

(E)(2)(i) DC has identified schools in need of improvement and the lowest achieving schools and has a solid process to do so.

(E)(2)(ii) DC has a strong record in turning around low performing schools and has harvested the lessons of its work (Table E2.2.) and used them to refine and improve its plans which includes sensible activities and timelines and identifies who is responsible for action. DC's plan also recognizes the need for differential funding for students in the first years of a school's turn around and for strong managerial support. Overall this is a first rate package.

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)				
(F)(1)(i) Table F1.2 shows that education funding as a % of DC's total budget increased between 2008 and 2009 in a time of declining revenues.				
(F)(1)(ii) DC's student financing formulae are per capita and needs based and are applied equitably across the district.				
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	40	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	8	8	
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
(F)(2)(i) DC law does not prohibit or inhibit charter school establishment.				
(F)(2)(ii) DC law ensures open enrollment at DC charters and requires high performance for charters to continue to operate.				
(F)(2)(iii) DC financing formulae provide for equal treatment of charter students. See Appendix F1.2.				
(F)(2)(iv) Charters in DC also receive a facilities per capita allowance and access to a variety of loan and grant facilities as well as use of public school space.				
(F)(2)(v) DC has a number of autonomous and innovative schools operating and more may be established if DCPS becomes an authorizer.				

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	5	5	
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
(F)(3) DC preliminary narrative covering the history of recent education reform and the policy and structural framework established and being augmented is a very good backdrop for another generation of intensive change and improvement. This is extended by the State's commitment to universal pre kindergarten, a suite of special education developments, efforts to address the needs of "at risk" youth. All this combined by first class leadership at different levels sets a strong reform environment.				
Total	55	55	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)				
DC has shown a willingness to integrate STEM issues into various plans and actions set out in its RTTT plan. It plans to augment this with a STEM learning network with 15 partners - all of high quality and relevance and many with considerable expertise and resources. The end result is likely to be better preparation of STEM teachers, better STEM pathways within schools and across schools to college and work place learning. The plan makes passing reference to women and science but overall there is an emphasis on STEM in DC's plan.				
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)				
DC's submission directly and comprehensively addresses RTTT's four areas of action and builds on actions its leadership has taken over the last three years to lift student performance and to make its educational institutions more effective and more responsive to individual needs. The array of reforms are usually well planned, grounded in evidence, respectful of local conditions, informed by past practice and shaped into a compelling and credible set of strategies. There are a few sections where the multiple actions proposed and underway do not cohere and tend to blur the concentration on student growth. Balancing that is the specification of goals, performance measures, responsibilities and timelines. The legal and fiscal frameworks are clear and well established.				
Total		0	0	

Grand Total	500	421	436	
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accountability and the need to close or turn around ineffective charter schools. The score for criterion E2ii is therefore being raised.				
Total	50	45	48	

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)

(i) Compared to DC's education funding in FY2008, funding in FY2009 increased as a percentage of its overall budgets for the two years. This earns the state full points for this criteria.

(ii) Education funding in DC is done through a per pupil allocation to its LEAs, with special weighting given to students with disabilities and limited English proficient students. However, the applicant relies on federal Title I resources to provide extra money to schools that serve large numbers of economically disadvantaged students. For the reasons stated above, this criterion is rated in the high range.

(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	7	7	
(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	8	8	

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

(i) The proposal states that the Center for Educational Reform gave DC an "A" for its laws governing charter schools. There is no cap on the number of charter schools that can operate in the state. In fact, 42.5% of DC's schools are public charter schools, with 38% of DC's students enrolled in them.

(ii) DC's charter school law requires that all charter schools must have open enrollment, with a lottery used to select students when the number of applications exceeds available seats. According to the proposal, charter school enrollment reflects greater concentrations of non-white and poor students than in DCPS schools. Also, charter schools may not discriminate in enrolling students with disabilities. Only 34% of charter school applications have been approved by PSCB, and in the past five years, 12 charters have been revoked, although there is no evidence of specific charter schools that were closed because of poor student achievement. This criterion is rated in the high range.

(iii) All charter LEAs receive the same per pupil funding as DCPS schools and receive equitable allotments of federal funds as well, earning this criterion the highest rating.

(iv) DC charter schools receive significant facilities support. In FY2010, charter schools will receive \$2800 per student for expenses related to facilities, reflecting a steady increase in such funding over the past several years. Also, charter schools by DC law have the "right of first offer" for any available space in DCPS schools or buildings.

(v) DCPS has established an Office of School Innovation which is promoting new visions for education among DCPS schools. A significant number of such schools have received autonomy regarding budget, instruction, professional development, scheduling and textbooks.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	4	4	
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
The applicant has described many reforms in areas such as Universal PreK, Special Education Interventions, Full-Service Schools and Alternative Education. Lack of sufficient evidence of the successful results of these reforms prevents this criterion from receiving the highest rating.				
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)				
Using RttT funds, DC will partner with an outside organization to create the DC STEM Learning Network to coordinate statewide efforts to improve outcomes in STEM education. Through this network, the state will build upon pockets of successful STEM projects in its schools to expand and spread successful STEM programs throughout the state. Also, an important aspect of these endeavors will be the upgrading of math and science standards and interim and summative assessments aligned to them. Along with human capital efforts to recruit, train and retain highly effective STEM teachers, the actions described in this section provide evidence that DC meets this 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)				
In this RttT proposal, DC has presented a coherent, comprehensive plan to build on its already significant reform efforts to further increase student achievement, narrow achievement gaps, and increase the rates at which students graduate from high school ready to succeed in college and careers. All four of the reform				

areas of ARRA are addressed throughout the inter-connected sections of the proposal. DC has certainly met the absolute priority of this grant competition.

Total		0	0	
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Grand Total	500	417	441	
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DC has an excellent plan for “supporting its LEAs in turning around schools...” [(E)(2)(ii)]. The plan draws on the District’s extensive history with implementation of the four turnaround models outlined in the RTTT notice. As a result, the District has developed a strong set of lessons, which it carries into the RTTT process.

DC has a big, bold plan for turning around schools through RTTT. The headlines on this plan underscore the sophistication with which DC leaders approach the complex, multi-year challenges of altering a school’s trajectory. Reading just the headlines shows a good logic and detail to the work plan:

1. Identify and plan for the turnaround, revisiting the plan annually:Finalize list of schools eligible for turnaround; examine rankings and eliminate those not truly needy or ready; publish list of schools; establish detailed plan and timeline; plan for additional turnarounds.
2. Provide preparation support for potential turnaround teams: Establish new organizational chart, job responsibilities and staffing in the Office of Human Capital; from list of turnaround schools, determine when each one will start in each of the next three years and assemble administrative team to lead turnaround; fund planning years (one year) for administrative teams who will take on turnaround in the following year.
3. Align school modernization efforts to support school turnaround:Make sure that turnaround efforts fit well within five year modernization that is underway for entire DCPS.
4. Provide differential funding for turnaround schools: DC’s turnaround plans provide additional per pupil funding over four years, starting with \$1,000 in year one and phasing down to \$500 by year four; Develop plan for use of differential funding for each school; provide differential funding for turnaround schools based on number of students.
5. Ensure capacity for strong management of turnaround partnerships: Establish new organizational chart, job responsibilities and staff for Office of School Innovation; Hire new team members.

Not listed amongst these headlines is the particular turnaround model for each school. Of the 10 schools identified for turnaround, several will take a “restart” approach; several will pursue “transformation;” and the remainder will undergo “turnarounds.” These models were identified based on review of each school’s full battery of data and reform history, and the preferences of the particular administrative team charged with the turnaround.

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)				
DC scores in the high range for this criterion, since “the proportion of total revenues available to the State that were used to support elementary and secondary, and public higher education, increased from FY08 to FY09.” According to evidence provided in the proposal, the share available to education rose from 22.3 percent in FY08 to 23.5 percent in FY09, an increase in dollars of roughly \$200 million.				
(F)(1)(ii)				
Similarly, the proposal provides sound evidence that DC’s “policies lead to equitable funding between high-need LEAs and other LEAs, and within LEAs, between high-poverty schools and other schools” [(F)(1)(ii)].				

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	38	38	
(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	6	

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

DC arguably is one of the nation's leaders in the charter school movement. According to the proposal, New Orleans is the only urban district with a higher percentage of charter schools and students in charter schools; DC is at 42.5 percent and 38 percent, respectively. DC also is recognized as having the strongest charter laws in the nation. Obviously, the District is highly dedicated to "ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools" [(F)(2)].

(F)(2)(i)

The charter school law governing DC, as imposed by Congress, mandates what should be considered a "high cap." It limits chartering authorities to approve no more than 20 new charter schools annually. There is no evidence, however, that this cap has been close to imposing a barrier to establishing charter schools. Typically five charters per year have been approved, which has more than met demand.

(F)(2)(ii)

DC has set rigorous standards and accountability systems regarding charters [(F)(2)(ii)]. The District's "mature charter law" is definite on how charter authorizers are to approve, monitor, oversee, hold accountable, reauthorize or revoke charters. Enrollment is in no way limited as to population or otherwise structured to encourage charters that are different in population than traditional public schools. Indeed, DC's charters currently serve a higher percentage of minority and economically disadvantaged students than the DCPS schools.

The proposal documents clearly that charter school accountability is strong in DC. Between 2004 and 2007, 27 new charters were approved, 51 were denied, and four were revoked. Over the past five years, 12 charters have been closed—four charters were revoked and eight were returned after intensive monitoring.

(F)(2)(iii)(iv)

DC's funding for charters meets RTTT's criterion that "a state's charter schools receive equitable funding compared to traditional public schools" [(F)(2)(iii)]. The District is especially helpful in providing charter schools financial assistance with facilities [(F)(2)(iv)]. Charter schools receive an additional \$2,800 per pupil that may be used for facility leasing, purchase, financing, construction, maintenance and repair. Adjustments to this amount are possible, if a school can argue the case. Charter schools also are eligible for low-cost, tax-exempt bond financing through the DC Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development.

(F)(2)(v)

School autonomy is quite relevant to DCPS reform efforts, well beyond charter schools [(F)(2)(v)]. The proposal provides significant evidence that the DCPS has a coordinated, well-led plan to promote innovative school models. Currently, 17 DCPS schools operate under one of three autonomous projects, all of which meet the definition required by the RTTT notice: they provide flexibility at the school level over budgets, instructional program, professional development, schedule and textbooks. Not mentioned is

whether or not the innovative model provides flexibility over staffing, one of the RTTT definitional requirements.				
(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	3	3	
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>DC's explains with precision how it "demonstrates other significant reform conditions" [(F)(3)]. Keeping with the RTTT requirement, none of the additional reforms are mentioned earlier in the proposal. Moreover, all are critical to improving learning and advancing school reform. For instance, DC features universal pre-kindergarten as a key step in readiness to learn; special education interventions as essential to a significant share of its student population; and, alternative education for disengaged and disaffected students, who are off-track for graduation. To quote the proposal, "from preschool through high school and beyond, DC is positioned to meet the needs of all its students."</p> <p>Points are lost, however, because DC fails to provide evidence for how the "other significant reform conditions" shaped student performance. The proposal is silent on whether the reform conditions, to quote the RTTT criterion, "have increased student achievement or graduation rates, narrowed achievement gaps, or resulted in other important outcomes."</p>				
Total	55	51	51	

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>DC submits a superb plan for STEM. It acknowledges at the start that it has many pockets of excellence in STEM education, thanks to many partnerships, but that what is missing is a comprehensive and cohesive vision and strategy. DC's proposal, to be implemented in collaboration with Battelle and other partners, is a giant first step towards cohesion and effectiveness.</p> <p>Most impressive, the plan truly is a strategy, and one that aligns deftly with the RTTT framework. Six major strategy elements are outlined:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a learning network, that leverages existing resources and programs for STEM • Establishing a strong foundation for STEM subjects by aligning with standards and assessments • Developing human capital resources for STEM by establishing new teacher pipelines and improved professional development • Developing a map of when and how students master STEM knowledge and skills to be prepared for college and careers • Using STEM as the key program component in one or more school turnarounds in DCPS • Coordinating partnerships between LEAs and university and industry sectors in STEM. <p>DC provides a certain action plan for how these strategies will move from being good headlines to actual work. Good pre-planning has occurred, such that priority work, roles and responsibilities, and partners, are known for each of the strategy areas. Pertinent to the RTTT requirements, several of the strategies pinpoint attention to addressing the need of underrepresented groups and of women and girls.</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	
<p>Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</p> <p>DC's RTTT proposal is one of unique energy, thoroughness and a contagious spirit. The plan is comprehensive, coherent, bold, well conceived and exceptionally presented. DC has set aggressive performance goals for RTTT and has a strong theory of change. Integration of approach and work is a theme throughout the proposal: with impressive persistence, DC weaves together related and mutually supporting elements from multiple parts of the proposal.</p> <p>RTTT funding would advance work already underway in each of the RTTT priority areas. DC is crystal clear that the RTTT infusion would come at a critical juncture: at the point when aggressive changes in governance, leadership, school organization, standards and assessments, data use, teacher union contracts and relations, charter school evolution, and, most important, student performance require a big push to fully succeed.</p> <p>The biggest challenge to the proposal is the failure to the win the signature of the Washington Teacher's Union. On the downside, the lack of formal support from the union casts doubt about the likely success of the high-stakes use of performance systems and measures. However, DC argues with convincing candor that it sought the union's support, but stopped trying when it was clear that it would have had to compromise its top priority of using evaluation to ensure excellent human capital in the DC schools. In addition, DC indicates that it faces no collective bargaining limitations to the bold human capital approaches advocated by RTTT and proposed for the District.</p> <p>Lastly, DC's comparative advantages are notable. First, funds focused on DC may well go "further, faster" given the smaller scale: 72,000 students in a little over 200 schools. Second, DC is a poster example of the crisis of urban education, yet could be a lead story on how urban districts and schools can turnaround to become places of rigor, relevance and success. Third, the creative moves with charter schools, that has resulted in a system of entrepreneurial schools (rather than a school system) along side a traditional school district, demonstrates how a mixed model of governance and autonomy can work. Lastly, leadership consistency with Mayoral control, the presence of a dynamic public school chancellor, the generosity of philanthropic and business partners, and the engagement of innovative educational nonprofits, all combine to make DC fertile ground for a path-breaking RTTT and City-State partnership.</p>				
Total		0	0	
Grand Total	500	443	468	

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	
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</p> <p>Education is the highest priority, and this is reflected in the budget. Funding has increased even in difficult economic times. The Mayor has asked city agencies to absorb deeper budget cuts in an effort to hold school funding stable. The education spending increased between FY 2008 and FY 2009 by total dollars amounts and by percentage. The applicant clearly states this and provides a chart to support the claim.</p> <p>Equitable education funding is possible via the Uniform Per Student Funding Formula which is part of the School Code. Every student generates foundational funding for its LEA in the same way and in the same amount. Additional individual student weightings are applied based on grade level, special education level, limited/non English proficiency, etc. Additional Title I funds flow through the State to district LEAs serving children living at the greatest poverty levels. The applicant includes a reference to a 2006 Ed Week article which ranked this applicant 13th in the nation for per pupil expenditures. RTTT funds will be a strategic investment in the development of systems and processes to enable funding dollars to be leveraged for results.</p>				
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	40	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	8	8	
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</p> <p>The applicant states that their charter laws are the strongest in the nation. Autonomous schools are encouraged through the charter sector and also within the traditional LEA. The State has a vibrant network of charter schools 57 charter LEAs, and 96 charter campuses (42.5%) serving 28,066 students (38%) which, the applicant states is higher than other urban districts, except for New Orleans. Charters will be eligible to access 40.1 million dollars or 36% of the RTTT dollars. The applicant documents enrollment by type of charter and number of students served.</p> <p>As noted above, with the equitable funding per student, there is no difference in the amount of money that goes to a traditional school student or a charter school student as the formula is uniform. There are no caps on charter schools. There has been an average of 5 charter schools approved each year. Successful charters can easily increase capacity or replicate their models with approval from the charter authorizer without counting against any type of quota. The ratio of charters to traditional schools is 1:34. There is no practical limit to growth of charters and there is no legal or practical limit to the number of students who can</p>				

be served by the charter schools. To extend charters as models of innovation and autonomy, the Chancellor is considering requesting chartering authority for the traditional LEA to allow the LEA to engage more readily in school restarts and to use charters for turnaround efforts.

Charters are open enrollment institutions and the statute expressly prohibits public charters from limiting enrollment on the basis of student's race, color, religion, national origin, language spoken, intellectual or athletic ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, or status as a student with special needs. They can limit enrollment to specific grade levels. When applications exceed capacity, a random selection process or lottery must be used for admittance. Accountability is very strong with annual monitoring by the chartering agency and a comprehensive review every 5 years to ensure compliance.

A five year table documents the history of applications, withdrawals, approvals, denials, and measures taken to close non performing charter schools. The Center for Education Reform's 2009 Accountability Report cites the chartering agency as having "created the gold standard in charter school accountability."

Funding for facilities is provided on a per student basis. This funding has increased every year from FY03-FY08. Additional facility funds are also possible through 5 other sources of federal funds and various programs through the Deputy Mayor's office.

The Official Code gives the right of first offer for any current or former public school property to an eligible applicant whose petition to establish a public charter school has been conditionally approved. The permission is then granted to occupy for not less than 25 years, renewable for an additional 25 years. The applicant has not only addressed all of the criteria for successful charter schools, it has exceeded the criteria in every way so that charters and other autonomous schools are ensured successful conditions to be high performing and innovative without barriers traditionally seen.

There is a specific office of school innovation whose mission is to increase the level of diversity and innovation of the schools. This department is led by an experienced administrator from another urban district where successful turnaround strategies were implemented. The goal is to ensure that all children regardless of test scores or where they live will have access to innovative schools that meet their unique needs. Currently there are 4 autonomous schools, 10 collaborative for change schools, and 3 partnership


schools. The district is committed to removing barriers to change and supporting schools in their change efforts.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	4	4	
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>Universal prekindergarten was passed in 2008. Through a blended model, Head Start, charters, community based organizations and school districts are working together to provide quality programming meeting high standards for all.</p> <p>Alternative education will be addressed for those who are disengaged and off track for graduation.</p> <p>Leadership, at the top, and a new administrative structure for the district has been recently put into place and the applicant documents early successes.</p> <p>These reforms together will meet the needs of students from preschool through high school and beyond.</p> <p>The State has failed to appropriately serve students with special needs. This has been a financial and a political drain on the system which will now be addressed. The State has described a variety of efforts which it will support to ensure that students are served appropriately in the least restrictive environment through a continuum of appropriate services which meet the IEP of each individual child.</p> <p>The two groups which are not specifically identified for additional assistance and/or special programming to focus on ensuring their successes are gifted and talented and English Language Learners.</p>				
Total	55	54	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>STEM initiatives are underway and more are being planned. The applicant includes information about the Battelle Foundation which has approved an investment of \$50,000 to accelerate the efforts regarding planning and design phases of two STEM education projects. It is the intent of Battelle to leverage this short term effort into a long term partnership. They see the applicant being ready to move forward, and they see the geographic location as being great for expansion of the STEM initiative. It is their intention to support this effort for as long as possible so that it is sustainable, and so that it can become a national STEM model for others in the US to model.</p> <p>While STEM is not as fully developed in the district as the other reform initiatives, there are pockets of excellence now, and there is a strong plan for implementing this priority more comprehensively during the course of the RTTT funding and sustaining it beyond the 4 years.</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)

The applicant has presented an application which clearly demonstrates how successful it has been in implementing comprehensive reform which is aligned with the four RTTT education reform areas. It is clear that there is leadership in place, a political will to move forward, and an understanding that this work will not be easy, but it is necessary and will be accomplished.

In addition, there is a plan to continue to move forward using the RTTT dollars to supplement the efforts that are already underway in the district. There is a clear understanding of the importance of increasing achievement for all students while closing the gaps among sub groups of students. There will also be a stronger focus on high school, early childhood education and the education of special education student within the LEAs. While the applicant mentions ELL students and those that are gifted and talented, these sub groups are not addressed in depth as the other sub groups are.

The data initiative is very comprehensive as it connects data and accountability across all sections of the application. Data Managers will be available at all schools to assist teachers and principals in their understanding of what the data means and how that information can be used to best change practices to improve instruction and ultimately result in improved learning/achievement for all students (in all sub groups). There are components of professional development based on individual needs listed in the plan. Standards for professional development are not included in the application.

This urban district has many pieces to the puzzle in place, including documented success with all 4 models of turnaround. The goal is to have all elements working with even better results in all areas. Then, it can become the model to which other urban school districts can look to and learn from.

Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)

The applicant team provided clarification and confirmation of information from their proposal to the review team during their presentation and during the question and answer section. The applicant team members were well prepared, had a deep understanding of their plan for RTTT, and modeled their ongoing intent to work as collaborative partners across their respective agencies to become a national model.

Total			0	0	
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Grand Total	500	458	458		
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Information shared during the interview made it very clear that the mayor can intervene in the lowest achieving participating charter schools.

(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	30	30	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	25	25	
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>(i) DC identified two types of schools for turnaround: Schools with graduation rates below 60% over a two year period(3) and the lowest achieving 5% of Title I schools identified for improvement (7), for a total of ten schools. The response is strong and clear, 5 points were awarded.</p> <p>(ii) Of the 10 schools identified for improvement, five have already been targeted for turnaround using one for the four models. Two are "restarts, two are transformations and one is a turnaround model.</p> <p>DC has a comprehensive plan for using the "Turnaround Model for the other five schools. The Public School Charter Board will implement a plan for the only charter school on the current list of persistently low achieving schools, through the approach outlined in the PCSB's Performance Management Framework.</p> <p>In the last five years, the State has attempted to turnaround 7 schools using the turnaround model, 4 using the restart model, 47 using the closure model and 13 using the transformation model. Emerging results are reported only for the 2008 and 2009 years. Lessons learned include statements and explanations that range from turnaround is; not inherently attractive, expensive, strategically challenging, and has a ripple effect throughout the District.</p> <p>The State has plans in place, but the lessons learned seem to highlight the difficulty of implementing turnaround models. The response is credible so it was scored at the high end of the medium range with 25 points.</p>				
Total	50	35	40	

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	4	4	
(ii) Equitably funding high-poverty schools	5	5	5	
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>(i) The State increased its budget to support elementary, secondary, and public higher education from FY2008 to FY2009 by .4% which represent \$196,250,000. There was a \$500,000 decrease in the support for public higher education, therefore only four points were awarded.</p> <p>(ii) Equitable DC education funding is achieved via Uniform Per Student Funding Formula (UPSFF), as outlined in DC Official Code 38-2901-2902. Every student generates funding for its LEA in the same manner and in the same amount.</p>				

Funding is mandated by state code, the response was compelling and awarded five points.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	40	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	8	8	

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

(i) DC official code 38-1802.03 allow eligible chartering authorities to approve up to twenty annual petitions to establish a public charter school. The adopted "cap" is well above demand. The number of petitions has never exceeded twenty. Presently, 38.8% of public school children attend public charter schools and 42.5% of DC schools are charters. As a result, the response was scored in the "high" range according to reviewer guidance.

(ii) The District's charter law provisions explicitly outlines how charter authorizers approve, monitor and oversee, hold accountable, reauthorize, and revoke charters; DC Official Code 38-1802.1(approval), 38-1802.13,38-1802.11 (oversight), 38-1802.12(renewal), 38-1802.01-13-13a (revocation). A chartering authority may revoke a charter if it is determined that the charter has failed to meet goals and student academic achievement. The response is compelling and earns all eight points.

(iii) Both charter LEAs and DCPSs are funded according to the same student-based formula. All District charter schools qualify and therefore receive equitable access to major federal education formula grant funds. "High" points were awarded, because the funding formula is mandated by code.

(iv) Public charter schools receive a per-student facilities allowance, established by DC Official Code 38-2908. Additional DC Official Codes address the other areas of this criteria. The response was compelling, thus eight points were awarded.

(v) The DC Office of School Intervention (OSI) is currently developing and implementing three autonomous school models; Autonomous Schools (4 schools), DC Collaborative for Change(10 schools) and Partnership Schools (3 schools). The response was compelling, thus eight points were awarded.

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

The DC Council passed the "Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Act" (DC Official Code 38-273.01 to address DC school readiness. Special Education Intervention and Alternative Education models are described. The areas of gifted and talented, and English for Speakers of Other Languages were omitted. The response is credible, but the omission of two areas weakens the response. A score of 3 was awarded.

Total	55	52	52	
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Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
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Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	15	15	
Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>(i) The District has strong college-career-ready standards for math. Over the next year, DC will begin the process of revising DC science standards. A resolution is included to attest to this forthcoming action. In order to promote the use of relevant and enhancing technology, DC will seek to adapt standards from International Society for Technology in Education. The P-20 Consortium described in Section B 3 intends to bring colleges, universities, DCPS and charter schools together to work on alignment of curriculum and high school exit requirements.</p> <p>(ii) The list of industry experts, universities, research centers partners include the American Association of Applied Sciences, American University, University of Maryland, University of the District of Columbia, Carnegie Institute, CISCO, NASA, and the US Department of Energy, entities that are committed to assisting with the STEM initiatives. The universities are committed to assisting in the preparation of STEM teachers. The Carnegie Institute of Washington will provide job-embedded professional development for teachers. CISCO will offer CISCO certification. NASA and the US Department of Energy will provide internships and summer programs for students and teachers.</p> <p>(iii) Five LEAs that account for 68% of DC students and among them 21 schools with specialized programs making STEM education widely accessible in DC. P-20 Consortium will strive to establish a college-going culture to involve strategies for enhancing girl's interest in STEM-related careers.</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 application comprehensively and coherently addresses all four education areas, as well as State success factors criteria. The State has clearly demonstrated that it, along with the LEAs are taking a systemic approach to education reform. The State has commitment from LEAs to implement and achieve the goals in the RTTT plan. The plan clearly describes how the State, in collaboration with its LEAs will use Race to the Top and other funds to increase student achievement, decrease the achievement gaps across subgroups, and increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers.</p>				
Total		0	0	

Grand Total	500	434	447	
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