

community engagement, and teachers and leaders prepared to work in a turnaround environment are critical areas of support. A key support which exemplifies once again the strong commitment the state has to LEA level turnaround efforts is the state developed Turnaround Partnerships and Learning Communities. Here the state connects successful turnaround schools/LEAs with LEAs having low achieving schools. The modeling and support at this level provide potential turnaround LEAs with both a vision of what can be, and practical and tactical strategies that result in reaching the vision. The possibility exists that a LEA's effort will not be successful. The state gives schools/LEAs five years (with required annual reports) for the change to take place. Schools/LEAs unable to manage a successful turnaround must choose a different RTTT turnaround model.

Total	50	50	50	
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F. General

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	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	
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>The percentage of total revenues available to the state used to support education in the state was greater in FY 2009 than it was in 2008.</p> <p>The state has established policies to ensure equitable funding between high need and other LEAs. In terms of distribution of funds, 68% of LEAs' funding is based on average daily attendance. The state also allocates funds to a number of categorical programs, many of which provide funds for issues likely to be more prominent in high need LEAs. For example, funding is allocated for expelled and at risk youth, English Language Learners, foster youth, class size reduction, and students with disabilities. It is through this process the state ensures that funding is available to address the needs of low income youth.</p>				
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	37	39	
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	8	8	
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	8	8	
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	8	8	
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	8	8	

(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	5	7	
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The state has a high cap in terms of the number of allowable charter schools. Currently there are 810 charter schools operating in the state, which represents 8 percent of the state's schools. These schools are categorized by curriculum type (e.g., traditional, science-math, technology); instructional strategy (e.g., site-based, independent); and source of funding (e.g., directly funded by the state, directly funded by the district).

Charters in the state may be granted to individual schools, a total LEA, an entire county, or for state-wide benefit. As a result, there are multiple authorizers in the state. Authorizers provide oversight for the school, and organizations such as the Charter School Association and the Charter School Development Association provide resources and training. As a measure of quality, all charter schools must meet all state-wide academic standards and administer state required assessments. They are also required to meet a number of identified student achievement goals. Charters can be revoked if statutory requirements are not met. The state has a strong history of working with charter schools. While the flexibility and number of authorizers may be problematic for some states, this structure for authorizing and providing oversight for charter schools seems appropriate for a state as large and diverse as is California. The state's record for closing charters over the last four years is: 2005-06 /31 schools; 2006-07/ 39 schools; 2007- 08/ 25 schools; and 2008-09/ 35 schools. The low student performance and lack of financial viability were frequent reasons for closure.

Charter schools are funded just as the state's traditional schools are funded. Categorical and general funds are used in the same way, which the state believes ensures equitable funding between charter and traditional schools

California law requires that public school facilities must be shared among all students. As a result charter schools have equitable access to school facilities. The state also provides funding for charter school facilities through grants and other funding sources.

LEAs are able to establish alternative schools of choice by law. The expectation of these schools is that innovative ideas and methods which go beyond the traditional curriculum will be tried. The state lists an impressive array of alternative schools that are not charter schools. Insufficient information makes it difficult to determine whether or not these schools meet to total definition for innovative, autonomous schools.

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

Based on the State's response to a question focused on innovative, autonomous schools, it is clear that the state enables LEAs to operate schools that have components of innovative and autonomous schools as defined by the notice. Schools exist that are able to define instructional models, implement new structures, and have flexible budgets.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	5	5	
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(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)


A number of laws and other conditions exist in the state that support education reform or innovation. These include legislation to strengthen the role of parents in the education of children, flexibility in education codes and funding strategies in order to encourage local innovation, and legislation that supports early childhood education and after school programs. Taking advantage of the flexibility, funding, and possibilities to create programs made possible by these legislative acts could result in improved achievement and subsequent reduction of the achievement gap.

Total	55	52	54	

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	15	15	
Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>The state describes principles that guide current STEM initiatives in the state, and principles that would guide reform-based initiatives. These include STEM-related curriculum and instruction aligned with core academic standards; exposure for all students, but especially students from groups who are underrepresented in STEM-related careers (e.g., women, minority, and economically disadvantaged students) to engaging content and instruction; a K-20+ vision for STEM learning experience as a mechanism to provide a pathway to college or career success; and the belief that STEM should serve as the basis for building strong partnerships between the schools, communities, business and the local governments. Six initiatives that address the RTTT reform areas are listed.</p>				
Total	15	15	15	

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes	Yes	
Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>California presents a comprehensive and coherent approach to all four education reform areas specified in ARRA. The consistency with which the state was able to advance its theory of change and weave it into the discussion of the six RTTT criteria suggest a deeply embedded set of beliefs that will serve as an anchor throughout the reform process. The state clearly intends to be transformative in its approach to education reform, and in many cases innovative and creative strategies are presented. The state has a foundation of innovation and reform and is able to draw from multiple initiatives that have been piloted in the state. There is tremendous support in the state for reform from a diverse group of stakeholders. In as state as large as California, the decision to work with a limited number of highly committed LEAs seems prudent. Just as the seven Leadership LEAs are able to provide lessons learned and models from their involvement in reform activities as the RTTT application was being generated, so will the remaining 295 LEAs generate models and exemplars that will have a broader impact on education in the state. Student growth and achievement are at the center of the proposals included in the application. The state demonstrates ambitious strategies to increase student achievement, decrease achievement gaps, and increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers.</p>				
Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)				

The State's history of innovation with respect to education is evident in the reform agenda put forward. The notion of "proof points" (i.e., the implementation, evaluation, and dissemination of innovative ideas) as suggested as a process for scale up of practices throughout the state, at the same time allows for continuation of the State's historic role in providing ideas for others throughout the nation to replicate.

Total		0	0	
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Grand Total	500	461	466	
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(E2ii). The state's plan for providing support for its LEAs in turning around the lowest performing schools builds on the state's history of working with low performing schools and incorporates the participating LEAs transitioning to using one of the four intervention models in their persistently lowest achieving schools. The state's plan is very detail oriented and builds on lessons learned from prior experience with assisting lowest performing schools. For example, the plan includes a step by step process that begins with identifying research-based conditions that are critical for successful school turnaround; support LEAs in addressing gaps identified in a collaborative diagnostic process; review and approve plans showing how participating LEAs will transition to using one of the four intervention models in their persistently lowest achieving schools; provide a clearinghouse of tools/data/insight to support execution of school turnaround; engage parents/community members; developing turnaround teachers and leaders; ensuring accountability; and investing in LEAs support while learning as a state from successes and failures. The plan is robust and does an excellent job of bringing all aspects of the state's plan together. Unfortunately, the state's plan does not address the requirement that an LEA with more than nine persistently lowest achieving schools not use the transformation model for more than 50% of its schools.

Total	50	45	45	
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F. General

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	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	
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
(F1i). The state's application includes a table which shows that there has been an increase in the percentage of state revenues allocated for education funding from FY 2008 to FY 2009. These revenues increased from 46% to 47.4%.				
(F1ii). The state's application cites an analysis done by the Education Trust for SY 2005-06 that shows that the state provided \$599 more per pupil fuding for high poverty LEAs. The section of the application provides detailed evidence to support the contention that the state's education funding policies are structured to guarantee equity between high need LEAs and other LEAs.				
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	33	40	
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	8	8	
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	8	8	
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	8	8	
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	8	8	
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	1	8	
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				

(F2i). The state's application provides evidence that the state has repealed its original statute that set a total cap of 100 charters and enacted a law that allows for continued growth in the number of charter schools. There is a limit of the number of charters, but according to the application the limit has not been reached because the authority to expand has far outpaced the actual growth of charter schools. For example, in 2009-10, a total of 1,350 charter schools were authorized to operate, in contrast with the 810 actually in operation. Therefore, the state's description appears to qualify as a "high cap."

(F2ii). The State of California's Charter School Law provides strong guidance for the approval, oversight, reauthorization, and revocation of charter schools and charter LEAs. There appear to be clear processes for denials at each level. Data provided in the state's application indicates the number of charters that have been closed each year. The application also references an analysis of closings done by the Rand report that found "that the most frequent reason for revocation of a school's charter was for unsound academic program." This is further supported by the California Charter Schools' assertion that "30 of 32 state charter schools closures last year were for quality reasons related to academic quality and/or fiscal stability." Embedded within the state's charter school statutes is specific guidance that charter school authorizers "shall give preference to petitions that demonstrate the capability to provide comprehensive learning experiences to pupils identified by the petitioners as academically low achieving."

(F2iii). The state's education code is quite specific that each charter school "be provided with operational funding that is equal to the total funding that would be available to a similar school"

(F2iv). The state's application provides evidence that the state provides charter schools with funding for facilities. Evidence provided in the appendix indicate that Proposition 39 passed in 2000 requires that public school facilities should be fairly shared among all public school students, including those in charter schools. In addition, a Charter School Facility Grant Program, passed in 2001, offers direct cash assistance for facilities rental/leasing costs.

(F2v). The state's application provides several examples of innovative, autonomous schools such as the Early College High Schools that blend high school and college into a coherent education program. Not enough information is provided within the application to determine if these schools meet all criteria established in the grant for these schools such as open enrollment and ability to select and replace staff.

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

F2v. During the state's presentation and follow-up question and answer period, the state provided clarification regarding the alignment of selected schools to the US Department of Education's definition of autonomous, innovative schools including per pupil funding, shared decision making, and control of budgets.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	5	5	
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>(F3). The state's application cited a number of other significant reform conditions such as implementation of AVID which focuses on closing achievement gap by strengthening college readiness for all students. Data were provided that indicated that the percent of AVID students graduating varied only slightly from a low of 97.6% in 2002-03 school year to a high of 99.7% in the 1997-99 school years. Additional programs highlighted at the other end of the educational spectrum focused on expanding opportunities for early learning programs. One of these program is the Power of Preschool (PoP) which offers disadvantaged children free voluntary, high-quality part day preschool to assist them in becoming effective learners. The state's application includes impressive pre and post data that indicate significant gains made by children completing the PoP program in personally and social competency; physical and motor skills and safe and healthy living competencies.</p>				
Total	55	48	55	

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	15	15	
Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>The state's plan promotes the core academic standards in mathematics and science as the cornerstone of a rigorous course of study. It would have been helpful to have more information to describe how the standards of mathematics and science will intersect with the traditional Career Technical Education fields of Engineering and Technology to develop a robust program of study for the four course elements of STEM. This is not a major concern and does not detract from the overall effectiveness of the state's plan. The plan does a good job of establishing a context of collaboration among a variety of stakeholders as evidenced by the number of letters of support garnered to endorse the state's application. Threaded throughout the state's plan are six ambitious initiatives that encompass all of the four areas of the RTTT. The plan emphasizes, for example, that the STEM curriculum and instruction must engage students--especially women and minority and economically disadvantaged students. Finally, the state's plan does a good job of building on an already impressive array of activities and initiatives in order to support a strong agenda for advancing STEM education in the state.</p>				
Total	15	15	15	

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes	Yes	
Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>The state's plan represents a comprehensive and well articulated plan. A central focus of the application is the long history that the state has already amassed in the four areas of reform. The plan builds nicely on this history and reflects the lessons the state has already learned. The state's history provides a rich backdrop for concrete next steps to fulfill the educational agenda. The budget is supported by sufficient detail and is aligned to the major initiatives of the plan.</p>				
Total		0	0	

Grand Total	500	410	424	
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EPCs to assess the school's areas for improvement. In the second year of corrective action, schools prepare a plan with their LEA for alternative governance of the school and are required to select one of the federal restructuring options: reopening the school as a charter; replacing all or most staff including the principal; contracting with an outside entity to manage the school; or other major restructuring. In Year 5 of PI, the school implements this alternative governance plan. In addition to the supports and sanctions for schools in PI, California also created tools and processes to support and intervene in districts in PI status through the District Assistance and Intervention (DAIT) process that assists districts in revising and implementing LEA plans and DAIT recommendations for improvements.

The state reports that it currently has 78 turnaround schools identified in the participating LEAs, and in the current proposal, the state developed nine specific strategies and an accompanying set of detailed activities for turning around the state's lowest achieving schools. The nine strategies include: Identify the State's Persistently Lowest-Achieving Schools; Ensure Conditions for Success at the LEA Level; Provide a clearinghouse of tools/data/insight to support execution of school turnaround; Support Turnaround Partnerships and Learning Communities; Engage parents/community members; Ensure Accountability; Developing Turnaround Teachers and Leaders; Provide additional resources and supports to LEAs that will allow for lasting change after the schools implement the turnaround models; and Learn from successes and failures.

The proposed strategies provide a sequenced set of steps that districts can follow in intervening in low performing schools. Additionally, the state proposes to collect information from LEAs engaged in other innovative strategies for school turnaround, conduct evaluations of the four intervention models in the lowest-achieving schools to examine implementation and determine effects of the models, and coordinate and participate in intra-state and cross-state learning initiatives. While the state indicated that it intended to implement the required restructuring options, the number of points awarded in this section is due to the need for additional information that the state intends to apply the restructuring models according to the required parameters regarding EMOs and the number of schools permitted to use the turnaround model.

Total	50	44	44	
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F. General


	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	9	9	
(i) Allocating a consistent percentage of State revenue to education	5	5	5	
(ii) Equitably funding high-poverty schools	5	4	4	

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

In this section of the application, the state verified that the percentage of the total revenues available to the state that were used to support elementary, secondary, 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. In the application, the state reported that even with a deep fiscal crisis and a decline in revenue from FY 2008 to FY 2009, education funding as a percentage of state revenues increased from 46% to 47%. The Governor indicated his intent to protect education from further cuts, and to support K-16 education at the same General Fund level as in the prior fiscal year, despite an anticipated budget deficit of \$20 billion.

The state reported that its funding policies are structured to guarantee equity between high need LEAs and other LEAs and referenced an analysis of state data completed by The Education Trust, that showed for the last year for which the analysis was completed, the State provided \$599 more per pupil in funding for high-poverty LEAs than it provided for students in low poverty LEAs. In addition to funding policies, the state discussed a number of state laws that ensure equitable funding across LEAs. For example, the Serrano

Ruling and Proposition 13 dealt with the issue of wealth-related disparities in per-pupil expenditures that denied students in less wealthy LEAs a constitutional right to an equal education. As a result of the Serrano Ruling, the state passed legislation that established district-wide, per-pupil "revenue limits" for each LEA that would be equalized among all LEAs over time. And in a second example provided in the narrative, the state discussed the passage of Proposition 98 which guaranteed K-12 education and California Community Colleges a minimum level of funding.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	34	35	
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	6	6	
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	8	8	
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	7	7	
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	7	7	
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	6	7	

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

(i)

California reported that it has operated charter schools since 1992, and since that time, the total number of charter schools has grown to 810, representing nearly 8 percent of the schools in the State. In absolute numbers, The state reported that it has the most charter schools and the largest number of charter students among all of the states with over 250,000 K-12 students attending one of the state's 323 elementary, 89 middle, 249 high school, and 149 K-12 charter schools. Additionally, the state reported that California was one of only three states to receive an "A" from the Center for Education Reform for the strength of its charter school laws, noting that the State has been able to establish the largest number of charter schools in the country. In this section of the application, the state provided data on the type and number of charter schools currently in operation: Conversion 122; Start-up 688; Traditional 226; Performing/Fine Arts 96; Technology 65; Science/Mathematics 35; Vocational 26; Montessori 21; Other Specialty 486; Site-based instruction 626; Independent study 152; Combination of site-based instruction and independent study 32. The state indicated that the diversity of charter school types in California stems directly from state law that supports charter schools. Additionally, the state discussed the fact that in 1998, California repealed its original statute that set a total cap of 100 charter schools in the state, and enacted a law that allows for continued growth in the number of charter schools. In the reenactment, the state authorized an increase in the total number of charter schools by an additional 100 charter schools (or approximately one percent of all schools in California) in each successive school year.

(ii)

California Education Code outlines the mechanisms for the approval, oversight, reauthorization, and revocation of charter schools and charter LEAs, and allows multiple methods to be used to request authority for a charter at the LEA and state levels. The Code provides appeal processes for denials at each level and permits charters to be granted for individual schools, for an entire LEA, an entire county, or for a "statewide benefit" charter school. Additionally, the state reported that California statutes provide explicit guidance to encourage the establishment of charter schools in areas that serve high-need students.

When a charter is granted, it is approved for an initial period of up to five years. Renewals are approved for a period of five years and are based on student achievement and academic quality criteria. Charter authorizers are required to provide ongoing oversight of the charter and conduct site visits and monitoring of the school's fiscal condition. Under California law, charter schools must meet all statewide academic standards and conduct all state mandated student assessments, in addition to the criteria identified in the individual charter.

In cases in which schools do not meet the statutory requirements, the charter is revoked. Reasons for revocation include failure to meet or pursue any of the student outcomes identified in the charter; violation of the charter's conditions, standards, or procedures; fiscal mismanagement; or violation of any provision of law, and a school's charter may be revoked by the SBE, whether or not the SBE is the chartering authority.

Charter schools applying for renewal must meet academic criteria that includes attaining an Academic Performance Index (API) growth target; attaining a state rank in deciles 4 to 10 on the API for a demographically comparable school in the prior year, or in two of the last three years; and ensuring that the performance of the charter school is at least equal to the academic performance of the public schools that the charter school students would otherwise attended. In addition, the school's performance must be at least equal to the academic performance of the schools in the LEA in which the charter school is located.

The state provided information on the numbers of charter schools started, renewed, and closed for each of the past five year, and indicated that while it does not currently maintain information on the total number of applications made for charter schools or the total number of new charter applications denied, the CDE has committed to tracking this information in the future.

(iii)

The state reports that general and categorical funding for public schools apply equally to the charter schools in California and a revenue analysis for LEAs for 2007–08 school found that the distribution of general and categorical fund is being implemented effectively to create equity in funding between public and charter schools.

(iv)

The current application states that California charter schools are eligible for assistance with facility rental and lease costs if they are located within the attendance area of a public elementary school in which at least 70 percent of the pupil enrollment is eligible for free or reduced price meals, or the charter school is serving a pupil population that meets or exceeds 70 percent eligibility for free and reduced price meals. In 2000, the state enacted Proposition 39, requiring public school facilities to be shared fairly among all public school students, including those in charter schools. The state reports that in 2009-2010, 120 charter schools were beneficiaries of Proposition 39, and an additional 116 charter schools were housed in district facilities not supported by Proposition 39. Charters also participate in state and federal programs covering facilities costs, and receive facility funding through the Charter School Facility Grant Program (SB 740) which provided a total of \$23.6 million to 195 charter schools to support facility rental costs; Qualified School Construction Bonds (QSCB) which awarded \$29.2 million to six charter schools, with a total of \$73 million set-aside, in 2008-2009; State Charter School Facilities Program awarded \$836 million to 58 charter schools serving 27,500 students; State Charter School Facility Incentive Grants Program which awarded \$48 million to 128 charter schools serving 42,900 students; and the California Charter Building Fund which provided over \$100 million to 13 charter schools between 2007 and 2009.

(v)

In the current application, the state acknowledges that its education rules and regulations stifle creativity, but indicates that steps have been taken to create a more flexible system. The State intends to expand current initiatives and provide greater innovation and flexibility in education code, categorical programs, and local budgeting. Examples of increased flexibility cited by the state allow LEAs to request a waiver of almost any section of the Education Code, allow locally elected school boards and superintendents greater flexibility to decide how to best use their funds to maximize student achievement, allow LEAs to conduct a local public hearing and use categorical program funds for any educational purpose, and allow the majority of resource decisions to take place at the school level.

The state reports that California law provides school districts with the ability to establish and maintain alternative schools and programs of choice and allow the schools and programs of choice to be operated in a manner to maximize the opportunity for improvement of the general school curriculum by innovative methods and ideas. Examples of alternative schools of choice provided by the state include Early College High Schools, Magnet Schools, Schools Without Walls, and Thematic Schools, Additionally, the state also

permits the operation of schools that offer a different educational philosophy or approach to learning, such as Montessori, Waldorf, or International Baccalaureate, a different instructional strategy, such as independent study, dual language immersion, or online learning, or specialized programs for targeted student populations, such as street academies and newcomer centers.

In this section of the application, the state verified that it has statutes, regulations, or guidelines regarding how charter school authorizers approve, monitor, hold accountable, reauthorize, and close charter schools, described the student achievement criteria that the school must meet, verified that charter schools serve student populations that are similar to local district student populations, especially relative to high-need students, and discussed the procedure and criteria for closing or not renewing ineffective charter schools. The number of points awarded in this section is due to the fact that the alternative programs and thematic schools, while many appear to be innovative, the narrative does not verify that they are permitted to operate autonomously.

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

During the Tier 2 presentation and responses to questions, members of the California team explained that in one district, innovative schools are given flexibility to design curriculum and operational elements. While the examples provided evidence of autonomous functioning, the team did not verify that the examples were common throughout the state or that state statute or policy provided a legal foundation for autonomy. Since the team provided evidence of existing autonomous schools, the number of points awarded to this section were increased.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	4	4	
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>In addition to the reforms discussed in the previous sections of this proposal, California reported that it has taken additional measures to build a foundation of reform. Examples of numerous reform efforts cited by the state include the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program, which focuses on closing the achievement gap by strengthening college readiness for all students, the California Partnership Academy (CPA) program which was designed to integrate a rigorous academic program with career technical education and provide students with the choice of multiple career paths upon graduation from school, and the state's initiative to Improve and Expand Early Childhood Education and Expanded Learning Opportunities by supporting a seamless transition from preschool to kindergarten.</p>				
Total	55	47	48	

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	15	15	
Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>Throughout the application, the state described its plan to offer a rigorous course of study in mathematics, science, technology, and engineering and to cooperate with industry experts and community partners to prepare and assist teachers in integrating STEM content across grades and disciplines. Additionally the state plans to address the needs of underrepresented groups and of women and girls in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.</p> <p>California proposes to use rigorous science and math standards to ensure that all California students will experience classroom STEM learning that is integrated, interdisciplinary, and college and career relevant. The state proposes to use four principles to guide the work and connect advancements in STEM to broad-based school improvement. In the first principle, the state believes that STEM curriculum and instruction</p>				

must be aligned with the state's core academic standards and promote the mastery of challenging, relevant math and science content. The state's second principle states that STEM curriculum and instruction must engage students who are underrepresented in STEM careers by providing them with opportunities to experience, understand, and address real-world problems. The third principle states that STEM learning experiences should contribute systematically and cumulatively to providing students with a range of pathways to college or career success. The fourth and final principle states that STEM should serve to build strong, lasting partnerships between schools and community based organizations that can expand student access. The state plans to use these principles to guide the implementation of a three-part plan to advance STEM in California: 1) Strengthen the design and delivery of STEM in California's high schools; 2) Map backward into K-8 and build a strong STEM foundation emphasizing authentic application and career exploration; and 3) Build support systems and infrastructure by supporting STEM-related investments that will help expand high-quality STEM teaching and learning.

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

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes	Yes	
Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>The state's application addresses all of the four education reform areas specified in ARRA as well as the State Success Factors Criteria. The state and its participating LEAs propose a systemic approach to education reform and while the number of participating LEAs is less than 20% of the LEAs in the state, the state indicates that the LEAs represent a large number of students. Participating LEAs are required to implement the entire reform agenda and the state identified seven Leadership LEAs to guide the implementation of the proposed reforms. In the plan, the state described goals, strategies and activities to implement and achieve the reform initiatives and describes how the state, in collaboration with its participating LEAs, will use RttT 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.</p>				
Total		0	0	

Grand Total	500	394	403	
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Total	50	45	45	
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F. General

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	8	8	
(i) Allocating a consistent percentage of State revenue to education	5	3	3	
(ii) Equitably funding high-poverty schools	5	5	5	
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</p> <p>The percentage of total revenues available to support education remained substantially unchanged. The actual percentage of revenues increased from 46% - 47%, but total education funding took close a 20% cut.</p> <p>California policies clearly lead to equitable funding of its public schools. As mentioned in the application, the well known Serano Priest decision of 1971 led to the establishment of per pupil revenue limits for each LEA in the state. Over the years this in effect has led to the states equalization of funding. California also provide numerous categorical programs to meet the needs of its neediest students.</p>				
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	39	39	
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	8	8	
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	8	8	
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	8	8	
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	8	8	
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	7	7	
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</p> <p>California has an extremely supportive and accountably driven environment for charter schools. In 2009-10, a total of 1350 charter schools were authorized to operate. There are 10,225 school in California and the number of authorized charters exceeds 10% of the total number of schools. This represents a high cap state.</p> <p>Charter schools must meet all statewide academic standards and conduct all state mandated assessments, in addition to the criteria specified in their charter. Furthermore, a charter may be revoked by the SBE, whether or not the SBE is the chartering agency. Each year approximately 90 new charter are approved and 30 charter schools are closed or not unauthorized to operate. State guidelines allow for the creation of 100 new charter schools each year and if that figure is not reached, unused slots may be carried over to the following year.</p> <p>Charter schools appear to be funded at levels comparable to general education schools. The state is also very generous and creative in helping charter schools fund and find appropriate facilities. For example, California's Charter School Grant Program requires funding at the highest level to charter schools opening up in the attendance area of low performing schools. Furthermore, if a charter school opens up within the attendance area</p>				

of a school in which 70% of its students qualify for free or reduced lunch, the funding for facilities would be equal to the total funding available to traditional schools within the attendance area. In addition to charter schools the state appears to be very supportive of innovative, autonomous schools such as Early College High Schools, Magnate Schools, Schools without Walls, Curriculum based Thematic Schools, Philosophically Distinctive Schools, etc. Clearly there is a great deal of innovation and experimentation happening in California. The application, however, does not indicate how autonomous these schools are.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	5	5	
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
California has a number of other significant reform conditions that have increased student achievement and raised high school graduation rates. Notably the Advancement VIA Individual Determination (AVID) program has had a huge effect on the achievement of high school students of color and those living in poverty. Also of note are the 500 or so California Partnership Academies (CPA) that merge academic learning with career technical education and fieldwork opportunities in STEM related areas and career pathways. Another significant trend is the increased opportunity for parents and community people to be involved in the improvement of their schools.				
Total	55	52	52	

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	15	15	
Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
STEM discussion is integrated into the entire application. STEM discussion is nicely summarized in the application's conclusion. The summary is also clearly linked back to the exact areas in which it first appeared in the application. All STEM criteria are covered in the application.				
Total	15	15	15	

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes	Yes	
Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
California's application comprehensively and coherently addresses all of the four education reform areas specified in the ARRA. Its approach is unique in that seven leading and practicing superintendents and 302 reform minded LEAs will build on their strengths and commitment to make school reform happen. Representing about a third of California's LEAs and schools with a critical mass of big city school districts, they believe that they can lead the way in their own systems and influence the state as a whole. Given California's huge size this approach makes sense. Rather than building				

commitment by watering down expectations they have chosen to band together and fully implement the ideas embedded in RTTT.

Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)

The California team presentation validated and confirmed the initial assessment of this application. While its reform plan is innovative, the requisite level of commitment and voice from teacher groups has yet to emerge. The presentation was clear and informative, but during the Q & A period, the team appeared to speak and offer individual examples from their particular school districts rather than speak as a statewide group with a clear unity of purpose. The state plan has promise and is emerging, but is not quite there.

Total		0	0	
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Grand Total	500	385	385	
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- The focus is on the LEA as the point of change; and will let the LEA decide which of the 4 turnaround models to choose from,
- LEA partnership and collaboration are critical, with the State acting primarily as broker; and
- The State should establish clear outcomes and clear accountability, while allowing flexibility in implementation.

CA has outlined a very explicit set of steps to identify, support, connect, measure, refine and learn about turnarounds in their LEAs. They acknowledge the lack of movement in the past, even with significant attention and resources, highlight what they've learned and built their new approach out of these findings. It is, of course, unknown whether they will have greater effect with this model, but on paper, it is well constructed with foundations in lessons learned. This section warrants high marks.

Total	50	45	45	
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F. General

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	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)

(i) Allocating a consistent percentage of State revenue to education

Even as state revenues deeply declined from FY 2008 to FY 2009, education funding as a percentage of state revenues increased from 46 percent to 47 percent. In his budget proposal in January of 2010, the Governor indicated his intent to protect education –including higher education– from further cuts, and to support K–16 education at the same General Fund level as in the prior fiscal year, despite an anticipated budget deficit of \$20 billion.

The percent available to support education increased, for which the state is awarded full points.

(ii) Equitably funding high-poverty schools

California Supreme Court's ruling in *Serrano v. Priest* in 1971 and the enactment of Proposition 13 in 1978 had significant effects on CA's education funding. In the *Serrano* case, the California Supreme Court ruled that significant wealth-related disparities in per-pupil expenditures denied pupils in less wealthy LEAs a constitutional right to an equal education. Proposition 13 dramatically cut property taxes, and subsequent education budgets.

Equalization efforts have produced a substantial increase in equality between districts in the area of revenue limits; in fact, the Court discontinued monitoring compliance with the *Serrano* decision because it concluded that equalization was essentially complete.

Economic Impact Aid funding (\$946 million), is specifically provided to high-need LEAs to address the needs of low-income students.


In a variety of other areas, the state channels several hundred million dollars to high needs education populations: students with disabilities, English language acquisition program, foster youth, students who fail the high school exit exam, pregnant and parenting teens, expelled and at-risk students.

California's education funding policies are structured to guarantee equity between high- need LEAs and other LEAs. State data, analyzed by the Education Trust, shows that for the 2005-06 school year (the last year for which this analysis was completed), the State provided \$599 more per pupil in funding for high-poverty LEAs than it provided for students in low- poverty LEAs.

While individual LEAs can and do equalize funding between high poverty schools and others, there are no state policies that drive how LEAs distribute funds.

Because the CA has worked at the state level to ensure equitable funding policies for high needs districts, but has not influenced how districts allocate funds, this section is awarded medium points.

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

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	38	40	
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	8	8	
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	8	8	
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	8	8	
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	8	8	
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	6	8	

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

(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"

California first allowed a total of 250 charter schools to be authorized in 1998, with a provision to increase that total by an additional 100 charter schools (or approximately one percent of all schools in California) *in each successive school year*. Any unused authorizations roll over to the following year. This limit has never restricted the number of charters authorized because the authority to expand has far outpaced the actual growth in charter schools. In 2009–10, a total of 1,350 charter schools were authorized to operate, in contrast with the 810 actually in operation (which represent nearly 8 percent of the schools in the state.)

For having a law that does not prohibit or cap the number of charter schools at less than 10% of schools in the state, this section is awarded high points.

(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes

Both the Center for Education Reform and the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools rank the state very high on the strength of its law, quality and accountability, funding equity, facilities support, autonomy, and growth and choice.

Multiple methods can be used to request authority for a charter, whether at the LEA level, the county level, or the state level. There are clear appeal processes for denials at each level. Charters can be granted for individual schools, for an entire LEA, an entire county, or for a "statewide benefit" charter school, which provides instructional services that cannot be provided by a charter school operating in only one LEA or county. This system of multiple authorizers and types of charters ensures sufficient opportunity for innovative ideas to develop in charter schools across the state. All charter school petitioners must agree to meet all statewide academic standards and conduct all state pupil assessments.

When a charter is granted, it is approved for an initial period of up to five years. Renewals are approved for a period of five years and are based on student achievement and academic quality criteria. Charter authorizers must also provide ongoing oversight of the charter, including site visits and monitoring of the school's fiscal condition. In California, charter school oversight and monitoring are primarily implemented by the LEA authorizer. The law also provides county and State education agencies with charter oversight and monitoring responsibilities, including the right to investigate and to revoke a school's charter.

California has supported its charter schools by providing state-led technical assistance through a CDE Charter Support Team and the State Advisory Commission on Charter Schools, which reviews charter school funding and programmatic issues and provides advice to the State Board of Education. In addition, the California Charter School Association and the Charter Schools Development Center provide resources and training for charter school leaders and staff.

The Education Code, requirements for charter applications and funding incentives encourage the priority of schools that serve students who are most in need. Education Code also dictates academic achievement levels that must be met in order to be granted renewal.

CA doesn't mention the number of applications each year or how many were not approved or why. They do provide a table that shows the number approved, the number opened, and the number closed or not reauthorized. These numbers range from 10-39 a year. A Rand report on the operation of charter schools in California found that the most frequent reason for revocation of a school's charter was "an unsound academic program." According to the California Charter Schools Association, 30 of 32 state charter school closures last year were for quality reasons related to academic quality and/or fiscal stability.

The state has guidelines for authorizing and monitoring, for encouraging schools that serve high needs students, and for closing schools, in particular, for not meeting student achievement targets. The state receives high marks from charter policy centers who rate them high compared to other states on having a quality law and for expecting authorized charters to be high quality schools. For this section, the application receives full points.

(iii) Equitably funding charter schools

California has established funding mechanisms for the state's charter schools to help ensure that they will receive funding at a level that is equitable to traditional public schools. The State's Education Code indicates, "*It is the intent of the Legislature that each charter school be provided with operational funding that is equal to the total funding that would be available to a similar school district serving a similar pupil population.*" The mechanisms for general and categorical funding for public schools apply equally to California's charter schools. A revenue analysis for LEAs in the State of California for the 2007-08 school-

year reflects that this strategy is being implemented effectively to create equity in funding between public and charter schools.

Charter schools in CA receive equitable funding and this section is awarded full points.

(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities

In 2000, voters in California enacted Proposition 39, which required that public school facilities be shared fairly among all public school students, including those in charter schools. In the 2009-2010 school year, 120 charter schools were beneficiaries of Proposition 39, and an additional 116 charter schools were housed in district facilities not supported by Proposition 39.

The State has also made investments in charter school facilities through the following programs:

- Charter School Facility Grant Program (SB 740): Provided a total of \$23.6 million to 195 charter schools in the 2008-2009 school year to support facility rental costs;
- Qualified School Construction Bonds (QSCB): Awarded \$29.2 million to six charter schools, with a total of \$73 million set-aside, in 2008-2009;
- State Charter School Facilities Program (Prop. 47, 55, 1D): Awarded \$836 million to 58 charter schools serving 27,500 students;
- State Charter School Facility Incentive Grants Program: Awarded \$48 million to 128 charter schools serving 42,900 students; and
- California Charter Building Fund: Provided over \$100 million to 13 charter schools between 2007 and 2009.

The state has worked from a variety of angles to ensure funding and access to facilities and is awarded full points for this section.

(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools

Though the applicant lists a host of innovative schools, there is not enough information provided to know if the applicant fully meets this sub-criterion.

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

(v) In answer to a reviewer question about clarifying the autonomy of innovative schools, the state provided examples of per pupil budgeting, shared decision making, open enrollment, autonomy, traditional public schools that have written plans for flexibility and have individual contracts in Los Angeles, and parent and teacher involvement in choosing school models. With this information, the applicant fully meets this sub-criterion.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	5	5	
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(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Beyond the work around the four key assurance areas, California has implemented AVID to address the achievement gap, created the California Partnership Academies (CPA) to offer students multiple pathways to graduation and technical careers, brought forth legislation to support parents of children in low performing schools, empowered LEAs by making the education code more flexible and offered more budget flexibility; and expanded early childhood learning.

Long before RTTT, CA has been working through laws, innovations and programs to change conditions that would increase student achievement and narrow achievement gaps. For this section, full points are awarded.

(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)

Total	55	51	53	
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Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

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

Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The application builds around a three part plan for advancing STEM in CA:

1) Strengthen the design and delivery of STEM in California’s high schools through the following:

- Teacher Preparation Programs with the California State University System (*Section D: Great Teachers and Leaders*) (See Appendix S.XIII);; and
- Use STEM-focused Pathways in California Partnership Academies To Turn Around Low-Performing High Schools (*Section E: Turning Around Lowest Achieving Schools*).

2) Map backward into K-8: Build a strong STEM foundation emphasizing authentic application and career exploration

- After-School STEM Learning Programs (*Section D: Great Teachers & Leaders*); (See Appendix S.III); and
- Summer Learning Opportunity: Stepping into STEM (*Section B: Standards and Assessments*); (See Appendix S.IX for description).

3) Build support systems and infrastructure: Support STEM-related investments that will help sharpen and expand high-quality STEM teaching and learning statewide:

- Online STEM Programs (*Section C: Data Systems; Section B: Standards & Assessments*);
- STEM E-Portfolio (*Section C: Data Systems*) (See Appendix S.VI); and
- TechNet and Industry Partners STEM Programs (Spans all Assurance Areas, See

Appendix S.IV).

The partners include the Office of the Governor, the California Department of Education, selected two- and four-year post-secondary institutions, TechNet and its industry partners, ConnectEd: the California Center for College and Career, California Virtual Campus, the Silicon Valley Education Foundation, and representatives of California’s premier philanthropies. All of these organizations have signed a formal letter of support for this application, pledging their commitment to implement the plan over the next four years and beyond.

STEM initiatives are embedded throughout the application, emphasizing rigorous classes, targeted toward under-represented groups, connected to industry, and encouraging advanced study of STEM subjects. The application meets the competitive preference priority.				
Total	15	15	15	

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes	Yes	

Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

This application is refreshingly clear and comprehensive. It starts early with a high bar set for what all participating districts would need to do, spelled out the details in black and white, and got significant numbers of districts to join in, even if they represent only 1/3 of this large state.

CA answered every part of every question, even if it meant revealing failures, weaknesses or past omissions. They reflected on these experiences to discern why they didn't work and how their new initiatives could build off of lessons learned. The MOU for participating LEAs went well beyond the strong sample provided by USDOE and was developed by 7 vanguard districts which are already implementing many of the reforms within. It contains a very explicit scope of work yet has managed to energize 302 districts to the challenge. In addition, they created an MOU for partner IHEs, set targets, and assigned responsibilities across the reform areas. To implement the plan, CA has created a novel structure to run the program as an independent non profit, has the support of all gubernatorial candidates, and is built off the expertise and credibility of 7 districts that are already deep in this work.

This application embodies the spirit of Race to the Top, using this opportunity as a chance to challenge a variety of sectors, leaders and educators across the state to aim high, use ambitious goals set by superintendents to galvanize all levels into new ways of doing business and take risks that could lead to significant gains for CA students.

Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)

The state did a great job of conveying the enthusiasm and grassroots, LEA-driven effort to bring ambitious reform to the State of California. The panelists were knowledgeable, experienced, passionate and committed.

Total		0	0	
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Grand Total	500	429	440	
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