



Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2

New Jersey Application #3550NJ-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	24	38	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	15	25	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	4	8	

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

A 1 (i)

The New Jersey (NJ) proposal provides examples of the State's historical record of state reform and improvement efforts, such as

- “Pioneering the use of alternative-route teacher certification,
- Being the first state to take direct administrative control of failing school districts, and
- Being one of the first states to pass charter school legislation.”

The NJ proposal includes the following objectives that will be pursued even if the NJ proposal isn't funded:

- “Incorporate the Common Core into New Jersey’s high-quality academic standards;
- Develop and support multiple, curriculum-embedded assessments that support instruction, analysis, and accountability;
- Deploy a cloud-based data system that supports longitudinal analysis, management of effectiveness, and instructional improvement;
- Create evaluation systems for teachers, principals and school district leaders that are based upon student achievement;
- Implement merit pay and equitable distribution incentives for teachers and leaders;
- Do what it takes to boldly turn around the most struggling schools and districts; and
- Sustain reform conditions to advance and improve educational services across the state.”

The NJ proposal meets the maximum criteria (5) for this criterion based on its outstanding, historical leadership in reform efforts and its carefully developed plans to address the major features of Race to the Top.

A 1 (ii)

New Jersey was able to obtain strong support for its proposal from a significant number of agencies and organizations, including the American Federation of Teachers, (AFT) but, not, however, from the state’s National Education Agency (NEA) affiliates.

As noted in the proposal, only 387 districts out of 656 districts, 59.1 percent of possible involved LEAs, have agreed to participate in New Jersey's reform effort. Of the 387 participating LEAs, only four "Local Teachers' Union Leaders" have provided signatures, representing one percent of possible local union leaders.

New Jersey notes that even with the reduced NEA support, "roughly 950,000 students are represented, including 74.8 percent of the high poverty population in New Jersey."

The rating for this criteria is in the low, medium range (15) on the basis that only 59.1 percent of LEAs have signed MOUs and only four (one percent) of the local teachers' union leaders have signed the MOUs. This lack of greater involvement will challenge NJ's efforts to meet its goals.

A 1 (iii)

New Jersey notes that only the participating districts (387 districts out of 656 districts) would receive \$100,000 grants. These funds, designed to support LEA RTTT activities will be denied to the 269 districts that have chosen not to participate in this proposal.

The RTTT goals, (adopting internationally benchmarked standards... , building data systems,,, , increasing teacher effectiveness... , and turning around its lowest achieving schools) even if accomplished in participating districts will not reach its full statewide impact because of the significant number of school districts that are not participating, plus the even greater number of local teacher union leaders.

Since New Jersey was unable to obtain the support from 269 school districts, the large number of nonparticipating school districts and teachers is the basis for a low, medium score.

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

A 1 ii

Based on the panel's presentation, New Jersey reports that the implementation of the state's reform efforts can take place even with little support from local unions. While the lack of union support may create some problems, it now seems that implementation can proceed with the existing LEA commitment.

A 1 iii

Based on the State's presentation, New Jersey clarified its commitment from its 387 LEAs to the State's reform effort.

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	24	24	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	20	20	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	4	4	

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

A 2 (i)

The NJ notes that RTT will have three and a half years of consistent, dedicated administrative support because the Governor and the Chief State School Officer, both took office in 2010.

To ensure the capacity to implement the proposal, the Department of Education is reorganizing around the RTTT priorities, The position of Chief RTTT Officer (CRO) that will be responsible for implementing the RTTT priorities and for ensuring compliance with federal guidelines will be established. The CRO will be supported by two Project Managers and a fiscal manager, who report directly to the Commissioner. In addition, a range of state offices will be assigned specific responsibility for implementing RTTT, along with 21 Executive County Superintendents.

The state will fund the hiring or designation of one full-time staff member in each county (two in four most populous counties) who will be responsible for oversight and engagement of superintendents or district staff on RTTT reforms. These RTTT Coordinators will report to the Executive County Superintendents but day-to-day activities will be directed by the NJDOE Chief Race to the Top Officer to ensure aligned and consistent support for all the districts, schools, and students. New Jersey has a high quality plan for managing the implementation of RTTT, marred only by the large number of school districts that have chosen not to participate.

New Jersey is requesting \$399 million from RTTT to be spent primarily on getting good teachers to the neediest classrooms and on transfers to participating LEAs. Fifty percent of the funds will be distributed to LEAs. The remaining 50% will be spent on key projects:

- 1) RTTT Administration: \$16.8M for stakeholder communication, county-level implementation support, and project oversight;
- 2) Supplemental Funding to Participating LEAs: \$31M to ensure every Participating LEA receives at least \$100,000 over the course of the grant;
- 3) Data Systems: \$47.4M to complete the development of the State Longitudinal Data System and deploy the Instructional Improvement System;
- 4) Curriculum and Assessment Enhancement: \$20.5M to improve the NJ assessment systems, provide curricular support to the Common Core standards, and develop the State evaluation system;
- 5) Teacher Effectiveness: \$63.5M to provide merit pay and incentives for equitable distribution of effective teachers;
- 6) Virtual Schooling: \$5.4M to provide virtual classes in high-needs subjects (including STEM) to at-risk students; and
- 7) School Turnarounds: \$14.5M to turn around our lowest-performing schools.

New Jersey intends to implement its reforms through NJDOE and LEA action, through regulatory revisions proposed to the State Board, and then ultimately through State legislation.

While many of the NJ costs are "front-loaded" – e.g., the development of curriculum and assessment components, longitudinal data tracking and instructional improvement system development, professional development transitions, and the creation of new assessment and evaluation frameworks.

After RTTT funding ends, NJ will be able to incorporate these activities into the state budget. Nonetheless, certain expenses will increase over time. NJ is committed to incorporating these expenses into the state budget.

NJ is proposing a high quality plan for administering its proposal, for funding its major elements, and for maintaining funding for RTTT priorities after the federal funding is over.

A 2 (ii)

As noted previously, only 387 districts out of 656 districts, 59.1 percent of possible involved LEAs, have agreed to participate in New Jersey's reform effort. Of the 387 participating LEAs, only four "Local Teachers' Union Leaders" have provided signatures, representing one percent of possible local union leaders.

New Jersey has worked with a number of individuals and organizations in developing its reform efforts and the RTTT proposal. The letters of support in Appendix III reveal broad support for both the state and national efforts. These letters reveal positive "support." They do not describe, however, what these organizations will do. This collection of support letters represents a wide range of organizations, private companies, and even editorials that were published in various newspapers. Again support is not included for NEA school district affiliates.

New Jersey does provide many examples of support; however the lack of support from 269 school districts and the NEA teacher union leaders supports a low rating for this criterion..

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	26	26	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	4	4	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	22	22	

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

A 3 (i)

New Jersey describes its efforts to improve instruction with general references to content ("STEM teacher education" for example is mentioned) but specific details are not provided.

New Jersey provides general rather than the specific information about the development of standards (not the Common Core Standards included in the RTTT criteria).

New Jersey has implemented data systems but the details about what data is collected, and how the data are being used are not included.

New Jersey's major commitment in the area of "teachers and leaders" relates to its alternative certification programs.

NJ addresses this criterion at a medium level.

New Jersey has developed a comprehensive system of supports and monitoring for schools and districts that have been identified for improvement under Title I of ESEA.

While activities related to RTTT priorities, have been addressed by New Jersey, the efforts do not appear to be significant or coordinated as RTTT requires, resulting in a low, medium rating for this criteria.

A 3 (ii)

New Jersey has provided evidence of addressing the following areas since 2003:

Student achievement: On the 2009 National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP) for mathematics, New Jersey 8th graders have improved significantly since 2003. Only two states' students scored better on the eighth-grade test. New Jersey fourth-graders continue to score higher on the NAEP math test than students in all but three other states.

Decreasing achievement gaps: From 2003 to 2007, the achievement gap between black and white students significantly decreased. Black students' scores increased by 12 points, and the gap between black and white students decreased by 10 points. This was the largest gap reduction in the nation, and New Jersey was one of only three states with a 10-point decrease.

High school graduation rates: New Jersey has put in place a data system to track high school graduation rates which will be essential to determine if revised policies will be able to improve existing graduation rates.

These efforts by New Jersey provide evidence for a high quality rating on this criterion.

Total	125	74	88	
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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)				
<p>B 1 (i)</p> <p>New Jersey is participating in a consortium of states (48 states and the District of Columbia) supported by the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Association of Governors Center for Best Practices (Memorandum of Understanding included in Appendix), New Jersey appears to be relying on these organizations to complete the international benchmarking.</p> <p>New Jersey has provided evidence, above, that it meets this criterion at a high.</p>				
<p>B 1 (ii)</p> <p>New Jersey reports a thoughtful and consistent approach to adopting the Common Core Standards for the state through a number of meetings and hearings going back to 2009. Adoption by the State was scheduled for June 10, 2010. The results are not included and should be checked on before funding this proposal.</p> <p>New Jersey provides a high quality response to this criterion.</p>				
(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	10	10	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality assessments	5	5	5	
(ii) Including a significant number of States	5	5	5	
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>B 2 (i)</p> <p>The NJDOE has signed MOUs with two consortia to engage in the system design, including the "Balanced Assessment Consortium," led by Dr. Linda Darling Hammond and Sue Gendron; and the "Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC)," led by Achieve.</p> <p>The examples above support a high quality rating for this criterion.</p>				
<p>B 2 (ii)</p> <p>Twenty-six states are members of the Balanced Assessment Consortium, and 24 are members of the PARCC consortium.</p>				
(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	18	18	
(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>B 3</p>				

New Jersey describes its proposed transition to high quality assessments and enhanced standards and provides significant detail, as required.

“The current process to review and update the New Jersey Core Curriculum Standards will serve as the catalyst for the alignment of the curriculum, instruction, professional development, and assessment systems across the state that students experience from early childhood through high school. Building on the work already underway in New Jersey to assist with all aspects of standards-implementation, with Race to the Top funding, New Jersey will work with local content-area leaders from the LEAs and national experts to create a Curriculum and Assessment Spine – an integrated set of formative-assessment tools.”

New Jersey provides an action plan including a reasonable budget, dates and responsible parties in which it merges its approaches to implementing the Common Core Standards, and the relevant assessments. This example of a high quality plan supports an excellent rating for this criterion.

Total	70	68	68	
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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	14	14	

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

C 1

New Jersey has implemented seven of the 12 elements of a statewide longitudinal data system.

(C)(2) Accessing and using State data

5

4

4

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

C 2

New Jersey has developed a comprehensive system for accessing and providing State data to teachers, administrators, and parents. One aspect of this system ("will design user interfaces to support tablet, netbook, and traditional data views, and encourage LEAs to ensure that every teacher has access to the data systems both at school and at home") is a reflection of the careful planning and foresight that NJ has put into its planning.

The enhanced NJ SMART system will provide web views targeted to each user group: policymakers; school leaders and administrators; and teachers. Key features include:

- A Student Growth Model,
- An Early Warning System,
- On-time Graduation Reporting,
- Post-Secondary Reporting,
- Discipline Reports,
- Aggregate Reporting,.

In addition to these features, during this phase NJ SMART will be enhanced to ensure that it addresses all 12 of the elements required in the America COMPETES Act, including more robust implementations and integrations of some of our existing elements.

NJ provides a high quality plan for assessing and using state data.

(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	14	14	
(i) Increasing the use of instructional improvement systems	6	5	5	
(ii) Supporting LEAs, schools, and teachers in using instructional improvement systems	6	6	6	
(iii) Making the data from instructional improvement systems available to researchers	6	3	3	

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

C 3 (i)

New Jersey is committed to increasing the use of instructional systems.

NJ plans to provide a web-based Instructional-Improvement System (IIS) to all Participating LEAs. Instructional Improvement spans many areas, including collaboration, knowledge management, formative assessment, actionable reporting, and targeted instruction. By providing a seamless platform, presenting the tools to classroom users on both traditional computers and the new generation of highly-usable tablet computers, and getting the right data to the right actors and stakeholders in the system in near-real-time, NJ has a quality plan that should be able to significantly improve the quality of teaching and learning in NJ.

C 3 (ii)

New Jersey has both the technology needed and has presented a management system for delivering instruction improvement systems.

NJ's approach to professional development will focus on system use, user adoption at all levels, and the integration of the system into daily practice. The professional-development modules will be developed by the IIS development vendor in collaboration with, and using input from, the NJ SMART Steering and Stakeholder Committees.

Delivery of the PD modules will be provided via the County Executive Offices. Usage-tracking will be available to monitor access to the system, use of the tools, the extent of user contributions and community participation, and fidelity to guide ongoing professional development. New Jersey recognizes that instructional change requires significant efforts beyond the initial implementation of the IIS. The training will promote collaboration to impact positively the professional development of teachers.

NJ has a comprehensive high quality plan to provide professional development.

C 3 (iii)

New Jersey describes what data will be available to researchers but does not provide a researcher's perspective on what studies the data might be used for and/or what research needs the data will provide. Without this additional information, NJ is worthy of only a medium quality rating for this criterion.

Total	47	32	32	
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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	18	18	

(i) Allowing alternative routes to certification	7	6	6	
(ii) Using alternative routes to certification	7	7	7	
(iii) Preparing teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage	7	5	5	

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

D 1 (i)

New Jersey deserves credit for establishing the nation's first alternative certification program. As noted in the proposal, New Jersey has certified a significant number of teachers who complete some form of alternative preparation. This core of teaching candidates includes significantly higher numbers of minority populations than the prospective teachers prepared in traditional programs.

NJ, also, has preparation programs where a school district principal is responsible for recommending a candidate for certification.

Alternative programs for principals are described in NJ's response to D 1 (ii).

NJ's response includes its rules and regulations that govern their alternative certification programs.

NJ's efforts at establishing alternative certification policies have led the nation and deserve recognition through a high quality rating for this criterion.

D 1 (ii)

New Jersey has since 2003 had alternative certification programs for teachers, principals and since 2008 for school counselors. Detailed descriptions of programs and authorizing language are included.

Again NJ's efforts are worthy of a high quality rating.

D 1 (iii)

New Jersey has what appears to be an excellent process for determining future needs for teachers and principals through both surveys from school districts and by monitoring developing legislation and State rules. The extent to which preparation programs, traditional or alternative, are formed to respond to these needs is not clear.

In teacher-shortage areas, especially, New Jersey continues to work to improve the quality of the pathways through which teachers can become certified. Alternative-route programs are a key pipeline for high-need LEAs, and alternative-route options have been expanded since 2004, with the introduction of targeted alternative-route programs in high-needs subject areas such as Special Education, English as a Second Language, Bilingual Education, World Languages, and most recently, in 2008, career and technical education. In addition, alternative-route pilot programs to increase the number of science and mathematics teachers are currently being implemented.

NJ not only has plans to address shortage areas but also can site examples of programs that have addressed the shortage areas.

Again NJ provides a high quality response to this criteria.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	51	51	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	4	4	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	14	14	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	8	8	

(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	25	25	
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</p> <p>D 2 (i)</p> <p>New Jersey's proposal includes the following, "First, we will measure student academic progress. Second, we will create the nation's finest teacher-evaluation system: a system that is based directly on measures of student academic progress, and on measures of practices that correlate with student academic progress."</p> <p>New Jersey describes how it will measure student growth not only for mathematics and language arts teachers but also for courses and grades for which student growth measures are not commonly used.</p> <p>Of continued concern is the large number of NEA school districts and teachers who may choose not to participate in these activities reducing, the potential for full or successful implementation.</p> <p>D 2 (ii)</p> <p>New Jersey presents a reasonable approach to developing measurement systems.</p> <p>NJ describes an evaluation system for teachers that will be implemented by principals.</p> <p>New Jersey is developing teacher evaluation systems with four categories of effectiveness, through the efforts of collaborative committees.</p> <p>With 269 LEAs not participating, NJ's impact may be limited.</p> <p>D 2 (iii)</p> <p>New Jersey presents two excellent approaches to conducting annual evaluations. First, NJ proposes to field-test an instrument with a limited number of participants. Secondly, NJ makes provisions for repeated reviews and revisions as the evaluation system is implemented.</p> <p>Again the NJ system will be used by principals to evaluate teachers.</p> <p>Of continued concern is the large number of NEA school districts that will not participate will limit the effectiveness and impact of this effort.</p> <p>D 2 (iv)</p> <p>New Jersey is taking controversial and bold steps to change the status quo and make evaluations a consideration for tenure decisions, bonuses for individual teachers, and the criteria for Reductions in Force. As noted in the Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU), participating LEAs will negotiate the agreements that are necessary for the full implementation of the New Jersey Teachers and Leaders plan. LEAs that signed the MOU understand that the failure to use evaluation data to inform professional development, compensation, acquisition of tenure, and to determine whether to initiate action to remove a tenured employee for inefficiency will result in the termination of that district's participation in the RTTT grant.</p> <p>New Jersey describes a series of activities to ensure the equitable distribution of teachers in high-poverty or high-minority schools. They include bonuses for highly effective teachers who transfer to such schools, establishing return rights for these teachers if they wish to return to their previous schools, and recruiting outstanding graduates from colleges such as Princeton and Columbia.</p> <p>With over 40 percent of the LEAs not participating, the potential for statewide impact may be limited.</p>				
(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	13	13	

(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	8	8	
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(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

D 3 (i)

“With the implementation of the state’s new teacher-evaluation system, proposed for the 2012–13 school year, participating LEAs will connect their equitable distribution plans to teacher performance, complete with timelines and goals; and will use the incentive system described above to attract highly-effective teachers and school leaders to, and retain them at, high-poverty, high-minority, and low-achieving schools. As part of these plans, participating LEAs will gather and maintain data on vacancies recruitment, selection, staffing, and educator-effectiveness.”

The NJDOE will also use the LEA equitable-distribution plans to monitor the link between effectiveness data and LEA actions such as tenure decisions, retention programs, and decisions related to professional-development services. Participating LEAs will update and review progress on their plans annually, and will submit them to their county and ultimately the Office of Professional Induction, Development, Evaluation and Certification of the NJDOE for review and approval. As information regarding high performing preparation programs becomes available (in Fall 2013), LEAs will expand their strategies to recruit new and highly-skilled teachers from those programs to fill vacancies. As a part of the monitoring of this work, the NJDOE will withhold a portion of district RTTT funds if the LEA goals for the equitable-distribution plan are not met.

To ensure the effectiveness of these initiatives over the next several years, during the 2013-14 school year the New Jersey State Board of Education will conduct a comprehensive review of its LEA-evaluation system to ensure that students in high-poverty, high-minority schools are not served by ineffective teachers and principals at higher rates than other schools.

New Jersey’s plan to insure the equitable distribution of effective teachers through a variety of initiatives includes: Virtual Learning, special education, mathematics and science programs, Traders to Teachers Program, Progressive Science Initiative, Partnerships with Museums, Companies, and Institutions of Higher Education, World Languages and ESL. These represent a broad approach to ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas.

Of continued concern is the large number of NEA school districts that will not participate in these activities.

NJ presents a high quality plan to insure equitable distribution of effective teachers.

D 3 (ii)

New Jersey will revise its preparation programs based on the evaluation data obtained from the proposed new evaluations for experienced staff. NJ will, also, require that the newly adopted learning standards be incorporated into preservice programs and publicize the results of these programs.

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	14	14	
(i) Linking student data to credentialing programs and reporting publicly	7	7	7	
(ii) Expanding effective programs	7	7	7	

(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

D 4 (i)

New Jersey proposes to link student growth and student achievement data by calculating individual student -growth scores to enable its data system to compile this information and connect it to individual teachers. By 2011-12, NJ will have established growth metrics that include the current statewide annual

assessments, as well as statewide interim assessments for non-tested grades and subjects. Also proposed is the creation of Teacher and Course Modules. The Teacher Module will collect individual teacher-level data such as teaching assignment, highly-qualified status, and credentialing/preparation program information through the integration of K-12 education and the higher education system. The Course Module will collect enrollment information for each section of each class, so that NJDOE will be able to link each student to each course and each teacher. This system will also allow New Jersey to create eTranscripts that compare students' course grades to their end-of-course assessments, and to ultimately study the relationship between students' course-taking patterns and their success in post-secondary institutions and in the workforce.

NJ will, also, require that the newly adopted learning standards be incorporated into preservice programs and publicize the results of these programs.

The NJ high quality plan should accomplish its objectives.

D 4 (ii)

New Jersey will work with the State Board to propose regulations to establish a Preparation Program Effectiveness Evaluation Committee (PPEEC) to develop an evaluation scale that includes key indicators of success in preparation programs. Such indicators will include multiple measures of student achievement, measures of candidates' knowledge of the relevant course content and their pedagogical knowledge, a metric assessing the strength of candidates' clinical experience, and an assessment of the preparation program's systemic use of data for continuous improvement. Once this evaluation system is established, NJDOE will use the system to evaluate teacher- and school-leader-preparation programs in the State.

Once the effectiveness-evaluation framework is adopted, the NJDOE will have a consistent metric to determine which preparation programs are successful at producing effective teachers and principals. Programs exhibiting particular success -- such as, for example, success in specific subject areas -- will be identified, and they will be examined in order to discern the correlating success factors.

In the 2013-14 school year, NJDOE will be able to draw upon two consecutive years of effectiveness data and will publish the complete range of effectiveness data for all preparation programs in order to further program transparency, to allow prospective applicants to make informed decisions, and to provide LEAs with important information about where to recruit teachers and principals. NJ will also work to ensure that prospective students receive this information, so that they will have the opportunity to attend the best possible programs.

As the effectiveness evaluation system is designed and implemented, New Jersey will continue improving preparation programs, as well as working to expand effective ones. NJ will collaborate with traditional- and alternative-preparation programs and routes in order to ensure that incoming teachers are better-prepared for their classrooms by being equipped with the tools and pedagogic routines that are necessary to support student achievement in reading and mathematics.

New Jersey will also leverage existing efforts to have the State Program Approval Council (PAC) embed the Curriculum and Assessment Spine in content-specific standards for preparation programs and LEAs. With these efforts, new teachers will receive the same professional learning that their more-experienced peers are receiving in school settings.

In the above ways, NJ will expand successful options and programs. These efforts represent a high quality effort.

Of continued concern is the large number of NEA school districts that will not participate in these activities.

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	16	16	
(i) Providing effective support	10	8	8	
(ii) Continuously improving the effectiveness of the support	10	8	8	

(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

D 5 (i)

New Jersey State regulations require all teachers to accrue 100 hours of professional-development time every five years, which are tied to teacher evaluations. The regulations also require LEA- and school-based planning for professional learning, and call for teachers to play a key role in the design and review of school-based professional learning opportunities that are specifically tied to student-learning results.

The school-leader professional-development requirement calls for each school leader to develop a professional-growth plan every three years, by working with a team that supports his or her efforts through collegial reflection. This requirement aligns school leaders' learning with their professional standards, the professional-development standards, and each individual's professional-growth plan (PGP). Every three years, school leaders must provide evidence of plan fulfillment, including a narrative account of goals and their achievement, along with related documentation. The plans will be strengthened through expanded opportunities for collaborations among school leaders.

The policies NJ is describing are of high quality and should meet the intent of this criterion.

Of continued concern is the large number of NEA school districts that will not participate in these activities.

D 5 (ii)

"Research has shown the importance of school staff's using multiple sources of data to identify and monitor student learning challenges and successes. Teachers and school leaders will be provided with tools, resources, and training that will promote their ability to "dig deeply" into the data to find causal relationships. The curriculum-focused and sustained professional training will produce much data about teaching and learning, including answers to formative assessments, student work, and classroom observations, and it is important to know how to analyze such data in ways that are productive for both teachers and students. There will be tools on the IIS to help analyze such data, and the instructional coaches will also be available to offer assistance in understanding, analyzing, and applying the lessons to be learned from this information."

As noted above, NJ has a high quality plan for using professional development to measure, evaluate and improve student achievement.

Total	138	120	120	
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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				
New Jersey has the authority to and has taken over school districts when it was necessary. New Jersey, also, has the authority to take over schools.				
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	40	40	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	35	35	

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

E 2 (i)

New Jersey is using appropriate data sources to identify the lowest-achieving schools based on the Department of Education's School Improvement guidelines.

New Jersey will utilize the state's authority to provide a variety of school options, including achievement academies, charter schools, magnet schools—that will replace a number of those schools that are in a persistent state of failure. NJ will make full use of the state's expert nonprofit partners, its store of facilities, its human capital, and its current charter-operators—as well as operators from outside the state's borders. These activities primarily adhere to the "closure" and "restart" options in RTTT.

New Jersey plans to use its partnership with the Harlem Children's Zone as one approach and focus on "turnaround" and "transformation" models.

Also, NJ will develop a "new schools" strategy with an emphasis on charter schools which have been successfully established in Newark.

E 2 (ii)

Previous efforts by NJ to turn around schools have met with mixed success; leading NJ now to focus on school specific issues affecting student achievement.

Needs assessment teams will determine what intervention will be most appropriate. Responsible professionals will assume these responsibilities at both the state and local level. Funding is provided for the first three years with the district assuming greater shares of the costs until after the fifth year, the district will provide 100 percent of the costs.

The NJ approach is comprehensive and carefully planned with a broad consideration of the elements that will be needed to make the program a success.

Total	50	50	50	
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F. General

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	4	4	
(i) Allocating a consistent percentage of State revenue to education	5	1	1	
(ii) Equitably funding high-poverty schools	5	3	3	
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
F 1 (i)				
The proposal asks the state to compare education spending in 2008 and 2009 which NJ doesn't do. NJ proposes a 2.2 percent increase for education spending in 2011.				
F 1 (ii)				
New Jersey provides additional funds to school districts based on special formulas for certain student categories, e.g. special education students. While this probably results in more funding for high-poverty schools, New Jersey does not make this clear.				
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	32	32	

(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	8	8	
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	8	8	
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	8	8	
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	8	8	
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	0	0	

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

F 2 (i)

New Jersey has supported charter schools since 1995 and has no caps on the potential number of charter schools.

F 2 (ii)

New Jersey describes a three stage approval process for charter schools and its monitoring procedures. The small percentage of applications that result in charter schools reflects on the quality of its procedures.

F 2 (iii)

New Jersey provides equitable funding for charter school children. Money flows through LEAs on an equal basis for charter school children (minus 10 % for administrative purposes) and public school children.

F 2 (iv)

New Jersey has established in law and regulation procedures to provide charter school facilities and equitable access.

These policies represent a high quality response to this criterion.

F 2 (v)

In 1999, New Jersey's legislature adopted the Interdistrict Public School Choice Program (IPSCP) to allow LEAs to open enrollment of specified public schools to students from outside the LEA. IPSCP was adopted to provide greater school choice to students whose home LEAs may be limited in either the variety or quality of their academic programs.

New Jersey's example is limited.

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

F 3

New Jersey identifies three reform conditions: Equitable Funding, Early Childhood Education, and the State's commitment to history and cultural heritage.

The first additional condition is the development of a new equitable-funding strategy through a formula supported by the relevant New Jersey Supreme Court decision; the second is the early-childhood-education transformation initiative; the third is the emphasis on the role of history in culture.

These efforts reflect a high value commitment to demonstrating other significant reform conditions.

Total	55	41	41	
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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)				
Comparative Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM				
While STEM is mentioned in several sections, detailed descriptions of approaches to incorporating STEM into the school curricula with related plans for assessments and revisions are not included. Engineering is hardly mentioned.				
Total	15	0	0	

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		No	No	
Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
Priority 1: Absolute Preference				
While much of the New Jersey proposal is strong, one important fact makes it unlikely to succeed. Forty point nine percent of the state's LEAs will not participate in this proposal. That is a significant number and when combined with the only four school district union leaders who signed MOUs (one percent of the participating school districts and approximately one half of one percent of the total number of district teacher union leaders), New Jersey will find it difficult to implement even successful elements of its RTTT proposals.				
Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)				
The proposal includes the following statement: "New Jersey is working to expand its pipeline of great teachers by proposing regulations that would make it the first state in the nation to grant equivalent certifications to teachers who possess certifications from their home states, who can provide documented evidence of content knowledge, and who possess three years of successful teaching experience."				
The National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (of which New Jersey is a member) has for at least 27 years through its Interstate Agreements allowed a teacher certified in one state to be certified in another state on the basis of three years successful teaching experience and validation of appropriate academic preparation.				
Total		0	0	

Grand Total	500	385	399	
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Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2



New Jersey Application #3550NJ-8

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	51	61	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	33	43	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	13	13	

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

A 1. i

New Jersey has articulated a strong, comprehensive reform agenda shaped by several factors:

- The state's historic commitment to financially supporting education. New Jersey spends the most per child on its public schools of all the states;
- Strong support from policy makers. Its political leaders are increasingly frustrated that given the financial support provided and the fact that the state has some of the highest scores and best schools in the nation, at the same time, it still has some of the worst and has not been able to close the achievement gap.
- Its history of bold reforms. New Jersey pioneered alternate-route teacher certification, took control of failing school districts early on and gave early support to charter schools.
- A strong belief that education can overcome disadvantage and help achieve social justice.
- The political will to overcome barriers that will undoubtedly form to impede progress and protect the status quo. A statement of strong commitment to the Race to the Top initiatives introducing its application was jointly signed by Governor Christie, legislative leaders of both parties, the President of the State Board of Education and the Commissioner of Education.

The State is clear that improving student achievement has to be central to its agenda which includes: incorporating Common Core standards; developing effective assessments; deploying a cloud-based longitudinal data system that will track student growth and provide analysis of what works; creating incentive, support and accountability frameworks that are aligned with student success for teachers, principals and school district leaders; doing what it takes to turn around struggling schools and improving educational services across the state to support all that's planned. The goals the State has set map directly to the Race to the Top assurances.

The narrative lays out a credible path for how, working collaboratively with its participating LEAs, New Jersey will achieve its goals. Included are performance measures/annual targets and timelines for proposed activities.

ii

New Jersey's response here is somewhat confusing. On the one hand, the state's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) seems equally as strong and *binding* as U.S. Department of Education's and each LEA was required to sign on to every significant element. However, some elements are statutorily

mandated to be collectively bargained and all the other elements will be locally negotiated by each participating LEA superintendent. Large percentages of LEAs signed on to many elements of the plan, but quite a few of those commitments are conditional. Local negotiations might preclude full cooperation in meeting the state's goals. As to the signatures obtained, here again what is reported is confusing as 100% of superintendents signed on as did 99.5% of board presidents but even though the state AFT affiliate endorsed the plan, the narrative shows that only 1% of union leaders did – a percentage that seems impossible given the data presented in the appendix. The State's ambitious plan evinces a passionate commitment to reform that is convincing and the current lack of union support seems to stem mainly from one aspect of the MOU, but the conditional signings of the MOU give pause. Medium points are awarded.

iii

The likelihood of New Jersey's achieving statewide impact seems great as a wide-range of LEAs representing nearly two-thirds of its students - 950,000 - and three-fourths of those in high-poverty schools signed on to the state's plan. Further, the state will leverage all its federal resources to reinforce the plan and scale up current state initiatives that have proved effective. In addition, LEAs will receive additional resources to support reform efforts and planned improvements in teacher quality will impact *districts and teachers* statewide. In addition, the curricula, assessment and data system improvements should impact every *student* in the state. All of this bodes well for efforts to improve student achievement and decrease gaps statewide, especially given New Jersey's ambitious goals to do so and its strong history in these respects. Increasing the graduation rate may initially prove more difficult as the state has been inflating it and nearly one-third of LEAs did not sign on to support this goal, this factor precluding full points. The State's goal is to increase college enrollment by 5% a year from 2010 to 2014 and to increase the number of students completing one year's worth of college credits in two years by the same percentage. Overall, it seems very likely that the plan can have broad impact. High points are awarded.



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

During its presentation, New Jersey clarified that the conditional commitments referenced in the narrative would not block the implementation of the State's planned reforms.

(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

New Jersey has demonstrated that it can create the necessary statewide capacity to carry out its plans. As mentioned, it has taken steps to provide strong leadership by getting significant commitment not only from political leaders - its governor and legislative leaders - but also from its educational leadership. Also, the State will have consistency of elected leadership during the period of the RTT grant. It is undergoing a major extensive reorganization of its Department of Education, creating several divisions each of which is aligned with a RTT reform area. It will be adding pertinent staff to provide more effective statewide operations to implement its plan and, in doing so, will greatly support its LEAs in their endeavors. An example: it is setting up a division that will support the development of public school boards and prepare district performance information for boards to use in evaluating their superintendents. Another example: it is setting up a Division of Education System Efficiency that will, among other things, work strategically with

the state's 21 country offices to provide the services necessary to carry out the state's plan. New Jersey is also assuring its capacity to spend RTT funds appropriately on its key projects by hiring a financial analyst and providing for independent audits. It purposely "front loaded" much of the costs of its plan for its curriculum development, longitudinal data tracking and instructional improvement system development, professional development, assessment an evaluation transisitions and frameworks - resulting in a reduction in its budget for these initiatives in the fourth year of the grant so they will require only maintenance fees that can be covered in the state budget. Also, the State has identified \$107 million in additional state and federal funds to complement the RTT work (School Improvement Grants, Talent 21 ARRA, Title I, Edea, Title II). Further, to assure sustainability, the new practices will be fixed in regulatory provisions and new statutes to protect the reform agenda.

ii

New Jersey has provided ample evidence including numerous support letters from a wide-range of organizations that it has the support of stakeholders crucial to its plan's success. In addition to letters from the state political leaders previously mentioned, letters are included from the New Jersey School Boards Association, the New Jersey Association of School Administrators, the New Jersey Charter Schools Association, the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in New Jersey, the New Jersey State Federation of Teachers, BioNJ, Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., Dell, Inc., New Jersey Business and Industry Association, New Jersey Community Capital, New Jersey Technology Council, Verizon, Apple, Platinum Minds, The New Jersey State Chamber of Commerce and several other chambers of commerce, the New Jersey Council of Education, the New Jersey Gasoline Retailers Association, several colleges and universities and Congressman Robert Andrews. All in all, it lists support from 9 categories of agencies including editorial boards that are important to influencing public opinion and gaining support and other state agencies whose cooperation should prove particularly helpful. Among the supporting groups are many teachers and principals and 11 education associations.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	24	24	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5	5	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	19	19	

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

A 3 i

New Jersey has made substantial progress in the 4 reform areas. It has used its funds to provide LEAs with online formative and interim assessments and invested substantially in classroom technology. In addition, it has provided preschool programs that have had significant impact on children through the second grade although this reviewer could find no data to support the reported positive impact. For years, New Jersey has been recognized as a national leader in alternative certification and has recently piloted Stem teacher preparation programs. It has been cognizant of the need to address struggling schools. Its recent report on cradle to college and workforce pipeline for all children provided a framework for much of its RTT application.

ii

One of New Jersey's greatest strengths is the progress that it has made in improving student achievement and it includes ample evidence of that progress. The factors that it credits for its progress are listed in A 3 i. The progress it has made in increasing student achievement on NAEP assessments ranks among the best in the country. It has also made remarkable progress in closing achievement gaps on NAEP assessments, especially remarkable given the very high scores of white students, and it has been nationally recognized as one of the top states in the nation to do so – one of only three states with a 10-point decrease in achievement gaps on NAEP scores. Similar trend data on closing gaps on ESEA

assessments was not included. Its record on improving graduation rates is not clear given that it was inflating its rates by not keeping accurate data. The last two factors preclude a higher score on this criterion.

Total	125	105	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)



B 1 i

New Jersey demonstrates its willingness to jointly develop common standards that are internationally benchmarked and build toward college and career readiness by high school graduation time with its nearly 15 years of commitment to core standards and its willingly stopping considerable work on a third revision of them to join a consortium of 48 states. The state is thus entitled to high points on meeting this criterion. All of the evidence required is present in appendix A (a copy of the MOU, a list of the states, the standards, etc.).

ii

New Jersey includes its detailed plan with specific time guidelines to lead to the adoption of the standards. Its State Board was scheduled to vote on a resolution to adopt on June 16, 2010.

(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	10	10	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality assessments	5	5	5	
(ii) Including a significant number of States	5	5	5	

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



B 2 i

New Jersey has demonstrated its commitment to high-quality assessments for many years and has included the evidence called for. In 2003, New Jersey began six years of funding for the New Jersey Performance Assessment Alliance, a statewide consortium charged with developing and modeling performance assessments across multiple grades and subjects and creating associated professional development programs to promote the use of curriculum-embedded assessments throughout New Jersey. The consortium trained hundreds of New Jersey teachers to develop, administer, score and analyze results from performance assessments in language arts, mathematics and science. The State believes that decisions on student performance standards and cut scores should not hinge on contracts with testing

vendors but rather be the result of deliberative educational policy. Recently, it resisted pressure to maintain or lower its standards in order to report better scores and instead raised achievement standards in language arts and math in grades 3-8.

ii

New Jersey is currently a member of an assessment consortia with a significant number of states, e.g., The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) has 24 members and the Balanced Assessment Consortium has 26 members.

(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	20	20	
(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
B 3				
<p>New Jersey is well positioned to transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments in that it has already done considerable work on requiring more rigorous standards and performance assessments, especially through its Learnia program and its Progressive Math and Science Initiative. It has constructed an elaborate design that incorporates all the necessary factors to successfully further transition to implementing Common Core Standards, complete with a detailed timeline. Its design emphasizes strong content including in STEM strategies, appropriate evaluation measures - some using peer-review teams consisting of the full range of educators from teachers to higher-ed faculty plus community members - and broad involvement of all types and sizes of LEAs. Teachers, assisted by a national expert contractor, will be both supported by and involved in the creation of exemplar lessons and units tied to specific standards. These will be available not only statewide but to other states as well. Adaptive instruction routines will help teachers assess and modify for special-needs students and those in chronically-underperforming schools. Units will also be aligned across grade levels to build upon students' understanding of concepts. Workshops will be convened to assist LEAs in understanding the many components involved in the transition and in adapting units to their own curriculum.</p>				
Total	70	70	70	

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	14	14	
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
New Jersey has fully implemented seven of the America COMPETES elements.				
(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	5	5	
(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
C2				
<p>It is difficult to imagine what more this state could include to make its data system accessible and to support wise decision making. Included in the very wide array of services to be made available are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying students in need of support early while intervention can still change outcomes; • Making it possible for teachers to access the systems both at school and at home; • Being able to see anonymized growth at student, class, school, region and LEA levels; 				

- Tracking graduation cohorts that will include courses taken, credits earned and progress in post secondary institutions and the workforce;
- Making available to parents student profiles, educational progress and attendance data and integrating all that with Personalized Planning Tools to enable parents to better manage their children's education; and
- Calculating a School Performance Index that will be published online and used to identify schools needing additional support and those that are candidates for turnarounds.

(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	18	18	
(i) Increasing the use of instructional improvement systems	6	6	6	
(ii) Supporting LEAs, schools, and teachers in using instructional improvement systems	6	6	6	
(iii) Making the data from instructional improvement systems available to researchers	6	6	6	

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

C 3. i

The state has a very comprehensive plan not only to access data as noted above, but also to use that data to improve instruction. It will provide a web-based Instructional-Improvement System (IIS) to all participating LEAs, creating economies of scale. The system will include a Formative-Assessment Platform, Assessment-Focused Reporting, a Target Instructional-Content System and a standards-aligned Action-Planning Module that will help teachers plan instruction for individuals, small groups or whole classes. Included is a diagram to illustrate the integration of all the elements of their IIS plan that succinctly summarizes it titled "What?" "So What?" and "Now What?"

ii

Among the IIS components is a Professional Development Support System that will assist administrators and teachers in building individualized, targeted professional-development plans and in monitoring their implementation and A Climate-Survey Tool that will enable surveys of stakeholder perceptions, especially helpful in evaluating school and district leadership. Participating LEAs have committed to the adoption and use of the IIS by providing time for teachers to be trained and ensuring that they will be encouraged to take advantage of the time provided.

Professional Development modules will be provided via County Executive Offices and their usage tracked. Training will promote collaboration to enable educators to become skilled in data-interpretation, differentiated instruction, online collaboration, inquiry work and action-research.

iii.

The NJDOE will provide a data mart for researchers to enable them to evaluate the effectiveness of instructional materials, methods and approaches that participating LEAs use to educate various types of students.

Total	47	37	37	
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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	

(i) Allowing alternative routes to certification	7	6	6	
(ii) Using alternative routes to certification	7	6	6	
(iii) Preparing teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage	7	4	4	

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

i

ii

D 1 i

New Jersey provides non-traditional pathways for both teachers and principals. The State, recognized as an early advocate of alternative certification for teachers, has had a statute in place since 1985 supporting alternative routes to certification for them. Since 2003, it has also offered a non-traditional preparation pathway for school principals and supervisors and since 2008, one for directors of school counseling services. It is clear that administrator certification can be earned from providers other than higher education but not stated that teachers can. However, referenced elsewhere in the application, is that teachers from Troops to Teachers and Traders to Teachers are employed in the State, indicating that the State does allow for teacher certification from providers other than Institutions of Higher Learning.

ii

The state has provided high-quality alternative pathways for aspiring teachers and principals. It lists 10 alternative routes for teachers and the number of each program operating at various sites in the state, albeit most routes seem to be affiliated in some way with institutions of higher education. This reviewer could not find the elements for each route, but overall there is a required grade-point average to enter one and a required number of credit hours to be completed. A strong mentoring element seems to be present in all. An evaluation of the entire program was mostly positive, finding that the program was doing what it was supposed to do - that administrators were impressed with Alternate Route teachers' in-depth subject matter knowledge, maturity and enthusiasm and that they could find Alternative Review candidates for hard-to-fill positions in math, science, foreign language, special education and ESL for middle and high schools. Recommendations for improvement included one to set up an Alternate Route Advisory Committee that was established in 2008. The percentage of Alternative-Route Certificates relative to total certificates awarded increased from 29% in 2007 to 36% in 2009. The total number of Alternate Route Completers in 2009 was 2,778. Roughly one-quarter of New Jersey's teachers have been certified via an alternative route. In response to a 2003 statewide survey showing a shortage of highly qualified principals, the State's administrator's association began offering a non-traditional pathway for administrators. Candidates must have a master's degree before entering the program which stresses action research, data-driven decision-making and technology-driven research applications. It was cited as an exemplar program by the USDE in 2004. For six years, New Jersey has been funded by the Wallace Foundation's State Action for Educational Leadership Project designed to improve the effectiveness of educational leaders with an emphasis on instructional leadership. In the past three years, the New Jersey Department of Education has issued nearly 1200 principal certificates of eligibility, an initial requirement for securing a credential, more than the number of principals who trained through traditional higher-education programs. It was not clear that these two numbers are directly comparable. Given the large numbers of educators employed with Alternative Route certification, high points are awarded.

iii

New Jersey has a process to monitor and identify shortages of teachers and school leaders - including principals - and excesses of qualified teachers. It also analyzes the impact of policy changes on teacher supply such as expansion of preschools and increased STEM initiatives. Additionally, it forecasts teacher retirements. To address teacher shortages the state has established a Teacher Recruitment Initiative and established a variety of partnerships both in-state and out-of-state such as the Troops to Teachers Program. In this manner, over 200 teachers have been certified. Other than the aforementioned survey,

the narrative is vague about its process for staffing principals. New Jersey's monitoring efforts seemed stronger than its recruitment efforts, e.g., no tuition incentives were included and principal recruitment was not mentioned. Medium points were awarded.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	56	56	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	4	4	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	15	15	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	9	9	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	28	28	

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

D 2 i

Recognizing that even though it required measures of pupil progress in every teacher and school principal's evaluation since 1978, its measures varied widely across the state, New Jersey recently implemented a new growth model. The model includes measuring both student *absolute growth* with summative and year-to-year assessments and student *relative growth* with within-school year and through-course assessments. Among its many features, New Jersey's plan will deliver student-level growth reports that are easily interpretable, aggregated meaningfully by student subgroups and tied directly to individual teachers. In addition, comparisons of performance of similar students throughout the state will be reported. While New Jersey's proposal is credible and the narrative references using student growth data to improve effectiveness of teachers and principals, all the details given are about teachers only. High but not full points were awarded.

D 2 ii

New Jersey has a very comprehensive and ambitious, yet fair design to improve educator - teacher and principal - performance and it is being developed collaboratively. The work is being done in three contexts: Regulatory and Legislative, Stakeholder Groups and Local District Conditions. To this end, the state board and legislators have committed to the principle that student learning will represent 50% of evaluations. Evaluations will result in assigning each teacher and school leader one of four ratings. Numerous steps will be taken to include educator involvement such as:

- the establishment of an Educational Effectiveness Evaluation Committee made up of representatives of education-stakeholder organizations;
- the creation of a new in-house Office of Education Research to assess and report on issues of educator concern such as the validity of growth measures that will be used and the impact of a bonus system on student achievement; and
- permitting LEAs to design their own measures of effective practices.

Full points are awarded.

D 2 iii

New Jersey has a credible plan for requiring annual evaluations for all teachers and school leaders, including principals— tenured and non-tenured. It includes a requirement that student-performance data be incorporated as a factor in the evaluations. LEAs will use formative observations to help teachers adapt and improve their practices and inform professional development for them. The same tool set will be available for administrators. The Instructional Improvement System will make available a rich amount of data, including data on student growth, that can be used for constructive feedback. School leaders'

evaluations will include their ability to provide constructive feedback to teachers. High points were awarded.

D 2 iv New Jersey has a high-quality plan for its participating LEAs to use improved evaluations to inform employment decisions. It has all the elements that will ensure success and is ambitious, yet achievable and full points are awarded.

a

New Jersey will rely on its system of LEA- and school-based professional learning communities to provide successful professional development. The professional development will include customized professional services and rigorous evaluations of programs to assess impact on student learning by measuring changes in teacher practices, student behaviors and student achievement. Teachers and school leaders, including principals, who have not achieved an "effective" rating will be assigned highly effective counterparts as mentors. Teacher mentors will even provide quality lesson plans to their mentees. County offices will leverage economies of scale by encouraging LEAs with similar needs to combine services.

b

New Jersey's proposal for career ladders includes Master Teachers and Master Principals for a selected few who have received "highly effective" ratings for a minimum of three consecutive years. New Jersey will also be setting up merit pay systems that include Closing the Gap bonuses for exceptional growth among the lowest achieving students and an All Students Advancing Bonus for exceptional school-wide student growth.

c

By 2012-13, all participating LEAs will use effectiveness as the cornerstone for granting tenure, but tenure can still be granted after 3 years.

d

As part of its high-quality plan for improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance, New Jersey has full met this criterion. It is addressing removals by taking action to remove teachers in persistently low-achieving schools who have been rated ineffective for three consecutive years. Since the current removal process takes too long, the NJDOE will establish a task force to recommend ways to streamline the process with a report due early in 2012. The Commission plans to work with legislators to recommend changes in the code that would permit reductions in force decisions to be based on evaluations of effectiveness.

Specific timelines and performance measures were provided.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	24	24	
(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	10	10	

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

D 3 i

New Jersey's plan to ensure equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals is a high-quality, many-faceted one with some unique elements. earning full points. It includes:

- Providing seniority retreat rights for educators who agree to transfer to a high-poverty, high-minority school to be able to return to their previous school with no loss of seniority;
- Offering equivalent certification to out-of-state highly-qualified teachers;
- Actively recruiting liberal arts graduates of prestigious nearby universities through an alternative route program and identifying alumni of those universities to personally connect with them;
- Recruiting outstanding high-school graduates from the areas in need to go into teacher training as teachers very likely want to remain local when seeking employment;
- Providing high-poverty, high-need LEAs with seven-day exclusive access to candidate resumes;
- Improving working conditions in the high-poverty, high-minority schools; and
- Offering staggered-incentives whereby teachers are given a \$3,000 Answering the Call bonuses for committing to spend three years in one of these schools and then another \$2,000 at the end of that period.

New Jersey's data system informed its plan, as the data revealed that 99.7% of its teachers have been judged to be highly qualified while only 55% of students in high-poverty schools demonstrated typical or high growth. The plan was also shaped by several initiatives already in place – the NJDOE Professional Development Initiative, the New Jersey Center for Future Education, the Garden State Partnership for Teacher Quality and the NJ Hire web service. Missing from the application was the State's definitions of high-minority and low-minority schools as defined by the State for the purposes of the State's Teacher Equity Plan, evidence required, precluding full points.

ii

New Jersey has a high-quality plan with several initiatives for finding teachers for hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas and has ambitious yet achievable targets to expand those in a variety of ways. In monitoring trends in LEA staffing data, it has identified 5 areas of potential shortfall and will be addressing those. It will greatly increase access to virtual classes for both students and teachers and even more actively recruit individuals with math and science skills who have lost positions in the recession through its "Traders to Teachers" program. It will have 100 physics and chemistry teachers trained or in training by next fall by expanding its Progressive Science Initiative through which twice the number of physics teachers was certified as in prior years by all New Jersey universities. This model is being expanded to chemistry and biology. New Jersey will also expand its longstanding partnerships with the state's museums and develop a Future Science and Mathematics Educators Program to provide students with various opportunities while still in high school. The NJDOE has a pre-engineering recruiting academy and will expand on its current infrastructure in the area of world languages to include training in Arabic, Korean and Hindi in addition to its current Accelerated Chinese-Language Teacher Certification Program.

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	14	14
(i) Linking student data to credentialing programs and reporting publicly	7	7	7
(ii) Expanding effective programs	7	7	7

(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

D 4 i

New Jersey instituted a new performance-based program-approval process in response to recommendations made by the Higher Education Task Force in 2006. As part of this process New Jersey has a high-quality plan to create a data base that will track extensive data on graduate performance - employment, retention, impact on student achievement – directly link student growth and achievement to

teachers and principals and publicly report on each credentialing program. Its targets are ambitious, yet achievable.

ii

A Preparation Program Effectiveness Evaluation Committee will be proposed to develop an evaluation scale on which to judge the success of teacher- and school-leader (including principals) preparation programs in the State. The indicators are to include measures of candidates' knowledge of course content, their pedagogical knowledge, the strength of their clinical experience and the program's systemic use of data for continuous improvement. By 2013-14 school year, the State will be able to draw on two consecutive years of effectiveness data and there should be sufficient transparency for the state's Program Approval Council to take action with respect to reforming or eliminating preparation programs that consistently fail to produce effective teachers and principals and with respect to deciding which programs to scale up - possibly to a state-wide level - thus expanding those programs proven to be successful. This plan is ambitious and requires some regulatory changes, but seems achievable.

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	20	20	
(i) Providing effective support	10	10	10	
(ii) Continuously improving the effectiveness of the support	10	10	10	

(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

D 5 i

New Jersey's plan is thorough and grounded in research. Recognizing that the school is the locus of organizational change, the State has created a school-based, collaborative professional development planning process, that strongly focuses on academic content to positively impact student achievement. The critical features of the plan to provide effective support for teachers and principals include:

- Active support of school and LEA leaders;
- Evidence of what works;
- Collective participation of groups of teachers from the same school, department or grade level;
- Active learning (analyzing student work, developing a curriculum unit, sharing data)
- Improving and deepening teachers' knowledge of their subject matter; and
- Coherence (connecting student content and standards, assessments, materials and school and LEA goals).

Realizing that few local districts are equipped to provide extensive professional development, the state will make it available through the Regional Centers. Face-to-face professional services will be offered as well as online training with web-based modules available throughout the year. Video feedback will be offered as will Data Analysis support and Instructional Coaches. Pedagogical, social and structural supports will all be evident. The plan seemed to be based not just on research but also on past experience but previous barriers were not specifically noted. Action steps, NJDOE's expectations of participating LEAs and a timeline were included.

ii

LEAs will have the necessary tools to engage in a rigorous review of the impact of professional development on classroom practice and the effects of it on student achievement. Using classroom-observation protocols and formative and through-course assessment measures to capture student growth, schools and LEAs will be able to track student performance by classroom teacher, by the quality of

instruction and by the professional development a teacher participated in. Lessons emerging from this holistic data set will enable the state and the LEAs to shift attention and resources to the methods and approaches that will best help children succeed.

Individual teachers provide evidence of how their professional development was implemented at their annual summary conferences. School leaders, including principals, must develop a professional-growth plan every three years and provide evidence of plan fulfillment. LEAs' professional development plans are self examined based on the impact on teachers' practices and student learning. Their plans are also reviewed at the state level through the Quality Single Accountability Continuum to insure that they remain focused on improving student learning. The NJDOE will work in collaboration with participating LEAs to measure, evaluate and continuously improve the effectiveness of the supports provided. Specific steps included in the plan include:

- Providing highly skilled coaches to aid in collecting and evaluating student work and assessment data;
- Providing teachers and leaders, including principals with comprehensive information on what works;
- Providing real-time videos of master teachers engaging in the teaching of exemplar units; and
- Developing a technology platform that will support online Professional Communities of Practice and knowledge management responsive to student and teacher needs.

High Points are awarded.

Total	138	130	130	
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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

New Jersey has the legal, statutory and regulatory authority to intervene directly in its persistently lowest-achieving schools and LEAs. It also has the authority to charter new schools to provide alternatives to students currently assigned to failing schools. The New Jersey Quality Single Accountability Continuum system, NJSA 18A:7A-3 et seq, establishes rules for evaluating and monitoring all public schools in the State. Districts are evaluated on five key component areas of school-district effectiveness – instruction and program; personnel; fiscal management; operations and governance. New Jersey has taken over three districts, two of which remain under state takeover.

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

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

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E 2 i

New Jersey's plan to identify its lowest achieving schools will continue using its selection method based on ranking schools by their students' combined reading and math scores as reported on state report cards. Those schools with the lowest scores are ranked highest. Also, the Lowest-Achieving -Over- Multiple-Years method was applied to determine lack of progress. Using these methods, 20 schools are on the TIER 1 list (Title 1 schools in need of improvement), 12 schools are on the TIER II list (one-third of them in Newark, a district that is under state control and already exploring innovative options for students) and 174 schools in 62 LEAs are the Tier III list (Title 1 schools in need of improvement in the bottom 12th percentile). The state will use a graduation rate also, first using their current leaver rate and beginning next year, using the four-year cohort to identify schools with less that 60% graduation rate over two years. Given the credible methodology for identifying lowest achieving schools, the high number of schools identified and New Jersey's plan to provide direct services and/or capacity building services to identified schools, full points are awarded.

E 2 ii

New Jersey has a high-quality, ambitious plan to support its LEAs in turning around schools. It is two-pronged. First it will attempt "turnaround" or "transformation" models to improve existing schools – using the strongest interventions possible. Second, it will pursue a vigorous "new schools" strategy as it believes that "no school has the right to exist in perpetuity if it is failing its children" and it is not lost on the State that "...many of the nation's highest-performing high-poverty schools are newly-started charters...[and that] the highest performing schools in Newark today were started by...Kipp and Uncommon Schools." Well thought-out details to achieve these plans are presented in the application. Some examples:

- Specific root causes of problems must be identified for each school as not all low-achieving schools are alike.
- The state will assign a Network Turnaround Officer (NTO) to support the turnaround efforts.
- Clusters of two to three schools that are facing similar challenges will be created with a NTO for each cluster.
- RTT-funded \$10,000 bonuses will be paid to highly-effective teachers agreeing to teach in the persistently low-performing schools.
- The state will facilitate charters' finding facilities in which to start new schools as "It is unfair to taxpayers and to families...for a district to maintain half-empty facilities when capable charter-operators urgently need usable space."
- Needs Assessment Teams will conduct curriculum audits and adopt the state's Curriculum and Assessment Spine.
- Teachers will receive additional compensation for a longer school day and year.
- To engage community stakeholders, the work of the High School Graduation Campaign Forging New Jersey's Cradle to College and Workforce Pipeline for all Children will be built on.
- A full-time employee will be assigned to help coordinate and foster state-level interagency cooperation.

Evidence of the state's historic performance on school turnaround includes that 122 schools have been in restructuring status since 2004-05. Each school implemented one of the federal sanctions and 83 have exited restructuring because of their progress with another 35 in line to exit this year. Key lessons learned from these experiences were included such as principals not being permitted to re-circulate among the restructured schools and districts not being allowed to just add new programs without discontinuing numerous ineffective ones. It would have been helpful to have more detail included in the plan about what has already been tried and found to be *successful* or *not successful* and what may have been desirable, but for lack of funding or some other reason, not attempted to make its proposal even stronger. It is apparent that the State has made a prodigious effort to turn around the appropriate schools and will continue doing so and full points are awarded..

Total	50	50	50	
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F. General

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	3	3	
(i) Allocating a consistent percentage of State revenue to education	5	0	0	
(ii) Equitably funding high-poverty schools	5	3	3	

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

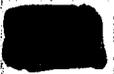


F 1 i

The Governor states that despite enormous budget challenges, New Jersey increased the funds to public schools in 2010. The narrative states that the State is *proposing* an increase of 2.2% for 2011, but the evidence asked for was the *actual* increase for 2008-2009. The percentage of the state budget proposed for education funding certainly seems adequate, but how this percentage compares with that of previous years was not included. Because the evidence required was not presented, no points are awarded.

New Jersey's school-funding system leads to equitable funding among districts. State aid is wealth-equalized with a district's ability to support its schools based both on property wealth and its aggregate income. Categorical aid is weighted for student needs and is allocated regardless of LEA's wealth. No evidence regarding equitable funding for schools within LEAs was presented. Medium points are awarded.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	34	39	
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	8	8	
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	7	7	
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	8	8	
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	8	8	

(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	3	8	
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

i

F 2 i

New Jersey ensures successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools in that it has a charter school law that does not place caps on the number of high-performing charter schools so technically it meets the criterion and full points are awarded. Since 2005, there have been 144 charter applications, 30 approvals with 28 actually opening, and 13 closed. Less than 3% of the State's schools are chartered and less than 2% of its students attend charter schools. The narrative does state that regulations have been amended twice to foster growth of charter schools and charter operators are permitted to expand existing charters.

ii

New Jersey ensures successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools in that it has numerous laws, statutes and regulations in place regarding all factors related to charter schools. It prides itself on being a conscientious authorizer and a tough monitor of school quality. Preference for enrollment is granted to students who reside in the LEA where the charter is located and if there are more applicants than spaces, students are randomly selected. To the maximum extent possible, charters are to seek a representative cross-section of the school-age population, including racial and academic factors. Academic achievement was not singled out as one significant factor in authorizing a charter, so high but not full points are awarded. The State Commissioner conducts an annual review and the county superintendent has ongoing access to all charters' records; the school must be in compliance with state curriculum standards and show that it is providing appropriate services to at-risk students. For high-school students, a school must include the percentage of students going on to college and which ones will be attended. Out of 365 applications since 1995, less than one-third was approved and fewer than that actually opened. Thirty-eight have been closed. Recently, as mentioned above, initiatives have been introduced to increase the number of applications including multiple application times and dissemination grants to highly-effective charter schools designed to address the most difficult issues charters encounter.

iii.

Full points are awarded as charter schools receive nearly the same per-pupil funding as traditional schools receive with the exception that LEAs, through which the funding flows, retain 10% for costs of administering the charter schools. The LEAs pass through 100% of categorical funds.

iv

Full points are awarded in regard to facilities as the state seems to be supportive in that it exempts charters from some facility regulations, permits charters to use their revenues for building spaces and expedites their having access to public school space not in use.

v

As New Jersey lists just one example of the state's enabling innovative, autonomous schools – an open enrollment opportunity for specified schools that is considered a success (but reasons for its success were not included), low points are awarded.

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

During its presentation, New Jersey clarified that the State does enable LEAs to operate innovative, autonomous schools (as defined in the notice) and gave several more examples of them.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	4	4	
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>F3</p> <p>New Jersey counts among its significant reform conditions: the changes made in its school funding formula and that those changes resulted in its Supreme Court's approval of the funding formula after many years of litigation; the most generous resources in the nation for children at risk and Quality Counts giving the State some of the highest grades in the country for that level of resources; the state's considerable investment in pre-school - increasing enrollments from 5,000 to 45,000; improving NAEP scores and the State's strong emphasis on American and world history witnessed by the establishment of a New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education and the Amistad Commission. While the State has demonstrated other significant reform conditions and meets the criterion, given its proximity to some of the most prestigious institutions in the world and the severity of its long-standing challenges in improving student achievement, one might expect an even richer array of significant reforms so high, but not full points are awarded.</p>				
Total	55	41	46	

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)				
<p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Competitive Priority</p> <p>New Jersey has a high-quality plan to meet the criteria for this priority. Throughout its application and in this section's recapitulation of STEM initiatives, more than sufficient evidence exists for it to qualify for STEM Priority points, e.g., the State's providing classroom teachers with high-quality materials to teach STEM subjects; its participation in the Common Core, a key tenant of which is making the standards reflective of 21st Century Skill sets; the creation of a STEM Council composed of representatives of higher education, research, industry, other state agencies and decision makers that will be responsible for creating and supporting a unified vision for STEM work in the State; expanding the State's Progressive Science Initiative currently teaching algebra-based physics to 1200 students in Newark, Jersey City and Paterson – to biology and chemistry; expanding online Stem coursework in high-needs LEAs; expanding its successful Traders to Teachers program through a broader recruitment effort; further exploration of alternative routes of certification and additional professional development opportunities and class work to improve the supply of well qualified staff in STEM subjects and providing students with more summer programs and career information related to STEM.</p>				
Total	15	15	15	

Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

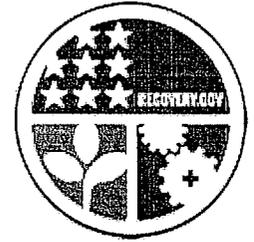
	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes	Yes	
Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
Absolute Priority The State's application comprehensively and coherently addresses all four education reform areas specified in the ARRA as well as the State Success Factors Criteria, demonstrating that the State and its participating LEAs are taking a systemic approach to education reform. The State covers how its plan will increase student achievement as a result of such measures as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·adopting the Common Core curriculum that will enable not only the studying of a more rigorous course of study but also, though the subsequent correlated assessments, a more detailed monitoring of student achievement that will allow better measurement of teacher and principal performance and quality; ·continuing the monitoring, improving and take overs of its lowest performing schools; and ·increasing high-performing charter schools. 				
Total		0	0	
Grand Total	500	448	463	



Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2

New Jersey Application #3550NJ-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	53	53	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	33	33	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	15	15	

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

(i) The NJ Education Reform agenda is clear and comprehensive. New Jersey is ahead of other states in the use of charters, alternative routes and even state takeovers of failing LEAs. The state agenda is convincing in its strong commitment to higher standards, use of student growth data, the quest for more effective teachers and leaders, and to school turnaround strategies.

(ii) Approximately 60% of LEAs (school board presidents and superintendents) serving 75% of children in poverty made a commitment to the state plan. The NJ Federation of Teachers (AFT) said "yes" to the plan, but the NJ National Education Association (NEA) did not pledge support. This moderate local commitment earns points at the top of the middle range. The state MOU is explicit in its details on scope, with some districts reserving their right or obligation to negotiate to reach consensus on the personnel changes proposed under section D, "Great Teachers and Leaders".

(iii) The NJ proposal included an incredible variety of support letters submitted including both public and private colleges which brings the possibility of greater completion of college. The career readiness and college preparation goals were strongly endorsed by high tech firms, a yacht repair firm, food vendors and gas station owners. Support letters committing to all the goals came from dozens of state wide and local organizations. Strong support was expressed by Princeton's teacher prep program and by Mathematica, a very rigorous evaluation firm (in NJ) willing to evaluate the teacher bonus and other state education reforms. The breadth of support for raising school achievement and using data to sustain reform is very impressive and deserves full credit.

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	27	27	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	20	20	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	7	7	

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

(i) NJ will expand its capacity to promote and implement education reform. The idea of appointing a state agency RTTT coordinator and additional financial monitors makes very good sense in monitoring the budget. Many of the expenditures will be in the first two years, which might help the long term sustainability.. To supports LEAs two dozen new technical assistance staff will be placed in the county education offices, verified in the state RTTT budget. The plan includes the creation and staffing of

numerous teams and committees with local and state level stakeholders fully involved in the pilot testing of growth models, staff evaluations, bonus and incentive plans.

(ii) NJ Charter schools and the public universities expressed the most support for the plan and will help implement the plan. To scale up the plan, there will be numerous pilot programs in the early years, and it is likely that 40% of the LEAs will hold out for a "wait and see" time period before committing to major reforms. The overall support for the plan is somewhat restrained, stronger in the urban areas, but moderate at best. The State Senate voted bipartisan and unanimous support which bodes well for scaling up and sustainability. Major employers are strongly supportive and will help sustain the plan in future years.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	28	28	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5	5	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	23	23	

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

(i) The state of NJ committed to high standards and assessments earlier than most states. NJ is and has been among the most outspoken state leaders in supporting dramatic reforms over the past decade, especially welcoming charter schools and alternative pathways to teaching. The commitment to more rigorous courses, standards and growth measures of assessment is very impressive and has resulted in achievement score gains. The state evaluates professionals annually but acknowledges weakness in current staff evaluation formats; the state has an impressive new plan (outlined in Section D). NJ was one of the first states to take over responsibilities for failing LEAs, and has more urban turnaround experience than other states.

(ii) NJ state leadership actions have contributed to impressive gains in both the state scores (required under federal law) and the improved NAEP proficiency scores that place NJ among the top states in the nation. The minority achievement gaps have narrowed, notably for black students, although the gap still remains large. High school graduation rates have improved overall, although there is still a sizeable gap for Hispanics and black students. Over the last decade NJ has made commendable overall progress in higher scores and graduation rates.

Total	125	108	108	
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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) NJ is part of the National Governors (NGA) and state education "chiefs" (CCSSO) consortium to develop a Common Core. The consortium includes 48 states and additional trust territories which is very significant and qualifies for the full twenty points.

(ii) New Jersey has an aggressive state decision timetable and commits to a vote on the Common Core by or before August 2, 2010.

(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	10	10
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality assessments	5	5	5
(ii) Including a significant number of States	5	5	5

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

(i) New Jersey belongs to two consortia developing stronger assessments, the "Balanced Assessment" group led by Stanford Professor Linda Darling-Hammond, and another state assessment Partnership group led by ACHIEVE.

(ii) There are 24 states in one consortium and 26 in the other consortium with some overlap but sufficient strong representation. NJ was also a founding member of the American Diploma Project and accelerated its use of Algebra I and II exams, which is cited to emphasize the state's strong commitment to more rigor and a variety of powerful assessments.

(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)

New Jersey has a transition plan beginning with the adoption of high standards and assessments in mathematics, language and science. The state is committed to developing a value added growth model which will provide data for evaluating the effectiveness of schools, teachers and principals and rewarding the entire staff as appropriate. The state will procure formative assessments and tool-kits to serve better the needs of school staff. New Jersey exceeds the national curriculum goals (English Language and Mathematics) by encouraging local assessments of those school grades with no required state/federal tests and other subjects including social studies, health, world languages and 21st Century skills. They endorse the teaching of creative and critical thinking, beyond the basic skills and multiple choice tests, which is commendable. The scope of the commitment is praiseworthy, and the plan to use data more effectively is first rate in its design. The more difficult transitions to high quality assessments will be vetted by stakeholders and the assessments then pilot-tested in up to ten LEAs before scaling up state wide. This is a very sound and sensible plan.

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	14	14	

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

1. New Jersey has completed seven of the twelve America COMPETES tasks, qualifying for 14 points, or two for each.

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

The NJ plan for using data relies on developing a "student growth" model which will be used for measuring student achievement gains and "more effective" teaching. Use of state data will help low achieving Tier I, II and III schools either improve or close or be transformed. The longitudinal data as well as annual reports

will be available for all interested parties to use in decisions such as teacher retention, principal assignments, and the type of help offered from state or county offices. This plan was reasonable and persuasive.

(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	12	15	
(i) Increasing the use of instructional improvement systems	6	6	6	
(ii) Supporting LEAs, schools, and teachers in using instructional improvement systems	6	3	6	
(iii) Making the data from instructional improvement systems available to researchers	6	3	3	

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

(i) Data will be used by the state, county offices, LEAs and schools to deal with issues concerning the adequacy of instruction and the early identification of potential dropouts. The state will use data constructively to provide an Instructional Improvement System and School Performance Audits, and provide information on line to local decision-makers. The plan sounded plausible and achievable.

(ii) The concepts sounded good but there are questions unanswered about how support will be delivered other than online. This section understated the role of county offices and institutions of higher education in providing potential support. There are lots of tools and resources, which earns the three points, but few examples of how delivered. NJ is at work on developing the menu of supports but more needs to be known about the delivery system.

(iii) Making data available to researchers appeared not to be a state priority. There is no designated university or research council that might join in important reform evaluations. The Mathematica support letter included in the Appendix was far more explicit on the way a research and evaluation form could help NJ policymakers. The state signaled an appropriate concern about protecting individual privacy. A state data mart will allow research on student work, demography and implementation, but this section seemed not to show much imagination or enthusiasm for researchers' use of data, despite the potential promise of relevant research on "what works". This minimal commitment to making data available for research earned moderate support.

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

The presenters further clarified the important role of the county offices, and especially the positive role the additional county staff will play in helping teachers and principals use data to improve instructional systems.

Total	47	31	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	18	18	
(i) Allowing alternative routes to certification	7	7	7	
(ii) Using alternative routes to certification	7	7	7	
(iii) Preparing teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage	7	4	4	

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

(i) New Jersey for twenty-five years has authorized, by state law, alternative routes to certification, and includes the five essential elements of earned degrees, content knowledge, examinations, mentoring and supervision, which qualifies for full points. The commitment to provide alternative routes for leaders (principals and supervisors) is much more recent but is also authorized by state law and regulation.

(ii) NJ has certified 30,000 teachers through alternative pathways, allowing Teach for America (TFA) and other providers to come in to help NJ schools, especially the cities with high needs and low performance. There is only one alternative source for new principals, a program run by the state association of principals for aspiring leaders.

(iii) The state tracks shortages and identifies persistent staffing shortages in STEM, Special Ed, ESL and World Languages, and Pre-K teachers. There was a minimal discussion of the principalship, where 200 NJ schools, many in cities, need much more effective leadership. Points are awarded for the documentation of teacher shortages.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	53	55	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	5	5	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	15	15	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	8	10	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	25	25	

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

(i) NJ intends to make key decisions based 50% on student growth, and the other half on "effective measures" supported by research on best practices. The state in two years will know more about student growth and will then use these data (and local assessments of courses not tested) to evaluate teachers, principals and the sources that prepared them. This plan earns full credit for a strong commitment.

(ii) NJ will build on their ASK (Assessing Student Knowledge) system for measuring student achievement as a building block for evaluating teachers and principals, then in a few years transitioning to new and better assessment tools. An appointed statewide Educational Effectiveness Council will represent the major stakeholders including teachers, principals and superintendents, which is a very constructive way to build a new evaluation system..

(iii) New Jersey laws provide for annual evaluations but staff is now generally found to be 98% satisfactory. The current system of reviews is not helpful in determining how effective or ineffective teachers and principals are. The plan calls for rating four levels of "effectiveness" that will help determine retention, bonuses and other personnel decisions. This system sounded very persuasive on teacher evaluations, and began to describe how principals will be evaluated on their skill in improving achievement, their fiscal management skills, and ratings by parents, community and other local agencies. The plan as outlined is of high quality, especially in recognizing that not all teachers, subjects and grades are now tested each year under federal and state laws, and that local assessments must also be developed with the advice of local stakeholders.

(iv) This plan provided excellent detail on how evaluation data would be used first to make teacher tenure and retention decisions, and later to designate Master Teachers and Master Principals, rewarding financially teachers who mentor new teachers, supervise and coach others, developing curriculum, volunteering for high need schools and take on other assignments as needed. The use of evaluations for removing ineffective new or veteran teachers found ineffective will apparently be subject to local negotiation or new state laws. The current law protects school personnel, but could present a serious barrier to removing ineffective practitioners, and reduces the points allocated to using data for either improvement counseling or removal of staff.

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

The presentation clarified the strong commitment to annual evaluations, to stakeholder design of the evaluation systems, and to a very strong state statute that the state is clearly prepared to implement.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	23	23	
(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	8	8	

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

(i) New Jersey has come up with imaginative new ways to persuade teachers to take on the most challenging assignments especially in low performing schools. They acknowledge that money is only one factor (in teacher decisions to stay) and that working conditions also must be improved for teachers to remain at a school. There will be a "NJ HIRE Website" and \$3000 bonuses for teachers going to high poverty or minority schools. NJ will offer additional bonuses for teams of teachers and all staff for achieving highly effective gains. Several cities will benefit from a new Teacher Residency program, and by allowing high need school principals seven days (in advance of wide dissemination of resumes) to recruit the most promising teacher applicants before any other LEAs. These ideas are creative and likely to attract effective teachers and principals.

(ii) The best discussion was the Progressive Science Initiative that sequences Physics, Chemistry and Biology courses differently, and of a quest for additional teachers of Arabic and Chinese. The shortages of thousands of other STEM and Special Education required a full discussion of ways to utilize and reward both IHEs and alternative sources for increased production of effective teachers. There was no serious discussion of expanding TFA or The New Teacher Project (TNTP) or other sources already making a contribution.

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	12	14	
(i) Linking student data to credentialing programs and reporting publicly	7	7	7	
(ii) Expanding effective programs	7	5	7	

(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(i) When student growth data are available in 2013, NY intends to track school and teacher effectiveness back to the producers of teachers and principals. Very sensibly two Preparation Program Evaluation committee will include representatives of teachers, principals, universities and accreditors to ensure fairness and time for program improvements. Results will be made available to LEAs seeking to recruit only from the more effective programs and to prospective teachers and principals avoiding the less effective programs. This is a reasonable and potentially effective plan.

(ii) The state proposes to recommend the expansion of the more effective providers. There are 114 producers of teachers, 90 of them alternative sources. In contrast there are 18 programs preparing principals, and only one alternative source. There is no bold, well defined strategy for finding and expanding the number of great principals for 200 schools in serious need of improvements. The plan for expanding teacher programs is sound and plausible.

(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)

During the presentation it became clearer that New Jersey intends systematically to use growth data to evaluate principals and the programs that prepare them. The Commissioner explained that higher

education institutions participated in developing the standards and in contributing to the New Jersey RTTT plan.

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	16	16
(i) Providing effective support	10	8	8
(ii) Continuously improving the effectiveness of the support	10	8	8

(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

(i) Much of the support, the tools and training and intervention, was outlined in previous sections of the plan. What is new is the reliance on the county education offices to identify needs and organize support, especially professional development and technical assistance to local school districts and school staff. The state education agency in Trenton will not be able to respond to all local needs, although each school cluster in the low-performing Tier groups will have a liaison manager. Not enough is said about the past and potential usefulness of county offices and their capacity to help the schools, especially since 25 additional staff appeared in the budget.

(ii) This plan offers a smorgasbord of ideas: videos, online help, blogs, wiki, coaches, inquiry teams, and learning communities. The requirements cited are for collective, coherent support, customized and targeted. Missing from this section is detail on how the universities, regional labs, county offices will contribute to the plan for each school, especially the low performers. There are many good ideas.

Total	138	122	126
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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)

(1) The NJ statute is quite strong and allows for serious state agency interventions in LEAs and schools. Newark and Patterson schools have been placed under state management for some years.

(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

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

(i) NJ has identified precisely the 20 lowest achieving schools (Tier i), the next twelve (Tier II), and then the 174 Tier III schools. The state clearly knows the 32 LEAs (ten percent of NJ districts) in greatest need of improvement. The school performance identification strategy is solid.

(ii) The proposal discusses each of the models but stops short of a crisp, clear plan for the lower performing 20 schools. The Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) charter schools and Uncommon Schools have been helpful in Newark. Several very effective schools have expanded, but it is not clear that even more charter school expansions will be considered. There is very little discussion of increasing the use of Charter Management Organizations (CMO/EMO). There may be some closures of low performing schools, but this option is only hinted at. The 400 Achievement Academies hold out the promise of reform. This

section is quite good, but stops short of making firm commitments to several of the high potential turnaround models discussed.

Total 50 45 45

F. General

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	4	4	
(i) Allocating a consistent percentage of State revenue to education	5	0	0	
(ii) Equitably funding high-poverty schools	5	4	4	

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

(i) New Jersey did not supply the 2008-2009 data as required and therefore forfeits the points. The 2011 appropriation request does not meet this requirement.

(ii) A state court order on educational adequacy has mandated the appropriation of more funds for high poverty schools and students. This important judicial decision and state appropriation qualifies NJ for a high score, presuming it will be funded. The plan lacks assurances about equitable allocations within a school district.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	32	38	
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	8	8	
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	8	8	
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	8	8	
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	8	8	
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	0	6	

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

(i) The New Jersey state law allows the creation and expansion of charter schools without caps. The New Jersey laws and policy potentially could accommodate 10% or more of all NJ school children. This clearly enables the expansion of effective charter schools,

(ii) New Jersey has explicit rules and a strong state review process for approving or denying approval, monitoring and closing failed charters. These charters have often been approved for high need cities serving low income populations. In recent years 38 failing charters have closed, and five successful charters have been authorized to expand their enrollments.

(iii) NJ Charters qualify for the comparable local, state and federal dollars as regular public schools, and meet the 90% test.

(iv) To meet the need for facilities, charter schools may use available public buildings, or float bonds for construction, and apply for renovation funds, which policies are generally comparable to other public schools and deserve full credit.

(v) There is a brief discussion of inter district choice which is really a program for individual students. There was no discussion of innovative schools, magnet schools or public academies that are or might become autonomous. There are no points awarded for this section.

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

The Commissioner and Newark school administrator explained how the Achievement Academies fit the definition of innovative and autonomous schools.

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

New Jersey is committed to and has expanded pre-K early childhood program opportunities.

The state commitment in general to innovation, reform, 21st Century skills, preschool through graduate school articulation, growth models and to educational alternatives is unquestionable, and deserving of full credit.

Total	55	41	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)

NJ will use a state STEM Council to guide the expansion of science, technology, engineering and mathematics programs tied to the Common Core initiative. The state is expanding the use of AP courses in science and math. New Jersey has committed to the American Diploma Project which further expands math and science requirements. STEM is highlighted in discussion of Progressive Science (PSI) course sequences. NJ has an innovative program to turn former Wall Street traders into math teachers. There is minimal discussion of career opportunities for girls, women and minorities except for several city programs including the PSI courses in three cities. NJ has many industries that might offer internships, and the STEM Council will explore ways to expand opportunities for students and teachers to learn about emerging science and technologies. On the whole, New Jersey is strongly committed to expanding STEM programs for all students.

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)

New Jersey addresses all four education goals and has obtained the support of enough LEAs serving a majority of the high risk high need students. The proposal explicitly links Race to the Top with other federal and state resources. There is a clear and coherent commitment to raise student achievement, improve staff effectiveness, decrease the racial and ethnic achievement gaps and produce more college graduates. The New Jersey commitment to enable charters and alternative pathways for teachers is clear and unequivocal.

This is an aggressive and ambitious reform proposal, and measurable gains in college and career preparation are clearly achievable through implementation of this plan.

Total			0	0
Grand Total	500	432	445	



Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2

New Jersey Application #3550NJ-7



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	46	50	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	29	33	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	12	12	
(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>In its application, New Jersey provided documentation concerning its history of reform efforts and provided an overview of its RTTT reform plans which are directly aligned with the ARRA assurance areas.</p> <p>New Jersey succeeded in obtaining the participation of 387 LEAs representing 59.1% of all LEAs and 69.2% of students in New Jersey, which is substantial. The participating districts do include the largest LEAs and 74.8% of the state's students in poverty but many small LEAs are represented as well. New Jersey used the MOU provided in the application package and made two modifications to strengthen it, requiring participating LEAs to sign all significant elements and requiring all participating districts to negotiate RTTT related issues with bargaining units. The reduction in points for A(1)(i) was because even more districts could have signed on and there was very limited support from LEA union representatives.</p> <p>In support of A(1)(III), New Jersey made a bold commitment pledging to drop any LEA from the grant that does not successfully negotiate the MOU provisions which could ultimately result in a drastic reduction of participating LEAs. New Jersey secured state level support from AFT but not NEA which expressed concern regarding the merit pay provisions. Just a few LEA bargaining representatives signed the MOU. The MOU elements concerning use of evaluations to inform compensation, promotion, and retention decisions were conditionally accepted by 42% of LEAs and use of evaluations to inform tenure and/or full certification was conditionally accepted by 18% of LEAs. Conditional endorsements ranged from 2% to 13% for the other MOU elements.</p> <p>In the application New Jersey addressed plans for leveraging use of other federal funds and state initiatives to support their RTTT plan to achieve statewide impact. They provided substantial and meaningful details on each of the four elements of A(1)(iii) but New Jersey is only now moving to put accurate graduation rate measures in place.</p>				
(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)				
<p>Four points were added to A(1)(ii) based on clarification provided in the presentation indicating a higher level of union and LEA support for implementing the sensitive MOU elements than suggested by the numbers signing off or conditionally signing as originally reported in the application.</p>				
(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	28	28	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	20	20	

(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	8	8	
(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>New Jersey's application details steps which are planned to restructure NJDOE strategically creating new departments to better support reform and enhance RTTT implementation capacity. There will be a chief RTTT Officer, two project managers, and a fiscal manager. RTTT coordinators will be funded for each county. The \$200 million in RTTT funds will leverage another \$107 million in federal and state funds to further increase K-12 reform capacity. New Jersey made a convincing argument that RTTT will become the operational core rather than being an add-on to business as usual. Detailed budget plans for seven projects systematically aligned with the four RTTT areas were also provided. The budgetary plans support the creation of a number of positions at the state, county, and LEA (coaches) level which are needed for a successful RTTT implementation. New Jersey committed to using a portion of the state's share of RTTT funds to assure that each participating district gets at least \$100,000 to support RTTT reform. The highly detailed MOU scope of work and budget shows very thoughtful planning and contributes to credibility regarding the state's capacity to implement.</p> <p>New Jersey has attended to getting broad stakeholder support for its plan and engaged stakeholders including those opposing some elements of the plan. New Jersey provided letters of support from a broad array of stakeholders including AFT, the state association for school administrators, the state Board of Education, state agencies, and higher education. The New Jersey Governor, who will serve throughout the grant period, was joined by 100% of the New Jersey legislature in supporting it. New Jersey's biggest challenge relates to the lack of support from the state's NEA affiliate and the weak support for the sensitive evaluation provisions.</p>				
(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	25	25	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5	5	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	20	20	
(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>New Jersey has made substantial progress in each of the four core RTTT reform areas in recent years. They are leaders in restructuring schools and alternative certification programs. The application indicated that ARRA funds underwrote data system development while federal School Improvement grants helped with struggling schools. State funds also supported the reform efforts.</p> <p>Analysis of the data provided by New Jersey reveals that reading and mathematics NAEP status and gains scores are well above the national average. More rigorous state reading and mathematics standards and assessments were implemented in 2007-2008 so only the two most recent years of data can be compared but they show gains as well. New Jersey has made some good progress in reducing achievement gaps for African American and Hispanic students but substantial gaps still remain. New Jersey provided a credible root cause analysis for the observed improvements citing specific details regarding its reform work in each assessment area. New Jersey acknowledges that its historical graduation rate data is unrealistically inflated and has plans to implement a new tracking system soon. Some available data shows low graduation rates for Hispanic and African American students. There was no evidence that graduation rates have improved.</p>				
Total	125	99	103	

B. Standards and Assessments

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
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(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)				
New Jersey is a part of the Common Core Standards Initiative which, according to their documentation, includes 48 states and territories. New Jersey is on track to adopt the Common Core Standards by August 2, 2010, and had it scheduled to be acted on by the State Board of Education on June 16, 2010.				
(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	10	10	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality assessments	5	5	5	
(ii) Including a significant number of States	5	5	5	
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
New Jersey is a member of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (24 states) and the Smarter Balanced Consortium (26 states), both of which will develop assessments aligned with the Common Core Standards. MOUs documenting participation were provided.				
(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	18	18	
(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
New Jersey submitted a comprehensive plan for supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments. The plan did not explicitly identify goals but otherwise included the high quality elements: numerous activities, timelines, and responsible positions or entities which address transitioning to the new high-quality assessments. The plan is generally very thorough and well-thought-out. New Jersey envisions an ambitious multi-faceted assessment system and a level of curriculum development that goes beyond what is required and what most states are doing. The narrative provided little information on professional development but some additional information was found on a chart in the appendix. Still, more attention should have been devoted to the design and delivery of teacher professional development to support implementation of the new standards and assessments. The work for transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments will be supported by project budgets three and four in the appendix budget totaling about \$68 million over four years. That funding should be adequate.				
Total	70	68	68	

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	14	14	
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
New Jersey has seven of the required America Competes Act elements for statewide longitudinal data systems in place at the present time. The missing elements are:				
(3) student-level information about the points at which students exit, transfer in, transfer out, drop out, or				

complete P-16 education programs, (4) the capacity to communicate with higher education data systems, (8) a teacher identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students, (9) student-level transcript information, including information on courses completed and grades earned, (11) information regarding the extent to which students transition successfully from secondary school to postsecondary education, including whether students enroll in remedial coursework.

(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	3	3	
(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>New Jersey described general plans and the vision for accessing and using state data in its improvement, operations management, and parent empowerment efforts. While they were thoughtfully developed and sound concepts, specific operational details were missing. There were no explicitly identified goals. Activities with timelines, and responsible positions or entities, which are the high quality plan components called for in the application notice, were also missing. Work for this area is supported by budget project three in the appendix which totals \$47.4 million over the four year grant. Two points were deducted because the high quality plan elements were missing.</p>				
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	11	11	
(i) Increasing the use of instructional improvement systems	6	4	4	
(ii) Supporting LEAs, schools, and teachers in using instructional improvement systems	6	4	4	
(iii) Making the data from instructional improvement systems available to researchers	6	3	3	
(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>New Jersey described general plans and the vision for using data to improve instruction and plans to provide each participating LEA with a web-based instructional improvement system that will include teacher formative assessment, content, and action-planning teacher tools. As with C(2), the plan was thoughtfully developed with sound concepts but specific operational details were missing here, too. There were no explicitly identified goals. Activities with timelines, and responsible positions or entities (which are the high quality plan components called for in the application notice) were missing and resulted in the point reductions. The plans are ambitious and achievable but would be more achievable if quality detailed activities, timelines, and responsible persons were determined.</p> <p>The planned professional development is insightful, targets teachers and principals, and will explore use of the instructional management system in collaborative processes labeled The Cycle of Inquiry, Data Conversations, and Data-Analysis.</p> <p>New Jersey's plan and provisions for making data available for researchers was quite limited and did not address provision of specific information needed to evaluate effectiveness of the plan elements for disabled, ELL, or students with achievement above and below grade level. New Jersey's work for this area is supported by budget project three in the appendix which totals \$47.4 million over the four year grant.</p>				
Total	47	28	28	

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	16	18	

(i) Allowing alternative routes to certification	7	4	6	
(ii) Using alternative routes to certification	7	7	7	
(iii) Preparing teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage	7	5	5	

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

New Jersey has statutory authority and regulations which provide alternate pathways to certification for teachers and principals and reportedly was the first state to do so. A copy of the regulations/process was included as evidence. New Jersey did not provide evidence that it has an alternative options for teacher certification independent of higher education. New Jersey has about 30,000 teachers, many from minority backgrounds, who have earned alternative certification.

New Jersey did report passing legislation recently providing principal certification independent of higher education and has about 1200 prospective principals participating each year. The program is offered in cooperation with the New Jersey Principal and Supervisors Association. This status for (D)(1)(i) calls for awarding high points for principals but low points for teachers so a middle ground rating of four points was awarded for (D)(1)(i).

New Jersey did not provided a general description of the array of providers and statewide summary statistics on alternative certification production. The number of teachers and principals credentialed through alternative pathways is substantial in New Jersey and the process has been particularly effective in credentialing minority candidates. For 2008-2009, alternative certification programs accounted for 26% of teacher and 10-15% of principal certificates issued but they are typically associated with institutions of higher education.

New Jersey requires districts to report annually on shortages and has an adequate vehicle in place for monitoring, evaluating, and identifying areas of teacher and principal shortage. Little detail was provided regarding how New Jersey addresses areas of shortage.

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

Two points were added to D(1)(i) because information was provided in the presentation clarifying available alternative teacher certification routes.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	53	53	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	4	4	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	15	15	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	10	10	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	24	24	

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

New Jersey's plan for measuring student growth is clear for grades K-8, but at the high school level, it is essentially a vague "plan to plan". New Jersey submitted a very impressive high quality plan for improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance. The plan does not explicitly identify goals but has a host of well-thought-out activities with timelines and responsible positions or entities. Budget project five in the appendix, with total four-year expenditures of \$63.5 million, supports improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance.

Performance measures were provided with 100% targeted by the end of 2013-2014 for most measures. Overall, they are ambitious. The 2013-14 projection was 90% for using the evaluation measures for teacher and principal tenure, 75% for promotion and compensation, and 50% removal decisions. No

explanation was given not eventually targeting 100% for those performance measures which resulted in the point reduction for D(2)(iv). Since New Jersey pledged to drop funding for any LEA not implementing these elements in 2012-2013, it would appear they project terminating the participation of half of the participating LEAs. Since this implementation accountability may not be determined in the final year of the project, it may be of little or no practical consequence to the districts and they may fail to implement the evaluation provisions or use them for key decisions.

New Jersey presented an impressive planning framework for the development of its teacher and principal evaluation system and described a variety of means by which it will be continuously evaluated and used to inform decisions. Efforts will be taken to create a committee/coalition to guide development and implementation of the system will be strategic in creating a better system and increasing acceptance of it. New Jersey already provides for annual evaluations of teachers and principals. The new expanded teacher and principal evaluation systems will be piloted in 10 participating districts in 2011-2012 before being implemented state-wide in 2012-2013.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	17	17	
(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	7	7	

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

New Jersey submitted a high quality plan for ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals. The plan did not explicitly identify goals but included activities, timelines, and responsible positions or entities. New Jersey did not supply the required definitions of high-minority and low-minority schools resulting in a point reduction. Budget project five with total four-year expenditures of \$63.5 million and budget project six with total four-year expenditures of \$5.3 million support equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals.

New Jersey described plans for addressing teacher shortages in science, mathematics, special education, and language instruction. Performance measure baseline data was projected to be established in rather late in 2012-2013 and targets were provided only for 2013-2014. Even then, the performance targets are not very ambitious but are certainly achievable.

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	12	12	
(i) Linking student data to credentialing programs and reporting publicly	7	6	6	
(ii) Expanding effective programs	7	6	6	

(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

New Jersey submitted a high quality plan for assessing and linking student growth to teachers and principals and their preparation programs. The plan does not have explicitly stated goals as requested in the application notice, but does have impressive and thoughtfully-developed activities, timelines, and responsible positions or entities. The system will become fully operational in 2012-13 linking student growth to teachers and principals and their preparation programs. Ambitious but achievable performance measure targets of 100% were provided 2013-2014 for the percent of teacher and principal preparation programs in the state for which the public can access data on achievement and growth of institutional graduates. New Jersey described a solid stakeholder involvement process they will use to develop the specifics of the effectiveness evaluation system. The plan is not as well developed or complete as it could be and lacked explicit goals. What is there, is solid.

NJDOE will provide incentive grants funded through RTTT-state-funds that will allow the scaling-up of effective traditional and alternative programs, or will expand successful preparation partnerships with LEAs.

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	18	18	
(i) Providing effective support	10	9	9	
(ii) Continuously improving the effectiveness of the support	10	9	9	
(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>New Jersey submitted a high quality plan for providing strategically identified professional development support to teachers and principals that is broad ranging and should be effective. They will also create professional learning communities to build social capital. The plan did not explicitly identify goals as requested in the application notice but did include an array of thoughtfully-developed goals, activities, timelines, and responsible positions or entities. Budget project five , in the appendix, with total four-year expenditures of \$63.5 million, and budget project six with total four-year expenditures of \$5.3 million will provide effective support to teachers and principals.</p> <p>New Jersey did address how it would evaluate and continuously improve support for teachers and principals. The state will use a broad range of strategies for measuring the impact of professional development including examining impact on teacher classroom application of the skills.</p> <p>One point was deducted for each subarea due to the lack of explicit goals.</p>				
Total	138	116	118	

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)				
<p>In its application, New Jersey provided narrative describing its authority to intervene with persistently low-achieving schools and LEAs. State regulations concerning the state accountability system were included as evidence.</p>				
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	40	40	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	35	35	
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>New Jersey provided documentation for the process for identifying its persistently low-achieving schools and included lists of the identified schools by tier. The state reported extensive experience and lessons learned from restructuring over 120 schools since 2004-2005. New Jersey submitted a high quality plan for turning around the lowest-achieving schools which did not include explicitly identified goals, as requested in the application, but did include many activities, timelines, and responsible positions or entities.</p>				

The grant budget for project seven will support turning around the lowest-achieving schools with \$14.5 million over the life of the grant, but New Jersey will also be receiving \$66.6 million in School Improvement funds that will support this effort. New Jersey projects using all four models and has set realistic and appropriate performance measure targets for the number of turnaround schools to be implemented for the next four years. In the application, New Jersey described a solid intervention process for its lowest-performing schools which begins with needs assessment and root cause analysis and leads to a customized school intervention plan jointly developed with NJDOE. Small networks of schools with common issues/agenda will be guided by a network turnaround officer.

In addition to implementing a turnaround model, New Jersey will require its lowest-achieving schools to implement a number of other reform strategies such as increased learning time for students and teachers, and will provide wide-ranging support to the schools.

Total	50	50	50	
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F. General

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	3	3	
(i) Allocating a consistent percentage of State revenue to education	5	0	0	
(ii) Equitably funding high-poverty schools	5	3	3	
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>New Jersey reported that the 2011 budget proportion of state expenditures devoted to education in New Jersey will increase by 2.2% but the application called for addressing changes from 2008 to 2009 so zero points were awarded for F(2)(i).</p> <p>New Jersey's has policies concerning the provision of funding for high-need versus other LEAs and within LEAs for high-poverty versus other schools that assures equitable funding for high-poverty schools. For section F(2)(ii) two points were deducted because the application did not address equitable funding within LEAs.</p>				
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	32	40	
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	8	8	
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	8	8	
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	8	8	
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	8	8	
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	0	8	
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>New Jersey provided documentation showing that it has no restrictions on the number of charter schools, that it authorizes a wide range of charter school types, encourages charter school creation, and that it has 68 charter schools operating in the state currently. New Jersey requires charter school applicants to assure representative racial and socioeconomic diversity for the school. Achievement outcomes are a</p>				

consideration in the initial approval and the continuing approval of charter schools. New Jersey has closed 38 charter schools due to poor academic performance. In short, new Jersey is a charter-friendly state and is committed to substantially increase the number of charter schools in operation.

Funding for charter schools is provided on a basis of equal to non-charter schools except that LEA's may hold back 10% for administrative overhead costs. The balance (90%) goes directly to the charter school. This probably results in more money per student for charter schools than regular schools.

Charter schools appear to have access to funds for facilities on the same basis as regular schools but there is more flexibility regarding facility standards for charter schools. Local school districts are required to make available unused buildings for use as charter schools and the state has a required process for monitoring availability of space for charter schools based on an ongoing pattern of declining enrollment.

New Jersey did not provide convincing information that it enables LEAs to operate innovative autonomous public schools other than charter schools. The application evidence included references to the Interdistrict Public School Program which provides for open enrollment schools, but New Jersey did not provide evidence that the schools have "flexibility and authority to define their instructional models and associated curriculum; select and replace staff; implement new structures and formats for the school day or year; and control their budgets." There was also no information regarding how these schools would be innovative.

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

Eight points were added to F(2)(v) because information was provided in the presentation clarifying the characteristics of Achievement Academies which made it clear that the state requirements and provisions for the schools meet the RTTT definition of innovative autonomous schools.

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

New Jersey provided information concerning a few other reform initiatives such as early childhood, equitable funding, and the Amistad commission did not discuss the extent to which they have increased student achievement or graduation rates, narrowed achievement gaps, or resulted in other important outcomes.

Total	55	38	46	
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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)

STEM activities were mentioned at a few points, very briefly, in New Jersey's application. The information contained in this section of the application does not rise to the level of a high quality plan. New Jersey did not communicate a comprehensive vision for STEM and did not adequately address the elements called for in the application notice. The STEM activities discussed are not deep and systematic enough for broad-based "rigorous course of study in mathematics, the sciences, technology, and engineering", "integrating STEM content across grades and disciplines, in promoting effective and relevant instruction", or "Prepar [ing] more students for advanced study and careers in the sciences, technology, engineering, and mathematics, including by addressing the needs of underrepresented groups and of women and girls in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics." Clearly, New Jersey is doing some things with STEM, but the evidence provided was not enough to be awarded points for this "all or nothing" point area.

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

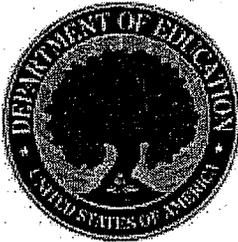
	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform		Yes	Yes	

Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

New Jersey's RTTT application described wide-ranging, thorough, and thoughtfully-developed reform activities in each of the four assurance areas. It is clear that many of these reform activities predate the RTTT initiative. New Jersey was among the first states to offer charter schools and alternate paths to teacher certification, and has long required that student achievement be included in some way in teacher evaluation.

Total		0	0	
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Grand Total	500	399	413	
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Race to the Top

Technical Review Form - Tier 2

New Jersey Application #3550NJ-6



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	36	51	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	25	35	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	6	11	

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

(i) The application puts forth a very straightforward and powerful reform agenda that clearly focuses on students and their educational welfare. The agenda specifically addresses the four ARRA education reform areas in a coherent and comprehensive manner.

(ii) The terms and conditions/scope of work statements within the MOU clearly delineate state and LEA responsibilities. The state was able to garner commitments from 59% of LEAs representing 75% of students in poverty, a fairly strong commitment. MOU signatories did include charter schools.

The state appears to be heavily unionized, and the state NEA affiliate did not support the proposal, while the AFT affiliate and local AFT chapters did support it. Of the participating LEAs, only 1% of teachers' unions signed the MOUs. The proposal does a good job of facing this apparent resistance head-on, stating that LEAs that fail to negotiate contract terms supportive to attaining its RTTT goals will be dropped from participation. The danger in this approach, however, is that many districts could potentially fail to reach satisfactory negotiations, and thus the percentage of participating districts could possibly drop dramatically.

(iii) While the proposal does a good job of describing those elements of its RTTT plan that will have statewide impact, it does not address head-on the question of why the participating LEAs are the right ones to create sustainable statewide impact under the RTTT plan.

NJ has certainly set ambitious goals to achieve by 2014, including accelerating academic achievement as measured by NAEP and state ESEA tests by 15-20% for all students, reducing achievement gaps by half (using same ESEA state measures) and raising college enrollment by 20%. These goals address all four areas required by this criterion. However, data or other supporting evidence were not provided to explain why these goals are achievable within this time frame and with the RTTT reforms detailed in this plan.

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

(ii) The presentation provided clarifying information that positively affected the number of points awarded for this criterion. While the majority of New Jersey Education Association (NJEA) local affiliates gave only conditional approval to the MOU in participating districts, the state presentation clarified the two areas of concern: seniority provisions related to Reductions in Force (RIF) and merit pay, both based on teacher effectiveness measures. The presentation also clarified that pending legislative action will make these provisions statutory requirements, potentially rendering the local union resistance irrelevant. In this event, it seems more likely than initially assumed that MOU negotiations will be successful and create the conditions for securing LEA commitment.

(iii) Information provided in the presentation clarified that the participating LEAs represent a significant number of students and student in poverty, and that the conditional support of local union leaders is likely to become unconditional support during the RTTT implementation period.

(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	30	15	28	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	10	20	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	5	8	

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

(i) The proposal describes how the SEA will establish a new organizational structure, including strong leadership positions and dedicated teams, to implement the RTTT reforms. However, it is unclear why the State Board of Education has not yet approved these structural modifications. The Chief State School Officer, Governor, state legislature, and county superintendents all appear to be intimately involved and supportive of the plan. The fact that the Chief RTTT Officer is so critical to the plan, but has not yet been identified is somewhat of a weakness. This means that an as-yet unknown person is proposed to be in charge of very critical plan components.

The seven budgeted RTTT projects will provided both direct and indirect support to participating LEAs. While the data system development project is critical, the allotted funding seems disproportionately large compared to that applied to the school turnaround effort. The proposal discusses how participating LEAs will be required to coordinate their federal funds with RTTT work, but does not discuss how the state will do so.

Sustainability is approached through two means: potential legislation and potential state fund sources. While these are certainly important avenues to pursue in order to maintain RTTT reforms, the proposal did not provide specific examples or commitments in regard to these two sustainability strategies; rather, it only referenced beliefs, anticipations, and intentions.

(ii) The letters of support included in the proposal were, with few exceptions, form letters that reiterate the four components of the RTTT plan and express "wholehearted support." The letters do not include specific commitments of time, personnel, resources, or other tangible supports from the organizations and letter authors, which included institutions of higher education, state level professional organizations, and business/community entities. As mentioned earlier, the state NEA affiliate, which represents a large number of participating LEAs, did not support the proposal, which could constitute a serious gap in support.

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

(i) The presentation clarified that the state department reorganization has been approved and is being implemented.

The presentation also provided strong clarification regarding budget allocations for the RTTT plan components. The Superintendent clarified that RTTT funds will be used for "transitional" expenditures (such as building and implementing the data system, and not for ongoing costs, such as school turnaround efforts. This response contributes to the concept of sustainability of RTTT reforms.

The presentation also clarified RTTT management/oversight assignments, so that it is now clear who the responsible people will be during RTTT implementation.

(ii) Information provided in the presentation clarified the involvement and support of county education offices and of institutions of higher education (IHEs), as well as other significant organizations such as Mathematica and Educational Testing Service. Some questions still remain about garnering the full support of LEAs.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	30	27	27	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5	5	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	22	22	
(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>(i) The proposal adequately outlines relevant reform efforts in each of the four ARRA education reform areas. The state's efforts are particularly strong in the areas of (1) setting high standards and providing teachers with formative assessments, (2) taking a collaborative approach to supporting struggling schools, and (3) promoting alternative routes for teacher certification. The recently launched graduation campaign holds promise for improving graduation rates. Overall, the state made a strong case that it has made progress in each of the reform areas.</p> <p>(ii) The proposal provides convincing evidence from NAEP, state ESEA testing, and other data sources that the state has made progress in improving student achievement and closing achievement gaps since 2003. The state credits these improvements to specific reforms, including a focus on higher standards and intensive professional development. However, the state's graduation rate methodology is inadequate and will be changed, so trends are not available.</p>				
Total	125	78	106	

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)				
<p>(i) The proposal provides evidence through a copy of its MOU that it is a member of the Common Core standards consortium. The proposal includes appropriate documentation of the fact that the standards will be internationally benchmarked, the number and names of states in the consortium, and a copy of the standards. Forty-eight states and three territories are participating in the Common Core consortium, a clear majority of states in the country. This response qualifies for full credit for this criterion.</p> <p>(ii) The state scheduled adoption of the Common Core standards by the State Board of Education for its June 16, 2010 meeting, complying with the RTTT deadline of August 2, 2010, and qualifying for high points on this criterion.</p>				
(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	10	10	10	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality assessments	5	5	5	
(ii) Including a significant number of States	5	5	5	
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				

(i) The proposal provides evidence through a copy of its "document of commitment" that it is a member of the Balanced Assessment consortium, which will develop assessments aligned with the Common Core standards. This response qualified for full credit for this criterion.

(ii) Thirty-three states are participating in the Balanced Assessment consortium, a clear majority of states in the country. This response qualifies for full credit for this criterion.

(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	20	20	20	
(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>NJ has recently been working to upgrade its standards, and the proposal builds on this effort to support the implementation of the Common Core standards and assessments. A particular strength is the state's development of formative assessments and curriculum exemplars as part of its "curriculum and assessment spine." This spine creates a base upon which LEAs can build classroom-level materials and teaching strategies. Exemplar curriculum units being developed will be of benefit to all LEAs statewide as they work to realign their curricular scope and sequence with the new standards.</p> <p>Another strength is the intent of the SEA to issue competitive grants to LEAs to develop additional assessments of subjects and grades not tested by the state. This will be an important component of the educator evaluation system, as it will allow the inclusion of all teachers, in all subjects and grades.</p> <p>The proposal presents a strong implementation plan that includes ambitious and achievable goals, realistic timelines, and responsible parties.</p>				
Total	70	70	70	

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	24	14	14	
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>The proposal provides evidence that 7 of the 12 America COMPETES Act elements for a statewide longitudinal data system are in place, qualifying for 14 points on this criterion.</p>				
(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	5	3	3	
(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>The state is building the "NJSmart" system as the portal for data access by educators and the public. The proposal describes credible plans to develop communications about the system, training for educators, and system documentation. The plan also includes important stakeholder engagement opportunities through working groups and councils. The proposal adequately describes how data from this system will be used to improve instruction, to inform policy decisions, and to assess overall effectiveness of RTTT reforms. However, the system will not be available and utilized till late in the grant period.</p> <p>A detailed plan with specific goals, activities, timelines, and responsibilities was not included, so only medium points are awarded.</p>				
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	18	9	9	
(i) Increasing the use of instructional improvement systems	6	3	3	

(ii) Supporting LEAs, schools, and teachers in using instructional improvement systems	6	3	3	
(iii) Making the data from instructional improvement systems available to researchers	6	3	3	
(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>(i) NJ plans to provide a state-developed instructional improvement system to all participating LEAs, and the MOU requires LEAs to use it. In some ways, a customized system will have definite merits, because it will be developed specifically to meet the needs of NJ educators. However, the proposal does not provide a rationale for building this system "from scratch." The pilot version of the system will not be ready until September 2011, and most on-line applications will not be available until 2012, again bringing into question the advisability of constructing the system during the course of the grant rather than seeking other alternatives.</p> <p>(ii) The professional development plan, as described, is minimal and lacks detail. Without a fully functional instructional improvement system ready until 2012, it will be very difficult to tell if the training is useful and is fostering improvement during the life of the RTTT grant. A detailed plan with specific goals, activities, timelines, and responsibilities was not included, so only medium points are awarded.</p> <p>(iii) The proposal gives only brief treatment to this criterion, simply assuring that de-identified data will be made available to researchers who sign appropriate agreements. There is no mention of how such research may benefit the RTTT plan, students, educators, or the state.</p>				
Total	47	26	26	

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	21	15	16	
(i) Allowing alternative routes to certification	7	6	7	
(ii) Using alternative routes to certification	7	5	5	
(iii) Preparing teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage	7	4	4	
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>(i) The application provides strong evidence of robust and flourishing alternative programs for teachers, principals, and other school personnel. The programs appear to meet four of the five criteria for alternative routes as defined in the RTTT notice. Evidence was not provided as to whether programs are required to operate through institutions of higher education. Although referenced in the narrative, the legal requirements for whether programs must be affiliated with an institution of higher education were not included. Since Teach for America-Newark operates independent of institutions of higher education, this response qualifies for high points. There was a general lack of clarity, however, as to whether the state law allows this for other programs, or whether Teacher for America was a special exception.</p> <p>(ii) The proposal provided descriptions of alternative programs in use, and aggregate data regarding program completers, but not completer data by program, which was required evidence. This made it difficult to determine the most and least active programs.</p> <p>(iii) While the proposal describes that teacher shortages are monitored through a LEA reporting process, and also describes a general attempt to recruit teacher candidates in anticipation of retirements, it is not</p>				

clear how the shortage data directly informs targeted recruitment and preparation efforts in the state (with the possible exception of science and mathematics). In addition, the proposal does not address principal shortages in this section except in one vague sentence. This response merited medium points.

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

(i) The presentation provided clarification that state law does allow alternative certification programs to operate independent of IHEs. The fact that only one program (Teach for America-Newark) operates as such is a matter of practice, not policy. Therefore, the response qualifies for high points on this criterion.

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	58	53	53	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	4	4	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	15	15	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	10	10	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	24	24	

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

(i) The proposal describes a logical plan to develop multiple measures of student growth. The summary timeline provided was very helpful in understanding the plan. To its credit, NJ did a good job of addressing the issues of developing growth measures for grades and subjects not included in state census testing. Of some concern is the fact that for high schools, growth measures will not be complete until after the RTTT grant period, bringing into question how high school teachers and principals can fully participate in the evaluation system within the grant period.

(ii) The evaluation system described in the plan includes multiple rating categories, and student growth will account for 50% of the evaluation, meeting the general requirements for this criterion. A credible plan is in place for teacher and principal involvement in developing the evaluation system, and also to solicit feedback from a variety of stakeholders during development. Four rating categories, which correlate with RTTT definitions of "effective" and "highly effective," will adequately serve to differentiate effectiveness, also meeting requirements for a high-quality evaluation system plan.

(iii) The proposal provides credible evidence that annual educator evaluations are already required by state law. The evaluations will include timely/constructive feedback to teachers and principals and will provide student growth data to educators via the instructional improvement system. The description provided fully meets the high-quality plan requirements for this criterion.

(iv) The plan does a thorough job of describing how the state will use its RTTT leverage to ensure that participating districts use the new educator evaluation system to make decisions regarding professional development, compensation, tenure, and removal. However, the actual use of evaluations will be negotiated in each participating district, many of which did not get signatures of union leaders on the MOU. Therefore, if districts do not negotiate agreements that match the state's intended use of evaluations, the districts are dropped from RTTT participation and lose their grant funding, but this would mean that the intended reforms do not occur.

While in its structure and intent the plan to use evaluations to inform decisions generally meets the criterion, the concern raised above regarding how negotiations will affect local implementation means that full points were not awarded.

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	25	23	25	
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	13	15	

(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	10	10	
(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>(i) The plan for equitable distribution of highly effective teachers and principals is exceptionally creative, is based on some pilot studies showing promising results, and holds strong potential for improving access to highly effective educators in the neediest schools. The state proposes employing a multi-pronged approach to staff schools with high percentages of at-risk students, including bonuses, exclusive access to highly effective teacher and principal prospects, a concerted effort to recruit highly effective out-of-state candidates, and recruiting from among the best and brightest college students. This combination of creative methods has strong potential to improve the effectiveness of educators in the neediest schools. However, the plan did not provide the required definitions of high-poverty and high-minority schools.</p> <p>(ii) The proposed plan for increasing the number and percentage of effective teachers and principals in hard-to-staff and shortage area subjects is strong. A combination of expanded on-line course offerings for high schools, intensive recruitment, and expanded alternative certification routes creates a comprehensive approach to managing shortages, especially in high-need schools. The Progressive Science Initiative was particularly credible.</p>				
(D)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)				
<p>(i) In light of information provided in the presentation regarding various services and interventions planned for high-poverty and high-minority schools, the application confirmed the presence of the required definition for high-poverty/high minority schools.</p>				
(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	14	14	14	
(i) Linking student data to credentialing programs and reporting publicly	7	7	7	
(ii) Expanding effective programs	7	7	7	
(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>(i) The proposal provides a logical and credible plan, including an achievable timeline, for linking student growth data to teacher preparation programs, following new teachers into their classrooms to study job attainment, retention, and effectiveness and reporting back to the preparing institutions. In addition, the data will be publicly reported for both informational and accountability purposes. The plan meets all aspects of this criterion.</p> <p>(ii) The narrative provides specific plans to use graduate effectiveness data to expand successful preparation programs and modify or eliminate weak ones, through codified changes in program approval regulations. This a strong response that fully meets this criterion.</p>				
(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals	20	18	20	
(i) Providing effective support	10	8	10	
(ii) Continuously improving the effectiveness of the support	10	10	10	
(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>(i) The plan for providing data-informed professional development in participating LEAs is multi-faceted and aligned with the RTTT goals. The array of offerings, is, however, somewhat disconnected, and the role of the regional centers is not fully described. The plan goals appear to be ambitious but achievable, with clear steps for implementation and appropriate assignment of responsibilities, meriting high points for this criterion.</p>				

(ii) Student performance will be linked to the professional development experienced by their teachers, allowing the state to measure effects of professional development on both teachers and students, and using this and other program evaluation data to continuously improve professional development offerings. This plan is a high-quality response for this section.

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

(i) The presentation provided strong clarification for the roles of the county offices/regional centers and the ways that effective support will be provided to teachers and principals.

Total	138	123	128	
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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 proposal provides credible evidence in the form of statutes that the state is authorized to intervene directly in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs. This response qualifies for high points on this criterion.				
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	40	40	40	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	35	35	
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1) (i) The state plan has a credible methodology to identify the lowest-achieving schools. Using this methodology, the SEA has identified 32 Tier I (Title I eligible) and Tier II (secondary) schools as constituting the lowest 5% of low-achieving schools. The proposal indicates that approximately one-third of these schools are in one LEA that is under state control, which may offer potential for dramatic reforms. This response qualifies for high points on this criterion. (ii) The state has provided a detailed and organized plan to support participating LEAs in turning around their lowest-performing schools. The plan has thoughtfully combined existing and new approaches into a coherent system of support. Identified schools will be required to adopt one of the four RTTT school intervention models and supported throughout the implementation process. The proposal includes a chart with reasonable predictions of the numbers of schools expected to adopt each of the four models. This response qualifies for high points on this criterion.				
Total	50	50	50	

F. General

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(F)(1) Making education funding a priority	10	3	3	
(i) Allocating a consistent percentage of State revenue to education	5	0	0	

(ii) Equitably funding high-poverty schools	5	3	3	
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>(i) Evidence provided for FY2011 indicates that state support for education, as a proportion of overall state funding, will increase. However, the state did not provide information about funding levels for FY2008 and FY2009, as required in the application criterion. Therefore this response earns no points for this criterion.</p> <p>(ii) The evidence provided in the narrative for this section indicates that NJ has a newly revised and equitable system of funding between high-need LEAs and other LEAs. However, the proposal does not address the equitable distribution of funding between schools within LEAs as required by this criterion. This response qualifies for medium points on this criterion.</p>				
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools	40	30	38	
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	8	8	
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	8	8	
(iii) Equitably funding charter schools	8	8	8	
(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities	8	6	6	
(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools	8	0	8	
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				
<p>(i) The proposal describes and includes state laws demonstrating no caps on the number of charter schools and charter school enrollment. This response qualifies for high points on this criterion.</p> <p>(ii) The proposal provides ample evidence and detailed descriptions of state regulations and processes regarding how charter schools are approved, monitored, held accountable, reauthorized, and revoked. The tables provided show that that state is selective about approving and monitoring charter schools. Student achievement, as defined in the RTTT notice, is a significant factor in the accountability system. Sixty-four charter schools are currently operating in the state. Reasons for denial of applications were provided and conform with state requirements. Of charter schools formed since 2005, 13 have been closed for reasons provided in the proposal and conforming with state law. This detailed response qualifies for high points on this criterion.</p> <p>(iii) The amount of funding provided to charter schools is equal to 90% of that provided to regular schools, qualifying for high points on this criterion.</p> <p>(iv) NJ does not directly provide charter schools with facilities funding, but makes available multiple and flexible options for obtaining suitable facilities. This response qualifies for high points on this criterion.</p> <p>(v) NJ allows "interdistrict school choice" to allow students to attend schools outside their home LEA. However, this does not appear to mean that innovative, autonomous public schools are supported. This response qualifies for no points on this criterion.</p>				
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)				
<p>(v) The presentation clarified that the state does allow and support innovative, autonomous public schools as defined in the RTTT notice. These are currently exemplified by the Achievement Academies operating in Newark, with plans to expand the concept to other districts and schools.</p>				
(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions	5	3	3	
(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)				

The proposal provides descriptions of three reforms (the newly revised equitable funding formula, early childhood education, and content requirements for teaching history), only two of which were presented with some results: the funding reform was recently highly rated by Education Week's Quality Counts methodology, and the early childhood reform has apparently improved 4th grade NAEP achievement for participating students. This response qualifies for medium points on this criterion.

Total	55	36	44	
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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	15	

Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)

STEM initiatives are found sprinkled throughout NJ's RTTT application. The plans include offering rigorous courses of study available through both traditional and on-line methods; collaboration with partners in higher education, industry, and the public sector; extensive support for teachers in the STEM disciplines (such as the Progressive Science Initiative); and preparation for STEM advanced study and careers. The proposed measures (student course participation, student performance, teacher effectiveness) are congruent with RTTT priorities.

However, the plans in the proposal do not specifically address the needs of underrepresented groups and of women and girls in relation to STEM initiatives. In addition, no specific engineering initiatives are included, and the summer programs that will give students access to hands-on STEM experiences are not described. Finally, no mention is made of how STEM content will be integrated across grades and disciplines.

In light of the listed deficiencies, the proposal does not meet the STEM Competitive Preference priority.

Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)

Information provided in the presentation clarified the overall configuration of the state's STEM plan. It was clear from the panelists that STEM efforts do focus on underrepresented populations, in which girls and women are included. The presentation also clarified the involvement and collaboration of industry experts, institutions of higher education (IHEs), research centers, and other STEM-related partners.

Some weaknesses in the plan still persist (e.g., lack of description for summer programs, integration across grades and disciplines), as referenced in the Tier 1 comments, but the additional clarification provided enough information to determine that the STEM component of the state application meets the preponderance of criterion elements.

Therefore, the proposal meets the STEM Competitive Preference Priority.

Total	15	0	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 NJ application addresses all RTTT education reform areas in a comprehensive and coherent manner. The plans, as presented, include ambitious yet achievable goals for all of the reforms. State leadership for the initiative is strong, and the plans demonstrate a deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities offered by the reform effort. Especially impressive are the thoughtful approaches to measuring student growth and tackling the tough challenges of turning around low-performing schools.

The biggest question for this proposal is whether the reforms will truly make a statewide impact in light of the non-support of local and state NEA affiliates. Most implementation depends heavily on local bargaining processes and outcomes. This could potentially curtail or water down a potentially very strong plan. State recourse is to drop non-cooperative LEAs from the program, but this just means that fewer and fewer might be left to participate.

Overall, the reform plan itself is generally strong and well-designed and meets the absolute priority as a comprehensive approach to education reform.

Total			0	0	
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Grand Total	500	383	439		
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