

National Mentoring Program. The state is considering a residency program for teachers, no start date was mentioned.		
<b>(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>15</b>
(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (i)The state is developing a dashboard of info to support teachers and principals in decision-making. Professional development will be provided to assist principals in using current technological tools for decision-making. Teachers will be given training in using the dashboard and in using technology to support student's learning. (10 pts) (ii)The state will develop a system with benchmarks to evaluate the effectiveness of the support. The state will report the findings of these evaluations to the public. It is not clear what will happen once reported to help improve effectiveness. (5pts)		
<b>Total</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>95</b>

**E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools**

	Available	Tier 1
<b>(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: The SBE has the right to intervene in LEAs & schools.		
<b>(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>15</b>
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	0
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	15
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (i)The application made the following statement. "Alabama's persistently low-performing schools will be defined in conjunction with those identified through the 1003g School Improvement grant." The appendix that was referenced in the application provides data on schools that do not make AYP. It does not provide information on identifying the lowest performing schools. (ii)The state is aware of the 4 models, but has found that the transformation model works best in its schools. It appears that this is the only model it will use in its schools. They have an achievable plan to support schools in the transformation process. They do not have a contingency plan if there is an LEA with 9 lowest-performing schools. The activities in the timeline are not addressed in the narrative.		
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>25</b>

**F. General**

	Available	Tier 1
<b>(F)(1) Making education funding a priority</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (i)Education funding is tied directly to the sales tax, which has decreased. LEAs do benefit from the property tax. The budget presented in Appendix F shows a reduction in actual dollars and a reduction in the percentage of the state budget going to education. (ii) No mention was made about equitable funding.		
<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>2</b>

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (i)The state does not have a charter school law. They are working with the National Alliance of Public Charter Schools to design a law. Legislation will be introduced in 2010. Items in (ii)(iii)(iv) are not applicable. (v)The state has supported the development of magnet schools that are STEM or arts focused. They appear to be theme schools, not schools that have been given autonomy in the same sense of a charter school. It was mentioned that there are two schools that have their own governance structures and boards. The application does not provide information on the powers of the Boards.		
<b>(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: The state has put resources into a focus on STEM and college readiness. There wasn't much said in this section beyond comments on the move away from Carnegie units in the high school. Other reforms that were mentioned in the introduction were not commented in this section.		
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>7</b>

**Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM**

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>
Competitive Reviewer Comments: A commitment to STEM education is mentioned throughout the proposal. The Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative (AMSTI) is a multi-participant partnership including colleges of education and colleges of math and science and supported by an array of business partners who provide application expertise and content and practice expertise. It is in 50% of the state's schools. Detail about AMSTI is provided in the appendices. There is a focus on assisting teachers and leaders in using technology for instructional and management decisions.		
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>

**Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform**

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>
<b>Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform</b>		<b>No</b>
Absolute Reviewer Comments: The state is committed to using the Common Core Standards as the base for their own state standards. There is a clear pathway to developing principals and teachers to transition to a more rigorous set of standards The state has laid out a regional strategy to support principals and teachers in the reform process. It is ready to hold preparation programs accountable and it is ready to build a solid longitudinal data system. The most troubling aspects of the application are: 1. The letter from the leadership of the state union that implies that key initiatives of RTT may be eliminated; 2. the lack of clear achievement goals for students; and no charter law. Other troubling aspects are: 1. the focus on the transformation strategy for turnaround, 2. lack of evidence of broad stakeholder support, 3. glossing over the places where achievement has not improved, and 4. little attention to the achievement gaps.		
<b>Total</b>		<b>0</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>294</b>

system-wide school improvement plan. If improvement is not made the State Board of Education shall require the State Superintendent of Education to intervene and assume the direct management and day-to-day operation of the local board of education for such period of time as may be necessary for student achievement to improve. This provides the state legal authority to intervene in the lowest achieving schools and LEAs. Per Alabama's legal code (see Section E Appendix 1), any school that has a majority of its students scoring one or more grade levels below the prescribed norm on the state adopted student assessments will have an assistance program developed by the State Board of Education. In considering whether to take steps of intervention, the State Board of Education shall consider factors which may have affected the prescribed norm test score. Factors shall include drop-out rates, attendance rates, special education enrollment, and any other data necessary to properly interpret student achievement in each school. The Alabama State Department of Education's Rewards and Intervention Plan (see Section E Appendix 2) thoroughly articulates the state's intervention policy for low-performing schools, which also applies to the state's persistently lowest-performing schools, as defined in this application. This policy includes support through a statewide system of support that is guided by a continuous improvement plan (CIP). LEAs and schools not making adequate yearly progress (AYP) must conduct an analysis of needs. Alabama currently implements intervention in a manner that aligns with the transformational model defined in the Race to the Top notice.

<b>(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>28</b>
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	4
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	24
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Alabama in its statute has identified low achieving schools that meet the criteria defined in the Race to the Top notice for elementary schools but not high schools. It plans to implement a multi-pronged approach to turn around persistently lowest-achieving schools using the transformation model. It proposes (1) strengthening the capacity of the Statewide System of Support, (2) providing training to strengthen LEA knowledge, skills, and ability to increase graduation rates, (3) strengthening collaboration with LEAs in developing multiple models of innovative pathways to high school graduation, (4) providing greater incentives to low-performing and turnaround schools that show potential for success, and (5) integrating technology as an interactive learning tool in low-performing schools. It proposes a number of activities that have merit. There is no explanation of how these activities will be carried out. The activities do not comprise a comprehensive or coherent plan for turning around low performing schools. More explanation and clarity are needed. From 2006-2007 to 2010 Alabama's "Schools in Improvement" decreased from 452 to 121. Ninety-one (91) LEAs are currently working with State Department of Education (SDE) Regional School Improvement Coaches. Alabama has demonstrated significant progress in this area. Alabama has focused primarily on the Transformational Model because of the large number of rural schools where significant numbers of new principals and teachers are not readily available. It asserts that LEAs have embraced this model because it mirrors "models that have been successful". It is not clear that the current intervention model replaces the principal and that replacement of the principal is part of the proposed strategy.</p>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>38</b>

**F. General**

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>
<b>(F)(1) Making education funding a priority</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Alabama's total revenue expenditure has decreased. The downturn in the economy in a state where education funding is directly tied to sales and income tax has exacted a toll on the state's financial capacity. It was noted that Alabama has a unique funding formula where 10 mills of property tax or the</p>		

equivalent rests with the local district as their participation in the Foundation Program. Further clarification as to the effect of that provision is needed. It is not clear that the state's funding formula takes into account wealth, student need, and towns with low wealth.

<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>2</b>
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: Alabama does not have legislation authorizing the establishment of charter schools. It was asserted that the State Board of Education has recently passed a resolution in support of legislation authorizing charter schools. No points are awarded states with no charter school law. The state does allow innovative and autonomous schools. In addition to a number of magnet and innovative schools described, two schools that function under the direction of their own governance structure and their own board of directors were identified.		
<b>(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: FIRST CHOICE has provided an environment for innovation and reform in serving students at the secondary level. Needed are identification and description of additional initiatives or programs created through law, regulation, or policy that promote statewide reform or have potential for significant impact in increasing graduation rates and narrowing the achievement gap.		
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>7</b>

**Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM**

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>
Competitive Reviewer Comments: Alabama has described plans to impact STEM components: (1) rigorous course of study, (2) STEM capable community partners to prepare and assist teachers, and (3) preparing more students for advance study and careers in the sciences, technology, engineering and mathematics by addressing the needs of underrepresented groups, and of women and girls. Strategies chosen to place emphasis on STEM were not strong or sufficiently integrated throughout the application.		
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>

**Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform**

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>
<b>Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform</b>		<b>No</b>
Absolute Reviewer Comments: Alabama's did not demonstrate it has a high quality plan to implement a systematic approach to state reform. It did not comprehensively and coherently address each to Race to the Top element defined in the notice. While the application demonstrated strength in specific areas there were a number of key areas where the strategies did not align with the component. For example, Alabama's plan to provide effective support to teachers and principals does not provide an overarching approach for providing support. It focuses on data access and provides few explicit strategies to provide support for teachers and principals. Its plan for designing and implementing evaluation systems has two strategies, both related to the development of formative evaluation instruments. But there are no strategies to identify how transparent, rigorous, and fair evaluation systems with rating categories that tie student growth to		

teacher and principal effectiveness will be developed. Other such examples are identified in the comments in the sections above. In addition, in a number of areas (identified in the comments in sections) there was insufficient explanation about an activity to determine the quality of the initiative or judge the likelihood of statewide implementation and use.

<b>Total</b>		<b>0</b>
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<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>269</b>
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regional service centers to take professional development to the local LEA's and tailor it to their needs, particularly in the area of data use with the state's LDS. Professional development in technology is planned for more than the LDS. It will also address other 21st Century tools, such as interactive whiteboards, iPods, and other web-based networking tools. The state's plan also includes development of an Educational Leadership Network that will be designed to support educational leaders, share best practices, and build collaborations that result in improved teaching and leadership.

<b>Total</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>76</b>
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**E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools**

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>
<b>(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: The state has the legal right to intervene in both schools and LEA's so earns full points on this criterion.		
<b>(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>25</b>
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	0
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	25
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: i. The state did not address how it identifies the persistently lowest achieving schools and any non-Title I eligible schools due not having time to correlate the data with the 1003g School Improvement Grant that was changed on the day the RTTT was submitted. ii. The state has been using the transformation turnaround model, as it believes it works best in rural areas where substantial supplies of new teachers and principals are not readily available. Two approaches to the transformation model have been used. Both involve state support and a Turnaround Team Intervention, but one uses an additional program – the Continuous Improvement Residency Program. According to the information in the "Lessons Learned" section, the districts preferred the second model. The state did not provide much analysis on lessons learned. From 2006-2007 to 2009-2010, the number of "Schools in Improvement" in the state has gone from 452 to 121. This data reflects well on state efforts which is why the state scored as well as it did on this criterion considering it did not provide much information on lessons learned and data was missing on the Performance Measures Chart related to the number of schools for which each of the four school intervention models will be used.		
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>35</b>

**F. General**

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>
<b>(F)(1) Making education funding a priority</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: The percentage of the state's total revenues used to support public elementary, secondary, and higher education decreased from 2008 to 2009. Therefore, the score for this criterion is low. The state did not report its policies related to equitable funding between high-need LEA's and other LEA's or between high-poverty schools and other schools.		
<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>8</b>

<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:                  i.-iv. The state does not currently have legislation that authorizes the creation of public charter schools. The Alabama State Board of Education recently passed (unanimously) a resolution to support legislation authorizing charter schools and a copy of the resolution is include in the appendices. The state also claims that the Governor's Office of Educational Policy and the Alabama Department of Education have been working with the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools to develop possible legislation with a focus on learning. v. The state supports specialized and innovative schools such as magnet schools and schools focused on STEM. Score points are awarded for these schools which include 27 STEM schools that provide engineering and biomedical curriculum, 15 magnet schools (5 with an arts focus), and over 50 career and technical schools.</p>		
<b>(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>
<p>(F)(3) Reviewer Comments:                  The state supports magnet schools and has 5 focused on the arts and 27 STEM schools that provide engineering and biomedical curriculum, as well as 50 career and technical schools. In addition, the state has adopted FIRST CHOICE, a program that the state believes has created an environment for secondary level innovation and reform. The points given for this criteria are substantially due to the state allowing these schools to move away from the Carnegie unit toward a mastery approach to learning that has resulted in a substantially increased rate of change in dropout numbers (from a rate of 5% over the past 5 years to 26% this past year), as well as a positive impact on attendance, achievement, and on the number of students graduating college/career prepared.</p>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>12</b>

**Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM**

	Available	Tier 1
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>
<p>Competitive Reviewer Comments:                  The state is awarded the points for the STEM Priority because its RTTT plan embeds a focus on STEM from providing rigorous courses in the STEM areas to teacher training and community involvement in STEM projects. A plus point for earning the Stem Priority score points is the fact that Alabama has made a significant investment in the Alabama Math, Science and Technology Initiative (AMSTI) that has been implemented in 50% of the state's schools. AMSTI provides a foundation for the state to build upon that has a track record of success. The state plans to use RTTT funding, if awarded, to scaled-up AMSTI across the rest of the state. AMSTI is a partnership effort between the state and colleges of math and science that is supported by business partners who provide practical application expertise. The state has also designed and implemented an A+ College Ready Advanced Placement Training and Incentive Program that it plans to expand to all schools if awarded an RTTT grant that has a STEM focus. Threaded throughout the state's application were references to STEM projects and initiatives.</p>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>

**Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform**

	Available	Tier 1
<b>Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform</b>		<b>No</b>
<p>Absolute Reviewer Comments:</p>		

The state's application does not comprehensively and coherently address the four education reform areas. While the state provides a list of activities and programs (some that appear to be promising), there does not appear to be a theory of action around which the state plan and roll-out is organized. It is difficult to see how each piece of the reform fits together into a conceptual framework that will advance significant improvement in the four ARRA areas. In addition, while there appeared to be significant support from a broad range of constituencies, one of the most critical, the state teachers organization, submitted a letter of support that raises questions about the level of commitment the organization has to implementing the state's RTTT plan. The letter from the teachers' organization reflects a very hesitant and tentative approach to many of the types of programs and reform initiatives that the state might want to advance to institute an innovative reform agenda. While the state appears to have implemented many promising programs from which to build, the RTTT plan does not reflect how all of these and other programs and strategies will be woven into a unified plan of action that will result in the closing of the achievement gap and significant improvement in student achievement, advancing all students to new academic heights that will allow them to compete and succeed in the flat world of the 21st Century.

<b>Total</b>		<b>0</b>
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<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>333</b>
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with students is required for a teacher and principal to be considered effective. The state also needs to clarify how much student growth will weigh when looking at all the criteria being used to evaluate the effectiveness of preparation programs.

<b>(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>12</b>
<p>(D)(5) Reviewer Comments:          The applicant has a plan in place to provide effective support to teachers and principals but it is missing a strategy for evaluation and continuous improvement. Alabama plans to develop a clear and automated method for providing data that will allow a strong support method for teachers and principals to maintain awareness of their best practices. To reach these goals, the state plans to introduce the SLDS II dashboard into common teacher and principal use, build an educational leadership network, develop technological instructional and leadership support, develop the support structure involved in the Professional Pathways model norm and make available public reports on an annual basis. Based on the plan, it appears as if the centers will be responsible for ensuring these supports to teachers and principals and that benchmarking will be done to trace the effects of these systems. It's not clear however what will happen after this benchmarking happens to ensure continuous improvement in student achievement. The plan does not adequately address how it will support schools and teachers in using data.</p>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>59</b>

### E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1
<b>(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:          According to the narrative, it appears as if Alabama has the authority to intervene in low-achieving schools and LEAs.</p>		
<b>(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>15</b>
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	10
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:          Alabama does appear to have a definition for persistently low-achieving schools. Alabama's plan for turning around its lowest-achieving schools however is not strong. The state plans to identify and post Alabama's persistently low-achieving schools on the Department's web site no later than February 8, 2010. Alabama's plan is to then use a multi-pronged approach to turning around persistently low-achieving schools using such strategies such as the transformation model and graduation coaches. Alabama is mainly proposing the use of the transformational model because it is supported by LEAs in the state. The fact that the state is not using this model based on past results in turning around low-performing schools is concerning. The focus on graduation coaches as a strategy is based on a decrease in drop-out rates of 1.5%. This seems like a more promising strategy given that there is some data on past results. Overall, Alabama's plan here is not very well-thought out.</p>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>25</b>

### F. General

	Available	Tier 1

<b>(F)(1) Making education funding a priority</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: Alabama's narrative states that its total revenue available to public schools has decreased. There is no information on the percentage of the total revenue that was spent on public education this year or last year. There state's policies on equitable funding between high-need LEAs and other LEAs and within LEAs and between high-poverty schools and other schools is not made clear in the application.</p>		
<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>8</b>
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: Alabama does not currently have legislation authorizing the establishment of charter schools in the state. The state has demonstrated its support of specialized and innovative schools through the development of magnet schools and schools focused on the arts and STEM.</p>		
<b>(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
<p>(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: Alabama doesn't provide a great deal of information on other significant reform conditions in the state. It does provide information however on an effort called First Choice, which is basically an effort to create an environment for innovation serving students at the secondary level. Within First Choice, schools and systems may waive the traditional Carnegie requirement of seat time as it relates to student proficiency or mastery in academic and elective classes. By doing so students who are advanced in a content area may move through the curriculum at a faster pace and take more rigorous classes while students who are struggling are granted additional time and support rather than falling within the traditional time driven method of awarding credit. This reform has seen strong results in decreasing dropout numbers in the state. Because this is the only reform condition that Alabama lists in this part of the application, it's difficult to assign more points.</p>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>11</b>

### Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>
<p>Competitive Reviewer Comments: Alabama's STEM initiatives are captured throughout the application, the state has a good plan in this area and consistently refers to its plans for improvement in this area throughout the application. The state's big goal moving forward is to complete the implementation of the Alabama Math, Science and Technology Initiative in all of Alabama's schools to serve as the basis for all other STEM learning activities. To increase the rigor with STEM programs, the state is expanding A+ College Ready Advanced Training and Incentive Program. Supporting the research of supporting female students in STEM classes and careers is Alabama's Girls Engaged in Math and Science University and the culminating STEM activity is Project Lead the Way through which engineering and biomedical academies have been established in 27 of Alabama's schools. Through partnerships with university and industry expects, Alabama is committed to preparing a new generation of learners equipped with STEM content knowledge and skills.</p>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>

**Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform**

	Available	Tier 1
<b>Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform</b>		<b>No</b>
<p>Absolute Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Alabama is not a strong applicant at this time for Race to the Top funding because it does not do a good job of comprehensively and coherently addressing all of the four reform areas specified in the ARRA as well as the State Success Factors Criteria needed to demonstrate that the state and its participating LEAs are taking a systemic approach to education reform. The state did not articulate its goals in the coming years for improving student achievement, decreasing achievement gaps, increasing high school graduation rates and college enrollment and does not provide enough data to confirm that they are committed to executing the Race to the Top reforms statewide.</p>		
<b>Total</b>		<b>0</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>272</b>

E2 (i) and (ii) The state plans to scale up a model it believes has met with success in turning around its lowest performing schools and has some elements of the Race to the Top Transformation Model. Strengths of the state's plan are intensive attention and support and the implementation of components that include intervention with a turnaround team coupled with a continuous improvement residency program, training for school staff to increase graduation rates, multiple models of pathways to graduation, including credit recovery programs, incentives for low performing schools to show progress, and integrating technology as a tool for learning in all turnaround schools. The plan will also involve increasing statewide support through a state coordinator managing the efforts of field staff currently engaged in supporting the schools. The state will also request that LEAs dedicate one staff member to each low-performing school in the district. While points were gained for the state's plans, points were lost because the application provided no data on the grade levels of the schools and how the state balanced the numbers of elementary and secondary schools. In addition, in a couple of places personnel were mentioned only in the timeline not in the narrative. For example, a "school turnaround specialist" was mentioned in the timeline, but the position's roles and responsibilities were never defined or clarified. Similarly, reference to a continuous improvement residency program was made as a strong component of the state's success, but it was never described. No actual table data was presented in the application about the number of schools for whom this intervention was successful. One sentence in the application states that the number of schools in improvement decreased from 452 to 121, but no timeframe was given. It is difficult to infer the historic performance of the state on school turnarounds with such limited data. Also, no performance measures or baseline data were provided. According to the evidence presented, the state's interventions were based on the AYP designations of the NCLB Act. With more rigorous standards - the Common Core Standards - and more challenging common assessments the results and lessons learned from the past may not be transferable. As a result, full points were not awarded to the application on this criterion.

<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>30</b>
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**F. General**

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>
<b>(F)(1) Making education funding a priority</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: F1 (i) According to evidence provided by the applicant, the state's expenditures for K-12 and Higher Education in FY2009 decreased from those of FY2008. However, the state does use a funding formula that reduces expenditures the Department of Education makes from its share of property taxes to local school systems that raise more property tax in order to distribute more state funds to local districts that raise less taxes. As a result of this effort towards equitable funding, some points were awarded for this criterion.		
<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>8</b>
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: F2 (i) The state does not currently have legislation authorizing the establishment of public charter schools. Legislation is being introduced by the Governor during the current legislative session 2010 to authorize the establishment of charter schools in areas of need. Since the state has established magnet schools and schools focused on the arts and the STEM disciplines and at least two of the schools have a charter school-like governance structure and board of directors, some points were awarded for this criterion.		
<b>(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments:		

F3 The state has implemented a number of innovations prior to the Race to the Top grant competition, including the First Choice high school program, the A+ Program, more rigorous high school requirements in mathematics and science, a statewide Reading Initiative that placed a reading coach in all K-3 schools in the state, an Adolescent Literacy Program, a Mathematics Science and Technology Initiative involving 50 percent of the state's schools and virtual learning courses for high school students.

<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>18</b>
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**Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM**

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>

**Competitive Reviewer Comments:**

The state has initiatives that involve STEM disciplines. These include a Mathematics, Science, and Technology Initiative that currently involves 50 percent of the schools in the state, First Choice that increased the mathematics and science requirements for high school graduation for all students, virtual high school courses in mathematics, science, engineering, and technology, and the A+ Program that earned the state recognition from the National Institutes of Science and Mathematics and the College Board for making STEM disciplines a priority. The Longitudinal Data System (Criterion C) will include data on student performance in STEM disciplines. As a result, the application is awarded full points for the STEM competitive priority

<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>
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**Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform**

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>
<b>Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform</b>		<b>No</b>

**Absolute Reviewer Comments:**

While many elements of Race to the Top's reform agenda are mentioned in the application, some salient concerns affecting a comprehensive approach to education reform should be noted. The state lacks a charter school law that provides choices and options for students and families. The state teachers union does not support some key reform strategies. The budget does not match the narrative in several places. There was an inconsistent use of performance measures, baseline data, and annual targets throughout the application. Key data tables and documents for evidence were missing. As a result, the state's application did not present a comprehensive and coordinated approach to education reform as required by Race to the Top.

<b>Total</b>		<b>0</b>
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<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>273</b>
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