

expansion to the State's data warehouse that would enable student achievement data to be linked with teacher licensure and program completion data.

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	0
<p>(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (D)(5)(i)(ii) Oregon discusses what they will do at the State level to provide effective support to teachers and principals, but their plan does not speak to their efforts to work in collaboration with LEAs, or build the capacity of its LEAs, to (a) provide effective, data informed professional development and (b) measure, evaluate, and continuously improve the effectiveness of the supports provided to improve student achievement. Because Oregon did not provide the information requested in the application, all points for this judging criteria were withheld.</p>		
Total	138	45

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

	Available	Tier 1
(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	10	0
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (E)(1) Oregon's is presently working to address a legislative mandate to define strategies that enable the State to intervene in low performing schools. Oregon says it is working with stakeholder groups to define intervention and turnaround procedures, and expects these procedures to be "ready" in 2010. Points were withheld because the State presently doesn't have the authority to intervene in lowest performing schools or LEAs.</p>		
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	31
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	1
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	30
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (E)(2)(i) Oregon has developed a tiered system for identifying the performance of its schools. The State says the system will enable it to identify the lowest achieving 5% of its schools. Oregon will use its Achievement Index, which factors in statewide student assessment data and graduation rate data to identify its lowest performing elementary and secondary schools. LEAs with the lowest achieving schools will be required to submit School Improvement Grant applications to the State. The applications will describe the needs and plans for improving each school and will lead to further assistance being provided by the State. Oregon is receiving low points because the State indicated in its application that it does not yet have a full system for identifying low achieving schools. (E)(2)(ii) Oregon has a system for supporting its LEAs in turning around the lowest achieving schools. LEAs can use a turnaround or transformation model. In either model, recently or newly installed principals have "substantial authority and flexibility to overhaul instruction and instructional support", implement professional development for teachers, and "make staffing assignments as negotiated within collective bargaining agreements.</p>		
Total	50	31

F. General

	Available	Tier 1
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	6

<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (F)(1)(i) The percentage of the State budget that Oregon used to fund elementary, secondary, and higher education in FY2009 was 56%. In FY2008, it was 57%. Thus, the funding level was "substantially unchanged", and therefore, points were withheld. (F)(1)(ii) LEAs with 30% or more of students in poverty receive, on average, 29% more funding than LEAs with 10% or less students in poverty. Oregon presents a table showing more than \$2,000 per pupil is contributed to LEAs with high versus low numbers of students in poverty. However, points for F1 were withheld because Oregon did not indicate that State policy led to equitable funding between high-poverty and other "schools" within an LEA. As a result, points were withheld.</p>		
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	34
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (F)(2)(i) Oregon passed its charter school law in 1999. The first 11 charter schools opened in 2000-01 serving 622 students. At the end of 2008-09, there were 88 charter schools serving 15,400 students (2.7% of the state's student body). Oregon's charters serve students in a variety of grade configurations, with the majority of schools serving students in K-5, K-8, K-12, and 9-12 grades. They also provide a diverse curriculum. There are presently no caps on charter schools in general, but there is a moratorium on virtual school student enrollment and expansion. (F)(2)(ii)(iii) Charter schools in Oregon are authorized by LEA school boards or by the State Board of Education. Schools established by LEAs must receive at least 80% of the funds the LEA spends per pupil on grade K-8 and 90% of the funds is spends on grades 9-12. However, the State Board must provide at least 90% of the funding for grades K-8 and 95% of the funding for grades 9-12 to the schools it's chartered. Charter school results are evaluated annually by LEAs and the State Board. Schools can be closed for persistent poor student performance, as measured by the State's annual assessment and related measures. (F)(2)(iv) Oregon does not provide charter schools with facilities funding. Oregon does, however, provide pass through federal assistance to support charter school with start-up and implementation costs through the federal Charter School Grants Program. The state also has a law that lists 25 criteria for opening a new charter school as well as evaluation metrics. The evaluations assess whether or not charter schools meet the targets they say they will meet when chartered. (F)(2)(v) Oregon does enable LEAs to operate innovative, autonomous public schools other than charter schools. There are also 484 alternative schools or programs in Oregon serving 21,561 students. Forty percent of these schools are operated by school districts, 31% are private programs operated via contract with private entities, 13% are operated by community colleges, and 8% are operated by the State Education Service Districts.</p>		
(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	4
<p>(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (F)(3) Oregon has created laws that enable high school students to earn credit towards graduation through applied learning opportunities. The State also established a Career Readiness Certification, which acknowledges that Oregon residents who've successfully completed certification requirements are prepared to succeed in the workplace. Oregon also discusses the Engineering and Technology Industry Council the state created. Their primary objective is to boost the number of engineers and technical workforce in Oregon.</p>		
Total	55	44

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	15
Competitive Reviewer Comments:		

Oregon provides a detailed plan for offering rigorous courses of study in mathematics, the sciences, technology, and engineering; preparing students for advanced study in STEM fields; and partnering with other entities to support students and teachers development in STEM.

Total	15	15
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Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		No

Absolute Reviewer Comments:

Oregon has presented an application that has great intentions and great promise, but that falls short on providing clear plans for what they will do "specifically" to meet the objectives of the Race to the Top grant program. In many places within the application, Oregon does not sufficiently explain what it will get done, why, how, by whom, where, and when. They explain the purpose of their efforts very well, but not the plans. Additionally, Oregon spends too much time highlighting their successes and emphasizing why the approaches they plan to take are important. Instead, Oregon should more closely review what the selection criteria in the Race to the Top Federal Notice is asking them to respond to, and provide clear, concise examples of their plans and approaches. Additionally, Oregon's plan fell short on integrating student growth measurements into teacher and principal evaluations, and decisions about intervening in low performing schools.

Total		0
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Grand Total	500	299
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(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(E)(1) By state statute ORS329.105, the state has proposed to examine its authority to intervene directly in the state's persistently lowest-achieving schools – those that, after being designated as low-performing, fail to meet Achievement Index benchmarks set by the Education Coordinating Council. However, the state currently does not have the authority to intervene in these schools. Since the applicant does not indicate whether the state has the authority to intervene in low-performing districts (LEAs), the applicant receives no points for this part of the criterion. Since the applicant does not indicate the state's current ability to intervene in either schools or districts, the applicant earns no points on this criterion. (0 points)

(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools

40

23

(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools

5

3

(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools

35

20

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(E)(2)(i) The applicant describes the state's plan to identify the lowest-performing Tier I, II, and III schools (as defined in Appendix E.3) by using a combination of the Achievement Index, which is based on student performance and year to year growth on state assessments, and a weighted-average graduation rate calculation. The applicant explains the methodology in detail in Appendix E.3. Also, using an "achievement" score based on student performance on state assessments and graduation rates is a logical way to identify the state's lowest-achieving schools. However, the applicant proposes a strange rubric to have "at least 25%" representation of elementary, middle, and high schools in the pool of turnaround schools, though there is no evidence provided that suggests that any elementary schools would be identified in need of turnaround. This confounds the applicant's rubric for identifying the lowest-achieving schools. The applicant earns 3 points on this criterion. (3 points) (E)(2)(ii) The applicant indicates that the schools selected for turnaround will be subject to either the turnaround model or the transformation model, and further specifies that none of the state's LEAs have more than nine turnaround schools, meaning the transformation model is allowed for all schools in any state district. Both models require the replacement of the principal; the applicant indicates that the new principal will be afforded significant professional development as well as significant authority and flexibility in determining the direction of school improvement efforts, as required for those models. All turnaround schools will be judged on student performance data via the expanded state education data system as described in Section C, and will use the methods described in Section D to increase teacher and school leader effectiveness. In addition, several initiatives to involve parents and other community members will be implemented or expanded in all turnaround schools, as recommended by the criteria. The applicant presents significant state data detailing the last five years of school turnaround efforts, lessons learned, successes and replicable results. The applicant indicates that although most of the efforts detailed were at a local/school intervention level, lessons learned from those interventions will be applied to state intervention efforts. Districts containing schools that are to be turned around will be required to submit School Improvement Grants and present detailed plans of their turnaround efforts, a positive indicator of commitment to change. However, while the applicant lists expectations of many stakeholders - parents, teachers, schools, community - there is no mention of the entities responsible for coordinating these efforts, nor how stakeholders will be held accountable for results. Therefore, although the applicant presents a multifaceted, comprehensive, aligned plan for school turnaround, without a strong accountability structure, it is completely possible that none of these goals will be realized. The applicant earns 20 points on this criterion. (20 points)

Total

50

23

F. General

Available

Tier 1

(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	5
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(F)(1)(i) The applicant describes two methods for calculating the percentage of total revenues available to the state that were used to support elementary, secondary, and public higher education. The first includes local revenues mandated by state law, and thus available to the state for disbursement. The second excludes these revenues. By the first methodology, the applicant indicates that state revenues for public education have held steady from FY2008 to FY2009 at 64%. By the second methodology, the applicant indicates that state revenues for public education have declined slightly from FY2008 to FY2009, from 57% to 56%. Since the applicant indicates level funding or a slight decrease over the period from FY2008 to FY2009, the application earns medium/low points on this criterion. (2 points) (F)(1)(ii) The applicant indicates that the state uses a weighted formula to distribute proportionally more funds to high-need LEAs, with poverty as one of the key weights (the more students in poverty in an LEA, the greater the "bump" in funding for that LEA). This leads to a more-than-equitable distribution of funding between high-need LEAs and other LEAs. However, the applicant also indicates that the division of funds between schools within an LEA is under local control. Thus, while the state recommends equitable distribution between schools, state policy does not govern whether high-poverty schools are provided equitable funding with other schools. Further, the applicant provides no state-level data on distribution of funding between schools within LEAs. The applicant earns 3 points on this criterion. (3 points)</p>		
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	24
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(F)(2)(i) The applicant indicates that the state's charter school law, in place since 1999, places no cap on the number of charter schools that can be created in the state. In addition to citing appropriate state legislation (Oregon Revised Statutes, ORS338.015), the applicant indicates the state was one of five in the nation to win a competitive \$9.5 million US Department of Education Charter School Program grant in 2008; one of the grant criteria was "strong annual growth in the number of charter schools." The applicant earns full points on this criterion. (8 points) (F)(2)(ii) The applicant describes a rigorous state process for charter school authorization, including application, sponsorship, and charter development. The applicant indicates that charter schools are held accountable financially (through an annual audit) and academically (through students scores on the state OAKS assessment). The applicant indicates that nearly 30% of the state's charter schools have the stated mission to serve at-risk or underrepresented students; all charters must describe the student population they will serve in their application for sponsorship. State charters may be closed for failure to meet financial, academic, or statutory obligations. The applicant indicates that the data requested as evidence for this criterion are local decisions not reported to the state, thus aggregate data is not available to report. However, some data is provided anyway for the number of charter schools opened, applications turned down, schools closed, and student performance in charters compared to other public schools. The applicant earns 6 points on this criterion. (6 points) (F)(2)(iii) The applicant indicates that charter schools receive a share of state general purpose grants. On this revenue source alone, charter pupils are funded at 80-95% of their public-school peers. However, since state law does not require that charter schools receive any other state, local, or federal education funds, the actual per-pupil funding in charter schools comes out to only 55-65% of the district per-pupil average. Since this level is below 79%, the applicant earns low points on this criterion. (2 points) (F)(2)(iv) The applicant indicates that the state provides no facilities funding for local school districts or public charter schools, earning them no points on this criterion. (0 points) (F)(2)(v) The applicant describes state law that authorizes school districts to create alternative education programs, a significant portion of which are considered innovative, autonomous public schools. The state currently has in place an impressively large number – 484 – of these alternative education schools or programs within schools. The applicant details one specific program, the Oregon Small Schools Initiative (OSSI), funded by the Gates Foundation and creating 38 new schools, 17 of them autonomous and non-charter. All OSSI schools have high accountability for closing achievement gaps, combined with significant flexibility in school operations. Impressively, three and four-year</p>		

outcome data presented by the applicant show that OSSI schools have dramatically raised the achievement rate, increased the graduation rate, and decreased the dropout rate for the most challenged student subgroups. The applicant earns full points on this criterion for creating alternative schools that actually work. (8 points)

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	5
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>(F)(3) The applicant describes four significant state reform conditions, not covered by the previous sections, that increase chances for student success. First, by state law, after 2012, students will be required to demonstrate proficiency in essential skills such as reading, writing, and applied math, all critical for postsecondary success, in order to receive a high school diploma. Second, the currently existing applied academics program allows high school students to earn credits toward their diploma through well-defined options besides seat time (one example: Math in CTE). Third, students and existing workers can take assessments to earn a Career Readiness Certificate (CRC), a portable credential that documents their workplace and college readiness skills. Fourth, the state's Engineering and Technology Industry Council (ETIC), created to increase the home-grown engineering and technology workforce, has increased both state engineering graduates (by 30%) and federally funded engineering research (by 88%) in the last decade. The applicant earns full points on this criterion. (5 points)</p>		
Total	55	34

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	15
Competitive Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant stresses a STEM focus throughout the application, making clear indications how work in each of the four ARRA reform areas will apply specifically to STEM instruction. The applicant also provides a summary, in the competitive priority section, of their STEM plan. In the summary and in Appendix A-20, the applicant makes a strong case for its long-term leadership in the development of K-12 standards and assessments through initiatives such as the PASS system. The state's rigorous standards signal that students are provided a rigorous course of study in STEM fields. The applicant describes a partnership with the Engineering Technology Industry Council (ETIC) to deliver OPAS, the Oregon Pre-Engineering and Applied Science Initiative, which assists schools in delivering high-quality STEM curriculum and has a strong focus on attracting traditionally underrepresented students. Finally, the applicant describes three programs used by the state to increase the capacity of teachers to provide strong STEM instruction: PrISM (Preparation for Instruction of Science and Math), offering teachers online professional development in STEM subjects; OETC (Organization for Educational Technology and Curriculum), providing teacher professional development on effective use of technology in the classroom to improve student achievement; and long-standing programs at Oregon State University and Portland State University to provide pre-service and in-service research-based professional development to math and science teachers. Since points for the STEM Competitive Priority are awarded as all or nothing, the applicant earns 15 points on this criterion. (15 points)</p>		
Total	15	15

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes

Absolute Reviewer Comments:

The absolute priority is addressed throughout the application. All four ARRA reform areas are comprehensively and coherently addressed by the applicant; sufficient LEA participation and commitment is demonstrated; and the applicant describes how its plans will translate to increased student achievement, decreased achievement gaps across subgroups, and increased graduation and college-going rates. The applicant meets the absolute priority.

Total		0
Grand Total	500	322

F. General

	Available	Tier 1
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	5
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The state reports that the funding for education in OR remained constant between 2008 and 2009. The education funds were distributed through the state funding formula that uses a weighted student calculation that gives proportionately more funding to LEAs with larger numbers of high need students. The poverty weight allocates 25% more funding to districts for students in poverty. OR law gives the LEA control over distributing the state and local resources to individual schools; however the Superintendent of Public Instruction has "pressed" LEAs to allocate additional resources to schools with larger numbers of high need students, particularly those schools with subgroup achievement gaps. The points awarded for this section of the application are based on a predetermined score range for states that the percentage of state revenues for education were unchanged between 2008 and 2009.</p>		
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	25
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>OR has a charter school law that was enacted in 1999. At the present time, the state has over 100 charter schools with a total enrollment of 15,400 students. Each year, approximately 12 new schools open and each school must have a plan to address the needs of low achieving students. OR does not set a limit on the number of charter schools and was one of five states that received a competitive Charter School Program grant award. Charter schools must be approved by the district board of education and once a charter is granted, the state permits charter schools to be independently operated, although charter schools must have an annual financial audit and file requested reports with the SEA. According to OR law, a charter school may be established as a new public school, from an existing public school, or from an existing alternative education program. The state indicated that data on charter school applications is maintained at the district level and since the state does not require the LEA to report the data, the state did not provide this information as part of the application. Charter schools may participate in the state achievement assessment and the SEA monitors and reports charter school information in its Grant Performance Report to ED. A charter school may be closed if the school closes itself, the charter is not renewed, or the charter is terminated on one of 5 statutory grounds. In the last 5 years, 10 of the 120 charter schools were terminated or not renewed based on failure to meet the performance commitments contained in the charter contracts. Voluntary closure has usually been due to financial instability or insufficient facilities. In OR, charter school are funded by property taxes, general fund school support grants, and revenue bonds. Charter schools receive public school funding equivalent to 80% of the district funding for weighted average daily membership in grades K-8 and 90% of the ADMw for grades 9-12. The SEA awards grants to charter schools or applicants that wish to establish or expand a charter school and gives priority to schools that serve at-risk students. OR does not fund charter school facilities; however, state law requires the LEA to make vacant and unused buildings, or portions of buildings, available for charter schools. The state reports that most non-charter public schools operate as alternative schools; other non-charter public schools operate as autonomous small schools. However, the application is not clear on how the state defines autonomous schools. In this section of the application, the state demonstrated that it has a charter school law that does not prohibit increasing the number of charter schools in the state and that the state has statutes that determine how charter school authorizers approve, monitor, hold accountable, reauthorize, and close charter schools. The state verified that charter schools receive equitable funding compared to traditional public schools, and a commensurate share of local, state, and federal revenues. The state provides access to public facilities and other supports to the approved charter schools. The number of points awarded for this section of the application is due to the fact that the state does not have a cap on the number of charter schools, provides equitable funding and grants to charter schools, and has a charter school law that specifies how charter schools are approved and</p>		

monitored. Additionally, the number of points awarded for this section is due to the fact that the state does not provide charter schools with funding for facilities and the lack of detailed information on how the state determines which schools can operate autonomously.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	5
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: <i>The state provided a description of several reform initiatives that were created by law, policy or collaborative program. The initiatives included a requirement that beginning in 2012, OR students demonstrate proficiency in reading, writing and applied math in order to receive a high school diploma, and a rule that gives students a number of options to earn graduation credits. OR participates in a Math-in-CTE program that pairs CTE and math teachers in applied math instruction, issues career readiness certificates to high school students, and uses an ETIC partnership to boost the engineering and technology workforce. In this section of the application, the state demonstrated that it has created through law, regulation, policy, or collaborative program, other conditions favorable to education reform or innovation that have increased student achievement or graduation rates, narrowed achievement gaps, or resulted in other important outcomes.</i>		
Total	55	35

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	15
Competitive Reviewer Comments: Throughout the application, the state described the STEM activities and initiatives that were related to that particular section of the state's reform agenda. The state provides a TSPC option for placing licensed teachers in STEM courses, works with universities to develop STEM training programs, implements STEM initiatives to increase engagement and interest in school for student subgroups, proposes to use increased planning and collaboration time for teachers to work on STEM initiatives, involve teachers in STEM professional learning communities, designate STEM mentors, and offer negotiated pay structures and professional compensation for STEM teachers. In addition to the section <i>specific information</i> , the state provided a description of the emphasis that has been placed on STEM throughout the system. OR uses an integrative approach to STEM education rather than a separate content approach for science, technology, engineering, and math. Additionally, the state expects teachers to use authentic instructional experiences, and to use current technologies, critical thinking, and problem-solving to give depth to the content delivered. The state has formed a partnership with Oregon Preengineering and Applied Science Initiative, PrISM collaborative, Oregon State and Portland State Universities, Organization for Educational Technology and Curriculum, and Education Northwest to promote STEM education.		
Total	15	15

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes
Absolute Reviewer Comments: The state's application addressed all four ARRA reform areas as well as the State Success Factors Criteria. The state demonstrated LEA participation and commitment for the proposed reform agenda.		
Total		0

Grand Total	500	316
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numbers of schools, but no evidence of the results of these strategies and lessons learned to date. The State's plan does not seem well focused on the four school intervention models, and does not seem to be either high-quality or ambitious. The State's track record with these models is unclear or unknown, as are the prospects for future success.

Total	50	9
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F. General

	Available	Tier 1
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	5
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant's K-12 state funding formula allocates state dollars and most local revenues for education. Of the local revenues, those that are mandated by state law are revenues available to the State and are treated as state revenues in the funding formula. Including those revenues, the share of total revenues used to support K-12 and public higher education in FY2008 and FY2009 were basically the same (64%). If those local revenues were not included, the share of total revenues used to support K-12 and public higher education decreased from 57% to 56% from FY2008 to FY2009. The applicant uses a weighted student formula to direct proportionally more funding to LEAs with larger shares of high-need students. The applicant provided evidence that LEAs with high proportions of students in poverty receive increasingly larger amounts of additional funding as the percentage of students in poverty rises. No evidence or discussion is provided concerning equitable funding within LEAs between high-poverty schools and other schools.</p>		
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	21
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has over 100 charter schools, with roughly a dozen new schools opening each year. State law does not set limits on the number of charter schools that can be created or otherwise restrict student enrollment. A score in the "high" range is awarded for (F)(2)(i). The applicant provides a thorough description of the State's approach to charter school authorization and accountability but no evidence of the number of charter school applications made in the state (120 were approved, and 10 of those were terminated or not renewed) or the number of applications denied and for what reasons. A score in the "high" range is awarded for (F)(2)(ii). The State provides charter schools with school funding that is scored in the "low" range under reviewer guidance for (F)(2)(iii) because the per-pupil funding of charter schools in this State ranges between 55-65% of the average for traditional public school students. The applicant does not provide evidence that it provides funds for facilities for public charter schools or local school districts, or other supports, and does not state that it does not impose requirements on charter schools that are stricter than those applied to traditional public schools, and as a result it earns a score in the "low" range for (F)(2)(iv). The applicant has numerous innovative and autonomous non-charter public schools, ranging from alternative schools to schools created under the Oregon Small Schools Initiative. A score in the "medium" range is awarded for (F)(2)(v).</p>		
(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	4
<p>(F)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant highlights that the State's students must demonstrate proficiency in essential skills to receive a high school diploma, starting in 2012. Also, students can earn credits toward graduation through a number of well-defined options besides seat time in class. The State's Math-in-CTE program pairs a CTE teacher with a high school math teacher to teach and reinforce math concepts in a given career field. The State has a Career Readiness Certificate program and an Engineering and Technology Industry Council.</p>		

Total	55	30
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Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	15
<p>Competitive Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant sets forth a clear vision for STEM education and addresses components of it throughout the application. A comprehensive list of partners is identified that will help the applicant achieve its strategies for improving STEM education. Limited information is provided on how the State offers a rigorous course of study in STEM disciplines, however. If funded, the applicant's proposal will provided for the coordinated delivery of research-based STEM resources. Strategies for sustaining the STEM components of the proposal beyond the grant funding period are provided. Various STEM strategies included in the state's plan are designed to address the achievement gap between subgroups. The applicant's approach to integrating a STEM focus into its reform plans is high-quality and will help the state produce high school graduates who can meet the growing demand for STEM careers by preparing more students for advanced study and careers in STEM and by assisting teachers in providing more effective instruction in STEM fields.</p>		
Total	15	15

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes
<p>Absolute Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The State's application narrowly meets the threshold for describing the ARRA education reform area of how the State will handle the turning around of persistently low-achieving schools in a comprehensive and coherent way. In this section, and in many others, considerable chunks of evidence are not provided or are inadequate or incomplete. The state clearly intends to be taking a systemic approach to education reform, but the application suffers from an unfocused narrative and insufficient attention to details in the subsection-by-subsection requirements for narrative and evidence detailed in the Application. This application meets the absolute priority by the narrowest of margins and, if not funded in Phase 1, could benefit from a thorough re-write prior to Phase 2 that pays much closer attention to the specific language and requirements of the application.</p>		
Total		0

Grand Total	500	266
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(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

i. Oregon chooses to identify its schools in need of turnaround as being composed of 25% elementary, middle, and high schools. The reason given for this is that if the state focused exclusively on achievement growth, only middle and high schools would be represented. The decision to include elementary schools was made based on the recommendations of a working group created for this application. The mandatory inclusion of elementary schools does not follow the definition of lowest-achieving schools and the new rule created by the state may dilute the focus on those schools that most persistently struggle to demonstrate student growth. ii. LEAs can choose any of the 4 intervention models, though the application states that the turnaround or transformation models are most likely. The application then describes a number of possible resources and guidelines that the state will offer to LEAs in order to assist them in designing improvement plans for their low performing schools. Many of these strategies have been used previously, as described in the table at the end of this section. Unfortunately, there is no evidence about changes in student achievement that may have resulted from these interventions. This makes it difficult to assess whether the state's supports for intervention are likely to yield success. The guidelines that the state proposes to offer appear to be quite vague as described here. And, while there is a performance monitoring plan described, it is not apparent what consequences there may be if the performance targets are not met.

Total	50	12
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F. General

	Available	Tier 1
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	4

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

i. The percentage of total revenues available to the state was essentially the same in FY 2008 and FY 2009. If one looks only at state revenues, the percentage declined slightly. ii. Oregon directs increasingly large amounts of state aid to those districts that have increased levels of students in poverty. This is a state level effort to assist poor students. However, it does not necessarily provide evidence about the equitability of the system. If, for example, the additional aid that the state provides does not close the funding gap between these districts and their more wealthy neighbors, then the system could be highly inequitable in spite of this state effort. There is no evidence provided that would indicate an overall measure of equity among districts. There is no ability for the state to encourage equitable funding among schools within an LEA; this is an entirely local decision.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	28
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

i. There are no limits on the number of charter schools, percentage of total schools that can be charters, nor any restriction on student enrollment in charter schools ii. State law says that LEAs can approve charters. If an application is not approved, the SEA can approve the charter or can be compelled to do so. This maximizes the possibility of opening a charter school. There are a number of requirements related to the monitoring and accountability of charter schools. Sponsors (either the district or the state) must visit the school annually, collect a fiscal audit, assess student performance in comparison with stated goals, and take part in OAKS as well as both federal and state accountability policies. Ten charter schools (of 120) have been closed, mostly due to fiscal challenges or physical plant issues. Legislation includes student performance as a reason for either school closure or non-renewal, though it is not clear that that reason has been invoked up to this point. All charter school applications must include a plan for addressing the needs of low-achieving students. Overall, Oregon has a rather clear charter school law that provides a great deal of flexibility while still holding charter schools accountable for performance, management, and safety issues. iii. Charter schools in Oregon receive anywhere between 80% and 95% of the standard student funding of state general purpose

grants for that district, depending on grade level and sponsor. A level in this range could be considered commensurate with traditional public schools. However, because charters may not receive commensurate shares of other funds, including federal title funds, charter schools are often funded at 55-65% of the funding in their districts. This is a significant fiscal penalty for charter schools. iv. The state does not provide any funding for facilities, though it does make available lists of available structures. However, it is not required that the building owner accommodate the charter school. However, there is no explicit statement that the state does not have special requirements for charter school facilities beyond those required for traditional public schools. Without evidence to make apparent the similar requirements for charters and traditional public schools, full points could not be awarded for this criterion. v. Oregon has an abundance of alternative and small schools that are permitted to offer credit in exchange for demonstrations of proficiency, online learning, innovative groupings and other instructional supports.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	4
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: Oregon is raising standards though the introduction of graduation requirements in essential skills, offering credit for learning experiences other than traditional "seat time," and the introduction of career readiness certificates that make expectations for certification even more transparent. All of these are evidence of ongoing reform efforts that support standards, innovation, and accountability.		
Total	55	36

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	15
Competitive Reviewer Comments: Appendix A-20 outlines Oregon's plans for improving STEM education in the state. While this plan could use more detail, it does provide some efforts in each of the three criteria identified under this competitive priority. The state depends heavily on high quality professional development for all of its initiatives in this area. These efforts should be supported by the use of formative and benchmark assessments to be developed in concert with the MOSAIC consortium. These will, in turn, be aligned to the internationally competitive standards that the state intends to adopt as part of the CCSSO/NGA consortium. <i>In combination with more targeted efforts, this overall plan has the potential to improve STEM education in the ways indicated.</i>		
Total	15	15

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes
Absolute Reviewer Comments: Oregon makes an attempt to address all of the education reform areas specified. In certain cases (e.g., supporting the development of charters and other innovative schools), the state provides a comprehensive plan. However, in many other cases (e.g., how professional development will be supported), the application lacks sufficient detail or overlooks particular criteria (e.g., the effective use of evaluation data). In spite of these shortcomings, the state has made some efforts in all areas. The fact that many of the efforts in the state prior to the Race to the Top competition aligned with certain criteria made it possible for the state to describe some efforts in all four areas.		

Total		0
Grand Total	500	260