

Kentucky has tried various approaches to turning around low-achieving schools and districts. The plan under Race to the Top is very extensive and includes a variety of levels of support for the schools. The Department has reorganized to support this effort, but central to the support is creating Centers of Learning Excellence to serve as intermediaries between the Department's special section and the schools in need of improvement. The Centers will coordinate efforts from a variety of sources, provide professional learning services, work with the community, and generally drive the effort to turn around the schools. They also will foster networks and other peer support capabilities. Special attention is being paid to leaders by, for example, inserting an administrative manager so the principal can concentrate on instructional matters. Another component is for the state to create endorsements specifically for people who will work in turning around the low-achieving schools. Separate certifications will be created for Educational Recovery Leaders, and Educational Recovery Specialists and Intervention Specialists. The state has developed a Leadership Assessment and the results have already been used to determine who makes the decision about which of the four turnaround options to employ and who will lead the turnaround process. The state will employ this Leadership Assessment as a key component in its efforts to turning around the identified schools. The system of support is multifaceted and flexible and should be able to support all four approaches to turning around these schools.

Total	50	47	47
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**F. General**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(F)(1) Making education funding a priority</b>	10	8	8	
(i) Allocating a consistent percentage of State revenue to education	5	5	5	
(ii) Equitably funding high-poverty schools	5	3	3	

**(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

The state has increased revenue for elementary, secondary and higher education from 43.6% of total revenues in 2008 to 46.5% in 2009.

Kentucky's funding formula has upward adjustments for at-risk pupils, exceptional children, home-schooled or hospitalized pupils and limited English proficient students. These adjustments provide additional revenue to high-need LEAs. The distribution of funding within LEAs is done on a per-pupil basis, so there is no special funding consideration taken for students who may be in a higher need school within a district. Without this consideration for individual schools within a large district, the chance for inequitable funding increases.

<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	40	8	8	
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	0	0	
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	0	0	
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	0	0	
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	0	0	
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	8	8	

**(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

Kentucky does not have a charter school law. The state does encourage and enables LEAs to operate innovative autonomous public schools other than charter schools. It has a site-based-decision-making model that provides significant autonomy for School Councils. Most LEAs in Kentucky are small with one school per grade span (e.g., high school), but the largest LEA does have a number of options for students. The flexibility for the School Councils could provide opportunity for innovation in LEAs.

<b>(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	
<b>(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
Kentucky has created a myriad of conditions favorable to school reform. Most notable is an early commitment to state provision of preschool and looking after the needs of the whole child by creating family and youth resource centers. The Center for School Safety has had an impact throughout the state by decreasing disciplinary actions resulting in a safer and better school climate. Most recently they have become a partner state in The Partnership for 21st Century Skills. There have been a number of efforts to look at closing the achievement gap, but as noted in earlier sections, they have not met with a great deal of success. These and other efforts have helped to create conditions favorable to school reform.				
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	

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

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	
<b>Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
Kentucky has a STEM Task Force comprised of leaders within the government, business and education sectors. A number of admirable activities are mentioned in the application including encouraging more access to Advanced Placement programming, expansion of the Project Lead the Way program, science centers and various efforts to improve the content knowledge and teaching skills of teachers in the STEM areas. The STEM section does not specifically address underrepresented groups and women and girls, but different portions of the application do clarify that these groups are represented in STEM efforts. Similarly, activities or programs for elementary students are not addressed in the STEM section. Project Lead the Way is described as a K-12 STEM curriculum, but the application says the expansion of the Project will result "in a strengthened STEM education of all middle and high school students..." Other portions of the application allude to strengthening the elementary curriculum in STEM areas, but there are few significant efforts. The STEM Task Force report has a strong call to action, excellent definitions of problems, strong recommendations and possible strategies. The application says that the state "has established the partnerships and initiatives described in that plan." The connections between the activities described in this section and the report are weak but evident. While not an overwhelmingly comprehensive plan, Kentucky has adequately addressed the criteria for this section.				
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	

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

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform</b>		<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	

**Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

The Kentucky application meets this priority. While Kentucky does not have laws enabling charter schools, it does provide flexibility in governance for the LEAs in Kentucky. Other areas of the application are particularly strong. There is total commitment to the reform effort with all school districts signing on to a strong MOU. The commitment to high quality standards and assessments demonstrated through history as well as leading the current nationwide effort is commendable. The statewide longitudinal data system is in place and plan for its expansion and enhancement is very solid. The CIITS is an excellent use of technology and should help level the playing field for the many rural LEAs in the state. The overall plan to build great teachers and leaders is strong, although there is some concern about the equitable distribution of highly effective teachers and that impact on the gap between low-income and non low-income students. Finally, the state has a very robust and integrated approach to turning around low performing schools. Full implementation of the plan should increase student achievement across the state, increase graduation rates and result in an improved professional corps of educators.

Total			0	0
Grand Total	500	402	411	

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

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs</b>	10	10	10	

**(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

KY has the legal authority to intervene in the State's persistently lowest-achieving schools. As for districts, the state has the authority but must first conduct an administrative hearing.

<b>(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools</b>	40	35	35
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	30	30

**(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

(i) KY has an approved definition that will be used from 2010-12 at which time the definition will be expanded to include all schools that fail to meet the state's accountability measures. The state has proposed an aggressive identification process.

(ii) Kentucky articulates an aggressive plan for turning around its lowest performing schools using the four school intervention models with extensive supports. Prior to intervening, KY conducts a leadership audit to determine the capacity at the school and district level to assess who is best to lead the intervention and which of the four turnaround options would be most effective. If the district is unable to intervene, the state takes over the school. The state also has the authority to take over an LEA.

Based on its experience with a variety of turnaround strategies, Kentucky is implementing a new turnaround support - Educational Recovery Schools - that will be supported by a team for educational recovery services. To oversee this effort and maximize resources, 3 SEA units have been combined to better focus Federal programs (Title 1), Leadership and School Improvement, and the Office of Teaching and Learning (content specialists). The state team will be led by an Educational Recovery Project manager (new position).

Direct services will be provided by the yet to be created and funded nine Centers of Learning Excellence. Three will be established in Year 1 of RTT, with six more added in year 3 at a cost of \$500,000 per year per Center. These centers will be selected on a competitive basis, eligible organizations include regional service agencies, school support organizations, or an educational management organization.

These Centers will provide extensive consulting services to these failing schools. The one concern with this new structure is how it will coordinate and collaborate with the other Centers and support activities proposed in the application. In addition, the list of potential services have probably been provided to these consistently failing schools on numerous occasions by many providers. Given the needs of these failing schools and the ambitious goals set out in the application, a more focused plan was expected.

<b>Total</b>	50	45	45
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**F. General**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(F)(1) Making education funding a priority</b>	10	7	7	

(i) Allocating a consistent percentage of State revenue to education	5	4	4
(ii) Equitably funding high-poverty schools	5	3	3

**(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

- (i) Education funding in the state increased by \$15M or 3% from 2008 to 2009.
- (ii) State policies for equitable funding are set at the district level. The formula sets a basic per pupil amount which is then adjusted based on at-risk population, exceptional students, home-schooled or hospitalized students, and limited English proficient students. At the school level, funds are distributed on a per-pupil basis. The state provides three examples as evidence of the higher per pupil expenditures based on at-risk status but it does not address the issue at the school level.

<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	0	0
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	0	0
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	0	0
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	0	0
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	8	8

**(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

- (i) State law focuses on providing independence and autonomy to all schools through school based decision making . Therefore, according to KY, state law allows all charters and that there are no prohibitions such as caps . It should be noted that the law is silent on charters per se because no distinction is made between charter schools and regular schools . While KY has no prohibitions on charters in statute, the fact that there are none is evidence of some form of unspoken prohibition. The state argues that given their rural nature the interest in charters is low, it does not address the possible interest in its urban areas, such as Louisville.
- (ii) The school based decision making allows schools to be closed when academic or managerial deficiencies are present. The state statute included in the appendix is not as definitive as the text might imply. There do not appear to be specific processes and procedures to be followed. No evidence is provided on the number of charters that exist in KY and if their funding status has ever changed.
- (iii) KY states that their funding allocation process is equitable. However, with no charter schools operating in the state (as well as no specific charter school statute) there is no evidence to support that claim.
- (iv) KY states that charters have equal access to funding for facilities. As previously stated, there is no charter school statute, no evidence of any existing charter schools, there is no evidence of facilities funding or access to facilities for charter schools.
- iv) KY clearly allows LEAs to operate autonomous schools. There are school choice programs, primarily in Louisville, with magnet schools.

<b>(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
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**(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

KY has a number of other significant reform conditions that have contributed to increased achievement from pre-school programs to extended day programs to partnerships with foundations and other reform

organizations. The state does not provide specific examples linking these strategies to achievement. As noted in previous sections of the application, KY believes it is not a single reform strategy that has improved achievement but the cumulative effect of all its past efforts.

Total	55	20	20
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**Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM**

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

**Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

KY has included STEM activities in all the relevant sections of the application with an emphasis on recruiting and rewarding STEM content teachers. The state plan to focus on STEM areas in the alternative teacher certification programs should increase the quantity and quality at the local level. Given the geography of KY and some of its isolated areas, the state will also use distance learning to increase STEM content for students. The plan addresses the need for all students to be more involved in STEM activities as well as a Partnership in high need school districts. The plan provides specifically for underrepresented groups, including women and girls.

This is an impressive plan as well as supported by extensive resources.

Total	15	15	15
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**Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform</b>		Yes	Yes	

**Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

KY's application meets this priority. It has provided a comprehensive approach to improving achievement in the state through the full participation of its LEAs.

KY's plan builds on its long history of reform and uses the lessons it has learned to propose new strategies and activities to meet the increased challenges of RTT.

Total		0	0
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Grand Total	500	396	399
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(E)(2)(ii) Kentucky earned points in the high range for this section. The Kentucky RTTT proposal in all other sections has provided clear and well organized information. This is not the case for this section. Kentucky has mixed numerous programs and strategies for addressing concerns about schools at various levels of need. Kentucky has an elaborate procedure for school and district responses. It has a flow chart on who in the district or the school should determine the turnaround strategy depending on how well the school and district leadership function. (See CD PDF 9, Page 292) In doing so, Kentucky has not answered very well how the KDE will support its LEAs in turning around those schools by implementing one of the four school intervention models turnaround model, restart model, school closure, or transformation model required in RTTT. KDE leadership actually seems to be focused on other recovery approaches that use three strategies noted in the proposal under the headings of District 180, Centers for Learning Excellence, and Educational Recovery Leaders and Specialists. Those programs would help low-achieving schools but the design seemed to address general concerns and were not specific to the four models. Kentucky earned points for strategies that districts and schools could use to make model selection decisions and for providing school improvement support. It did not earn points associated with state leadership in implementing the four models required in the RTTT program. The response may be because Kentucky schools have unique powers to make their own decisions.

**(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

Points were reduced because the panel's response did not clarify sufficiently the concerns about the State's role in turn-around schools that were not responding positively to intervention efforts by partners. The answer did not provide answers about when and what would be done about partnerships that were not working out.

Total	50	42	40	
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**F. General**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(F)(1) Making education funding a priority</b>	10	10	10	
(i) Allocating a consistent percentage of State revenue to education	5	5	5	
(ii) Equitably funding high-poverty schools	5	5	5	
<b>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>(F)(1)(i) Kentucky earned maximum points because Kentucky increased the percentage (43.6% to 46.5%.) of the total revenues available to the State and the total amount (an increase of 15 million dollars) that were used to support elementary and secondary education, and public higher education for FY 2009 was greater than or equal to the percentage of the total revenues available to the State that were used to support elementary, secondary, and public higher education for FY 2008.</p> <p>(F)(1)(ii) Kentucky earned maximum points because the state's policies lead to equitable funding (a) between high-need LEAs (as defined in this notice) and other LEAs, and (b) within LEAs, between high-poverty schools (as defined in this notice) and other schools. In fact, Kentucky provides an additional 15% to LEAs with high percentage of poverty students with no differences in schools within LEAs.</p>				
<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	40	8	8	
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	0	0	
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	0	0	

(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	0	0	
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	0	0	
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	8	8	
<b>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>The State does not have a charter school law that does not prohibit or effectively inhibit increasing the number of high-performing charter schools (as defined in the notice) in the State, measured (as set forth in Appendix B) by the percentage of total schools in the State that are allowed to be charter schools or otherwise restrict student enrollment in charter schools;</p> <p>Kentucky proved difficult to score in regards to charter schools. If one uses the function definition of a charter school then Kentucky should earned maximum eight points because all schools in Kentucky have such great amounts of autonomy. If one uses a legal definition of charter school that requires a state to have a charter school law then Kentucky should not receive points. Though very different from charter school laws in other states, the autonomy given schools in Kentucky is very similar to the autonomy given charter school in other states. However guidance given to reviewers required that a state have a charter law before it can be given points. Kentucky does not have a charter school law and therefore gets 0 points.</p> <p>(F)(2) (ii) Kentucky does not have a charter school law and therefore gets 0 points.</p> <p>(F)(2) (iii) Kentucky does not have a charter school law and therefore gets 0 points.</p> <p>(F)(2)(iv) Kentucky does not have a charter school law and therefore gets 0 points.</p> <p>(F)(2)(v) Kentucky earned the maximum eight points because it enables LEAs to operate innovative, autonomous public schools (as defined in this notice) other than charter schools. In many ways every school in Kentucky meets the requirements of the subsection. This option is especially important for large districts where specialty schools and open enrollment options are possible.</p>				
<b>(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	
<b>(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>(F)(3) Kentucky earned maximum points because it has a long history and numerous examples of having created, through law, regulation, or policy, other conditions favorable to education reform or innovation that have increased student achievement or graduation rates, narrowed achievement gaps, or resulted in other important outcomes.</p> <p>The Kentucky RTTT proposal provided the following examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990 that included: new standards, across seven subject areas, and new assessments, School intervention authority, School-level control and innovation, School Based Decision Making, Transition to equitable Support Education Excellence in Kentucky (SEEK),</li> <li>• Partnership with Wallace Foundation to pilot key elements of reforms to increase teacher and principal effectiveness</li> <li>• Universal administration of the ACT.</li> </ul> <p>All three examples have created conditions favorable to education reform and the 1990 legislation was exemplary and a national model. Many of the components were precursors for similar concerns in RTTT. The Wallace Foundation work addressed the importance of having great teachers and leaders even before RTTT. The universal administration of ACT was important because some students, who would not have taken the test otherwise, found that they were capable of higher education pursuits.</p>				
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>23</b>	



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

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM</b>	15	15	15	
<b>Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>Kentucky met the conditions required to earn the 15 points associated with emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). Throughout the proposal, in several STEM related appendices and in the special section devoted to the STEM priorities, Kentucky gave extensive documentation of what it is doing in this area. STEM-related programs of special note were AdvanceKentucky, Project Lead the Way, UTech, Mathematics and Science Partnership, Partnership Institute for Mathematics and Science Reform. Also significant were the numerous opportunities that will be made at the various science centers. This reviewer would have liked more attention given to women and minority populations. References to girls were found only in AdvanceKentucky and the Girl's STEM collaborative. However, Kentucky's frequent use of "all students" to included women and minority populations is accepted with some concern.</p>				
<b>Total</b>	15	15	15	

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

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform</b>		Yes	Yes	
<b>Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>The Kentucky Proposal meets all the conditions of the "Absolute Priority." The application comprehensively and coherently addresses all of the 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. Kentucky had 100% LEA participation and therefore demonstrated in its application sufficient LEA participation and commitment to successfully implement and achieve the goals in its plans. It described how the State, in collaboration with its participating LEAs, will use Race to the Top and other funds to increase student achievement, decrease the achievement gaps across student subgroups, and increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers. The proposal was clearly written and had all the required and optional charts completed. The budgets were very well done, realistic and connected directly to RTTT efforts. The most serious concern was that the appendices were not marked with identifiers or page numbers and thus were very difficult to find and use.</p>				
<b>Total</b>		0	0	

<b>Grand Total</b>	500	429	425	
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clarified as being the common point person for the process. This strengthened the process so full points were awarded.

Total	50	45	50
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**F. General**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(F)(1) Making education funding a priority</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	
(i) Allocating a consistent percentage of State revenue to education	5	5	5	
(ii) Equitably funding high-poverty schools	5	3	3	

**(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

(F)(1)(i) Kentucky's commitment to allocating a consistent percentage of State revenue to education is evidenced by the fact that the Commonwealth has increased spending to education by 15 million dollars despite an overall budget decline of \$500 M. This was a proportional increase in educational spending of 3% from 43.6% to 46.5%. Kentucky earned full points.

(F)(1)(ii) Kentucky has a formula that leads to equitable funding between high-need LEAs and other LEAs, between high-poverty schools and other schools within LEAs. Under the Support Education Excellence In Kentucky (SEEK) funding formula, the state fixes a base rate for each student. The amount of revenue is then adjusted upward for each LEA to reflect a set of factors that affect the cost of providing services to students. These factors include: at-risk pupils; exceptional children; home-schooled or hospitalized students, and Limited English Proficiency. Kentucky's funding system devotes more resources to low income and minority children. Kentucky's distribution of funding within LEAs is done on strict per-pupil basis. This would mean that within a district there is no way to allocate extra funds to a school with larger percentage of high needs students. This is a weakness in the funding plan. Kentucky earned moderate points in this area.

<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	0	0	
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	0	0	
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	0	0	
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	0	0	
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	8	8	

**(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

(F)(2)(i-iv) There is no charter school law; therefore no points were awarded for these elements (i-iv).

(F)(2)(v)

In 1990, Kentucky passed the first legislation in the country to address the need for innovative, autonomous schools; Kentucky enacted KRS 160.345 as part of the Kentucky Education Reform Act. It remains, to the date of this application, the only state legislation that has created an environment that makes ALL public schools innovative and autonomous through the establishment of a school-based decision making (SBDM) form of school governance. Full points were awarded for this element.

<b>(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>			
<p>(F)(3) Kentucky has favorable conditions for school reform. Kentucky Educational Reform Act (KERA) legislation resulted in: new standards, assessments, school intervention authority for the state to intervene in low-achieving schools; School Based Decision Making, and Support Education Excellence In Kentucky (SEEK) funding. Beyond KERA, Kentucky has implemented several other actions that also enhance the reform environment such as: partnership with the Wallace Foundation; universal administration of the ACT; Senate Bill 1. These reforms have led to dramatic progress. Over the last decade NAEP 4th grade mathematics scores rose 24 %, and reading scores rose 10% ;graduation rates climbed 9%,from 1996-2006, and post secondary enrollment has risen 12% since 1992. These data and activities make Kentucky a fertile environment for continued reform. Kentucky earned high points.</p>			
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>21</b>

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

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

**Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

Kentucky addresses STEM throughout their plan for RTTT. As a part of their emphasis on STEM, Kentucky formed a task force comprised of key stakeholders to investigate the STEM initiative. As a result of these partnerships, Kentucky has developed a comprehensive plan to further their students' progress in the STEM fields. Examples of Kentucky's STEM initiatives include: Advance Kentucky (an initiative to encourage more participation in AP (math & science) courses); Project Lead the Way, and a PK-8 parent initiative. Innovations such as partnerships with TFA; UTeach; The Mathematics and Science Partnership, and Partnership Institute for Mathematics and Science Education Reform are also examples of systemic and creative ways to address STEM initiative. Centers for Learning Excellence will manage the implementation of programs in turn around schools to ensure that teachers are trained in and students participate in rigorous STEM courses. Gender and minority issues are addressed in appendix FFF and LLL though not directly in the narrative. More direct information about this area would have been helpful. Kentucky is awarded STEM points for this initiative.

Total	15	15	15
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**Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform</b>		<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	

**Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

Kentucky has presented a cogent and cohesive plan that addresses all four education reform areas specified in the ARRA and in the State Success factors. The attached MOUs clearly describe how the Commonwealth in collaboration with LEAs and other key partners such as: universities, Kentucky Parent Teacher Association, Kentucky Education Association will creatively use the RTTT funds to decrease achievement gaps, and increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and career. Kentucky appears to already have taken preliminary steps to insure the success of the reform effort. The structure of the Commonwealth support as presented is cohesive and innovative.

Total		0	0
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<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>448</b>	<b>462</b>
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(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	30	30
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**(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

**(E)(2)(i)**

State has identified persistently lowest-achieving schools using the federal definition, supplemented with other state considerations.

**(E)(5)(ii)**

State has undertaken a needs assessment (for the initial list of intervention schools) that makes informed judgments about the capacities of school councils, school principals, and LEAs to guide and/or implement school turnaround. Language for employing the four options denoted in RTTT has been legislated, inclusive of guidance for determining which option to select for a given context, and how to effect the option. State will also provide support to LEAs and/or schools through regional centers and training of school intervention leadership. The phase-in plan is reasonable (start with 10 schools and eventually expand intervention to 30) and performance targets are satisfactory.

Total	50	45	45
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**F. General**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(F)(1) Making education funding a priority</b>	10	8	8	
(i) Allocating a consistent percentage of State revenue to education	5	5	5	
(ii) Equitably funding high-poverty schools	5	3	3	

**(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

**(F)(1)(i)**

According to the narrative, from 2008 to 2009 State funding for elementary, secondary, and higher education rose from 43.65% to 46.5% of the State total budget.

**(F)(1)(ii)**

In 1990, the State implemented a plan (SEEK) to ensure equitable funding for LEAs. SEEK, in effect, equalizes funding per pupil with upward adjustments for students in certain categories (e.g., at-risk, Exceptional children, English Language learners). Thereby, SEEK promotes horizontal and vertical equity. However, districts are permitted to use property taxes to increase their education revenues up to 15% above the SEEK base. The narrative for subsection (b) suggests that funding within school districts is distributed equally to all students, but this subsection is unclear (e. g., Under School-Based Decision Making (SBDM) are budgets completely decentralized at the school level? Are there differences in average teacher pay at schools based on teacher experience and education levels? If Yes, how is this difference accommodated in the budget process?).

<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	40	8	8
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	0	0
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	0	0

(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	0	0
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	0	0
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	8	8

**(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

**(F)(2)(i)**

The State does not have a charter school law. However, Kentucky's RTTT application argues that the State's mandated School-Based Decision Making (SBDM) law represents "the most comprehensive system of 'public charter' schools in the nation." Kentucky's SBDM model does provide school councils with enormous budget and decision-making authority. However, my reading of Appendix FFFF suggests that this model does not provide as much autonomy as the typical U.S. charter school. There is a critical difference in how personnel decisions are made. For example, under SBDM, school councils must fill teacher and principal vacancies from lists of candidates provided by the local superintendent. Moreover, under SBDM, school councils cannot dismiss or transfer staff. The typical U.S. charter school is not bound by these critical restrictions.

**(F)(2)(ii)**

Kentucky does not have a charter school law.

**(F)(2)(iii)**

Kentucky does not have a charter school law.

**(F)(2)(iv)**

Kentucky does not have a charter school law.

**(F)(2)(v)**

Kentucky's statewide SBDM model gives schools, through school councils, exceptional authority over resource allocation and program decision-making.

<b>(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
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**(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

**(F)(3)**

Beginning with the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990 (KERA) the State has progressively effected practices (e.g., School-Based Decision Making) designed to propel improvements in student achievement, close achievement gaps, and improve graduation rates.

Total	55	21	21
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**Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM**

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

**Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

**Priority 2: STEM**

In 2007 the State engaged a broad range of key stakeholders to develop a comprehensive, coherent STEM plan for Kentucky. Elements of STEM initiatives are clearly reflected throughout the State's RTTT application. Through projects such as AdvanceKentucky and Project Lead the Way, the State plans to improve the rigor of, and access to, STEM courses by all students, including "underrepresented groups, including girls." (Appendix KK) Through projects such as UTeach and the Mathematics and Science Partnership, Kentucky plans to improve the capacity of current teachers to teach STEM and to attract more math and science majors to teaching. Centers for Learning Excellence would help to ensure that the lowest-performing schools possess an equal opportunity to benefit from the State's STEM initiatives.

Total	15	15	15
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**Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform</b>		Yes	Yes	

**Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

In the main, Kentucky's RTTT application comprehensively and coherently addresses the education reform areas specified in ARRA as well as the State Success Factor Criteria. With respect to the plan's strengths, notable growth in aggregate student performance in recent years is correlated with a solid history of, and financial and programmatic commitment to, educational reform (e.g., KERA). The State is engaged in concerted efforts to develop, adopt, and implement high-level standards and assessments. The State has a plan for making effective use of longitudinal student-level data to improve instruction. The State would employ both traditional and alternative routes for developing and certifying teachers and principals. The state has a solid plan for providing effective support to teachers and principals. The State has a solid plan for turning around persistently lowest-achieving schools. All LEAs indicated they are committed to participate in the RTTT initiative. The State has a history of implementing coherent STEM initiatives, and would continue and/or expand these efforts under RTTT.

Total		0	0
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Grand Total	500	363	365
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