



Massachusetts Department of
**ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY
EDUCATION**

**Race to the Top Phase 2
Application for Initial Funding**

Massachusetts

Submitted by:

Governor Deval Patrick

Commissioner Mitchell D. Chester

Maura Banta, Chair

Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

CFDA Number: 84.395A

V. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

A State must meet the following requirements in order to be eligible to receive funds under this program.

Eligibility Requirement (a)

The State's applications for funding under Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund program must be approved by the Department prior to the State being awarded a Race to the Top grant.

The Department will determine eligibility under this requirement before making a grant award.

Eligibility Requirement (b)

At the time the State submits its application, there are no legal, statutory, or regulatory barriers at the State level to linking data on student achievement (as defined in this notice) or student growth (as defined in this notice) to teachers and principals for the purpose of teacher and principal evaluation.

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

Massachusetts certifies that it does not have any legal, statutory, or regulatory barriers at the state level to linking data on student achievement or student growth to teachers and principals for the purpose of teacher and principal evaluation. Furthermore, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education's regulations on evaluation of teachers and administrators include this provision, at 603 CMR 35.04(3) (emphasis added): *School committees are encouraged to establish programs and standards which provide for a rigorous and comprehensive evaluation process for teachers and administrators. **The evaluation process may include consideration of the extent to which students assigned to teachers and administrators satisfy student academic standards or individual education plans, and the successful implementation of professional development plans, as provided in M.G.L. c.69, §1B and c.71, §38.***

The language in bold mirrors the following provision in G.L. c. 71, s. 38, referring to arbitration of teacher performance standards (emphasis added): *In reaching a decision, the arbitrator shall seek to advance the goals of encouraging innovation in teaching and of **holding teachers accountable for improving student performance.***

I. SELECTION CRITERIA: PROGRESS AND PLANS IN THE FOUR EDUCATION REFORM AREAS

(A) State Success Factors (125 total points)

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

The extent to which—

- (i) The State has set forth a comprehensive and coherent reform agenda that clearly articulates its goals for implementing reforms in the four education areas described in the ARRA and improving student outcomes statewide, establishes a clear and credible path to achieving these goals, and is consistent with the specific reform plans that the State has proposed throughout its application; (5 points)
- (ii) The participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) are strongly committed to the State's plans and to effective implementation of reform in the four education areas, as evidenced by Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) (as set forth in Appendix D) or other binding agreements between the State and its participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) that include— (45 points)
 - (a) Terms and conditions that reflect strong commitment by the participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) to the State's plans;
 - (b) Scope-of-work descriptions that require participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) to implement all or significant portions of the State's Race to the Top plans; and
 - (c) Signatures from as many as possible of the LEA superintendent (or equivalent), the president of the local school board (or equivalent, if applicable), and the local teachers' union leader (if applicable) (one signature of which must be from an authorized LEA representative) demonstrating the extent of leadership support within participating LEAs (as defined in this notice); and
- (iii) The LEAs that are participating in the State's Race to the Top plans (including considerations of the numbers and percentages of participating LEAs, schools, K–12 students, and students in poverty) will translate into broad statewide impact, allowing the State to reach its ambitious yet achievable goals, overall and by student subgroup, for—(15 points)
 - (a) Increasing student achievement in (at a minimum) reading/language arts and mathematics, as reported by the NAEP and the assessments required under the ESEA;
 - (b) Decreasing achievement gaps between subgroups in reading/language arts and mathematics, as reported by the NAEP and the

assessments required under the ESEA;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Recommended maximum response length: Ten pages (excluding tables)

Note: Please see the general appendices for a letter certifying ESE's general counsel as the designee of the Attorney General; a glossary of Massachusetts education terminology; and a comprehensive list of works cited.

(A)(1)(i)

Since Horace Mann launched the vision of a free school system for all, Massachusetts has led the nation as a pioneer in public education. We have worked tirelessly to build a system of high expectations, rigorous curricula, challenging assessments, and meaningful accountability that allows our teachers to shine and our students to compete with their peers around the world.

Today, we stand ready to accelerate our efforts and launch into the next phase of education reform. Our administration, legislature, educators, community leaders, parents, and a wide-reaching set of stakeholders have committed to doing whatever it takes to provide every student in the Commonwealth with the tools, supports, technology and innovation necessary to ensure that each graduate is prepared to succeed in college, careers, and life in the 21st century.

We are already a national leader in student achievement, and Race to the Top funding will give us the resources we need to build on our accomplishments, accelerate ongoing improvement efforts and target new strategies for reform where the greatest needs and performance gaps still exist.

We will know that our work is complete when every student can say with confidence:

“I am challenged and engaged in school, and I see how what I’m learning connects with the real world. I know what I’m good at, I know what I need to work on, and I know where to go for support. I am on track to go to college, get a job that I’m great at, and keep learning.”

And every teacher can say:

“I know how to reach, motivate, support, and engage every student in my classroom. I receive honest, useful feedback from my peers and principal, recognition when I succeed, and support when I do not. All of my students have the ability to go college, and I know that it’s my job to prepare them so they have that choice.”

We have the momentum we need in Massachusetts to achieve this vision for every student and teacher, and a longstanding history of valuable and productive collaboration among education, community, government, and business stakeholders. Over the past several years we have reignited the commitment of these stakeholders to finish the important work we began together nearly two decades ago with the landmark Education Reform Act of 1993. Race to the Top funding will provide us with resources to get there quickly.

Over the next four years we will rebuild our public education system to achieve this vision for every student and teacher through four interconnected objectives designed to fundamentally transform teaching and learning in every classroom across the state, diminish—and ultimately, eliminate—the achievement gap, and ensure all students graduate ready for lifelong success:

- 1) Attract, develop, and retain an effective, academically capable, diverse and culturally proficient educator workforce to ensure every student is taught by a great teacher and every school and district is led by a great leader;
- 2) Provide curricular and instructional resources to provide every educator with the tools necessary to promote and support student achievement;
- 3) Concentrate great instruction and supports for educators, students, and families in our lowest performing schools and districts to create the conditions needed for improved student achievement; and
- 4) Increase dramatically the number of students who graduate from high school ready for college and career.

Massachusetts embarked on an ambitious course for change with the enactment of the 1993 legislation, which initiated standards-based reform in our state. This legislation established the key elements undergirding education reform in Massachusetts: a set of curriculum frameworks that set standards in all core curriculum areas, a rigorous system for assessing student progress toward meeting those standards, and a foundation budget that ensures each district has sufficient resources available to support this work.

The results are evident. Massachusetts students used to perform at the middle of the pack, but now they rank first among their national peers on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading and mathematics assessments, and high against their international peers on the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). We achieved these noteworthy

results by setting ambitious standards, administering rigorous assessments, and holding districts and schools accountable for the results; providing more than \$21 billion in new state education funding since 1993; and distributing it more equitably, to ensure that the poorest school districts receive relatively more funding.

Most importantly, we have stayed the course, withstanding enormous pressure to lower our standards and postpone or eliminate the implementation of graduation exit exam requirements. Through it all we remained steadfast in our belief that when held to high standards and given the tools to succeed, our students could achieve the goals we set for them—and they did.

But while we remain proud of the achievements our students have made, persistent and unacceptable achievement gaps among our English language learners, minority, special education and low income students illustrate that the job that began with the passage of the Education Reform Act remains unfinished. On the 2009 Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) tests, across all grades, only 33% of African American students scored *Proficient* or *Advanced* in mathematics, as compared to 64% of white students. Only 58% of Hispanic and 68% of African American students graduate from high school in 4 years, versus 87% of white students. Among students entering high school as ninth graders, an average of 10% drop out during high school, including 20% of low income students and 25% of English language learners. And more than one-third of public high school graduates entering Massachusetts public colleges are required to take at least one remedial course in their first semester (DOE 2008). Clearly, too many of our students still do not receive a world-class education, and too many of our educators still do not receive the support they need to help every student excel.

These are the challenges that drive our second phase of reform, which was launched in 2008 with the development of Governor Patrick's Education Action Agenda. This robust and comprehensive blueprint for education reform was the final product of the Commonwealth Readiness Project, a nine-month effort by a diverse group of education, business, and civic leaders charged with assessing the public education system in Massachusetts. They created goals to individualize learning, develop and retain effective teachers, increase college and career readiness, and unleash innovation and systemic change throughout the public education system

(see Appendix A1). These goals and the specific recommendations included in the Education Action Agenda are the foundation for Massachusetts's Race to the Top proposal.

The initiatives in our application are driven by our core belief that the persistent variation in student outcomes stems from both discrepancies in the quality of curriculum and instruction, and unrelated out-of-school circumstances that can affect a student's ability to learn. Each element in our proposal is designed to reduce this variation by focusing on improving the quality of teaching and learning each student receives and on providing students and families with the health and human service supports they require.

The teaching and learning initiatives constitute a coherent set of human resource policies and strategies that provide teachers and principals with honest, robust feedback based in large measure on student performance, along with rich opportunities to implement effective practices and strategies in order to continuously improve outcomes for students. These initiatives link efforts to prepare, recruit, retain, evaluate, develop, reward, promote, and when necessary, dismiss ineffective teachers and principals with efforts to connect the educator workforce with curricular resources and instructional models that work. Both our human resources and curriculum and instruction initiatives place particular focus on areas where Massachusetts districts are collectively challenged, and where the state has a comparative advantage, including recruiting and training educators to work with English language learners and disabled students; recruiting and training educators to teach STEM subjects; and differentiating instruction to meet the needs of all students. We have set our target at college and career readiness for all students and will develop new data systems that will provide the data we need to ensure that all students will be provided with high quality academic programs.

The student and family support initiatives reflect a commitment to extending school turnaround initiatives beyond academic concerns by incorporating health and human service resources. It is no accident that 80% of the students enrolled in the 35 schools that the Commonwealth identified in March as underperforming are from families that qualify for free or reduced lunch. Our Race to the Top application builds on Massachusetts statute that requires state agencies responsible for health and human services to participate in the development of turnaround plans for underperforming schools and to participate in the implementation of the plans. Initiatives in our proposal include funding for wraparound initiatives that will pilot comprehensive approaches to involving governmental and non-

governmental community health and human service agencies in school turnarounds in seven low income neighborhoods. We have also included supports and training for guidance counselors so they can better assist students in making smart choices to prepare themselves for life after high school.

Massachusetts is well positioned to move forward on the reforms identified in this proposal. In 2008, incoming Commissioner Mitchell Chester worked with the state's Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to identify four priorities that would guide the Commonwealth's work: effective educator policies; improvement of curriculum and instruction; integration of accountability and assistance efforts; and intentional incorporation of student and family supports. These priorities, which align well with the four Race to the Top assurances, prompted the reallocation of resources and the reorganization of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The Commonwealth's commitment to these four priorities bodes well for our capacity to implement this proposal.

Our next step was to pass groundbreaking education legislation. In January 2010, the legislature passed An Act Relative to the Achievement Gap, which established the legal framework for providing targeted support to students most in need of assistance and increasing access to high quality schools across Massachusetts. The new legislation lifts charter school caps in the state's 30 lowest performing districts—those that previously were closest to reaching their charter enrollment cap. It provides substantial new authority for districts and the state to intervene more rapidly and forcefully in the lowest performing schools, with powers to reallocate budgets, revise district policies and practices, alter collective bargaining agreements, require all staff to reapply for their positions, and dismiss teachers with professional teacher status (tenure) under a “good cause” rather than a higher “just cause” standard. Finally, the law enables a wide range of entities, including teachers, school or district leaders and parents, to create Innovation Schools, in-district public schools that retain school funding within the district, but can operate with increased autonomy in the areas of curriculum, budget, school schedule and calendar, staffing (including waivers or modifications to collective bargaining agreements), professional development, and school district policies. In exchange for this increased flexibility, Innovation Schools will be held responsible for meeting annual student and school performance benchmarks. With this new law in place, we are well positioned to take on the challenge of reforming Massachusetts education policy to meet the needs of the 21st century.

Entering this next phase of education reform has also required us to re-envision and restructure relationships within the education sector to promote greater continuity for students and educators. The Patrick administration led this effort two years ago by establishing the Executive Office of Education (EOE) and appointing a Secretary of Education who is responsible for developing a seamless, high quality, comprehensive education system from birth through higher education. EOE works with the Departments of Early Education and Care, Elementary and Secondary Education, and Higher Education, as well as the University of Massachusetts. During its first year of operation, the EOE built the architecture for an integrated P–16 education system, oversaw the appointment of an exceptional team of new leaders for the state’s education departments, and helped them launch coherent policy agendas. EOE has also created a Child and Youth Readiness Cabinet co-chaired by the Secretary of Health and Human Services to build partnerships among all Massachusetts public agencies that serve children and established six regional Readiness Centers to serve as hubs for collaboration among local, regional, and state education stakeholders and to deliver professional development and instructional services.

It is with this network of partners and continued support from the administration and legislature that we have joined forces and worked closely with education stakeholders from across the Commonwealth to develop our Race to the Top objectives, which aim to:

Attract, develop, and retain an effective, academically capable, diverse and culturally proficient educator workforce to ensure every student is taught by a great teacher and every school and district is led by a great leader

Massachusetts has already implemented multiple strategies to improve the educator workforce. We have strengthened the standards for teachers seeking special education or elementary certification, adopted new performance standards for administrators, supported alternate routes to certification, and incubated innovative models of educator preparation. A pillar of our RTTT plan is to enhance these strategies and implement new ones to develop an effective, academically capable, diverse, and culturally proficient workforce. By employing student performance as the key barometer of impact and progress, we will transform the entire career continuum for both teachers and principals. Reaching this goal will require identifying and rewarding practices that work, changing and (when

necessary) eliminating practices that do not, and connecting consistent, high quality feedback on performance to professional supports and opportunities for continual improvement and advancement. To that end, we will implement two primary initiatives:

- **Develop a new statewide framework for teacher and principal evaluation and provide educators, schools, and districts with the tools, resources, and support needed to successfully implement more robust evaluation strategies.**

Massachusetts will develop a new statewide framework for teacher and principal evaluation in which student performance will be a significant factor. We have already implemented a student growth model that provides reliable measures of student learning growth in English language arts and mathematics. This measure, along with pre- and post-assessments in non-MCAS subjects and grades, will be a cornerstone of evaluation protocols to be implemented statewide over the next four years. We will provide training and support to ensure that teachers understand the new evaluation framework, and that administrators, principals, and other evaluators have the tools and supports they need to conduct comprehensive annual evaluations, provide meaningful feedback to both teachers and principals, and use evaluation results to inform critical personnel decisions.

- **Ensure students in high poverty and high minority schools have equitable access to highly effective educators, and expand the pool and pipeline of effective educators in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas.** We will employ a variety of monetary and non-monetary incentives to increase the number of effective educators in the state and deploy them in high need schools and hard-to-staff subjects. These will include recruitment incentives, improvements to school climate and conditions, and expansion grants for effective preparation programs. We will make preparation programs and training opportunities easier to access and more affordable to encourage seasoned educators to obtain additional licenses in high need areas, such as special education and English language development.

Provide curricular and instructional resources to provide every educator with the tools necessary to promote and support student achievement.

Our standards-based education reform strategy has until now involved developing high quality state curriculum frameworks, standards, and associated assessments, and leaving it to districts to determine how best to implement them in schools. Our experience over the last 17 years, however, has shown that simply establishing standards and assessments without providing the appropriate training and support is not good enough. Few schools or districts have the capacity to develop curriculum resources or instructional approaches to sufficiently meet the learning needs of every student. To help all students succeed, we must provide more assistance to fill the gap between standards and assessments. To do this, we will:

- **Build a statewide teaching and learning system aligned with the Common Core Standards.** Massachusetts will establish a comprehensive system that will include:
 - More than 100 coherent, engaging, and rigorous curriculum maps and units in English language arts, mathematics, science and technology/engineering, history and social science, English language development, and vocational areas;
 - Curriculum-embedded performance tasks aligned with standards;
 - A digital library of curriculum resources developed by external partners and Massachusetts educators;
 - A test builder engine to deliver interim and formative assessments statewide and return student results to educators within 24 to 72 hours; and
 - 24-hour access to student achievement and growth data and associated reports for all 80,000 educators statewide.

Concentrate great instruction and additional supports for educators, students, and families in our lowest performing schools and their districts to create the conditions needed for improved student achievement.

To close the achievement gap and dramatically improve dropout and graduation rates, we must transform our lowest performing schools. Over the past several years Massachusetts has developed powerful frameworks and mechanisms for doing this work, and with

the passage of An Act Relative to the Achievement Gap, the state has access to new rules, tools and supports to accelerate the implementation of research-based turnaround strategies and decisively address the conditions that contribute to chronic underperformance. We plan to use RTTT funds to enhance this work through investments to achieve the following goals:

- **Develop a specialized corps of educators prepared to tackle the challenges of the lowest performing schools.** Great principals and teachers are critical to rapidly improving low achieving schools. The state will work with LEAs to accelerate the flow of highly effective educators into these schools through a statewide marketing campaign; incentives for principals and teachers; and training, mentoring, and support. At the end of four years, Massachusetts will have a well developed pipeline that will have produced at least 45 principals and 450 teachers whose specialized skills and preparation have enabled them to contribute substantially to school turnaround efforts across the state.
- **Build district and state capacity to prevent low achievement and sustain progress.** The success of all four school intervention models developed by the U.S. Department of Education depends on strengthening district systems of support. We will focus first on strengthening four systems critical to districts' ability to intervene effectively in struggling schools: effective governance and leadership; integrated human resource management and development systems; enhanced community support for students' social, emotional, and health needs; and improved dropout prevention and recovery. We will also identify and scale partners with expertise in supporting three interconnected conditions for school effectiveness that experience has shown are critical to catalyzing rapid improvement of low performing schools: social-emotional supports that ensure students enter the classroom ready to learn, an expanded school day and/or year, and effective use of data to support tailored instruction.

Increase dramatically the number of students who graduate from high school ready for college and career.

Despite our students' overall strong performance, we continue to have too many students, especially low income and minority students, who are not ready for college and careers when they graduate from high school. We will dramatically increase college and

career readiness by strengthening curriculum and instruction in low income, high minority schools, and improving alignment between high school and college.

- **Expose more students to rigorous curricula and college-level work, particularly in STEM fields.** Early exposure to rigorous curricula and college-level work is a proven strategy for increasing college and career readiness, particularly for low income and minority students. We intend to pursue this strategy through pre-AP training for teachers of middle and high school English language arts, mathematics, and science in schools that serve these students and through the establishment of STEM-focused Early College High Schools.
- **Align high school curricula with college entrance requirements.** We will make MassCore, our current recommended high school curriculum for college and career readiness, into the default curriculum: required for high school graduation unless students and parents agree to an alternate program of studies. We will also align MassCore with the public college entrance requirements so that students who successfully complete MassCore will also have met the Massachusetts public four-year college entrance requirements.

Finally, achieving our four ambitious objectives hinges on the development of a robust state data and information infrastructure. Through RTTT we will transform our data systems so that they can efficiently deliver comprehensive, accessible, actionable, and timely data to all Massachusetts K–12 educators; invest in new technology to support the PreK–12 teaching and learning system and a more effective educator workforce; and strengthen and expand training and supports so that educators can use data to inform instructional decisions.

Massachusetts has already embarked on the next generation of reform. In addition to Governor Patrick’s Education Action Agenda and Commissioner Chester’s restructuring of the state education agency, recent legislative and administrative efforts illustrate our commitment to continued reform. The first 35 turnaround schools were identified in March 2010. Turnaround plan development is underway, with an expedited process being utilized in Boston. In six of the 12 Boston turnaround schools, teachers had to reapply for

fall 2010 positions, and newly assigned principals had discretion over faculty selection. On May 25, 2010, the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education directed the Commissioner to convene a task force to develop recommendations to revise the teacher and administrator evaluation regulations in time for the Board to adopt new regulations governing teacher and administrator evaluations in spring 2011. The same day, the state Board adopted new regulations that implement the charter cap lift, thus opening the way for new charter applications in the lowest performing districts.

After the four years of Race to the Top, Massachusetts will have accomplished a remarkable transformation. Every student will experience college- and career-ready standards and curricula, and every educator will have access to online curriculum, instruction, assessment, and data tools to support their students' individual needs. Every educator will receive an annual evaluation that highlights their contribution to student performance and identifies strengths and areas for improvement in helping students grow, and every evaluator will be prepared to give high quality feedback on teacher and principal performance. We will have built a cadre of turnaround teachers and leaders prepared to take on the challenges of our lowest performing schools, and we will have strengthened districts' capacity to improve their schools and prevent low performance.

We have used the RTTT planning process to mobilize stakeholders to agree on and launch these new efforts; funding will enable us to accelerate this work and broaden its statewide impact. With our strong foundation and partnerships, history of successful implementation, and longstanding nonpartisan political commitment to education reform, Massachusetts has what it takes to create a public education system that will prepare all students for success.

(A)(1)(ii-iii)

Conversations that began with the Commonwealth Readiness Project in 2008 have gained renewed vigor as we talked with LEAs, unions, school committees, early education and higher education professionals, business leaders, community groups, and other stakeholders to develop our RTTT proposal. We have been energized by the statewide momentum to identify and develop powerful solutions together and to ensure successful implementation in every classroom, school and district. We realize the magnitude of the

work ahead, but we are confident that we have a solid platform and a clear design for how Massachusetts—with RTTT resources—can reach our goals.

By our side throughout this effort will be the vast majority of our schools and districts. A total of 332 of the state’s 393 LEAs have signed on to our Race to the Top initiatives, and of that group, we are counting 276 as participating.

For most LEAs we required signatures on our Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) from the LEA leader, school committee or board chair, and union leader (where applicable) in order to qualify as a participating LEA. The American Federation of Teachers—Massachusetts (AFT), the smaller of the two statewide associations of teachers’ unions, unfortunately opted not to support our proposal for Phase 2. In light of that decision, we allowed the 21 LEAs with unions represented by the AFT to participate with only the signatures of the superintendent and school committee chair. A total of 20 of the 21 AFT LEAs are participating. This includes 14 that were allowed to participate without the signature of their union president; the other 6 AFT LEAs retained their union leader’s support. (See Appendix A2 for our MOU.)

The Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA), which represents the vast majority of districts, not only supports the Commonwealth’s application but has explicitly endorsed the use of student growth as a significant factor (along with goals for improving teaching and student performance) in the teacher and principal evaluations that will be required of all districts. All MTA districts were required to submit MOUs with three signatures in order to participate, and 195 did so. We also received, but did not accept, MOUs from an additional 56 LEAs represented by the MTA that obtained only two of the three required signatures. Given the MTA’s continued support and commitment to this work, we are not counting those 56 as participating LEAs.

As a result, we will ultimately be joined in our work by a total of 276 participating LEAs (70.2% of the 393 LEAs eligible to sign). These LEAs represent the full range of districts and charter schools in Massachusetts. In all they cover 1,375 schools, 74% of K–12 student enrollment, and 88% of students in poverty statewide (see summary table for A1iii). Of the 276 participating LEAs, 159 are traditional school districts, 60 are charter schools, 36 are regional school districts, and 21 are vocational schools.

This level of participation represents a major step forward for Massachusetts. In a culture of strong local control and powerful teacher unions, we have secured broad statewide commitment to a common set of strategies for the next phase of education reform. With the participation of these LEAs, we are poised to make strong progress in reducing the achievement gap and to show statewide improvement in student achievement, high school graduation, and college enrollment. We expect that students who are currently furthest behind will make faster, more dramatic improvements and that gains will accelerate over the next six years as the benefits from the state's investments take off. Our goals for each measure, described below, are ambitious yet grounded in the state's historic ability to continuously improve statewide performance (see Appendix A3). They are:

- 1) Increase historic rates of gain in student performance on NAEP and MCAS (our ESEA assessment) by 15% between 2010 and 2014 and another 25% between 2014 and 2016. This will increase the share of students scoring in *Advanced* and *Proficient* and reduce the share scoring in *Warning* or *Failing (Below Basic)* on NAEP).
- 2) Reduce achievement gaps in student performance on NAEP and MCAS by 25% between 2010 and 2014, and another 25% between 2014 and 2016.
- 3) Maintain our first-in-the-nation standing on all four NAEP assessments in 2010, 2012, and 2014.
- 4) Improve overall high school graduation and college enrollment rates by 5% between 2010 and 2014 and an additional 5% between 2014 and 2016.
- 5) Reduce achievement gaps in high school graduation, college enrollment, and college course completion rates by 15% between 2010 and 2014 and another 15% between 2014 and 2016.

If we attain these goals, by 2014, about 3,000 more students in the class of 2014 will graduate from high school, and 2,000 more will enroll in college. An additional 13% of students will score *Advanced* or *Proficient* on the mathematics MCAS, translating to 70% of students statewide. We will no longer have some of the largest achievement gaps on NAEP, and we will cut our MCAS achievement gap almost in half in just six years.

And we will accomplish all of this without compromising our standards.

RTTT will enable us to reach these goals quickly, but Massachusetts will pursue this agenda with or without RTTT funding. We will support our most critical investments, such as implementing the Common Core Standards; redesigning our accountability, assistance, and educator development systems; and improving our data systems through private or repurposed funding. These investments are part of the governor’s Education Action Agenda, and we have already established significant momentum among all stakeholders to succeed. But without funding, we will have to proceed more slowly and with less support for LEAs. Without RTTT funding, we anticipate that it could take four to six additional years to achieve our goals.

Summary table for (A)(1)(ii)(b)

Elements of State Reform Plans	Number of LEAs Participating (#)	Percentage of Total Participating LEAs (%)
B. Standards and Assessments		
(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high quality assessments	255	92%
C. Data Systems to Support Instruction		
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction:		
(i) Use of local instructional improvement systems	276	100%
(ii) Professional development on use of data	276	100%
(iii) Availability and accessibility of data to researchers	276	100%
D. Great Teachers and Leaders		
(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance:		
(i) Measure student growth	276	100% (conditional)
(ii) Design and implement evaluation systems	276	100% (conditional)
(iii) Conduct annual evaluations	276	100% (conditional)
(iv)(a) Use evaluations to inform professional development	276	100% (conditional)

Elements of State Reform Plans	Number of LEAs Participating (#)	Percentage of Total Participating LEAs (%)
(iv)(b) Use evaluations to inform compensation, promotion and retention	276	100% (conditional)
(iv)(c) Use evaluations to inform tenure and/or full certification	276	100% (conditional)
(iv)(d) Use evaluations to inform removal	276	100% (conditional)
(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals:		
(i) High poverty and/or high minority schools	276	100%
(ii) Hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	276	100%
(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals:		
(i) Quality professional development	276	100%
(ii) Measure effectiveness of professional development	276	100%
E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools		
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	276	100%

Notes:

- 1) Massachusetts’s MOU includes two optional initiatives in support of criteria B3: rolling out a statewide PreK–12 teaching and learning system and increasing college and career readiness. If an LEA committed to implement either or both of those initiatives, it earned credit for participation in criterion B3.
- 2) We have marked as conditional any district commitments to our MOU that, by state law, are subject to collective bargaining. These primarily include issues related to teacher evaluation and compensation. Conditional commitments do not apply to principals, whose work conditions are not subject to collective bargaining in Massachusetts. Although these commitments are conditional, when we pass new state regulations on educator evaluation, every participating district will be required to bargain the issue and to align their evaluation system with our state framework. The extent to which an LEA needs to negotiate over other issues depends on the local collective bargaining agreement and past practice in the LEA.

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

	Number of Signatures Obtained	Number of Signatures Applicable	Percentage (%) (Obtained/Applicable)
LEA Superintendent (or equivalent)	276	276	100%
President of Local School Board (or equivalent, if applicable)	276	276	100%
Local Teachers' Union Leader (if applicable)	207	221	94%

Summary table for (A)(1)(iii)

	Participating LEAs (#)	Statewide (#)	Percentage of total statewide (%)
LEAs	276	393	70%
Schools	1,375	1,833	75%
K-12 students	686,137	931,391	74%
Students in Poverty	258,046	294,692	88%

Note: Two participating charter schools opened in fall 2009, and one will open in fall 2010. K–12 enrollment and students in poverty data are not available for these schools.

Detailed table follows on next page