

100 low performing high schools in a targeted drop out prevention effort--If successful, this proposed state turn around program can have a significant statewide impact in key areas of identified "need."

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	

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

State revenue dedicated to education is higher in 2009 than 2008. State resources are distributed so as to address issues of poverty and special need with a formula developed for those purposes.

(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)**

A new state law has increased the "cap" for charter schools from 60 to 120--39 are currently operating in the state. Although there is a legal cap, there seems to be sufficient room for adding new charter schools in the years to come. Present state policy and state entitleis exist with authority for creation and evaluation of charters and funding streams are equal to other public schools. A state charter school fund allows for start-up costs including materials and capital expenditures. The state allows for "contract schools", as an alternative to non-profits to manage schools with significant policy flexibility.

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

Overall, the state has been moving in a positive reform direction and has been accumulating a comprehensive profile of reform activities. It has established wide support for its reform efforts, established important key partnerships that it can build on, and has been working with other states in its development of high standards and reliable and valid student assessments.

Total	55	53	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 state makes a particular effort to include STEM education reform in all aspects of its proposal by describing the development of new standards, assessments and professional development and teacher production plans. This builds on a set of existing state efforts and together these intersections can move the state forward in the STEM reform arena producing much higher standards, new curricula, an enhanced teaching workforce, and a greater pipeline of students in the STEM area.

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)**

The state puts forward a comprehensive plan that builds on a solid history of education reform. The plan addresses all areas of the Rtt requirements, providing ample plans, evidence timetables and resource information in each area. The goals are ambitious but attainable although the state will face challenges related to its overall, comprehensive data system and how it will be used to achieve its articulated goals.

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

The presentation provided ample opportunity for discussion of substantive state capacity issues that may relate to the implementation and final outcomes for this Rtt effort. This state must address several key elements in the plan in a timely manner including adoption of new standards, development of new assessments, development of a statewide educator professional assessment and development tool, and a data/information system that would allow the reform plan to be enacted. Unfortunately, the presentation and answers provided during the on-site session with the state team did not provide any additional clarifications that enhanced the information provided in the proposal.

Total		0	0	
Grand Total	500	387	387	

<b>(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>37</b>
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	32	32

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

The applicant sets forth a high-quality plan to identify and publicly report the State's persistently lowest-achieving schools. The State has established a list of "Illinois Priority Schools," which are those that are among the lowest-achieving 5 percent of schools statewide, regardless of Title I status, as well as any high school with a graduation rate under 60%. Under their MOUs, participating LEAs must undertake one of the four school intervention models in all Illinois Priority Schools within the LEA (an exception was made in Chicago, where it was deemed beyond the LEA's capacity to work with all of its Priority Schools on the same timeline as the rest of the State). The intervention must commence during the first three years of the RTTT grant period and with no less than a proportionate cohort of schools initiating interventions in each year. Participating LEAs that can demonstrate that a prior intervention substantially aligned with one of the four school intervention models is demonstrating significant achievement gains may receive funding to continue with that intervention. The performance metric targets are achievable. While they could be more ambitious in terms of the timeline for initiating one of the four school intervention models, they reflect the practical reality of needing to build up the existing capacity levels of the participating LEAs. The State's prior LEA interventions since 2004-2005 are detailed in full, with approach used and results and lessons learned.

<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>47</b>
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**F. General**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(F)(1) Making education funding a priority</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	

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

The State increased the level of its support for elementary, secondary, and public higher education from \$9.2 billion to \$9.5 billion, an increase of 1.7% of State revenues from FY2008 to FY2009. The State Aid formula has a mechanism to provide additional funding for the impact of poverty in the district. A separate supplemental grant is also calculated based on the district's poverty count. The School Code and State administrative rules require LEAs to undertake planning and budgeting processes to address equitable funding between high-poverty schools and other schools. The narrative demonstrates a strong commitment to education funding in the State.

<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>32</b>
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**(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

Chicago is the only area of the State with a cap limiting the establishment of charter schools. With the passage of a recent law, Chicago now has a "high" cap of 70 schools, and under the cap, if filled, more than 10% of the 665 total public schools in the LEA would be charter schools. Thirty-nine charter schools currently operate in the State. The applicant provides a complete description of the State's approach to charter school accountability and authorization, with appropriate evidence. Charter school funding may not be less than 75% or more than 125% of the school district's per capita student tuition multiplied by the number of students residing in the district who are enrolled in the charter school. The statutory range for charter school funding (between 75% and 125% of an LEA's per capita student tuition) is very wide, and "medium points" were awarded for this element by this reader. In addition, the proportionate share of funds generated under Federal or State categorical aid programs are directed to charter schools serving students

eligible for that aid. The State makes funding available to charter schools for start-up costs through the Charter School Revolving Loan Fund and provides charter schools with assistance with facilities acquisition. The applicant made no mention of any facility-related requirements on charter schools that are stricter than those applied to traditional public schools. State law also authorizes contract schools, which are managed and operated by a for-profit or not-for-profit private entity retained by the LEA board.

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

The applicant highlights the State's Illinois Early Learning Council and the subsequent expansion of its Preschool for All program. This program and the Council help to ensure that children in the State are able to enter K-12 education ready to learn and more likely to make progress towards college readiness.

<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>43</b>	
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**Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM**

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

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

The applicant provides a comprehensive focus on the STEM disciplines throughout the application. The policies promoted by the State are aimed to integrate and vertically align with STEM standards at the elementary, middle, and secondary school levels. The application would establish a rigorous course of study in STEM for students within participating LEAs, establish "STEM Learning Exchanges" through public-private partnerships that will help to increase the number of effective teachers teaching in the STEM disciplines and by offering programs offering teachers real-world experience and increased math and science expertise.

<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	
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**Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform**

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

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

This is an exceptional application—clear, well-organized, comprehensive, and detailed in how the applicant will use RTTT funds to implement significant reforms across all four education reform areas of the ARRA, as well as the State Success Factors Criteria.

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

The State's application is a comprehensive effort to reform its K-12 education system on a timeline of several years. It commits to reforms across all four major areas of the ARRA. The State is ready to embark on these reforms, and at least some of them appear reliant on being awarded a RTTT grant. As an example, the State currently does not have a comprehensive data and information system or the ability to handle value-added issues. It is committed to such reforms, and ready to do so, but RTTT will enable them to start moving towards these goals, not help them cross the finish line on reforms that are well underway in these areas.

As noted throughout the Tier I review comments above, and confirmed by the State team presentation, several overarching issues may hamper the State's ability to effectively implement and achieve full anticipated results from the reforms in the application. These are caveats that stand out in terms of this reviewer's confidence in whether the State is sufficiently ready and capable to take full advantage of a RTTT grant.

First, as the State recognized upfront in its application and in its State presentation, the SEA and LEAs have limited capacity to implement these reforms at present, which is why the State's application focuses a great deal of attention on the use of external partnerships. This is an approach that is likely to help the SEA achieve greater success with implementation, but the State clearly continues to struggle with internal (and external) capacity. This lessens the confidence of this reviewer in whether there is a clear enough leadership structure to "own" the State's RTTT reforms and direct implementation from the SEA down to the classroom level. The State has committed to very aggressive goals, timeliness, and performance measures, and its plans are, for the most part, of high quality. The nagging question is whether the State is being too aggressive about its goals and too optimistic about the results it will achieve, given its own limited capacity and the limited capacity of its LEAs.

A second overarching issue is whether the lack of support from local teacher unions will hamper the ability of the State to implement reforms at the classroom level. The statewide teachers' unions are on board with RTTT, but responses in the State team presentation heightened this reviewer's concerns that teacher union commitment to RTTT may be shallow and perhaps largely confined to the statewide organizations, who have had seats at the table and been supportive partners with the State's leadership.

A third issue of concern is that the State is unwilling or unready to commit to teacher and evaluation systems being used for employment decisions. An advisory committee will consider these issues in the future, but the State has made no commitment to moving forward with these kinds of reforms.

In sum, the State has set forth a high-quality application and is committed to embarking on an aggressive reform agenda but needs the funds to do so. Several caveats remain as to whether the State is sufficiently ready to adopt the fullest range of education reforms aligned with RTTT policy priorities and has the capacity to implement these reforms at the highest level.

Total		0	0	
Grand Total	500	408	408	

(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	35	35
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**(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

E2(i)The applicant's reform agenda identified the persistently lowest achieving schools as the Illinois Priority Schools. E2(ii)The reform agenda outlines a robust plan to transform its persistently lowest-achieving schools utilizing all four school intervention models. Comprehensive criteria, targeted initiatives, supports and accountability systems have been established. The timeline for planning and implementation is ambitious given the complexity of the decisions and necessary steps. It is unclear from the application whether the Center for School Improvement will have oversight responsibilities for all Illinois Priority Schools.

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	

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

The percentage of revenues available to the State and used for education increased.

(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)**

The State has a charter school law that does not prohibit increasing the number of high performing charter schools. The State has laws regarding the authorization of charter schools and has provisions for closing the ineffective ones. The State provides for equitable funding compared to traditional schools is unclear based on the percentage range referenced in the plan. The State provides for facilities agreements

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

The State has had a focus on Early Childhood for many years. The 2003 Early Learning Council was established to ensure effective statewide initiatives to support Pre-K programs. Rigorous certification requirements are in place for Pre-K teachers. The State will be aligning the Common Core Standards with early childhood standards and expectations. Focused attention on the transition grades are resulting in the development and implementation of comprehensive practices and initiatives to ensure student success.

Total	55	53	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 State's reform agenda will create STEM Learning Exchanges throughout the State.

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

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

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

The applicant has met the criteria of the Absolute Priority as evidenced by its highly ambitious, rigorous but achievable reform agenda. The applicant addressed all four reform areas in a comprehensive plan which builds from a foundation of previous dramatic reform efforts, evidenced based research, best practices, a comprehensive statewide engagement of stakeholders, broad base support, and policies enacted to ensure a high quality education system for all of its students to graduate prepared for college and the workforce.

<b>Total</b>		0	0	
<b>Grand Total</b>	500	448	445	

D 5 The proposal is very weak on how it plans to improve professional development. It seems to focus on mentoring and whether or not practitioners participated in any, not what kinds should be offered or how it would be made available, whether there will be opportunities for collaboration, etc. It stated only that Participating LEA's would be required to establish and use indicators for measuring professional development effectiveness.

Total	138	113	113	
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**E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools**

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

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

E i Illinois does have the legal authority to intervene with low-performing schools.

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

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

E 2 i Illinois identifies persistently low-performing schools based on certain criteria such as their being in the lowest 5% of student achievement statewide or having a graduation rate of less than 60%. Identified schools are Illinois Priority Schools. E 2 ii Illinois has developed an elaborate support system for turning around lowest achieving schools, forcefully addressing why the schools are underperforming and tackling all aspects (e.g., the drop out rate and the elementary and middle schools that feed into Priority Schools) and clearly ascertaining just what it will take to successfully reorganize particular schools, presumably individualizing approaches accordingly.

Total	50	50	50	
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**F. General**

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

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

F 1 Illinois increased its funding for education by 1.7%.

<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	40	34	34	
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**(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

F 2 i Illinois did not raise its cap on charter schools until last year. Considering that the state has 3910 public schools, roughly 3400 outside of Chicago (that now has a high cap), doubling the cap to 120 means that it allows less than five percent of its schools to be chartered. F2ii Illinois requirements for charter schools to be authorized are quite thorough. To be approved, applicants must include in their proposals goals, curriculum, pupil performance standards, assessments, proof that the school will be economically sound

and the governance/operating structure. Applicants must also agree to set rigorous achievement standards and plans to achieve them and agree to enroll a substantial number of at-risk students. The State has closed some schools. F2iii Charter Schools receive equitable funding and also funds for start-up costs. F2iv Illinois also provides funds for school construction and related expenses. F2v Illinois does authorize innovative schools in the form of contract schools.

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

F 3 Illinois has been a leader in recognizing the importance of early childhood development and education for later academic success. In 2003, it created the Early Learning Council and then expanded its Preschool for All program. Also, Illinois serves a higher percentage of 3-year olds than any other state and has extensive services for infants and toddlers. In addition, Illinois requires its preschool teachers to have Bachelor of Arts degrees, specialized training and certification. Illinois will begin designing a linked Multi-agency early learning data system and these efforts will, by law, be connected to the longitudinal data system. Illinois' preschool programs have learning standards and those will be realigned with the new Common Core Standards being adopted.

<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>49</b>	
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**Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM**

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

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

Illinois has met this priority.

<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	
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**Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform**

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

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

Illinois has fully addressed all four areas.

<b>Total</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
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<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>444</b>	<b>444</b>	
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expand or reward program producing measurable results. Also, the plan does not discuss what it will do if programs are not effective.

<b>(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals</b>	20	20	20	
<b>(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
The State has a clear plan for providing effective, data-informed professional development, coaching, induction, and common planning and collaboration time to teachers and principals that are, where appropriate, ongoing and job-embedded. The State's strategy to build upon the success of current partners is smart and ensures the statewide strategic plan for induction and mentorship is based on effective practices. The State's plan to leverage the Measurement Plan it is developing as well as add additional indicators is a viable strategy for improving the effectiveness of supports towards improving student achievement.				
<b>Total</b>	138	120	120	

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

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

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

It's not clear from the State's plan if the State Superintendent can "directly intervene," since the State Board must first provide authorization. The State does describe what legal intervening steps the State can take for persistently low-achieving schools. Based on this understanding, full points are awarded.

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

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

The State's proposal includes a system for identifying low performing schools. The State has a history of turning around low-performing schools and has almost exclusively used the Transformation Model intervention. The state has articulated a coherent and ambitious plan, in particular around its focus on high school reform, for increasing student achievement and high school graduation, and reducing dropouts.

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

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

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

The State's funding levels for education have remained consistent. The state has sufficiently demonstrated mechanisms are in place to promote funding equity.

<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	40	29	34	
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**(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

The State has a high charter cap. The State only "expects" student achievement to be a significant factor. The State does give preference to schools serving similar population. The State does have laws regarding charter schools; however, the proposal (or the law) lacks a description of how student achievement is used as a significant factor. The majority of charter applications were denied for an "other" reason, yet the application does not provide details into the "other" reason. The State has a little north of 10% of their charters, which seems consistent with the State's low charter approval rate. Given the State's charter school funding range, it is difficult to clearly determine funding equity between charters and traditional public schools. Based on this understanding, low points are awarded. The State provides charters with funding that "may be used for facilities." The State's plan does not describe how it assists with facilities acquisition or provide the ability for charters to share in bonds and mill levies. In terms of facility-related regulations that may be stricter, LEAs have the option to charge charter schools a fee if the building used is not a conversion building. The statute described in the proposal seems to be limited to CPS schools. The State does not clarify whether other LEAs in the State can operate innovative, autonomous public schools other than charter schools.

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

Based on the discussion surrounding today's presentation, the State does require student achievement to be a significant factor in the authorization and renewal of a school's charter.

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

The State's plan has demonstrated other reform conditions in Illinois, in particular in the area of early childhood education.

<b>Total</b>	55	41	46	
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**Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM**

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

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

The State successfully integrates STEM strategies throughout its proposal. The State's application addresses the need to (i) offer a rigorous course of study in mathematics, the sciences, technology, and engineering by 1) requiring participating LEAs serving grades 9 through 12 to establish at least two Programs of Study promoting critical STEM application areas; (ii) cooperate with STEM-capable community partners to prepare and assist teachers in integrating STEM content by 1) establishing "STEM Learning Exchanges" through public-private partnerships modeled on the State's successful agricultural education; and (iii) prepare more students for advanced study and careers in the sciences, technology, engineering, and mathematics by 1) ensuring instruction integrates and vertically aligns to STEM standards and 2) expanding the Illinois Math and Science Partnership Program.

<b>Total</b>	15	15	15	
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**Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform</b>		Yes	Yes	
<b>Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
The State's application demonstrates strong LEA participation and commitment to successfully implement and achieve its goals. The plan sufficiently describe how the State, in collaboration with its participating LEAs, will use Race to the Top and other funds to increase student achievement, decrease the achievement gaps across student subgroups, and increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers.				
<b>Total</b>		0	0	
<b>Grand Total</b>	500	430	435	