

<b>(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	
<b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>(E1). Section 2-3.25 of the School Code gives the state board authority to intervene in under performing schools and districts remaining on academic watch status for three years following placement on academic watch status. The state may remove the local board members; appoint an Independent Authority to operate the school or school district; or change the recognition status of a school or district to "nonrecognized."</p>				
<b>(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	35	35	
<b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>(E2i). The state's plan for turning around the most lowest-achieving schools establishes a list of "Illinois Priority Schools" which include the state's "persistently-lowest achieving schools," as defined by RTTT. In addition, the state has extended the designation of Priority Schools to significantly low-performing schools within the Super LEAs; these schools are within the bottom 5% of student achievement statewide. According to the state's plan, the following information is included on the state agency's website: the list of Illinois Priority Schools; the definition of Priority Schools and schools identified in each category. Persistently lowest performing schools are also identified based on RTTT criteria.</p> <p>(E2ii). The state's plan provides a detailed process for supporting LEAs in turning around Illinois Priority Schools by implementing one of the four school intervention models identified by the US Dept. of Education. The interventions must commence during the first 3 years of the RTTT grant period. The state's response has four components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Illinois Partnership Zones which provide the structure to coordinate the services of "Lead" and "Supporting" partners to build LEA capacity;</li> <li>*A Direct State Intervention System which is designed for LEAs that do not demonstrate the willingness or capacity to undertake the dramatic actions necessary to improve student outcomes;</li> <li>*School District Reorganizations for Underperforming Districts for those LEAs that need a successful "restart" or "closure" intervention; and</li> <li>*Drop-out Prevention and Re-enrollment Supports which establishes targeted initiatives for students that are significantly below grade level and strategies for students who have dropped out of high school.</li> </ul> <p>The timeline is ambitious yet achievable given that the state is building on some structures that are already in place such as "Illinois Partnership Zones" that was initiated in October 2009. The state has already pre-qualified a strong cadre of Lead and Supporting Partners to support this initiative.</p>				
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	

**F. General**

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

(i) Allocating a consistent percentage of State revenue to education	5	5	5	
(ii) Equitably funding high-poverty schools	5	5	5	
<b>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
(F1i) The percentage of the total revenues available to the State for education has increased from FY2008 to FY 2009.				
(F1ii) The state's primary elementary and secondary education funding formula and a separate supplemental grant based on poverty count address the need to provide equitable funding between high-need LEAs and other LEAs. In addition, the State Aid Formula has a mechanism to provide additional funding for the impact of poverty in the district. The state's plan indicates a strong commitment to equitable funding among LEAs.				
<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>28</b>	
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	6	6	
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	5	5	
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	7	7	
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	8	8	
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	2	2	
<b>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
(F2i) Public Act 96-0105 increases the number of charter schools permitted in the State from 60 to 120. Separate caps are established for Chicago and the remainder of the State. The cap has limited the growth of charters in Chicago. The Charter Schools Law has sufficient flexibility to permit multiple campuses to be authorized under a single charter. But, the application does not provide enough information to determine if the cap is high; therefore, the applicant is scored at the medium range.				
(F2ii). The state's plan provides details on the charter school application process that gives preference to charter schools that serve student populations that are similar to local district school populations. The applicant also describes the process used to approve, monitor and revoke a charter school. Annual evaluations are required by school code. The application includes a chart that shows the actions taken regarding Charter Schools since SY 2004-05. Unfortunately, the narrative provides no analysis or explanation for why three (3) charters have been closed since 2004-05; therefore, no conclusions can be drawn regarding the significance of the three closings as they relate to this criterion.				
(F2iii) The state's plan references the Charter Schools Law that sets forth the equitable funding for these schools as compared to other public schools. There are two charter schools within Chicago that are funded at 75% of the district's per capita student tuition. No explanation is provided for this level of funding, but the applicant indicates that a review will be undertaken.				
(F2iv) The state's plan describes a number of programs that are used to provide charter schools with funding and assistance with facilities acquisition. These programs include Capital Funding Through the State Capitol Bill which provided \$196 million in funding for the acquisition, construction, renovation, and				

equipping of charter schools. An example of a funding effort from Capital Funding is The Charter School Revolving Loan Funds and the Tax-exempt and Below Market Financing Through the Illinois Finance Authority & IFE which helps charter schools secure low-cost, tax-exempt financing for capital improvement projects.

(F2v). Illinois law authorizes the use of contract schools, which serve as an innovative way of providing unique, quality educational experiences. Chicago Public Schools may operate up to 30 contract schools and an additional 5 contract turnaround schools. But, the application does not provide sufficient information to determine if the contract schools meet all components of the definition of autonomous public schools.

<b>(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	
<b>(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
The state's plan highlights three significant reform efforts:				
* The Early Childhood Education Reform which focuses on expanding Preschool for All programs. The applicant does a good job of relating how this initiative supports the reforms outlined in RTTT.				
* Virtual Learning focuses on the Virtual School which began operation in 2000; enhancements are planned for student services as well as development of services for teachers.				
* Dual Credit which focuses on allowing high school students to take courses that result in both college and high school credit. This reform provides a foundation for transition between high school and college, and establishes a history of strong collaboration between the secondary and postsecondary communities.				
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>43</b>	

**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>	
<b>Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
The state's plan provides a well presented and detailed plan to offer a rigorous course of study in the STEM disciplines and to collaborate with STEM-capable community partners. Several of these partners provide letters of support. In addition, the plan establishes "STEM Learning Exchanges" by using innovative public/private partnerships that help to increase the number of effective teachers teaching the STEM disciplines and by offering programs providing teachers real-world experience and increased math and science expertise. Moreover, Participating LEAs serving grades 9 through 12 must establish at least two Programs of Study promoting critical STEM application courses. Illinois Performance Measures at specific sections of the application reflect the state's commitment to addressing the needs fo underrepresented groups, including women and girls, in STEM areas. For example, the state has set targets for Participating LEAs of 55% of students and 65% of underrepresented students participating in STEM-related Programs of Study by the final year of the RTTT grant period (SY 2013-14)				
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	

**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>	
<b>Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
The state has presented a comprehensive application that addresses all four education reform areas specified in the ARRA and State Success Factors Criteria.				
<b>Total</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	

<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>432</b>	<b>441</b>	
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Illinois' state statute has broad statutory authority to intervene in under performing schools and districts. The state board may authorize the state superintendent to direct the regional superintendent to remove the local board members, appoint an independent authority to operate the school or district for the purposes of pupil performance and school improvement, direct the state superintended to reassign pupils, and unaccredit the district.. The response was awarded the maximum points.

<b>(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>35</b>	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	35	30	
<b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>Illinois has presented a clear process by which low performing schools will be identified. Further, all districts are publicly posted on the state website regarding their status of performing or under performing. The response was awarded maximum points.</p> <p>Illinois has presented a plan for improving student achievement in high priority schools through the LEA implementation of one of the four school intervention models. However, the state has also allowed for flexibility – in that LEAs that can demonstrate that a prior intervention that is substantially aligned to one of the four school intervention models in demonstrating significant student achievement gains – may receive funding to continue with that intervention. The four models offered are aligned with the models provided by the RTTT announcement. The response was awarded maximum points.</p>				
<b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)</b>				
<p>The state presentation did not clearly articulate a comprehensive plan with clear, identifiable supports that will turn around persistently low achieving schools. The plan does identify that one of the four school intervention models will be used for low achieving schools and that Lead and Supporting Partners will be used to support high needs schools. The presentation did demonstrate an effective plan to identify low performing schools - however, it is unclear how the plan presented will provide effective support to LEAS to turn around these low achieving schools.</p>				
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>45</b>	

**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>	
(i) Allocating a consistent percentage of State revenue to education	5	5	5	
(ii) Equitably funding high-poverty schools	5	3	3	
<b>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>Illinois' state budget reflects that education spending increased between FY 2008 and FY 2009. Maximum credit was allocated for this response.</p> <p>The state aid formula has a mechanism to provide additional funding for the impact of poverty in a district. However, the application does not demonstrate that the state has a truly adequate plan that provides for absolute equity in funding for high poverty schools. Although additional funding is made available for high</p>				

poverty districts, the full breadth of what the additional funding entails is unclear. The response was scored in the middle range.

<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>30</b>	
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	5	5	
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	8	8	
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	5	5	
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	8	8	
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	6	4	

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

The legislature passed a package of bills that expanded the number of charter schools from 60 to 120. The bulk of the new charters will be in Chicago (70). Chicago is the only area of the state where the cap has limited the establishment of charter schools. Chicago (not the rest of the state) has a high cap as defined in RTTT. Although the plan presented to increase charter schools in Chicago is thorough, the application does not clearly articulate if a majority of the state has a "high cap" to enable high performing charter schools. The response was scored in the middle range.

The State has clear laws and regulations regarding how charter school authorizers approve, monitor, reauthorize and close charter schools, with measurable student performance being central to the review. The response was scored in the high range.

The state school aid appropriations act requires that school funding for charters may not be less than 75% or more than 125% of the school district's per capital student tuition. The state also makes funding available to charter schools for start up costs. It is unclear whether or not this level of funding is a commensurate share of district revenues to provide equity between charters and LEAs. The response was scored in the medium range.

The state provides for a variety of funding and assistance with facilities acquisition for charter schools. Further, the state does not impose any facility-related requirements on charters that are stricter than those applied to traditional public schools. The response received maximum points.

The state law authorizes the use of contract schools as a way of providing unique educational opportunities that are managed and operated by for-profit or non-profit entities. These schools are held accountable for achievement outcomes. The response received maximum points.

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

The state presentation indicated that contract schools are not autonomous, independent schools for the city of Chicago in that they do not have the flexibility and authority to define their own curriculum or staffing. The presentation indicated that charter schools in the state may serve as independent and autonomous 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)**

The applicant describes other significant reform conditions; including initiatives that target early childhood education. The state appears to have extensive services for infants and toddlers. Further, the state has set a dual credit program which allows high school students to take courses that result in both college and high

school credit. Lastly, the state legislature has passed legislation which allows for school districts to offer virtual programs tailored to individual student needs. The response was given full credit.

Total	55	45	43	
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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>	
<b>Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
The state addressed the STEM priority where relevant throughout the application. Its plans for offering rigorous courses of study in STEM are competent. The plans are reasonably calculated to increase the numbers of members and meet the needs of underrepresented groups and women.				
Total	15	15	15	

**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>	
<b>Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
The state has demonstrated a commitment to improving educational outcomes for high needs students by strengthening early learning outcomes. Data from kindergarten readiness measures will be used to support alignment and create joint and integrated professional development across the state. Further, the state plans to use RTTT funding for the development of a statewide learning and performance management system which will allow LEAs, principals, teachers, and students to access critical data and information. Additionally, there is an adequate plan in place for the coordination of P-20 systems throughout the state.				
Total		0	0	

<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>432</b>	<b>426</b>	
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The plan is missing some instructional strategies that would help to clarify the depth of the program and if offered would give additional weight to what is being proposed. There are also no provisions made for developing veteran administrators.

**(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

The panel members offered evidence as to how effective support will be provided to new teachers and principals. The discussion about working with veteran teachers and principals did not spell out new specific ways the veterans who were evaluated as needing to improve were going to be assisted to make needed changes.

Total	138	122	117	
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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	
<b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
The Illinois State Board of Education has broad statutory authority to intervene in underperforming schools and districts.				
<b>(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools</b>	40	37	37	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	32	32	
<b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>The State has a list of "Illinois Priority Schools," which includes the State's "persistently-lowest achieving schools." The list consists of those schools designated as Tier I and Tier II schools. Low-performing schools within the Super LEAs have also been designated as Illinois Priority Schools.</p> <p>Participating LEAs must undertake one of the four school intervention models in all "Tier I" and "Tier II" schools within the LEA (subject to state and federal support for such activities). The interventions must commence during the first three years of the Race to the Top grant period. LEAs demonstrating a prior intervention substantially aligned to one of the four school intervention models that made significant student achievement gains, as determined by ISBE, may receive funding to continue with that intervention.</p> <p>The plan would be strengthened if one of the intervention models had been selected, rather than referring to the models only.</p>				
Total	50	47	47	

**F. General**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
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<b>(F)(1) Making education funding a priority</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	
(i) Allocating a consistent percentage of State revenue to education	5	5	5	
(ii) Equitably funding high-poverty schools	5	5	5	
<b>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>In FY 09, the State of Illinois increased the percentage of state revenues used to support elementary, secondary, and public higher education by 1.7% over FY 2008. Illinois has held education funding as a priority with funding increases shown from FY 2006 through FY 2010.</p> <p>LEA obligations are required, including planning and budgeting processes to address equitable funding between high-poverty schools and other schools.</p>				
<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>36</b>	
(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	7	7	
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	8	6	
<b>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>The State recently increased the total number of charter schools permitted in the State from 60 to 120: 70 in Chicago, 45 in the remainder of the State, and an additional 5 devoted exclusively to re-enrolling high school drop-outs. The Illinois Charter Schools Law was structured to establish separate caps in Chicago and in the remainder of the State. Since the Charter School Law's enactment in 1996, Chicago is the only area of the State where the cap has limited the establishment of charter schools. With the signing into law of Public Act 96-0105 in July 2009, Chicago now has a "high" cap, as defined in the Race to the Top review criteria, as under the cap, if filled, more than 10% of the total schools in Chicago would be charter schools. (There are currently 665 public schools in Chicago.) Also, outside of Chicago, the Charter Schools Law has sufficient flexibility to permit an increase in the number of charter schools as if the cap were higher. In particular, outside of Chicago, the Charter Schools Law permits multiple campuses authorized under a single charter, but this provision is not clear in its impact on making charter schools open to all students. The State also makes funding available to charter schools for start-up costs through the Charter Schools Revolving Loan Fund.</p> <p>The State plan stipulates that Contract schools in Chicago and the Illinois Priority Schools within the Super LEAs are held accountable for student achievement outcomes. The plan goes on to mention that in Chicago, student achievement outcomes determine whether the contract will be reauthorized after its initial term. Similarly, for the Illinois Priority Schools in the Super LEAs, the contract between the LEA and the Lead Partner overseeing the intervention will hold the Lead Partner accountable for student achievement outcomes, and the State's funding of the intervention through both the School Improvement Grant and RTTT is to include accountability for student achievement. This explanation creates a strong likelihood that this provision will be followed.</p>				
<b>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)</b>				
<p>The panel members did not stipulate clearly how innovative, autonomous public schools were going to be encouraged to operate in LEAs.</p>				

<b>(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	
<b>(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
The State's education plan to increase student achievement, narrow achievement gaps, and improve educational outcomes. When the programs planned are implemented more Illinois students will have more options and opportunities for school success.				
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>51</b>	

**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>	
<b>Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
A comprehensive focus on the establishment of a rigorous course of study in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) for all students within Participating LEAs is key to the Illinois plan. The plan includes addressing the needs of underrepresented groups and women. Programs of study in key STEM application areas are a central component of the Illinois RTTT plan. The plan model provides a wide set of flexible options for students to enter STEM-related pathways, especially for students that have not performed well in traditional science and math courses and other underrepresented groups in STEM fields, including women and minorities. The Overall STEM plan is comprehensive and ambitious.				
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	

**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>	
<b>Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
Illinois has a commitment to improving educational outcomes for students. The Illinois' application is a comprehensive proposal that addresses all of the education reform areas and addresses the reforms in an innovative and ambitious fashion.				
<b>Total</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	

Grand Total	500	463	450	
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According to the application narrative, funding resources, State Board of Education authority and influence, and a multi-state partnership for using turnaround models have been strategically leveraged to support more rapid implementation of intervention models in the state's persistently lowest achieving schools.

Strengths


- A strength of the plan is that it is made up of four components so that all designated schools are targeted. Components are:
  1. Creation of an Illinois Partnership Zone providing Lead and Supporting Partners for each of the Illinois Priority Schools.
  2. Direct state intervention for some designated schools.
  3. District reorganization in conjunction with a "restart" model for under-performing districts.
  4. Establishment of large-scale drop-out prevention and re-enrollment programs.
- Another strength is that the state's timeline appears to be ambitious but reasonable because the state has accelerated the development of supports for intervention by already designating Lead and Supporting Partners as evidenced in the Appendix – Illinois Partnership Zone Supplemental Materials - and has already assigned Lead Partners to LEAs by geographic region.
- The state also outlined and approved criteria for the use of the transformation model of intervention as well as human capital strategies for implementing all interventions.
- According to the application narrative and the timeline presented in the performance measures, 20 of the 35 Illinois Priority Schools will implement intervention models by the end of 2011. An additional five schools per year will implement models so that by the end of the 2014 school year, every one of the persistently lowest performing schools in the state have access to intervention and support.
- A particularly strong feature of the state's plan is its use of an all-funds approach that enables the state to create the momentum to move forward at a faster pace. School Improvement Grant funds for eligible schools will be used so that intervention through the Illinois Partnership Zone can start in 2010-2011 in a cohort of Participating LEAs. Board of Education criteria for School Improvement Grants will include requirements for Participating LEAs to use funds to work with Lead Partners. Race to the Top funds will provide funding for schools in the Illinois Priority Zone not eligible for School Improvement Grants.
- Prior state experience with interventions, including heavy reliance on the transformation model and direct intervention in two districts, yielded mixed results in both "hard" data, that is, student achievement and improved graduation rates, and "soft" data, that is, changes in school culture and program development. However, the experiences appear to have provided the state with insights needed to create the supports of the Illinois Partnership Zone, strategies for district reorganization with support, and the targeted use of some Race to the Top funds for statewide implementation of the IHOPE drop-out prevention and re-enrollment programs to increase graduation rates.
- A final strength of the plan is the provision for sustainability of support for the lowest achieving schools after the Race to the Top grant cycle. Evidence is the requirement outlined in the narrative that during the Partnership Zone period, Participating LEAs must align and allocate resources to take on and support the intervention model for persistently low achieving schools into the future.

As a result of these strengths, full points are awarded.

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	
<b>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>(F)(1)(i)</p> <p>According to evidence provided by the applicant, the state's expenditures for FY2009 for elementary, secondary, and public institutions of higher education increased by 1.7 percent over expenditures for FY2008. State Fiscal Stabilization Funds, which the state received from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), were channeled to education. Even without ARRA funds, according to the application narrative, state expenditures for public education increased by 0.6 percent from FY 2008 to FY2009.</p> <p>As a result, full points are awarded.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>(F)(1)(ii)(a &amp; b)</p> <p>The state has policies that lead to equitable funding between high-need LEAs and other LEAs. The state aid formula has a mechanism to provide additional funding for the impact of poverty in a district. A separate supplemental grant is calculated based on the district's poverty count. It is incorporated within the state's school funding entitlement and allows additional funding for districts with low income students.</p> <p>To insure equitable funding between high poverty and other schools within each LEA, the state has both a school code and board of education administrative rules requiring the submission of an annual plan to the state board of education that describes how state supplemental funds will be used to support low-income students within each LEA.. The state superintendent reviews the plan and the expenditure reports annually for compliance.</p> <p>Because of these policies and regulations, full points are awarded.</p>				
<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>32</b>	
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	6	6	
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	6	6	
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	6	6	
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	8	8	
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	8	6	
<b>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>(F)(2)(i)</p>				

State law sets charter school caps. Separate caps are set for Chicago and for the rest of the state. While these caps might appear to limit the number of charter schools that can be opened in the state outside the Chicago Public Schools, the law, according to the application, has not been a barrier to the establishment of charter schools in the state, either in Chicago or in the rest of the state. Chicago currently is near its cap and the rest of the state has not reached the cap.

The state's new Charter School Law (2009) – Public Act 96-0105 – retained caps, but created a “high” cap for Chicago so that additional charter schools can be established in Chicago up to 70 in number, which is slightly more than 10 percent of all schools in Chicago (665 schools).

Outside of Chicago, it is unclear from this application whether the new law allows for additional charter schools equal to or greater than 10 percent of the state's total number of schools. The law does permit multiple campuses to be authorized under a single charter which adds some flexibility to the cap and, according to the application narrative, the actual number of charter schools in the state is expected to increase under the law.

However, the state has not yet reached the standard set by the Race to the Top criterion for removing barriers and inhibitions to charter schools in the state because it has a cap. It should be noted that the state does not appear to restrict the number, percent, and demographics of students who may enroll in charter schools. Also, the state's plan for equitable distribution of options for high needs students includes authorizing more charters for high-poverty and/or high minority communities.

As a result, points in the high range are awarded.

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(F)(2)(ii)

Regulations governing the start up, operations, evaluation, and renewal of charter schools exist in the state, but support mechanisms for charter school developers, if they exist, are not presented in this application.

Charter schools can be authorized by the state or by local LEAs. The state has overall regulations and guidelines outlining how charter schools are approved, monitored, held accountable or closed and student achievement data, according to the application narrative, is a significant factor in decisions about renewal or non-renewal. In the period from SY2004-2005 to SY2008-2009, four out of 43 charter schools have been closed by the board of education. In addition, the state can override an LEA's denial of a charter school and has provided one example in the application narrative.

As a result, points in the high range are awarded.

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(F)(2)(iii)

While the majority of charter schools in the state receive funding equal to that of traditional schools, there are some minor exceptions.

According to the application narrative, the majority of charter schools in the state receive the same funding available to traditional schools including funding from applicable federal and state grant programs. Charter schools within Chicago and those outside Chicago receive a per pupil allocation equal to the base-level funding for traditional schools supplemented by applicable categorical state and federal funding per eligible student, per-pupil supplements for small schools, start up funding and annual expansion funds. As with traditional schools, the charter school is reimbursed for some special education teachers and aides. Additional funds for charter schools in Chicago Public Schools include two-year grants of \$500,000 for planning and operations through foundation funding provided by philanthropic organizations. Of the 12

charter schools outside Chicago, nine receive LEA funding at 100 percent of the LEA's per pupil allocation. Two other charter schools receive 75 percent of the LEA's per pupil allocation. One charter receives 80 percent funding supplemented by district provided transportation and food service. The state runs a Charter Schools Revolving Loan Fund for interest-free loans to charter schools across the state.

As a result, high medium points are awarded.

(F)(2)(iv)

The state has a number of programs to assist charter schools with funding and assistance for facilities. These include:

- Capital funding for the acquisition, construction, renovation, and equipping of charter schools.
- A revolving loan fund for the acquisition and remodeling of a school site
- Tax-exempt and below market financing through the state
- Start-up and expansion funding for new charter schools
- Low-cost leasing of existing public school buildings
- Rent-free use of converted school district buildings
- Qualified zone academy bonds if the charter school is located in a federal empowerment zone

In addition, the state does not impose any facility-related requirements on charter schools that are stricter than those applied to traditional public schools.

As a result of these programs and equitable facility-related requirements for charter schools and traditional schools, full points are awarded.

(F)(2)(v)

In addition to charter schools, Illinois law authorizes the use of contract schools in Chicago which are managed by for-profit or not-for-profit private entities retained by the board of education. A number of these schools currently operate in Chicago. Under the state's Race to the Top plan, schools in the Super LEAs will operate as autonomous public schools in districts other than Chicago.

Because of this authorization and plan, full points are awarded.

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

The state's presentation team clarified that schools designated as contract schools, a number of which currently operate in Chicago, are not autonomous public schools as defined by the Race to the Top criteria. However, under the state's Race to the Top plan, schools in the Super LEAs will operate as innovative, autonomous public schools. As a result, some, but not all points, are awarded.

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

(F)(3)

The state's application narrative presents descriptions of its current initiatives in improving the quality of Early Childhood Education, developing a Virtual Learning School and capacity for other virtual learning schools in LEAs, and establishing Dual Enrollment Programs that are supported by legislation and linked to Race to the Top reform agenda components, including Common Core State Standards, longitudinal data systems, and the delivery of high quality instruction for all students. The state's strategic, all-funds approach to managing support and sustainability, while not explicitly in this section of the application, is another important and significant reform condition proposed by the state.

As a result, full points are awarded.				
Total	55	49	47	

**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	
<b>Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>The overarching goal of the state's STEM initiative is to establish a rigorous course of study in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics for all students within Participating LEAs, particularly underrepresented groups and women. The state's approach to STEM learning integrates science, mathematics, engineering, and technology standards at all grade levels from elementary school through high school. The state has also placed STEM curriculum materials and assessments online for more widespread teacher use. State-sponsored STEM Learning Exchanges, which create partnerships among school districts, businesses, museums, institutions of higher education, and other community liaisons, have provided professional development as well as instructional materials, equipment, and technology infrastructure in nine critical STEM application areas. Another component of the state's STEM Learning Exchanges provides externship programs for teachers of STEM disciplines in local businesses to gain firsthand experience in how science, technology, engineering, and mathematics are used in the workplace. The Illinois Math and Science Partnership also supports secondary teachers in deepening their content knowledge through degree programs, courses, workshops, and institutes. In addition, teacher leaders for mathematics and science have been identified in the state to coach and lead instruction in their schools and districts while increasing their own content knowledge in math and science.</p>				
Total	15	15	15	

**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>				
<p>The state's application is well integrated. A clear process is outlined for building capacity and scaling up the work of education reform. A comprehensive plan for intervening in the state's lowest performing schools provides intensive support coupled with increased accountability for results and outcomes. The state's performance measures and timelines are ambitious but reasonable. A statewide data system and an all-funds approach to budgeting and funding provide conditions that support the reform agenda of the state.</p>				
Total		0	0	

<b>Grand Total</b>	500	404	413	
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2. Direct State Intervention System-designed for LEAs that do not demonstrate a willingness or capacity to change or improve student outcomes in the low poverty schools.
3. School District Reorganization- a provision for under performing school districts coupled with a restart or closure intervention.
4. Dropout Prevention or Re-enrollment Supports

The Turnaround Unit in the ISBE is a central player in this effort as well as the "lead partners" who are a critical element in this process to develop a coherent whole school intervention model in partnership with the LEA.

The approach to the transformation of schools encompasses:

1. school culture and climate changes;
2. developing teacher and school leader effectiveness;
3. extended school learning time; and
4. providing operating flexibility.

Planned turnarounds in 2010-11 includes 20 schools with 20, 30 and 35 in following years. This seems a rather jumbled mix of strategies. The schools in this section (grouped together by number) are not identified as turnaround, restart, school closure or transformation models. This leaves the reader guessing about the intentions for the future. This gives every indication of not being a well-defined plan. This section should identify the schools, provide the turnaround strategy, and place them in the timeline for action.

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

(ii) The State's presentation in Tier II provided information that addressed the plan provided in E2 (ii). This was a more coherent presentation than that provided by the proposal and provided clarity as to how the plan, specifically through the Center for School Improvement and School Turnaround Unit this will be implemented statewide. This presentation included information on improving the lowest performing schools by identifying and reporting on Illinois' priority schools, school district reorganization, direct school interventions, among others. This information has further informed the reviewer on the plan and its impact on the targeted districts. While the plan would be strengthened by identifying the turnaround schools, the strategies that they might use in each individual case and a timeline for implementation, the points have been revised significantly upward as a result of the State presentation.

Total	50	25	40	
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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>10</b>	<b>10</b>	
(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)**

(i) The applicant has provided information supporting the increase in state revenue for education by 1.7% between F/Y 2008 and F/Y 2009.

(ii) The state provides equitable funding between high-need LEAs, and within high-need LEAs between high poverty schools. This is accomplished through three funding formulas:

1. A Foundation Formula--the foundation is set at \$6,119 per student. Districts qualifying for this have available local resources less than 93% of the foundation level;

- 2. Alternate Formula--Districts with local resources per pupil of at least 93% but less than 175% qualify for this; and
- 3. Flat Grant Formula--Districts have local resources of at least 175% of the foundation formula.

This aid is provided based on the averagely daily attendance for the best three month average. The state addresses poverty by providing a State Aid Formula for the impact of poverty in a district. A separate supplemental grant is calculated based on the district's poverty count.

The State Code requires LEAs to budget for equitable funding between high-poverty schools and other district schools.

<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>26</b>	
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	2	2	
(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	0	0	

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

(i) The number of charter schools that will be allowed is capped at 120 under PA 96-0105. Although permitting 120 schools to operate, this represents only 3% of the total number of schools in the state. This is less than 5% and as a result can only qualify for low points.

(ii) School Code, Section 27A governs charter schools. The process for approval of a charter school requires the applicant to submit a proposal in the form of a contract between the local school board and the governing body of the charter school applicant to the Illinois School Board of Education (ISBE). The school board reviews the proposal and issues a recommendation to the ISBE to either grant or deny the application. Proposals are given preference that: have local support, set rigorous standards for pupil achievement and a feasible plan to achieve those levels of achievement and enroll and serve a substantial proportion of children-at-risk.

Schools are approved for not less than five years nor more than ten. Renewal of a charter depends upon the progress the school has made and a satisfactory financial statement. The ISBE and/or school board has the power to close or not renew a charter school based on a lack of progress, violation of the conditions of operation or law. Monitoring these schools has been left up to the ISBE which is required to compile an annual evaluation from local school boards and prepare an annual report for the Governor and General Assembly.

The process appears reasonable in assuring that charters meet their conditions of operation.

(iii) Equitable funding is provided by the state for charter schools. In addition, small school supplements are added to their allotments as well as added funds to support special education teachers and clinicians and special education aides.

(iv) Funding is provided for facilities acquisition, construction, renovation and equipping charter schools. Charters have access to a revolving loan fund for acquisition and renovation of schools and may access tax exempt below market rate financing. Charter school facility requirements are no different than those for traditional public schools.

(v) The state enables the operation of what they call autonomous public schools (contract schools) other than charter schools. A contract school is defined as: a school that is managed and operated by a for-profit or not-for-profit private entity retained by the school board to provide instructional and other services

to a majority of the pupils enrolled in the school. In this section, the applicant states that principals in priority school districts allow "principals to select and assign teachers to the school" and provide "other flexibilities" such a curriculum. If others outside of the school can assign staff and determine curriculum, it is difficult to see these schools as autonomous. The narrative describes the strategy to implement contract schools as "innovative," no description of this schools indicates that the schools themselves are innovative schools. A clear description is missing as to how these are both autonomous and innovative schools.

<b>(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions</b>	5	5	5	
<b>(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
The state provides evidence throughout the proposal of effective measures implemented to improve student achievement. In addition, this section provides information about other reform measures affecting early childhood education, virtual learning and dual credit.				
<b>Total</b>	55	41	41	

**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	
<b>Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
The proposal provides ample evidence of the State's commitment to STEM education. This is particularly true for math and science. The inclusion of women and minorities as a priority in this area makes this an even stronger statement.				
<b>Total</b>	15	15	15	

**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 has provided a comprehensive and coherent plan for most sections of the proposal that is applied to the four education reform areas specified in the ARRA and the State Success Factors Criteria. Parts of this presentation lack information that provides clarity for understanding how the reforms will be implemented. Concern has been expressed within the preceding narrative over the low number of union representatives that have agreed to participate. This raises the question of how effective reforms can be without this participation. While a significant number of districts have signed on to the reform effort, a further concern is for the 1,218 schools or the 348 districts that have not indicated a willingness to participate and how the reforms will touch on these students or the over 300,000 student of poverty who would be left outside of participating districts. Since much of the proposal involves being able to define student growth, it is disappointing to see that the state does not have a plan in force to measure this. Future plans are being developed to provide for this, but this lack of direction at this time weakens the proposal. In spite of this, the reform efforts will have a significant impact on a majority of students, many of whom are also students with high needs. This proposal is recommended for funding based on this and the overall plan.				

Total			0	0	
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Grand Total	500	376	403		
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