, the title of the Distinguished Educator Program was changed to the Highly Skilled Educator (HSE) Program. The program continued with its commitment to providing school improvement services to low achieving schools. It is still in operation today.

Subsequently, in 2006, the State launched the Voluntary Partnership Assistance Teams (VPAT) model, which was a partnership effort between the Department, the Kentucky Association of School Superintendents, and the Kentucky School Boards Association. Voluntary Partnership Assistance Teams provided districts with an intensive and collaborative assistance process designed to build capacity at the district and school levels and provide essential support and oversight for immediate and sustained improvement in student learning.

In 2008, the Department assessed the approach to school improvement and created the Assist and Support School Improvement Success Teams (ASSIST) program. The ASSIST program was designed to take the best practices of the HSE program and the team aspects of the VPAT

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program. (*Appendices XX to XX provide more detail on all of these programs and Kentucky's history and progress in improving struggling schools.*)

For many schools, Kentucky's interventions have been successful in raising achievement and building the capacity of schools to sustain the improvement. In the *2009 State Highlights Report* produced by the Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, between 1996 and 2006, Kentucky achieved a 9 percentage point graduation rate increase, the fourth highest increase nationwide. While there has been significant improvement at many struggling schools, others still continue to struggle, and incremental increases in student achievement are not sufficient to meet the Commonwealth's goals for all students. From the school improvement efforts outlined above, the Department has learned that while a focus on support is critical, it is not enough to turn around persistently low-achieving schools. The plan detailed below goes beyond what is traditionally considered sufficient to support school improvement to include regional support infrastructures and partnerships with local institutions of higher education, a dedicated turnaround arm at the Department, an emphasis on parent and community engagement, career paths for teachers and principals to become turnaround experts, new programming for students who are far behind academically, and more activities comprising a deep, intensive intervention strategy expected to yield step changes in students' outcomes at the lowest-achieving schools.

Over the next year, the Department will revamp its approach to turning around the lowest-achieving schools, with the **goal** of moving these schools to at least 50% combined proficiency in math and reading/language arts in the ALL students category by 2012. This history of programs to support low-performing schools provides a strong foundation from which Kentucky is now ready to take a bold step in a new direction. To meet this ambitious goal, Kentucky is going to address low-achieving schools with more intensive interventions and a "no-excuses" attitude that Kentucky's education stakeholders support. In a survey conducted to solicit stakeholders' perspectives regarding Kentucky's Race to the Top application, approximately 75% of the 2,440 respondents either agree or strongly agree that intervening aggressively and intensively in persistently low-performing schools, requiring dramatic changes to quickly improve student performance, will improve Kentucky's performance and contribute to increased student learning.

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Activity 1: Identifying Kentucky’s Educational Recovery Schools [criterion (E)(2)(i)]

From 2010 through 2012, Kentucky will use the federal definition of “persistently lowest-achieving” to identify the schools for turnaround. These schools will be called Educational Recovery Schools. In the fall 2012, the Department will expand the definition. The selection set schools will be schools that fail to meet the state’s new accountability measures. From this set the Department will identify those schools whose student scores have ranked in the bottom 5% in proficiency in Math and Reading/Language Arts combined for the ALL students category for three consecutive years. In addition, per the Race to the Top notice, the State will identify any high schools that do not meet the above definition but have a graduation rate of less than 60%.

Kentucky is choosing to go beyond the definition in the Race to the Top guidance for several reasons. Firstly, because the final guidance divides schools by Title I status, there is the possibility that an extremely low-achieving school could be left out of the turnaround process, i.e., a school that is in the bottom five achieving in the state may not make the list, because it wasn’t in the lowest 5% of Title I schools. The reverse could also be true. The proposed definition eliminates this possibility by including ALL schools in the lowest 5% regardless of Title I program improvement status. (*See Appendix XX for a full list of schools and their achievement data for each definition*). Secondly, to meet the Commonwealth’s goals for student achievement, more schools than the twelve lowest-achieving will need support, and the new definition empowers the Department to facilitate provision of the required supports for the LEAs and schools that need it. The Department recognizes that the Race to the Top program is focused on turning around those schools identified by the Race to the Top specific guidance, so the initiatives put forth in this plan will first and foremost address those schools, while broader turnaround efforts (supported by School Improvement Grants and other funding) will seek to vastly improve all schools in educational recovery.

Timeline

In spring 2010, the Department will have the most current student achievement data for all schools statewide. The Department will analyze this data, and identify the Educational Recovery Schools. Department staff will provide this analysis to all superintendents (who can then

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disseminate to school councils, local school boards, principals, etc.) so that all are able to see where their schools perform relative to all schools. The lowest-achieving schools identified will be selected for pilots starting in fall 2010, and conversations with the local superintendents of the districts that hold these schools, as well as the schools' councils and boards, will commence as soon as the schools are identified in spring 2010.

Activity 2: Creating District 180 to realign the Department to lead Educational Recovery

Educational recovery requires dramatic changes that move schools to a culture of high expectations for all so that significant gains in achievement and the closing of achievement gaps can occur in a short period of time (the expected time frame for education recovery is three years). This is followed by a longer period of sustained improvement. Educational recovery is very different and much more difficult than traditional school improvement efforts. It requires a special set of experiences, training and support. Educational recovery will require action on a number of fronts:

- Require many of these schools to relinquish much of the control over the school to the local district, the State, or an Educational Management Organization (EMO) that has a proven track record with students similar to those in the affected school(s)
- Make fundamental changes in the conditions under which these schools operate
- Develop a marketplace of partners and support providers skilled in educational recovery
- Appropriate the funding necessary to create successful educational recovery

For educational recovery to be successful, the Department, school districts, schools and outside partners must re-organize to attract, develop, and retain people with the skills to match the specific needs of schools in need of educational recovery. In Kentucky, three key elements will be the focus of developing and sustaining this specific level of support known as Educational Recovery Services: District 180, Centers for Learning Excellence, and Educational Recovery Leaders and Specialists.

In early 2010, the Department will create "District 180," a specific office for educational recovery services that will focus only on the schools/districts identified for educational recovery. This unit will provide support and assistance to the Centers for Learning Excellence as well as to

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those identified educational management organizations contracted to manage recovery schools. In addition, this office will be responsible for the identification of Educational Recovery Leaders and Specialists and for their training and support.

School and District Audits

Once Educational Recovery Schools have been identified in spring 2010, District 180 will conduct an audit of each school, as well as a district audit. Since 2000, school and district audits have been an integral part of Kentucky's efforts in school improvement, and provide a powerful tool to launch the State's future work in Educational Recovery Services. In addition to each audit's regular process, these audit teams will be seeking answers to the following questions to seek additional information that can inform the turnaround strategy for each school:

1. Does the school/district function as an effective learning community and support a climate conducive to performance excellence?
2. Does the school/district actively engage families and community groups to remove barriers to learning in an effort to meet the intellectual, social, career and developmental needs of students? (The team will use the rubric found in "The Missing Piece to the Proficiency Puzzle" (2007) to answer this question; *see Appendix XX for this article.*)
3. Does the school/district focus its professional learning program on job-embedded professional learning opportunities that occur in small learning teams of teachers, and use content-driven professional learning sessions to address the needs identified in the learning teams?
4. Do school/district instructional decisions focus on support for teaching and learning, organizational direction, high performance expectations, creating a learning culture, developing leadership capacity?
5. Is the school organized to maximize use of all available resources (both human and fiscal) to support high student and staff performance?
6. Does the school/district have an effective process for ensuring that:
 - a) the needs of all students are identified;
 - b) specific, measurable goals are set to address those needs;
 - c) specific strategies are implemented to reach those goals;

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- d) adequate resources are provided to implement those strategies; and
- e) The implementation of the strategies is frequently monitored and adjustments are made when strategies are not achieving their desired outcomes.

The results of these assessments will detail the challenges and issues that are driving low achievement, as well as successes and potential promising practices. This data will inform the best course of action for struggling schools.

Persistently low-achieving schools

The results of these audits will determine who (i.e., the State, district, or school council) makes the decision about which turnaround option to employ, and who (i.e., the State, district, or school council), with the support of their local Center for Learning Excellence (*see Activity XX below*), will lead the turnaround process (*see Appendix XX for a flow chart visual*). Educational Recovery Schools will need to implement one of four prescribed intervention strategies described below (*see Appendix XX for more detailed descriptions of the four intensive intervention options*):

- 1) Turnaround: State or district assign new principal and identify staff for transfer or termination
- 2) Re-start: District contracts to have school become managed by EMO
- 3) Closure: District closes school and re-assigns students and staff to other schools
- 4) Transformation: District develops a plan for turning around the school (a comprehensive strategy that, at a minimum, replaces the school leadership and develops and rewards teacher and leader effectiveness as outlined in section (D)(2); adopts comprehensive instructional programs; extends time for students and staff and offers community-oriented services; and provides operating flexibility and intensive support) and submits plan to State for approval

Timeline

By August 2010, District 180 will have completed all audits and will have worked, based on the audit results, with each Educational Recovery School's district leadership and the school council, to identify the best-fitting intervention strategy for each chronically low-achieving school. These

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schools will be prioritized for interventions beginning in fall 2010, when the first Centers for Learning Excellence are established.

Activity 3: Creating Centers for Learning Excellence to support Educational Recovery

Kentucky will solicit proposals to establish Centers of Learning Excellence (“Centers”) to serve as intermediaries between the Department’s District 180 team and the Educational Recovery Schools. Centers will be collaborative hubs, representing multiple support partners and providers. Schools and districts in need of educational recovery will be clustered and assigned to these Centers.

Each Center will serve to provide support to Educational Recovery Schools that continue under district control and more intensive support and required services to Educational Recovery Schools that have been reassigned to District 180. The Center is established through an RFP process between the Department and a lead recovery partner. The lead partner could be an institution of higher education or a school support organization (this could be a regional educational cooperative or a regional or national recognized school support organization or an educational management organization). In addition to the formal contract between the Department and the lead partner, a successful proposal will also contain formal relationships with other support partners as well as community, family, and area business partners.

The role of the Centers for Learning Excellence

The strengths of each Center will vary based on the organization that serves as the lead partner. Successful lead partners will be able to demonstrate how they will use other partners to ensure that no gaps exist in the structure of services they will provide to recovery schools. A Department staff member will work with each Center to ensure collaboration is strong between the State, the Center, and the local districts. Each Center’s staff will include varied expertise, and will provide support services that will include, but not be limited to, the following:

- A liaison that will serve as a point of contact for each school assigned to the center
- Professional learning services coordinated to each school’s needs, e.g., partnering with the Kentucky Association of School Superintendents and the Kentucky School Boards Association evitalize a program similar to the Voluntary Partnership Assistance

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Teams model, or working with local universities to provide professional learning experiences for teachers and principals

- Building capacity in each school by clustering the schools in the Center in various ways (size, grade level, etc.) to create support structures and networking opportunities in the schools
- Networking and collaboration opportunities for Educational Recovery Leaders and Specialists (*described in Activity 4 of this plan*)
- Engaging parents and developing community coalitions to provide out-of-school programs and resources to improve learning in the schools, e.g., the Everyone Reads program in Louisville
- Provide training and engagement activities for families in each school community
- In high school situations, develop dual credit, early college, specific STEM initiatives and dropout prevention services to enhance student success

The Centers will also manage multiple partnerships formed to provide support services for Educational Recovery Schools in that region. Working with established educational support organizations, whole school reform programs will be available to recovery schools, including the expansion of the following programs already showing success in Kentucky:

- **High Schools That Work and Making Middle Grades Work:** These initiatives provide an effort-based, comprehensive framework for middle grades and high school improvement. They are founded on the conviction that most students can master rigorous academic and career studies if school leaders and teachers create a culture of high expectations and continuous improvement that motivates students to make the effort to succeed. These programs would be the recommended programs for educational recovery in secondary schools and each Center would provide staff support services for the program. The Southern Regional Education Board is already a strong partner in Kentucky for these programs (*see Appendix XX for more detail*).
- **Early Identification Program:** Low student achievement in upper grades represents a cumulative effect of several years of ineffective instruction and other non-educational barriers. One of the functions of the Center will be to house a program designed to identify the feeder schools, when appropriate, that provide the students for lowest-

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achieving schools. Currently, the Save the Children K-8 literacy program provides these services (*see Appendix XX for more detail*). This type of innovative public/private partnership will be a central point of support for the schools that feed recovery schools in an effort to make students better prepared for success when they enter those schools currently in recovery. This program will provide children with the opportunity to increase their reading achievement by supplying the tools they need to develop reading skills and the guidance they need to grow as readers. Each Center will have a staff person to serve as liaison with this program, which consists of the following components (*see Appendix XX for more detail*):

- Literacy training delivered to struggling readers in K-8 grades
- Afterschool program provided four days a week with supplemental in-school support and during the summer
- Carefully designed curriculum taught by professionals and paraprofessionals
- Tutorials including one-on-one and small group instruction for children identified by reading needs
- Software-based literacy tools to complement core activities and help to develop reading fluency and comprehension
- Additional non-academic student supports, e.g., healthcare and nutrition
- Dual credit initiatives: Through local community colleges, several districts are already offering dual credit opportunities, e.g., Bullitt County's partnership with Jefferson Community and Technical College. The Department is also interested in Centers for Learning Excellence launching initiatives with a track record of success in other regions, e.g., the Gateway to College Program. This program helps re-connect high school dropouts with their education. Through the program, students are able to complete their high school diploma requirements on a college campus while simultaneously earning credits toward a college degree or certificate. The research behind this program shows that many young people who had little chance of graduating from high school are achieving post-secondary success. Each Center will work with at least one community college in its service area to implement the Gateway to College concept.
- STEM initiatives: Kentucky currently has several STEM programs in place to increase access to rigorous STEM curricula, projects and learning opportunities in STEM-related

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fields, and professional learning experiences for teachers in STEM subject areas. (*See (B) (3) and the STEM section for more detail on Kentucky's numerous STEM initiatives*). The Centers will have liaisons to manage the implementation of programs like AdvanceKentucky and Project Lead the Way to ensure that in Educational Recovery Schools, teachers are trained in, and students participate in, rigorous STEM courses. Additionally, Centers will form partnerships with other organizations to provide project-based and real-world experiences in STEM-related fields.

Fostering innovation with support from the Centers for Learning Excellence

Given the capacity and resources Centers will aggregate and facilitate for school turnarounds, the Department will support new ideas and strategies that leverage the Centers for purposes of innovation. Because Kentucky's School-Based Decision making governance structure gives school councils extensive authority over school-level decisions and processes (*see Appendix XX for full detail on this structure*), these new ideas and innovative approaches may be proposed to a Center from a school council to be tried at a single site. Or, because the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990 gives local districts authority to create innovative schools for at-risk populations with unique needs (e.g., students with behavior issues, juvenile justice issues, or who otherwise need an alternative setting to achieve success), a district may seek further partnership with Centers to implement innovative approaches and operate schools without the usual authority of school councils (*see section (F)(2) for more detail on Kentucky's School-Based Decision Making governance structure*).

For example, a local district superintendent has a program for African-American males in a high school that has shown great results at improving the academic performance of these young men, as well as their character, communication skills and self-image. The superintendent wants to expand the program and create an "alternative school." Other superintendents are similarly interested in innovative initiatives like this one, but many, particularly in rural areas, lack the capacity and resources to do so. As part of Kentucky's approach to turning around the Commonwealth's lowest-achieving schools, the newly-formed Centers can supplement district and school capacity and enable superintendents and school councils to undertake more innovative strategies collaboratively. This may mean facilitating knowledge-sharing and

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networking, or it could mean identifying potential partnerships or collaborations between districts.

Timeline

The Centers will be funded initially through Race to the Top and may be sustained through state and federal school improvement funding. In spring 2010, the Department will send out the RFP for Centers for Learning Excellence, and then select three Centers by August 2010. The first three Centers will serve as three-year pilots, and will include all of the chronically low-achieving schools identified by District 180. The Department will conduct an evaluation of these three pilots in summer 2011, and again in summer 2012, with interim reports from Centers showing progress and improvements they've seen at Educational Recovery Schools, as well as lessons learned through the process. Between 2012 and 2014, the Department will facilitate two more RFP processes to establish another six Centers so that all regions of the Commonwealth are served.

Activity 4: Establishing Educational Recovery certification and endorsements

The Department, the Education Professional Standards Board, and the Council on Postsecondary Education will work together to develop certification endorsements for Educational Recovery Leaders who will be prepared to lead the identified schools and Educational Recovery Specialists who will provide support to teachers in these schools. In addition, each school in educational recovery will be assigned a School Administrative Manager so the Educational Recovery Leaders and Specialists can focus on improving student learning.

Educational Recovery Leaders **[Note: David is revising this section]**

Kentucky will introduce a new group of individuals known as Educational Recovery Leaders. In recovery schools that remain under district management, the district will choose new administrators from those individuals with credentials as an Educational Recovery Leader. In recovery schools assigned to District 180, the State will have a cadre of individuals credentialed as Educational Recovery Leaders. These principals will be employees of District 180 who will be assigned to an Educational Recovery School for up to three years and then re-assigned to a new school. The Educational Recovery Leaders will be the lead administrator in that school, and

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will go through extensive and on-going training in educational recovery strategies, beginning with a residency component formulated based on the findings of programs like the Academy for Urban School Leadership and New Leaders for New Schools. Educational Recovery Leaders will focus on assessing what barriers exist to whole school turnaround with more emphasis on culture, family and community engagement, teacher effectiveness and professional growth, leadership, and resource allocation. In addition, Educational Recovery Leaders will assess the staff and identify those individuals who are potential instructional leaders and prepare them to facilitate the induction of the new principal after the turnaround.

Educational Recovery Specialists

Educational Recovery Specialists are individuals with specific experience and training in working with teachers to make dramatic improvement in instructional practice that leads to improved student learning. They will focus on coaching, mentoring and modeling effective instructional practice in order to increase the effectiveness of the school's staff. Multiple Educational Recovery Specialists will be assigned along with an Educational Recovery Leader to form a "Recovery Team" who will provide coaching, mentoring and staff development in Educational Recovery Schools. Some Educational Recovery Specialists may teach courses, though they will not teach a full course load as much of their time will be allocated toward leading professional learning communities and facilitating the implementation of turnaround interventions. As this program is established and grows, Educational Recovery Specialists that are in classrooms and/or are alumni will serve as mentors and coaches to those in training and in their first placement.

School Administration Managers

The School Administration Manager project is a strategy designed to help change the role of the principal from the managerial leader to the instructional leader, resulting in an increase in time spent on improving teaching and learning. This work has been developed and supported through Kentucky's partnership with the Wallace Foundation. The job of the School Administration Manager is to assume school operations functions (such as ordering textbooks, overseeing fire drills and filing reports on compliance with regulations) and thereby enable the principal to focus more time on observing classrooms, facilitating embedded professional development, and

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improving instruction. Although the School Administration Manager initiative would not be housed in District 180, a key element of the success of recovery will be the placement of a School Administration Manager in every recovery school. (*See Appendix XX for more detail.*)

Timeline

The Department, the Education Professional Standards Board, and the Council on Postsecondary Education will work together to create the Education Recovery Leader and Specialist certification programs to be voted on and formalized during Summer 2010, so that the first round of applications can be accepted in fall 2010. These programs will be facilitated by the Education Professional Standards Board, with support from the Department's District 180 to work with Centers and place the first cohorts of graduates in fall 2011. This first cohort will provide feedback and input to the Department, the Education Professional Standards Board, the Council on Postsecondary Education, and the Centers' management organizations so that the program can be improved over time. The Department will fund a formal evaluation of these programs in 2014.

Activity 5: Legislative changes and infrastructure building

To realize the goal of turning around the bottom 5% of schools in Kentucky, KDE has prepared for the legislative actions necessary to begin to implement the broad-based changes required by this new approach. Much of the action that must take place for educational recovery to occur involves the revision of statute and administrative regulation as well as the introduction of new legislation to allow for these dramatic changes to take place:

- KRS 160.346 (School Council Statute) will be amended to allow for schools to enter the Educational Recovery System, including changes to create access to all four turnaround options
- Establish "District 180" at the Department

Please see documentation related to these legislative revisions in Appendix XX. Kentucky's legislature meets in January 2010; all proposed changes have received support from key stakeholder groups and are expected to pass without challenge (*as included in Appendix XX*).

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Reform area: (F) General

Criterion: (F)(1) Making education funding a priority

Points possible: 10 points

Recommended maximum response length: 3 pages

Draft date: January 7, 2010

Specifics of criterion (verbatim from application):

The extent to which–

- (i) The percentage of the total revenues available to the State (as defined in this notice) that were used to support elementary, secondary, and public higher education for FY 2009 was greater than or equal to the percentage of the total revenues available to the State (as defined in this notice) that were used to support elementary, secondary, and public higher education for FY 2008; and
- (ii) The State's policies lead to equitable funding (a) between high-need LEAs (as defined in this notice) and other LEAs, and (b) within LEAs, between high-poverty schools (as defined in this notice) and other schools.

Instructions for each reform condition criteria (verbatim from application):

State Reform Conditions Criteria are used to assess a State's progress and its success in creating conditions for reform in specific areas related to the four ARRA education reform areas. The State must provide, for each State Reform Conditions Criterion addressed, a description of the State's current status in meeting that criterion, and at a minimum, the information requested as supporting evidence that the State has met the criterion. The State may also submit additional information that it believes will be helpful to reviewers in judging the criterion.

Evidence for (F)(1)(i):

- Financial data to show whether and to what extent expenditures, as a percentage of the total revenues available to the State (as defined in this notice), increased, decreased, or remained the same.

Evidence for (F)(1)(ii):

- Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers.

Definitions (verbatim from application):

Total revenues available to the State means either (a) projected or actual total State revenues for education and other purposes for the relevant year; or (b) projected or actual total State appropriations for education and other purposes for the relevant year.

High-need LEA means an LEA (a) that serves not fewer than 10,000 children from families with incomes below the poverty line; or (b) for which not less than 20 percent of the children served by the LEA are from families with incomes below the poverty line.

High-poverty school means, consistent with section 1111(h)(1)(C)(viii) of the ESEA, a school in the highest quartile of schools in the State with respect to poverty level, using a measure of poverty determined by the State.

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(F)(1)(i) Maintenance of effort: proportion of funding to education

Kentucky has a strong commitment to education. In one of the worst economic climates that the state has ever faced, the Commonwealth has remained committed to funding education to emerge stronger from the downturn. The data on the proportion of total revenues available to the state that the commonwealth dedicated to education tell this story in numbers.

In 2008, of total revenues totaling \$8,947,817,000, the state committed \$3,904,537,447 to elementary, secondary, and higher education. This represented 43.6% of total revenues dedicated to education.

In 2009, of total revenues totaling \$8,426,400,000, the state committed \$3,920,979,791 to elementary, secondary, and higher education. This represented 46.5% of total revenues dedicated to education.

Thus, the Commonwealth of Kentucky, amidst numerous budget cuts and an overall budget that declined by more than \$500M, *increased* its absolute spending on education by \$15M and proportional spending on education by nearly 3 percentage points, from 43.6% to 46.5%. (See further detail in Appendix X which describes the state budget more fully.)

(F)(1)(ii)(a) Equitable funding across districts between high-need and low-need LEAs

Since the landmark legislation of the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) in 1990, Kentucky has been committed to equitable funding of education across the commonwealth. The mechanism that arose from KERA to do so was the Support Education Excellence in Kentucky (SEEK) program (replacing the prior Minimum Foundation and Power Equalization programs).

Under the SEEK funding formula, the state sets a fixed base guarantee amount per student in average daily attendance. The amount of revenue per pupil guaranteed by SEEK is then adjusted upward for each local school district to reflect a set of factors that affect the cost of providing services to pupils, including:

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- At-risk pupils: A 15% adjustment of base per pupil guarantee to reflect the higher than average costs associated with educating economically disadvantaged ("at risk") students. "At-Risk" is operationally defined as federal free lunch program eligible.
- Exceptional children: Increased by a series of weights designed to reflect the additional costs of providing services to such pupils. The costs associated with educating exceptional children are based on a count of pupils with different disabilities, a state-determined exceptional pupil-teacher ratio for each disability or service, and a resulting per pupil cost.
- Home-schooled or hospitalized pupils: An adjustment is made for the cost of educating pupils taught at home or in a hospital during the period of their illness or convalescence. Such pupils generate additional funds amounting to the base per pupil guarantee minus one hundred dollars (normally dedicated to capital outlay).
- Limited English Proficiency: Added in 2005, the new weight was established at 7.5% of the base per pupil guarantee.

In addition, there is a final adjustment for transportation costs.

The base per pupil guarantee, as adjusted for at-risk, exceptional, home & hospital, and limited English proficient pupils, as well as for transportation costs, becomes the total calculated per pupil base SEEK cost.

Equalization of per pupil revenues among local school districts under the SEEK program begins with a requirement that every local school district levy a minimum equivalent tax rate of 30 cents per hundred dollars of assessed valuation. The yield from this tax effort serves as a deduction against the revenues guaranteed by the state under SEEK. Every district is guaranteed that its minimum tax levy will produce the same dollars per student regardless of the district's property tax base. This results in the state providing a greater proportion of per pupil revenues in those districts with lower property wealth per pupil.

All local school districts have the option to impose taxes sufficient to generate revenues up to 15 percent over those generated under base SEEK. Districts with assessed property per pupil less than 150 percent of the statewide average receive funds from the state sufficient to garner

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revenues from these additional taxes equal to those generated if their per pupil property wealth was indeed 150 percent of the statewide average. In other words, the state guarantees an additional local levy will produce the same revenue in property-poor districts as would be produced in richer districts. The local tax levied under this provision is not subject to voter recall. After completion of the preceding calculations, any school district failing to receive at least as much state SEEK funding per pupil as it received in fiscal year 1992 is provided additional state funds to sustain that funding level, referred to as SEEK's hold-harmless provision.

Below (and in more detail in appendix X) are the current year funding allocations for three Kentucky school districts, to illustrate the differences

District	% “at-risk” students	SEEK per pupil
Covington Independent Schools	85.5%	\$4,163
Franklin County Schools	41.1%	\$3,154
Oldham County Schools	10.75%	\$3,127

The SEEK funding scheme ensures, at minimum, equal funding across districts and, in all cases increased funding for high-need LEAs so they have sufficient resources to serve all students well.

As reported by the Education Trust (“Education Watch State Reports – Kentucky,” full report in Appendix X), aggregated across the commonwealth, this results in significant average differences in per pupil funding *on behalf of high-poverty districts*. The difference of \$906 *in favor of* high-poverty districts in Kentucky compares to *an average deficit* of \$773 for high-poverty districts across the United States.

	Average Per-Pupil Funding	Differences in Funding Per Pupil	Percent Differences in Funding
High-poverty districts	\$7,404	+\$906	+14%
Low-poverty districts	\$6,498		
High-minority districts	\$7,468	+\$234	<5%

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Low-minority districts	\$7,233		
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(F)(1)(ii)(b) Equitable funding within districts between high-need and low-need schools

The distribution of funding within an LEA is done on a strict per-pupil basis – leading to equal allocations for equally sized schools. As Kentucky’s SEEK formula yields more funds to high-need LEAs, that means that, on average, high-need schools will receive more funding than low-need schools. For individual schools within a district there is no distinction between low and high need schools. Districts allocate operations funds on a per pupil basis, so each school receives equitable funding based on the size of their pupil population. For human resources, the funding is based on a formula that allocates teaching positions and support staff to a school based on student population. This allows for school councils to select the best person for a position without concern to choose a less “expensive” teacher.

[do we need to address comparability issues here?]

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Reform area: (F) General

Criterion: (F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools

Points possible: 40 points

Recommended maximum response length: 6 pages

Draft date: January 7, 2010

Specifics of criterion (verbatim from application):

The extent to which—

- (i) The State has a charter school law that does not prohibit or effectively inhibit increasing the number of high-performing charter schools (as defined in this notice) in the State, measured (as set forth in Appendix B) by the percentage of total schools in the State that are allowed to be charter schools or otherwise restrict student enrollment in charter schools;
- (ii) The State has laws, statutes, regulations, or guidelines regarding how charter school authorizers approve, monitor, hold accountable, reauthorize, and close charter schools; in particular, whether authorizers require that student achievement (as defined in this notice) be one significant factor, among others, in authorization or renewal; encourage charter schools that serve student populations that are similar to local district student populations, especially relative to high-need students (as defined in this notice); and have closed or not renewed ineffective charter schools;
- (iii) The State's charter schools receive (as set forth in Appendix B) equitable funding compared to traditional public schools, and a commensurate share of local, State, and Federal revenues;
- (iv) The State provides charter schools with funding for facilities (for leasing facilities, purchasing facilities, or making tenant improvements), assistance with facilities acquisition, access to public facilities, the ability to share in bonds and mill levies, or other supports; and the extent to which the State does not impose any facility-related requirements on charter schools that are stricter than those applied to traditional public schools; and
- (v) The State enables LEAs to operate innovative, autonomous public schools (as defined in this notice) other than charter schools.

Evidence for (F)(2)(i):

- A description of the State's applicable laws, statutes, regulations, or other relevant legal documents.
- The number of charter schools allowed under State law and the percentage this represents of the total number of schools in the State.
- The number and types of charter schools currently operating in the State.

Evidence for (F)(2)(ii):

- A description of the State's approach to charter school accountability and authorization, and a description of the State's applicable laws, statutes, regulations, or other relevant legal documents.
- For each of the last five years:
 - The number of charter school applications made in the State.

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- The number of charter school applications approved.
- The number of charter school applications denied and reasons for the denials (academic, financial, low enrollment, other).
- The number of charter schools closed (including charter schools that were not reauthorized to operate).

Evidence for (F)(2)(iii):

- A description of the State's applicable statutes, regulations, or other relevant legal documents.
- A description of the State's approach to charter school funding, the amount of funding passed through to charter schools per student, and how those amounts compare with traditional public school per-student funding allocations.

Evidence for (F)(2)(iv):

- A description of the State's applicable statutes, regulations, or other relevant legal documents.
- A description of the statewide facilities supports provided to charter schools, if any.

Evidence for (F)(2)(v):

- A description of how the State enables LEAs to operate innovative, autonomous public schools (as defined in this notice) other than charter schools.

Definitions:

High-performing charter school means a charter school that has been in operation for at least three consecutive years and has demonstrated overall success, including (a) substantial progress in improving student achievement (as defined in this notice); and (b) the management and leadership necessary to overcome initial start-up problems and establish a thriving, financially viable charter school.

Student achievement means—

(a) For tested grades and subjects: (1) a student's score on the State's assessments under the ESEA; and, as appropriate, (2) other measures of student learning, such as those described in paragraph (b) of this definition, provided they are rigorous and comparable across classrooms.

(b) For non-tested grades and subjects: alternative measures of student learning and performance such as student scores on pre-tests and end-of-course tests; student performance on English language proficiency assessments; and other measures of student achievement that are rigorous and comparable across classrooms.

High-need students means students at risk of educational failure or otherwise in need of special assistance and support, such as students who are living in poverty, who attend high-minority schools (as defined in this notice), who are far below grade level, who have left school before receiving a regular high school diploma, who are at risk of not graduating with a diploma on time, who are homeless, who are in foster care, who have been incarcerated, who have disabilities, or who are English language learners.

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Innovative, autonomous public schools means open enrollment public schools that, in return for increased accountability for student achievement (as defined in this notice), have the flexibility and authority to define their instructional models and associated curriculum; select and replace staff; implement new structures and formats for the school day or year; and control their budgets.

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(F)(2)(v) Kentucky’s approach to innovative, autonomous public schools

In 1991, the state of Minnesota enacted the first “charter” school legislation in the country. One year earlier in Kentucky, the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) introduced the first, and to date the only, state legislation that created an environment for all public schools to become innovative and autonomous through the establishment of a school-based decision making (SBDM) form of school governance. The goals of the school-based decision making legislation are the same as the goals in most state charter laws. The chart below shows a comparison between the standard set of innovation-enabling attributes of a charter school and Kentucky’s school-based decision making form of school autonomy. (*See Appendix XX for full text of SBDM legislation.*)

Attribute type	Charter School Attributes	SBDM Attributes (per KRS 160.345)
1. Organization	Charter schools are public schools that are organized differently than traditional public schools.	All Kentucky public schools have autonomy not normally granted to public schools (nationally); the SBDM council has the authority to organize the school however it sees fit to best serve student learning.
2. Governance	Charter schools are governed by an independent school board whose only focus and responsibility is that particular school.	All Kentucky public schools are governed by a school council made up of teachers, parents and administrators. They are responsible for governance of their school.
3. Responsiveness	Charter schools are very responsive to the needs of students and families enrolled in them.	School councils, because they include teachers and parents, are extremely focused on the needs of their students and families.
4. Accountability	Charters have more stringent obligations related to academic achievement. They can be closed for failing to reach specific academic and non-academic goals or for irresponsible management.	As long as the school continues to improve the learning outcomes of its students, the school-based decision making council retains its decision making authority. If achievement results do not meet identified targets, the school council risks its ability to make decisions (per KRS 160.346).
5. Academic model and budget control	Charter schools control all decisions related to defining their instructional models and associated curriculum; selecting and replacing staff;	In each of Kentucky’s 1249 schools, the SBDM Council is responsible to craft policy, based on stakeholder input, that allows for innovative

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	implementing new structures and formats for the school day or year; and controlling their budgets.	approaches in the areas of defining their instructional models and associated curriculum; consulting on certified and classified staff positions; principal selection; implementing new structures and formats for the school day or year; and controlling their budgets. Principals are then tasked with the implementation of those policies.
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This process has served the state well in giving all schools the opportunity to self govern and thus increase the opportunities for innovation. Kentucky is a rural state with only one true urban center (Louisville-Jefferson County). The debate regarding charter schools has received minimal attention outside of Jefferson County. Of our 174 LEAs in Kentucky: 144 (83%) have only one high school, 134 (77%) have only one middle school, and 69 (40%) have one one school at the elementary grades. In a rural environment like Kentucky’s, the school based decision making model allows for more opportunity for innovation because in most of these LEAs the singular school per grade level means there isn’t capacity to split already limited resources by introducing a charter school.

While charter schools haven’t gained a foot hold in Kentucky, a number of Kentucky LEAs (Bullitt County, Daviess County, Fayette County, Hardin, Kenton County, Madison County, and Oldham County) have school choice options through open enrollment policies to address the need for school choice and make available magnet programs to all students. In Kenton County, as an example, parents can apply for open enrollment to any school in the district and sign a contract regarding attendance commitments, academic progress, etc. Parents are responsible for providing transportation and staffing is adjusted based on open enrollment.

The most significant school choice opportunities occur in our lone urban school district, the Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS). JCPS has 100,000 students and 160+ schools. All elementary, middle, and high school students have school choice options and may apply to any of the following:

- The school that serves their home address

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- A magnet school
- A magnet program
- An optional program
- Any other school in their elementary cluster or their high school network

JCPS **magnet schools and magnet programs** focus on a specific subject (such as environmental studies), offer training for a specific career (such as engineering), or provide a specialized learning environment (such as a Montessori school setting).

Students who are accepted into a magnet program become full--time students of the school that offers it, and they go to the school for all of their classes-not just the magnet program classes.

Some magnet schools and programs accept students only from specific areas of the district. Other magnets accept students from any home address. JCPS provides bus transportation for district students accepted into a magnet school or program regardless of where the students live.

The district offers many different types of magnet schools and programs. Here is general information on a few of them:

- A **traditional school** is a type of magnet school that focuses on teaching and learning at grade level in a traditionally structured classroom environment. Traditional schools require uniforms, daily homework, and parent involvement. A traditional program operates in the same way as a traditional school, but it's a program within a school.
- A **magnet career academy** (MCA) is a type of high school that lets students focus on training for a specific career-in addition to providing the basic courses that all students are required to complete.
- A **Montessori school** uses the Montessori approach to learning, which encourages critical thinking, exploration, and self-directed education.

An **optional program** is a small, specialized program within a school. Students who are accepted into an optional program become students of the school offering the program. They attend the school for all of their classes, not just the optional program classes, but JCPS does not

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provide transportation for students in an optional program unless they live in the school's attendance area.

Students who aren't interested in magnet or optional programs may still apply to any other school in their **cluster**. JCPS provides transportation for students who are accepted. Most of the district's elementary schools are part of one of six clusters. Each includes 12 to 15 schools.

Most JCPS **middle school** students always have the option of attending the school that serves their home address. Students may apply to attend a magnet middle school. They may apply to other schools through their magnet or optional programs.

Beginning with the 2010-11 school year, JCPS high schools will be divided into three networks. High school students may apply to any school in their network and to district-wide magnet schools and programs.

In general, school-based decision making councils promote shared leadership among those who are the closest to the students. Each council is composed of two parents (elected by the parents of students attending the school), three teachers (elected by the teachers in the school), and the principal or administrator of the school. The council role is to set school policy and make decisions outlined in statute which provide an environment to enhance student achievement. Making decisions through shared decision making results in a greater commitment to implementing decisions that will enhance the achievement of students. This structure then allows principals and other school leaders the opportunity to create the innovation necessary to meet the needs of a diverse student population.

Another comparison between charter schools and Kentucky's SBDM system is that all of Kentucky's schools are subject to strict accountability standards and SBDM authority can be revoked. Since the enactment of KRS 160.346 in 2006, four schools have had their school council authority removed. All four cases occurred in 2008 and in all four cases the authority was given to the school district superintendent. In two cases, the district closed the schools and opened new academies with new leadership and stronger direction as to instructional programs. In the other cases, the school district chose to use the transformation model. They removed the

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school leadership and worked with the new leadership to implement a series of reform initiatives designed to improve student learning. While indications in all four cases are that the turnaround efforts are off to a good start, with only one year of new state test scores, another year is needed to get a true picture of the success of the turnaround. Recently enacted amendments to KRS 160.346 have better aligned Kentucky's intervention strategies for low-achieving schools to federal guidelines.

The most critical connection that can be made between Kentucky's approach to innovative, autonomous schools is that in each of Kentucky's 1249 schools, the SBDM Council is responsible to craft policy, based on stakeholder input, in the areas of defining their instructional models and associated curriculum; selecting and replacing staff; implementing new structures and formats for the school day or year; and controlling their budgets. With this level of autonomy, principals and teachers can then design programs that most specifically meet the needs of their students. In this way, SBDM is a "charter-like" structure.

For a more detailed understanding of the areas SBDM councils have authority, here is a partial list from the relevant statute, KRS 160.345 (*see Appendix XX for full statute*):

- Determination of the curriculum, including needs assessment, alignment with state standards, and program evaluation
- Instructional practices
- Professional development
- Selection of the principal and consultation on all personnel decisions.
- Assignment of staff time
- Assignment of students
- Schedule for the day and week
- School budget
- School improvement planning
- Technology use
- Use of school space
- Discipline, classroom management, and school safety
- Extracurricular programs and student participation in them

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- Public participation in school
- Collaboration with other schools, districts, and agencies
- Waiver of district policies

Because SBDM truly enables school-level decision-making authority, school councils have significant autonomy and flexibility to innovate, experiment, and adjust each school's structures and processes to best meet the needs of the students they serve. As with any initiative designed to bring school reform innovations, the SBDM structure has been successful in many schools and less successful in others. While there is no specific research to quantify the value of the SBDM process in schools, SBDM has the same characteristics as research has born out regarding charter schools: 1) the ability for school leadership in every school to think in innovative ways; 2) to make decisions on instructional and curricular programs with the input of staff and families; and 3) the ability to make other policy, budget and hiring decisions. These characteristics would seem to play some part in improving student outcomes when SBDM takes full advantage of the authority they have been granted.

With all 1249 schools engaged in SBDM, the other considerations related to this criteria (percentage of schools that can be charter, funding and facilities) are less of an issue. Kentucky's funding formula for schools, Support Education Excellence in Kentucky (SEEK), is one of the most equitable funding formulas in the country (*see section (F)(3)*). Under this method of funding schools, higher-need LEAs and schools receive greater levels of state funding than do lower-need LEAs. In the same way, facilities funding is allocated based on local need. The result is that because there is no distinction between schools based on their characterization as charter or traditional, all schools are eligible for SEEK and facilities funding.

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Reform area: (F) General

Criterion: (F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions

Points possible: 5 points

Recommended maximum response length: 2 pages

Draft date: January 7, 2010

Specifics of criterion (verbatim from application):

The extent to which the State, in addition to information provided under other State Reform Conditions Criteria, has created, through law, regulation, or policy, other conditions favorable to education reform or innovation that have increased student achievement or graduation rates, narrowed achievement gaps, or resulted in other important outcomes.

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

Evidence for (F)(3):

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

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Kentucky has a long history of pursuing comprehensive and innovative reform. The landmark Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990 enacted a top-to-bottom overhaul of the education system in the Commonwealth. Many aspects of this reform have been discussed in other reform conditions, including:

- New standards, across seven subject areas, and new assessments, assessing wide range of skills students need to succeed (*criterion (A)(1) and (B)(3)*)
- School intervention authority for state to intervene in low-performing districts and schools in need of improvement (building from 1984 “academic bankruptcy act”) (*criterion (A)(1) and (E)(1)*)
- School-level control and innovation: Devolved decision-making to where it matters most – the school – via School Councils and Site-Based Decision Making (SBDM) (*criterion (A)(1) and (F)(2)*)
- Transition to equitable Support Education Excellence in Kentucky (SEEK) funding formula (*criterion (F)(1)*)

In addition to these key reforms, several other important advances were made with KERA. These have contributed to the growth in student achievement and in graduation rates described in criterion (A)(3). They include:

- Began state provision of preschool: Established preschool program to assist children to succeed in school as a means to help schools achieve the goals set in accountability sections of the KERA.
- Created Extended School Services: Provides additional instructional time for at-risk students. Schools schedule sessions outside normal school hours – before school, after school, in the evenings, in the summer, and during intersessions created by alternative calendars – to meet specific, identified student needs.
- Created Family and Youth Resource Centers: Family Resource Centers serve elementary schools and provide access to child care, parenting training, child development training, parent and child education services, and health screening services and referrals. Youth Services Centers serve secondary schools and provide employment counseling, training and placement, summer and part-time job development, drug and alcohol abuse counseling, and family crisis and mental health counseling.

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Beyond the 1990 Act, several reform conditions have been put in place that directly support the work of this application and are cited elsewhere. They include:

- Partnership with Wallace Foundation to pilot key elements of reforms to increase teacher and principal effectiveness (*described in criteria (A)(3) and (D)(2)*)
- Universal administration of the ACT (as well as precursor EXPLORE and PLAN tests) begun in 2008 (*described in criterion (A)(1)*)
- Passage of landmark Senate Bill 1 in 2009 which sets the stage for complete revision of Kentucky's standards (in seven subject areas) and assessments (summative) (*described in criterion (A)(1) and (B)(3)*)

Additionally, Kentucky has created a Center for School Safety. The Kentucky Center for School Safety (KCSS) was established in 1998 with a mission "to serve as the central point for data analysis; research; dissemination of information about successful school safety programs, research results, and new programs; and in collaboration with the Department of Education and others, to provide technical assistance for safe schools." The Center's mission and scope of work demands a statewide collaboration. This partnership provides a dynamic blend of experience in project management, applied research, and technical assistance to our state's education, human service and justice organizations. Accomplishments of the Kentucky Center for School Safety since 1999 include:

- Produced and distributed the annual Safe Schools Data Report
- Hosted 3,933 events/services attendance by more than 227,930 participants (Kentucky educators, parents and community members)
- Provided services to 100% of Kentucky school districts
- Provided website access with in excess of 3 million viewers per year
- Provided books and other literature regarding bullying, proactive approaches to behavior management, defusing anger and managing threats to postsecondary education departments
- Provided technical support for school districts and alternative education programs
- Conducted Safe School Assessments in over 400 schools in our state

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Kentucky has created an innovative Partnership for Minority Student Achievement. This broad coalition endeavored to work to close achievement gaps in schools across the Commonwealth. One main focus of this group was finding and codifying best practices in terms of closing the achievement gap.

Beginning in 2004, Achievement Gap teams in the Department reviewed school progress data of Kentucky schools at the elementary, middle and high school levels to identify schools whose data demonstrated a closing of achievement gaps in one or more of the student populations listed in Senate Bill 168 (to include students' gender, students with disabilities, students with limited English proficiency, African American students, and students with low socio-economic status). The teams used criteria each year to identify schools successfully closing achievement gaps. Based on these criteria, schools were selected for on-site visits to chronicle qualitative data to be shared statewide with schools and districts needing information on how to close gaps. The teams used a rubric created from goals developed by the Partnership for Minority Student Achievement Taskforce. Teams were asked to document a school's processes/practices, programs, people, policies, and the physical environment that assisted schools in successfully closing achievement gaps.

More information on the history and success of this work on achievement gaps can be found in Appendix X: "Kentucky: A Focus on the Achievement Gap".

Finally, Kentucky has recently established a Summer Learning Program for low-income students in grades 2-5. The program provides summer camps that are a blend of evidence-based instruction in the core subjects of reading and mathematics plus experiential enrichment in the arts, technology, and sports. This initiative builds off of the successful work seen elsewhere with summer learning and comes from the recognition that it is low-income students who lose academic ground during summer months.

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Reform area: Priority

Criterion: Emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)

Points possible: 15 points, all or nothing

Recommended maximum response length: 1 page

Draft date: January 7, 2010

Specifics of criterion (verbatim from application):

To meet this priority, the State's application must have a high-quality plan to address the need to (i) offer a rigorous course of study in mathematics, the sciences, technology, and engineering; (ii) cooperate with industry experts, museums, universities, research centers, or other STEM-capable community partners to prepare and assist teachers in integrating STEM content across grades and disciplines, in promoting effective and relevant instruction, and in offering applied learning opportunities for students; and (iii) prepare more students for advanced study and careers in the sciences, technology, engineering, and mathematics, including by addressing the needs of underrepresented groups and of women and girls in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

The competitive preference priority will be evaluated in the context of the State's entire application. Therefore, a State that is responding to this priority should address it throughout the application, as appropriate, and provide a summary of its approach to addressing the priority in the text box below. The reviewers will assess the priority as part of their review of a State's application and determine whether it has been met.

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In March 2007, Kentucky's STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) Task Force, comprised of leaders within the government, business, and education sectors across the Commonwealth, released a comprehensive report (included in Appendix XX) in response to the charter from the Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) to "develop a statewide P-20 strategic action plan to accelerate Kentucky's performance within the STEM disciplines." Since then, Kentucky has established the partnerships and initiatives described in that plan to further our progress in STEM fields. As part of this comprehensive approach, there are specific places in the Kentucky Race to the Top application where STEM-related initiatives appear. We reference those below, including the specific STEM goals addressed (i.e., (i) offer a rigorous course of study, (ii) prepare and assist teachers in integrating STEM content, and (iii) prepare more students for advanced study and careers). These make clear that STEM is a clear a priority for Kentucky. 

Standards and Assessments (Race to the Top criteria (B))

- AdvanceKentucky (*see reform plan for criterion (B)(3), addresses STEM goals (i), (ii), and (iii)*). This math-science initiative will be expanded to allow more students to access and participate in academically rigorous coursework in STEM subject areas through challenging Advanced Placement (AP) programming. Begun in 2007, this is a six-year partnership between Kentucky Science and Technology Corporation (KSTC) and the National Math and Science Initiative (NMSI). It also includes extensive training of teachers, identification and cultivation of lead teachers, additional time on task for students, and financial incentives based on academic results.
- Project Lead The Way (*see reform plan for criterion (B)(3), addresses STEM goals (i), (ii), and (iii)*). This proven, recommended, nationally recognized and nationally aligned K-12 STEM curriculum will be expanded, resulting in a strengthened STEM education of all middle and high school students to make them college and STEM career-ready, improve teacher effectiveness through enhanced teacher preparation and continuing professional development, utilize rigorous assessments to monitor learning outcomes, and implement the appropriate infrastructure to verify the expected improvements.

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- Student Technology competitions (*addresses STEM goal (iii)*). The Kentucky Department of Education's Office of Educational Technology sponsors competitions. [*what information here would describe program and relate to STEM?*]

Great Teachers and Leaders (Race to the Top criteria (D))

- UTeach (*see reform condition for criterion (D)(1), addresses STEM goal (ii)*). UTeach is a program that encourages math and science majors to enter the teaching profession by offering an integrated degree plan, financial assistance, and early teaching experiences for undergraduates. UTeach is an effort sponsored by the National Math and Science Initiative (NMSI).
- The Mathematics and Science Partnership (MSP) (*see reform plan for criterion (D)(5), addresses STEM goal (ii)*). This program is intended to increase the academic achievement of students in mathematics and science by enhancing the content knowledge and teaching skills of classroom teachers. Partnerships between high-need school districts and the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics faculty in institutions of higher education are at the core of these improvement efforts.
- Partnership Institute for Mathematics and Science Education Reform (PIMSER) (*see reform plan for criterion (D)(5), addresses STEM goal (ii)*). This effort seeks to enhance learning in mathematics and science for K-16 students and teachers and to prepare students for success in STEM education and teaching careers. KDE partners with PIMSER through Leadership Support Networks in Mathematics and Science (MLSN and SLSN).

Turnaround of Persistently Lowest-Achieving Schools (Race to the Top criteria (E))

- Coordination of STEM initiatives in turnaround schools (*see reform plan for criterion (E)(2), addresses STEM goal (i), (ii), and (iii)*). In the turnaround work, Centers for Learning Excellence (CLEs) will manage the implementation of programs like AdvanceKentucky and Project Lead The Way to ensure that teachers are trained in, and students participate in, rigorous STEM courses. Additionally, CLEs will form partnerships with other organizations to provide project-based and real-world experiences in STEM-related fields.

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Reform area: Competition Priorities

Criterion: Priority 3: Invitational Priority – Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes

Points possible: None

Recommended maximum response length: 2 pages

Draft date: January 7, 2010

Specifics of criterion (verbatim from application):

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

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

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Early learning was a significant component of the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990. Preschool is an example of how Kentucky has effectively leveraged federal dollars to support reform. Those preschool students with special needs are provided preschool services through federal IDEA dollars. Remaining 3 and 4 year olds in poverty are funded through state dollars at the rate of 150% of poverty. The Kentucky Board of Education has made expansion of pre-K learning opportunities to 200% of poverty level for four year-olds a legislative priority (See 2010 Board agenda in Appendix XX.)

Because in the 1990's, Kentucky did not have a focus related to early learning, Governor Paul Patton created the Governor's Early Childhood Task Force. The task force is made up of representatives from business, higher education, state agencies, schools and districts, early care programs and other education partners. The Governor acknowledge the connection between quality early childhood experiences and the future economic development of Kentucky. The task force was charged with developing a 20-year plan in recognition of the reality that supporting quality early childhood experiences requires a significant financial investment that take many years to accomplish. The task force made recommendations in four key areas: assuring maternal and child health, supporting families, enhancing early care and education and establishing a support structure. These recommendations and the resulting support for students have created a strong foundation for student learning. A list and description of each initiative created as a result of the task force recommendations can be found in Appendix XX – KIDS NOW.

In March 2009, the Governor of Kentucky, Steven L. Beshear created, through Executive Order 2009-232, the Task Force on Early Childhood Development and Education (task force). (See the Executive Order in Appendix XX.) As in 1999, the task force is made up of representatives from business, higher education, state agencies, schools and districts, early care programs and other education partners. The task force membership is reflective of Kentucky's ongoing commitment to collaboration in the area of early care and education. The duties of the Task Force are outlined in the Executive Order but we will highlight a few that support the work around standards and assessments, great teachers and leaders, data systems and turning around low performing schools.

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Standards and Assessments (Race to the Top criteria (B))

The Kentucky Early Childhood Standards (2009) represent specific learning standards for children through four years of age. These standards are designed as a framework to assist parents, early care and education professionals, administrators, and others in understanding what children are able to know and do from birth through four years of age. All of the audiences listed were involved in the development of the standards and the companion assessment guide mentioned later. In light of the development of common core standards in mathematics and English/language arts, these standards need to be revised. Therefore, the Task Force has been charged to “revalidate early childhood standards and identify ways to ensure they are widely understood and used effectively in the programming for high quality early care and pre-school programs and used across education, Head Start and child care” (Executive Order 2009-232).

The Kentucky Early Childhood Continuous Assessment Guide is a companion piece to the Kentucky Early Childhood Standards. The Continuous Assessment Guide provides support to programs as they revise and establish a continuous assessment system to measure a child's progress on the Kentucky Early Childhood Standards. The Task Force will “analyze child assessment requirements and needs; re-examine the Kentucky recommended assessment tools and win broader understanding of and common acceptance by child care, pre-school programs and kindergartens” (Executive Order 2009-232).

Senate Bill 1 requires each school that enrolls primary students to use diagnostic assessment and prompts that measure readiness in reading and mathematics for its primary students as determined by the school to be developmentally appropriate. The Task Force will be defining school readiness and that definition and the work around early assessment will help districts and schools in Kentucky collect the very best data possible to determine school readiness and design instruction that ensures continuous progress for all students.

Assessments of student growth are recommended in Kentucky’s *Continuous Assessment Guide*. School districts may choose one or more of the 12 research-based classroom/instructional assessments recommended in the guide. Each assessment is formative in nature, embedded in regular curriculum, aligned with early childhood standards and can shape instructional changes

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to improve child outcomes. The data are being collected statewide in Kentucky Early Childhood Data System (KEDS). The roll out happens in five phases, the last of which starts in 2010-2011. Assessment data will be comprehensive, representing at-risk children, children with and without disabilities, and children enrolled in Head Start. Data from First Steps (IDEA Part C) and Child Care will be collected in the system, too.

Data systems (Race to the Top Criteria (C))

The Kentucky Early Childhood Data System (KEDS) is a universal web-based system designed to reliably collect assessment data from children in public preschool, Head Start, Early Intervention (0-2 years), and child care. It measures child progress on the Kentucky Early Childhood Standards and the 3 outcomes required by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). This data will become part of the CIITS and be used to make instructional improvement decisions.

Great Teachers and Leaders (Race to the Top criteria (D))

Kentucky is in the process of creating a system of support for schools and districts to measure preschool teacher effectiveness. The system will be comprehensive and cohesive. It will build on current Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education (IECE) teacher standards, preschool student assessments defined by Kentucky's *Early Childhood Continuous Assessment Guide*, and evidence-based classroom evaluation tools such as the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS). Teacher effectiveness will be based on additional measures of school readiness and transition (preschool to kindergarten).

Aligned with the Kentucky Teacher Standards, the IECE Teacher Standards contain an additional standard and criteria for families (e.g., Supports Families). A preschool teacher must know and be able to demonstrate knowledge of family structures and development, communicate effectively with families, assist family members with resources in support of their child(ren)'s development, among many other criteria. This knowledge is essential to the foundation of effective teaching in the preschool environment.

Turning Around Low Performing Schools (Race to the Top Criteria (E))

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When working in low performing schools, the Centers for Learning Excellence (CLE's) will make sure when working with struggling schools, that the early learning experiences and data are informing the work that needs to occur to ensure continuous progress for all students. The regional training center network already in place will play a crucial role in this process.

Supporting infrastructure

The infrastructure is already in place to support Kentucky's early learning initiatives related to the four assurances areas. That infrastructure consists of the following:

- **Kentucky's Regional Training Centers (RTCs).** There are five early childhood RTCs, each with staff certified to train other trainers in CLASS administration. By developing a cadre of coaches at the district level, the RTCs could help guide and assist a CLASS support system to ensure high quality teaching and learning. These regional training centers can support professional learning experiences around the use revised standards and how to use data ensure continuous progress for all students.
- **Institutes of Higher Education (IHE).** The Division of Early Childhood regularly convenes the early childhood faculty from Kentucky's IHE community. Through this network, the new standards, assessments and the relevance of CLASS to teacher evaluation and effectiveness can be emphasized and lead to pre-service learning opportunities for new teachers.
- **Collaboration with Head Start.** Head Start collaboration is necessary around the standards and assessments in order to ensure a high quality learning experience for all students. Head Start has already started to implement CLASS into its support structures. Fifty percent of Head Start programs are administered by school districts, making alignment with and support of CLASS an important priority.
- **Great By Eight Summit.** A leadership summit entitled "Great By Eight" will be held in 2010. Teams of local and regional leaders, including business and industry, will participate by development regional action plans to advocate for high quality schools, programs and services for all children to reduce and eliminate achievement gaps. Standards, assessments, the use of data and effective teaching will be an important element to the regional planning teams.