

they do specify one of seven actions that could lead to turning around a school. A comprehensive plan for working with schools is found in the Appendix. New legislation is currently pending.

(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	30
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	25
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (2) (i) Lowest-achieving schools are identified in this section. All schools were in the Milwaukee School District. They identify Title I and non-Title I schools as being low-performing in addition to this. The plan incorporates many aspects of the existing system to expand monitoring and technical assistance. This is an effective plan. (2) (ii) The plan includes a comprehensive support system for LEAs as evidenced in their work in Milwaukee and other requirements related to schools not making AYP for three years. Much of this section focuses on the need for social reforms in districts that have high crime and poverty. The WINS program based on Harlem's Children's Zone is an example of this. School closures have resulted from their intervention. The main strategy seems to be replacing school management and extending learning time. There is extensive information in the Appendix relating to the work in MPSs. The plan seems to be to address 60 low performing schools by SY 2013. While the goal does seem credible given the history of past efforts, this section needs to identify one or more of the turnaround modles required by this section.</p>		
Total	50	35

F. General

	Available	Tier 1
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	5
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (i) State revenues to support education declined. (ii) There are a number of formulas in place to assure equitable funding to school districts. Since the district is responsible for funding individual schools, the funding of individual high poverty schools cannot be determined. The response must address how state policies led to equitable funding within LEAs , between high-poverty schools and other schools.</p>		
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	21
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (i) Initially, the number of charter schools was capped at 20 schools by state law. This cap has now been removed. This section provides information regarding the number and type of charter schools currently operating. Information is not provided regarding the percentage that these schools represent of the total number of schools in the state. (ii) Information is offered as to the process of approval by a district, the operation and closure of schools. This section would benefit from seeing state law or guidelines for this. (iii) From the narrative, it does appear that the money from state aid for schools follows the child and may be equitable. Federal and state funds are provided to these schools as with any other state public school. Since districts determine the specific level of funding, it would be helpful to see the guidelines distributing funds to charters in a district. This answer provides insufficient information to determine if funding is actually equitable. (iv) The state does not provide facilities funding for charter schools or traditional public schools. (v) The law in this state allows local school districts the flexibility to create and operate innovative and autonomous public schools and education programs. It would be helpful to know how many there are, what type of school and any other useful information that would provide a clearer picture of this.</p>		
(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	5

(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: There is ample evidence in this section and throughout the application of the state's commitment to creating conditions favorable to education reform or innovation.		
Total	55	31

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	15
Competitive Reviewer Comments: The state has embedded STEM priorities throughout the application. It has indicated that it will support four STEM academies statewide and obtained letters of support from STEM organizations in the state. The plan for increasing this activity through RTTT funding is credible and shows promise of substantially increasing the opportunities available in the STEM fields. Inclusion of Project Lead the Way in its schools is another credible way of providing a means of enhancing and expanding knowledge in these fields.		
Total	15	15

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes
Absolute Reviewer Comments: The application supports all of the prescribed RTTT areas.		
Total		0
Grand Total	500	381

development of a plan to gather data to assess the effectiveness of the professional development plan, not a detailed implementation plan. Overall, because the system for linking student achievement to personnel decisions was not clearly described, that deficiency affected all components of this criteria.

Total	138	59
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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	5
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: As described, the state has the legal, statutory and regulatory authority to intervene directly in the state's persistently lowest-achieving districts but not in individual schools. It also describes pending legislation that would expand this authority.		
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	29
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	24
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: E2i- the state has clearly identified the persistently lowest-achieving schools. E2ii - The plan has identified the possible intervention models (that are in compliance with the definitions of the notice) for turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools and indicated which ones were appropriate for individual schools. There is a plan with goals, activities, timeline and responsible parties, but there is a strong reliance on outside parties with expertise in turnaround efforts, without detailed information about what the implementation plans would be. The description of the WINS program effort is ambitious, but if implemented could have an impact on student achievement. Evidence of state implementation of turnaround measures is documented and performance measures are included in the plan; however it is unclear who will support (will the state contract with outside consultants?) and how (the implementation plan?) for the 55 additional turnaround schools that are projected will need intervention from EOY 2010 - EOY 2013.		
Total	50	34

F. General

	Available	Tier 1
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	4
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: F1i - The revenue available from the State to support public education for FY 2009 was less than FY2008, but not by much. F1ii - The State policies as described in the plan lead to equitable funding as defined in this notice at the state level, but is not assured at the school level.		
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	33
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: F2i - The State has charter school laws that do not prohibit or effectively inhibit charter school development or charter school enrollment. F2ii - The State plan has described the laws and regulations regarding how charter school authorizers approve, monitor and close schools, including assuring a racial balance that is similar to the district in which the charter resides. Student		

achievement progress is a factor in closing a school, but the definition of student achievement does not appear to be the same as in the notice. The state has closed ineffective charter schools in the last few years. F2iii – The State plan describes that Wisconsin statutes do not provide any facilities funding for charter schools; however, the state provides that funding to the district and there is no assurance that the district provides that same level of funding to the school. F2iv – In that the State does not provide any facilities funding for any schools, it is equitable for both charter and traditional schools. F2 v The State plan as described allows wide latitude for LEAs to operate innovative and autonomous schools other than charter schools.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	4
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: The application describes several other innovative state initiatives to reform education including funding four-year-old kindergarten, investments in effective teachers that focuses on student achievement as opposed to longevity and continuing education, the Wisconsin Urban Schools Leadership Project, and establishment of the Wisconsin Covenant Scholars. While reforms listed imply that increased student achievement resulted, no direct links to increased student achievement are included.		
Total	55	41

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	15
Competitive Reviewer Comments: The different types of initiatives described in the plan to address STEM priorities are comprehensive and include increased science and math graduation requirements, professional development for teachers and expanded collaboration with IHEs. Project Lead the Way addresses the needs of underrepresented groups.		
Total	15	15

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes
Absolute Reviewer Comments: The application comprehensively and coherently addresses all four reform areas. The goals, activities, parties responsible and timelines are built on existing state efforts and are clearly articulated. In areas that current capacity does not exist (connecting teacher/principal evaluations to student achievement), appropriate action has been taken to enable the state to meet this requirement in the future.		
Total		0

Grand Total	500	348
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(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
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Wisconsin presents a creative and challenging set of plans relative to “turning around the lowest-achieving schools” [(E)(2)]. First, instead of working with multiple locations, Wisconsin focuses solely on its largest district. Second, it is stepping beyond the four RTTT school interventions to propose that funds go to a comprehensive overhaul of human, social and political capital in selected Milwaukee schools and adjoining neighborhoods. Wisconsin has instituted a careful method for “identifying its persistently lowest-achieving schools” [(E)(1)(i)]. According to the proposal, the identification process was implemented only for the purposes of the RTTT proposal. The result is that only five persistently low-performing schools have been identified; all are located in the Milwaukee Public School District. Wisconsin has taken a bold step to focus solely on these five schools, arguing that no other schools are in as severe shape academically. Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) is in corrective action under ESEA. Beginning in 2007, the WDPI has directed the district to implement specific corrective actions. As a result, the WDPI has an extensive monitoring and technical assistance system within MPS. In terms of the five low-performing schools, interventions will begin with Title I 1003 School Improvement funds. RTTT funding will be necessary to make improvement efforts more productive. The state proposes using RTTT funds to establish the position of Director of School and District Improvement and secure external experts to assist in the implementation of the reform models by providing technical assistance in areas such as charter school start up and operations, teacher evaluation and development, adolescent literacy, and principal leadership. In addition, RTTT funds would be used to support a research alliance of major academic and civic entities around the reform work in persistently low-performing schools. Lastly, Wisconsin’s most creative part of the proposal is the plan to create Wisconsin Initiative for Neighborhoods and Schools that Work for Children (WINS for Children). As noted earlier in the review, WINS would be modeled after the Harlem Children’s Zone Project and build on an infrastructure established by the Zilber Neighborhood Initiative (ZNI), which is already underway in two Milwaukee neighborhoods with a \$50 million philanthropic investment. WINS will promote academic achievement; foster social and emotional development of children from birth through 25; encourage parental engagement and effective parenting; increase student stability; support instructional leaders and neighborhood schools; and improve teaching and learning. WINS does not fit within the four school intervention models highlighted in the RTTT application and criteria. Aspects of each of those models may be a part of WINS, but not in the ways RTTT describes school intervention. Nevertheless, WINS is a highly compelling alternative: it has strong support from the Governor, State Superintendent, State Legislators, Mayor, Milwaukee educators, community leaders, and business and philanthropic leaders; it is based on a reportedly effective model in New York City; and it builds on similar work in Milwaukee. Most important, WINS rationale is spot on—school failure is often a complex combination of students’ academic, social and community realities, not only what is occurring within the walls and schedule of a school. Wisconsin would help RTTT expand the reach of its innovations beyond traditional school boundaries. All in all, the state scores in the high range for this sub-criterion, but loses some standing because of WINS’ modest ties to RTTT’s preferred interventions.</p>		
Total	50	36

F. General

	Available	Tier 1
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	5
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:		

Wisconsin's scored in the mid-range on the criterion to "make education funding a priority" [(F)(1)]. The share of Wisconsin's state budget going to K-12 education decreased slightly between FY 2008 and FY 2009. Although a small drop (35.9 percent to 34.3 percent), it still shifted education support in a negative direction [(F)(1)(i)]. Wisconsin has a strong record for highly equitable school funding, both between high-need LEAs and within LEAs between high poverty schools and other schools [(F)(1)(2)]. The proposal provides good evidence of how the state's school funding policies result in highly comparable per pupil funding rates across districts, but is silent on the required matter of within district equity.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	22
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>To quote the proposal, "Wisconsin has established a policy environment that fosters the proliferation of high-quality charter schools and innovative programs statewide" [(F)(2)]. Unfortunately, the state falls short in two important aspects charter school policy as defined by the RTTT process. Wisconsin's first charters were authorized in 1993. Since then state laws and regulations have evolved to the point where there is no limit concerning the number of charter schools or the number of students that charter schools may serve [(F)(2)(i)]. Wisconsin has a rigorous monitoring and review process, with academic performance the most imperative criterion. [(F)(2)(ii)]. Wisconsin provides charter schools and traditional public schools equitable funding in as much as LEAs are awarded the same levels of support for students whether or not they attend charter schools. However, the state gives LEAs final authority over the amount of funding provided to charter schools, which means in some LEAs charters are funded at lower levels than traditional schools [(F)(2)(iii)]. Turning to the final charter school sub-criterion [(F)(2)(iv)], Wisconsin receives zero points because it fails to have policies that provide charter schools financial or other assistance with facilities. Regarding innovative and autonomous public schools [(F)(2)(v)], school boards in Wisconsin have maximum flexibility to create and operate such schools. Unfortunately, the proposal does not provide any examples of innovative, autonomous schools or a discussion of plans to promote them.</p>		
(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	5
<p>(F)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Wisconsin provides a lively, historical discussion "demonstrating other significant reform conditions" [(F)(3)]. Reaching back nearly 150 years to feature its role as the birthplace of Kindergarten, the state emphasizes the priority it has long given to early childhood education and its significance to academic achievement. Related to its charter school record, Wisconsin notes its long history of open enrollment programs. Wisconsin also highlights its efforts on small class size through the Student Achievement Guarantee in Education (SAGE) program. Nearly 475 schools participate in the program this school year. Investments in high quality educators, such as those achieving National Board Certification, also are featured. Lastly, Wisconsin rightly makes the point that a good deal of state energy has gone in recent years to ensuring academic opportunities for students in the state's small, rural schools, which serve about 44 percent of the student population.</p>		
Total	55	32

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	15
<p>Competitive Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Wisconsin presents an exciting STEM initiative, underscoring its commitment to have excellence in science, technology, engineering and math as a central piece of its RTTT reforms. The plan opens with smart attention to the initiative's leadership by creating the State Superintendent's STEM Advisory</p>		

Council. This group will coordinate efforts around the state to secure relations between regional economic development partners and higher education, aligning STEM efforts with higher education and workforce needs, as well as promoting best practices within Wisconsin schools. The central feature of the STEM initiative will be four different STEM Academies across the state, each developed in collaboration with educational institutions, professional organizations and non-profit agencies. The Academies will provide a STEM focused learning center initially for high school juniors and seniors on-site and virtually. Faculty also will benefit through interactive technology in lesson study and professional learning communities. The STEM Academies will help to deliver standards and high quality instruction in the math and sciences, especially to schools lacking in qualified teachers. The STEM initiative will support pilot projects in Participating LEAs, lead an effort to increase credit requirements in math and science, and increase AP course participation by training high school faculty.

Total	15	15
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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:

Yes, Wisconsin's RTTT proposal meets the "Absolute Priority – Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform." Wisconsin brings impressive focus to its goals for RTTT: zeroing in on achievement and graduate rate gaps. The state presents a comprehensive and coherent reform agenda and clearly articulates its goals for implementing RTTT's four priority reforms. The proposal lists a five-part reform strategy needed to raise overall achievement and reduce gaps. In a bold approach, Wisconsin extends its reform strategy beyond RTTT's parameters to propose WINS (Wisconsin Initiative for Neighborhoods and Schools that work for children), a four-year demonstration project modeled on the Harlem Children's Zone (NYC). Wisconsin's reform agenda is aggressive and specific. Not only will it advance work statewide on the far reaching RTTT reforms, it will connect that work to comprehensive interventions in the lives of the state's most troubled students. Rightly so, the state has adopted a theory of change that sees advances in achievement as dependent on a reform model that connects statewide policy and technical changes with school and neighborhood-specific interventions and capacity building.

Total		0
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Grand Total	500	317
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monitoring, technical assistance and accountability systems and structures that will be in place. The continuous use of data regarding best practices related to the three proposed models will be critical in maximizing impact. The State has created a solid infrastructure to support the reform work of the three models and the implementation of WINS for Children. The use of external organizations and specialist in the design and program implementation of key areas is appropriate, however, consideration for alignment and coordination may be necessary to ensure an overall coherent intervention.

Total	50	40
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F. General

	Available	Tier 1
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	5
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: Total revenues available to the State decreased in 2009. The State's policies lead to equitable funding between LEAs but not within an LEA.		
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	35
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: The State has a charter school law that does not prohibit increasing the number of high-performing charter schools. The State has laws and guidelines regarding the authorization of charter schools and the renewal and closure of charter schools. The State provides equitable funding to the LEAs, however provisions for equitable distribution within the LEA to charter schools is the decision of the individual LEA. The State does not provide funding for facilities as it relates to its charter schools. The State enables LEAs to operate autonomous public schools		
(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	5
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: The applicant provides sufficient evidence of State reform conditions and initiatives prior to the submission of the reform agenda application, such as expanding programs to 4K, class size initiative SAGE, Wisconsin Quality Education Initiative and the repeal of the Qualified Economic Offer Law. These efforts are directly linked to improving student achievement.		
Total	55	45

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	15
Competitive Reviewer Comments: The plan outlines a thorough plan for creating STEM academies, aligning resources to student needs based on data, staff capacity and recruitment of teachers to hard to fill positions. Partnerships providing expertise and ongoing support have been established.		
Total	15	15

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes
Absolute Reviewer Comments: The State's application met this criteria as evidenced by the comprehensive goals and plan for each of the four education reform areas. The State's commitment to implement a systemic reform agenda as evident by the initiatives outlined and the broad base statewide support, has the potential for far-reaching impact and transformational improvement for the State's educational system.		
Total		0
Grand Total	500	367

Total	50	27
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F. General

	Available	Tier 1
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	3
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: i. The percent of the state budget devoted to education decreased between FY2008 and FY2009. As a result, no points can be given for this criterion. ii. Wisconsin has a number of programs to improve equity in educational spending and as a result ranks quite high nationally in terms of the equity of funding between high need LEAs and other LEAs. There is no information about equity of spending within LEAs.		
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	35
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: i. The state does not limit the number or percentage of charter schools or students. ii. Wisconsin has a standardized process and clear regulations outlining how charter schools are approved, monitored, and closed. Authorizers have closed schools for a variety of reasons, including poor student performance (according to anecdotal evidence provided in the application). Authorizers are directed to give preference to schools that service high need students and must describe how it will achieve an ethnic and racial balance reflective of its host district. iii. It is difficult to assess whether charter schools receive their share of education revenues. Because for the majority of charter schools the funding arrangements are negotiated with their host district, there is no comprehensive data about the percentage of funding that is getting to the charter schools. There is some evidence to suggest that the charter schools are being funded at a level commensurate with traditional public schools, but this is inconclusive. Regardless, the mechanism for funding charter schools suggests that they confront the same benefits and challenges, related to fiscal support, as traditional public schools in their districts. iv. The application narrative does not provide evidence of any more strict requirements on charter schools than it does on traditional schools, it also does not provide any additional funding for facilities for charter schools. The application does not describe any assistance that the state may provide in helping charters to access public facilities or raise money through bonds. As a result, points were awarded for not imposing any unique facility-related requirements on charter schools, but no points were awarded for supporting facilities funding for charter schools. v. Wisconsin law allows LEAs a great deal of latitude in operating its schools. The state has a waiver system that can exempt most schools from most educational requirements, with a few primary exceptions.		
(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	5
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: Wisconsin has made significant modifications in a number of regulations to make teacher compensation more flexible, encourage small class sizes, encourage college matriculation, and create more educational options in the state's lowest performing district. In combination, these efforts point to a philosophy of experimentation and flexibility. It is not clear that these efforts have resulted in specific gains for students, though the number of intervening variables can make this hard to determine.		
Total	55	43

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1
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Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	15
Competitive Reviewer Comments: Wisconsin has outlined a number of STEM focused initiatives that it plans to pursue. These include a STEM advisory panel to consider how the content is being improved statewide, four STEM academies to serve as statewide models, competitive grants for STEM programs in LEAs, increasing math requirements in the high intervention districts, and conducting teacher training to improve course offerings in a number of STEM-related areas. Based on these efforts, one can see that the state is hoping to improve performance in STEM education.		
Total	15	15

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes
Absolute Reviewer Comments: While Wisconsin has some areas of real strength in its application, such as ambitious plans for an instructionally useful assessment system and encouraging the development of charter schools, it also suffers from some profound weaknesses. For example, the application is so limited in its discussion of educator evaluation, how those evaluations will be conducted, and the potential uses of the resulting data. And, while the application describes robust plans to intervene in Milwaukee, it provides relatively limited support to the other LEAs, many of which have relatively stagnant growth. So, while there is at least some attention paid to all four reform areas, the quality of these efforts varies tremendously.		
Total		0
Grand Total	500	293