



Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2

Pennsylvania Application #5520PA1



A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	55	55	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	45	45	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	5	5	

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(A)(1)(i) The applicant describes a coherent and comprehensive state reform agenda addressing all four ARRA improvement areas – standards and assessment (involvement in the Common Core State Standard Initiative (CCSSI) and the American Diploma Project (ADP), as well as multiple common assessment consortia; applying for Race to the Top (RTTT) assessment grants); data systems (integrating the State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS), Standard Aligned System (SAS), and school/district data into single data system, differential access to data via password-protected online entry, producing and disseminating reports); teachers and leaders (using detailed evaluation systems incorporating student data to identify areas of need and deliver targeted professional development; new requirements for educator preparation programs); and low-performing schools (coherent plan to address low-performing schools combining resources from RTTT, School Improvement Grant (SIG) funds, and state funds). The applicant earns full points on this criterion. (5 points) (A)(1)(ii) The applicant includes, as Appendices 1.1 (districts without turnaround schools), 1.2 (districts with turnaround schools), and 1.3 (charters), the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) detailing the scope of work, key roles and responsibilities of the state and the participating Local Education Agency (LEA), state recourse for LEA non-performance, and assurances. The MOU is sound and comprehensive, fulfilling the requirements of this criterion. Of the 179 participating LEAs, the applicant indicates 100% will implement every part of the state plan. Further, the applicant indicates that 100% of the participating LEAs have provided all three requested signatures: the LEA Superintendent; the President of the Local School Board; and the local Teacher's Union Leader. Since all participating LEAs have signed comprehensive MOUs, agreed to implement all parts of the state plan, and provided all three requested signatures, the applicant earns 45 points on this criterion. (45 points) (A)(1)(iii) The applicant indicates that 179 of the state's 633 LEAs will be participating in the grant, representing only 28% of the total state LEAs, 36% of the schools, 38% of the K-12 students. Thus, while participating LEAs have shown strong commitment, the low percentage of total LEAs, schools, and students represented by the participating LEAs makes it unlikely that grant outcomes will translate into broad statewide impact. However, high-need districts are disproportionately represented in the participating LEAs, such that 28% LEA representation can translate into 58% representation of the students in poverty in the state. Thus the grant outcomes would likely make a significant impact on achievement of a majority of the highest-need students in the state. The applicant describes in narrative, and provides in tables in Appendix 12, its goals for increasing student achievement, decreasing achievement gaps, increasing graduation rates and increasing college enrollment. For the PSSA statewide assessment (ESEA results) and NAEP, the applicant shows projections of improved student achievement, total and broken out by subgroup, for 4th and 8th grade in math and reading, with and without RTTT funds. The applicant shows increased rates of increase in student achievement, and decrease in gaps between subgroups, with RTTT funds. High school

graduation and college enrollment rates are also shown by subgroup, with and without RTTT funds, with increases in both graduation and enrollment rates shown with RTTT funds. While these goals would be ambitious and achievable with a majority of the state's LEAs participating in the grant, it is unclear how such significant effects will be reached through the small percentage of total state LEAs involved in the RTTT project. The applicant thus earns 5 points on this criterion. (5 points)

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	30	30
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	20	20
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	10	10

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

(A)(2)(i) The applicant describes, and helpfully illustrates, a leadership structure that will provide coordinated support for grant oversight and district-level implementation. At the state level, the RTTT Project Management team consisting of the Project Director, Turnaround Director, analysts and technical work groups will provide grant administration and oversight. Connecting the state level to the individual districts will be Implementation Intermediaries (already being used in the state for the purpose of translating state-level initiatives to the districts): Intermediate Units (IU), Distinguished Educators, and the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN). To this crew, the applicant proposes to add several external service firms to fill the gaps for providing service related specifically to the RTTT grant implementation. In addition, the state will use its Consortium for Education Research, Evaluation, and Policy Analysis, described in detail in Section C, to conduct research on implemented initiatives, identify effective and ineffective practices, disseminate information about best practices, and intervene in cases of ineffective practices. Upon grant completion, the applicant indicates that the state will continue the reforms through the technical assistance providers, teachers, and principals trained in data use and evaluation through the grant funds. The costs associated with continuation of the grant-created programs will be borne through the state budget and direct fee-for-service charges to the districts. The applicant presents a budget (as a separate section of the application) both as an overview and broken down by project area, with detail for each project including categories and amounts of funding, justification for dollars requested, and timelines for completion of each of sub-goals within each project area. The project goals and funding are aligned with the state goals described in the narrative of the application. The applicant earns full points on this criterion. (20 points) (A)(2)(ii) The applicant has already indicated that the teacher's union representative in every participating LEA has signed the district MOU, a significant achievement signaling practitioner buy-in at the district level. In addition, the applicant includes an impressive 144 letters of full support (summarized in the narrative and included as Appendix 2) from a variety of constituency groups: legislative, early education, K-12, postsecondary, nonprofit, business, community organizations, education associations, citizen's groups and parent organizations. The applicant earns full points on this criterion. (10 points)

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	20	20
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5	5
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	15	15

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(A)(3)(i) The applicant clearly indicates that significant state budget resources and Federal grant dollars have been expended in the four reform areas. The applicant describes how the state has used these investments to make progress in the four areas: developing rigorous standards and new (Keystone) assessments; enhancing its state data system (with SLDS grant dollars), bringing its Standards Aligned Systems online, and integrating the two; implementing student achievement data-based improvements to teacher and principal evaluation systems; and turning around low-performing schools through significant investments tied to prescriptive requirements. The applicant earns full points on this criterion. (5 points) (A)

(3)(ii) The applicant provides data in the narrative and in Appendix 3 that demonstrates that the state's students, overall and by subgroup, have seen increases, sometimes dramatic, in achievement levels in reading and math. These increases hold for NAEP results and the state assessment (PSSA). In addition to raising average scores, the data also indicates that significant reductions in the percentages of students at each grade level, in each subgroup, and in each subject area scoring below basic, with concomitant increases in percentages of students scoring at or above basic, proficient, and advanced. High school graduation rates have also increased among all subgroups since 2003. However, gaps between subgroups in achievement and graduation rates remained nearly constant since 2003. Also, while the applicant describes multiple areas of progress related to the four reform areas, no clear connection is made on how the specific reforms have resulted in increased achievement levels or increased graduation rates. The applicant earns 15 points on this criterion. (15 points)

Total	125	105	105
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B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards	40	35	35	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	15	15	
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20	20	

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(B)(1)(i) The applicant is a member of the Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSSI), a consortium of 51 states and territories to design a common set of K-12 standards that are internationally benchmarked and build toward college and career readiness by high school graduation. Since the consortium includes a majority of the States in the country, the applicant receives "high" points for this criterion. In addition, the applicant provides most of the evidence requested in this criterion, in the form of: a signed Memorandum of Agreement documenting their participation in the consortium (Appendix 4.1); a list of the states that are participating in the consortium (Appendix 4.2), and documentation that the standards will be internationally benchmarked and lead to college- and career-readiness by high school graduation (Appendix 4.5). The applicant does not, however, include a copy of the draft standards indicating the anticipated date of completion. The applicant earns 15 points on this criterion. (15 points) (B)(1)(ii) The applicant provides a viable adoption timeline and high-quality adoption plan including vetting by multiple stakeholder groups (Appendix 4.3). The applicant also appears to have a strong legal process in place for standards adoption (Appendix 4.4). The applicant's timeline indicates that the standards will be adopted by August 2, 2010; further, the applicant explains how an expedited state process known as "final-omitted rulemaking" will be used to ensure that the adoption can happen by the required date. Finally, the applicant indicates that if even this process does not allow adoption in time for the August 2 deadline, the Governor has the authority to invoke emergency rulemaking to further expedite the standards adoption process. Given the high-quality plan, viable timeline, and multiple options for expediting the process, it is likely the applicant will meet the August 2, 2010 deadline for adoption. The applicant earns 20 points on this criterion. (20 points)

(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	10	10
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(B)(2)(i) The applicant includes non-binding Memoranda of Understanding for three different assessment consortia (Appendix 5.1) and lists of participating states (Appendix 5.2). The first, the Balanced Assessment Consortium, will build a full assessment system aligned to the Common Core Standards, will provide an overall plan for an assessment system that will align the efforts of the other assessment consortia, and, according to the narrative and appendices of Pennsylvania's application, includes 30 states. The second,

the Common Assessment Consortium, plans to develop a technology platform for effective assessment, specifies in the MOU that the consortium will apply for a grant under the Race to the Top Assessment Grant competition, and, according to the narrative and appendices of Pennsylvania's application, includes 12 states. The third, Multiple Options for Student Assessment and Instruction Consortium (MOSAIC), plans to develop formative assessments aligned with the CCSS common core standards and, according to the narrative and appendices of Pennsylvania's application, includes 26 states. Though the consortium agreements are non-binding, the applicant shows significant intent (the applicant is a lead state in the MOSAIC Consortium). Finally, the applicant indicates that as an Achieve ADP state, it has also signed on to a statement of principles guiding the development and implementation of aligned standards and assessments, which is documented in Appendix 5.1. According to the narrative and appendices of Pennsylvania's application, a total of 27 states have signed this fourth agreement. Since the applicant is working closely with CCSSO and Achieve, coordinating with three consortia, and serving as a lead state in MOSAIC, the applicant earns 5 points on this criterion. (5 points) (B)(2)(ii) The Balanced Assessment Consortium includes 30 states (according to Pennsylvania's application) earning "high" points. The applicant earns full points on this criterion. (5 points)

(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	20	20
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(B)(3) The applicant describes a comprehensive approach to standards adoption and implementation. The applicant has in place a coordinated system of resources and supports for K-12 educators called the Standards Aligned System (SAS), accessible to all educators through an online portal. SAS includes sections for Standards, Assessments, Curriculum Frameworks, Instruction, Materials and Resources, and Interventions, all aligned to each other. The applicant's plan for the adoption and implementation of standards and assessments is threefold. First, the applicant will work with relevant consortia to develop and adopt common core standards and assessments aligned to those standards. Next, the applicant will revise every part of its SAS system to the most granular level possible to align to the common core standards. Finally, the applicant will provide high-quality professional development to educators at every level in the state: district, school, classroom, and even parents/community. These supports are each outlined in the application. In addition, the applicant will develop voluntary model curriculum and formative assessments aligned with the new standards, and integrate these into the SAS online tool; ensure that all teacher preparation programs in the state revise their requirements based on the new standards; and integrate the new standards into educator evaluations, school improvement plans, and classroom practice. Finally, the applicant indicates the state has developed new high school graduation requirements, and has a plan to develop and implement 10 new Keystone exams that will serve as part of the new high school graduation requirements. These Keystone assessments will be aligned with the new standards; the state is working with its postsecondary institutions to ensure that the exams will also serve as college placement exams (with a passing score on a Keystone exam indicating no remedial need). This comprehensive and aligned implementation plan earns the applicant 20 points on this criterion. (20 points)

Total	70	65	65
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C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	16	16	

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(C)(1) The applicant documents that 8 of the 12 America COMPETES Act Elements are currently contained within the state's longitudinal data system (SLDS), earning the applicant 16 points. The state has applied for a USDOE SLDS grant in December 2009 which, if funded, would allow the state to add the four missing

elements and enhance several of the existing elements. Notes are provided below for each element. (16 points) (1) Yes – PK16 Student IDs – 2 points (2) Yes – enrollment, demographics, program participation – 2 points (3) Yes – drop out, transfers, program completion, NGA Graduation Rate – 2 points (4) Yes – eTranscript to postsecondary data system – 2 points (5) Yes – data audit system assessing data quality, validity, and reliability – 2 points (6) Yes – yearly ESEA test records of individual students – 2 points (7) Yes – information on students not tested by grade and subject – 2 points (8) Yes – teacher identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students – 2 points (9) No student-level transcript information – 0 points (10) No student-level college readiness test scores – 0 points (11) No information on student transitions to postsecondary – 0 points (12) No other information determined necessary to address alignment – 0 points

(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	5	5
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(C)(2) The applicant details a two-part plan to ensure data access and use by a variety of stakeholders, including educators, parents, researchers, and the public. The first part of the plan involves creating an online data tool integrating the state's longitudinal data system, the SAS system, and real-time-updated school/district records. This integrated database would be accessible to parents, the public, principals, teachers, and researchers; in part (C)(3), the applicant describes how these various stakeholders would be provided differentiated access based on their needs (through a password-protected interface). Also in part (C)(3), the applicant describes a plan for a train-the-trainer model of professional development, using district-embedded data facilitators, for teachers and principals in participating districts. The second part of the plan involves creating a state-level consortium to work with key stakeholders to develop a research agenda, collaborate with external research organizations, conduct research, translate findings into reports, and conduct public outreach to disseminate findings. This is appropriate, and will likely be more helpful to the public in understanding state-level education data than direct access to the database. The applicant earns full points on this criterion. (5 points)

(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	18	18
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(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(C)(3)(i) The applicant presents a plan to improve the effectiveness of the state's instructional improvement system, accessible at the local level, by integrating SLDS, SAS, and school/district data. The combined system will be accessible via a web portal, provide password-protected entry to users, and have an easy-to-use interface. The data system will combine student demographic, academic, attendance, and behavior data in a way that will help educators provide individualized supports to students. The web portal will include classroom, school, and district-level "dashboards" that provide information at-a-glimpse aggregated to each of these levels; the portal also will offer an early warning system to identify students in need of additional interventions. The enhancements to the state data systems are in line with what is required to increase educator effectiveness in supporting individual student needs, earning the applicant full points on this criterion. (6 points) (C)(3)(ii) The applicant describes a plan for a train-the-trainer model of professional development, using district-embedded data facilitators, for teachers and principals in participating districts. Participating LEAs have committed, through their RTTT Memoranda of Understanding, to several specific activities related to teacher and principal professional development on data use for instructional improvement. These commitments include: a school preparation week prior to the start of a new school year; weekly teacher collaborative planning times facilitated by coaches or data facilitators; bi-weekly leadership team meetings for principals facilitated by instructional coaches; and quarterly staff data review meetings led by the school's leadership team. This detailed, comprehensive, and well-thought-out plan, complete with implementation timeline, for teacher and principal professional development on data use earns the applicant full points on this criterion. (6 points) (C)(3)(iii) In part (C)(2), the applicant describes plans to create a state-level consortium to work with key stakeholders to develop a research agenda, collaborate with external research organizations, conduct research, translate findings into reports, and conduct public outreach to disseminate findings. This consortium will be called the Consortium for Research, Evaluation and Policy Analysis, and through its work will provide a streamlined data access application for researchers. Findings of the Consortium will be publicly disseminated in periodic reports that

are written with a wide audience in mind, and should support continuous improvement at all levels of the state's education system. The applicant earns full points on this criterion. (6 points)

Total	47	39	39
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D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	13	13	

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(D)(1)(i) The applicant describes several alternative routes for teacher certification available in the state. While the alternative routes are selective, provide school-based experiences, allow streamlined coursework, and award the same level of certification as traditional teacher preparation programs, none of these programs operate independently from institutions of higher education. In addition, the applicant indicates that while there is no state law prohibiting alternative routes to principal preparation, none currently exist in the state. The applicant thus earns 2 points, or the high end of "low" points, on this criterion. (2 points) (D)(1)(ii) The applicant describes three alternative routes to teacher certification currently available in the state: ABCTE and the Intern Certificate Program (both post-baccalaureate programs), and E=mc2 (an experimental program to train mid-career professionals as middle school teachers). All three programs are selective, allow streamlining of coursework, and provide the same certification as regular teacher preparation programs. The applicant describes these elements for each program, and provides data on the number of teachers that completed each program in the past year. However, as indicated above, the applicant indicates that no alternative routes to principal certification currently exist in the state. Since the criterion is specified for both teachers and principals, it seems fair to allot half the points for this criterion to each (teachers vs. principals). Rounding up from 3.5, the applicant earns 4 points on this criterion. (4 points) (D)(1)(iii) The applicant explains that the way the state identifies teacher and principal shortages is by examining the percent of teachers and principals who hold emergency permits, by subject area (teachers) and leadership of schools (principals). Using this methodology, the applicant provides data showing very low percentages of teachers and principals with emergency permits in the state, with the exception of Bilingual ESL teachers (6% emergency permits). However, the applicant admits that new effectiveness measures that will be instituted with the new data system will allow more detailed analysis of teacher effectiveness, with expectations that 35-40% of teachers will require supports to become effective. The applicant describes a two-fold plan to address shortages: recruiting professionals with expertise in key areas to the teaching profession, and providing professional development to current teachers to increase their effectiveness rating. Both the enhancements to the methods for identifying teacher and principal shortages and the methods for addressing them appear sound. The applicant earns 7 points on this criterion. (7 points)

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	53	53
(i) Measuring student growth	6	0	0
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	15	15
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	10	10
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	28	28

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

(D)(2)(i) In section C, the applicant mentions that the state has the capability to track student assessment measures on state assessments for ESEA targets. However, the applicant does not describe how student

growth will be measured or describe at all the plan to establish clear approaches to measuring student growth. The applicant mentions the development of student growth measures in the timeline provided for this section; however, no further explanation is provided. The applicant earn no points for this criterion. (0 points) (D)(2)(ii) The applicant lays out clear plans to develop and implement rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation systems for teachers and principals. The systems for both teachers and principals will: differentiate effectiveness using multiple rating categories; take student growth into consideration as a significant factor, among multiple measures; and be designed with teacher and principal involvement. The applicant indicates that the rubrics for evaluation will be transparent and developed with teacher/principal input; the results will be used to rate the teacher/principal against their own co-developed performance plan. The applicant earns full points on this criterion. (15 points) (D)(2)(iii) The applicant indicates that principals and teachers will be evaluated at least annually. The annual evaluations will lead to the establishment of performance targets that will be incorporated into individual professional educator development plans. These plans, co-developed with teachers/principals, will guide the evaluation of the educator in the following year. Data on student growth will be provided to teachers/principals and used as a basis for their evaluation. The applicant earns full points on this criterion. (10 points) (D)(2)(iv) The applicant describes in some detail how the evaluations will be used to develop, compensate, grant tenure to, and remove teachers and principals. All participating RTTT LEAs will be required to develop "human capital plans" that detail how they will use evaluations for these purposes. Generally, evaluations will be used to develop educators through job-embedded professional development targeted to areas of weakness identified through the evaluation rubric. The state will work with external experts to develop compensations plans for rewarding outstanding performance based on evaluation results. Evaluations will be used both for granting tenure (for highly effective teachers and principals) and for removal (of teachers and principals rated unsatisfactory for two consecutive annual evaluation periods). This comprehensive plan addressing each of the criterion requirements and developed in concert with participating LEAs earns the applicant full points on this criterion. (28 points)

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	22	22
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	14	14
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	8	8

(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(D)(3)(i) The applicant admits difficulty in staffing high-poverty and high-minority schools with effective teachers, and proposes a three-part plan to address this problem: increase the pipeline of teachers headed to high-need schools; increase the effectiveness of teachers already serving in high-need schools; and remove ineffective teachers. The applicant has described the process of teacher evaluation leading to removal of ineffective teachers in (D)(2). To increase the pipeline of teachers wishing to serve in high-need schools, the applicant proposes fiscal incentives (signing bonuses and career ladders with increased pay), academic support (hiring in cohort teams), and facilitating credentialing of teachers and principals willing to serve in these schools (Turnaround Academies, Urban Principal Program, targeted Internship Certification). To increase the effectiveness of teachers and principals already serving in high-need schools, in addition to the evaluation strategies mentioned in (D)(2), the applicant proposes providing these educators with focused professional development on: effective data use; ELL instruction; and high-rigor coursework. All of these interventions appear sound and address the need to increase effectiveness of the educator workforce serving high-need schools in the state, from "within." However, it is also apparent that more of these measures are directed to teachers than to principals. The applicant earns 14 points on this criterion. (14 points) (D)(3)(ii) The applicant proposes a three-part plan to address teacher shortages in each of three areas: special education, STEM education, and English Language Learners (ELL). The applicant proposes supporting certified teachers to "add-on" certifications such as special education, but does not specify what these supports would be or what incentives would be provided to teachers to pursue this program. Second, the applicant proposes "residency certifications" that encourage mid-career professionals in STEM areas to

earn their teaching certification while teaching in a hard-to-staff subject area. Finally, the applicant proposes targeted professional development to teachers in schools that serve the largest populations of ELL students to increase their effectiveness in serving these students. The plans appear sound, but are not presented in much detail. The applicant earns 8 points on this criterion. (8 points)

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	7	7
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(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(D)(4)(i) The applicant explains that the proposed expansion of the state's SLDS system will include teacher ID numbers for each teacher candidate enrolled in a teacher preparation program in the state. Further, the state has no barriers to linking student data to teachers; as student growth measures are incorporated into the state's SLDS, these will dynamically be linked to the teacher IDs of each student's teacher. Thus, upon rollout of the new state data system, student achievement data will be linked to teachers, teachers will be linked to their teacher preparation programs, and this data will be made public through the state's web portal to their newly-integrated (SLDS, SAS, school/district) data system. The applicant's plan is sound, and includes ambitious yet achievable targets. The applicant earns full points on this criterion. (7 points) (D)(4)

(ii) The applicant explains that once the data linkages described above are implemented, ineffective teacher preparation programs will be revised, improved, or discontinued. However, the applicant's only plan to support and expand effective programs, as detailed in the application, is through increased demand for their students prepared through those programs, growth in applications to those programs, and the use of effective programs to model improvements to less-effective programs. There is no indication that successful programs will be provided a greater share of state dollars, expanded in size or scope, or provided any other type of support by the state. Nor does the applicant provide any targets for expansion of successful programs. The applicant earns no points on this criterion. (0 points)

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	20	20
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(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(D)(5)(i) The applicant has a strong plan to deliver data-informed professional development to teachers and principals in conjunction with the implementation of the new state data system, which will incorporate student achievement and growth as critical data points in teacher and principal evaluations. In addition to the teacher professional development methods already described, principals will be provided professional development through the Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership program, embedded Chief Turnaround Officers (in turnaround schools), and GE's New Manager Assimilation leadership program. Both teachers and principals will be provided professional development in the following areas: the use of data to improve and differentiate instruction; use of the integrated SAS portal and associated tools; Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtII); the Early Warning System (to identify students at academic risk); and the development of Individual Learning Plans. Teachers will be provided common planning time and access to collaborative communications with other teachers at a distance through the SAS online portal. The applicant's plan also includes, and clearly delineates, roles for the state and for LEAs. The applicant earns full points on this criterion. (10 points) (D)(5)(ii) The applicant describes a two-part plan for evaluation of educator professional development programs. First, the state will develop a plan for increased oversight of all educator professional development programs, evaluating the effectiveness of these programs based on student achievement. Only programs that have a positive impact on student achievement will continue to be funded. Second, through the Consortium for Research, Evaluation, and Policy Analysis set up as part of the state's expanded data system, researchers will work to identify best practices in professional development and evaluate programs on the basis of these criteria. The applicant's plan is sound and data-driven, and should result in more effective educator professional development programs, as measured by improved student outcomes, over time. The applicant earns full points on this criterion. (10 points)

Total	138	115	115
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E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

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

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

(E)(1) The applicant explains, citing appropriate state law, that the state has the authority to intervene directly in all districts as well as (under specific circumstances) in schools within districts. Through the state's Education Empowerment Act, the state may take over failing districts via an appointed State Board of Control, which has all the powers of an elected school board except the power to levy taxes. In addition, the state has authority to intervene in 80% of the schools in the state's Turnaround Initiative. Since the state has authority to intervene in both LEAs and schools, the applicant earns full points on this criterion. (10 points)

(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	34	34
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	4	4
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	30	30

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

(E)(2)(i) The applicant has a clear methodology for identifying schools in need of turnaround, based on RTTT definitions, Title I status, and percent of students scoring "below basic" on state assessments. The applicant has selected 128 schools for turnaround. 28 are part of the 37 which meet the definition of the RTTT notice, and 100 are part of the 125 additional schools that meet the Title I and performance measure requirements of the state's own definition. All 128 selected turnaround schools are located in districts that have agreed to adopt all of the state's RTTT plans, and provided signatures from the superintendent, president of the school board, and union representative, as documented in the Appendices. The schools that meet the definitions (RTTT or state) but have not been selected for turnaround are either charters (the state is not turning around any charter schools) or in districts not participating in the state's RTTT grant. It is commendable that the applicant chose to increase the reach of its turnaround activities by including its own definition rather than simply using the RTTT definition; however, the applicant does not specify if or how these definitions will be used to continue to identify low-performing schools throughout the grant's duration, thereby revising the numbers of schools that need to be served. The applicant earns 4 points on this criterion. (4 points) (E)(2)(ii) The applicant presents very ambitious goals for turning around low-performing schools, indicating that the state will intervene and turn around large numbers of schools in each of the first three years of the grant. Specifically, the number of schools slated for turnaround in 2011/12 – 77 schools – seems more ambitious than achievable. However, the applicant provides a rich, detailed explanation of the interventions schools will implement in addition to following one of the turnaround models. These include many of the strategies specified for the Transformation model: install new, high-quality school leadership (principal); increase educator effectiveness through targeted professional development; institute data-based instructional reform, including implementation of rigorous and aligned curriculum; increase learning time; and build in social, emotional, and community supports for students. In addition, each school will be provided a Chief Turnaround Officer to assist the principal and coordinate turnaround efforts; at the state level, external technical assistance providers will be contracted to provide additional support to struggling schools. The applicant presents a strong plan, though its targets for the second year are so high that they may be unachievable. The applicant earns 30 points on this criterion. (30 points)

Total	50	44	44
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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	



Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2

Pennsylvania Application #5520PA-2



A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	50	57	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	35	42	[REDACTED]
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	10	10	

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(i) The applicant has made a compelling case for its broad-based, fully comprehensive reform agenda. Pennsylvania enjoys a rich historical tradition for leadership in education and has built upon this foundation in recent years through a number of visionary reforms. The narrative is persuasive, detailed and amplifies the four reform areas emphasized in the ARRA. The State has also successfully described its planned use of the RttT funds and how these funds will build upon existing or planned initiatives. The State's plan is ambitious however the existing framework built over the years and the evidence provided for the commitment of the influential and important support of stakeholders suggest a reasonable probability of success. (ii) The MOU's are strongly constructed with specific objectives differentiated among LEAs, LEAs with Turnaround Schools, and participating Charter School LEAs. The State has met or exceeded Application guidelines with regard to required Terms and Conditions. The Scope-of-Work descriptions are also fully aligned with the objectives of the Race to the Top plan. The level of detail incorporated in the initial MOU, even though the competition provides for an additional 90 day period to complete the Scope-of-Work, indicates the substantial level of commitment on the part of the State and the participating LEAs. While the State demonstrates an admirable commitment across critical governmental, business and independent organizations that strongly support the application, all of which meets the required criterion, the State has not successfully secured a large proportional percentage of eligible LEAs for this competition. The application includes commitments from 28% of the State's eligible LEAs which represents 38% of the State's student population. This competition is focused on four areas that in the aggregate will produce measurable student achievement across a statewide education reform agenda. This level of participation makes for a weak argument to accomplish the expectations of a statewide agenda when 62% of the student population is not currently represented by the application. The application also indicates a strong effort on the part of the state to ensure that all participating LEAs fully understand what is expected of them through the full-day readings of the application and conferences among signatories prior to execution of the MOU. This suggests a higher likelihood that the participating LEAs, though proportionally small, will remain committed throughout the four years of the grant period and strengthens the application. (iii) The agenda described in the application reflects bold goals and a thoughtful approach to achieve them by leveraging upon the State's prior reform initiatives and targeting funds that might be won in this competition in a specific manner. The State's application meets the four criterion required in this section in terms of the agenda, its content and areas of emphasis. The narrative evidence in this regard is compelling. However, as has been pointed out in (ii) above, the application falls considerably short in meeting the requirement when considering the numbers and percentages of participating LEAs, schools, K-12 students, and students in poverty.

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

The State Panelists successfully clarified the plan for ensuring statewide participation by LEAs and therefore successful statewide reform. It was pointed out that the Intermediate Units (IU) are an integral part of the plan's infrastructure and that all IUs have a similar profile in terms of participating and nonparticipating LEAs within each IU. Further, the State's very high standard of requiring all three signatures in order to participate suggested a strong commitment to attain the deep support of each LEA and to increase the probability of the LEAs to execute the plan as intended.

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	24	24
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	16	16
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	8	8

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

(i) The description of leadership and dedicated teams supported by the Organization Chart provides evidence of clear lines of responsibility, supported by a proposed dedicated team of five for the Race to the Top Management, and the integration of multiple State agencies dedicated to the plan. In evaluating the State's plans for ongoing financial sustainability after the RtT grant period, the application indicates an expectation of approximately 6% of the requested grant as the amount of ongoing costs without indicating how this amount was calculated. Out of a \$400 million grant request, this seems to be a very low budget for sustainability. The plan is completely silent in articulating any processes for ceasing ineffective practices, as required in the criterion. The application meets the requirement for sustained fiscal, political and human capital support beyond the funding period. (ii) The application describes the State's demonstrated track-record for broad and sustained stakeholder support, over changing political administrations, to maintain progress toward a robust reform agenda. The expectation of broad support, however, is not met by the limited representation of only 28% of the eligible LEAs and unions. This does not represent significant proportional engagement of the State's teachers and principals. Support by the other critical stakeholders, though, is strongly evidenced.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	21	21
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	3	3
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	18	18

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(i) The application demonstrates strong evidence of the State's commitment in each of the four reform areas through legislative action, existing infrastructure, and forward planning. Clear progress is evident in the areas of standards and assessments and the effective implementation of comprehensive data systems. However, the application is silent in this section as to the specific progress made with regard to preparation of students to succeed in college and the workplace. The application refers to the State's participation in the America Diploma Project consortium in an effort to join other states to develop a common set of principles so that all students can become college and career ready which suggests the state's commitment to this reform area. However, no details are given in that reference in Section B nor referred to at all in this section to satisfy the criterion. With regard to the reform area of effective teachers and principals, no mention is made of any alternative certification programs. The application does refer to allowances for alternative certification when addressing Turnaround Schools, however, but is silent on this point with regard to the State's plans for effective teachers. The State has considerable authority to address Turnaround schools and districts and the application provides evidence of a thoughtful framework to address this reform area. However, the criterion requires evidence of the State's ability to make progress in these areas, and no data are provided to show accomplishment within the State's Turnaround Schools. (ii) The State's student outcome data between 2003 and 2009 tell a strong story in support of progress in most areas. The NAEP scores for reading and math in the aggregate demonstrate progress over 2003 and 2009 as the narrative

describes. However, the narrative does not expand upon the story behind the drop in 5th grade PSSA reading scores that result in flat performance across those years. The State's performance relative to the achievement gap is commendable and impressive. The application presents credible evidence of substantial improvement in the graduation rates as an overall metric and also demonstrating increases in the number of Hispanic graduates.

Total	125	95	102	
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B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards	40	35	35	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	17	17	
(ii) Adopting standards	20	18	18	

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(i) The application and appendices satisfy each of the criteria except for providing a copy of the final or draft standards. (ii) The application and appendices meet the criterion through an extremely ambitious and challenging timetable. The state's commitment to achieve adoption by August 2, 2010 is quite clear and further supported by a narrative explanation of the process leading up to that point.

(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	10	10	
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The application exceeds the criterion for this section both in that the State is participating in three consortia, Balanced Assessments of the Common Core Consortium (30 States participating), the Common Assessment Consortium (12 member States), and Multiple Options for Student Assessment and Instruction Consortium (26 member States).

(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	16	16	
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The narrative provides strong evidence to meet the criterion in all areas except for details to describe how the State intends to support the transition to new standards and assessments into classroom practice for all students, including high-need students. The application is silent on the State's plan for transitioning to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments for high-need students.

Total	70	61	61	
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C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	16	16	

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The application presents evidence that eight of the twelve America COMPETES Act elements are completed.

(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	5	5
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The detailed narrative for this section emphasizes the importance of effectively using data as a critical element for the State's reform agenda. The State presents a thoughtful plan for making the SLDS accessible through a variety of strategies. The Pennsylvania Standards Aligned Systems is an online tool developed to allow the public to generate reports and conduct basic descriptive analyses at the classroom, school and district levels. The plan also contemplates a State-level consortium of stakeholders, policymakers and school leaders to develop a research agenda that addresses the core problems and questions they face, among several other objectives. The plan is comprehensive and presented in detail.

(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	8	12	
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(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(i) The criterion requires the State to articulate its plan for increasing the acquisition, adoption and use of local instructional improvement systems. The State describes in detail the plan for encouraging LEA participation in the Standards Aligned Systems (SAS) online tool but does not address how the State will integrate LEA systems that are locally selected into the State's Longitudinal Data System or SAS. (ii) The criterion also require evidence of a high-quality plan which, using data, evaluates the effectiveness of instructional materials, strategies and approaches for educating different types of students. The application is silent on this point. (iii) The application only makes a brief reference to researchers and the State's plan to ensure data are made available as required by the criterion. This does not satisfy the criterion.

(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)

The State Panelists clarified the State's plan for encouraging the local adoption of local instructional improvement systems as well as the State's strategy for incorporating local choices into the Standards Aligned System resulting in an increased allocation of points.

Total	47	29	33
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D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	13	13	

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(i) The criterion requires evidence for alternative routes to certification, particularly routes that allow for providers in addition to institutions of higher education. Pennsylvania's laws do not presently allow for alternative certification independent of institutions of higher education. (ii) The application does not provide evidence that a variety of alternative certification paths are in use. The majority of alternative certification participation is coming from the State's Intern Certificate Program. Further, the State currently offers no provision at all for the alternative certification of principals. The State's approach to achieving high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals is considerably more narrow than the elements required by the criteria. (iii) The State indicates that it benefits from minimal teacher and principal shortages in the critical subject areas. The application provides evidence of an effective system for tracking shortages and reporting them on an annual basis. The application also provides a detailed description of the strategies the State has developed to prepare teachers and principals to fill these areas of shortage.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	38	38
(i) Measuring student growth	5	1	1

(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	13	13
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	8	8
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	16	16

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

(i) The application does not address how student growth is measured in this section, either in the narrative or with any supporting appendices. While it is evident in other sections of the application that student growth metrics are essential to the State's overall reform agenda, it is not addressed specifically as required in this section. (ii) The criterion clearly state a requirement for evidence that student growth will be a significant factor in evaluating teachers and principals. Yet the application only references the use of student growth as among one of five multiple measures, listed as the last measure throughout, without any evidence to indicate whether the State intends to put significant weight on student growth in the context of the other measures. However, the initiatives underway in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh suggest that the State's two largest school districts are focused on multi-measure systems for teacher and principal evaluations using student growth as a significant factor. The plan is silent on how the State might later leverage the lessons learned from these efforts into a statewide agenda. (iii) The narrative, exhibits and appendices provide evidence of the State's commitment and plans which meet the criterion for annual evaluations and the use of feedback. (iv) The application effectively addresses how evaluations are intended to be used for developing teachers and principals. The plans for implementing a statewide utilization of evaluations for compensating and promoting teachers and principals is over a very extended timetable demonstrating a weak commitment on the part of the State's vision. Further, the narrative and supporting appendices fall short of providing robust, clear evidence of the State's plans for utilizing evaluations in determining the granting of tenure and/or full certification and is particularly weak in articulating the specific process, against a reasonable timeframe, for removing ineffective tenured or untenured teachers and principals.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	16	16
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	10	10
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	6	6

(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(i) The application articulates three comprehensive approaches to meet this criterion: increasing the pipeline of effective teachers and leaders; enhancing the skills of the existing workforce; and, exiting from the profession those individuals who prove to be ineffective in raising student achievement. The goal of developing a larger pipeline of effective teachers, largely by increasing the overall number of current teachers who are in the effective teacher category, is credible but does not further specify how effective teachers would be encouraged to relocate, if necessary, to fill the geographic gaps in effective teachers. Further, the burden is placed fully on future activity at the LEA level and the narrative leaves absent any solid evidence of how the state intends to monitor and implement an effective plan. There is no discussion of how the State might intend to intervene when imbalances exist when students in high-poverty and/or high-minority schools who are being taught disproportionately by ineffective teachers. Overall, the plan is coherent and credible in meeting the criterion. (ii) The application addresses the specific details for increasing the number and percentage of effective teachers in the area of ELL but is weak or silent in the other required areas of mathematics, science, and special education.

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	12	12
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(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(i) The application provides evidence of a unique student ID that is assigned to every teacher preparation candidate that will follow him/her into the classroom after graduation. This will allow the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) to link student performance data to the students' teachers and principals and, further, to the in-state preparation programs. In addition, the plan indicates public dissemination of this data. (ii) The application satisfies the criterion and demonstrates some impressive innovation regarding the State's plans for creating a variety of more narrowly-defined degree programs for teachers. The performance targets for implementing this aspect of the State's plan are reasonable and evidence is provided of the State's commitment to expand effective teacher preparation programs. Not as much detail is provided, however, in relation to principal preparation programs.

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	16	16
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(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(i) Pennsylvania's plan indicates creative thinking in terms of providing effective, data-driven support to teachers and principals. The narrative is comprehensive and meets the required criterion. (ii) It is critical that the State have a carefully considered measurement and evaluation system to improve the effectiveness of the described supports linked to student achievement growth. The narrative is somewhat weak in describing how these measurements and evaluations will be developed and implemented that detract from being a high-quality plan.

Total	138	95	95
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E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

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

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

The state presents strong evidence both of its statutory authority to intervene in low-achieving schools and its prior success in doing so. However, the laws are somewhat restrictive as to the extent the State may directly intervene in the lowest-achieving schools.

(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	38	38
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	33	33

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

(i) The State provides evidence of a strong, comprehensive system of identifying lowest-achieving schools across a wide array of metrics. (ii) The application is robust in its clear evidence of a high-quality plan for turning around the lowest-achieving schools. The State has provided exceptional support in recent years to LEAs in achieving the goal of a successful district turnaround though with mixed results. The approaches utilized include essentially two of the school intervention models described in this competition. The State's plan is ambitious, high-quality and innovative.

Total	50	48	48
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F. General

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

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

The 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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Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2

Pennsylvania Application #5520PA-3



A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	60	60	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	43	43	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	12	12	

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(A)(1)(i) The Applicant gives a complete review of the state's work in the four ARRA areas. In addition, the Applicant notes a 100% increase in state funding in less than ten years. (A)(1)(ii) Each of the 179 LEAs (including charter schools) has fully signed (superintendent, school board and union) MOUs, representing statewide: 28% of LEAs, 36% of schools, 38% of K-12 students, and 58% of students in poverty. Detailed table for A1 contains all required information, i.e. LEA demographics, MOU signatures, MOU terms and participation in each applicable Plan Criterion for each of the 179 participating LEAs including the 59 charter schools (129 legally defined LEAs and 59 charter schools identified as LEAs for purposes of this application). (A)(1)(iii) The number of students on grade level in reading and math has increased by nearly 30 percent over the last 7 years, the percent of students in the lowest range, below basic, dropped 63 percent in 5th grade and 54 percent in 8th grade and the percent of students at grade level in 8th grade increased by 40 percent. Required and additional tables with narrative included the following: summary of elements of applicant's reforms, projections of math and reading improvement and reduction in achievement gaps. OThe Applicant offered chart showing increase in math and reading achievement and with and without RTTT funds (RTTT funds would accelerate increased achievement according to the Applicant). Some points were deducted for the large number of LEA union representatives who did not sign the MOU. To the state's (and union's) credit, union presidents of the two largest districts, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, did sign the MOU. All required table information as evidence for (A)(1)(ii) and (A)(1)(iii) are provided with appropriate narratives.

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	24	24	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	15	15	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	9	9	

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

(A)(2)(i) Applicant states that over past seven years it has changed from traditional State Education Department (SED) monitoring role to that of a Technical Assistance (TA) provider. An RTTT initiatives organization chart is provided in Exhibit 5. Well thought out, it includes, in addition to the State Board of Education and leadership of the applicant, offices and positions to be newly created: a Director of a newly developed Consortium for Education Research, Evaluation and Policy Analysis, an office of RTTT Project Management with a RTTT Project Director, and Charter office Director. Other existing bureaus will also become part of the RTTT department and under the project manager, the following tools and resources are

listed that form the basic implementation core: Getting Results! an extensive online strategic planning tool found in Appendix 8, a longitudinal data system Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS), the Pennsylvania Value-Added Assessment System (PVAAS) that provides student growth data to districts (*not yet linked to teachers), the Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtII) framework and professional development, the Standards Aligned System (SAS) and the tools and resources of the SAS Portal, a comprehensive instructional improvement system (to be developed) that will align standards, assessments, curriculum framework, instruction, materials and resources and interventions. The 29 Intermediate Units (IU) and the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN), are the two arms of the applicant already in existence that will provide major TA in the field. The number of IUs will be increased with RTTT funds. However, there is no discussion of their effectiveness in the field as evidenced by PD evaluation surveys, etc. The IUs are discussed throughout the application and their effectiveness is a concern as so much of the TA depends on this mechanism. (A)(2)(ii) Exhibit 6 details letters of support from 144 entities, including legislative/governmental agencies, Teachers' Union, IHEs and other postsecondary institutions, Early Childhood Organizations, Education Organizations, and the Business Community. Bi-partisan legislative/governmental support will help sustain the initiative through the gubernatorial change in 2011.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	19	19
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	4	4
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	15	15

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(A)(3)(i) Significant progress has been made in the four education reform areas: Common Standards and Assessments, Data Systems to Support Instruction, Great Teachers and Leaders, and Turning Around the Lowest Performing Schools. One concern is the reduction in class size in grades K-3 that is cited as evidence in this criterion. While a "rule" at the state level, district-by-district and school-by-school, particularly in low achieving schools, this rule can often be bent. Some sort of assurance that "bending" of a class size restriction rule in such a crucial area as class size in the early grades would be important to help guarantee continued increased student achievement and reduction in achievement gaps. (A)(3)(ii) It appears that sustained growth on the NAEP is somewhat elusive. According to the most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results, Pennsylvania's scores on 4th grade math and 8th grade reading and math are significantly higher than they were in 2003 (see Exhibit 7). The 4th grade reading scores suggest a positive, though not statistically significant, upward trend. The NAEP data also suggest that the achievement gap between White and African-American students has declined over time, with statistically significant decreases in 4th grade math and 8th grade reading gaps over the past decade.

Total	125	103	103
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B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards	40	40	40	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20	20	
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20	20	

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(B)(1)(i)(a) The Applicant signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Common Core Standards Initiative. In June 2009, the Applicant adopted revised core-curriculum content standards in seven of nine

areas. The process and organizational infrastructure that resulted from the revision of the standards in the other content areas will be extremely valuable in the transition to the common standards in language-arts literacy and mathematics. (B)(1)(i)(b) The Common Core Standards Initiative is a consortium comprised of 48 states. (B)(1)(ii)(a) In the narrative, the applicant presents a detailed timeline beginning in October, 2009 and culminating in an April 21, 2010 resolution presented to the State Board of Education to adopt the Common Core Mathematics and English Language Arts Standards.

(B)(2) Developing and Implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	8	8
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

B2-The applicant is a member of three different assessment consortia and one partnership that should provide sufficient quality assessments for the applicant to adopt. Missing is any discussion/plan for reviewing and combining the best components of the four into one viable statewide assessment system.

(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	15	15
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(B)(3) Regarding step 3 implementation: PD on new standards and assessments appears to use 'basic' methods of training; i.e. "district staff will conduct curriculum mapping", which may not be sufficient for this program. The applicant will rely on their Standards Aligned Systems Portal (SASP) as the "major delivery mechanism for the revised standards and assessments". This SASP needs more explanation and statistics regarding its use by districts, schools and teachers. A survey of district- and building-level use by staff and improvements requested is needed. States tend to implement from the top down and then assume that their procedures are in place and being utilized in the manner they were designed, which is often not the case. Clarification regarding how the Intermediate Units (IUs) (mentioned earlier in this proposal - A1), operate is also required. Regarding training design chart the assumption is that the applicant will conduct the various levels of training, from district to parents, since no other entity is named. With 120 LEAs in this RTTT, it appears to be impossible for this to occur. Therefore, further detail is required as to how this important PD will be delivered using methods proven to provide ongoing support for implementation of new standards and assessments.

Total	70	63	63
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C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	16	16	

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The applicant has completed eight of the twelve America COMPETES elements demonstrating its commitment to a statewide longitudinal data system. Of the four yet to be completed, two are in a partial phase and two have not yet begun. The applicant submitted an SLDS proposal to the ED on December 9, 2009, which if funded, will support the completion of the four remaining elements as well as enhancing many of the already completed elements. There was no discussion on funding for the incomplete elements if the ED proposal is not successful.

(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	4	4
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The applicant has a fairly extensive, thoughtful plan for instituting mechanisms that will promote ease of access to their statewide longitudinal data system. The two-part plan includes an integrated online portal and a statewide consortium. It is noted that the applicant acknowledges the difference between providing access to data and providing usable information for the end-user; from students, to researchers to the business community, many of whom are not data savvy. Timelines are included along with two examples of how the data from the portal might look. The plan also includes sharing knowledge gained from consortia members. However, missing is any discussion for training of the multiple end-users described as the applicant's audience.

(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	14	14
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(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The applicant has a good plan for rollout and introductory training of staff on use of the many online tools to be developed. Ideas that particularly stand out as both useful and attainable are: classroom- and district-level dashboards, model early warning system and the screenshot. All will be useful IF staff at all levels become comfortable with the technology. A "stroke and poke" method may be useful; as these tools are 'mandated' for use in RTTT LEAs and schools, staff also could be rewarded with ongoing training, use of a buddy system and hands-on TA provided on call. One major weakness is the "school preparation week" where teachers will review student data for instructional planning one week before school opens. Teachers should be planning over the summer for the students they will have in the fall. One week before school opens is not enough time to plan adequately for new students, especially in light of the many new tools staff will have to learn to use to improve their planning and delivery of instruction.

Total	47	34	34
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D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	16	16	

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The applicant has alternative routes to certification for teachers, but not for principals by organizations that are not connected to IHEs. The alternative for teachers are discussed and charted in exhibit 13. An honest response was offered by the applicant in the discussion of educator turnover in urban schools. It was noted that although the applicant conducts annual reports of shortages, the real number may be much higher in urban schools for both teachers and administrators and that the upcoming improved system of data collection (as presented in C3 of this application), focused on effectiveness will result in a more accurate count.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	52	53	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	3	3	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	14	14	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	10	10	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	25	26	

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

(D)(2)(i) –The only discussion offered by the applicant regarding criterion D2i (clear approaches to measuring student growth for each individual student) is that there is "no statute, regulation or legal barriers

prohibit the linkage of teacher data with student performance". (D)(2)(ii),(iii) Applicant has a strong plan to develop an annual, multi-measure evaluation system for both teachers and principals with an achievable timeline. These evaluations will be developed with input of union leaders and LEA staff. Consideration has been given to multiple evaluation measures such as: providing five levels of evaluation; identification of teachers on a "growth" or an "improvement" track; and standards for evaluation that include planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, professional responsibilities and student growth. The applicant will collect and make public teacher and principal summary evaluation data for all LEAs. (D)(2)(iv) – The applicant intends for all RTTT participating schools to develop and submit to the applicant, a "human capital plan". The concept of a "human capital plan " is a good one. Focusing on the above noted areas form a strong framework to begin real 'professionalization' of the profession. Once a weeding out process of ineffective educators becomes actualized, schools and LEAs will be able to begin the important work of changing the culture and climate of schools and districts that can pave the way for more effectively functioning schools. Secondly, increasing the pipeline and improving the skills of the current workforce are also vitally important. There are people who want to teach, and welcome the challenge of working in hard-to-staff areas. Creating incentives along with alternative routes to certification can ease their transition to the field. They must then be provided with the supports required to be successful during their first three years as an educator. This plan is strengthened by the inclusion of a mentoring program in which the mentors must be evaluated as "highly effective" teachers, to ensure mentees receive mentoring from the best teachers. According to the applicant, the human capital plan must address three critical elements: - Increasing the pipeline of effective teachers and leaders, - Enhancing the skills of the existing workforce through job embedded professional development and individualized professional growth plans, - Exiting from the profession those individuals who prove to be ineffective in raising student achievement. Some of the areas the plan will include are: signing bonuses and cohort hiring, mentoring and career ladder, and an urban principal program. Part of this plan relies on use of the previously referred to Intermediate Unit (IU) trainers. Not enough information regarding the IUs has been shared in this application to verify whether or not this IU entity is sufficiently staffed currently for the existing workload. For example, in this section, the applicant states that 111 data facilitators will be required to deliver job-embedded professional development to principals and teachers in the 1150 schools in participating districts and charter schools.

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

The state panelists provided information clarifying the Intermediate Units, resulting in an increase of one point.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	21	21
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	15	15
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	6	6

(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(D)(3)(i)The Applicant plans to ensure the equitable distribution of teachers and principals in high-poverty and/or high-minority schools by: 1) Increasing the pipeline of effective teachers and leaders, 2) Enhancing the skills of the existing workforce through job embedded professional development and individualized professional growth plans, and, 3) Exiting from the profession those individuals who prove to be ineffective in raising student achievement. Each of these goals is supported by a number of strategies. An Overview of Strategies to Ensure Equitable Distribution of Highly Effective Teachers and Principals is included in the narrative in Table 5. Required performance measures for this criterion is also presented in the narrative. (D)(3)(ii) The Applicant plans to increase the number and percentage of effective teachers teaching hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas including mathematics, science, and special education by: 1) Increasing the pipeline of effective teachers and leaders, 2) Enhancing the skills of the existing workforce through job embedded professional development and individualized professional growth plans, and, 3) Exiting from the profession those individuals who prove to be ineffective in raising student achievement. Each of these goals

is supported by a number of strategies. An Overview of Strategies to Ensure Equitable Distribution of Highly Effective Teachers and Principals is included in the narrative in Table 5. While the strategies cited were good, they did not rise to the level of excellence required to warrant awarding full points in this sub-criterion.

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	12	12
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(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(D)(4) There are no legislative barriers to linking teacher information to student performance data in Pennsylvania and the results will be disseminated through reports and briefs and email announcement to postsecondary institutions, districts, and schools, as well as be made available on the Pennsylvania Department of Education's portal. The Applicant has a multi-faceted plan to address the improvement of the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs. Some of the most promising aspects of the plan are: 1) Baseline Expertise in Special Education and Teaching English Language Learners - all educational certification programs must include a minimum of the equivalent of 9 credit hours focused on special education/diverse learners, and 3 credit hours on teaching English Language Learners by 2011; 2) Appropriate Expertise for All Higher Education Faculty - PDE now requires programs to submit evidence that faculty members teaching in the educational core have content-area expertise for every course that they teach; 3) Dual Certification for Special Education Teachers - all new special education teachers must also obtain certification in either a grade band or as a Reading Specialist.

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	12	12
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(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The applicant discusses many ideas for providing ongoing PD for teachers and principals, such as expanding the Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership (PIL) program, a management program in conjunction with GE, job-embedded PD for teachers of ELL students. Much of this section will be funded by RTTT. The term, "job-embedded PD" is used often, however, no mention is made regarding any of the many concerns related to implementing job-embedded PD, e.g. released time for students (and all that entails), extended school days (zero hour) and will teachers have to be paid to attend, required schedule changes to accommodate the PD, etc. While most of these details will be handled at the local level, acknowledgement of the complex nature of job-embedded PD, valuable as it may be, should at least be mentioned.

Total	138	113	114
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E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

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

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

(E)(1) The applicant presented statutory evidence of the ability to intervene directly in LEAs and schools (24 P.S. § 17-1705-B(b)). The state has the authority to intervene directly in the lowest performing LEAs and, in certain circumstances, to intervene directly in schools within those LEAs noted in Exhibit 17 in the narrative. The state may take over districts that fail to make the requisite improvement via an appointed State Board of Control.

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

(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



Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2

Pennsylvania Application #5520PA-4



A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	65	65	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	45	45	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	15	15	

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

i- The State has presented a reform agenda that builds on current successful efforts and is supported by significant constituencies in the state. The reform agenda is bold and far-reaching, and calls for doubling achievement levels by 2014. The primary area of focus include rigorous academic expectations and assessments, quality teaching and school leadership, high quality data systems and extending educational opportunities for all. This reform agenda meets the requirements of (A) (1) (i). ii- Commitment to the plan includes a large number of LEAs, including both Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, and the MOU requires Union leadership signatures to be a part of the effort. Signatures are universal for all involved LEAs and 100% signings have been reported in the summary table in this section of the application. The number of participating LEAs includes 38% of all students and 58% of students in poverty. iii- Signatures have been obtained from the appropriate people to make the reform effort successful- Governor, SBE, Chief State School Officer, Teacher organizations, and legislative leaders. Especially noteworthy is the recognition, as stated in the application, that the Governor has only one year left on his term, and thus a real effort has been made to obtain strong commitment so there is no drop off in support from a new administration. Full points are awarded.

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

The State Panel's explanation of student outcomes was especially elusive around NAEP results and appeared to contradict the information in the application. Therefore, no changes are made in this score.

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	30	30
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	20	20
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	10	10

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

(i) Pennsylvania has outlined a detailed, comprehensive and realistic plan to ensure it has the capacity required in its proposed reform plans. The number and types of capacity building/sustaining initiatives already in place are impressive, ranging from a Value-Added Assessment System to professional development, collaborations and partnerships that will help with capacity building. The strong leadership of the Department of Education and the teams assigned by the Department to implement the education reform

plans are outlined in detail. In addition, the variety of support mechanisms for LEAs, from professional development to tools and resource, strongly supports the efforts towards implementation. Pennsylvania has a long and positive record of grant implementation, due in part to the operations and processes developed and in place within DOE. The budget as presented represents a strong effort to meet the goals of the grant, and the recognition of efforts to achieve sustainability are outlined in the grant. Full points are awarded. (ii) Ample evidence is provided to demonstrate broad stakeholder support, especially in light of a change in the Governor's role next year. Broad bi-partisan support, as evidenced by signatures of minority and majority leaders in the legislature, attest to support for implementing the proposed reform agenda. Furthermore, the staggered nature of State Board seats guarantees continuity over time.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	20	20
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	4	4
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	16	16

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(i)- The application provides a variety of information that clearly shows real progress over time in three of the four reform areas, the one exception being turning around persistently low performing schools. In this reform area there is no data provided about exactly what the success rate has been via state intervention and improvement. In all other reform areas the application provides detailed information about their progress to date. Four points are awarded for (A)(3)(i) (ii)- Pennsylvania's improvement overall in the last seven years is remarkable. While there are still large number of children scoring below proficiency, the rate of improvement on both NAEP and local assessments is quite positive. The level of improvement on 4th and 8th grade math and 8th grade reading is positive, while 4th grade reading remained statistically flat. Local assessments mirror NAEP trends. In the area of reducing the achievement gap, there is no statistically significant reduction of gaps (even though subgroups have improved over time) on NAEP. State trends tend to be more positive on subgroup gaps. Graduation rates are also reported to have increased over time. While student enrollment has declined over time, 20,000 more students graduated from Pennsylvania's high schools in 2007-08 than in 1997-98. This is clear progress. A total of 16 points is awarded with 4th grade NAEP reading and subgroup performance issues being reflected in the total score. Increases of an even larger amount are reported over time on the state assessment.

Total	125	115	115
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B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards	40	40	40	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20	20	
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20	20	

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(i)- Pennsylvania is one of the 48 states involved in the Common Core initiative. (ii)- The state outlines the role of the State Board of Education to speed up rule making around the new standards, provided they are no less rigorous than Pennsylvania's current (revised) standards. The state's adoption process is entirely appropriate and meets the requirements of (B)(1)(ii).

(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	10	10
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The state has joined three consortia to work on assessment systems, including the Balanced Assessment Consortium (30 states), the Common Assessment Consortium(12 states) and MOSAIC(26 states). They are also members of the America Diploma Project. MOUs are provided in the Appendix .

(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	20	20
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Pennsylvania's plan includes a three-step transition process that includes adopting new common standards and creating new assessments, integrating the standards/assessments, and providing technical assistance, coaching and tools to enhance implementation. The plan is credible and sufficient to meet the requirements of (B)(3).

Total	70	70	70
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C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	16	16	

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The state meets eight of the twelve elements and is thus awarded sixteen points.

(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	5	5
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Pennsylvania appears to have developed a most comprehensive and sophisticated longitudinal data systems that incorporate the availability of data as a foundation of their system. They have developed the State Longitudinal Data System that incorporates a Standards Aligned System (SAS) for online, real-time school and district records. Thus, the high quality plan described in (C)(2) has already been implemented in large scale in Pennsylvania. The state's next steps of their plan incorporate a three-fold process designed to expand and provide even further outreach in the future.

(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	15	15
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(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Pennsylvania's plan to increase the use of instructional improvement systems is titled the Comprehensive Instructional Improvement System. The system will combine demographic, academic and other data to enhance educators' ability to meet individual student needs. The plan will increase the acquisition, adoption and use of local instructional improvement systems (i) by building on existing tools and resources and expanding these efforts to reach more teachers, principals and administrators. Especially noteworthy is the model early warning system- using data to alert teachers and principals of students who appear to be 'in trouble' and may need early intervention. The plan also includes professional development involving weekly and bi-weekly sessions to help educators incorporate the system into their instructional design. (ii) The resources and tools Pennsylvania has developed and proposes to expand are impressive. The one missing element in this plan is the evaluation component- the evaluation of various activities, professional development and tools is never mentioned in the application. (iii) A total of fifteen points is awarded for (C) (3)

Total	47	36	36
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D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	10	10	

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(i) - As stated in the application, Pennsylvania has the legal authority to permit alternative routes to certification, but implementation appears to be mixed at best. Furthermore, this legal authority is granted for teachers but not administrators. The application is awarded three points. (ii) - There are no alternative routes in use for administrators, and the routes for teachers are confined to degree granting institutions. Pennsylvania reports a long history of alternative certification availability, but also states that they produce a surplus of teachers every year and as a result there is not the sense of urgency that might be found in other states. Three points are awarded for (D)(1)(ii). (iii) - Pennsylvania's extensive student information system and tools that link data to performance provides the state with a means of already collecting information to monitor, evaluate and identify teacher and principal shortages. This extensive data, combined with a set of activities and proposals, is presented as the plan in this area. There is no set timeline and no evaluation effort in this plan. Four points are awarded for (D)(1)(iii).

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	44	44
(i) Measuring student growth	5	4	4
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	10	10
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	10	10
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	20	20

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

(i) - Pennsylvania reports the ability to link student growth to educator performance, but needs to explain in further detail how they will measure student growth. Four points are awarded. (ii) The state, through RttT funding, plans to create a 'robust' teacher evaluation system that is annual, links student data and involved a two-tiered categorization for teachers. Of special note is a statewide union agreement to be actively involved in creating this new evaluation system. A multi-step, multi-measure principal evaluation system is also discussed- however, there is no mention of the kind of principal involvement in the design of the evaluation system as had been mentioned for teachers. Ten points are awarded for (D)(2)(ii). (iii) - The commitment to annual evaluations that include student data is adequate to meet the requirements of this part of (D) (2) (iii). (iv) - The reform plan outlines extensive plans for assisting teachers related to the evaluations through professional development and other types of support. It appears reasonable to conclude that the focus of this entire evaluation system is assisting teachers in improvement yet forcefully removing them if they are not able to make improvements. The same description applies to principal evaluations. Furthermore, the commitment to the connection of tenure and full certification based on rigorous standards is clearly articulated. The description of plans related to compensation, promotion and retention of teachers and principals is vague, non-committal and inadequate. Such words as "thoughtful options", "will work with external experts to design a model" are simply inadequate, and given the detailed description of most plans in this application, this is a weakness of the proposal. Twenty points are awarded for (D)(2)(iv).

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	19	19
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	15	15

(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and speciality areas	10	4	4
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(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(i)- The state's application outlines three critical elements they will address in their plan to ensure equitable distribution of teachers and principals. These include increasing the number of effective teachers and leaders, enhancing skills of existing workforce and removing those who are not effective in raising student achievement. From signing bonuses to internships and career ladders, the state has outlined a number of new initiatives designed to create equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals. Many of their plans build on successes already in place, especially in the data area. Full points are awarded (ii) Increasing the number and percentage of effective teachers in hard-to-staff subjects and speciality areas will be accomplished through the new evaluation system and through a variety of new certification initiatives currently being developed (and implemented in some cases). There is very little discussion about how to identify and remove ineffective teachers in hard-to-staff schools and subject areas, and the plan in Table 5 does not even mention this topic. Four points are awarded for (D)(3) (ii)

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	9	9
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(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(i) The fact that Pennsylvania can currently assign every teacher preparation candidate a student identifier that will follow him/her into the classroom is an enormous factor in being able to actually make this happen. The real question is how long it will take for the state to formally do so, and while the application talks about next step, there is not a firm commitment in writing to making this happen, and the plan with concrete timelines extends well into 2013. Four points are awarded in this area. (ii) Expanding preparation and credentialing options is a real strength of this application as evidenced by the expanded options and the pre-baccalaureate program revisions that are significantly changing the preparation programs in the state. Alternative forms of credentialing are not discussed. Five points are awarded in this area.

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	14	14
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(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(i)- The state has provided a plan that appears to be effective and appropriate to support teachers and principals. Once again Pennsylvania builds on many existing resources and tools, including its data reporting capabilities, to give real time information to help teachers and principals adjust instruction accordingly. From embedded job support to Turnaround Officers in schools, the state appears committed to helping educators grow as professionals. (ii)- Evaluation is mentioned in the plan related to effectiveness of professional development, but little mention is made of evaluating other tools and resources. Four points are awarded.

Total	138	96	96
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E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

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

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

Clear evidence is provided about the legal authority to intervene directly in the State's persistently lowest-achieving schools and LEAs in this category.

(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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Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2

Pennsylvania Application #5520PA-5



A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it	65	62	62	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	45	45	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	12	12	

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

This state presents a compelling picture of its coordinated strategy for education improvement in a succinct and clear manner. It appears to have thought through each step where teachers may need help in meeting the needs of their students as they strive for stronger performance outcomes. The state is signing on to common standards, and has full political support for its goals. (ii) 28% of LEAs signed the MOU, with 100% of those committing to meet the goals and numeric targets of the application. There is a much more intensive MOU for Turnaround schools. With the two largest districts participating, 58% of students in poverty will be represented by LEAs participating in the activities of this RttT proposal. What is impressive is that the state has set building-level growth targets for each of its participating districts and stipulated that districts would risk losing subsequent year RttT funds if they failed to meet their performance targets, and that they could receive additional financial rewards if they exceed their targets. (iii) With just 28% of LEAs participating, and 58% of children in poverty represented, there is some concern whether the impact from the RttT effort will be translated into statewide impact. But the state sets ambitious yet achievable goals for performance statewide, and it could be expected that with participation of the two largest districts, the push for performance will bring other LEAs along too. It is also feasible that it is more practical for a large state like Pennsylvania to focus on a sub-set - but still large number (179) of LEAs initially - and then disseminate lessons and practices statewide.

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	29	29	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	19	19	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	10	10	

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

(ia) The application demonstrates that Pennsylvania has considerable experience implementing large-scale educational reform, and has the capacity to implement its plan. It will rely on contractors to either provide training or build computer analysis systems. It would have been helpful to have assurance that such expertise exists on the large scale called for in the proposal and that it could be of proven high quality and expertise. They will establish a Strategic Leadership Council to develop and implement strategies and performance goals. The Council will be comprised of business leaders as well as national experts in the core areas of the plan. This high-profile approach will bring another level of fidelity to implementing the proposal. (ib) Using the information systems that are in place or will be built with RttT funding, Pennsylvania is well positioned to support participating LEAs in successfully implementing the proposed education

reforms. They will expand and strengthen the capacity of Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) staff, and accelerate train-the-trainer capacity building and embedding supports in schools. There are concrete plans to provide technical assistance and job-embedded professional development. The Consortium for Pennsylvania Education Research, Evaluation and Policy Analysis will be established as an external research organization to conduct research, evaluation and policy analysis on education programs and reform initiatives to enable data-driven decision making at all levels of the education system. While the purpose of this consortium is broader than to provide LEA support, the information that it generates will likely provide useful feedback to the state and its districts as the work progresses. (ic) In order to ensure appropriate grants administration and oversight, a RttT management team will be established with a Project Director, three analysts and various technical working groups. This approach, building on the experience the state already has in grants management, should ensure appropriate management of the grant. (id) Much of the funding will be allocated to contractors who will design and implement many of the support and data systems proposed. This work is directly related to accomplishing the activities described in the proposal, which is expected to lead to improved student performance. An additional sum will fund the new research consortium, which will contribute to the state's understanding of what works and what does not. Some key ideas, like incentives to teachers getting good AP performance from their students - have very small allocations (\$50/teacher, for example). It is also not clear how supporting a Charter School director will help the state accomplish its goals. Charter schools are not a specific strategy for meeting their goals. (ie) The state's reforms have bipartisan political support to maintain reform efforts after the grant ends. (ii) There is wide stakeholder support for the proposal. The MOUs contained 100% support from local teachers' union leaders. The 144 letters of support are broad based, including legislative/government, postsecondary institutions, early childhood organizations, education organizations, the business

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	19	19
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5	5
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	14	14

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The proposal clearly describes the progress the state is making in each of the ARRA reform areas and provides evidence of the strides they are making. With regard to improving student outcomes, Pennsylvania is making progress in 4th grade math and 8th grade reading. The achievement gap closed slightly on some NAEP measures too. But achievement gaps remain large. Graduation rates have remained the same.

Total	125	110	110
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B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards	40	40	40	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20	20	
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20	20	

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The state is participating in the CCSSO Common Core State Standards Initiative, which includes a majority of states. The State Board of Education is ready to consider their adoption on the condition that they (a) have the opportunity for public vetting and (b) that they will be no less rigorous than their about-to-be

approved new revised standards. Indeed, they withdrew moving forward with their own revised standards in September, 2009 to await the opportunity to incorporate the new Common Core Standards.

(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	10	10
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

They have joined three consortia that are working on common assessments, two of which include a majority of states.

(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	17	17
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The state has a strong vision of transmission of materials via their Standards Aligned System (SAS) portal. They plan to revise all of this system's components (via contractors) for alignment. They plan to extend this alignment into higher education and intend to have their assessments serve as placement exams. In addition, at the other end of the pipeline, they plan to develop and institute a kindergarten assessment. All educators will be trained through support from district staff. This will include time for principals and teachers to collaborate. Principals will be assigned responsibility for guiding and supporting their teachers. No further details are provided about how this process will be implemented and supported to ensure that it is done with fidelity and is effective. However, they provide performance measures that promise full implementation of training on the Standard Aligned System (SAS) by 2014.

Total	70	67	67
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C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(C)(1) Fully Implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	16	16	

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

Pennsylvania has eight of the 12 data elements in place.

(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	5	5
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The Research Consortium idea fits in well here. They are right that the public cannot (and should not) access complex unit-record data sets. And designing what used to be called 'management information systems' are expensive and often less useful than hoped. So this is a sensible approach to access. Their districts/schools/teachers, on the other hand, will ostensibly be well trained to use data for instructional improvement.

(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	18	18
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(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The state is developing an elaborate Standards Alignment System and this is the state's area of great strength. It is also where they are putting much of their budget - to update alignments and train teachers in the use of data.

Total	47	39	39
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D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	8	8	
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
(i) Statute restricts options for PA so they cannot offer certification without an IHE pathway. (ii) They do have fast-track alternative pathways within postsecondary programs that attract mid-career and career-changers. But their criteria for entry are quite low (BA + experience). A medium score is assigned. (iii) With regard to assessing shortage areas, PA's method is narrow - those holding emergency certification. The state does expect to have an opportunity to modify this when effectiveness becomes part of the evaluation process. But at this time, (iii) earns a medium score.				
(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	53	57	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	1	5	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	15	15	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	10	10	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	27	27	

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

(i) This state can match students to teachers, but is only just beginning to do so in its largest districts. (ii) Their development plan includes student growth information (quantitative and qualitative), along with other measures, and warrants a strong score. The state's plan to develop collaboratively, and with the help of vendors, a multi-measure evaluation process for all teachers and principals is clearly spelled out, as is their intent to require participating districts to develop a human capital plan including use of evaluations. (iii) The MOU requires conducting annual evaluations, and all LEAs agree to do this. (iv) All LEAs also agree to use evaluations to inform key decisions (MOU). In large states like this one, it will be hard to ensure compliance at the district level, and the proposal does not identify how compliance will be enforced. Targets are ambitious yet reasonable, if there is a way of transparently ensuring that evaluations are rigorously applied.

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

The state panelists explained the work that is going on to develop a thorough value-added growth measure, and how the approach will be implemented across participating districts by 2011. The score is raised to reflect this effort.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	19	19	
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	12	12	
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	7	7	

(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

The state plans to implement three elements of a comprehensive human capital system to address the equitable distribution of effective teachers in high-poverty or high-minority schools - increasing the pipeline of effective teachers and leaders, professional development and individualized professional growth plans, and termination for those who prove to be ineffective in raising student achievement. The support structures that the state intends to implement contain some interesting components. Turnaround Academies, in

particular, may hold the promise of building a cadre of teachers who are well positioned to work successfully in struggling schools, if these Academies are rigorous and supported by faculty of the highest quality. The proposal does not provide information on how it will ensure the equitable distribution of principals, although it does set performance measures. It would have been useful to know how they intend to move towards reaching those targets. Since there is currently no information on the distribution of highly effective and ineffective teachers and principals, the state proposes quite modest performance measures for the distribution of highly effective and ineffective teachers and principals that seem reasonable. The state will support already certified teachers seeking add-on certification in order to teach additional subject areas. The legislature is considering a residency certification program for candidates with more than five years of work experience and a degree in a relevant content area that will focus on teacher shortages in math and science. In addition, professional development in ELL instruction will be targeted to 250 schools reaching 63% of ELL students through ELL coaches who will be able to provide embedded staff professional development. Performance measures for (ii) are provided. Without baseline data, it would have been helpful to have known how the annual targets were developed - the proportions expected to be effective as of 2010-2011 may be high.

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	7	7
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(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

There is an excellent SLDS that can follow new teachers from their preparation program into the classroom. Their plan to create evaluation standards and metrics for teacher preparation programs under the leadership of their proposed Consortium holds great promise for not only the state, but as a national model. HE faculty will also be required to have content-area expertise in the courses they teach. This is a major breakthrough and needs to be celebrated loudly. Principal preparation programs are not addressed, with the exception of performance measures. Performance measures for public access to data on teacher and principal preparation programs' graduates are targeted to be 100% by 2014, which shows strong commitment to meeting this criterion. The proposal does not address (ii).

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	20	20
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(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(i) The state has a strong plan to link data to improvement. Teachers and principals will receive training in how to use data, data will be used to evaluate not only teachers and principals, but to identify group professional development (PD) needs. The increased oversight of PD programs is an important component of the pipeline of effective support. The State's plan to use the same mechanism for PD credit approval as is being developed for its preparation programs is a great move. (ii) The proposed Consortium will evaluate the effectiveness of PD programs based on student growth.

Total	138	107	111
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E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

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

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

Pennsylvania can intervene directly in LEAs, and in schools within LEAs in certain circumstances.

(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	30	40
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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 RtT 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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