

and principals, potential replacement of staff, and state provided instructional tools would used by schools and districts to address achievement concerns. Additionally, Georgia's State Education Agency will require school districts that have low performing schools to submit to budget and resource allocation reviews to ensure that funds and resources are being adequately invested in target schools and schools within their feeder chain.

Total	50	45	48	
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F. General

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	10	10	

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

(F)(1)(i) The State's contribution to education increased from 58.2% of total state appropriations in FY2008 compared to 62.5% in FY2009. An expenditure chart demonstrates the level of appropriation to state agencies serving elementary, primary, and higher education, in comparison to other state agencies, services and initiatives. The applicant received full points for this criterion. (F)(1)(ii)(a) Georgia's school funding formula provides a higher level of state funding to "less wealthy" LEAs than to wealthier districts. The state also provides an "Equalization" grant that subsidizes the costs of educating students in "less wealthy districts." Georgia reports that the amount of Equalization funding at the beginning of FY2010 was \$413M. In addition the Equalization grant, the State's Regional Educational Service Agencies (RESAs) provides funding that is heavily weighted towards rural and poorer districts. In FY2010, \$11M was dedicated for this purpose. Georgia also established a bond program where, starting in FY2009, low-income districts can access a special bond to help cover the cost of school construction and renovation. In FY2010, \$10M was appropriated for this purpose. Georgia is receiving full points for this criterion. (F)(1)(ii)(b) Georgia's state law requires that schools failing to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for two years in row must be provided technical assistance from the LEAs. LEAs are to ensure that schools complete a school improvement plan, which upon completion, qualifies the school to receive additional aid and resources to execute its plan. Georgia state law enables LEAs to direct additional state funding to persistently low achieving schools. In addition, remediation and early intervention program funds supplement the funding schools receive for students at risk. In FY2010, \$40M was appropriated by the state for its Remediation Fund and \$306M for its Early Intervention Program Fund. Georgia has made a significant commitment to supporting its lowest performing schools, and is deserving of full points for this criterion.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	38	38	
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(F)(2)(v) Georgia enables LEAs to start and operate charter schools and has established 12 Early College High Schools, which are also started and managed by school districts and serve 2,201 students in Georgia. Eighty-one percent of students enrolled in Early College schools are low income, 85% are minority and 85% would be the first in their family to attend college. Because of the limited scope of opportunities for school districts to operate innovate schools presented here, Georgia has presented for this criterion, points are being withheld.

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

F)(3) Georgia presents several innovations. All of them create favorable conditions for reform and innovation. Specifically important to the sustainability and impact of education reforms in Georgia is the strength of local school boards. In 2008, Georgia moved to strengthen local boards by establishing the Commission on School Board Excellence, and involving business partners in the creation of the

Commissions, its policies, and programs. The Commission's recommendations were introduced as a bill that passed the State Senate but not Georgia's House of Representatives. Georgia said it planned to reintroduce the bill in January 2010. Should it pass, it will provide sweeping changes and improvements to school boards. Georgia recognized that school quality extends to school boards; boards enable school districts to create the conditions for high performing schools, effective teachers, and successful students. It's wise on the part of Georgia to include this priority in their reform goals.

Total	55	51	51	
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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)

Georgia presents a thorough plan for enhancing STEM education in the State. Georgia has increased the rigor of its math and science standards, enhanced math and science requirements for graduation, and introduced differentiated pay for math and science teachers and for early childhood teachers with a math/science "endorsement". Georgia also introduced science mentors for teachers in schools and partnerships between K-12 and higher education.

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)

Georgia's application comprehensively and coherently addresses all of the four education reform areas specified in ARRA and the State Success Factors Criteria. Georgia has a very aggressive reform plan, and was able to get school districts that educate half of the students in Georgia to participate. Should Georgia and participating LEAs succeed with implementing and executing their RTTT reform agenda, the State will significantly increase its potential to encourage (or require) other LEAs to participate in the future.

Total		0	0	
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Grand Total	500	440	437	
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(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
Georgia is in a good position to directly assist persistently lowest-achieving schools and LEAS. Current Georgia law allows the State to intervene to assist persistently lowest-achieving schools and LEAs. They also were among six states chosen by the US ED to pilot a Differentiated Accountability Pilot, which creates tiers of interventions best suited to the needs of schools.				
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	40	35	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	35	30	
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
Georgia has a clear method for identifying persistently lowest-achieving schools (LAS; bottom 5% of schools using ESEA tests in Math and ELA, and whether a high school had a graduate rate of < 60%.) In addition, they have taken an aggressive, pro-active approach and have added back in 20 schools that fell into the NI-5 or higher category, and wishing to identify feeder schools, those elementary schools that are sending students to middle schools and high schools, where given the larger sample sizes, are finally identified as LAS schools. (While this increases the number of schools of highest concern from 63 to 126, the state will not be asking for additional money for feeder schools from RTTT.) Georgia offers a thoughtful, comprehensive plan for turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools, based on past successes and lessons learned from previous reform efforts, such as systematic use of data, establishing clear performance expectations of schools, short-term action plans, performance coaches, data driven professional learning and leadership academies. They plan to establish a new office – the State Office of School Turnaround within the GADOE to lead this effort to support persistently lowest-achieving schools, and plan to use a variety of structural and programmatic initiatives to turn around its LAS. The proposal includes a detailed action plan for these proposed efforts.				
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)				
The panelist did not sufficiently clarify what was entailed by several strategies (e.g., intensive diagnostics, tool kits) proposed for turning around lowest achieving schools.				
Total	50	50	45	

F. General

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	10	10	
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
The Georgia state budget reflects the high priority it places on education. Its state appropriated allocation to education increased from 58% to 60.4% of total expenditures from FY08 to FY09, despite the state revenue decreasing by 9%. Its state policies lead to equitable funding between high-need LEAS and other LEAs, and between high-poverty schools and other schools.				
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	39	39	
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
Georgia has a number of conditions in place that are supportive of encouraging high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools. Georgia's charter school laws has no caps on the number of charter schools that can be authorized or on the number of students charters can enroll. The National Alliance of				

Public Charter Schools ranked Georgia fourth in terms of charter laws and commitment to charter quality. There are 7 types of charter schools in Georgia, and there are currently 121 approved charter schools. ii – Georgia has clear laws and regulations regarding how charters schools are authorized approved, and closed, where student achievement plays a significant factor. It also stipulates that charter schools must reach students representative of the racial and SES diversity in the school system, and provides positive demographic enrollment data to support that claim. Iii – Georgia charter schools are entitled to equitable funding levels compared to traditional public schools. Unlike in many states, they are entitled to state federal and local revenue, and funding does not rely on special appropriations, but rather, is built in the funding formula generally applicable to all public schools. Iv – The state provides charter schools with funding for facilities and assistance with facilities acquisition. Each local board of education must make its unused facilities available to local charter schools, and may not charge rent for the facility normally used by a public school. V – The State enables LEAS to operate innovative, autonomous public schools other than charter schools. This application cites only one form of innovative schools, that of Early Colleges (partnerships between the local systems and a USG institution), which allow students to receive both secondary and post-secondary credit for the same courses.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	4	4	
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
Georgia demonstrates other significant reform conditions, including efforts to pass legislation that would strengthen school system governance models, and heighten requirements concerning board membership, capacity, and accountability. Other reform efforts includes the Investing in Educational Excellence legislation passed in 2008 to grant increased flexibility to LEAS in return for increased accountability, and redesigning of preparation programs for school leaders and teachers.				
Total	55	53	53	

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)				
Georgia outlines a comprehensive plan with a major emphasis on STEM. Three major goals are outlined which cross the four major reform areas, that include a rigorous course of study in STEM, cooperation with STEM-capable partners, and preparing more students for advanced careers in STEM. Of note, they wish to enact a major policy change requiring that all elementary and middle schools make Science their second AYP indicator. They also describe a Math+Science=Success initiative, which is an awareness and communications campaign especially targeting under represented groups, to increase awareness of and interest in STEM studies.				
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)				

Georgia has offered a bold, comprehensive approach to education reform, that address all four major areas outlined in the Notice. They recognize the importance of "complete vertical alignments", spanning from the State, to LEAs, school leaders and teachers, in order to effect successful school improvement, and the proposal demonstrates broad stakeholder support, including drawing upon a survey they conducted involving 20,000 educators as part of the RTTT proposal process. They have laid out clear, comprehensive plans addressing supporting schools and LEAS in their transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments, increasing use of local instructional improvement systems, developing and supporting highly effective teachers and leaders, and turning around lowest-achieving schools.

Total		0	0	
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Grand Total	500	431	414	
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Summer academies for school leaders are not explained in any depth. The curriculum for k-12 students is standards based, but teacher and leader professional development are not.				
Total	138	106	106	

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	10	10	10	
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) The state clearly has the legal authority to intervene in its persistently lowest achieving schools and school districts and feels obliged to identify and work with its low achieving schools. These schools are identified in a tiered system and receive support according to their particular needs.				
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	35	35	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	30	30	
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) Georgia has done a nice job of identifying and working with its persistently lowest achieving schools (LAS) Currently Georgia has identified 62 persistently low achieving schools. 24 are high schools, 36 are middle schools, and 2 are elementary schools. The state has taken a systems approach in that it has also identified feeder schools in the system that have also contributed to low performance, thus in effect raising the number of LAS to 126. The state has a positive historic performance of improving low achieving schools. The number of schools in the needs improvement category dropped between 2003 and 2008-09 from 533 schools to 33 schools. Yet, there are still challenges with 12% of schools in needs improvement status and still over 30 persistently low achieving schools. Partnerships with outside organization like Teach for America and charter management organizations are being explored and cultivated. Furthermore, there is a new state office, the Office of School Turnaround. The state has employed a number of strategies in working with these schools including; different intervention models; extended day; math and graduation coaches, and life and learning Academies focused on improving middle school students chance for success in high school and beyond.				
Total	50	45	45	

F. General

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	7	7	
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) Education took a 9% or 2 billion dollar cut, yet the percentage of education expenditures for 2009 rose from 58.2% to 60.4%. The state has a grant equalization program used to subsidize less wealthy districts. It also leverages funds through its regional Educational Service Agencies. It is difficult to determine what these and other cited policies accomplish in terms of district per pupil expenditures.				

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	35	35	
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>The National Charter School Alliance views Georgia's charter school law as fourth best in the country. There are 121 charter schools in the Georgia, which represent 6% of the schools in the state. Significantly, there are no caps. There is a rigorous review process for for granting and denying charters, which includes student achievement and a variety of other Important criteria. Charters in Georgia receive equitable funding and significant help with the attainment of facilities. Georgia allows LEAs to operate 12 early colleges and are considered innovative and autonomous in that they operate in partnership with LEAs, business, and and colleges. Given these supportive conditions, one would expect to find an even greater number of charter schools.</p>				
(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	3	3	
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>Georgia is to be commended for new performance based "governance team" standards for school for its school boards. Also of note is the Investing in Excellence opportunity for LEAs that allows them the freedom to negotiate performance based contracts. The discussion surrounding teacher and leadership program redesign was not well developed.</p>				
Total	55	45	45	

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>This appears to be a real strength for Georgia. The state has rigorous math and science standards, increasing graduation requirements, differentiated pay for math and science teachers, repayable loans and a host of other incentives to encourage and support teachers. STEM discussion and values are integrated throughout the application.</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>Georgia's application comprehensively and coherently address the four education reform areas. LEA involvement could be wider but there is strong commitment from the districts involved and they represent a significant number of poor, minority and low achieving children within the state.</p>				
Total		0	0	
Grand Total	500	406	406	

States' schools at the level most appropriate for the situation and to provide sufficient state supports to help ensure the effective turnaround of these schools.				
Total	50	50	50	

F. General

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	10	10	
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) (F)(1)(i) The percentage of total revenues allocated to education has increased each year. In 2008 it represented 58.2% of the budget, in 2009 it was 60.4%, and for 2010 it will be 62.5%(F)(1)(11) A combined approach to ensure equitable funding is detailed to identify multiple sources and approaches to provide avenues for success to turnaround schools and districts in need.				
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	40	40	
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) (F) (2) (i)Georgia's charter school laws do not prohibit or inhibit the development of high-performing charter schools. In fact, Georgia is ranked #4 in the nation in terms of charter laws and commitment to charter education, according to the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. Georgia has no cap on the number of charter schools that can be authorized or the number of students that charter schools can enroll. (F)(2)(ii) Applicable statutes are in place regarding procedures for approval, monitoring, holding accountable, reauthorizing, and closing charter schools. (F)(2)(iii) All locally approved charter schools are treated no less favorably than traditional district schools with regard to funding. (F)(2)(iv) The Georgia General Assembly created a charter school facilities grant program in 2004 and has funded it every year since 2005. This program has provided the State with additional supports for obtaining/maintaining charter school facilities. (F)(2)(v) Other innovative public schools, such as Early Colleges, may operate in Georgia.				
(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	5	5	
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) (F)(3) In 2008 an initiative was begun in Georgia to study local board governance and recommend best practices. The results of that study were used to craft legislation on that topic. Its increased focus on school and district accountability has resulted in a sound and often-emulated accountability system for Georgia's schools. Other thoughtfully planned initiatives include the redesign of educator preparation programs for teachers and school leaders.				
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) The theme of STEM permeates this application. It is clear that all components of Georgia's education system from PK-16 will be positively impacted by these far-reaching initiatives, which use differing and complimentary approaches for success, including elements such as differentiated pay for new STEM				

teachers and for elementary teachers with mathematics and science endorsements, performance bonuses based on STEM, elevating in priority the Science AYP indicator, an expansion of the partnership between Georgia Tech, the State, and the Center for Education Integrating Science, Mathematics and Computing. These and other STEM-centered initiatives and priorities are detailed in this section.

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)

This is a far-reaching and extremely well-constructed application designed to positively impact all facets of education in Georgia. Pertinent themes were woven throughout the application and supported by significant data. Additionally, all players are on board with these initiatives. STEM and funding equity are major themes that are highlighted throughout the application.

Total		0	0	
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Grand Total	500	487	481	
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measures further indicate what it looks like in schools when this support is in place, which is helpful in seeing that the plan is both ambitious and realistic. In the sections labeled "great teachers and leaders" and "low-achieving schools," there is missing detail on the programmatic initiatives -- such as focusing on the development and support of leaders and 1:1/group/peer coaching - and to aligning systems and removing barriers to effective implementation of practices designed to improve student learning outcomes.

Total	138	105	105	
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E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	10	10	10	
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) Legislation is in place to ensure intervention is possible at both the LEA and school level. The Differentiated Accountability Pilot (DA) plan, launched in school year 2008-2009, offers further distinction of school needs and interventions and has allowed them to vary "the intensity and type of interventions used and focus resources on schools with the greatest needs."				
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	37	39	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	32	34	
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) This section outlines definitively an ambitious and achievable plan. It discusses the need to work with understanding of root causes of these persistently low-achieving schools, to address at both school and LEA level and with a clear methodology and focus on early grades. There is a comprehensive set of supports and a "web of support" for high need students.				
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2) The panel spoke to how their team will focus on the 33 remaining schools on their lowest-achieving list as well as schools that have joined that list.				
Total	50	47	49	

F. General

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	8	8	
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) The application meets the criteria (F)(1)(i) and (ii). Revenues committed to education increased from 58.2% to 60.4% from 2008 to 2009 when state funding "plunged 9%" during the same period. There are robust state-level and LEA-level interventions reflected in state law and the use of state funds to ensure equitable funding. Missing, however, is the impact data to show that the equalization formula works to ensure equitable funding.				

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	31	34	
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>Section (F)(2)(i) indicates that the conditions are present to support innovation in charter and other new schools. These include: no caps on charters and legislation passed in 2008 that created a state-level Commission "that can authorize charter schools directly." In section (F)(2)(ii) Table F3 shows there were 8 less (29 to 21) charter applications in 2009 than 2008. The application mentions that some schools pulled out of the process earlier, but does not say why or what meaning the state makes of that change. There is missing narrative to show how the state interprets and will address in future, possible conditions and/or accountability standards that may have had such an impact. Section (F)(2)(iii) shows that per-pupil charter school expenditures are slightly lower than traditional schools, but still greater than 90% of the per-pupil funding for traditional public school students. For section (F)(2)(iv), the statute does not provide funding ("if feasible" is the language used), but there are solid provisions for supporting facility acquisition, including a special grant program and local school board activity to "require local districts to make unused facilities available to charter schools at no lease cost." Annual funding awards from the state augment this. Innovative autonomous schools are more subject to the vagaries of local relationships. More detail about the impact that these relationships and a lack of state-level intervention have on these schools' success or failure would strengthen this section.</p>				
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)				
<p>The panel offered a sound, if not fully comprehensive, explanation for the reduction in charter applications and why some may have pulled out of the process. That explanation elevates the score for (F)(2)(ii).</p>				
(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	4	4	
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>The proposal effectively meets the criterion for (F)(3) and presents a strong case that it has put in place and has a plan to continue to develop additional conditions for reform. These include a pending state resolution (SB 84) to "address key gaps in Georgia law relating to school board governance," and legislation passed in 2008 to provide greater flexibility to LEAs that demonstrate they can meet accountability standards.</p>				
Total	55	43	46	

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 proposal meets this priority in numerous areas of the proposal, captured well in this section as a summary. These areas include teacher preparation, a legislative agenda, student coursework and tracking, and partnerships outside of the school system.</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)

Georgia's proposal thoroughly addresses each of the four areas and makes connections across them to support a coherent, state-led and locally focused strategy for education reform in the state. While the application meets this priority, there is one very serious area to be addressed to ensure effective statewide adoption and implementation of reforms. Only 23 of the state's LEAs have signed on as participating (12.7% of the state). As indicated, this number raises serious questions as to the state's capacity to successfully implement and achieve the goals in the plans statewide. If progress is made in this subset of LEAs and considerable attention is given to subsequently expanding high-quality reform to a broader group of LEAs, especially those with high need populations and low-achieving schools, then this priority would cut across the entire application more completely. To show what interventions led to the LEA participation results they achieved, Georgia should also provide more information about how their outreach process to LEAs was structured and carried out, why such a small percentage joined the proposal, what their concerns are about this experience and how they plan to ensure that they can achieve their goals.

Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)

The state offered a compelling explanation as to how their level of LEA participation will lead to successful implementation and achievement of their goals statewide. Statewide success still requires considerable attention to expanding high-quality reform and learning over time.

Total		0	0	
Grand Total	500	408	430	