

F. General

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	7	7	

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

(F)(1)(i) The applicant indicates in the narrative, and backs up with data, that while the total revenues for the state decreased from FY2008 to FY 2009, the percentage of total revenues used to support public education actually increased, from 41.2% in FY2008 to 41.9% in 2009. While the percentage increased, the dollar amount decreased; also, the increase was not substantial. What is substantial is that the percent of revenues allocated to education did increase while state revenues overall decreased. The applicant earns 4 points, or the "low" end of high points, on this criterion. (4 points) (F)(1)(ii) The applicant details a state plan to increase funding for high-need LEAs so that high-poverty and low-poverty LEAs are eventually on an equal per-student funding basis: the state's funding formulas direct the bulk of new funds to high-poverty districts. The applicant further indicates that this resulted in twice the increase in funds for high-need LEAs (~\$2000) as for other LEAs (\$1000) in the same period of time. However, the applicant does not indicate the base or current level of actual per-student funding in dollars for either type of LEA, thereby making it difficult to assess the level of equity between the two, or how many more years it will take the state to achieve equitable funding between high-need and other LEAs. Furthermore, the applicant makes no mention of whether per-student funding is equitable between schools within LEAs. The applicant earns 3 points on this criterion. (3 points)

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	27	27	
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(F)(2)(i) The applicant indicates, referring to appropriate state statutes, that the state has no caps on the number of charter schools or charter school enrollments, nor does it restrict charter schools by type or geographic area. The applicant also provides chronological data on the growth in the number of charter schools operating in the state over time. The applicant earns full points on this criterion. (8 points) (F)(2)(ii) The state has statutes and regulations in place regarding how charter school authorizers approve, monitor, hold accountable, reauthorize, and close charter schools. However, authorizers do not specifically require that student achievement be a significant factor in evaluating charter schools, nor do they require that the charters specifically serve high-need students in the districts in which they operate. Further, the state does not have the authority to close charter schools except cyber charters; the districts do have this authority. The data presented by the applicant indicates that districts denied a significant number of charter applications each year since 2003 (generally more than half the charter applications were denied), though the reasons for these denials are not provided; relatively few charters were closed each year. The applicant earns 3 points on this criterion. (3 points) (F)(2)(iii) The applicant indicates that, by state law, charter schools must have per-pupil funding equity with other schools in the district. In fact, the actual expenditures per pupil indicate that charter schools are funded at over 100% of the funding levels for other public schools. The applicant earns full points on this criterion. (8 points) (F)(2)(iv) The applicant indicates that the state provides charter schools funding for facilities in the form of reimbursements for building rental charges. Also, charters are subject to the same facility-related requirements as other public schools. However, the applicant does not describe any way in which the state provides charters with assistance for facilities acquisition, access to public facilities, or other supports. The applicant earns 7 points on this criterion. (7 points) (F)(2)(v) The applicant makes only one mention of innovative schools other than charters: Virtual High Schools. From the applicant's description, these schools would provide expanded curricular offerings, intensive academic supports for students, credit recovery, and college entrance examination preparation support. All of this sounds excellent; however, no virtual high schools currently exist in the state, and the plans are only in the "study commission" stage. Further, the applicant makes no mention of state law that enables LEAs to operate innovative autonomous schools other than charters. The applicant earns 1 point for this criterion. (1 point)

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

(F)(3) The applicant describes several other conditions created by the state that are favorable to increasing the educational achievement of public school students. The state has revised (since 2003) its school code to align early childhood education standards, curriculum, instruction and assessment to research on how young children learn, allowing more students to get a head start on learning before entering the elementary grades. The state has invested in programs to expose elementary school students to hands-on science, help high-risk students earn college credits while in high school, and promote the effective use of instructional technology at all school levels. In addition, the state is poised to put into place new regulations that will allow students additional ways, including taking and passing local and national assessments, to earn high school credits, thereby increasing the number of students that will have access to a high school diploma. The applicant earns full points on this criterion. (5 points)

Total	55	39	39
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Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	0	0	

Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The applicant mentions the state's STEM initiative sporadically throughout the application, and provides a summary in the competitive priority section. Overall, it appears that the applicant is proposing expansion of one significant program, Science It's Elementary, which provides elementary students with hands-ons science experience and targeted professional development to elementary teachers; and the creation of one significant program, the alternative certification pathway for mid-career STEM professionals, which should help increase the pool of highly qualified STEM teachers. However, two of the other initiatives mentioned in the summary – subject matter course exam requirements for high school graduation, and the expansion of available AP courses – while conducive to greater student achievement, are not sufficiently STEM-specific. The Pennsylvania STEM initiative, while impressive in that there is a five-region collaboration across the state, is funded only minimally and undertakes only a few outreach efforts (competitions and summer camps). Finally, the last initiative documented by the applicant in the summary seems almost frivolous: the creation of a summer camp for video game development. This does not appear to have the potential to significantly increase the engineering and technology workforce of the state. The applicant does not address the various criteria for this priority in a comprehensive manner, and since points are awarded all or nothing in this category, earns no points on this criterion. (0 points)

Total	15	0	0
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Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes	Yes	

Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The absolute priority is addressed throughout the application. All four ARRA reform areas and State Success Factors are comprehensively and coherently addressed by the applicant; the state and its LEAs are taking a systemic approach to education reform; while LEA participation by percentage of total districts

is on the low side, the commitment demonstrated by participating LEAs is extraordinarily strong; 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	0
Grand Total	500	407	407	

F. General

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

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

The evidence is abundantly clear that, although at a very small amount, the percentage of total revenues available to Pennsylvania did in fact increase between FY 2008 and FY 2009. Further, the application provides ample evidence for effective State policies that lead to equitable funding as required in the criterion. This is clear in terms of past performance as well as with regard to the State's future plans.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	25	30	
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The growth in the number of charter schools in Pennsylvania is impressive as is the lack of a cap on the number of charters allowed by law. What is less clear from the application is who specifically is allowed to authorize a charter school and how many of the State's existing charters were approved/denied by each of the State-approved authorizers. The application provides evidence of reasonably equitable state funding support for charters but fails to delineate those expenses that are withheld from charters under the heading of "nonpublic" expenditures and what the formulaic parameters are for determining those funds. While funding is provided for charter facilities in the form of lease reimbursement, no mention is made of the State's facility funding support in other areas. Finally, the criterion requires a description of how the State enables LEAs to operate innovative, autonomous public schools. Beyond offering up a description of innovative virtual schools, the application fails to address what is required.

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

The State Panelists clarified that the only expenses withheld from charter schools are those dollars that would be used for capital facility purchases. The State does provide dollars for rent but does not allow funds to be used for debt or capital. The panel further reaffirmed that charter schools in Pennsylvania receive a greater number of funds than their traditional school counterparts. This clarification resulted in an adjustment in the overall score.

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

The six examples of innovative policy reforms put into practice are impressive and contribute to the broad coherence of an effective state-wide reform strategy. These innovations span the range of education from early childhood education to plans for helping more high school students earn college credit to more effective uses of technology.

Total	55	40	45	
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Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

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

Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The application provides compelling evidence of innovative strategies to accomplish ambitious goals related to STEM. While the lack of coherence among the strategies makes it somewhat difficult to determine an

overall, high-quality State plan in this regard, the creativity and commitment of the different strategies described indicate a strong commitment by the State for STEM as a critical part of its reform agenda.

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

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes	Yes	

Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The application in its aggregate presents a comprehensive State reform agenda that illuminates prior successes, defines reasonable aspirations for future accomplishment with occasional glimpses of authentic innovation, while maintaining a number of challenging areas which are identified in the comments as they arise. The State demonstrates sufficient LEA participation by securing the support of the two largest school systems but certainly not a strong degree of participation that would better indicate broad, state-wide participation. The four education reform areas specified in the ARRA and the State Success Factors Criteria are adequately represented throughout the application. It is particularly impressive and a great strength to the reform agenda that the State enjoys the strong support of its Teacher Associations. It is also important to point out that the plan's commitment to focus on the appropriate expertise for all teachers in the State's Higher Education preparation programs is a particularly impressive and potentially very influential component.

Total		0	0
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Grand Total	500	383	399
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(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	30	30
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(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(E)(2)(i) The applicant fully identified schools eligible for (and documented MOUs and letters supporting participation) turnaround by both RTTT standards and extended State standards for low achieving Title I and non-Title I schools. The applicant provided exhibit tables with AYP status, school size, grade levels and minority/poverty concentration, as well as, in the appendix, each individual school, its AYP status, grade span, locale, number of students, percentage of low income students, percent of students below basic proficiency and percent of students scoring proficient or above. (E)(2)(ii) The applicant's high quality plan for turning around the lowest achieving schools includes a fairly detailed description of activities and a detailed appendix (#6) of the applicant's objectives for the Turnaround Initiative (committed to by the participating LEAs) and turnaround strategies, in addition to selection of one of the ED identified turnaround models. The following are the applicant's objectives that, if associated strategies are implemented fully as described, will strongly support increased achievement and ongoing LEA and school culture changes that should support continuous improvement: Installing quality principals and turnaround leadership; Ensuring effective teachers and leaders; Implementing rigorous, research-based and aligned curriculum; Using student data to inform and differentiate instruction; Increasing learning time; Building appropriate social-emotional and community-oriented supports for students. The applicant also included a copy of their 44 page framework for continuous school improvement entitled, "Getting Results: Continuous School Improvement Plan" which appears to be an extensive two year planning tool. Questions remain regarding the intended position of Chief Turnaround Officer (CTO). Some description is specified, however, important details like the number of schools each CTO will be responsible for and required experiential background (i.e. success at turning around schools such as these) are not included.

Total	50	45	45
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F. General

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

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

(F)(1)- While the percentage of the total state budget dedicated to education increased by .67 from FY 2008 -09 to 2009-10, the majority of the actual education budget was level funded, resulting in a medium point award for this criterion.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	29	37	
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(F)(2)(i) The Applicant asserts that there are no caps on the number of charters allowed in the State nor are there restrictions on student enrollment in charter schools. There are no restrictions on charter schools operating in certain geographic areas or serving particular types of students. In fact, Pennsylvania encourages cyber charters to expand opportunity to attend charter schools to the many students who live in rural areas of the state. (F)(2)(ii) Pennsylvania's standards and assessments apply to charter schools, charter schools must submit annual reports to PDE, and school districts may terminate a school's charter if one or more material violations of any of the conditions, standards or procedures contained in the charter, failure to meet state requirements for student performance or failure to meet any performance standard set forth in the charter, failure to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management or audit requirements, violation of provisions of the state charter school law, violation of any provision of law from which the charter school has not been exempted (including federal laws and regulations governing children with disabilities) or the charter school has been convicted of fraud. With regard to student enrollment,

charter schools must give first preference to students who reside in the sponsoring school district or districts. A charter school may give preference in enrollment to a child of a parent who has actively participated in the development of the charter school and to siblings of students presently enrolled in the charter school. A charter school must comply with school district's desegregation order. (F)(2)(iii) While the Applicant states that charter school expenses are equal to 107.3% of non-charter schools, it is not clear that the charter schools are funded at that level. (F)(2)(iv) According to the Applicant, the state does not impose any facility-related requirements on charter schools that are stricter than those applied to traditional schools. In addition, for leases of buildings or portions of buildings for charter school use that have been approved by the Secretary of Education, the Department of Education shall calculate an approved reimbursable annual rental charge. (F)(2)(v) It is not clear whether the state allows the operation of autonomous schools as there is no response to this sub-criterion.

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

The state panel stated that charter schools receive more per pupil funding than public schools, answering the question above in the Reviewer's Tier I response (F)(2)(iii), resulting in an increase of four points. In addition, the panelists also provided clarification regarding charter school funding/charges for charter school space. This allowed for an increase of four points for sub-section (F)(2)(iv).

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

(F)(3) The Applicant has listed a number of important initiatives, some supported by state code and or regulation, that are innovative and hold promise for increasing student achievement and participation in distinctive programs. One of the most important of these is the focus Pennsylvania has on developing and funding early childhood education.

Total	55	44	52
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Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

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

Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The Applicant's STEM plan is a good first effort at focusing on STEM. While STEM initiatives are not strongly included throughout the application, the state's program, Science: It's Elementary!, is commended in two ways. First, it is included earlier in the application, and second, it is a program for the elementary level, encouraging natural interest and promise in students in the sciences.

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

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes	Yes	

Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The Applicant has developed a high quality RTTT application. The applicant has experience with school improvement/reform efforts. Commitment to the ARRA elements are clear and substantiated. There is more than enough substance in this plan for it to be successful if funded and then followed with fidelity.

Total

0

0

Grand Total

500

417

426

(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	30	30
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	25	25

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

(i)- The state has created an ambitious plan to identify a significant number of schools above the threshold level that will be deemed persistently low performing and will receive increased leadership, financial and equity-related support. They have secured commitments from all stakeholders necessary to meet goals related to this expanded number of schools. The plan is ambitious, detailed and appropriate to meet the basic requirements of (E)(2)(i). Five points are awarded. (ii)- Each of the priority schools will be required to participate in one of the four outlined intervention models referenced in Race to the Top. However, Pennsylvania plans to expand beyond the four intervention models in an aggressive implementation schedule. The proposed activities, timelines, etc., appear appropriate. The evidence required in (E)(2) includes the State's historic performance on schools turned around to date. The results provided are confusing and hard to decipher as to exactly how many schools have been turned around historically. There has been some success but it is difficult to gauge how much, and especially in large urban areas it is hard to determine what, if any, success has occurred. The application is awarded 25 points in this area.

Total	50	40	40
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F. General

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

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

(i)- The state meets the requirements of this criteria- the percent of total state revenues for elementary, secondary and postsecondary increased from 41.18% in 2008/09 to 41.85% in 2009/2010. Full points are awarded. (ii)- The state's policies regarding equitable funding are both historical and long-standing. In 2005 Pennsylvania began its foundation formula approach and has expanded over time. New funds are now going to the poorest districts and equitable funding is a strong policy in the state. Full points are awarded.

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

(i)- Pennsylvania has no caps on the number of charters allowed in the state. There are 135 charter schools; 5% of the state population. Full points are awarded. (ii)- The state's standards and assessments apply to charters and must submit annual reports. The state's laws do not require use of achievement but the charter school law allows non renewal for failure to meet performance. The state's laws do not address populations in charters similar to local district populations. The State DOE has not closed charter schools, as in Pennsylvania this is the responsibility of the district who grants charters. A total six points is awarded. (iii)- Equitable funding is clearly allowed and practiced based on state statute and policy. This has been consistently applied and enforced beginning with the original legislation and continues currently. Full points are awarded. (iv)- The State does provide charters with facilities funding and does not impose any facility-related requirements that are stricter than those applied to traditional schools. Full points are awarded. (v)- The State is proposing to operate a number of innovative, autonomous schools, including virtual high schools that are called Cyber Schools. The number of schools to be established and further details were not provided. No other information about innovative schools was provided. A total of two points is awarded.

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

The state has provided a number of positive examples of efforts to improve conditions for significant reform, beginning with the Early Childhood Education effort. In addition the Science It's Elementary program is an important part of their overall STEM initiative. Significant focus on improving high school performance was cited through a number of programs. And finally a strong STEM strategy from elementary school through the 12th grade was described. Full points are awarded.

Total	55	47	47
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Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

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

Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Pennsylvania's STEM effort is mentioned repeatedly throughout the application and is a coherent, multi-faceted effort involving most grades in the K12 system. It fully meets the competitive preference priority of RttT requirements.

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

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes	Yes	

Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Pennsylvania has provided an application that meets three of the four education reform areas. In the fourth area, Great Teachers and Leaders, the primary weakness relates to leadership efforts, but even in this area there is great progress and well researched plans moving forward. The level of commitment from LEAs, state leaders and the Teacher's Union is outstanding and cements the possibility of success. Pennsylvania is a state with great diversity, large urban segments, and rural, isolated areas. The challenge of improving performance while reducing achievement gaps is huge, and the state's plan appears to be a solid effort combining the best of what is currently being done with bold new initiatives funded through RttT.

Total		0	0
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Grand Total	500	419	419
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(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	25	35	

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

Their expanded inclusion of additional Title I schools seems appropriate, especially since elementary schools are now also included (88 of the 128). PA will leave it up to participating districts with schools in the Turnaround School Initiative to select which of the four school improvement models will be used to turnaround a school. The state has a strong support strategy with clear expectations for plans, the provision of a Chief Turnaround Officer and support staff of 15 FTE, and access to national experts as advisors. The state does not provide strong evidence of success to date. They do provide evidence that overall performance from students in the lowest performance group has improved. But this is not the same as showing success with the lowest-performing schools.

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

The state panelists referred to data on success with turning around empowerment districts, and the data were found in the application that confirm their response. The score is increased.

Total	50	40	50	
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F. General

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	6	6	

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

Funding increased from 41.18% to 41.86% - substantially unchanged (medium points). Since 2005 the state's funding formula to LEAs has a component for Poverty and ELL students. No mention is made of equitable funding at the school level (medium points).

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	31	31	
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(i) There are no caps on the number of charter schools (8). (ii) The state's standards and assessments apply to charter schools and they must submit annual reports to PDE. Districts may terminate charter schools if, among other things, they fail to meet state requirements for student performance or fail to meet any performance standard set forth in the charter. But there are no laws, statutes, regulations, or guidelines requiring the use of student achievement, to encourage charter schools to serve student populations that are similar to local district student populations, especially relative to high need students. Nor has the state closed or not renewed ineffective schools, although school districts have done so. (5). (iii) State law requires that charter schools receive no less than budgeted total expenditure per average daily membership of the sending school district minus several categories of budgeted expenditures (non-public school programs, adult education, community/junior college programs). Charter schools are not LEAs under state law. But PA has established a fund in the RttT proposal specifically for charter schools equal to what they would have received if they had been LEAs. (8) (iv) State provides lease reimbursement (8); (v) In 2008, Pennsylvania established a virtual high school study commission within PDE. The commission recommended that a virtual learning program be established, and funding for online courses is proposed in this application. Since virtual high schools exist in many other states already, this component is scored in the low category for innovation. (2)

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

The proposal describes a range of additional statewide reform conditions, from early childhood programs to dual enrollment in college. Their Science: It's Elementary initiative is especially innovative.

Total	55	42	42	
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Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM	15	0	0	

Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Although STEM is mentioned a few times within the proposal, there was no coordinated plan to address all three aspects of the priority. Their add-on description is interesting, but does not meet the criteria established for this priority.

Total	15	0	0	
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Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes	Yes	

Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Pennsylvania's proposal addresses seriously and comprehensively each of the four ARRA reform areas and state success factors. The work proposed builds on significant efforts to date. Furthermore, the state steps up to the plate in each category by providing performance measures by which its progress can be monitored. Despite its low LEA participation, many of the systems that will be developed will have a statewide impact. And the efforts of these LEAs (which include the two largest in the state) will likely spur other districts to follow suit.

Total		0	0	
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Grand Total	500	405	419	
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