

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: Again, the state's legal position is provided in an appendix with no interpretation. Since the state's strategy is to establish a learning network of lowest-achieving schools, it appears that they do not have authority to intervene more directly.		
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	31
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	26
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: Kansas will be identifying its lowest 5% lowest-achieving schools using the Lowest Achieving Over Multiple Years Method. Evidence from two of the past three years will provide the basis for determination. Kansas works collaboratively with its schools to help them avoid being identified as a school of district on school improvement. It appears that the state has had some success with the transformational model (2 or 6 are off) when contracting with outside support; three are in the process of using turnaround; and several school closure approaches have been used. A comprehensive plan is provided for each approach in the Appendix and summarized in the narrative. It appears, however, that KSDE relies quite heavily on guidebooks and handbooks and the state might want to consider how it might provide more direct support to lowest-achieving schools.		
Total	50	31

F. General

	Available	Tier 1
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	7
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: The proportion of education funding increased in FY 09 over FY 08. The state's funding formula provides some adjustment for categories of students and schools. No data were provided, however, to demonstrate the extent to which these adjustments lead to equitable funding.		
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	22
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (i) There are no charter school caps in Kansas. (ii) Charter schools must be accredited by the state board of education and meet all current standards and accountability requirements as other public schools. Legislation provides that charter schools can operate within a district independently from other schools in the district. About 25% of charter schools have closed during the five-year period, largely due to financial considerations and low enrollment, although one was closed for not meeting academic standards. No requirements are in place to serve student populations that are similar to the local district populations, nor has Kansas closed or not renewed a charter school for ineffectiveness. (iii) Charter schools are funded as part of district budgets with no separate funding provisions or exceptions. No data were provided on the per student expenditure, either for charter schools or traditional public schools. (iv) There are no separate facilities funding provisions. Districts operating charter schools have access to the same facilities funding laws as any district/LEA in Kansas. (v) There appears to be no provision for non-charter innovative, autonomous public schools.		
(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	3
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments:		

The state's school funding formula was reformed in 2005 but there is no evidence that this was related to, or resulted in increasing student achievement or graduation rates, narrowed achievement gaps, or resulted in other important outcomes.

Total	55	32
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Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	0
Competitive Reviewer Comments: Kansas' application did not address STEM consistently or extensively throughout its application.		
Total	15	0

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes
Absolute Reviewer Comments: Overall, Kansas has demonstrated a commitment to meeting the intent of RttT. It has addressed each of the four reform areas although its approach to Great Teachers and Leaders is quite weak. The state does not demonstrate a strong commitment to using student growth data, and did not provide targets for improvement. But the very strong support of its LEAs (almost 100%), and their sign on to all the efforts of the state's plan balances some of these weaknesses, so that overall, a positive judgement is given.		
Total		0

Grand Total	500	290
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F. General

	Available	Tier 1
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	8
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Kansas has shown some evidence of making education funding a priority, through increased education funding from 2008 to 2009 (a \$40 million increase), albeit largely due to multi-year school finance plan enacted by 2006 Legislature to ensure "that the state provides adequate funding for the education of all students." Beyond the base state aid per pupil (\$4,400), adjustments are made to reflect additional costs associated with certain pupil populations, including at-risk and bilingual students (school districts received an additional \$400 million) and for special education services to students with disability (\$428 million). These populations somewhat correlate, presumably, with those districts considered high need, and high-poverty schools.</p>		
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	18
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>I - Kansas has demonstrated the existence of successful conditions for high-performing charter schools. There are no limitations on number of charter schools under state law, nor restrictions on student enrollment in charters. For 2009-10 school year, 35 charter schools were authorized and 34 are in operation. ii - Kansas has laws regarding how charter schools authorizers approve, monitor and close charter schools. Academic goals and requirements form a core set of criteria, but the proposal does not specifically discuss in much detail how student achievement information is involved in decisions regarding school closings (although citing that one school was closed for failure to meet academic requirements.). iii - The state's charter school statutes does not insure that charter schools will receive equitable funding compared to traditional public schools. iv - The application does not specifically state ways in which charter schools are provided assistance with facilities acquisition, access to public facilities, or the ability to share in bond and mill levies. v - The proposal does not adequately nor specifically describe ways in which the State Enables LEAS to operate innovative, autonomous public schools other than charter schools. Instead, it lists a set of statutes regarding charter schools.</p>		
(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	4
<p>(F)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Kansas has improved school funding conditions through a series of legislative actions beginning in 2005, resulting in significant increase in the amount of base state aid per pupil, at risk and bilingual weightings, special education, and local option budget authority.</p>		
Total	55	30

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	0
<p>Competitive Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>There was generally a very scant emphasis on STEM throughout the application. The main STEM focus was to address the decreased teaching force in STEM, through a promising program called the UKan Teach program. The proposal contained little on continued professional development specific to STEM, applied learning opportunities for students, or preparing more students for advanced study or careers in the STEM.</p>		

Total	15	0
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Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes

Absolute Reviewer Comments:

Kansas has put forth a reasonably comprehensive and coherent plan to address all four education reform areas specified in the ARRA as well as the State Success Factors Criteria in order to demonstrate that the State and its participating LEAS are taking a systemic approach to education reform. On a highly promising note, a high percentage of the roughly 300 LEA's in the state are participating LEAS, with 90% or more of the LEA's signing various elements of the plan, as well as high percentages of schools with high poverty and/or high minority schools.

Total		0
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Grand Total	500	307
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F. General

	Available	Tier 1
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	7
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(i) The application presents evidence that the State's expenditures for public education increased from FY08 to FY09. (ii) The application provides a brief explanation of the State's per pupil funding formula with references to additional funds flowing for certain subgroup populations but does not elaborate as to the specific amounts. The application also offers evidence of two supplemental amounts of State funding targeted for supplemental education services for at-risk and bilingual education students and to provide special education services to students with disabilities.</p>		
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	16
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(i) The State does not have a limit on the number of charters allowed and, therefore, does not prohibit or effectively inhibit increasing the number of high-performing charter schools or their enrollments. (ii) The application presents evidence of the State's statutes that govern charter schools. These regulations provide for how charters are authorized and the narrative describes the support offered to applicants. Student achievement is a factor in evaluating effective charter schools. The application provides evidence of the numbers of existing charters, the number of charter applications denied, and those charters which were revoked. (iii) The application does not provide sufficient detail to evaluate the State's assurances of equitable funding for charter schools. (iv) Further, the application does not indicate any funding that is available to assist with expenses related to charter school facilities, access to public facilities or parity with regard to State facility requirements for charter schools consistent with what is required of public schools. (v) The application does not provide evidence that LEAs are enabled to operate innovative, autonomous public schools other than charter schools. The narrative simply repeats the enabling charter school legislation.</p>		
(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	4
<p>(F)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The criterion requires evidence of the extent to which the State has created conditions favorable to education reform or innovation that have increased student achievement or graduation rates. The application presents a description of legislative actions resulting in targeted State funding that is aligned with the targets defined under the No Child Left Behind Act. This is presented as a reform condition resulting in increased assessment results in reading and math. This is a reasonable condition that meets the criterion.</p>		
Total	55	27

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	0
<p>Competitive Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Although brief, the application strives to meet the criterion by asserting in a very brief narrative the State's emphasis on STEM through professional development, common core standards, and addressing teacher shortages. And, the references to STEM in several sections of the application indicate that STEM is a factor in the State's reform agenda. However, the criterion require a more robust narrative of the State's commitment to STEM in several specific areas. The application lacks</p>		

evidence of a rigorous course of study in mathematics, the sciences, technology and engineering. The plan is silent on any vision for cooperating with industry experts or museums nor does it elaborate on any other STEM-capable community partners to prepare and assist teachers in integrating STEM content across grades and disciplines. In sum, the application does not meet the criterion.

Total	15	0
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Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes

Absolute Reviewer Comments:

The Kansas application absolutely meets the criterion for being a comprehensive, coherent plan that addresses all four education reform areas specified in the ARRA as well as the State Success Factors Criteria therefore providing evidence of a systemic approach to statewide education reform. Further, the participation of 91% of the State's LEAs in support of this plan further affirms statewide alignment of funds to increase student achievement, decrease achievement gaps across student subgroups and increase rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers. The application exhibits examples of vivid innovation in a number of sections but in others is considerably weak. This inconsistency across the application weakens the possibilities for an effective reform agenda. But there are overwhelming flashes of brilliance sprinkled throughout to suggest real promise.

Total		0
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Grand Total	500	332
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Total	138	119
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E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1
(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	10	0
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(E)(1) Narrative does not address criterion regarding intervention by the applicant; mandating participation in a network (KLN) is not considered statutory authority. In the appendix, Applicant lists six statutes/regulations, four of which speak to accreditation. One, K.A.R. 91-31-40, "sets out the "sanction" actions available to the state board of education which may be applied to any conditionally accredited or not accredited school". However, the referred to "sanction actions" are not quantified, nor entered in evidence, therefore the information is insufficient to assess the ability of the Applicant to intervene in low-achieving LEAs and schools. As a result, zero points are given for this sub-criterion.</p>		
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	34
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	29
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(E)(2)(i) The applicant has a process for identifying persistently low-achieving schools. Figure (E)(2)(i) Defining Persistently Low-Achieving Schools found in appendix E-3 is offered as evidence of this process. (E)(2)(ii) Most of the steps taken thus far, as well as future plans, indicate that the Applicant appears to be relatively new to the school improvement process. No discussion or evidence is presented for school improvement prior to the 2004-05 school year. If additional actions had been taken previously, (and shared in this application), a fully picture of the strategies the applicant has taken to improve low-achieving schools in the past would help to set the context for the current plan presented here. The Applicant states that the four models offered in RTTT, Turnaround Model, Restart Model, Close/Consolidate Model, or the Transformation Model are included in the handbook they developed to serve as a resource for schools entitled, Title I School Restructuring Handbook. Applicant also states that this handbook will be revised to include current guidance for each model, and listed the changes required. Applicant included charts and required data on past and future planned use of approved turn around models. There is scant information provided regarding the "human capital" side of the reform equation: teachers, parents, principal, community, and alas the students. While plans and process are important, evidence of the human equation in turning around low-achieving schools is missing. For this Applicant, the RTTT initiative can thrust the school reform agenda, especially sections focused on ARRA component, Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools, to the forefront of the Applicant's school improvement efforts. In addition to the lessons learned through the Applicant's experience and noted in the required chart included in the narrative, the Applicant and it's low-achieving schools and districts may be well-served by meeting with and observing schools and districts that have been successful in their turnaround efforts.</p>		
Total	50	34

F. General

	Available	Tier 1
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	9
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

(F)(1)(i) The Applicant's legislative budget for elementary and secondary education had an increase of 5.7% in FY2009 over FY2008. (F)(1)(ii) The Applicant asserts that to fund the general operations of schools, the state's school finance formula provides a base state aid per pupil amount for each full-time student enrolled in a school district. In addition to receiving base state aid, school districts during FY 2009 received an additional \$400 million through the school finance formula to provide supplemental education services to at-risk and bilingual education students and \$428 million to provide special education services to students with disabilities. There is no discussion regarding equitable distribution of funds between high-poverty and lower-need schools within LEAs.

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

40

27

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(F)(2)(i), (F)(2)(ii) Kansas' state statutes allow for the creation of charter schools. According to the Applicant, there are no limitations on the number of charter schools under state law. For the 2009-10 school year, 35 charter schools were authorized and 34 are in operation. Kansas charter schools may operate within the following type – Charter and/or charter/virtual. Nine charters are operating as charter/virtual schools – four charters have a virtual component. The remaining 22 charters operate without a virtual aspect. Charter school applications are reviewed by a Review Committee using a Charter School Petition Rubric to rate the quality of each component, provided on page F1 in the Appendix. A table, Five-Year Summary of Charter School Applications, Approvals, Denials and Closings is listed as required in the narrative. There is no notation of the percentage the currently operating 34 charter schools represents of the total number of schools in the State. With regard to laws, statutes and regulations, the Applicant cites eight relevant statutes/regulations with respect to charter schools in the narrative. (F)(2)(i), (F)(2)(ii) Kansas' state statutes allow for the creation of charter schools. According to the Applicant, there are no limitations on the number of charter schools under state law. For the 2009-10 school year, 35 charter schools were authorized and 34 are in operation. Kansas charter schools may operate within the following type – Charter and/or charter/virtual. Nine charters are operating as charter/virtual schools – four charters have a virtual component. The remaining 22 charters operate without a virtual aspect. Charter school applications are reviewed by a Review Committee using a Charter School Petition Rubric to rate the quality of each component, provided on page F1 in the Appendix. A table, Five-Year Summary of Charter School Applications, Approvals, Denials and Closings is listed as required in the narrative. There is no notation of the percentage the currently operating 34 charter schools represents of the total number of schools in the State. With regard to laws, statutes and regulations, the Applicant cites eight relevant statutes/ regulations with respect to charter schools in the narrative. P122 (F)(2)(iii) The Applicant states that the state's charter school statutes do not specify separate funding provisions or exceptions for charter schools. Districts operating charter schools are subject to the same state funding laws and regulations to which any district/LEA in Kansas is subject. (F)(2)(iv) The state's charter school statutes do not specify separate facilities funding provisions or exceptions for charter schools. Districts operating charter schools have available the same state facilities funding laws and regulations as any district/LEA in Kansas has. No other data or discussion is provided, for example, regarding possible assistance with facilities acquisition or access to public facilities. Space and facilities for charter schools is of the utmost importance and charters often need assistance in this area. (F)(2)(v) In response to this sub-criterion, the Applicant cites the following statute, which only refers to charter schools, and therefore, does not serve as an adequate response to this sub-criterion: K.S.A. 72-1903 (a) evidences the nature of the charter school as an independent school—"It is the intention . . . to provide an alternative means within the public school system for ensuring accomplishment of the necessary outcomes of education by offering opportunities . . . to establish and maintain charter schools that operate within a school district structure, but independently from other schools of the district." No other discussion is offered in this response regarding autonomous schools that are not charters.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions

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(F)(3) Reviewer Comments:

(F)(3) In response to this criterion, the applicant cites evidence that "... all other things being equal, districts that spend more had better student performance....we can be more than 99% confident there is a relationship between spending and outcomes." Proof of this fact operationally is reflected in the acknowledgement that Kansas' assessment results in both reading and math have shown an increase for the nine years in a row. This is attributed, in part, to school funding conditions resulting from a series of legislative actions beginning in 2005 Kansas Legislative Session. House Bill 2247 coupled with Senate Bill 3 modified the school finance formula resulted in significant increases in the amount of base state aid per pupil, at-risk and bilingual weightings, local option budget authority, and funding for special education, all totaling an increase in school funding of approximately 289 million. While laudable, there is no discussion of programs, strategies, practices, etc. that were supported by this increased funding that resulted in the associated increases in achievement. Nor were any disaggregated statistics included that showed increases in graduation rates or narrowed achievement gaps.

Total	55	39
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Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	0
Competitive Reviewer Comments: Applicant did not have a high quality plan addressing STEM criteria. Narrative included nothing on: (i) rigorous course of study; (ii) partnerships and cooperatives with industry experts, museums, or math, engineering, science or technology-based organizations; (iii) preparing more students for advanced study and careers in the sciences, technology, engineering, and mathematics, nor addressing the needs of underrepresented groups and of women and girls in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. This resulted in zero (0) points for this Competitive Preference.		
Total	15	0

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes
Absolute Reviewer Comments: While the Applicant has submitted a proposal in which there are a number criterion areas not addressed satisfactorily to warrant full points for all criteria in the application, overall a passable effort was made to do so.		
Total		0

Grand Total	500	367
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The State provided its method for identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools. It detailed the components of its transformational, turnaround, and restart models. The State has made some changes to its models to bring them into alignment with the Race to the Top requirements. For example, the transformational model used in the past did not require the removal of the principal; the model detailed in the application does. However, the State does not have a proven record of implementing these reforms as detailed in the notice. The State has used three of the four models in the past and has a state system of support to assist LEAs and schools with their turnaround efforts.

Total	50	37
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F. General

	Available	Tier 1
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	8
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: The percentage of the State's revenues dedicated to education increased from 59 percent in FY 2008 to 65 percent in 2009. The State's school finance formula does not include adjustments for high poverty LEAs or schools. However, the formula does make adjustments for certain student populations such as bilingual and at-risk students, so there is some attempt at equalizing funding for high-need districts.</p>		
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	14
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: The State does not put a cap on the number of charter schools that are authorized to operate; full points were awarded for this criterion. Charter schools are held to the same standards for student achievement and accountability that other schools must meet. There is no renewal period, but charter schools can be closed for failure to meet academic requirements. However, most charters have been closed due to financial considerations or low enrollment and not academic performance. Because of the lack of a renewal process and school closures based on performance, it does not appear that the State conducts rigorous reviews of its charter schools based on academic achievement. The State did not provide sufficient evidence on equitable funding for charter schools, therefore no points were awarded for this criterion. The State does not provide additional funds to charters for facilities. Points were withheld since the State did not provide evidence that it operated innovative, autonomous public schools other than charter schools.</p>		
(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	5
<p>(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: As evidence of other significant reform conditions, Kansas pointed to its increased funding for education since 2005. A legislative audit found that a 1% increase in performance was associated with .83% increase in spending which has led the State to make significant investments in education. The State believes this increased funding has contributed to the steady growth in student performance in both reading and mathematics.</p>		
Total	55	27

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	0

Competitive Reviewer Comments:

Kansas focused on STEM throughout its application beginning with improved standards to addressing teacher shortages in a STEM-related field. However, the State's application does not reach the standards of a high quality plan related to STEM. The State did not demonstrate a high degree of support from the STEM community. Its major initiative designed to prepare more math and science teachers does not appear that it will expand the pipeline enough to fill the shortage areas the State is projecting.

Total	15	0
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Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes

Absolute Reviewer Comments:

Kansas presented a thoughtful, well articulated plan on its four-tiered approach to systemic and sustained reform that aligns with the Race to the Top principles and goals. Kansas has undertaken authentic reforms in each of the four key areas and appears to have the infrastructure and capacity to immediately begin implementing the Race to the Top elements. The application presents a strong connection and collaboration between the Kansas State Board of Education (KSBE) and the Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR) emphasizing the State's commitment to P-20 education and joint responsibility for implementing reforms. The State has secured widespread buy-in from participating LEAs and stakeholder groups including teachers, administrators, and higher education, and community members. The State has already laid a strong foundation on which to build the Race to the Top reforms including developing new standards and assessments and a statewide longitudinal data system. Throughout its plan the State demonstrated its commitment to strengthening its educator workforce through improved pre-service preparation, stronger supports in the classroom, improved evaluation, and job-embedded, coordinated professional development.

Total		0
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Grand Total	500	352
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