

significant role in the professional development delivery, however, the selection criteria for the coaches is unclear. (ii)The plan outlines a thorough and thoughtful plan for measuring effectiveness of the professional development and impact on daily practice.

<b>Total</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>79</b>
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### E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>
<b>(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: The State has the legal authority to intervene directly in the State's persistently lowest achieving schools and LEAs.		
<b>(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>25</b>
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	20
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (i)The State identifies persistently lowest achieving schools annually. (ii)The applicant outlined a plan for the development of a plan to address the appropriate steps that will be taken relative to the persistently lowest achieving schools which includes conducting a needs assessment, community engagement, and selection of the model(turnaround, restart, school closure or transformation. Although the plan outlines the key concepts that must be included, in the absence of a comprehensive plan for support to LEAs for the decision making process and implementation process, impact can not be assessed. Capacity building within the LEAs to engage in the decision making process of determining the appropriate model is critical, however the plan does not address the necessary capacity building work that will need to take place.		
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>35</b>

### F. General

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>
<b>(F)(1) Making education funding a priority</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (i)The percentage of the total revenues available to the State that were used for education increased from 36.9% to 39.6%. (ii)The State's policies lead to equitable funding as evidenced by its equity funding model.		
<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>38</b>
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: 1. The State's charter school law does not prohibit the increase number of charter schools - no cap. 2. The State has laws regarding the authorization of approval, renewal and closure of charter schools. The percentage of charters approved in the past raises questions related to possible barriers from the State. 3. The State's charter schools receive funding equitable to traditional schools. 4. The State provides for facilities agreements. 5. The State allows for innovative autonomous public schools through the Interdistrict Public Schools Choice Program.		

<b>(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>(F)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b> The State has made major investments in early childhood education. The State claims that the result of the investment is the increase in achievement as measured on the State assessments and NAEP. Through legal and regulatory provisions, the State now has equity funding. Student need is now weighted.		
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>53</b>

**Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM**

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Competitive Reviewer Comments:</b> The State's reform agenda will focus on improving achievement and teacher capacity through a thoughtful STEM plan. Partnerships with Institutes of Higher Learning, industry and other partners will be critical in the development and implementation of a STEM plan that will have a major impact on student achievement.		
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>

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

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>
<b>Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform</b>		<b>Yes</b>
<b>Absolute Reviewer Comments:</b> The applicant's plan reflects a thoughtful approach to reform with the determination that the results of the reform agenda will have a broad and systemic impact on the entire State.		
<b>Total</b>		<b>0</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>340</b>

<b>(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>33</b>
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	28
<b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b> The State has identified its persistently lowest-performing schools. The State does not provide a one size fits all model for turning them around; instead, the State seeks to develop a tailored solution for each school that addresses their specific root causes for underperformance. The State proposes a broad set of supports for turning around its schools and giving principals in said schools greater responsibility, such as hiring and termination power as well as budgetary authority. Although, the plan does not clearly explain what happens if the principal is part of the problem. The State's use of turnaround officers and Needs Assessment Review teams in the context of school reform is progressive and further reflects the State's commitment to resourcing poor performing schools with people who have track record of success. Although, it is unclear if LEAs and sites will have the capacity to implement turnaround strategies identified by the NTO. Also, the State's plan to use data, like its root cause analysis and demographics tool, to create turnaround cohorts should maximize resources and impact. The State will have to closely monitor its cohort of poor performers to ensure each stays committed to dramatically producing results and does not revert back to the actions that led to its poor performance. The proposed School Innovation and Renewal Zones is a powerful way to engage the community as co-partners in the transformation of its schools. However, the decision to give the community a say in selecting a turnaround model is unwise. Schools should be given more autonomy for producing results not performing poorly.		
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>43</b>

## F. General

	Available	Tier 1
<b>(F)(1) Making education funding a priority</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b> Funding has remained largely unchanged. The State ensures equitable funding through its School Funding Reform Act of 2008.		
<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b> The State does not have charter caps. The State by law must conduct annual performance reviews of charter schools. The review examines student achievement, but it is unclear if it is a "significant factor." The State also has a history of encouraging high-performing schools to expand and forcing low-performing schools to close. The State's charter schools receive equitable funding, and charters have funding streams that can be used for facilities. The State has given LEAs the authority to open specialized schools. The programs emerging from this authority are at capacity, and it is unclear if this is due to popularity or limited space.		
<b>(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>(F)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b> The State clearly demonstrates other significant reform conditions in the state, such as its equitable funding strategy, secondary education transformation initiatives, and career and technical education program.		

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

	Available	Tier 1
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>
Competitive Reviewer Comments: The State's application includes a high-quality plan to address the need to (i) offer a rigorous course of study in STEM as outlined in its revamped New Jersey Core Standards; (ii) cooperate with STEM-capable community partners to prepare and assist teachers in integrating STEM content across grades and disciplines by providing classroom teachers with high-quality materials to support the teaching of STEM subjects and seeking to create and convene a STEM council responsible for refining the State's strategic vision for STEM work, and (iii) prepare more students for advanced study and careers in STEM fields by continuing to extend student understanding of STEM careers at the middle-school level and seek broader experiences to provide the chance for real-world STEM experiences.		
Total	15	15

### Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1
<b>Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform</b>		<b>Yes</b>
Absolute Reviewer Comments: 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.		
Total		0

<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>377</b>
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includes the following strategies: 1) Instructional Focus; 2) Transformational Operating Authority Program; 3) Network Turnaround Officer (NTO); 4) Extended Teaching and Learning Time; 4) Professional Development; 5) Leadership Academy; and, School Innovation and Renewal Zones. Parts of this plan are basic, e.g. instructional focus and professional development. There was nothing new about these two strategies explained in the narrative that would suggest they would work any better than before, particularly in a persistently lower-achieving school. A Leadership Academy has the potential for changing administrative behaviors. A Network Turnaround Officer can be effective if the role of school improvement/reform coach is understood by all involved parties, and if the superintendent respects and supports the NTO's guidance to principals. Extended Teaching and Learning Time and School Innovation and Renewal Zones hold the most promise for sustained change and improvement. More time on task and time for teachers/staff to meet and plan is valuable IF it is used properly and monitored. Extended instructional time will make a difference if the extra time is embedded in the school day; not before or after school, as student attendance is usually poor for zero hour and after school sessions. According to the Applicant, School Innovation and Renewal Zones will be created in order to allow more focused community attention where there are clusters of consistently low-performing schools. When within the School Innovation Renewal Zone, persistently low-performing schools will receive priority for various federal and state funding sources targeted to schools identified for improvement, and will be given the maximum flexibility in the use of federal, state, and district funds and regulations to implement the turnaround initiative (consistent with the transferability provisions of Title VI of ESEA). This strategy hold great promise if implemented properly. The Applicant should seek counsel from LEAs with successful experience in this area. A timeline and required chart are included in the narrative.

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

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>
<b>(F)(1) Making education funding a priority</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(F)(1)(i) The Applicant State's legislature increased its percentage of spending on education 2.7 percentage points from 36.9% in 2008 to 39.6% in 2009. (F)(1)(ii) The School Funding Reform Act of 2008 (SFRA) represents the first comprehensive school-funding system for the Applicant in decades to receive judicial approval as an equitable funding mechanism. The SFRA is the culmination of, and answer to, funding-equity questions that have surrounded the state since the 1970's. The SFRA includes two types of state aid: wealth-equalized and categorical. The equalization formula used in New Jersey considers both a community's property wealth (measured by equalized property valuation) and its aggregate income to determine the local ability to pay. This formula ensures that those LEAs with a lower ability to raise a local tax levy receive more state support, and vice-versa. In contrast, categorical aid is allocated regardless of a LEA's wealth. Categorical amounts are generally determined by multiplying the cost factor for a particular category by the number of students who qualify for the aid. Special education is funded through a "census-based" method.</p>		
<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>34</b>
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(F)(2)(i) Since 2000 the Applicant has had no caps on the number or size of charter schools in the state. There are a total of 68 charter schools in the state: 46 elementary, 8 middle, 8 high, and 6 K-12. (F)(2)(ii) Since charter legislation was adopted by the Applicant state in 1995, 365 charter-school applications have been received, of which 111 were approved and five denied. The balance (249 applications) were either withdrawn or never completed. From the 111 charters approved, 105 schools were opened. Thirty-seven of these have since been closed by charter revocation, charter surrenders,</p>		

withdrawal, or non-renewal. The Applicant presents a required chart of the past five years' charter school activity. Totals for the last five years are as follows: applications- 144, approvals- 30, denials- 0, opened- 28, closed- 13. Under section 18A:36A-16 of New Jersey state law, the commissioner must conduct an annual review of every charter school to determine whether it is meeting its goals, and conduct a more comprehensive review prior to granting the renewal of the charter. The commissioner may revoke a school's charter if the school either has not fulfilled the conditions required by its charter, or has violated any such condition. The legislature granted the commissioner full authority to develop procedures and guidelines for the revocation and renewal of a school's charter. The annual review also includes an evaluation of progress along several dimensions other than test scores, e.g. curriculum in compliance with Applicant's Core Curriculum Content Standards. According to sections 18A:36A-7 and 18A:36A-8 of New Jersey law, charter schools must be open to all students on a space-available basis. Preference for enrollment is granted to students who reside in the LEA where the charter school is located. In instances where there are more applicants than available spaces, the charter school must select students using a random selection process. To the maximum extent possible, charter schools are required to seek the enrollment of a representative cross-section of the community's school-age population, including racial and academic factors in its determination of what selection of students would be representative. (F)(2)(iii) The Applicant asserts that charter schools receive funding on the same basis that traditional public schools do. Charter-school state aid flows from the school LEA to the charter school. Charter-school aid is calculated pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36A-12b, which stipulates that the school LEA must pay directly to the charter school, for each student enrolled in the charter school, an amount equal to 90% of the sum of the budget-year wealth-equalized state aid per pupil and the pre-budget-year general-fund local tax levy per pupil inflated by the corresponding CPI rate. The remaining 10% is retained by the school LEA to help cover the cost of administering the charter-school program, including the student-registration-and-verification process. With the new funding formula, charter schools benefited financially by receiving a greater share of resources for at-risk students (as did all public schools). Also, the school LEA is required to pay to the charter school 100% of the categorical state aids (those determined on a per-pupil basis) attributable to the student, and a percentage of the LEA's special-education categorical aid equal to the percentage of the LEA's special-education students enrolled in the charter school. The Applicant's state laws and regulations meet the guidelines set forth in the application for "high" points, as "the per-pupil funding to charter school students is =90% of that which is provided to traditional public school students." The 10% charter administration costs to the LEA seem reasonable. (F)(2)(iv) The Applicant states charter schools are granted flexibility in regard to the type of facility in which they are permitted to locate. They are exempt from State public-schools facility regulations, except those pertaining to the health or safety of students. Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36A-10, charter schools are permitted to locate their facilities in part of an existing public-school building, in space provided on a public work-site, in a public building, or in any other suitable location. Charter schools are permitted to use local and state sources of revenue for facility costs, including lease payments and mortgage payments. (F)(2)(v) In 1999, the Applicant state's legislature adopted the Interdistrict Public School Choice Program (IPSCP) to allow LEAs to open enrollment of specified schools to students from outside the LEA. IPSCP was adopted to provide greater school choice to students whose home LEAs may be limited in either the variety or quality of their academic programs. Interdistrict school choice has reached its capacity for participation. This one (identified) attempt – now at capacity – seems meager in light of the many types of innovative programs available to public schools and LEAs since 1999.

**(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions**

5

5

**(F)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

(F)(3) The Applicant cites six reforms in response to this section. Four have been discussed/reviewed earlier in the application: providing alternative pathways for teaching certification, emphasizing STEM, early-childhood education programs, and the new equitable-funding strategy supported by a State Supreme Court decision. The two not previously discussed, a Secondary-Education Transformation initiative and Career and Technical Education Programs producing College-Ready Students, are presented. The Secondary-Education Transformation Initiative focuses on redesigning middle schools and high schools through action steps and supportive policies that align content standards,

assessments and high-school-graduation requirements with college and workplace expectations. Via a statewide high school redesign committee, a suggested framework has been developed. This document provides recommendations that focus on five areas, including standards and high-school-graduation requirements, assessment alignment, teachers and school leaders, learning communities and personalized education, and P-16 alignment. Thus far, a 21st Century Skills (Alignment) Council was created in 2008 and sixteen schools were chosen from 90 applications to pilot individualized learning plans. These plans have been implemented for students in sixth and ninth grade in these schools for a two-year study. Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs: The Applicant has been using career academies to extend the role of CTE programs of study in high school. Districts are being recruited to create new and rigorous career academies. Some goals/activities used (or planned) by the Applicant to strengthen CTE are to redesign the CTE curriculum to ensure that academic skills are being integrated, offering CTE courses that count for academic credit using both the Math-In-CTE model and the creation of courses such as construction geometry, and the creation and use of AP courses in CTE programs of study. The applicant will also develop model articulation agreements for dual enrollment that can be adapted for local use in developing and implementing articulation agreements between secondary and postsecondary providers of CTE. These programs appear to be worthy, and some perhaps even significant, however, most dates and other data are missing. For example, we don't know how long the Applicant has been using career academies to extend the role of CTE programs of study in high school, a strategy used throughout the country for some time now. And while information in regard to the Secondary Education Transformation Initiative is more detailed, there is no discussion as to why it has taken the Applicant so long to decide to redesign its high schools prior to two years ago, when this project began. If there was an earlier high school redesign initiative, mentioning this would provide a wider context for high school reform by the Applicant.

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

	Available	Tier 1
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Competitive Reviewer Comments:</b> The Applicant's STEM plan is not particularly rigorous. Evidence offered in Appendix II is strong for science (New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards for Science and sample science standards) and technology (The Educational Technology Plan for New Jersey, approved by the State BOE 12/07). There was no discussion in the narrative regarding similar standards or plans for mathematics or engineering. The Applicant states it will create and convene a STEM council, responsible for refining the strategic vision for STEM work and planning for additional resources to support teachers and students.		
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>

### Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1
<b>Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform</b>		<b>Yes</b>
<b>Absolute Reviewer Comments:</b> The Applicant has submitted a thorough RTTT grant proposal. Most requested and required areas were substantially covered. Questions remain as to the capacity of the NJDOE to successfully handle the plans presented in this application. In addition, issues surrounding teacher union buy-in need to be addressed as soon as possible. Without teacher support and compliance, this RTTT grant will be difficult to implement.		

Total		0
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Grand Total	500	420
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to-be-formed leadership academy. The school's curriculum may be mandated, extra time (~2 hours/week) will be provided for professional development and review of student work, and extended time for student learning (15%) will be required. Each may provide essential scaffolding for embedding changed practices in the school. Teacher compensation will be adjusted for the longer hours, addressing a common disincentive for high-intensity reform efforts. Particularly promising appears to be the provision of support in regards to school context and community, through the clustering of support in School Innovation Renewal Zones, enhanced community engagement and integration across health, housing and job-creation services. In addition, expanded early childhood support promises enhanced impact. It is not entirely clear how integration at the point of professional practice, or at least at the school level, will be managed across services or exactly how zones will structure interagency collaboration, or by whom. Implementation audits, with the threat of closure/restart/reconstitution, should provide some driver for ongoing adjustments. While lessons learned from prior restructuring experiences are broadly stated, they do appear to reinforce the need for focused intervention coupled with attention to the supporting conditions of reform, including school climate and local staff buy-in.

<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>45</b>
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**F. General**

	Available	Tier 1
<b>(F)(1) Making education funding a priority</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:                      The state's percentage of total revenues used to support education increased from 2008 to 2009, though nominal dollars showed a 4.7% decrease. Only top-level appropriations figures are provided. Legislation passed in 2008 provides an adequacy + categorical funding formula, meant to provide equitable funding through a combination of a base amount and additional funding for more expensive school levels, at-risk status, LEP and special education. No data is provided illustrating LEA funding distribution.</p>		
<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>34</b>
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:                      The state has no caps on the number of charter schools, nor restrictions on their enrollment. Currently, 68 charters exist in the state, 68% at the elementary level. The state has approved 30% of charter applications, though only 21% since 2005. However, existing charters also added 28 other schools/campuses since 2005. Roughly 10% of charters have been closed since 1995. A large number also did not complete applications (68%), which the state attributes to an inability of the charters to secure funding and/or facilities. Whether or not state conditions limit charter formation prior to application completion is not clear. The state provides regulations for charters from application stage through annual review and possible closure; compliance with state curriculum, discrimination policies, admissions, achievement targets, annual reporting, and supplemental service requirements are enforced, with closure authority vested in the state commissioner. The state's charter receive equitable funding (90% of state per student aid, receives transportation, 100% categorical aid per student, 100% federal entitlement funds for which they apply). Charters have more flexibility than traditional public schools in terms of facilities, but their access to facility funding is less clear. They may use their state and/or federal revenue to pay for facilities, and may have access to discretionary federal funds. No evidence is presented of state facilitation of charter facility acquisition. Other innovations are facilitated through the state's Interdistrict Public School Choice Program, which allows cross-LEA enrollment into specified schools. However, the state has "reached capacity for participation" in this program. Further details regarding state charter law are not provided.</p>		

<b>(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: The state demonstrates a series of other significant reform conditions, beyond alternative teaching pathways, early childhood program expansion, and STEM initiatives already noted. The state resolved its longstanding funding disputes with an equitable funding formula approved by the state supreme court. The state has also begun implementing pilots under its Secondary Education Transformation Initiative, and plans to redesign CTE standards.		
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>48</b>

**Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM**

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>
Competitive Reviewer Comments: The state's plan provides a clear emphasis on improving STEM education in the state, developing components to increase teacher supply, improve teacher skills, develop STEM curriculum, and enhance student achievement. Intent to integrate STEM support through the principal components of the overall plan is evident.		
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>

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

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>
<b>Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform</b>		<b>Yes</b>
Absolute Reviewer Comments: The application comprehensively and coherently addresses all of the four education reform areas specified in the ARRA as well as the State Success Factors Criteria. Sub-section comments provide further analysis. The plan provides notable attention to balanced assessment, evidence of state technical expertise (TAC, staff), and extensive experience with constructed-response/performance-based assessment development. The state provides strong supporting conditions through its work in early childhood, and strengthens the sustainability and implementation of its reform through the active role of teachers within evaluation of student interim assessments and exemplar development. The profile of school climate and social capital distinguishes the plan, and addresses a key area research has identified as critical to school reform. In an effort to expand and/or highlight prior feedback, it should be noted that further evidence regarding the following would strengthen the plan: 1) The development/collection/analysis of qualitative/quantitative data on professional and community variables to complement the student assessment data described; further evidence warranted to gauge implementation, sustainability, formation of local capacity, shifts in professional norms, etc., including, e.g., gauges of collective efficacy, instructional practice, community engagement, parental support, working conditions, changes in use of daily time, daily professional routines, understanding of plan vision, school climate (NJ plans this), etc.; 2) The impact of the total plan on school-level decision-making practices and demands, particularly the impact on school-level leadership practice; the plan has components to which it is committed (many seem well-warranted per evidence presented) and on set timelines; how this plan drives support rollout while also stimulating the demand-side pull from practitioners remains unclear; the plan must balance local flexibility in adapting to local context and support for this balancing warrants further clarification; 3) An opportunity exists in the continued development of longitudinal student data systems to link to non-school data, providing the greater "360-degree" view of the child, and the promise of more integrated analysis of drivers to educational		

performance, and thus the promise of more efficient and effective use of funds and interventions across agencies, public and private, supporting this development; 4) Data regarding local community support and civic capacity remains limited, and yet are critical factors in successful reform efforts; 5) Data regarding the drivers of inequitable teacher and principal distribution in the state; 6) Explicit strategies in how the gap between tool development/dissemination and tool use will be bridged, given the frequent experience of this gap in prior reform efforts; 7) With a public commentary period built into the rollout of the new Common Core standards, fallback strategies should be considered, should public comments/engagement demonstrate further work needed to coalesce sufficient support; and 8) Further supporting evidence of sustainability, e.g., how standing state funds would be reallocated to sustain an enhanced continuous improvement cycle, how existing funding sources would support ongoing collaborative support structures and intensive assistance, and how existing funding would support the upkeep of new standards, assessments, enhanced technologies, etc.

Total		0
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Grand Total	500	396
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can partially or fully take over a failing school district. "The New Jersey Quality Single Accountability Continuum (NJQSAC) system, as required by N.J.S.A. 18A:7A-3 et seq., establishes rules for evaluating and monitoring all public-school districts in the State. NJQSAC is designed to be a single, comprehensive accountability system that consolidates and incorporates the monitoring requirements of applicable State and Federal programs."

<b>(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>37</b>
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	32
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(E)(2) (i) For the purposes of identifying the State's lowest-achieving schools, New Jersey has followed the U.S. Department of Education guidance for identifying lowest-achieving schools. That guidance recommends identification based on the academic achievement of the "all students" group and the school's lack of progress on those assessments over three years in the "all students" group. "Based on the three most recent years of assessment results, New Jersey identified 18 Title I schools on the TIER I LIST and five TIER II schools, as well as six schools with unacceptable graduation rates, for a total of 29 schools." (E)(2) (ii) This section received high points because New Jersey has a very specific and well thought-out plan for supporting its LEAs in turning around the lowest-achieving schools by implementing one of the four school intervention models (as described in Appendix C): turnaround model, restart model, school closure, or transformation model (provided that an LEA with more than nine persistently lowest-achieving schools may not use the transformation model for more than 50 percent of its schools). The plan will result in a very different approach to working with lowest-achieving schools and for this reason high points are given to this section. Historically, New Jersey has used "major governance restructuring" almost exclusively when working with the lowest-achieving schools. The proposal did not have a lot of discussion about the successes or failure of this approach. It did have an extensive list of lessons learned. Some of the most important were: Programs aren't stand alone solutions, Effective support teams matter, The benchmark process is a critical step that requires planned consistent follow up, Schools and districts do not necessarily know how to implement an effective practice or recommendation, Restructuring must be a unified process and closely observed by leadership, and School climate matters. Based upon those recommendations and research, New Jersey has develop a high-quality plan that has timelines, activities and mutual responsibilities. The biggest change from past practice is that NJ will do more thorough needs research as to the problems and solutions facing each school and then an intervention team will narrow the choices available to the lowest-achieving schools to the four options outlined by the U.S. Department of Education in both Race to the Top and School Improvement Grants under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The TEAM recommendation will also carefully consider the LEAs' capacity to implement the selected option. Unless the Commissioner of Education determines differently, the schools under study would have to accept the recommendation for one of the four options.</p>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>47</b>

**F. General**

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>
<b>(F)(1) Making education funding a priority</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(F)(1) (i) Maximum points were given to this subsection because even with a troubled economy, the State of New Jersey increased the percentage of funding to public schools. New Jersey increased its percentage of spending on education from 36.9% in 2008 to 39.6% in 2009. Actual dollar figures were down. Nominal education appropriations decreased by 4.7%, from \$12.0B to \$11.5B, a decline that</p>		

was smaller than the 11.3% decline in total State appropriations from \$32.6B to \$28.9B. (F)(1) (ii) Maximum points were given to this subsection because New Jersey does have policies that lead to equitable funding (a) between high-need LEAs (as defined in this notice) and other LEAs, and (b) within LEAs, between high-poverty schools. Because of its complexity, the exact language is quoted from the proposal: "The School Funding Reform Act of 2008 (SFRA) represents the first comprehensive New Jersey school-funding system in decades to receive judicial approval as an equitable funding mechanism. The new formula provides the most generous resources in the nation for children at risk. The SFRA includes two types of state aid: wealth-equalized and categorical. Wealth-equalized aid is allocated according to each LEA's ability to raise enough local revenue to support its adequacy budget (as defined below). The equalization formula used in New Jersey considers both a community's property wealth (measured by equalized property valuation) and its aggregate income to determine the local ability to pay. This formula ensures that those LEAs with a lower ability to raise a local tax levy receive more state support, and vice-versa. In contrast, categorical aid is allocated regardless of a LEA's wealth. Categorical amounts are generally determined by multiplying the cost factor for a particular category by the number of students who qualify for the aid."

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

40

38

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

(F)(2) (i) Maximum points are given to this subsection because New Jersey has a charter school law that does not prohibit or effectively inhibit increasing the number of high-performing charter schools (as defined in this notice) in the State, measured (as set forth in Appendix B) by the percentage of total schools in the State that are allowed to be charter schools or otherwise restrict student enrollment in charter schools. As of December 31, 2009, there were 68 charter schools opened and operating in New Jersey. Many of these schools are much larger than they originally were and an organization holding a charter may expand to new campuses without new approval. (F)(2) (ii) Maximum point are given this section because New Jersey has detailed and stringent procedures and expectations regarding how charter school authorizers approve, monitor, hold accountable, reauthorize, and close charter schools; in particular, whether authorizers require that student achievement (as defined in this notice) be one significant factor, among others, in authorization or renewal; encourage charter schools that serve student populations that are similar to local district student populations, especially relative to high-need students (as defined in this notice); and have closed or not renewed ineffective charter schools. Historically, New Jersey DOE has "received 365 charter-school applications, of which 111 were approved and five denied. The balance (249 applications) were either withdrawn or never completed. From the 111 charters approved, 105 schools were opened. Thirty-seven of these have since been closed by charter revocation, charter surrenders, withdrawal, or non-renewal. The large number of application withdrawals or non-completions in earlier years was attributable to the relative inexperience of applicants, many of whom were unable to raise sufficient funds and secure facilities between approval and the planned opening... To the maximum extent possible, charter schools are required to seek the enrollment of a representative cross-section of the community's school-age population, including racial and academic factors in its determination of what selection of students would be representative." As of December 31, 2009, there were 68 charter schools opened and operating in New Jersey (F)(2) (iii) New Jersey charter schools receive the same per-pupil funding that the student would have earned in the district of residence. The school LEA is required to pay to the charter school 100% of the categorical state aids (those determined on a per-pupil basis) attributable to the student, and a percentage of the LEA's special-education categorical aid equal to the percentage of the LEA's special-education students enrolled in the charter school. If applicable, the school LEA is required to pay to the charter school 100% of preschool education aid. (F)(2) (iv) New Jersey charter schools are permitted to use local and state sources of revenue for facility costs, including lease payments and mortgage payments. They also have access to any discretionary federal grants that are available for facility expenditures. (F)(2) (v) New Jersey has no state laws or rules that would prohibit an LEA from creating an innovative, autonomous school. However at this point, inter-district school choice has reached its capacity for participation

<b>(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (F)(3) Maximum points were given to this section. New Jersey listed six significant reform conditions they thought should be noted. They are: Alternative pathways for teaching certification, STEM, Early childhood-education programs, Equitable-funding strategy, Secondary-education transformation; and Career and Technical Education Programs.		
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>53</b>

**Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM**

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>
Competitive Reviewer Comments: After reviewing both the appendix on STEM and the standards and lesson plans, the conclusion is that the New Jersey proposal does NOT meet the STEM priority competitive requirements. The proposal does NOT (i) offer a rigorous course of study in mathematics, the sciences, technology, and engineering; (ii) and does not give evidence of cooperate with industry experts, museums, universities, research centers, or other STEM-capable community partners to prepare and assist teachers in integrating STEM content across grades and disciplines, in promoting effective and relevant instruction, and in offering applied learning opportunities for students; and (iii) is not doing anything special to prepare more students for advanced study and careers in the sciences, technology, engineering, and mathematics, including by addressing the needs of underrepresented groups and of women and girls in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Very likely those activities are taking place in New Jersey. However, they were not documented in the proposal. Because reviewers are required to give all or no points, this proposal will be given 0 points.		
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>

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

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>
<b>Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform</b>		<b>Yes</b>
Absolute Reviewer Comments: The New Jersey RTTT proposal suffered from unevenness. Some sections were exemplary and others were written very poorly. The New Jersey proposal does comprehensively and coherently address all of the four education reform areas specified in the ARRA as well as the State Success This proposal meets all conditions required for the absolute priority. The New Jersey RTTT proposal is given a yes for meeting the requirements of this section.		
<b>Total</b>		<b>0</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>387</b>