



# Race to the Top

## Technical Review Form - Tier 2

### Pennsylvania Application #3950PA-7



**A. State Success Factors**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>53</b>	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	40	40	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	8	8	
<p><b>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b></p> <p>Pennsylvania builds on nearly a decade of education reform. Initiatives implemented during the past decade include early school outcomes, boosting science and technology, accelerating high school learning, teacher and academic leadership pipelines, teacher access to data, teacher practice, and low performing schools. Its plan is ambitious but reasonable and doable. The plan is comprehensive in scope and tied together nicely. It is aligned to the four priorities articulated in the Race to the Top. Pennsylvania's Race to the Top (RTTT) application builds on progress made in these areas and articulates a comprehensive, coherent reform agenda. Full points are awarded <i>articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda</i>. There are strengths in the LEA commitment. The 191 LEAs that agreed to participate in RTTT is a nice mix of urban, suburban, and small districts and charters. Philadelphia and Pittsburgh agreed to participate; both represent the hopes and challenges facing America's urban districts. LEAs who signed on to this reform effort did so with a clear picture of goals, scope of work, roles and responsibilities provided through the MOU and discussions with the state team. The Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) were signed by all 191 superintendents, board presidents and union leaders. High points were awarded <i>securing LEA commitment</i>. The 273 letters of support serve as evidence of stakeholder commitment and willingness to serve as active participants. They include the important stakeholders; professional associations, the business community, parents, higher education, legislators, and others. The applicant provides much detail to describe the expected results of the statewide impact of their reform agenda. But points were withheld because more explanation about how the reform will be rolled out and implemented is needed. Statewide LEA commitment to implementation of the plan is of medium strength. Participation by 32 percent of the LEAs representing 38 per cent of the state's students and 57 per cent of its minority students, provides a base for change and improvement but make achievement of the ambitious statewide student achievement goals proposed a significant challenge. For example, the applicant notes it will rely on the "proven technical assistance" infrastructure (Intermediate Units) to roll out the reform and notes that this natural dissemination was successful with their assessment system and benchmark assessments and other tools. Because it presents greater challenges than tool dissemination, more is needed to understand how this bold reform effort will be translated into statewide impact. Medium points were awarded <i>translating LEA participation into statewide impact</i>.</p>				
<b>(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	20	20	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	10	10	
<p><b>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b></p>				

Full points were awarded for *ensuring the capacity to implement*. Pennsylvania involved the LEAs in developing the plan and clearly laid out their responsibilities prior to garnering signatures on MOUs. It provided a high quality plan to put in place people, structures, and processes to implement their reform plan. These include a strategy to integrate RTTT into the department's overall agenda, hiring external experts to manage key projects and activities, expansion of the Intermediate Units (IUs), a technical assistance unit, and a management structure that provides for oversight and coordination. Integrating management of reform into the agency management structure will help connect their management team and staff with all aspects of the effort as will hiring "talented professionals" to oversee implementation and ensure fidelity. Establishment of a council to advise on implementation and a number of other structures and activities to promote effective implementation further strengthen the effort. These include expansion of the state's intermediate Units (IUs) to play a major role in implementation. The applicant also presents an implementation structure with a project manager reporting directly to the Secretary of Education. Operation and oversight management and provisions for holding LEAs and others accountable were included. Full points were awarded *ensuring the capacity to implement*. The 273 letters of support are evidence of a high level of commitment from a broad and diverse stakeholder community. These include legislative, higher education, community organizations, business leaders, teacher unions, and other important players. There is evidence in the many letters of support that stakeholders have been involved in development of the plan and are on board. Full points were awarded *using broad stakeholder support*.

<b>(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>23</b>	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5	5	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	18	18	
<b>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>There is evidence that Pennsylvania has made significant progress in the four RTTT assurance areas. They adopted standards in 2003 and updated them in 2006. They also developed assessments and data systems to support instruction, redesigned principal and superintendent induction and professional development programs, strengthened teacher preparation and professional development programs, improved the achievement of low performing schools, and added alternative certification opportunities. Full points were awarded <i>making progress in each reform area</i>. Pennsylvania has made steady progress in improving student outcomes. NAEP and state assessment (PSSA) scores have steadily risen in reading and mathematics from 2003 to 2009. The state outperformed the nation in average annual student achievement increase and its student achievement scores are higher than most states. The applicant asserts that more than 2,000 Pennsylvania students graduated despite a decline in student enrollment. Points were withheld because no graduation <i>rates</i> were provided to determine if graduation rates had risen. The achievement gap has been narrowed, but not significantly. Medium points were awarded <i>improving student outcomes</i>.</p>				
<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>106</b>	

**B. Standards and Assessments**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20	20	
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20	20	
<b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				

Pennsylvania provides evidence of the state's effort to jointly develop and adopt a common set of K-12 standards that are internationally benchmarked and build toward college and career readiness. They are a member of the Common Core Standards Initiative that includes a majority of the states. They provided signed MOUs and a copy of the draft standards with anticipated date of adoption that meets the RTTT criteria. Full points were awarded (1) *participating in consortium developing high quality standards* and (2) *adopting standards*.

<b>(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality assessments	5	5	5	
(ii) Including a significant number of States	5	5	5	
<b>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
Pennsylvania is a member of three assessment consortia: Balanced Assessment Consortium (30 states), Common Assessment Consortium (21 states), and MOSAIC (26 states). MOUs are provided in the appendix. Full points were awarded (1) <i>participating in consortium developing high quality assessments</i> and (2) <i>including a significant number of States</i> .				
<b>(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	
<b>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
Pennsylvania has a high quality plan for supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high quality assessments. It employs a three-step process: (1) Adopting new common standards and creating new assessments; (2) Integrating standards and assessments; and (3) Providing technical assistance, coaching, and tools. Embedded in these steps are plans for adopting and rolling out rigorous standards, developing benchmarked summative assessments, and working with other states to develop formative assessments. It proposes aligning components of the instructional system and providing for use through an electronic portal. Professional development is planned to strengthen teacher capacity to implement. Full points were awarded <i>supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments</i> .				
Total	70	70	70	

**C. Data Systems to Support Instruction**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>	
<b>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
The applicant asserted it has a statewide longitudinal data system that includes all twelve elements of the America Competes Act. An appendix was provided that indicated that each element was in place. Full points were awarded for <i>fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system</i> .				
<b>(C)(2) Accessing and using State data</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	

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

Pennsylvania has a high quality plan to ensure data accessibility and use. It identified a clear and appropriate goal that ties to instruction and overall effectiveness and three strategies that anticipate the importance and growth of data usage. It understands its present shortcomings including lack of integration and delivery of "real time" data. It plans to add data and reports to its warehouse, improve the usability and efficiency of its data profiles, and increase the timeliness and accuracy of data reported by districts. Activities provided and performance measures are sound and well articulated. Full points were awarded *accessing and using State data*.

<b>(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	
(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)**

Pennsylvania has a high quality plan to (1) increase acquisition, adoption, and use of local instructional improvement systems that provide teachers, principals, and administrators needed information; (2) support LEAs in providing professional development; and (3) make data available and accessible to researchers. The plans for each of these three objectives are of high quality. Data-driven instruction will be facilitated by expanding their on-line instructional improvement system to integrate real-time school and district data with classroom, school, and district level dashboards. A model Student Information System will be created and RTTT funds made available to districts to enhance their systems. An early warning system that links supports and interventions to student needs will also be developed and implemented. These are sound activities that are described well. Full points were awarded *increasing the use of instructional improvement systems*. Pennsylvania's plan for providing support is strong. Its Intermediate Units (IUs) currently employ a train-the-trainer model to provide professional development on the use of the instructional improvement system and on-line portal. It proposes use of 119 data use facilitators, each responsible for 30 schools. Districts and charters have committed to a staff data review one week before school begins, weekly teacher collaborative planning times, bi-weekly team meetings, and quarterly staff data review. Full points were awarded for *supporting LEAs, schools, and teachers in using instructional improvement systems*. The plan to make data from the instructional improvement system available to researchers is clear and well conceived. Pennsylvania's Consortium for Education Research, Evaluation, and Policy Analysis will be the key vehicle for making data available and accessible to researchers. The state will develop clear and specific data access policies and procedures to promote access and ease of use and develop and employ a user friendly interface to create automated downloads from the web-site. Full points were awarded *making the data from instructional improvement systems available to researchers*.

<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>47</b>	
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**D. Great Teachers and Leaders**

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

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

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

Pennsylvania has several alternative pathways tied to institutions of higher education that are selective, real world oriented, and streamlined. The New Teacher Project appears to be a high quality pathway and E=mc2 focuses on STEM career changers. These pathways and others provide the same level of certification as do traditional programs. They are, however, tied to higher education institutions. It was not clear if law or regulation restricts Pennsylvania's ability to offer certification to principals or teachers through non-traditional pathways. The state has made an effort to pass legislation to expand entities that can offer licensure. Efforts by the state legislature to pass legislation by June 1, 2010, and the key elements of the bill are described. Key elements in the legislation are aligned with RTTT criteria. Yet despite votes in the house and senate that were overwhelmingly supportive of technical aspects of the bill subsequent senate/house reconciliation held up its passage. Because the law has yet to be passed and could still be a victim of politics medium points are awarded for *allowing alternative routes to certification*. It should be noted that Pennsylvania's alternative routes to certification do include some pathways independent of higher education institutions. But the state does not yet have sufficient pathways to earn high points in this area. Medium points are awarded for *using alternative routes to certification*. Pennsylvania identifies teacher shortages through the data reflecting the percent of teachers and principals who hold emergency permits in their current subject area or building. It notes that shortages are small in the aggregate but significant in specific geographic areas and subject areas. They also acknowledge that monitoring shortage permits is imprecise and propose a Teacher Information Management System to provide more timely and accurate information. A method to identify teachers by effectiveness level is also planned. Pennsylvania offers a number of sound strategies and tactics to address shortages. These include improving teacher preparation, academies, a three-year human capital plan, a campaign, **Teach for PA.**, and urban principal academies. These are exciting and innovative approaches. Further explanation to clarify how they contribute and what will be done to ensure effective implementation would strengthen the plan. High points are awarded *preparing teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage*.

<b>(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>42</b>	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	3	3	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	14	14	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	10	10	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	15	15	

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

Pennsylvania proposes the use of its value added assessment system (PVAAS), currently used to project student proficiency, as the tool for measuring student growth. But it was not clear that PVASS provides a valid, useful measure of student growth for each student. Its plan for measuring student growth was sound. Medium points were awarded *measuring student growth*. Pennsylvania plans to utilize a steering committee to guide development of the state's evaluation system. It will build in the student growth factors identified through the work funded by the Gates Foundation. Districts and charter schools will be required to implement RTTT teacher and principal evaluation by September 2011. Sound criteria for the evaluation system have been developed. State law spells out the basic elements for principal standards. IUs play a key role in development, roll out, and implementation of the evaluation system. The scope of work is broad and well designed, good information is provided on standards, and strategies appear sound. Timelines would help tie it all together. High points were awarded *developing evaluation systems*. The

scheme for teacher and principal evaluation has appropriate activities and timelines, targets student growth, includes provisions for feedback and growth, and has draft standards for teacher and principal evaluation. It specifies that teachers and principal evaluations will be conducted annually. The rating categories provide for teacher and principals ratings of their level of effectiveness. Full points were awarded *conducting annual evaluations*. The use of evaluations to inform decisions specifically addresses the four criteria targeted by RTTT. Provisions for professional development and support for teachers and principals are sound and clearly described. But compensation, promotion, retention, tenure, and renewal of ineffective teachers are addressed unevenly and the plan for implementation is not coherent. For example, a model "career ladder" is proposed to assist participating districts and schools in developing their known plans for using the evaluation system to make decisions. But the largest teachers' union has a draft of an alternative compensation and career ladder framework and Philadelphia and Pittsburgh have received significant grants to use evaluation to inform decisions. It is not clear how or when all this comes together as a coherent state system of evaluation. While a pilot district and pilot schools are proposed for 2010-2011 the application does not identify what will be implemented or provide a start date for statewide implementation. The applicant simply notes that the pilot results will be used to "inform and improve the statewide evaluation system". It also seems that the pilots will result in development and implementation of a new and different system that requires collective bargaining. But how or when that will be accomplished is not addressed. The Timeline Table does not provide sufficient activities and explanation to adequately address this complex effort. It does not adequately provide or describe how the various organizations, efforts, and grants will be brought together. In addition, explanation of how evaluations will be used to inform key decisions needs strengthening. Medium points were awarded *using evaluations to inform key decisions*.

<b>(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	8	8	
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	5	5	

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

The applicant's plan framed the equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals in high-poverty and high-minority schools and hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas as *one* overarching, connected challenge. It also proposed a lifting all boats approach to ensure equitable distribution. It identified performance measures to serve as targets and benchmarks for equitable distribution of teachers and principals in high-poverty and high-minority schools and in hard-to-staff subjects. The state asserts that its approach to equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals centers on enhancing effectiveness of teachers and principals in place, and improving preparation programs. It identifies strategies that were employed to address *shortages* in high-minority and high-priority schools and specific shortage areas. **Teach for PA**, the campaign, and other strategies have potential for attracting teachers to high-poverty, high-minority schools. But it is not clear what will be done to ensure equitable distribution of effective teachers. While it makes sense to improve teacher performance across the board it will not correct inequitable distributions in schools with a disproportionate number of ineffective teachers. The state does not address this and other situations where students may suffer if performance improvement and attracting more teachers are the dominant strategies. The state also asserted that 20 per cent of the teachers in high-poverty schools and 25 per cent of their principals are ineffective. Yet there was no evidence of any data to support that number or similar measures. While the difficulty in developing these types of performance measures is acknowledged the use of unsubstantiated estimates where little valid data exists may be misleading. Medium points were awarded *ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools*. While approaches for addressing the overall pool of teachers in shortage areas have merit, strategies to ensure an *equitable* distribution of teachers in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas were similarly lacking. Medium points were awarded *ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas*.

<b>(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	
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(i) Linking student data to credentialing programs and reporting publicly	7	7	7	
(ii) Expanding effective programs	7	2	2	
<b>(D)(4) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>Pennsylvania proposes expanding the statewide longitudinal data system to collect data to tie student growth to the effectiveness of specific teacher and principal preparation programs. Data tied to teacher preparation graduation success in raising student achievement will be broken out for each teacher education program. These results will be provided to higher education institutions and other providers and published publicly in 2013. The Pennsylvania Department of Education apparently has statutory power to accredit providers every seven years. A process is proposed to provide data to the providers and facilitate improvement. The applicant specifies that sanctions will be imposed on programs unable to demonstrate change or reach the level of effectiveness required. It is proposed that these data be brought to the Pennsylvania Standards Board and used to make accreditation decisions. Pennsylvania's approach is bold and well designed. Full points were awarded <i>linking student data to credential programs and reporting publicly</i>. There was some discussion but little explanation of how the state plans to expand effective programs. Lowpoints were awarded <i>expanding effective programs</i>.</p>				
<b>(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	
(i) Providing effective support	10	10	10	
(ii) Continuously improving the effectiveness of the support	10	6	6	
<b>(D)(5) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>Pennsylvania's plan for providing effective support to teachers and principals is of high quality. Robust job-embedded staff development for teachers and principal is a valid and effective approach. Model routines, tools, and supports delivered by Intermediate Unit experts anchored in the real world of schools has great promise. It also proposes use of an expanded on-line portal to deliver training and development for teachers and principals and GE Foundation training for principals. Data use for improving instruction is the focus of professional development but also includes responses to instruction and intervention, early warning systems, and development of individual learning plans. Full points were awarded <i>providing effective support</i>. The applicant provided evidence of the state's track record in evaluating state interventions and programs; three sound evaluative studies conducted by independent entities were provided in the appendix. They designated the Consortium for Research, Evaluation, and Policy Analysis as lead in organizing evaluation of RTTP supports and strategies. More explanation as to what the state wants evaluated and how the evaluation will be conducted would have earned additional points. Medium points were awarded <i>continuously improving the effectiveness of the support</i>.</p>				
<b>Total</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>93</b>	

**E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	
<b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				

Pennsylvania law provides full authority to intervene in failing districts but its law restricts intervention to only those schools in certain circumstances. (schools covered by Education Empowerment Act or Philadelphia schools). Medium points were awarded *intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs*.

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

The state clarified that Pennsylvania law does provide full authority to intervene in lowest achieving schools and districts as defined by the application.

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

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

The state identified 37 low-performing schools that meet the RTTT criteria and proposes adding 91 low-performing schools thus serving a total of 86,000 students. The additional schools also expand the districts involved from 16 to 23. This is an ambitious effort to turn around lowest-achieving schools. Full points were awarded *identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools*. The state has a number of programs in place to turn around lowest-achieving schools. They have raised test scores in a number of lowest-achieving schools annually dating back to 2003. Philadelphia's Renaissance Program has removed significant barriers to improving the lowest-achieving schools through collective bargaining. The plan for improving student performance in low-achieving schools is ambitious, well designed, and doable. It includes teacher recruitment, extensive and deep principal and teacher training and development, strengthening a research-based curriculum and aligning standards, development of special school plans, increased learning time, social-emotional supports, and a chief turnaround officer for each school. Quality science instruction is targeted for each elementary school. The schools will be further supported through 15 on-the-ground turnaround technical assistance coaches and the turnaround effort will be overseen by the Department's Office of School Turnaround. They have signed MOUs from the LEAs of all 128 schools. While this program is strong and comprehensive there are some omissions, some key concepts are not clear, and others raise concerns. The plan addresses elements of the four models required in the RTTT notice. A chief turnaround officer has merit but it is not clear where or how each will be found or chosen, how they will be trained, and the full scope of their responsibility. It is also important to clarify the scope of their authority, and to whom they report. While turnaround technical assistance through IU specialists has merit if each specialist has 8 or more schools (15 for 128 schools) their effectiveness may be limited. The activities and timeline are logical but need to be fleshed out. Medium points were awarded *turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools*.

<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>40</b>	
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**F. General**

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

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

Pennsylvania's educational expenditures for public and higher education increased from FY 2008 to FY 2009. Over the past seven years it has invested an additional 4.3 billion dollars. Full points were awarded *allocating a consistent percentage of State revenue to education*. The state's adequacy-based funding formula takes into account wealth and

student need between high-need LEAs and other LEAs, within LEAs, and between high-poverty schools and other schools. Full points were awarded *equitably funding high-poverty schools*.

<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>32</b>	
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	8	8	
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	6	6	
(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	4	4	

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

Pennsylvania provided a copy of the state's charter school law. It is cap-free, open to start-ups, public school conversion and virtual schools, and supports autonomy. Full points were awarded *enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps\*)"* Most Pennsylvania charter school approvals are made by school districts. About 80 per cent of charter school applications have been denied since 2003-2004. About half of these were then granted approval by Pennsylvania's Charters Appeal Board. This is a high override rate that may signal that districts are being overly protective. But the appeal process results in a relatively high authorization rate. Pennsylvania law calls for a five-year renewal for charters and has strong provisions to ensure accountability. For example, charter schools are required to provide extensive information to verify that they are providing effective approaches to educating students. They also are held to a standard of effectiveness; they can be closed if their test results persistently show failure. The state also provides technical assistance to charter schools. Typically, one to three charter schools are closed annually. In sum, while there are areas such as LEA authorization that appear in need of strengthening the state appears to have laws and practices that effectively provide opportunities for charter schools and holds schools accountable. High points were awarded *authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes*. Pennsylvania law stipulates that a charter school is to receive no less than the budgeted total expenditure per average daily membership of the sending school district. The applicant asserts that analysis of per student spending in 2008-2009 revealed that charter schools spend an average of \$1.07 per student for every \$1.00 traditional schools spend. Full points were awarded *equitable funding charter schools*. Funding for facilities for charter schools does not appear to be less than traditional schools but no data were provided to substantiate that charter schools actually received needed facility funding. High points were awarded *providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities*. The applicant describes a number of what they perceive to be innovative autonomous school efforts. While many of these schools appear to be innovative they may not be autonomous. For example, while Philadelphia's Renaissance Schools and Pittsburgh's Academies have some autonomy and are urged to be innovative, strong oversight and monitoring is provided. University assisted schools do not seem to be autonomous. Chester County Technical School does appear to be innovative and autonomous. The virtual high school is promising but has yet to be initiated. Medium points were awarded *enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools*.

<b>(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	
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**(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

Pennsylvania provided evidence of significant reform conditions in place to augment RTTT. They have made great strides in early childhood education, initiated significant block grants to support districts and schools and have instituted and funded Dual Enrollment to help students earn college credit. They also implemented Classrooms for the Future, a 200 million dollar initiative to change the way teachers teach and students learn in Pennsylvania. Finally, in 2006 they launched Science: Its Elementary (SIE) that helps student learn science by doing science. Full points were awarded *demonstrating other significant reform conditions*.

Total	55	47	47	

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

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM</b>	15	15	15	
<b>Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>Pennsylvania has a high quality plan to offer a rigorous course of study in mathematics, the sciences, technology and engineering. Throughout the application, and in the letters of support, there was evidence it has cooperated with industry experts, museums, universities, and research centers to prepare and assist teachers, to prepare more students by addressing the needs of underrepresented groups and women and girls in STEM areas. Its holistic approach is anchored by internationally benchmarked standards in mathematics and science coupled with end-of-grade tests and new supports via the instructional improvement portal system. Since 2006 the state has invested more than 50 million dollars in Science: Its Elementary. These and many other existing programs are provided in a chart with an explanation as to how RTTT funding will provide additional and innovative strength to the effort. The initiatives and activities identified are sound. STEM was integrated throughout the application. Full points were awarded <i>emphasis on STEM</i>.</p>				
Total	15	15	15	

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

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform</b>		Yes	Yes	
<b>Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>Pennsylvania met the absolute priority. It comprehensively and coherently addressed the four assurance areas and the success factors. It has met the absolute priority, <i>comprehensive approach to educational reform</i>.</p>				
Total		0	0	

<b>Grand Total</b>	500	413	418	
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# Race to the Top

## Technical Review Form - Tier 2

### Pennsylvania Application #3950PA-4



#### A. State Success Factors

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>57</b>	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	3	3	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	45	45	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	9	9	

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

### A(1)(i)

The applicant provides a coherent and comprehensive reform agenda and describes reform initiatives within the four education areas described in the ARRA. The statement that PA will be able to "significantly and rapidly" improve "all of our schools" is in contrast to the statements in the introduction to section A(1) that there will be "nearly universal buy-in" of the LEAs and the fact that only 192 LEAs agreed to participate in the RTTT application. This suggests that not all districts, nor all schools, will support these reform strategies and/or implement the RTTT reform efforts proposed in the application. However, it appears that (overall) the PA Plan is clear and relatively credible given information provided about the past ten years of change to the PA education system. Some concerns were noted:

The SAS Portal clearly shows the Department's commitment to providing important resources to the education community such as administrators and teachers, though it was not clear whether students and parents also have access to the information on this system. There is also no clear indication of how many teachers utilize these resources (or the system itself) or the extent to which this system has impacted the educational environment in Pennsylvania. Finally, there are two important considerations that impact whether this is a credible method of delivering this element of the reform agenda: (1) there was no timeline for when the SAS Portal will be updated to include the Common Core Standards, resources aligned with these Standards, and/or assessments aligned with these standards; and (2) there was no indication of who would be involved in updating and maintaining the resources and assessments located on the system (e.g., will highly-qualified and/or highly-rated teachers be developing the curriculum placed online, will there be an advisory body to assist with updating the system, etc.).

The pre-existing presence of a longitudinal data system (which is assumed to be part of PVAAS, though that is not clear) will be a good asset when it comes to implementing the reform agenda. In addition, the school-level strategic planning tool is an impressive tool for all principals, even those that have experience in designing such plans. There are several questions that arise from this information that are not addressed in the narrative. First, it is stated that Pennsylvania did research to show that local principals and superintendents are already using PVAAS to identify instructional changes in their buildings, but there is no mention as to the breadth or depth of such efforts (e.g., how many districts, how many schools, and which subjects are focused upon). Second, several statements in the last paragraph in this section are phrased in future tense and suggest that many of the features and supports are not yet in place (e.g., real-time access and technical assistance), which unfortunately impacts the credibility of the existing system.

Finally, although briefly stated in the final paragraph, it would be helpful to know the types and level of technical assistance that will be (or is currently) provided to support superintendents, principals, and teachers hoping to use this system (or currently using this system).

The application states that several unions are “committed to reforms” and the reform plan of the RTTT application and the applicant indeed submitted several letters from Union officials (e.g., AFT Pennsylvania, PSEA, Philadelphia Federation of Teachers, and Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers). However, while AFT and Philadelphia seem to fully support the RTTT reform agenda, it is not clear that PSEA nor Pittsburgh support the overall RTTT application and reforms proposed within the plan. For instance, the Pittsburgh union states they do not agree with everything in the proposed plan and the PSEA president states that there are many unresolved issues regarding the RTTT reform agenda. In addition, the PSEA president often uses guarded language and qualified statements to diminish their commitment to the RTTT reform plan (e.g., “ideas that can, in certain schools and communities, make important contributions” and “RTTT could become a needless distraction”).

Taken with the concerns indicated above, this section is awarded moderate points.

## **A(1)(ii)**

The applicant provides an information packet in Appendix A that was provided to LEAs and Charter Schools in Pennsylvania. In terms of the packet provided to LEAs and Charter Schools, the level of detail, professional presentation, clarity of outlined expectations, and lack of an “opt out” clause result in a very strong and understandable document and associated MOU. In fact, not only does the MOU require signing officials to agree to the concise language of the MOU itself, it also references and requires a commitment to the addenda contained within the RTTT information packet provided to the agency heads. Given the strength of the MOU and informational packet provided to LEAs and Charter Schools, this section receives full points.

## **A(1)(iii)**

The applicant has proposed ambitious goals that appear achievable given their recent efforts (e.g., increased state funding for education) and gains in student performance (as indicated in the application). However, some concerns come about from the statements in the narrative and supporting appendices. First, the applicant states earlier in the application that the RTTT reform efforts will carry on with or without RTTT funding, but this section notes that the proposed outcomes will only occur with RTTT resources. Second, with only a small percentage of LEAs participating in RTTT reform efforts, it is not clear whether the goals mentioned are statewide or only for those LEAs participating in the application. This is an important clarification, as it impacts both the “ambitiousness” and achievability of these goals.

The tables provided by the applicant to quantify their goals for improving student achievement on the PSSA (Exhibit A.3 and A.4) are inconsistent with the information provided prior to the table. It is unclear to what the percentage increase following the student numbers are referring. These figures are important, as they form the benchmarks of the states anticipated impact on student achievement. These projections may also be unrealistic, particularly in the first year, as they are calculated based on the assumption that participating schools will immediately begin to improve at the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile of annual improvement for similar schools. Finally, in terms of student achievement goals, the application shows anticipated impact on the achievement gap between minorities, economically disadvantaged, ELL, IEP, and other subcategories. While the projections suggest strong focus on student groups targeted by RTTT funds and other reform efforts, the final projections in 2014 still leave certain groups of students far behind their fellow classmates. For example, the proportion of Black students in 2014 “below basic” on the state assessment remains twice that of White students. That said, the methodology for statistically computing these projections appears sound and the commitment of the state to acknowledge and address the achievement gaps is commendable.

In the beginning of A(1), the applicant states that the SEA has a “sound approach to ensuring nearly universal buy-in” of the LEAs and that “nearly all” of the districts will voluntarily adopt and sustain the RTTT

reforms. However, 410 LEAs (out of 601) are not participating in the RTTT application and reform efforts, potentially secondary to the strong requirements of the MOU and the avoidance of any "opt out" clause. It would be helpful to know what led such a large proportion of the state's LEAs to not commit to the RTTT application and reform efforts, particularly given the strong language in other sections that the reform efforts and plan would impact the entire state and all schools. There was a letter stating that 152 of the non-participating superintendents support the goals and strategies set forth in the RTTT application, though it was not on letterhead and was not signed, thus weakening the credibility of the letter. Even so, there remains a large proportion of LEAs not represented in the RTTT application or letter of support. With only 191 districts "buying in" to the RTTT application at this point, how will the applicant achieve statewide impact? That said, it is a strength of the application that the LEAs participating in the RTTT application will represent approximately 95% of the students in "academically challenged districts" and a majority of students in poverty.

Given the above strengths and concerns, this section receives a moderate score.

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

The State reiterated their strategy presented in the application and acknowledged that the strategy was to "go deep" instead of "broad," believing that the non-participating districts would join the other districts once strategies are shown effective. It was good to hear the State had considered this issue to some degree based on previous experience. However, the concerns remain that less than a third of all LEAs are participating in the Race to the Top reform efforts and the application does not clearly demonstrate or explain how the state will support the non-participating districts to engage in these reform efforts should they later decide to join the reform efforts.

<b>(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	18	18	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	6	6	

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

**A(2)(i)**

Throughout the application and within this section, the applicant provided evidence that directly and/or indirectly supported their assertion that Pennsylvania has the capacity required to implement the proposed RTTT plan. For instance, although the state seemed to struggle with obtaining "buy-in" from the majority of LEAs, the overall application shows strong dedication and commitment from state-level professionals (e.g., the quality and detail of the information packet distributed to LEAs and Charter Schools). The organization chart (exhibit A.10) also supports strong dedication to this reform agenda at the state level, in that the project director reports directly to the Secretary and will be afforded a level of administrative freedom and power to operate this program as needed to meet the proposed goals. The technical assistance provided by the applicant through the Intermediate Units (IUs) will be key in implementing the applicants' RTTT plan, and the dedication of 220 staff within the IUs will help ensure successful statewide implementation of the RTTT initiative. While the organizational structure is strong, there are some concerns regarding the financial structure of the RTTT initiative in this state. Although the applicant states that two directors will be sustained after RTTT funding ends, the same is not said for the other staff that will be integral to the implementation and maintenance of this initiative after the conclusion of RTTT funding. Likewise, is it not clear whether some of the key components to promote sustainability will be continued after RTTT funding ends (e.g., the Strategic Leadership Council). There is also no indication of using other funding sources to support the RTTT reform plan other than School Improvement Grants and local funds. However, the application does clearly state that Pennsylvania is committing to approximately \$10M per year in ongoing costs to continue the reform efforts begun by RTTT, representing a relatively strong commitment to this initiative. It is not clear, however, whether this level of continued support will be sufficient to sustain this

program throughout the state (particularly as it is only 6% of the federal budget request from the applicant). Given the concerns about continuation, this section receives a moderate-high score.

### A(2)(ii)

The applicant demonstrates a good level of support from local teacher unions and, to some extent, the larger unions and associations relevant to teachers and principals. While the application has signatures on the MOUs from all 124 local unions among their participating LEAs, there remains concern about the qualified support from some of the larger unions (e.g., the Pittsburgh union states they do not agree with everything in the proposed plan and the PSEA president states that there are many unresolved issues regarding the RTTT reform agenda). In addition, the application includes a letter stating that 152 additional superintendents were fully supportive of the RTTT reform plan, but did not become participants in the RTTT application, thus suggesting barriers to agreeing to the established MOU. In addition to these unions, the letter from the Pennsylvania Association for Elementary and Secondary Principals notes concerns about the time commitments for principals to implement the RTTT reform plan and the “rigid requirements of removing the principal in various turnaround models.” Regardless, with 273 commitments, the applicant overall had strong support from a broad group of stakeholders, including state agencies, the State Senate, all members of the House Education Committee, all public Universities, Community Colleges, both candidates for Governor, mayors, and a wide variety of associations and corporations. This section receives a moderate score.

<b>(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>19</b>	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	3	3	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	16	16	

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

### A(3)(i)

The applicant demonstrates a commitment to and progress within each of the four education reform areas: standards and assessment, data systems to support instruction, great teachers and leaders, and turning around lowest performing schools. In addition, to some extent, the applicant indicates using other federal and state funds to pursue such reforms, though the majority of funding seems dedicated to development of the data systems used by the state. The other reforms, which were also explained to some extent earlier in the application, are silent regarding the use of other federal or state funds committed to the implementation. In addition, the state does not provide any indication as to the use of ARRA funds in implementing any of these reform initiatives. As such, this section receives a moderate score.

### A(3)(ii)

The applicant provides evidence of improved student outcomes, overall, over the past years, as well as progress towards closing achievement gaps among student groups. However, in looking at data provided by the applicant, the improved student outcomes are not clearly consistent across time. In other words, the state has shown overall improvement in some areas but the data does not demonstrate that the improvements are systematic and continuous. For instance, 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading results show that, among all students, the proportion of students “below basic” declined from 2003 to 2007, but increased again in 2009. In addition, the proportion of ELL 4<sup>th</sup> grade students “below basic” in reading has actually increased significantly in the past four years (from 58% in 2005 to 76% in 2009). Moreover, across all subgroups indicated in Appendix A-15, the percent of 4<sup>th</sup> grade students “at or above proficient” and “at advanced” in reading decreased from 2007 to 2009. The same does not hold true for 4<sup>th</sup> grade math, 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading,

or 8<sup>th</sup> grade math – all of which have moderate increased and/or relatively stable proportions across time. In addition to the NAEP data, the PSSA data shows relative stability in the gaps between subgroups in both math and reading across time, in addition to the fact that Black and Hispanic groups scored lower in 2009 than their White counterparts in 2003. It is important to note, however, that there has been a relative increase in scaled scores across all subgroups over time (with the exception of ELL students in some instances). As such, the question is how and whether the RTTT reform efforts proposed by Pennsylvania will maintain the increased achievement of “majority” groups while more rapidly increasing the gains of “minority” and other high need subgroups.

The application briefly mentions graduation rates in the narrative text and includes one table in the appendix showing rates from 2003-2008. The information provided in the narrative does not provide enough detail to support the assertion that Pennsylvania has impacted graduation rates (e.g., number of students graduating is not as meaningful as proportion of students graduating). However, the table does provide an indication that the graduation rates have been slowly increasing over the course of the last several years – from 86.4% overall rate in 2002 to 89.3% in 2008. The gap between subgroups as, for the most part, also been closing over these years, with the exception of ELL students, whose graduation rates have declined since 2002.

While some progress has been made, as evidenced by the data provided, the application does not provide a clear understanding of what actions have contributed to these changes over time. Given the above considerations regarding improvement over time and no clear connection to actions that have led to those improvements indicated, this section receives a moderate score.

Total	125	100	100	
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**B. Standards and Assessments**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	
(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)**

The applicant has demonstrated a strong commitment to the Common Core Standards, in part to address issues recently-identified by an analysis of Pennsylvania’s current standards. The applicant states that the State Board anticipates adopting the standards within one month of release and, in other sections of the grant narrative, indicates that strategies have already been developed for “rolling out” the new standards, developing curricula, and adjusting instructional materials contained on their centralized systems. Pennsylvania is working with 47 other states in the development and adoption of the Common Core Standards. This section receives full points.

**B(1)(ii)**

As stated above, the applicant states that the State Board anticipates adopting the standards within one month of release and, in other sections of the grant narrative, indicates that strategies have already been developed for “rolling out” the new standards, developing curricula, and adjusting instructional materials contained on their centralized systems. The application also states in Section A that the State Board of Education has full authority to adopt and implement the Common Core Standards for the entire state, and

they will be pursuing expedited adoption through final-omitted rulemaking (thus allowing for the standards to be incorporated by the beginning of the next school year). Particularly given that the state plans on adopting the standards ahead of schedule, this section receives full points.

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

The State provided documentation to show they have fully adopted the Common Core Standards.

<b>(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	
(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)**

The applicant is a member on three separate consortia aimed to jointly developing and adopting common, high-quality assessments aligned with the Common Core Standards. This section receives full points.

**B(2)(ii)**

Two of the consortia involve at least half the Nation's states, while one consortium only contains 11 states. Overall, however, Pennsylvania is working with well over half the states. This section receives full points.

<b>(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	
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**(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

**B(3)**

The applicant provides a well-developed roll-out plan for swift transition to the Common Core Standards. The plan proposed by the applicant involves three steps: Adoption, Integration, and Implementation. Each step of their plan appears achievable and provides details consistent with other sections of the application and the timeline of adoption provided in Appendix B-7. The Pennsylvania SAS Portal, which was further detailed in earlier sections of the grant narrative, promises to be an integral tool for rolling out and disseminating information about the Common Core Standards. Surprisingly lacking from the "integration" stage is the use of the IU staff, though they seem an integral part of the "implementation" phase of the roll-out. Further, while the roll-out plan is strong, the timeline provided following the three-step plan is too general and does not clearly evidence that the state has carefully considered the time necessary to implement each component of adopting such common standards and assessments. For instance, revising assessments is slated for 03/11-09/12, but implementation of the assessments is slated to begin in 08/10.

Regardless, the timeline is very ambitious and should be achievable given the level of staffing planned for RTTT reform initiatives. In addition, the intention (by way of Exhibit B.2) to ensure parents and communities understand the Common Core Standards and the reforms Pennsylvania is implementing is a noteworthy component of the overall plan. This section receives a high score.

<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>68</b>	
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**C. Data Systems to Support Instruction**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>	
<p><b>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b></p> <p><b>C(1)</b></p> <p>The applicant states that they have developed a data system that adheres to all 12 requirements of the America COMPETES Act and refers the reader to Exhibit C-2. This exhibit goes through each of the 12 requirements and concisely outlines how Pennsylvania addresses each of the components. According to the application, the state leaders were recognized by the Data Quality Campaign and the Council of Chief State School Officers secondary to efforts on establishing the state longitudinal data system. Pennsylvania has also received a \$14.3M grant to further develop the SDLS, although the application was not clear on the timeline for when the upgrades through the SDLS grant would be completed. This section receives full points for having 12 required elements.</p>				
<b>(C)(2) Accessing and using State data</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	
<p><b>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b></p> <p><b>C(2)</b></p> <p>The applicant has presented a well-developed plan for considering data needs of key stakeholders in education and solutions for addressing those needs. With the combined support of the federal SDLS grant and the RTTT reform plan, the applicant has worked to consider several types of potential data consumers, including researchers, administrators, technical assistance staff, teachers, policy makers, business leaders (potential funders), parents, and students. In each instance, the applicant has set forward solutions to address the needs. In addition to these general solutions, the applicant provides additional detail about merging several current data warehouses and utilizing the proposed research consortium (mentioned in the past sections, but particularly relevant in this section). Although not something that can be predicted at this point, it will be particularly interesting to see how the research consortium impacts the type of data collected by the state in future years. Overall, the plan appears well-designed and carefully considered to ensure access to useful and accessible data by all stakeholders. This section as earned full points.</p>				
<b>(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	
(i) Increasing the use of instructional improvement systems	6	5	5	
(ii) Supporting LEAs, schools, and teachers in using instructional improvement systems	6	5	5	
(iii) Making the data from instructional improvement systems available to researchers	6	3	3	
<p><b>(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b></p> <p><b>C(3)(i)</b></p> <p>The applicant has proposed a plan that should increase the acquisition, adoption, and use of instructional improvement systems that will comingle with the SLDS. The applicant discusses the increased training that has already occurred on the newly-developed SAS Portal and briefly discusses strategies for integrating the</p>				

SLDS with the SAS Portal. The purpose of this section, however, is local implementation of instructional improvement systems, and the applicant addressed the acquisition or adoption of some type of Student Information System (required of all participating LEAs) and some type of Early Warning System (such as Dipolmas Now!), though LEAs are not required to use the state’s model system. In addition to these requirements as part of the LEAs participating in RTTT, the state proposes developing “dashboards” to increase the usefulness and ease of access of data contained on the system. These strategies, taken together and presumably in a single system through the SAS Portal, represents a strong plan to increase access to data. However, the application does not make it clear what will be done to improve training on how to use these systems and/or methods for increasing actual use of these systems to guide instruction and decision making among teachers and principals. Even the best system will be limited by the actual use. This section earned a high score.

**C(3)(ii)**

As with the previous sub-section, there is good discussion about training teachers, principals, and administrators in using the SAS Portal and online system, but knowing how to access and/or how to pull data from the system is different than knowing how to actually use the system to inform instructional practices and effectiveness. That said, it appears as though the Department is aware of the need for continued assistance in using these complex systems and data, committing RTTT funds to provide for nearly 120 technical assistance providers to assist with training and professional development in this area. In addition to technical assistance, the applicant proposes preparation one-week before school, weekly teacher planning time, bi-weekly leadership team meetings, and quarterly staff data review meetings. These appear to be the foundation of a strong plan for assisting teachers and principals incorporate data from the system to improve instruction and effectiveness, but it is uncertain whether merely one week of planning is sufficient (particularly for upper grades, where teachers can have far more students). An important element that is missing from the proposed professional development strategy is individualized attention for struggling teachers and administrators. This section earned a high score.

**C(3)(iii)**

The applicant provides a plan for making data from the SDLS available to researchers. The plan will initially provide data access to the internal research consortium developed through RTTT funding, then to other external researchers. The proposal does not clearly indicate that the researchers will have access to data from the instructional improvement system and the SDLS, nor does it specify how data will be available (e.g., will it be available at the student level or aggregated at the teacher level, school level, or district level). Finally, there is no indication as to what procedure will be required for external researchers to access relevant data from the system(s) (e.g., is there an IRB or will one be developed, etc.). If the barriers to receiving approval for data access are unwieldy, then the intent of the RTTT funding and this particular section will be negatively impacted. This section earned a moderate score.

Total	47	42	42	
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**D. Great Teachers and Leaders**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	
(i) Allowing alternative routes to certification	7	2	2	
(ii) Using alternative routes to certification	7	4	4	

(iii) Preparing teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage	7	6	6	
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**(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

**D(1)(i)**

While the applicant describes an alternative certification process for teachers and principals in the narrative (SB411), the applicant explains that this bill has not yet been passed into Law. While both chambers passed their own version, a reconciled version is not expected until the end of the legislative session and, as with any such process, there can be no guarantee that this Law will be finalized nor that the Law will contain the same language as indicated in the grant application. The proposed legislation, if passed, will allow the alternative routes to certification to meet at least four of the elements listed in the definition (i.e., provided by various entities (internship certification and residency plan only), selective in accepting candidates, supervised/school-based experiences, limited coursework, and same certification as traditional routes). However, because Pennsylvania does not currently allow providers other than Institutes of Higher Education, this section receives a low score.

**D(1)(ii)**

The application provides information on several alternative certification rounds that are available for use, including post-baccalaureate programs (though it is not clear whether this model is yet being implemented), Pennsylvania teacher intern certification program, and innovative programs (e.g., E=mc2, TUteach). In addition, if approved, the new state law (SB411) will provide for the development of the Pennsylvania residency certification program and will allow agencies other than IHEs to provide alternative routes to certification. As with the previous section, the definition of alternative routes to certification under RTTT requires statutory authority and the five elements outlined in Exhibit D.2 of the application narrative. Given that alternative routes meeting most of the required elements are in place for teacher, but considering the above and considering that there is no discussion of alternative certification for principals, this section earns a moderate score.

**D(1)(iii)**

The applicant provides a candid account of the deficiencies with the current system of analyzing teacher shortages, particularly noting that current methods do not effectively address shortages of effective teachers and principals (rather than just numbers of teachers and principals). This section does not provide substantial information about the new Teacher Information Management System (TIMS) and this system would have been worth detailing in Section C of the application as it connects to the SIMS and SDLS.

Ultimately, the applicant provides a strong plan for addressing shortages in both effective teachers and principals. This section earned a high score.

<b>(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>45</b>	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	3	3	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	13	13	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	8	8	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	21	21	

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

## **D(2)(i)**

The applicant provides a brief statement asserting the value of the state assessment currently in place (i.e., the PSSA), but the application does not address the commitment to incorporating Common Core Assessments nor the need to assess student growth in subjects other than reading and math. As part of the focus of the RTTT reform effort is to establish methods for fairly and equitably assessing teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance, the application requires more detail about assessing the non-tested subjects geared to enhance student education and career/college readiness. Due to the limited discussion provided regarding rigorous measurements for student growth outside of the PSSA, this section earned a moderate score.

## **D(2)(ii)**

The applicant has proposed a strong plan for developing and implementing an annual, multi-measure evaluation of teachers and principals. The plan for evaluating teachers is more developed than the plan for evaluating principals, largely due to the incorporation of the Danielson model for teacher evaluation. Based on information provided, the assessment systems will be developed by two different steering committees and will involve the input of a wide variety of stakeholders, including teachers and principals. There is some concern, though understandable, that LEAs will be afforded the opportunity to develop their own evaluation system while the state develops a model system that may be adopted. The concern is less with the development of the system than with the technical assistance provided through RTTT funds and/or other funds, wherein the application states those LEAs developing their own system will be required to provide their own technical assistance and training. The concerns regarding technical assistance and professional development regarding the evaluation system impacts the implementation, while having a large variation in evaluation methods across the state could impact both fairness and transparency (a possibility that was not adequately addressed). This section earned a high score, as the plan remained strong despite these limited concerns.

## **D(2)(iii)**

As mentioned above, the applicant has proposed a strong plan for implementing an annual evaluation of teachers and principals. Specifically related to this criteria, the applicant clearly indicated that the evaluations will include timely and constructive feedback, including provision of data to teachers and principals about student growth for their students, classes, and schools. More detail would have benefited this application regarding the level of assistance that will be provided to teachers and principals that are not excelling in their positions. This section earned a moderate-high score.

## **D(2)(iv)**

The applicant provides a plan for how evaluations will be used to inform a variety of decisions necessary to improve teacher and principal effectiveness. However, the narrative does not incorporate information from previous sections on use of the Student Information System to provide for continuous improvement. For instance, as student growth is part of both the evaluation method and the information that can be obtained from the SAS Portal, it would seem appropriate to include professional development for all teachers and principals during the weekly and bi-weekly meetings. The use of evaluation to guide professional development among principals is less developed than for teachers, but both have multiple methods of development from which to choose. In terms of using evaluations to inform compensation, promotion, and retention – the applicant will develop a career ladder model that can be adopted by other school districts. This model, which will be developed with the assistance of contractors, will incorporate a number of methods by which teachers can receive bonus payments or salary supplements based on performance. However, the application of the career ladder model primarily applies to teachers and there is little mention of how highly effective principals can receive additional compensation. There is a brief discussion of how evaluation categories will be used to establish whether untenured teachers and principals will be removed if

unable to meet established standards, but there is no discussion about how the state or LEAs might remove ineffective tenured teachers and principals. In addition, there is no discussion about how the state will ensure the decisions made are transparent and fair (e.g., will the decisions and backup documentation be available for public review). This section earned a moderate-high score.

<b>(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	
(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	8	8	

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

**D(3)(i)**

The state will require all participating districts to develop their own human capital plan to address three critical elements: increasing the pipeline of effective teachers and principals; enhancing the skills of existing teachers and principals through strengthening school based instructional leadership, targeted job-embedded professional development and individualized professional growth plan; and removing teachers and principals shown ineffective in raising student achievement. Each of these strategies is discussed separately and the applicant provides a strong plan for each strategy. The same concerns exist for the third strategy as for D(2)(iv), wherein the applicant does not provide a clear indication of how tenured teachers and principals will be exited, if necessary. Further, this section does not clearly address how the applicant will ensure an equitable distribution of effective teachers among high-minority and high-poverty schools, how these schools will have access to such teachers/principals, or how the state will ensure these schools are not disproportionately served by ineffective teachers/principals. There was mention in a previous section about the Teacher Information Management System and how it could be used to address shortages of effective teachers and principals, but this was not further elaborated upon in this section (or the previous section). This section earned a moderate score.

**D(3)(ii)**

The applicant provides information regarding the "Teach for PA" marketing initiative to recruit effective teachers and principals, particularly focusing on the hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas – with priority to attracting candidates for rural schools and turnaround schools. In addition to the Teach for PA marketing plan, the applicant proposes to establish Turnaround Academies and Urban Principal Academies to further enhance the number of effective teachers and principals, but it is not clear whether the focus of these academies will be hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas. The state will also "provide support" to districts in meeting the challenge of hard-to-staff subjects (e.g., using RTTT funds to support teachers to recertify in additional subject areas). In addition, the state IUs will provide targeted ELL professional development. There was no discussion about specific strategies to increase the number and percentage of effective teachers for special education. This section earned a moderate-high score.

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

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

### D(4)(i)

The applicant has developed and implemented a Student ID system for teacher and principal candidates that will follow them throughout their careers, thus attaching their evaluation findings and student growth data to the program under which they were trained. The timeline for releasing the first public report is several years in the future, though it is not clear the reasoning behind the lengthy delay in the first report. Regardless, the idea of linking a teacher to their training program before they even become a teacher is a strength of the plan. The plan for providing information to the public is adequate, but it does not address the requirements of this particularly section (i.e., releasing data on each credentialing program to the public). This section earned a moderate-high score.

### D(4)(ii)

The applicant provides information in this section and previous sections about expanding preparation and credentialing options that are successful at producing effective teachers and principals. This section revisited some of the statements about alternative certification and SB411, though earlier sections also provided information about expanding options (not just alternative certification programs, but expanding what programs exist). For instance, the Urban Principal Academies and Turnaround Academies are good examples of expanding preparation options, as are several of the alternative certification options mentioned in prior sections. In addition, the use of "score sheets" to help grant students choose the best program that meets their needs and interests is a definite strength. This section earned full points.

<b>(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	
(i) Providing effective support	10	8	8	
(ii) Continuously improving the effectiveness of the support	10	6	6	

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

### D(5)(i)

The applicant revisits several of the strong ideas previously mentioned to provide professional development to teachers and principals throughout the course of the year, including weekly teacher collaboration time with IU staff, data review and planning session, bi-weekly leadership meetings, early warning system, STEM development, etc. The plan also incorporates new elements that further strengthen the proposal, including professional learning communities. The large staffing provided through RTTT funding (including 119 IU staff and 32 ELL experts) is impressive and will be helpful for the first years of implementation, though the state did not commit to continuing this level of support after RTTT funding ends and, as such, the plan must be geared more towards sustainable and ongoing professional development beyond the RTTT funding period. There is also little acknowledgement about the difficulties that this level of professional development might create (e.g., impact on teacher hours, impact on budgets and need for substitute teachers, etc.). Given these limited concerns, this section earned a high score.

### D(5)(ii)

The applicant provides examples of past efforts to evaluate some of their professional development systems and states that the Research Consortium developed as part of RTTT will be responsible for assessing professional development. However, the intention of this section is to demonstrate a plan for measuring, evaluating, and continuously improving the effectiveness of these professional development systems and other supports to improve student achievement. The application fails to adequately demonstrate a plan for how LEAs or the State will measure and evaluate these professional development provisions (e.g., the weekly meeting, bi-weekly leadership meetings, etc.). Certain systems (e.g., PIL) may

lend themselves naturally to a continuous improvement model, but other proposed systems do not and a plan must be developed for continuous improvement. Taken with other sections of the application, this section earned a moderate score.

Total	138	101	101	
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**E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs</b>	10	5	10	

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

**E(1)**

The applicant provided evidence that it has legal authority to intervene in school districts and schools that are failing in either financially or academically. More specifically, the state (24 PS.6-691(c)) has authority to declare a school district in financial distress (all districts) or academic distress (Philadelphia only) and intervene with a special board (all districts) or reform commission (Philadelphia only). In fact, the applicant notes this authority has been successfully implemented in three districts since 2000. The State also has authority under the Educational Empowerment Act to intervene in school districts with a history of low test performance, authority that has been successfully applied 12 times since 2000. However, the state does not have the authority to intervene in a school when the district is not covered under the Education Empowerment Act. With only 6 districts on the Education Empowerment List, it is unlikely that the state has substantial authority to intervene in all persistently lowest-achieving schools. This section earned 5 points, as there is no indication that the state has any authority to intervene in a school without first intervening in the district (there is also no evidence that the state has ever intervened in a school).

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

The State clarified the information provided in their application that indicated they do have authority to intervene directly in lowest achieving schools, as defined in the RTTT notice, through authority under school improvement grants and Title I. The State clarified that the intention is to intervene only at the district level to ensure successful implementation, but if necessary can intervene directly in schools. Given this clarification, the score is increased to 10 points.

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

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

**E(2)(i)**

The applicant defines persistently lowest-achieving schools as any Title I school where either (1) at least 50% of the students are scoring below basic (2.5th percentile), or (2) where 30% or more of the students are scoring below basic (10th percentile) and the building has shown less than 7% improvement in percent of students below basic since 2005 (75th percentile). This is an appropriate definition that expands the minimum expectations of RTTT. The identification of schools in Exhibit E.2 is not adequately explained, as the column under "PDE Expansion" does not match with the schools in the turnaround initiative. This section earned a high points.

## E(2)(ii)

The applicant presented information of past experience working with the persistently lowest-achieving school in Pennsylvania, and mentioned several techniques that have been successfully used to help address the needs of these districts and schools. Several specific efforts were introduced, including the use of Distinguished Educators, the Renaissance Initiative in Philadelphia, and the America's Choice model. Ultimately, the applicant provided a relatively detailed plan for instituting a turnaround model as part of the RTTT reform initiative. The turnaround model developed by the applicant includes several important elements, including: training principals, placing a chief turnaround officer in identified turnaround schools, implement turnaround academies to increase the number of effective teachers and principals at these schools, provide intensive support to new teachers, hold summer data academies for teachers, using research-based and aligned curriculum, use student data to inform instruction, increase learning time, and increase support for students. Overall, the plan is detailed and well-developed, investing in a wide variety of methods and including students, teachers, and principals. However, the purpose of RTTT is aggressive reform and the state has espoused successful experience in implementing turnaround models in other schools and districts, yet the state only plans on implementing turnaround reform at only 18 schools in the first year. This section earned moderate-high points.

Total	50	39	44	
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## F. General

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(F)(1) Making education funding a priority</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	
(i) Allocating a consistent percentage of State revenue to education	5	5	5	
(ii) Equitably funding high-poverty schools	5	5	5	
<b>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<b>F(1)(i)</b>				
The applicant reports the percentage of total revenues available to the State that were dedicated to education increased from 41.18% to 41.85%, which actually represents a decrease in total funding by approximately \$650,000. However, because this was an increase in total percentage, this section receives full points.				
<b>F(1)(ii)</b>				
The applicant adopted a formula for need-based distribution of education funding in 2008. The formula requires that a bulk of funds be invested in proven academic improvements. The formula takes into account risk factors, such as income level and ELL status, to help ensure equitable funding between high-need LEAs and other LEAs. As such, according to the applicant, the state is able to provide added funds to the highest-need districts and schools. Overall, the state's funding legislation and the Department works to ensure funds are distributed based on need and that the additional funds for high-need districts and schools are used primarily to support high-impact, research-based strategies.				
<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>33</b>	

(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	8	8	
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	6	6	
(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	3	

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

**F(2)(i)**

The applicant provides evidence that there is no cap (real or artificial) on the number of charter schools allowed in the state. In addition, as indicated by the applicant, the National Alliance for Charter Schools reportedly describes the state as "charter friendly" and the number of charter schools has increased from 6 in 1997-98 to 135 in 2009-10. The applicant reports that the state does not disallow certain type of charter schools, does not restrict charter schools to operate in specific geographic areas, and specifically prohibits enrollment caps. This section earned full points.

**F(2)(ii)**

The state has a number of laws and guidelines for the establishment of charter schools, including the application process, approval process, enrollment, accountability, and revocation. The ability to apply for a charter school is broad and there are no identified barriers to applying for a charter, though the state only receives 20-30 applications annually. Although there is no law as such, the state requires that charter schools adhere to the system of standards and assessments adopted by Pennsylvania. Charter schools must submit annual reports to the authorizer, which includes goal achievement, school improvement, quality of school design, AYP and NCLB accountability measures, as well as other elements. Specific to this criteria, the annual report is used to help determine whether to renew the charter for five years per renewal. Although student achievement is one factor, and although the applicant states that a charter can be terminated if the school fails to meet state requirements for student performance, no charter has been terminated due to academic reasons. However, Exhibit F.5 suggests that school districts have closed ineffective charter schools, though such information is not consistent with Exhibit F.6. This section earned a moderate-high score.

**F(2)(iii)**

The applicant provided clear information to support that charter schools receive equitable funding per student as do traditional public schools. This is required by Pennsylvania Law (24 PS 17-1725-A), and an analysis provided by the applicant shows that Charter Schools (on average) receive approximately 7% more than traditional schools. This section receives full points.

**F(2)(iv)**

The State provides Charter Schools with lease reimbursement, as per state law (24 PS 25-2574.3). In addition, the applicant states that they do not impose any facility-related requirements on Charter School that are more strict than those placed on traditional schools. The lease reimbursement is paid annually (which would likely help with the cash flow of the Charter School, allowing them to focus on serving the students) and the state has allowed Charter Schools created by converting a public school to remain at the state-owned facilities without rental costs. This section receives full points.

## F(2)(v)

The applicant states that laws and policies allow for innovative education opportunities and that the State Department of Education provides support to these innovative opportunities. The applicant provides several examples, such as the Philadelphia Renaissance Schools (14 schools to start in 2010), the Pittsburgh Academies (8 schools based on America's Choice), technical high school (1 school - dual enrollment high school), University-assisted community schools (8 schools), and virtual high schools - the later of which will be developed with RTTT funds. While the state application shows that they have permitted a small number of innovative schools, it is not clear that these are "autonomous public schools" as defined by RTTT. In addition, it is not clear that the schools described in the application are open enrollment, which is a required part of the definition of such schools. This section earns low points, as only part of the criteria are addressed for innovative, autonomous public schools.

<b>(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	
<b>(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
The applicant demonstrates a commitment to reform and provides information on several reform conditions previously implemented at the state level. These initiatives have been broadly applied, including the Early Childhood Education wherein they provide state funds for early childhood education, the Pennsylvania Science It's Elementary program (with roots back to 2000), revised and college and career readiness regulations, statewide financial investment in dual enrollment, the Accountability Block Grants, and Pennsylvania's Classrooms for the Future initiative. This section earned full points.				
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>48</b>	

### Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	
<b>Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
The applicant has provided mention of STEM throughout the application and provides additional detail in the 7-page STEM section of their grant application. It is clear from the whole of the application that the state is committed to providing reform, in part, geared towards implementing a strong STEM initiative. As demonstrated by other sections of the application, some STEM initiatives are already in place at the state and district levels. Overall, given the information in the application and the synopsis provided by the STEM table on page 5 of this section, the applicant has demonstrated the requirements for these priority points.				
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	

### Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform</b>		<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	
<b>Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				

The applicant has provided an application that addresses all four education reform areas, providing a coherent and comprehensive plan for reform at the state level and within the 191 participating LEAs. Although the application is supported by a minority of LEAs in Pennsylvania, the overall impact from the participating LEAs will be aligned to the intent of the RTTT legislation. Indeed, although less than half the LEAs, those participating represent a majority of the proportion of minority children, low-income children, and children with special needs. It is believed, taken as a whole, the reform proposed within this application is well-developed, carefully considered, and likely to spread to other LEAs in PA following success in other districts. As a general comment, the application is very well written, easy to follow, and contains a consistent theme of "Ready to Go" and "Reaching Beyond." Although not a feature of the grant that directly impacts scoring, this unique approach provided an interesting summary for each sub-section of the grant. In addition, the MOU packet sent to LEAs and Charter Schools is an amazing professional presentation and the individuals responsible for putting that information together and presenting in such a way should be commended.

**Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

General comments regarding the State's Tier 2 presentation: The State provided a good presentation that recapped and reiterated the main points of their application. The excitement, knowledge, and experience of the State's panel was both appreciated and beneficial to the process. The high scores originally provided throughout the application were substantiated by the State's presentation and answers, while several of the concerns were clarified. Unfortunately, while the clarifications of concerns provided a better understanding as to why the information was missing or vague in the application, they did not provide enough clarification (in the absence of new information) to significantly change lower scores. Overall, the preparation and candidness of the State's panel must be commended.

Total			0	0	
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Grand Total	500	413	418		
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# Race to the Top

## Technical Review Form - Tier 2

### Pennsylvania Application #3950PA-8



**A. State Success Factors**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>52</b>	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	35	35	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	12	12	

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

(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda

Pennsylvania presents a comprehensive and coherent reform agenda. It has clearly articulated goals for implementing reforms in establishing internationally benchmarked standards and high quality assessments; extensive, accessible data systems, effective and highly effective teachers and leaders, and turning around the lowest performing schools. The state's agenda charts a proven path to improvement, ensuring that the following elements are in place:

- high standards
- teachers and leaders with the data and professional skills to enable students to achieve those standards
- resources necessary to ensure that poor and minority students receive effective education in all subject areas
- only effective schools are in operation..

The challenges to getting this job done are:

- changes in top leadership in the state and possibly in the largest districts;
- dependence on intermediate units as central change agents, especially in large, independent minded school districts;
- an initially small number of highly effective teachers and coaches who will be expected to undertake multiple roles;
- resistance to change and the feeling that one can wait-out a four year reform
- the lack of attention in the plan to involving families.

With a carefully crafted plan, Pennsylvania appears to be up to these challenges.

(ii) Securing LEA commitment

Pennsylvania has a strongly-worded MOU. The addenda and exhibits clearly explain what is expected of participating LEAs in Pennsylvania's plan for achieving its goals in RttT. Pennsylvania's MOU is modeled on the RttT model MOU with one major difference. The provisions that call for using student growth data to make decisions about compensation and financial incentives to attract and retain teachers have been made optional.

Union leaders have given full approval for turnaround schools and conditional approval in other schools in participating LEAs to comply with the requirement that student growth be included as one of the significant factors in evaluating teachers. If some participating LEAs cannot resolve this issue with provisions their negotiated agreement, they will be excluded from participation.

The majority of high-need schools are concentrated in three LEAs. If for any reason Philadelphia or Pittsburgh were to withdraw from participation, it would be devastating to the potential impact for the applicant. These two large districts account for a large percentage of participating students, teachers, and principals, especially those of color. Support letters from district leaders including the two local unions are an encouraging sign that all parties will work hard to find positive solutions to continue involvement in RttT. The American Federation of Teachers, Pennsylvania and the Pennsylvania State Education Association also submitted letters of support indicating that they intend to be full partners in this effort to make sure that teachers have a voice in reform decisions and offer their best expertise to improve educational attainment in the state.

There are letters of support from the variety of organizations and institutions that have a role in the plan. Both the Democratic and Republican candidates for governor have committed to continue support for RttT, but with any change in leadership support can erode, limiting the full achievability of the plan.

(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact

Pennsylvania has 38 percent of its students participating in RttT, including the state's two largest districts, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. Participating LEAs teach 57 percent of the state's high poverty students. Pennsylvania has set ambitious goals for its students, some of which will be quite a challenge to achieve. This is especially true in the lowest performing turnaround schools and for ELL students. If the plan is implemented on schedule and to the fullest extent, it will be possible for Pennsylvania to reach its targets for student achievement, graduation, and college matriculation/persistence. As the plan is implemented, it is possible that other districts that look to participating districts as leaders or that see one or more of the participating LEAs as comparable will be encouraged to try the successful reforms voluntarily.

<b>(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	17	17	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	7	7	

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

(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement

The applicant will provide strong leadership by hiring program directors with direct responsibility for the major intervention strategies—teacher quality and leadership, use of data, charter schools, and turnaround schools—who report to a RttT administrator. This administrator will report directly to the chief state school officer. While two project directors have responsibilities that cross the entire initiative, two others have jurisdiction over a specific set of schools. These differences can possibly lead to confusion, particularly at the local level. The specific role of the Consortium for Education Research and Policy Analysis in its policy function is unclear. Pennsylvania has addressed grants management and oversight with a reasonable plan. The applicant has also structured the RttT grant to build internal capacity to continue services after the grant period. Funding for these services will be provided by an increase in the adequacy based funding formula. The solution is tenuous, however. Pennsylvania does not say what it will stop doing to free the level of funding needed to advance this work full-speed post-RttT.

(ii) Using broad stakeholder support

Pennsylvania plans to involve the professional education organizations, politicians, and business community as policy advisors; the teachers' unions in developing working conditions to support successful implementation; and researchers in oversight of effectiveness. It is not clear that other constituencies such as families, students, civil rights organizations, or other such community-based organizations will be deeply involved at the policy level, which may limit public engagement in support of the plan.

<b>(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5	5	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	19	19	
<b>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
(i) Making progress in each reform area				
<p>Pennsylvania has made progress in the four areas of reform. For example, it has adopted student content standards and developed supporting systems for professional development, created a system to collect value-added data, instituted new standards for principals and superintendents, participated in model alternative certification programs aimed at placing effective teachers and leaders in high-poverty schools, and created empowerment districts that house the lowest performing schools, intervening to raise test scores in 120 of them.</p>				
(ii) Improving student outcomes				
<p>From 2003–2009, Pennsylvania made progress at every level on both NAEP and state assessments in both reading and mathematics. The state has a mixed record in decreasing achievement gaps, but has outpaced other states. Although the data provided are spotty, Pennsylvania also has a mixed record on increasing graduation rates.</p>				
<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	

**B. Standards and Assessments**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20	20	
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20	20	
<b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>Pennsylvania has participated in the development of the NGA/CCSSO “Common Core” standards, which are internationally benchmarked and build toward college readiness. The collaboration involves 47 states.</p> <p>The Pennsylvania Board of Education anticipates adopting the Common Core standards by August 2, 2010.</p>				
<b>(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality assessments	5	5	5	

(ii) Including a significant number of States	5	5	5	
<b>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> Pennsylvania is participating in three consortia to develop and implement high quality assessments, The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (33 states), The Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Career(27 states) and the National Center on Education and the Economy (11 states).				
<b>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)</b> Pennsylvania adopted the "Common Core" standards by August 2, 2010.				
<b>(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>19</b>	
<b>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> Pennsylvania has a well tested existing system, Standards Alignment System, that aligns state standards, curriculum frameworks, instructional materials, and lesson planning resources with diagnostic, formative, benchmark, and summative assessments. The state's Keystone Exams, required for graduation, are accurate predictors of college readiness. The Standards Alignment System will be updated with the Common Core standards, and assessments benchmarked against recommendations from the three assessment development consortia. Pennsylvania will make these resources available through the state's electronic portal to teachers, administrators, educator preparation institutions and others. The Intermediate Units will provide professional development to the LEAs in their region. Additional, more job-embedded professional development on curriculum, instruction, and assessment for the new standards will be put in place in turnaround schools. To establish the Common Core standards in teacher and leader preparation programs, Pennsylvania will provide training to both traditional higher education institutions and alternative preparation programs, such as Urban Principal academies. Through RtT, district teachers and principals will have the opportunity to engage in curriculum mapping and other forms of job embedded professional development to ensure that the new standards are infused in teaching and learning. Funds will also be used to prepare teachers in high-need high schools to offer Advanced Placement courses. For this goal, Pennsylvania has developed a high-quality plan that is ambitious and achievable. Of some concern is whether there are systems throughout the implementation process for input and feedback from districts and schools to contribute to the development of the transition.				
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>69</b>	

**C. Data Systems to Support Instruction**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>	
<b>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> Pennsylvania's Statewide Longitudinal Data System includes all 12 elements.				
<b>(C)(2) Accessing and using State data</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	
<b>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> With a federal grant to enhance its longitudinal data system, Pennsylvania plans to connect its database to more early learning and workforce information, expand post secondary data collection, provide electronic student records and transcripts, and make more data available to researchers and families. Pennsylvania's				

plan for enabling stakeholders to access and use state educational data is high quality and likely to be achieved.				
<b>(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	
(i) Increasing the use of instructional improvement systems	6	5	5	
(ii) Supporting LEAs, schools, and teachers in using instructional improvement systems	6	5	5	
(iii) Making the data from instructional improvement systems available to researchers	6	6	6	
<b>(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
(i) Increasing the use of instructional improvement systems				
<p>Pennsylvania will integrate data from its statewide longitudinal data system with its standards alignment and instructional improvement systems to provide comprehensive data on student performance, standards, and instructional resources in a timely (e.g. early warning system) and user-friendly (e.g. classroom data dashboard) way. RttT funds will be available to districts and turn-around schools to upgrade their data collection and reporting systems and integrate state provided data. While it is very useful to have access to data on a just-in-time basis, there is no explanation of whether teachers, especially in rural areas, will have continuous and convenient access to the required technology. The quality and timeliness of the data in tools like the early warning system to prevent students from dropping out of school are dependent in part on local data entry. It is unclear how teachers and school leaders will have the time to devote to this purpose.</p>				
(ii) Supporting LEAs, schools, and teachers in using instructional improvement systems				
<p>Pennsylvania will support teachers and principals in understanding student performance data and using it to make informed decisions about curriculum, teaching and learning, social and emotional supports for students, etc. One data facilitator per thirty schools will "train the trainers" to use the student instructional portal. This one-size-fits-all approach to professional development is likely to meet with mixed results. The steps that participating schools and districts have agreed to take to embed data decision making locally are promising, however. Weekly, biweekly, and quarterly collaborative planning time, facilitated by local instructional coaches and leadership teams should build the capacity of all teachers and building leaders to use data to improve teaching and learning continuously.</p>				
(iii) Making the data from instructional improvement systems available to researchers				
<p>Pennsylvania will develop the Consortium for Pennsylvania Education Research, Evaluation, and Policy Analysis to conduct research on its RttT grant by enabling approved researchers access its longitudinal data system. This system can aggregate data by subgroup. Pennsylvania will also develop a clear set of guidelines to govern access to its data and protect the privacy of students. Collaborating with its assessment consortium partner, the Florida Department of Education, Pennsylvania plans to create a more intuitive interface for its data system and add tools to make information accessible to researchers in easy to understand formats.</p>				
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>45</b>	

**D. Great Teachers and Leaders**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	

(i) Allowing alternative routes to certification	7	2	2	
(ii) Using alternative routes to certification	7	2	2	
(iii) Preparing teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage	7	3	3	
<b>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
(i) Allowing alternative routes to certification				
<p>Pennsylvania's effort to provide legal authority for alternative routes to certification is a work in progress. There is one alternative route open for teacher certification and no alternative routes for principals at this time. The Teacher Intern Certification Program allows baccalaureate degree holders to acquire a full certificate, good for three years, with additional coursework in education (e.g., classroom management, methods and pedagogy) provided by one of 37 higher education institutions. All current routes require involvement of an institution of higher education.</p> <p>Bills to allow additional routes for teachers and routes for principals have passed both chambers of the commonwealth's legislature by wide margins, but have yet to be reconciled. If all goes as expected, the applicant looks forward to collaborating with The New Teacher Project and developing three Urban Principal Academies to prepare teachers and principals for the state's lowest performing schools. Other alternative providers have also expressed an interest in working in the state. Pennsylvania will also expand its alternative certification internship programs for teachers and principals.</p>				
(ii) Using alternative routes to certification				
<p>In 2008–2009, a mere 853 teachers successfully completed the Teacher Intern Certification Program. This program can be provided by higher education institutions and other providers, is selective in accepting candidates, provides supervised school-based experiences and ongoing support, limits the amount of coursework required, and awards the same level of certification as traditional programs. This program is open to baccalaureate degree holders. This route is used by teachers recruited through Teach for America and The New Teacher Project. The pending legislation would permit more flexibility for alternative providers to offer programs that meet the RttT criteria.</p>				
(iii) Preparing teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage				
<p>Pennsylvania has a process for identifying, evaluating and monitoring areas of teacher and principal shortage. As in many states, the current system underreports the number of emergency certificated personnel. Improvements to the teacher and principal information systems will eventually correct this situation. The system will also report the number teachers and principals rated effective and highly effective. Current data show that urban and rural high-poverty, high-minority schools have the greatest teacher and administrator shortage, particularly in hard-to-staff subject areas. Pennsylvania is developing a plan to eliminate these shortages. The plan includes only limited detail on how it will accomplish these plans. Of particular interest is how Pennsylvania plans to use bonuses and other compensation incentives to alleviate shortages.</p>				
<b>(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	4	4	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	12	12	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	7	7	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	17	17	

**(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)****(i) Measuring student growth**

Pennsylvania's well crafted plan for improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance establishes a clear approach to measuring student growth. Pennsylvania measures individual student growth in relation to adequate yearly progress for No Child Left Behind, as measured by the annually administered state achievement tests. It reports progress for students, showing growth in each subject area over the previous year, projecting the likelihood of reaching proficiency in the current year, and aggregating data by subgroup of students to show school-wide learning needs. These data are only as rigorous as the underlying test., the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment.

**(ii) Developing evaluation systems**

Pennsylvania will design a model evaluation system for teachers and principals that uses multiple measures, including PVAAS (value-added) data, which will count for 15-35 percent of the total result. How growth will be measured in subject areas that are not tested will have to be resolved. The model's elements will be based on the Danielson model and include planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, professional responsibilities, and student growth. Principal evaluation standards will be based on Pennsylvania's Inspired Leadership Program. The model system will be designed by a group of stakeholders that includes teachers, principals, other administrators, teachers unions, parents, business and community leaders, and professional organizations. Local districts may choose to design their own evaluations, but must have them approved by the state. Whether using a locally designed or the state model, districts must provide professional development for evaluators to ensure that implementation is fair, rigorous, and transparent. This is a high-quality approach to revising teacher and principal evaluation.

**(iii) Conducting annual evaluations**

The evaluations will differentiate effectiveness using five ratings (entry, emerging, achieving, highly effective 1, highly effective 2) and place the individual on either a growth or an improvement track. Those on the growth track will receive two observations and one summative evaluation per year. Those on the improvement track will receive a corrective action plan with goals and benchmarks. Supervisors will conduct two formal observations of anyone on the improvement track in each of two evaluation periods per year, and as many informal observations as the supervisor deems necessary.

Beginning in 2011, participating LEAs will phase in the revised annual evaluations. By 2014 the state anticipates that most districts will adopt the model evaluation system. Principals, superintendents, and others conducting evaluations will receive training through their intermediate units.

This plan is ambitious, but achieving it at the intended level is unclear. Three evaluations per year of every teacher may challenge novice or struggling leaders or in schools with concentrations of novice and low-performing teachers. If the formative evaluations are not performed adequately, the effectiveness of the system will be undermined. The development of a clear, mutually agreed on, high quality rubric as well as the appropriate professional development to ensure fair, effective evaluations will be essential to the success of this system.

**(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions**

Evaluation data will be used to help determine the kind of professional development needed for a faculty. For those on the growth track, each teacher and principal will collaborate to devise specific professional growth objectives informed by the evaluation data. The data will be used to ascertain patterns of need across groups of teachers and school-wide, and devise appropriate professional development. Tying evaluation to professional development decision-making is the strongest part of Pennsylvania's plan for using teacher and principal evaluation data.

There have been a few small pilot efforts to use compensation to reward teachers who receive good evaluations based on student performance as one factor. Most of these have been related to Teacher Incentive Fund or philanthropic grants and occurred in the largest districts. Unions in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia have been involved. Whether these efforts are appropriate for scaling up is not known, but unlikely outside of metropolitan areas.

The state will develop a model career ladder that can help districts use the new evaluation system as a factor in compensation. The Pennsylvania State Education Association will provide professional development for local affiliates that wish to negotiate a career ladder in their districts.

Novice teachers will only be granted tenure if they reach the “achieving” rating or above under the proposed evaluation system. Principals identified as “unsatisfactory” on two consecutive evaluations will be dismissed. How the new evaluation system will be used to remove ineffective teachers, except in persistently lowest-performing schools, has yet to be full described.

Overall, Pennsylvania’s plan for using evaluations that include student growth to inform decisions about compensation, promotion, retention, and removal of teachers and principals is not fully developed. Whether the collection of model practices and lessons learned from a variety of experiments can be transformed into a robust, statewide system is yet to be determined.

<b>(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	12	12	
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	6	6	

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

Pennsylvania’s plan to ensure equitable distribution of teachers and principals in high-poverty, high-minority schools is realistic and ambitious. Although it does not use the boldest strategies possible, this is a high-quality plan which should meet its targets over time. The plan requires all districts and charter schools to develop and submit to the state for approval a human capital plan that addresses:

- increasing the pipeline of effective teachers in low performing schools
- enhancing the effectiveness of the existing workforce
- removing ineffective teachers and principals from high poverty, high-minority schools.

At the state level, Pennsylvania will undertake a major effort to improve the qualifications and performance of teachers and principals already in place through the development of web-based professional development resources. The state will offer continuous professional development for teachers and principals, assistance with using student data to make instructional decisions, coaching to enhance teaching and leadership practices, and attention to subject matter rigor. English language learner coaches will work with staff in schools with the greatest concentrations of such students.

Pennsylvania has established annual targets for the number of effective and highly effective teachers in high poverty, high minority, and lowest-performing schools and will monitor progress toward reaching those numbers. The plan also calls for a series of steps to develop a staffing pipeline for low performing schools—marketing and incentives such as a waiver of certification fees, turnaround academies, and urban principal academies.

Pennsylvania plans to encourage collaboration between participating districts and teachers unions to design and offer career ladder programs and bonuses in high poverty/minority schools. The state hopes that district-union collaboration will extend to the issue of developing new approaches to deal with ineffective teachers.

To fill the need for teachers in high need subjects within high need schools, Pennsylvania will develop paths to high quality alternative certification that enable teachers to switch from a low to high need field. To serve rural schools, the state also plans to develop online courses in STEM. The plan to meet this goal is likely to achieve only modest results.

The final strategy in the state plan is to encourage the research consortium to identify practices that work in attracting and retaining highly effective staff in high-need schools and subject areas so that they can be shared with high-need LEAs.

<b>(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	
(i) Linking student data to credentialing programs and reporting publicly	7	3	3	
(ii) Expanding effective programs	7	3	3	

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

(i) Linking student data to credentialing programs and reporting publicly

Over the four years of RtT Pennsylvania will link student assessment data to graduates of in-state teacher and principal preparation programs. Pennsylvania's longitudinal data system already has an identifier in place to link preparation program data to practicing educator data. Pennsylvania plans to charge its consortium of researchers with developing standards and protocols to include student achievement and growth data and teacher and principal evaluations into the assessment of teacher and leader preparation programs. Data on the effectiveness of each program's graduates will be reported publicly and used by the state in deciding whether to renew a preparation program's license. This plan is vague. For example, what role will the higher education board play in this process? What will be the make-up of the consortium's working group? In what form will effectiveness data be reported to the public? With each district and charter school responsible for evaluating teachers and principals, the meaningfulness of the data reported in aggregate is difficult to predict. In small districts and charter schools it may be difficult to protect the identity of individual teachers or principals. Also, preparation institutions might steer graduates toward high achieving schools and districts.

(ii) Expanding effective programs

Like most states, Pennsylvania provides grants and loans to students who attend higher education institutions. As data on effectiveness of teacher and leader preparation programs are made public, Pennsylvania expects that preservice candidates will choose to enroll in the more effective programs, depriving ineffective programs of resources to continue operations. Pennsylvania will trust the market to work. Experience shows that people choose their higher education institutions for many reasons—cost,

proximity to job or family, etc. Whether potential candidates access the effectiveness data in time to include it in their decision-making and how much weight they give to a program's effectiveness remains to be seen.

<b>(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	
(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) Providing effective support

The heart of Pennsylvania's plan for significantly improving student achievement in participating LEAs is to

- inculcate in teachers, principals, and superintendents the habit of seeking lots of data
- make the appropriate instructional diagnoses about what students, teachers, and administrators need to know and do to achieve their instructional or leadership goals
- change actual classroom, school, and district practice
- increase the rigor of subject matter learning for all subgroups and in reading and STEM
- know immediately when learners are in trouble and take early corrective action to put them on the right track
- convince or force leaders and teachers who do not meet high standards of effectiveness leave the profession.

Pennsylvania will provide professional development to schools to ensure high quality data collection and analysis by deploying 119 data facilitators to the 191 participating LEAs. The state will also help districts improve their own data systems and align them seamlessly with the state systems.

Pennsylvania will provide a robust portal with standards, model lesson plans, guidance for differentiating instruction, virtual professional learning communities, etc. These online resources will be supplemented by additional time for professional development during the school year. The applicant's plan encourages and supports LEAs to establish school-based coaching and mentoring for novice teachers.

When implemented with excellence, these strategies have proven effective in improving student, teacher, and leader outcomes. Resources have been allocated strategically, with focus on the schools where the needs are most concentrated.

Can the state gain the cooperation of the large districts to follow through when the decisions are tough? Will the state and participating districts stop existing practices, with their entrenched constituencies, that prove to be ineffective? Can Pennsylvania build enough flexibility into the bureaucracy to meet individual needs while maintaining a high standard of quality across the board? These questions notwithstanding, Pennsylvania's plan is ambitious and achievable.

(ii) Continuously improving the effectiveness of the support

Pennsylvania is experienced in providing data to teachers and school leaders to improve student achievement. The state has also engaged researchers to evaluate the effectiveness of its interventions for enhancing data-driven decision-making and made improvements to its data systems, e.g. Pennsylvania Inspired Leaders. Pennsylvania's future plans include offering professional development for teachers on 1) ways to meet the needs of the students most at risk for school failure; 2) effective instruction in special

education, English language learners, and STEM; and 3) the best practices for turning failing schools around. This combination of past experience and future focus is promising, especially since Pennsylvania has incorporated into its plan steps to be a learning organization. Again, it remains to be seen whether Pennsylvania can stop those practices and policies that data show are ineffective, especially when they are popular or have powerful constituencies.

Total	138	87	87	
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**E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools**

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

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

Pennsylvania has legal authority to takeover districts for financial or academic failure and individual schools for academic failure. While it may be true that the state cannot takeover individual schools under all circumstances of failure, it can take over those schools at most risk to their students--academically failing schools within academically failing districts. Under takeover, the state can manage the operations of the district, require academic interventions, close or reconstitute schools, permit charter schools to operate, hire/fire the superintendent, and eliminate some topics from collective bargaining. Pennsylvania has exercised this authority with resulting academic improvements in most of the districts taken over.

<b>(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools</b>	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) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools

Pennsylvania has identified an expanded list of lowest-achieving schools for intervention in RttT. The additional 91 schools serve 57,000 students.

(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools

Pennsylvania has developed a thoughtful plan for turning around the lowest performing schools, which requires affected schools to adopt one of the four intervention models specified in RttT. Pennsylvania will also require lowest-performing schools to adopt specific programs, curriculum and practices to augment the intervention model. The state's plan is based on past experience, research analysis on Pennsylvania turnaround efforts, and advice from state and national experts engaged in school transformation. Pennsylvania has worked with the teachers unions to identify compensation incentives that attract and retain effective teachers in turnaround schools. While the plan is prescriptive in some of its features, e.g. every turnaround school must adopt *Science It's Elementary*, most mandates offer some choice, e.g. Reading Recovery, or comparable model. This flexibility will enable participating LEAs to develop a most appropriate and individualized plan. RttT provides funding for such mandates.

Most important is the ongoing assistance with important aspects of turning schools around, such as:

- supporting principal effectiveness,
- offering extensive data and abundant assistance in how to use it,

- providing skilled turnaround teacher leaders, and
- emphasizing special attention to important student transitions.

The degree to which every involved Intermediate Unit, the lynchpins for high quality professional development, have the requisite subject-matter and pedagogical experts and master problem-solvers with the ability to lead change among demoralized teachers and principals, who know how to contextualize their work to high-minority and high poverty settings is not described fully in the plan. How will RttT administrators know when Intermediate Units are not meeting the very high bar that has been set for them and what will be done about it? Since some schools will not start their turnaround experiences until year three, they will not have the full advantage RttT funding for very long. Overall, Pennsylvania has crafted a high-quality plan.

Total	50	45	45	
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**F. General**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(F)(1) Making education funding a priority</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	
(i) Allocating a consistent percentage of State revenue to education	5	3	3	
(ii) Equitably funding high-poverty schools	5	4	4	
<b>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
(i) Allocating a consistent percentage of State revenue to education				
<p>Although Pennsylvania decreased its overall percentage of funding in 2009-2010, it continued to increase funding for high-poverty schools. This increase was a modest .67 percent and leaves the budget substantially unchanged. Pennsylvania maintained its weighted funding formula and level-funded allocations for specific interventions in high-poverty schools.</p>				
(ii) Equitably funding high-poverty schools				
<p>Pennsylvania uses an "adequacy" funding formula that adds resources for poor families and English language learners to the base per pupil allocation. Additional adjustments are made for cost of living, district size, and interventions in low performing schools with the result that 10 percent of the state's districts received 45 percent of all new state funds, in FY 2010. Despite this effort, at the individual classroom level, schools that serve high need students generally have more emergency certificated personnel and higher turnover, which can lower actual per-pupil expenditure substantially. Pennsylvania monitors school districts to track the distribution of funds to individual schools and makes sure that Title I and other targeted resources are not used to supplant local and state share.</p>				
<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>32</b>	
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	8	8	
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	4	4	
(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	4	4	

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

(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"

Pennsylvania permits unlimited charter schools.

(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes

There are three authorizing agencies for charters in Pennsylvania, the local school district, the state, and, in Philadelphia, the School Reform Commission (whose authority derives from the state.) The state authorizes cyber charters only. To be authorized, a charter school must file a plan with performance goals. Charter licenses are reviewed every three to five years. Licenses can be revoked or not renewed for failure to meet student performance goals, fiscal mismanagement, discrimination, or fraud. Although district authorizers have closed ineffective charter schools, Pennsylvania has not closed any charter school to date. One in six charter schools is located in Philadelphia. Pennsylvania consulted with high-quality charter operators for their RttT proposal.

(iii) Equitably funding charter schools

Charter schools receive slightly more per pupil funding than public schools with deductions for adult education, college, special education, and non-public school programs.

(iv) Providing charter schools with equitable access to facilities

Pennsylvania provides support to charter schools for facilities through leasing reimbursement, purchasing, or making tenant improvements; assistance with facilities acquisition; access to public facilities; and the ability to share in bonds and mill levies. Conversion charters located in public school building are not charged rent. Charter school facilities must comply with the same laws as public schools.

(v) Enabling LEAs to operate other innovative, autonomous public schools

The state enables LEAs to operate autonomous public schools other than charters. Among others are special turnaround schools in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, early college high schools, and university-assisted community schools. The state leaves decisions about how to govern such schools under the control of local school districts. It is unclear whether these schools have control their own budgets and staffing decisions.

<b>(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	
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**(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

Pennsylvania has created other conditions favorable to increasing student achievement or closing subgroup gaps. Pennsylvania has invested in early childhood education by providing greater access to pre-kindergarten and improving its quality. Almost 35 percent of eligible children enroll in pre-kindergarten programs and 70 percent go on to full day kindergarten. Pennsylvania supports other initiatives, including one-to-one laptop computing, Keystone high-school exit examinations, and dual enrollment in high school and college credit-bearing courses. Although the early childhood education and high school exit examinations have a wide reach, other reforms affect relatively few students.

<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>42</b>	
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**Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	

**Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

Pennsylvania has important and positive features for its emphasis on STEM. The focus on elementary inquiry-based science is an important step for engaging students in real and rigorous science. The strong support for professional development to enable teachers to improve student achievement regarding Common Core standards should also be effective, especially since many elementary school teachers do not have deep subject matter knowledge in STEM. Efforts to add greater rigor to STEM by increasing the number of AP high school courses is also positive.

At the crucial middle grades level, Pennsylvania's plan offers little to meet the challenges of increasing STEM interest. Although there is a model effort to target girls, the impact of a small program, no matter how well designed, will not make the kind of changes American businesses seek in the future workforce. Pennsylvania's plan does not effectively address the needs of underrepresented groups and of women and girls in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

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

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform</b>		Yes	Yes	

**Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

Pennsylvania has coherently and comprehensively addressed the four education reform areas. The state has made progress in improving standards, linking professional development and assessment to those standards, establishing data systems, taking steps to improve teacher and leader quality, and turning around the lowest performing schools. The three largest schools districts are participating in the program, which will impact the sheer number of students, teachers, and administrators affected by RtT. Over time, the smaller districts that have also signed on to RtT are likely to have its affect on non-participating districts as they see successful results within their region. Perhaps the biggest challenge is achieving the specific goals for closing achievement gaps in high-minority, high poverty districts, but the applicant presents a thoughtful, research-supported plan to get there.

Total		0	0	
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Grand Total	500	388	388	
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# Race to the Top

## Technical Review Form - Tier 2

### Pennsylvania Application #3950PA-6



**A. State Success Factors**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>57</b>	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	3	3	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	45	45	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	9	9	

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

The state has articulated a strong education reform agenda that builds on past state successes. All four areas of educational reform that are required are addressed coherently and comprehensively. The state has an established planning process for continuous school improvement that will provide a framework for much of the work to be accomplished under RTTT. The state also has an established principal training program that has been evaluated and shown to produce positive impact on student learning. The student achievement goals are not clear. It appears that these are to apply to statewide data rather than just to the participating schools. If that is the case and with only 38% of students participating, then in order to achieve the goals, the actual growth/improvement required of the participating students would be of such great magnitude that they do not appear achievable.

In securing the commitment of Local Education Agencies (LEAs) the state prepared and utilized a very comprehensive document that clearly specified all of the commitments that were required of the LEA in its scope of work. The state did not use the model MOU that was provided in the application packet but the MOU that it developed and used appeared to cover all of the critical elements. The MOU used does not contain an opt-out clause. The state specified that a district could only be considered a participating district if the MOU was signed by the superintendent, board president and local union leader if applicable.

Out of 601 LEAs in the state 191 (32%) were able to obtain all three signatures and agree to become participating districts. These 191 LEAs represent:

- 37% of schools statewide;
- 38% of K-12 students statewide;
- 57% of students in poverty statewide; and
- 95% of students in academically challenged districts.

The state notes that all districts whether participating or not will be required to implement some elements of the RTTT effort; e.g., the new standards and assessments. They will also benefit from some of the materials and professional development that will be developed with RTTT funding. The state hypothesizes that the non-participating districts will see the positive benefits and increased student learning in the participating districts and most will then adopt the successful practices. While some of this delayed adoption will surely occur, it is unlikely that it will occur to the extent that would be needed to achieve a true statewide impact. This grant will provide significant support to participating districts; e.g., the 119 data coaches to be hired to work out of intermediate units. These will not be available to the districts that come on later. Additionally, the state's largest teachers union through the letter from its president, expresses the

belief that all districts that need/want the improvements available through this grant have signed on already. And, the elementary and secondary principals association has also expressed concerns about principal's ability to commit the time necessary for the project to succeed.

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

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

The state will develop a strong capacity to implement a successful RTTT project by establishing a management team dedicated solely to RTTT. This project team will be lead by a project director who will report directly to the secretary of education. Two program directors will also serve as part of this management team. In order to help ensure that the project is infused into the daily operations of the department, these two program directors will be embedded into existing department of education divisions. The department will also hire 21 core project management staff to assist in the implementation. A Strategic Leadership Council comprised of business leaders, as well as state and national experts in the core areas will be formed to advise the project throughout the grant period.

The state has planned a significant system of supports to help ensure the success of the RTTT efforts. As part of this system the state will use a portion of the RTTT funds to establish a Consortium for Education Research, Evaluation and Policy Analysis to track and report on implementation, impact and sustainability of state-level strategies in the four reform areas. The state also has an existing technical assistance infrastructure in the form of intermediate units that will play a crucial role in the implementation of the RTTT project. The 29 intermediate units deploy over 2500 staff to provide professional development, coaching, technical assistance, and the dissemination of best practices. The state will use RTTT funds to add 220 additional technical assistance experts to the staff in the intermediate units.

The state has included letters of support from a broad range of stakeholders including the governor and the opposing candidate for governor, legislative and other political leaders, teachers unions and administrators' associations as well as STEM consortia and the state higher education system.. However, the letters from two key organizations--the president of the Pennsylvania State Education Association and the executive director of the Pennsylvania Association of Elementary and Secondary School Principals offer only very qualified support. Although the state indicated that it had letters of support from 18 community organizations/advocacy groups those letters did not appear to be represented among the sample letters that were included in the proposal packet. Thus, the level of support and policy involvement of major civil rights advocacy groups or parent organizations such as PTO/PTA is not known.

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

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

The state has developed a high quality system of standards and assessments. Additional recent efforts to improve standards are now on hold as the state expects to adopt the Common Core standards. The state has been a leader in providing to districts a system of interim/benchmark and formative assessments in addition to the NCLB-required summative assessments. The state has improved from a data system that met only 2 of 10 essential Data Quality Campaign elements in 2005 to today's system that meets all 12 of 12. This progress has been supported by a number of State Longitudinal Data System grants from ED as well as a \$4.5 million dollars per year commitment at the state level. The state has implemented a set of Inspired Leaders standards and is requiring all new and sitting principals and superintendents to complete

training on these standards in order to maintain their certification. Evaluation results have found this effort to have had a positive impact on student learning. Efforts to develop high quality teachers have focused mainly on improving preparation programs and professional development. To date there does not appear to be a requirement for all practicing teachers to participate in any overall professional development program to improve their skills. Also, there is currently no alternative pathway to certification although the state is working toward that goal. The state has had very good success in turning around academically challenged schools.

In developing and implementing the RTTT program the state can build upon a history of success in improving student achievement and in reducing learning gaps. On the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) at grades 4 and 8 the state's progress has outpaced the national progress in both reading and mathematics. The grade 8 reading results are especially notable. The state has had mixed success in reducing achievement gaps on NAEP as compared to the nation but appears to have made some progress, although no data are presented for Hispanic students. The state also has reported improvement in student achievement as measured by the state assessment. The state also reports that "...the achievement gaps between different subgroups have declined over time,..." No data were provided to illustrate the size of the gaps nor the amount of progress that has been achieved. The numbers of graduates has increased at a time when school populations have declined. Thus, it would appear that graduation rates have increased but no graduation rate data based on an approved method of calculating a rate was provided. Additionally, except for a brief statement about Hispanic students, no graduation rate gap information was provided.

Total	125	104	104	
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**B. Standards and Assessments**

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

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

The state has a plan for rapidly adopting the Common Core Standards. The state is a member of the Common Core Consortium which includes a total of 50 states and territories and is using its "final-omitted rulemaking" process to expedite the formal adoption of the Common Core Standards. The state board has the authority to adopt standards and plans to do so at its July 1, 2010 meeting. The consortium has used exemplar state standards to inform the writing process and has convened a strong group of experts to draft, revise and validate the Common Core Standards in English/Language Arts and Mathematics. Three higher education faculty members from the state played leadership roles in the development and validation of the standards. An international benchmarking process was also used in the development of the Common Core Standards.

The state used a series of public roundtables to gather input on the draft Common Core Standards. The state also engaged a consultant to study the alignment of the draft Common Core Standards to the existing state standards. These steps plus the public vetting of the final Common Core Standards that occurs as a part of the formal adoption process will help to ensure a smooth transition to the new Common Core Standards.

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

The State submitted an amendment that verifies the formal adoption of the Common Core Standards.

<b>(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality assessments	5	5	5	
(ii) Including a significant number of States	5	5	5	
<p><b>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b></p> <p>By participating in three assessment consortia the state has an excellent plan to develop and implement common, high quality assessments. The three consortia are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium which consists of 33 states. This Consortium seeks to develop both summative and formative assessments along with professional development, technological supports and state of the art reporting systems.</li> <li>• Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Career which builds on the state's history of working with Achieve to align academic expectations with college and career readiness standards. This consortium counts 27 states as members..</li> <li>• The National Center on Education and the Economy Board Exam Consortium which aligns to the state's high school graduation requirements that set a rigorous core of academic expectations while allowing individual students to move on to college-level work after demonstrating proficiency on an internationally-benchmarked exam. Eleven states will participate in this consortium.</li> </ul>				
<b>(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	
<p><b>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b></p> <p>The state proposes a well thought out plan for transitioning to the Common Core standards and high-quality assessments. The basis for the plan is a very well designed three-step strategy. The state currently has a Standards Aligned System (SAS) that is available through an electronic portal. Through the Portal educators have access to extensive professional development, curricular materials, lesson plans, assessment tools and other high quality resources. All of these will be reviewed for alignment with the new Common Core Standards and will be revised as needed. All assessments in reading and math--summative, benchmark and diagnostic--will also be revised to align with the new Common Core Standards. Post secondary institutions and professional development providers will revise their programs to incorporate the new Common Core Standards. The state will work with post secondary institutions to have the end-of-course assessments serve as placement exams.</p> <p>The state has an extensive system of Intermediate Units (IUs) that provide professional development among other services. The state will use a train the trainer model to train IU staff who will then deliver training to all teachers and administrators statewide. The state will also provide districts with RTTT funds to support local curriculum mapping and time for teachers and principals to collaborate on approaches to successful implementation.</p> <p>The state has provided a list of activities accompanied by a timeline and designation of the responsible agency. These are in sufficient detail to allow the state to determine if the proposed project is on target to accomplish its goals.</p>				
Total	70	70	70	

**C. Data Systems to Support Instruction**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
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<b>(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system</b>	24	24	24	
<p><b>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b></p> <p>The state's integrated early childhood to post secondary longitudinal data system contains all 12 elements specified by the America COMPETES Act. Because of the state leadership evidenced in the design and implementation of this system, the governor and the secretary of education received the 2008 annual Leadership Award from the Data Quality Campaign and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). The state has recently received a federal State Longitudinal Data System grant award of \$14.3 million that will allow the system to include additional data elements and facilitate greater researcher access to the database.</p>				
<b>(C)(2) Accessing and using State data</b>	5	4	4	
<p><b>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b></p> <p>The state has a strong plan for access and use of data. The data system assists teachers to make instructional improvements by not simply providing data but by also allowing access to instructional resources including best practices. Dashboards will be implemented to more directly push selected data elements out to teachers and principals. Expanded reporting capacity will be developed to respond to queries from policymakers. The current value added system for measuring student growth will be linked to the longitudinal data system to provide enhanced information to evaluate the effect of interventions and to drive continuous improvement at the classroom, school and district level. The state plans to use Florida as a model to create automated downloads from the website to improve data access and usability. The intermediate units will employ 113 RTTT data use facilitators that will be available to provide on-the-ground professional development on data use.</p> <p>The state has provided a list of activities accompanied by a timeline and designation of the responsible party. These are in sufficient detail to allow the state to determine if the proposed project is on target to accomplish its goals. In the performance measures chart, the goal on the number of SLDS reports created per quarter does not appear to be sufficiently ambitious.</p>				
<b>(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction</b>	18	17	17	
(i) Increasing the use of instructional improvement systems	6	6	6	
(ii) Supporting LEAs, schools, and teachers in using instructional improvement systems	6	5	5	
(iii) Making the data from instructional improvement systems available to researchers	6	6	6	
<p><b>(C)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b></p> <p>The state presents a comprehensive plan to more effectively use data to improve student learning. To ensure that this plan is implemented the state will hire two new project managers in the Office of the RTTT Program Director to oversee the implementation of RTTT data use strategies. As one of the beginning steps to increase the use of instructional improvement systems, the state will identify the elements of a model student information system and will then assist participating districts and schools to analyze the alignment between those elements and their existing local system. RTTT funds will help districts to pay for improvements in their systems so that all elements of the state model are in-place at the teacher and school levels. As an option districts may use RTTT funds to purchase the state model student information system platform. Data dashboards and a Model Early Warning System will help drive teachers to use of data to improve instruction for individual students. The state lists a number of elements that participating districts and schools will be required to include in the Early Warning System.</p> <p>The state also proposes a comprehensive plan to support participating Local Education Agencies (LEAs), schools and teachers to use the instructional support system to inform instruction. The overall goal of this plan is to provide quality,</p>				

job-embedded professional development for teachers, principals and superintendents to develop strong habits of collaborative, data-driven decision making. The plan includes time for teachers to participate in:

- A staff data review meeting before school starts each year;
- Weekly collaborative planning time; and
- Quarterly staff data review meetings.

Additionally, the school leadership team along with instructional coaches will participate in bi-weekly meetings. The performance measures for this section indicate that principals will devote 4 hours per month to review data with staff. This does not appear to be adequate to ensure that teachers are fully capitalizing on the data available to make informed instructional decisions..

The state proposes to use funds from the State Longitudinal Data Systems grant to develop clear and specific data access policies and procedures which will clarify and systematize the process for researchers to access data. The state then proposes to develop a user friendly interface that will enable researchers to easily query the data warehouse to create automated downloads.

The state has provided a list of activities accompanied by a timeline and a designation of the responsible party. These are in sufficient detail to allow the state to determine if the proposed project is on target to achieve the performance measure. The state has provided performance measures that show a progression of increased implementation over the four-year project period. As noted above, one of the performance measures does not appear to require principals to devote sufficient time to working with staff to implement data-informed instructional decisions.

Total	47	45	45	
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**D. Great Teachers and Leaders**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	
(i) Allowing alternative routes to certification	7	2	2	
(ii) Using alternative routes to certification	7	3	3	
(iii) Preparing teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage	7	4	4	

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

The state does not currently allow teacher or principal certification programs that operate independently of Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs). Both chambers of the state legislature have passed by wide margins bills that would allow for alternative providers that operate independently of IHEs, but there are differences between the two versions that have yet to be resolved so that final legislation can be passed.

The state currently has several alternate pathway programs for teachers that operate in conjunction with an IHE. Typically these serve individuals who already possess a baccalaureate degree and offer some degree of flexibility in meeting standards required for certification. For example, demonstrating subject mastery through Praxis or an internship as a way of meeting field experience requirements. These programs are relatively new and in 2008-2009 accounted for the certification of 865 teachers. The largest of the programs is the Intern Certificate Program (853 certified) which is the mechanism used by most of the participants in the Teach for America or The New Teacher Project. The proposal did not indicate any currently operating alternate pathway programs for principals.

The plan that the state proposes to implement to address teacher and principal shortages and to improve the distribution of effective teachers and principals raises several areas of concern. The state currently relies primarily on a review of the percentage of teachers and principals who hold emergency certificates as

a way of identifying areas of shortage. The state recognizes that this provides a very incomplete picture and is preparing to implement a newly redesigned Teacher Information Management System to develop a more timely and accurate picture of teacher and principal shortages; however, there were no details as to the elements that will be designed into the new system. The state plans to increase the number of effective teachers available as well as increase the effectiveness of teachers already in place. One effort will be the establishment of at least three Turnaround Academies which will be one-year residency programs for individuals who have a strong interest in teaching in struggling schools. Strategies for increasing the number of effective principals are not well-defined at this point but will include the development of three Urban Principal Academies. One of the concerns is that without any accurate data regarding the extent of shortages of effective teachers and principals, the state cannot be certain that these Academies alone will be sufficient to address the shortages. A second concern is that the proposal indicates that efforts to improve the equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals is largely left to individual districts. Each participating district is required to develop a three year human capital plan that will address the district's areas of teacher shortage and the equitable distribution of highly effective teachers. The state does not provide evidence as to why they believe this strategy will fully address the equitable distribution, nor do they indicate how they will intervene in a district if the equitable distributions are not adequately addressed.

<b>(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>47</b>	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	4	4	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	15	15	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	7	7	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	21	21	

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

The state has provided a list of activities and a timeline along with the designation of the responsible party. However, as noted in the following discussion, the proposed activities are not sufficiently broad to ensure improved teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance.

The state has a plan to measure student growth in reading/language arts and mathematics in the tested grades through the use of a value-added approach that has already been implemented voluntarily within some districts in the state . However, the state does not propose a well-developed plan to measure student growth in non-tested grades and subjects. The proposal indicates that two steering committees will be established to develop model teacher and principal evaluation systems and these committees will help define growth measures for non-tested grades/subjects; however, the proposal provided no set of possible measures/methods that might be considered.

The state has an aggressive plan and timeline for the development and implementation of evaluation systems that take into account data on student achievement and growth. Two steering committees will be established to guide the development of the teacher and principal evaluation systems. Both committees will include a broad range of members including teachers, principals and business and community leaders. Funded by the Gates Foundation a consensus-building process to reach agreement on student achievement growth factors and their weighting is already underway. The state anticipates that student growth will be weighted between 15 and 35 percent. Several school districts in the state are already involved in this work and their experiences will help inform the development at the state level. By 2011-2012 all participating LEAs must implement either the state model evaluation systems or district-developed systems that have been approved by the state. The state will work with the intermediate units to develop and implement plans for professional development to support the use of the systems. The state will also fund one evaluation implementation coach per 30 schools.

The state will require evaluations of teachers and principals at least annually and will use the evaluation information to inform professional development plans. Teachers who are effective will be placed on a growth track. The principal and teacher will collaborate on a development plan for the teacher which will be

informed by appropriate student growth data and that includes specific performance targets and a commitment to participate in specific professional development activities. Teachers who are under performing will be placed on an improvement track. The principal will design a development or corrective action plan with specific goals and benchmarks. Principals will also be subject to annual evaluations which will include progress against an individual's annual performance plan and goals, student achievement, student growth, superintendent observations, teacher surveys and self-assessment. The proposal indicates that student growth data will be both quantitative and qualitative. However, the proposal did not indicate how the state will ensure the reliability of the qualitative information. For principals who receive a rating of "ineffective," superintendents will develop a corrective improvement plan with time-specific performance targets and quarterly performance reviews. The proposal did not address how the evaluation process will provide teachers and principals with data on student growth for their students, classes, and schools.

The state has a strong plan for using the results of the evaluations in developing teachers and principals; and in compensating, promoting, and retaining teachers and principals. However, plans for using the results of the evaluations in determining tenure and certification status, and removing ineffective teachers and principals are not well specified. As noted above, the results of the evaluations will be used in a process to develop professional development plans for all teachers and for principals who are rated as ineffective. A broad menu of supports and professional development options are available to support the professional development plans, for example, through the instructional improvement system portal or through the intermediate units in the form of coaching, training and other resources. The state plans that the results of the evaluations will be used to inform compensation. A number of districts, large and small, within the state are already experimenting with systems to tie evaluations to compensation and the state can use their experiences as they develop the state system. Also, the largest state teacher union has drafted an alternative compensation and career ladder framework that will be brought to the table as the steering committees work to design the evaluation/compensation systems. (It is important to note; however, that the definition of highly effective teacher in this proposed system does not match the definition in this competition.)

<b>(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	9	9	
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	6	6	

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

The performance measures, list of activities, timeline and designation of the responsible party that is provided in the proposal will not clearly ensure an equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals nor will they result in the changes being implemented in sufficient time to impact the student achievement goals specified in the proposal. Overall, the state has addressed teacher effectiveness more than equitable distribution.

The state's plan to ensure equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals is not sufficiently aggressive. The state has not used the definitions included in the application packet to determine the extent to which highly effective and effective teachers and principals are currently assigned to high-minority or high-poverty schools. Without this data it is difficult to judge the degree of challenge facing the state. However, the plan does not appear sufficiently aggressive to address even a moderate level of inequity. The state's plans are principally oriented around three strategies which are appropriate but are unlikely to be sufficient. One plan involves enhancing the effectiveness of teachers and principals already in place. The second involves increasing the pipeline of effective teachers by increasing recruitment as well as by improving the quality of teacher preparation. A third strategy is to exit from the profession those individuals found to be ineffective.

The majority of the state's plan in section (D)(3) is focused on ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools with little attention to ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas. The state will use RTTT funds to support already certified teachers who seek to obtain certification to teacher additional subjects. Once new legislation permits, the state will provide accelerated alternate pathways for career changers especially in STEM fields. Participating districts and schools will also be able to use RTTT funds to offer signing

bonuses and pay differentials to attract and retain effective teachers and leaders in hard to staff schools and subjects. No data are provided that would illuminate the degree of severity of the problem of equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas but it is unlikely that these limited strategies will be sufficient to fully address the problem.

<b>(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	
(i) Linking student data to credentialing programs and reporting publicly	7	4	4	
(ii) Expanding effective programs	7	5	5	

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

The state has established aggressive performance measures and has provided a list of activities and a timeline along with the designation of the responsible party. However, the activities that are proposed are not sufficiently comprehensive to ensure that teacher and principal preparation programs are significantly improved. Additionally, the seven year cycle for reviewing the accreditation of teacher preparation programs will not allow this data on the quality of the preparation programs to have timely impact.

The state plans to link teacher and principal evaluation results to preparation programs. As part of this plan the state will establish a working group to develop an accountability process with multiple rating instruments and sources of data, specifically including student achievement gains. In 2013 the state will prepare its first annual public report that aligns the data indicating the success of program graduates with their preparatory institution. Preparation programs whose graduates consistently fail to improve student learning will be required to revise and improve their programs or have their program approval revoked. The state proposes to use the state average as the criterion for requiring changes. This criterion will constantly change--rising as programs improve. The net result will be that half of the programs will always be deemed in need of change. The application indicates that when alternative pathway programs offer especially promising results, the state will work with the program to increase its recruitment and expand its enrollment. There was no discussion of using results to encourage expansion of successful non-alternative pathways preparation programs. The state plans to use the results from teacher and principal evaluations which involve metrics far beyond student achievement and student growth. The state has not specified whether reporting to the public will clearly satisfy the requirement that student achievement and student growth data be reported.

<b>(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	
(i) Providing effective support	10	7	7	
(ii) Continuously improving the effectiveness of the support	10	4	4	

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

The state plans to develop a number of resources to support effective, data-informed professional development, coaching, induction, and common planning and collaboration time to teachers and principals. However, the proposal did not indicate how all of these resources would function together as part of a coherent system to provide effective, data-informed professional development, coaching, induction, and common planning and collaboration time to teachers and principals. Most of the discussion in the application focused on providing professional development and support to teachers and principals on how to interpret data rather than on how data would be used to target professional development on activities that would provide teachers and principals with the knowledge and skills to change instructional practices to improve student learning. There were brief mentions of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and job-embedded development via the intermediate units for teachers and of building on the Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership Program (PIL) for principals. However, none of this was provided in sufficient detail, and mention of other critical supports was absent.

There was no plan for continuously improving the effectiveness of the support and how support would be continued after the RTTT grant expires. The proposal indicated that the state will monitor the impact on student achievement but there was no indication of what student achievement measures would be used, especially in non-tested grades and subjects. Nor was there any discussion of who would receive the evaluation results and how they would be used to determine whether an activity should be modified or removed from use.

The state has specified ambitious performance measures and has provided a list of activities and a timeline along with the designation of the responsible party. However, the proposed activities do not clearly specify a coherent plan that will provide to teachers and principals the effective, data-informed professional development that they require to be effective.

Total	138	91	91	
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**E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs</b>	10	5	10	
<b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> The state has authority to intervene directly in low-achieving districts but can only intervene in schools (outside of Philadelphia) when the LEA has first been identified as a district with a history of low test scores or financial distress. The state has invoked this authority to intervene in districts 12 times since 2000 and has successfully exited 8 districts from state intervention. There was no evidence that the state has previously intervened directly in a school.				
<b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)</b> The State clarified that under the School Improvement Grant process it can intervene directly in the persistently lowest achieving schools as defined in this competition.				
<b>(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools</b>	40	34	38	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	29	33	

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

The state has provided a list of activities and a timeline along with the designation of the responsible party. The activities proposed for school turnaround are not adequately detailed to ensure success in a significant number of the schools.

Although no list of identified schools is provided it appears that the state has an approved formula that identifies 37 schools as persistently lowest-achieving. The state proposes to serve a total of 165 schools—91 (345%) more than required. This is a cause for some concern given that first priority must be given to the 37 schools that meet the federal definition. However, the state has had a fairly long and successful history of successful school turnaround upon which to build which alleviates some of this concern. Additionally, the state has a strong intermediate unit structure which can provide significant assistance to the turnaround efforts. The state has not discussed how the School Improvement Grant program will work in tandem with the turnaround efforts proposed here. Although the state proposes to implement school intervention models in a total of 95 schools in the first two years the proposal did not indicate whether all 37 schools identified by the use of the federal formula would be in school intervention before serving the other schools not identified by the federal formula.

Rather than specify a single turnaround model, the state indicates that it will require each school in the turnaround initiative to adopt one of the four approved turnaround models. While the state indicates that each district involved in the turnaround initiative will have to submit a plan to the state, there is no discussion of any criteria/support the state will provide to the district as the district selects a model. The state proposes 7 specific support activity types that will be implemented to assist schools as they implement one of the four required turnaround models. These are based on the success of past school turnaround efforts. A centerpiece of the state's turnaround initiative is the requirement that every turnaround school hire a chief turnaround officer. However, there is no discussion as to how this chief turnaround officer will coordinate and collaborate with the principal to support the principal as the school's leader. Additionally, the proposal seemed to indicate that every school would be assigned a chief school turnaround officer. This does not seem appropriate to schools that convert to charters or schools that are turned over to an Educational Management Organization.

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

The State clarified the information in proposal section E, pages 15 and 16 that describes the role of the Chief School Turnaround Officer.

Total	50	39	48	
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**F. General**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(F)(1) Making education funding a priority</b>	10	9	9	
(i) Allocating a consistent percentage of State revenue to education	5	5	5	
(ii) Equitably funding high-poverty schools	5	4	4	
<b>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>The state made education a funding priority by increasing the percentage of state revenue that is allocated to elementary, secondary and public higher education. While the number of actual dollars available to elementary, secondary and public higher education declined from FY08 to FY09, the percentage of the total state budget dedicated to elementary, secondary and public higher education increased from 41.18% to 41.85%.</p> <p>In the past two years the state has moved to an adequacy-funding formula that prescribes the distribution of state education funds to LEAs. Because this funding formula includes additional weighted funding based on the number of students eligible for free/reduced price meals and for students identified as English Language Learners, high-need districts as identified by these two demographics receive a higher per pupil allocation than do other districts. Because the state exercises limited oversight as to how funds are distributed across schools within an LEA, there is no mechanism in place to ensure that funds are equitably distributed between high-poverty schools and other schools within a district. Philadelphia will pilot in FY11 a weighted funding formula which allocates dollars to schools based on the academic and demographic profile of their students. The state will work with the district to assess the strengths of this formula with the intent to explore application in other similarly situated districts.</p>				
<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	40	29	29	
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	8	8	
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	5	5	
(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)**

The state has no caps on the number of charter schools and specifically prohibits limits on charter school enrollment. Additionally, there are no restrictions on geographic area or on serving a particular student demographic. Currently 135 charter schools operating in the state serve 4% of the total K-12 enrollment in the state. The state has laws, statutes, regulations, or guidelines regarding how charter school authorizers approve, monitor, hold accountable, reauthorize, and close charter schools. The state does not have laws, statutes, regulations, or guidelines that require that student achievement be one significant factor in authorization or renewal. The state also lacks laws, statutes, regulations, or guidelines that would encourage charter schools that serve student populations that are similar to local district student populations. In the last six years there have been:

- 138 charter school applications;
- 33 applications approved (24%); and
- 12 charter schools closed--none for academic reasons, 6 for financial reasons and 6 for other reasons.

When an application is denied the applicant may appeal (except in Philadelphia). The appeal board approves approximately 50% of the appeals that it hears.

The state school code specifies that for non-special education students, the charter school is to receive no less than the budgeted total expenditure per average daily membership of the sending school district minus several expenditures that are not applicable to charter schools. Analysis of actual budgets indicates that charter school actually receive an average of \$1.07 for every dollar that an average non-charter school receives.

The state provides charters with funding specifically allocated for leasing space. In addition the state law allows charters that have been converted from an existing public school to remain in that facility rent-free. In Exhibit F.8, the applicant indicates that charters have the ability to share in bonds and mill levies, or other supports.

No evidence was provided that clearly indicates that the state allows for other innovative schools as defined in this competition, especially that they were open enrollment schools.

<b>(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	
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**(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

The state has introduced a number of other programs to improve student opportunities and learning. One of the major efforts has been to improve early childhood education and data shows considerable success in this area. Additionally about 70% of the state's kindergarten students are in a full-day program. The state will develop a kindergarten assessment to help teachers make sure that all students leave kindergarten ready for success in grade 1. The state has also provided more options and more support for college and career readiness, including funding to support students in a dual credit option. A substantial portion of this funding is directed toward low-income students who might otherwise never consider college as an option. The Classrooms for the Future (CFF) initiative is designed to provide students with 21st century skills. As part of CFF the state has provided significant technology funding to support laptops in core high school courses.

The state has also implemented a waiver procedure that has allowed districts to implement of a number of non-traditional, thematic schools to better address the needs of students. For example:

- Philadelphia operates 14 Renaissance Schools that have a high degree of autonomy in exchange for a high degree of accountability, and the recent collective bargaining agreement in Philadelphia gives

the schools the authority to dismiss half the staff, extend the school day/year and require principals to hire staff through mutual consent.

- Pittsburgh has transformed 8 struggling schools into Accelerated Learning Academies that have adopted the America's Choice school design that includes additional autonomy over operations, extended learning time, and site-based selection of teachers.
- Chester County Technical High School is the state's first hybrid career and technical high school/community college.
- Eight university-assisted community schools in West Philadelphia function as centers of education, services, engagement and activity.

Total	55	43	43	
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**Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM</b>	15	15	15	

**Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

The state will build on a number of currently operational STEM-oriented efforts. Once the Common Core Standards are adopted the state will augment them with engineering learning progressions K-12. In 2009 the state adopted statewide high school graduation requirements that are based, in large part, on the passage of end-of-course exams in all core subject areas, including math and science. Since 2006 the state has invested over \$50 million to improve elementary science programming. RTTT funding will be used to expand the programming in 78 turnaround schools that include elementary grade levels. RTTT funds will also be used to support integration of engineering concepts into the new elementary science program. And, RTTT funds will be used to expand dual-credit programs and access to Advanced Placement programming. While these last two efforts encompass more than science and math, historic trends indicate that about one-third of the slots funded with RTTT monies will be focussed on STEM coursework. Additionally, as the state initiates a virtual high school, RTTT funding will support the development of six online courses in STEM content areas. The state will also use RTTT funds to add new modules in the Inspired Leadership Program for instructional leadership in STEM content areas.

The state currently has five regional planning groups that bring together community partners to collaborate and coordinate with schools, teachers, students and families to promote STEM interest, content and opportunities. The STEM initiative regional centers launched and support numerous local programs specifically targeted to increasing participation of underrepresented groups in STEM, including women and girls. The state participates in the National Girls Collaborative Project at Carnegie Mellon Science Center, which recently was awarded \$200,000 to expand its innovative urban science adventure program designed specifically for middle school girls.

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

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform</b>		Yes	Yes	

**Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

The proposal provides a plan for reform that builds on many previously successful state efforts. All four required areas are addressed and all participating LEAs have submitted all three signatures on the MOU. The goals and plans for implementation are sufficient to ensure that the project can achieve satisfactory implementation.

Total			0	0	
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Grand Total	500	407	416		
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# Race to the Top

## Technical Review Form - Tier 2

### Pennsylvania Application #3950PA-5



**A. State Success Factors**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>59</b>	
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	5	5	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	40	40	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	14	14	

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

(i)

In the current application, the state proposed a comprehensive reform agenda that establishes goals for implementing reforms in the areas described in the ARRA and improving student outcomes statewide. In this section of the application, PA proposed a four part reform agenda that addresses each of the ARRA reform agenda areas.

First, the state plans to adopt and embed high quality standards in classrooms by adopting the Common Core Standards. The state is a member of the Common Core Initiative and the Pennsylvania State Board of Education plans to adopt the by August 2, 2010. Under the proposed reforms, all districts and charter schools will teach according to the Common Core. The state plans to develop STEM standards and learning progressions for engineering concepts in grades K through 12, operate a Standards Aligned System site, and update its system of standards-aligned multi-level suite of formative, benchmark and summative assessments. Classroom instruction will be differentiated and teachers will be able to drill down on each standard to the related eligible content that can be used in classroom activities, to build assessments and to individualize instruction.

Second, the state's reform agenda addresses high-quality data systems that can be used to inform instruction. PA plans to use a longitudinal data system that follows the progress of students through pre-kindergarten, elementary and secondary school and, increasingly, through post secondary education and into the workforce and make the data meaningful at the district, school and teacher levels. The state already uses value added building-level data to identify instructional challenges and a school-level strategic planning tool to guide school improvement. In the current proposal, the state plans to expand and refine the access and use of data for planning and instruction.

Third, the state plans to create a workforce of effective teachers and school leaders. The state's two largest teachers' unions at the state level and 122 of their local affiliates – including the Federation of Teachers in both Philadelphia and Pittsburgh – have committed to reforms that will change the teacher placement and evaluation in their school districts. The state plans to work with educators, academic leaders and experts in professional evaluation to develop an effective and widely adopted model for evaluating teachers where at least 15-35% of a teacher's evaluation is based on student performance, and plans to have an aligned evaluation system for teachers in every district in the state by September 2011. PA also proposes to link student growth data to the graduates of teacher preparation programs and tying future program certification and other measures of effectiveness to the data. The state also plans to increase the number of innovative alternative pathways for teacher and principal certification.

Fourth, the state proposes to intervene in the lowest-performing schools and provided data to show the success that it has accomplished in turning around 176 academically challenged districts in all student subgroups. In the reform plan, the state proposes to use effective, proven practices and to hire turnaround leadership, adopt model recruitment strategies to attract and retain high quality teachers, implement rigorous, research-based and aligned curriculum, use student data to inform and differentiate instruction, increase learning time, and build appropriate social-emotional and community-oriented supports for students.

(ii)

The state reported that it has 191 school districts participating in the reform agenda. The district superintendent, along with the school board president signed in MOU in all 191 districts, and the local union signed the agreement in 124 of the districts. The state reported that the participating school districts represent the majority of students most in need of intervention and additional resources, including 57% of low-income students, 75% of all African-American students, 71% of all Hispanic students, and 69% of all ELL students. Additionally, the state notes that the participating school districts include all sizes and geographic regions, and include the state's two largest districts, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. The state did not permit an opt-out and required all reforms to be adopted. The state also required participating districts and charter schools to develop a preliminary scope of work and to work with their key stakeholders to ensure that there was deep understanding of the changes envisioned, and within 90 days of an award of an RtT grant, each participating district and charter school will submit a Final Scope of Work describing exactly how they will implement each element of the reform agenda.

While the state reports that it has 191 districts and the two largest LEAs participating in the reform agenda, the narrative does not explain whether the number of participating districts represent a critical mass needed to attain statewide impact of the planned reforms. The number of points awarded in this section is due to the need for additional information on the total number of districts needed to effect the desired changes.

(iii)

In the current proposal, the state plans to increase the number of students meeting advanced proficiency five-fold. By the end of the decade, the state plans to have 9 out of 10 elementary and middle grade students proficient in math and for two-thirds to be advanced. At the high school level, the state proposes to have over 71% of students reach grade level in reading. The state plans to update the standards, integrate the assessments and the instructional support system so that schools offer every student an internationally benchmarked academic program, increase the skills of superintendents and principals, and provide teachers with the tools they need to offer high quality instruction.

The state reports that its reform agenda will have statewide impact and expects to attain the following outcomes by 2014: double the rate of improvement in student achievement, have 100,000 more students attain proficiency in reading and mathematics, and reduce the number of students below grade level by 41%. Additionally the state indicated that the gap between white and minority students across all grade levels will shrink by nearly 60 %, 17,000 more students will pass at least one AP course, 14,000 more students will earn college credit in high-school , and 71% of students will enroll in college and be prepared to do college level coursework without remediation. The state also expects that 93% of students will graduate high school with nearly 10,000 more students graduating each year by 2015. The state also established targets for student achievement and expects to attain the following goals: over 11,300 more students (8.3% increase) who perform at-or-above grade level in reading; over 15,100 more students (17.6% increase) will perform at advanced levels in reading and over 13,300 more students (17.8% increase) will perform at advanced levels in math. The state also expects to achieve similar increases in NAEP proficiency levels. Even though the state reported that it has scored every year well above the national average on the NAEP in both math and reading, under the reform agenda, the state plans to accelerate the trend.

The state indicated that it has made significant progress reducing the gap in achievement between black and white students. Under the proposed reform agenda, the state indicated that proficiency will rise dramatically and achievement gaps will substantially decline. Even though the state has narrowed the gap between black and white students performing at (or above) grade level by over 17 percent, the state plans

to shrink this gap by an additional 66% by 2014. The state indicated that between 2009 and 2006, the gap between PSSA scores for black and white students at the lowest level in math narrowed by 28%, and under the proposed agenda, the state plans to reduce this gap by an additional 72% by 2014. Similarly, the gap between PSSA scores for Hispanic and white students at the lowest level in math narrowed by 26%, and the state plans to further reduce this gap by an additional 73%.

The state also plans to increase the high school graduation rate three-fold between 2009 and 2014. In the narrative, the state reported that high school graduation rates improved from 88.6% in 2004 to 89.9% in 2009 and are projected to exceed 90% in 2010, and under the reform agenda, nearly 95% or nineteen out of twenty students that enter high school will exit with a high school diploma. The state also plans to increase the college enrollment and retention rates by over 14% and nearly 7.5% respectively, with the most dramatic increases in Black, Hispanic and Economically Disadvantaged areas. For each of the projected achievement goals, the state provided data charts showing a performance comparison across years.

Pennsylvania also plans to focus on increasing college enrollment and retention. The state joined a national initiative to boost college graduation rates and plans to provide staff development to prepare teachers for the new Common Core standards and the new summative and formative assessments needed to gauge student learning on the new standards. It plans to prepare an updated model voluntary curricula and complete the remaining materials that comprise the instructional improvement system, develop a new teacher and principal evaluation, provide improved mandatory training for every principal and superintendent in the skills needed to implement reforms and manage school turnaround processes, and implement an enhanced student level data system.

The state also plans to have every school district in the state update its instructional program to reflect the new standards and use the new state mandated summative assessments. To accomplish the reforms, the state plans to use its Independent Units to disseminate information on the reforms and required practices. While the state sets forth an ambitious reform agenda and expects all districts in the state to implement the new requirements, it is unclear how the state will enforce or ensure compliance with the requirements in non-participating districts.

<b>(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	
(i) Ensuring the capacity to implement	20	15	16	
(ii) Using broad stakeholder support	10	8	8	

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

(i)

In this section of the application, the state demonstrated that it has the capacity required to implement the proposed reform agenda by providing strong leadership and dedicated teams to implement the reforms, supporting participating LEAs, providing effective and efficient operations and processes for implementing the grant, using the grant funds to accomplish the proposed reforms and targets, including using funds from other sources, and using the resources of the State to continue the reforms after the period of funding has ended.

In the application, the state indicated that it will expand its capacity at all levels of the system to effectively manage and implement the reform agenda. The state plans to integrate the management for this reform into the overall management structure of the PDE and will hire qualified staff to ensure fidelity of the RtT initiative across participating districts and charter schools. Additionally, the state plans to leverage existing resources and ensure that the reform becomes the work of the department, and to garner success, the state plans to establish a Strategic Leadership Council, increase the IU train-the-trainer model to accelerate capacity building and embed supports in schools, and establish a State Charter Office to share charter school best practices, support expansion and provide oversight of charter school performance. The state

also plans to establish a State Turnaround Office to oversee all schools in the Turnaround Initiative and establish a Consortium for Pennsylvania Research, Evaluation, and Policy Analysis.

PA also proposes to implement a multilayer implementation structure in order to meet its proposed performance goals and build sustainability. To do so, the state will use a Professional Leadership Team at the Department to oversee and manage the reform work. The team will be led by an experienced Project Director who will report directly to the Secretary of Education and will coordinate with two Program Directors who will be embedded in existing PDE divisions. Two directors will also be hired to oversee the new State Charter School Office and State Turnaround Office and 21 core project management staff will be hired to assist in the implementation of the reform activities.

The state plans to form a Strategic Leadership Council to advise the state throughout the grant period. The Council will be comprised of business leaders, as well as state and national experts in the core areas of our proposed plan. The primary role of the group is to provide external expertise and objective perspective on planning, design, implementation and evaluation of activities and strategies. In the proposed structure, the Pennsylvania State Board of Education will house the Consortium for Pennsylvania Education, Research, Evaluation and Policy Analysis which will support the dissemination of best practices throughout the state and will be staffed by "resident scholars" who will track and report on the implementation, impact, and sustainability of priority state-level strategies.

In the proposal, the state also plans to use the IUs to implement training and provide technical assistance to participating LEAs. The state will also identify external service providers to train state, district, school, and IU personnel to develop the internal capacity to successfully implement education reform plans and to further scale-up effective practices, programs, and strategies. Pennsylvania's plan also includes strategies for ensuring effective management, budgeting and reporting. The PDE will serve as the fiscal agent and lead organization, including overseeing the execution and monitoring of subcontracts, and effort will be made to leverage resources and ensure that initiatives are supported by a combination of local, state and federal dollars.

The state opens this section of the application by saying that it has the capacity to implement the proposed plan, yet in the discussion, the state indicated that it proposes to expand its capacity to effectively manage and implement the reform agenda. The number of points awarded in this section of the application is due to the need for clarification on whether the state has the needed capacity or whether portions of the grant will be needed to build the needed capacity.

(ii)

In the application, the state demonstrated that it plans to use support from a broad group of stakeholders to better implement its plans, as evidenced by the strength of statements of support from teachers, principals, teacher unions, and other critical stakeholders. The state indicated that MOU signatures from the two statewide teacher union leaders, 122 school districts, and large urban districts like Philadelphia and Pittsburgh as well as small, rural districts is evidence that the state has support for the proposed reform initiatives. In addition to the formal MOU signatures, the state received 273 letters of support from Legislative/Government officials, Teachers' Unions, Higher Education Institutions, Early Childhood Organizations, Education Organizations, Intermediate Units, Non-Participating School District Superintendents, Business and Community members, Community Organizations and Advocacy Groups. While the state demonstrated broad stakeholder support, it is unclear what the state plans to do to ensure stakeholder support and commitment in non-participating districts, especially since the state expects to attain statewide implementation of the evaluation, standards, and assessment requirements of the reform plan.

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

During the Tier 2 presentation and response to questions, the Pennsylvania team clarified that the state's capacity to implement the reform agenda is based on the use of Intermediate Units to implement tools and provide professional development to LEAs and schools, the use of national experts to expand the state's knowledge and ability to develop an implementation plan, and the on-going effort to create teacher expertise to implement and sustain the reform initiatives. While the concern remains as to whether the state

is building comprehensive capacity, the responses provided by the state clarified that the RttT application is designed to expand the state's existing capacity to improve teaching and learning. As a result, the number of points awarded in this section of the application was increased.

<b>(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>23</b>	
(i) Making progress in each reform area	5	5	5	
(ii) Improving student outcomes	25	18	18	

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

(i)

In this section of the application, the state verified that it has made progress over the past several years in each of the four education reform areas, and used its available funding to pursue such reforms. In standards and assessments, the state reported that the State Board of Education adopted academic standards for all core subject areas and after implementing the standards for a few years, the state had the standards evaluated for the purpose of directing a strategic revision. The state reported that the evaluation found that of the 22 American Diploma Project Core English benchmarks, the Pennsylvania standards meet 16 of these essential expectations for college and career and that the PA Academic Standards for Mathematics (ASM) were well aligned with the ADP Benchmarks, and at this point, the state felt that it was well poised to adopt the Common Core Standards. The state also uses a summative assessment that is aligned to the state standards and found that the 11th grade assessment was sufficiently rigorous to be as good a predictor of college retention and success as the SAT. The state noted that it will select the appropriate summative assessment developed by the three national consortia and will begin measuring students' progress and teacher effectiveness on these more rigorous standards. In 2009, Pennsylvania implemented high school graduation requirements that require students to pass end of course exams in English, Math, Science and History, and plans to align the end of course exams to the Common Core standards. The state also created a suite of benchmark and formative assessments and diagnostic tools that show progress or highlight gaps in knowledge aligned directly to the standards. The first two elements of the suite are complete, are available to every district and school and are used by the majority of districts. Additionally, the state created a model voluntary curriculum with detailed learning rubrics, lesson plans, teaching materials, and links web and video content.

In Data systems to support instruction, the state built a statewide longitudinal data system, replaced eight existing state data collection systems, trained 1,200 school district and charter school staff to submit and use data, and provided a Help Desk to ensure timely submission of quality student and teacher data. In addition, the state created a data-rich environment with tools that align to state standards, secured funding to complete the expansion, improvement, and use of the statewide longitudinal data system, and encouraged the use of data to the academic experiences and performance of each student.

In great teachers and leaders, the state redesigned principal and superintendent induction and professional development requirements and developed standards that include team management, data analysis, data informed instructional leadership, and teacher development and evaluation models. The state requires principals and superintendents to complete training based on these standards as part of induction and to maintain their certification. Additionally, the state improved the preparation of teachers by issuing new standards, and worked with post secondary teacher preparation programs to meet the new standards and ensure that graduates have deeper knowledge of state standards, the SAS instructional system, strategies to differentiate instruction, technology based instruction, and special education strategies.

In turning around the lowest performing schools, the state added pre-k and full-day kindergarten programs, reduced class size in K-3 classrooms, expanded teacher support including literacy and math coaching, accelerated the use of technology in high school instruction in all core subjects, and provided credit recovery and intensive tutoring for students scoring below proficient on the PSSA. The state particularly emphasized its record of turning around the lowest performing schools and closing the achievement gap and reported the gains realized in the state's 120 most academically challenged schools and provided data

on achievement for 2003 to 2009. During this time, 95% of schools showed a reduction in number of students scoring below basic in math with an average reduction of 30 percentage points (a 47% improvement) and 95% of schools showed an improvement in number of students scoring proficient in math with an average improvement of 30 percentage points (a 210% improvement). Additionally, 92% of schools showed a reduction in the number of students scoring below basic in reading with an average reduction of 20 percentage points (a 34% improvement) and 94% of schools showed an improvement in the number of students scoring proficient in reading with an average improvement of 21 percentage points (a 128% improvement). Along with the academic gains, the state reported that it imposed diverse governance changes and intensive oversight of school improvement plans in the poorest performing districts. As a result, districts designated as empowerment districts showed significant improvement from 2003-2009 in both math and reading, and districts increased the percent of students reaching grade level by 59% in math and 33% in reading. Further, the percent in the lowest performance level was reduced by 29% in math and 12% in reading.

(ii)

In the application, the state noted that the 2010 Quality Counts report found that Pennsylvania had the nation's 6th highest rate of improvement in 8th grade NAEP scores in the nation from 2003 to 2009, and the state reported that the rate of improvement in 4th grade math put Pennsylvania among the top 15 states for progress on this assessment. In addition, Pennsylvania's NAEP scores increased 58% more than the national average in fourth grade math, and 23% more than the national average in reading. In math, the state also improved its performance. In 2009, the state reported that only seven states had significantly higher NAEP scores in 8th grade math than Pennsylvania.

Analysis of PSSA data also indicated that the state made improvements in student achievement. The state indicated that in 2009, students' scores in math measured at 5th, 8th, and 11th grades and in reading at 5th and 8th grades were higher than they were in 2003, and the number of students meeting proficiency increased substantially with more than twice as many 8th graders attaining advanced proficiency on PSSA Reading in 2009 than 2003, and the number and percent of 8th graders below basic on the reading assessment was nearly cut in half between 2003 and 2009. While the state provided academic information on reading and math on both the NAEP and PSSA, the narrative did not include information on student performance by subgroup.

The state reported that nearly 20,000 more students graduated from Pennsylvania's high schools in 2007-08 than graduated in 1997-98. During this same timeframe, Hispanic graduates showed a steady increase from 1997-98 to 2006-07 and the percentage of Hispanic graduates increased from 2.4% in 1997-98 to 4.3% in 2006-07. The number of points awarded in this section of the application is due to the need for specific information on the annual graduation rate compared to enrollments during the same timeframe and the need for information on subgroup performance on NAEP and PSSA.

Total	125	105	106	
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**B. Standards and Assessments**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards</b>	40	40	40	
(i) Participating in consortium developing high-quality standards	20	20	20	
(ii) Adopting standards	20	20	20	
<b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
(i)				

In this section of the application, the state verified that it is working toward jointly developing and adopting a common set of K-12 standards and that the state is a member of a consortium that includes a significant number of States. PA reports that it is a member of the 48 state National Governors Association and Council of Chief State School Officers Standards Consortium and plans to adopt the internationally benchmarked English language arts (ELA) and mathematics Common Core Standards.

In the application, the state indicated that the PA State Board has been committed to adopting the Common Core standards. In September, 2009 the Board withdrew the state-level revisions to academic standards in reading and math and deferred state action in order to consider the adoption of Common Core Standards. At the same time, the Board considered the adoption of a uniform approach to standards revision. During the past six months, the Board briefed state policymakers and education stakeholders, scheduled a series of regional public roundtables, and commissioned a study that compares Common Core with the PA academic standards, all in preparation of the upcoming standards adoption.

(ii)

Pennsylvania, a Phase 2 applicant, verified that it plans to adopt a common set of K-12 standards by August 2, 2010 and that the state has made significant progress in implementing the standards thereafter in a well-planned way. The state reported that the PA State Board of Education plans to adopt Common Core standards in July 2010, one month ahead of the August 2 deadline. In the application, the state noted that the July adoption date is contingent upon the final version of Common Core being available by early June. In order to accomplish the early adoption, Pennsylvania is planning an expedited process of adoption, known as final-omitted rulemaking and hopes to integrate the Common Core into the state's instructional resources at the beginning of the 2010-11 school year.

<b>(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	
(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 state demonstrated its commitment to improving the quality of its assessments by its participation in a consortium of States that is working toward jointly developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments that are aligned with the consortium's common set of K-12 standards. In the current application, the state reports that it is a member of two national consortia working on aligned assessment systems, and plans to join a third consortium. The first consortium is the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, a consortium that is developing assessments as teaching and learning tools. The Smarter Balanced Consortium is currently working on both formative and summative assessments along with professional development, technology and reporting systems. This consortium is also interested in designing assessment systems around learning progressions. The second consortium is the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Career which is working to design assessments around complex performance tasks. In the current application, the state indicates that it also plans to join a third consortium, the National Center on Education and the Economy, comprised of 11 states, that is developing an internationally-benchmarked exam that can be used to measure student proficiency and allow students who demonstrate proficiency to move on to college-level work.

(ii)

The state reports that the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium is comprised of 33 states and that the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Career is comprised of 27 states. Pennsylvania belongs to two consortia that have participation by over half of the states. The number of

points awarded in this section is due to the fact that both consortia have a significant number of participating states.

**(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments**

20

16

17

**(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)**

In this section of the application, the state verified that it has a plan for supporting a statewide transition to and implementation of internationally benchmarked K-12 standards that build toward college and career readiness by the time of high school graduation, and high-quality assessments tied to these standards. The state also described the activities that it plans to implement under the proposed plan. In the application, in addition to the discussion of the transition plan, the state provided a detailed list of performance measures for each of the transition steps in the proposed plan.

The state reported that it has a three-step transition plan to implement internationally benchmarked, common standards and assessments. Under step 1, Adoption, the PA State Board of Education is adopting rigorous academic standards in both math and reading that are consistent with the Common Core Standards and will take action to adopt the standards by August 2, 2010 using an expedited process. The state will also work in partnership with the assessment consortia to develop common, internationally benchmarked summative assessments, contribute to the development of high quality, aligned benchmark assessments, and work with other states in developing formative assessments. The state further indicated that it set a goal of ensuring that every student attains mastery in English, math, science, and social studies skills and is proficient in the state standards prior to graduation, and that it recently adopted new graduation requirements that require students to pass end of course exams.

In Step 2 of the plan, Integration, the state will continue to align the components of the instructional improvement system to the standards and will operate an electronic portal that will deliver relevant information and tools to teachers. Additionally, the state indicated that all assessments in reading and math, as well as summative, benchmark and diagnostic assessments, will be revised to align with the Common Core standards.

The state also reported that it recently established new standards for teacher and principal preparation and instituted a rigorous review process to make sure every teacher preparation program meets the new standards. The state plans to provide assistance to preparation institutions to ensure that the IHEs understand how to meet the new competencies and how to incorporate the use of designated tools and resources into their teacher preparation programs.

Under step 3, Implementation, the state plans to continue using its online portal to implement the state's Standards Aligned System (SAS) at the school and classroom-levels, and use the portal to provide tools and resources that can be easily adapted to meet the instructional needs of each student. The state also plans to implement additional training to build district-level understanding of the new standards and assessments and to assist districts with effectively implementing the revised standards. Additionally, the state will leverage RTTT funds to ensure that there is sufficient depth of understanding of the new standards, align each element of SAS at the district and school level, and provide resources and time needed to ensure successful implementation of the proposed reforms. The state plans to increase access to advanced coursework in high schools, nearly double the number of dual enrollment students, conduct online courses, and provide universal access to Advanced Placement courses.

While the state verified that it has a detailed transition plan, the number of points awarded in this section is due to the need for more information on how the participating LEAs will collaborate in the implementation of the proposed activities.

**(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)**

During the Tier 2 presentation and response to questions, the state clarified that it established a communication loop with LEAs through the Intermediate Unit system to implement and refine assessments and that it collaborates with LEAs by using outstanding teachers to align and develop assessments such as

the Pennsylvania Keystone tests. As a result, the number of points awarded in this section of the application was increased.

Total	70	66	67	
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**C. Data Systems to Support Instruction**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system</b>	24	24	24	

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

In this section of the application, the state indicated that is has fully implemented a statewide longitudinal data system that includes all of the elements of the America COMPETES Act.

The state's longitudinal data system, the Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS) has a unique student identifier that has been in place since 2006. In addition, PIMS has student enrollment, demographic and program information data, transfer, drop out, and program completion information, and the capacity to communicate with higher education data systems, The system includes a state data audit system, data on annual student assessment records, information on students not tested, by grade and subject, and has a teacher identifier system with the ability to match students with teachers. The PIMS contains student transcript information, including information on courses completed and grades earned, college readiness test scores, data on student transition from secondary school to postsecondary education, including remedial coursework, and data on success in postsecondary education.

The state also reports that it plans to launch the next phase of development in the state education data system, and plans to expand the longitudinal data system by increasing the amount of useful and relevant data housed in the system, providing immediate cost saving services, ensuring even greater data quality and access, and expanding the data use policy.

**(C)(2) Accessing and using State data**

5

5

5

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

The state indicated that it has a plan to ensure that data from the statewide longitudinal data system are accessible and used to inform and engage key stakeholders and that the data supports decision-makers in continuous improvement efforts.

The state reported that it met with key stakeholder groups that had a particular focus on data and its use to improve teaching and learning. During these meetings, the state identified the unique data needs for each type of stakeholder group and developed a plan that is responsive to the identified needs. When the state met with researchers, the need to track and link students to demographic identifiers and the need to easily query the data warehouse emerged. Teachers, principals and school staff wanted access to real-time student-level information connected to instructional solutions and access to resources that would help individualize and differentiate instruction to meet specific learning needs of students. Additionally, the educators needed access to instructional best practices. End-users and recipients of data reports indicated that they needed good data quality, more expansive data sets, and understandable and meaningful reports based on objective outcomes data. When asked, students and parents indicated that they needed information about local schools and wanted to understand the learning needs of students so they can be informed partners in the education of their children. IUs, LEA, and IHE leaders needed to ensure that employee skills match local needs and the ability to track students that move across districts, and policymakers needed to be able to measure the effectiveness of programs of all types and promote cost-effectiveness throughout the system.

In response to the identified needs, the state developed specific plans to expand and refine the current system. Among the proposed activities, the state plans to link multiple data warehouses and create a platform that evaluators can use to conduct in-depth evaluations on the reforms and provide data that will allow independent researchers to look at broad educational intervention questions and the effectiveness of specific programs. Additionally, the state plans to implement a proposed statewide research consortium and provide comprehensive data to the consortium as well as to external research organizations who may want to conduct multi-city or multi-state evaluations.

The state also indicated that it plans to focus on providing stakeholders with usable information and plans to create an easy access and easy-to-use online data tool that integrates the state's SLDS, the instructional improvement system, online portal, and realtime school and district records.

<b>(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	
(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)**

(i)

In this section of the application, the state verified that it has a plan to increase the acquisition, adoption, and use of local instructional improvement systems that provide teachers, principals, and administrators with the information and resources they need to inform and improve their instructional practices, decision-making, and overall effectiveness. To accomplish this goal, the state established a multipart plan that addresses data-driven instruction, student information systems, data dashboards, and the implementation of an early warning system.

Under data-driven instruction, the state verified that it is already implementing an instructional improvement system aligned to standards, assessments, curriculum frameworks, instruction, resources and materials and interventions and that it implemented online access to the system in December 2009. In the current proposal, the state plans to integrate the SLDS and real-time school and district data with classroom, school and district level dashboards that will provide teachers and principals with customized information and links to instruction and intervention strategies.

Under student information systems, the state proposes to create a model Student Information System (SIS). This work will begin by upgrading local systems and help fund improvements to local systems so that all elements of the state's model are in-place at the school and teacher level. The proposed model information system will include all data elements that are needed to analyze student achievement including demographic information, diagnostic, formative and benchmark assessment results, attendance, behavior data and course failure rates. The state also proposes to implement classroom level data dashboards that will integrate classroom data with district and state data to inform teachers of the learning strengths and challenges of their students on both an individual and group basis. In the classroom data dashboard, each student's test scores, attendance, discipline, grades, and language proficiency level data will be linked to instructional resources designed to meet their individual needs. This dashboard will also guide teachers to the location in the instructional improvement system portal where they can access information on classroom strategies, lesson plans, rubrics and the materials necessary to address specific student learning needs. In addition to classroom dashboards, the state plans to develop school and district level dashboards to focus school and district decision-making, actions, strategies, and interventions.

The state also plans to implement a model early warning system that uses multi-level assessment data and real-time student data to identify students who need additional academic and socio-emotional/behavioral supports. The state's early warning system data and results will be available to teachers and principals and

will be directly linked to supports and interventions using the Pennsylvania's Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtII) framework. Additionally, the state plans to generate a watch list of students who exhibit at-risk indicators. The state plans to prepare the list before school opens each September and update the list quarterly identifying student progress and adding new students as necessary.

In this section of the application, the state demonstrated its intent to increase the use of instructional improvement systems and described a comprehensive framework of data that can be used to make instructional improvements.

(ii)

In this section, the state verified that it plans to support participating LEAs and schools that are using instructional improvement systems in providing effective professional development to teachers, principals, and administrators on how to use these systems and the resulting data to support continuous instructional improvement.

In the current proposal, the state plans to provide training and professional development to teachers and leaders in all Pennsylvania districts and schools on the use of the instructional improvement system online portal. The state will provide 119 data use facilitators who will be responsible for 30 schools and provide support to teachers in the effective use of data to improve instruction. In turn, each participating district and charter school has agreed to help teachers prepare for students using real data, provide weekly teacher collaborative planning time, conduct bi-weekly leadership team meetings, and hold quarterly staff data review meetings.

By signing the MOU, participating districts and schools agreed to conduct a staff data review meeting one week before school starts each year during which teachers will review the prior year's assessment data for incoming students, receive training on the use of diagnostic assessments, identify performance trends and needs, and prepare classroom specific plans to address individual learning needs of incoming students.

Participating schools also agreed to schedule weekly teacher collaborative planning time facilitated by instructional coaches and focused on training provided by data use facilitators. The state indicated that the collaborative planning time will be used for grade-level or teams of teachers to review at-risk students flagged by the early warning system, plan specific action to meet the needs of identified students, and give subject-level teachers opportunities to discuss common challenges and work with coaches on instructional strategies.

In the proposed plan, the state intends for participating schools and districts to conduct bi-weekly leadership team meetings to use the early warning system data and devise strategies to help at-risk students, and to develop agendas and materials that will guide teacher collaborative planning time and help them use time more effectively. Additionally, the state expects participating schools and districts to conduct quarterly staff data review meetings led by the school's leadership team. In these meetings, staff will be expected to discuss the previous quarter's data and evaluate the outcomes of various interventions and review the quarterly early warning system at-risk students. In addition, the meeting will be used to review the school's improvement plan and assess whether the school is on track to achieving the goals.

In this portion of the application, the state demonstrated its intent to use structures such as training, collaborative planning time, and leadership team meetings to support the use of instructional improvement systems.

(iii)

In this proposal, the state verified that it will make the data from instructional improvement systems and statewide longitudinal data systems available and accessible to researchers so that they will have detailed information with which to evaluate the effectiveness of instructional materials, strategies, and approaches for educating different types of students. To accomplish this goal, the state plans to provide access to data for researchers in three ways. First, the state plans to develop a Consortium for Pennsylvania Education Research, Evaluation, and Policy Analysis to ensure that state data is used to inform education practice. The state plans to give the consortium access to data from the longitudinal data system and the instructional improvement systems. Second, the state plans to develop data access policies and

procedures which will clarify and systematize the process by which researchers can access data while simultaneously protecting the privacy of students. Third, the state plans to develop a user-friendly interface that will enable researchers easy access to the data warehouse and give researchers with approved proposals the ability to pull the data appropriate to their research proposal.

Total	47	47	47	
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**D. Great Teachers and Leaders**

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	
(i) Allowing alternative routes to certification	7	2	2	
(ii) Using alternative routes to certification	7	4	4	
(iii) Preparing teachers and principals to fill areas of shortage	7	5	5	

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

(i)

The state verified that it has the legal, statutory, or regulatory provisions that allow alternative routes to certification for teachers and principals; however, the state has not yet enacted legislation to authorize programs outside traditional pathways, particularly routes that allow for providers in addition to institutions of higher education. The number of points awarded in this section of the application is due to the fact that the lack of current or future alternative certification is dependent upon the passage of authorizing legislation.

Pennsylvania reports that it has numerous alternative certification programs affiliated with higher education including Teach for America and The New Teacher Project. In addition, Temple University offers a program focused on STEM careers. The state has pre-service standards for alternative teacher certification and strong requirements for programs including supervised school-based experiences.

The state legislature is considering passage of a bill that will expand the types of providers that can train and certify principals and teachers, and although there are different versions of the bill under consideration, the state is hopeful that the legislation will pass during the summer session. Once the bill passes, entities other than institutions of higher education that meet the state's teacher preparation program requirements will be able to operate certification programs for both teachers and principals. Additionally, the bill will reduce the number of years of professional experience prior to principal certification from five years to three years and teachers and principals who complete alternative routes will have the same certification as individuals who complete traditional routes. Regardless of the pathway, the state indicated that all of the alternative routes to certification, both within traditional higher education programs and in new programs to be offered by non-IHE providers, will be required to meet the same high standards. The state also plans to expand and focus its alternative certification Internship programs on the highest need schools. In this particular program, teacher candidates will work in the classroom full time while earning their certification.

In addition to expanded certification routes, the state plans to implement new teacher preparation standards that increase the requirements for content-specific coursework as well as child development and instructional practices, and will offer candidates more extensive field experiences and narrower grade-band certifications

(ii)

In this section of the application, the state indicated that it has alternative certification routes in operation and that it has recently expanded its alternative certification programs in order to increase the number and equitable distribution of effective teachers in high-need subjects and to provide greater diversity in the teaching force. However, the application does not describe the actual use of alternative certification pathways. In addition, in earlier sections of the application, the state indicating that it does not have authorizing legislation that would permit alternative certification. The number of points awarded in this section of the application is due to the need for explanation and verification that the state is actually using alternative certification routes.

In the application, the state indicated that at the present time, the state provides or is considering alternative programs in four areas: post-baccalaureate programs, teacher intern certification, residency certification, and in innovative programs. Additionally, the state reported that it has implemented guidelines for post-baccalaureate programs. While the guidelines encourage innovative and field-based programs, they also require programs to meet the requirements for all new teacher preparation programs.

The state's intern certificate program permits individuals with a baccalaureate degree to complete only the coursework needed to supplement the individual's credentials in classroom management, methods and pedagogy. Intern candidates receive a professional certificate that will be valid for three years and entitles the holder to fill a full-time professional teaching position and be considered a highly qualified teacher. The state reported that once new legislation is enacted, the state will approve new residency certification programs that will bring professionals into key shortage areas such as science and mathematics. In the application, the state noted that Temple University offers an innovative program to bring STEM career changers and early retirees into the classroom and permits professionals to begin the program while maintaining their existing jobs.

The number of points awarded in this section of the application is due to the fact that one or more of the alternative certification programs have yet to be implemented and are dependent upon passage of authorizing legislation.

(iii)

The state indicated that it has a process for monitoring, evaluating, and identifying areas of teacher and principal shortage and for preparing teachers and principals to fill these areas of shortage. In the application, the state said that it currently identifies teacher and principal shortages by reviewing the percentage of teachers and principals who hold emergency permits in their current subject area. The state indicated that emergency permit data shows that overall, teacher and principal shortages are relatively small, but in remote rural and big urban districts as well as in science, math, special education and bilingual ESL, the shortages are significant. In addition, the teacher turnover rate is high in many urban schools. As a result, the state plans to use the newly redesigned Teacher Information Management System to monitor teacher and principal shortages, and once the state has an indicator of teacher effectiveness, it plans to also identify shortages of effective teachers.

The state plans to address the shortage of effective teachers by increasing the pipeline of effective teachers available to schools and districts and increasing the effectiveness of our current teachers by establishing one-year residency programs for certified or uncertified individuals who have a strong interest in teaching in struggling schools. These programs, called Turnaround Academies, will allow participants to learn side by side with highly effective teachers. Additionally, the state requires each participating district and turnaround school to develop a three year human capital plan that addresses the district's areas of teacher shortage, and specify how the district will offer incentives to attract and retain effective teachers, adopt a career ladder, and use a cohort hiring model to attract and retain effective teachers. The state will use the data from the plans to implement a recruitment campaign that will offer incentives to bring teachers to these districts.

In addition to teacher shortages, the state plans to ensure that there is a sufficient pool of highly-qualified principal candidates, especially in hard-to-staff schools. To accomplish this goal, the state plans to approve innovative principal preparation programs and implement three Urban Principal Academies for 100 candidates per year for four years.

While the state has a plan to monitor and address teacher and principal shortages, the process does not describe how the human capital plan or the proposed academies will be designed to reduce the shortage of effective teachers and principals. The number of points awarded in this section is due to the need for more information on a process that will address all identified shortages.

<b>(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>52</b>	
(i) Measuring student growth	5	3	3	
(ii) Developing evaluation systems	15	15	15	
(iii) Conducting annual evaluations	10	8	8	
(iv) Using evaluations to inform key decisions	28	26	26	

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

(i)

In this section of the application, the state discussed its intent to establish clear approaches to measuring student growth for each individual student. The state verified that for the past four years, it has been measuring individual student growth through the Pennsylvania Value-Added Assessment System (PVAAS). The state indicated that the PVAAS provides a statistical analysis of individual and cohort scores from the state assessment and adds value added data to complement achievement data and calculate student proficiency projections. Additionally the PVAAS projects proficiency on future assessments, provides administrators and teachers with a measure of future performance, and helps focus instruction for each student. The state plans to use PVAAS data elements as the measurement for student performance for teacher and principal evaluations and to use the data to account for up to 35% of the evaluation.

While the state has an approach to measuring student growth for tested students, the narrative does not describe how the data plans to measure student growth for untested subjects or students. The number of points awarded in this section is due to the need for information on a comprehensive process that will include a growth measure for currently untested subjects or areas.

(ii)

In this section of the application, the state described its intent to design and implement rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation systems for teachers and principals that will differentiate effectiveness using multiple rating categories that take into account data on student growth as a significant factor and are designed and developed with teacher and principal involvement. The state's proposed plan to improve teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance appears to contain the essential steps to develop an evaluation system that contains the required components specified in this section of the RtT plan.

The state indicated that it plans to convene two steering committees to develop model teacher and principal evaluation systems, ensuring that the committees include leaders from school districts and charter schools, intermediate units, state and local teachers' unions, professional associations, parents, and business and community leaders. The state reported that it will use a consensus-building process to reach agreement on appropriate student achievement growth factors and their weighting in the overall evaluation which is anticipated to be 15 to 35%. In addition, the state plans to build a state level stakeholder group that will identify and agree on measures of student achievement growth to be used in teacher and principal evaluation systems, pilot a new evaluation system in at least five districts and charters, train staff to implement the tools and protocols, buy the technical capacity to analyze student and school data, and review best practices to determine valid options of student achievement growth measures.

The state reported that it requires all participating districts and charter schools to implement the new teacher and principal evaluation systems by September 2011, using either the state multi-level model or a

district-developed system that is approved by the Department and meets the standards for teacher and principal evaluation systems.

The state indicated that it plans to use the new evaluation system as a foundation for differentiating effectiveness and developing clear and measurable goals for student success for teachers and principals. In addition, the state plans to use the system to provide regular and ongoing feedback to help teachers and leaders improve their practice, target specific areas for individual and group training and professional development, identify teachers and leaders with the capacity and capabilities to assume additional responsibilities, remove ineffective teachers and leaders, and assess specific programs and intervention strategies.

To guide the development of the new evaluation system, the state identified criteria that will be used to develop a model system. The state indicated that multiple measures for evaluation must include planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities. Student growth must be a significant factor and within the range of 15% to 35% of the total evaluation. The model must include a transparent rubric to measure progress in each evaluation component and must include five levels of evaluation ratings that are aligned with years of experience and expected performance. Additionally, the model evaluation must be designed to ensure that evaluations occur at least annually and that employees receive timely and constructive feedback.

The state indicated that principal evaluations will be based on standards and competencies included in the statewide, standards-based leadership development and support system for school leaders. The principal evaluation must include a measurement of whether the leader has demonstrated the knowledge and skills to think and plan strategically, and has demonstrated an understanding of systems theory. In addition, the evaluation must measure whether the leader has demonstrated the ability to access and use appropriate data to inform decision-making at all levels of the system. The state also recommends that the evaluation measure whether the leader has created a culture of teaching and learning with an emphasis on learning, has managed resources for effective results, has collaborated, communicated, engaged and empowered others inside and outside of the organization to pursue excellence in learning, and has operated in a fair and equitable manner with personal and professional integrity.

(iii)

The state verified that it plans to conduct annual evaluations of teachers and principals that include timely and constructive feedback. In the narrative, the state indicated that the evaluation systems will evaluate the effectiveness of teachers and leaders and diagnose their individual strengths and weaknesses. The evaluation system will provide support to help educators improve performance. The teacher evaluation system will be designed to rate teachers in one of five categories and teachers who are performing at an effective level will be placed on a growth track and will receive at least two formal observations per year and an annual summative evaluation. Teachers who have underperformed will be placed on an improvement track and will work with the principal to design a development, or corrective action plan. Teachers on the improvement track will receive two formal evaluations per year.

The state indicated that it will also conduct annual evaluations of principals that include timely and constructive feedback and provide data on student growth for students, classes and schools. In the new system, principals will be evaluated by the superintendent or direct supervisor and will receive at least one annual evaluation with principals working on an Administrative I certificate will be evaluated at least twice annually. The state reported that the principal evaluation systems will have multiple ratings that can be used to identify highly effective principals and for principals who receive a rating of ineffective, superintendents will develop a corrective improvement plan that includes performance targets and quarterly performance reviews. In the proposed system, principals who fail to satisfactorily complete their improvement plan will be dismissed.

While the state proposes a robust evaluation system for teachers and principals, the narrative does not describe how the system will provide teachers and principals with data on student growth for their students, classes, and schools and how this data will be used in the evaluation to measure or improve performance. The number of points awarded in this section of the application is due to the need for additional information on the use of student growth data in the evaluation.

(iv)

In this section of the application, the state verified that it plans to develop and use a well-developed teacher and principal evaluation system to inform decisions on professional development, compensation, promotion, tenure and dismissal.

The state reported that districts and charter schools participating in the reform agenda will use the results of their enhanced teacher and principal evaluation systems to plan targeted professional development, develop advancement and compensation initiatives, inform retention and tenure decisions, and identify and dismiss ineffective teachers and leaders. The state will develop a model teacher and principal evaluation system that will include professional development plans for all teachers and principals as part of the evaluation process. Data on individual evaluations will be used to develop a growth plan and the results of teacher evaluations across group, grade, school and district levels will be used to identify broad based professional development needs.

The state will provide principals with access to high quality professional development through the Pennsylvania Inspired Leaders program, a comprehensive leadership program that is aligned to Pennsylvania's leadership standards and provides both induction and ongoing professional development. Additionally, the state will develop a model career ladder that participating districts and schools can use to develop their own plans for using the new evaluation system to inform compensation, promotion and advancement decisions. The state reports that it plans to use a Steering Committee will to develop a model career ladder that includes individual and group bonus payments or salary supplement for teachers, salary supplements for assumption of new teacher roles, and bonus payments or salary supplements to attract highly effective teachers and leaders to hard to staff schools and in hard to staff subjects.

The state reports that the Pennsylvania State Education Association has drafted an alternative compensation and career ladder framework that proposes a different rating system. The state expects that since PSEA is a member of the steering committee, it will bring this framework to the table for consideration when the Pennsylvania model is developed.

While the state proposed to use a career ladder system and to make decisions based on evaluations, the number of points awarded in this section is due to the need for information on how the evaluation data will be used to compensate, promote and advance teachers and leaders.

<b>(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	
(i) Ensuring equitable distribution in high-poverty or high-minority schools	15	12	12	
(ii) Ensuring equitable distribution in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	10	8	8	

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

In this section of the application, the state reports that it will ensure the equitable distribution of teachers and principals and increase the number and percentage of effective teachers and that it has a plan to implement incentives and strategies in such areas as recruitment, compensation, teaching and learning environments, professional development, and human resources practices and processes. However, the state's plan relies on professional development and recruitment and salary incentives to ensure equitable distribution of teachers and principals and does not provide a description of the specific strategies that the state plans to use to ensure equitable distribution in the high-poverty or in high-minority schools or how it will target distribution of teacher in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas. The number of points awarded in this section of the application is due to the need for information on the state's plan in each of the required distribution areas.

The state reports that its high-poverty and high-minority schools and districts face significant challenges in recruiting and retaining highly effective educators in hard-to-staff subjects, and that the state will address

the challenges by implementing the three critical elements of a comprehensive human capital system. First, the state will increase the pipeline of effective teachers and principals and focus on attracting, placing and retaining effective teachers and leaders in schools with persistent shortages. Second, the state plans to enhance the skills of the existing workforce in all participating districts and schools by strengthening school based instructional leadership, targeted job-embedded professional development and individualized professional growth plans. Third, the state plans to dismiss individuals who are ineffective in raising student achievement.

In order to ensure the equitable distribution of teachers and principals, the state will require all participating districts and charter schools to develop a human capital plan that addresses three critical elements. The elements will be supported by the state includes increasing the pipeline of effective teachers and principals by implementing new standards for teacher preparation programs, design and launch an aggressive marketing and recruiting plan, and attract highly qualified candidates to schools in the turnaround initiative and rural schools. The state proposes to waive certification costs, fund professional development opportunities, and operate a website to provide information on the state's programs and opportunities. The state plans to create Turnaround Academies for teachers which will provide learning labs and opportunities for certified and uncertified teachers who want to teach in struggling schools. Academy participants will be trained in a one-year residency program and will receive a Master's Degree or a teaching certificate. In addition, the state will create Urban Principal Academies to train principals specifically to lead reform in persistently failing schools. The state also plans to provide support to districts and schools to meet the challenge of hard-to-staff subjects by supporting already certified teachers who want to obtain an additional certification in order to qualify to teach additional subject areas. Participating districts and schools will also have opportunities to attract and retain effective teachers and leaders by offering signing bonuses and pay salary differentials to attract and retain effective teachers and leaders in hard to staff schools and subjects. In addition, schools in the turnaround initiative will use the cohort model to attract effective teachers by hiring, training, and placing a group of teachers together as a team to facilitate ongoing collaboration, teamwork and support to each other.

Additionally, the state plans to enhance the effectiveness of existing staff by implementing job embedded professional development on the effective use and interpretation of student data to identify students for specific intervention, group students according to need, and differentiate instruction. Professional development will include training in virtual coursework and can be offered in an individualized professional development format. The state will also ensure the equitable distribution of teachers and principals by dismissing ineffective educators through the new multi-measure teacher and principal evaluation systems that include student growth.

The number of points awarded in this section is due to the need for additional information on how the state plans to balance the distribution of highly effective teachers and leaders across all schools.

<b>(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	
(i) Linking student data to credentialing programs and reporting publicly	7	7	7	
(ii) Expanding effective programs	7	2	2	

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

In this section of the application, the state verified that it plans to link student achievement and student growth data to the students' teachers and principals and to link this information to the in-state programs where the teachers and principals were prepared for credentialing, and to publicly report the data for each credentialing program in the state.

The state reported that it has the ability to assign every candidate in a teacher or administrator preparation program a unique student ID that will follow him/her into the classroom after graduation and certification. As a result, the state will be able to determine the effectiveness of preparation and alternative certification programs by using the teacher and administrator evaluations and use student achievement as a significant

factor in individual teacher and principal evaluations. In its reform plan, the state will have the Pennsylvania Consortium for Research, Evaluation, and Policy Analysis convene a working group to create appropriate standards and protocols for using teacher and principal evaluations along with student achievement data to evaluate teacher and principal preparation programs. The state plans to include national experts, policy makers, educators, and postsecondary institutions in the working group that will develop an accountability process with multiple rating instruments and sources of data.

After schools and districts begin using their new teacher and principal evaluation systems, the state will be able to connect teacher and principal evaluations to preparation programs and then preparation programs will receive the data regarding the success of their graduates. The SEA will analyze the data and release this information to the teacher/principal preparation programs for comment and input. Additionally, the state plans to provide the information to policy makers, aspiring teachers, parents, preparation program administrators, and school administrators who will be able to use the data to improve instruction and teacher preparation. The data will also be used to identify preparation programs whose graduates consistently fail to improve student learning and these programs will be required to revise and improve their programs or have their program approval revoked.

The state also plans to work with key stakeholders to create a report that provides parents and other community stakeholders with useful data from the new teacher and principal evaluation systems. The state will prepare a benchmark report that provides district level aggregated results from the principal evaluation system and as well as district and building level aggregated results from the teacher evaluation system, and will prepare a guide for parents and community stakeholders on the evaluation results.

In the narrative, the state verified that it plans to link student achievement and student growth data to the students' teachers and principals and to link this information to the in-state programs where the teachers and principals were prepared for credentialing, and to publicly report the data for each credentialing program in the state. However, in this section of the application, the state does not discuss how it plans to expand preparation and credentialing options and programs that are successful at producing effective teachers and principals. The number of points awarded in this section is due to the need for additional information on how the state plans to expand preparation and credentialing options and programs.

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

During the Tier 2 presentation and response to questions, the state indicated that it plans to use data from its two-part framework of interns and post Baccalaureate programs to determine effective programs. Additionally, the state reiterated that it plans to use RttT funds to provide incentives to effective preparation and credentialing programs. The information provided during the Tier 2 session is consistent with the information provided in the application and as a result, the number of points awarded to this section of the application is unchanged.

<b>(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	
(i) Providing effective support	10	10	10	
(ii) Continuously improving the effectiveness of the support	10	3	3	

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

(i)

The state's response to this section of the application verifies that it plans to provide effective, data-informed professional development, coaching, induction, and common planning and collaboration time to teachers and principals that are, where appropriate, ongoing and job-embedded. The proposed supports are appropriate for the support needed to implement the reform agenda and represent a broad continuum of services for both teachers and principals.

In the application, the state described two large initiatives designed to provide effective, data-informed professional development to teachers and principals. The first initiative focuses on improving teacher

practice based on data and the second initiative focuses on boosting principal effectiveness with data. The state reports that it works closely with a PIMS implementation advisory board composed of district and school personnel, to provide regular professional development for school and district staff, and that the advisory board maintains a Help Desk for ongoing support during data entry and review periods. Under the current proposal, the state plans to ensure that the data is effectively used to improve outcomes and to connect extant data elements with other data indicators necessary to help teachers and principals know how their students are doing. To accomplish the new goals, the state indicated that it will develop new resources such as a model system of assessments, a model Student Information System, classroom and school level data dashboards and a model Early Warning System. In addition, the state plans to provide real time student data to teachers and leaders, protocols and data routines, professional development in providing high rigor coursework, and develop a catalog of high rigor virtual coursework which will include STEM courses. The state also proposes to develop a set of model routines, tools and supports to facilitate data review and data-informed decision-making. The state expects the online portal for the instructional improvement system to grow and will include both aligned units and lesson plans.

The state also proposes to boost principal effectiveness with data. The state reports that it has historically provided comprehensive, standards-based continuing professional education to principals and other school leaders in cohort groups through the statewide Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership (PIL) Program. In the current proposal, the state will broaden its support to principals with focused and job-embedded leadership supports and additional leadership resources such as additional modules to the PIL curriculum on the use of the online portal for the instructional improvement system and effective implementation of the new teacher evaluation system and leadership in STEM education. The state will assign data use facilitators to provide job-embedded support to both principals and teachers on how to use data effectively to drive and differentiate instruction and how to use real-time data to identify and intervene with students at academic risk. In addition, the state plans to give principals and district leaders in participating districts and schools access to a leadership program designed to support and accelerate district and school capacity to manage systemic change. The state will also provide job embedded support to participating districts and schools in tracking implementation, providing needs assessments, monitoring performance, supporting data/information systems and proactively managing potential roadblocks.

(ii)

While the state proposes a wide spectrum of services, the application describes previous independent evaluations conducted on three programs; however, the application does not include a description of how the state plans to continuously improve the effectiveness of the proposed supports. The number of points awarded in this section is due to the need for information on how the state plans to work with the Consortium to measure, evaluate, and continuously improve the effectiveness of the proposed supports in order to improve student achievement.

Total	138	105	105	
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**E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools**

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

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

In this section of the application, the state noted that it has the legal, statutory, or regulatory authority to intervene directly in the State's persistently lowest-achieving schools and in LEAs that are in improvement or corrective action status.

In the narrative, the state explained that it has the authority to intervene in failing districts and even to intervene directly in failing schools in certain circumstances. It explained that this authority comes from

several different laws that authorize state takeover of failing districts and that the state has exercised this authority with success over the last nine years. The state reports that it also has the authority to declare a school district to be in financial distress and has the ability to appoint a special board of control or reform commission that has all of the duties and powers of an elected school board, with the exception of the authority to levy taxes. The board of control has legal authority in suspending or dismissing the superintendent, entering agreements necessary for operation and management of the district, appointing persons and other entities to conduct fiscal and performance audits, and operating charter schools. In the application, the state cites several examples of its intervention in schools and districts.

<b>(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>33</b>	
(i) Identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools	5	5	5	
(ii) Turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools	35	28	28	

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

(i)

The state verified that it has identified the persistently lowest-achieving schools as well as other non-Title I eligible secondary schools that would be considered persistently lowest-achieving schools. The state reported that it will include 128 schools in the Turnaround Initiative, 91 more schools than would meet the criteria outlined in the RttT guidance. The state reports that it is committed to increasing the resources used for turnaround activities in addition to expanding the list of required turnaround action, and in doing so will improve the academic opportunity of 86,000 students, or 57,000 more students than required and includes 23 school districts instead of 16 districts.

The state explained that its expanded criteria for inclusion in the turnaround initiative is any Title I school where either at least 50% of the students are scoring below basic (2.5th percentile), or where 30% or more of the students are scoring below basic (10th percentile) and the school has shown less than 7% improvement in percent of students below basic since 2005 (75th percentile). The state also reported that the 128 schools in the Turnaround Initiative, are in districts that have agreed to adopt all of the state's reform strategies.

(ii)

In this section of the application, the state demonstrated its commitment to support participating LEAs in turning around struggling schools by implementing one of the four school intervention models.

The state described a ten year history of working with failing districts and schools and successfully increasing their performance. During this period of time, the state deployed Distinguished Educators to work in the chronically underperforming schools and implemented a number of intervention models such as management by a Charter-Management Organization and converting schools to Promise Academies. In addition, under the Renaissance School model, the state has the authority to dismiss half the staff, extend the school day/year, and require principals to hire staff through mutual consent. Also, the state worked with a local school district to transform eight struggling schools into Accelerated Learning Academies that used the America's Choice operational model.

The state reported that it worked with multiple stakeholders and nationally recognized experts to develop the Pennsylvania Turnaround Initiative and to identify a comprehensive framework and strategies for successful turnaround efforts. The state proposes to use this knowledge and framework, require participating districts to adopt one of the four school intervention models identified in the RttT guidance, and implement the identified turnaround strategies. At the core of these strategies are goals that focus on the provision of high quality leadership to support turnaround activities and to train every principal as the instructional leader of the school. The state also focuses its plan on goals to ensure effective leaders and teachers in every classroom and school by giving teachers and principals the support they need to succeed. The state also plans to focus on a rigorous, research-based and well-aligned curriculum that is

aligned with Pennsylvania's full standards and instructional improvement system (SAS). In the plan, the state also plans to focus on using student data to inform and differentiate instruction. In addition, the state's plan includes a focus on increased learning time in every school and providing appropriate social-emotional and community-oriented support for students. For each of the components of the plan, the state provided a detailed and extensive discussion of planned activities and programs to support the initiatives.

The state verified that it has successfully implemented intervention models and has an extensive and comprehensive plan to support districts and schools in the turnaround effort. The number of points awarded in this section is due to the need for information on how the intervention models will be selected and how the state plans to ensure that an LEA with more than nine persistently lowest-achieving schools will not use the transformation model for more than 50 percent of its schools.

Total	50	43	43	
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**F. General**

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

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

(i)

In this section of the application, the state verified that the percentage of the total revenues available to the state that were used to support elementary, secondary, and public higher education for FY 2009 was greater than or equal to the percentage of the total revenues available to the state that were used to support elementary, secondary, and public higher education for FY 2008.

The state reported that over the past seven years, Pennsylvania has invested \$4.3 billion in new funds for public schools. This represents a 100% increase in the amount of state funds available to operate public schools in less than a decade and although the General Fund revenue declined by 11.3% in FY 2009-10, the state continued its commitment to providing adequate educational resources to schools by continuing its funding for initiatives such as the implementation of the state's school funding formula which targets greater resources to high-poverty schools and districts, increased funding for public schools by \$300 million, maintaining 98% of state funding for programs that improve student achievement.

The state indicated that as a result of strategic decisions and in spite of a seven percent decrease in total revenue available to the state, the percentage of the total state budget dedicated to education increased from 41.18% in FY 2008-09 to 41.85% in 2009-10.

(ii)

The state reported that its policies lead to equitable funding between high-need LEAs and other LEAs, and within LEAs, between high-poverty schools and other schools.

In the application, the state indicated that the Pennsylvania Legislature adopted a formula that prescribes the distribution of state education funds to school districts based on need, and that the legislature adopted a new formula that requires the bulk of all new state funds to be invested in a set of proven academic improvements. The state described the new funding formula and indicated that it establishes a base cost for each student plus multipliers for students from poor families and English language learners, and makes adjustments for district size and regional cost of living differences. The state indicated that because of the adequacy-based state funding formula, it is possible to give additional resources to the highest-need

districts and schools. Additionally, the state reported that 80% of the new funds provided to school districts by the formula must be used for implementing only the most effective strategies for boosting student achievement such as extended learning time, tutoring, longer school days or school year, and new and more rigorous courses. Additional approved strategies include targeted teacher training, class size reductions in early grades, early childhood education initiatives, recruiting effective teachers and principals, and performance contracts for superintendents and principals.

In addition, the state indicated that ten percent of the new funds given to districts above their inflation-related increases can be used to maintain existing programs that meet the specified goals. All districts must submit a detailed on-line application, called the PA Pact, describing their intended use for these state funds that includes a data driven analysis of each district's strengths and weaknesses including student growth data. In addition, academically challenged school districts require state approval for their spending plans.

<b>(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>35</b>	
(i) Enabling high-performing charter schools "(caps)"	8	8	8	
(ii) Authorizing and holding charters accountable for outcomes	8	6	6	
(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	5	5	

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

(i)

In this section of the application, the state indicated that it has a charter school law that does not prohibit or effectively inhibit increasing the number of high-performing charter schools in the state, measured by the percentage of total schools in the state that are allowed to be charter schools or otherwise restrict student enrollment in charter schools.

The state indicated that in a study released by the National Alliance for Charter Schools, Pennsylvania was described as charter friendly. The study described the state as providing a cap free environment that is open to new start-ups, public school conversions, and virtual schools, and is supportive of autonomy. In addition, the state reported that it received a grade of A- in charter school autonomy from the Thomas Fordham Institute. The state reported that its charter school law places no caps on the number of charters allowed in the State and that there are no restrictions on student enrollment in charter schools, on charter schools operating in any particular geographic area, or on serving particular types of students.

In the application, the state provided data that verified that in 2009, the state had 135 charter schools in the state, making up five percent of public schools in Pennsylvania and serving four percent of the public school students. The state reported that 11 of the charters schools are Cyber Charters and that successful charter schools are allowed to take over struggling schools. In the discussion, the state provided several examples of charter schools and described the types of student achievement and school progress that each of them have made since receiving their charter. While the state reported that charter schools are in operation throughout the state, it provided data to show that in the Philadelphia School District alone, there are 67 charter schools in operation representing 60% of all charter schools in Pennsylvania, and serving 35,000 students. Additionally, the state indicated that 75% of the charter schools in Philadelphia reached their student achievement targets in the 2008-09 school year. Even though the Philadelphia charters have been successful, the state reported that the state has persistently low performing charters as well with seven charters in Corrective Action.

(ii)

In this section of the application, the state verified that it has regulations and guidelines regarding how charter school authorizers approve, monitor, hold accountable, reauthorize, and close charter schools and whether authorizers require that student achievement be one significant factor, among others, in authorization or renewal; encourage charter schools that serve student populations that are similar to local district student populations, especially relative to high-need students, and have closed or not renewed ineffective charter schools.

In Pennsylvania, charter applications may be submitted by individuals, one or more teachers who will teach at a proposed charter school; parents or guardians of students who will attend the charter, or by any nonsectarian or not-for-profit, corporation or association. In the application, the state explained that charter schools may be authorized by the local school district, the SEA, or by the School Reform Commission for cyber charter applicants. Additionally, the state explained that the denial of a charter application can be appealed directly to the statewide Charter Appeals Board (CAB) which then has authority to reverse the denial and authorize the charter. The state explained that original charters are authorized for a period of three to five years and after the first renewal, subsequent renewals are for five years and each renewal is based on the charter school's annual reports and reviews.

In Pennsylvania, charter schools must give first preference to students who reside in the authorizing school district or districts and may give preference to the enrollment of a child whose parent has actively participated in the development of the charter school and to siblings of students presently enrolled in the charter school. The state requires charter schools to comply with federal regulations and with a school district's desegregation order. In addition, charter schools are accountable for implementing the state standards and assessments and are required to submit annual reports to the department and to their charter school authorizer on data such as annual goals, AYP data, and school improvement plans.

The state explained that a school's charter can be terminated for material violations, failure to meet state requirements for student performance, failure to meet any performance standard in the charter, or failure to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management or audit requirements.

The state verified that it has the legal authority to operate and terminate charter schools. The number of points awarded in this section is due to the need for information regarding the number of charter schools that have been terminated or the number of applications denied.

(iii)

In this section of the application, the state verified that charter schools receive equitable funding compared to traditional public schools and a commensurate share of revenues. In the application, the state indicated that Section 24 PS 17-1725-A of the Pennsylvania Public School code states that for nonspecial education students, the charter school must receive no less than the budgeted total expenditure per average daily membership of the sending school district, and that the average net current expenditure per non-special education pupil of charter schools in 2008-09 was \$9,946 and for traditional school districts that amount was \$9,276, verifying that in Pennsylvania, charter schools are given \$1.07 to spend for every \$1.00 spent by traditional schools.

(iv)

In Pennsylvania, charter schools do not have any facility-related requirements that are stricter than those applied to traditional schools. In addition, the state provides funding to charters for the leasing of buildings or portions of buildings and the Department of Education calculates an approved reimbursable annual rental charge and then pays an annual amount determined by multiplying the aid ratio of the charter school by the approved reimbursable annual rental. In addition, the state reports that Pennsylvania law allows a charter school that has been converted from an existing public school to remain in the school facility rent-free.

(v)

The state reports that Pennsylvania laws and policies allow innovative education opportunities at the local level and the Department of Education provides intensive support and resources to local schools and districts to encourage diverse learning environments. In the application, the state described several types of

innovative public schools including Renaissance Schools which have a high degree of accountability. In the current proposal, nine of the fourteen schools will be governed by Renaissance Turnaround Teams as either charter schools or innovation schools and five schools will become "Promise Academies" which remain district managed but also have expanded flexibility. Additionally, one of the large districts in the state transformed eight struggling schools into Accelerated Learning Academies that have turned around struggling schools.

While the state describes a variety of thematic and targeted schools, it is unclear in the application that the schools described actually have the ability to operate autonomously and outside the parameters of state policy or code. As a result, the number of points awarded in this section of the application is due to the need for addition information on how the schools operate autonomously.

<b>(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	
<b>(F)(3) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>The state verified that it has created, through law, regulation, or policy, other conditions favorable to education reform or innovation that have increased student achievement or graduation rates, narrowed achievement gaps, or resulted in other important outcomes.</p> <p>In the application, the state described six additional programs that demonstrated that it fosters reform and innovation in education. Programs described by the state included the state's PreK program for at-risk children, an innovative elementary science program, dual enrollment programs, and innovative uses of technology.</p>				
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	

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

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	
<b>Competitive Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b>				
<p>Throughout the application, the state discussed its approach to STEM education in the Pennsylvania system. In this portion of the application, the state described its K-12 STEM program and its efforts to adopt rigorous standards in math and science in order to provide a strong foundation for success in STEM. Among the STEM initiatives, the state described its efforts to implement an engineering learning progressions and technology infused instruction, including the purchase of Internet connected laptop computers for every desk in core subject classrooms.</p> <p>In addition to the STEM initiatives currently in place, the state proposes to use funds from the proposed reforms to train 1,500 teachers per year for four years to teach AP courses and offer options beyond STEM areas, including the development of six online courses in STEM subjects.</p> <p>Pennsylvania describes commendable efforts to adopt rigorous standards and to implement high level courses and professional development, and demonstrates that it meets the minimal criteria required for the state's emphasis on STEM.</p>				
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	

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

	Available	Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
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<b>Absolute Priority - Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform</b>		Yes	Yes	
<b>Absolute Reviewer Comments: (Tier 1)</b> In the current application, Pennsylvania demonstrated that it proposes to implement a reform agenda that comprehensively and coherently addresses all of the four education reform areas specified in the ARRA as well as the State Success Factors Criteria. Additionally, the application demonstrated that the State and the participating LEAs are taking a systemic approach to education reform.				
Total		0	0	

Grand Total	500	431	433	
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