



SECTION F

General
(55 total points)

State Reform Conditions Criteria

(F)(1) Making education funding a priority (10 points)

The extent to which—

(i) The percentage of the total revenues available to the State (as defined in this notice) 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 (as defined in this notice) that were used to support elementary, secondary, and public higher education for FY 2008; and

(ii) The State's policies lead to equitable funding (a) between high-need LEAs (as defined in this notice) and other LEAs, and (b) within LEAs, between high-poverty schools (as defined in this notice) and other schools.

In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Evidence for (F)(1)(i):

- Financial data to show whether and to what extent expenditures, as a percentage of the total revenues available to the State (as defined in this notice), increased, decreased, or remained the same.

Evidence for (F)(1)(ii):

- Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers.

Recommended maximum response length: Three pages

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(i) EDUCATION SPENDING AS A PERCENTAGE OF STATE SPENDING

In fiscal year 2011, despite huge budget strains, the Governor is proposing an increase in state revenue-based support for education by 2.2% (\$238 million). As proposed, preschool-12 education spending as a percentage of the state budget will be 35.4%. Federal ARRA funding will not be available to school districts in FY 2011, but the Governor and the executive team remain committed to funding education even as state revenue-based support for most other areas of state spending has been cut. This demonstrates that, despite severe fiscal challenges, the leadership in the state of New Jersey remains committed to education.

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(ii) EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF STATE FUNDS

The School Funding Reform Act of 2008 (SFRA) represents the first comprehensive New Jersey school-funding system in decades to receive judicial approval as an equitable-funding mechanism. The new formula provides the most generous resources in the nation for children at risk.

For more than 30 years, New Jersey's school funding was comprised of piecemeal legislative efforts and numerous court directives in an effort to distribute state funds equitably to local school LEAs. The SFRA is the culmination of, and answer to, funding-equity questions that have surrounded the state since the 1970's. Conditions in the state have led to funding proposals in the Governor's budget in the amount of \$10.311 billion, with no district, except those experiencing enrollment decline, seeing a reduction of state aid equal to more than 4.99% of its adopted 2009-2010 general-fund budget.

The SFRA includes two types of state aid: wealth-equalized and categorical. Wealth-equalized aid is allocated according to each LEA's ability to raise enough local revenue to support its adequacy budget (as defined below). The equalization formula used in

New Jersey considers both a community's property wealth (measured by equalized property valuation) and its aggregate income, to determine the local ability to pay. This formula ensures that those LEAs with less ability to raise a local tax levy will receive more state support, and vice-versa. In contrast, categorical aid is allocated regardless of an LEA's wealth. Categorical amounts are generally determined by multiplying the cost factor for a particular category by the number of students who qualify for the aid. This has led to the receipt of more state aid where the need is the greatest.

Adequacy Budget

The adequacy budget is the State's estimate of the cost for providing a thorough and efficient education to all students in each LEA, given individual student and LEA characteristics. The costs are based on a model LEA that was developed by panelists who were drawn predominantly from school LEAs, and that was extensively reviewed by stakeholders and experts in education finance. The adequacy budget is primarily funded through equalization aid. As noted above, there are additional streams of funds made available to LEAs through categorical funding.

Weighting for Student Needs

The calculation of the adequacy budget begins with a base cost that is applied to all students, and incorporates additional costs for resources associated with higher grade levels and students' special needs. For FY 2010, the base cost per elementary pupil (grades K-5) is \$9,971 and all weights are relative to this amount. Students in grades 6-8 generate a cost that is 4% higher than the base cost, while students in grades 9-12 and county vocational LEAs generate costs that are 17% and 31% higher, respectively. There is also a weight for students who are at-risk, defined as those who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches according to federal guidelines (which require family income

below 185% of the federal poverty level). Every at-risk student receives an additional weight of at least 0.47 (47% more than the base cost), but the weight increases for these students as the LEA's at-risk-student concentration increases. The weight ranges from 0.47 (for LEAs with an at-risk-student concentration of 20% or less) up to a maximum of 0.57 (at-risk-student concentration at or above 60%). Finally, the weight for limited-English-proficient (LEP) students is 0.5, except where the student is also at-risk. For these "combination students" (LEP and at-risk), an LEP weight of 0.125 is added to the at-risk weight. The LEP weight is reduced, in these cases, to account for the overlap in the resources that are specified for at-risk and LEP students, respectively, such as afterschool and summer-school programs. The application of these additional weights in the calculation of the adequacy budget ensures that LEAs with higher concentrations of low-income and LEP students receive additional state aid.

Special Education

A portion of special education is also included in the adequacy budget. Rather than applying a weight to each classified student, special education is funded through a "census-based" method. Using this approach, special-education costs are estimated by multiplying the State's average "excess cost" for special-education students by the State's average classification rate, which is then multiplied by the LEA's total enrollment.

For FY 2010, the excess cost used for special-education students is \$11,262 and the average classification rate used is 14.69%. Two-thirds of the census funding is included in the LEA's adequacy budget (to be distributed through equalization aid), while the remaining one-third is distributed as categorical aid. The adequacy budget also includes the entire census-based cost for speech. For FY 2010, the excess cost used for speech is \$1,118, and the average classification rate is 1.897%.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools (40 points)

The extent to which—

(i) The State has a charter school law that does not prohibit or effectively inhibit increasing the number of high-performing charter schools (as defined in this notice) in the State, measured (as set forth in Appendix B) by the percentage of total schools in the State that are allowed to be charter schools or otherwise restrict student enrollment in charter schools;

(ii) The State has laws, statutes, regulations, or guidelines regarding how charter school authorizers approve, monitor, hold accountable, reauthorize, and close charter schools; in particular, whether authorizers require that student achievement (as defined in this notice) 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 (as defined in this notice); and have closed or not renewed ineffective charter schools;

(iii) The State’s charter schools receive (as set forth in Appendix B) equitable funding compared to traditional public schools, and a commensurate share of local, State, and Federal revenues;

(iv) The State provides charter schools with funding for facilities (for leasing facilities, purchasing facilities, or making tenant improvements), assistance with facilities acquisition, access to public facilities, the ability to share in bonds and mill levies, or other supports; and the extent to which the State does not impose any facility-related requirements on charter schools that are stricter than those applied to traditional public schools; and

(v) The State enables LEAs to operate innovative, autonomous public schools (as defined in this notice) other than charter schools.

In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State’s success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Evidence for (F)(2)(i):

- A description of the State’s applicable laws, statutes, regulations, or other relevant legal documents.
- The number of charter schools allowed under State law and the percentage this represents of the total number of schools in the State.
- The number and types of charter schools currently operating in the State.

Evidence for (F)(2)(ii):

- A description of the State’s approach to charter school accountability and authorization, and a description of the State’s applicable laws, statutes, regulations, or other relevant legal documents.
- For each of the last five years:
 - The number of charter school applications made in the State.
 - The number of charter school applications approved.
 - The number of charter school applications denied and reasons for the denials (academic, financial, low enrollment, other).
 - The number of charter schools closed (including charter schools that were not reauthorized to operate).

Evidence for (F)(2)(iii):

- A description of the State’s applicable statutes, regulations, or other relevant legal documents.
- A description of the State’s approach to charter school funding, the amount of funding passed through to charter schools per student, and how those amounts compare with traditional public school per-student funding allocations.

Evidence for (F)(2)(iv):

- A description of the State’s applicable statutes, regulations, or other relevant legal documents.
- A description of the statewide facilities supports provided to charter schools, if any.

Evidence for (F)(2)(v):

- A description of how the State enables LEAs to operate innovative, autonomous public schools (as defined in this notice) other than charter schools.

Recommended maximum response length: Six pages

Charter schooling has had a presence in New Jersey for 15 years. The state passed a charter law in 1995, becoming one of the first states to embrace this critically-important education-reform tool.

In 2009-10, the state had 68 charter schools on 72 campuses, serving more than 22,000 students.¹ Importantly, these schools are predominantly serving the state’s most disadvantaged students in the most distressed communities.

With this strong foundation, New Jersey plans to significantly advance charter schooling in the years to come. This effort will be given energy and direction by the state’s

¹ <http://www.publiccharters.org/charterlaws/state/NJ>

education leadership. Governor Chris Christie is a strong and vocal proponent of charter schooling. Education Commissioner Bret Schundler was an early and active proponent of choice, and he has made charter schooling a priority for the department.

Charter schools in New Jersey are dedicated to serving the most needy students. The reorganization of the NJDOE reflects New Jersey's increased commitment to expanding quality charter-choice options in the State, and the strategic role that the most highly-effective charters can have in scaling up quality schools in our most challenged communities.

As the state's charter-authorizer, NJDOE is committed to not only growing the number of high-quality charter schools statewide, but also improving its own capacity for reviewing applications and monitoring charter schools. Accordingly, the NJDOE has partnered with the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) to facilitate the adoption of the highest standards and the implementation of best practices in charter-authorizing.

Working with NACSA, New Jersey will strengthen the charter-school-accountability measures to include performance contracts and effective monitoring and technical assistance. A charter-specific version of the New Jersey Quality Single Accountability Continuum (NJQSAC) instrument is also under consideration, in consultation with charter-school operators. NJQSAC is the monitoring-and-evaluation system for public schools, and it shifts the focus from compliance to improvement and capacity-building.

New Jersey is exceptionally well-positioned to reach its bold charter-schools goals because of the strong web of external charter-school supporters across the state. NJDOE will work closely with those providing technical assistance to charters, such as the state charter-school association and the Charter School Resource Center; and those running extraordinary charters, such as KIPP and Uncommon Schools. The State will also develop new partnerships with highly-regarded CMOs and related entities.

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(i) LAWS REGARDING LIMITS ON THE NUMBER OF CHARTER SCHOOLS

New Jersey places no caps on the number of charter schools in the state, or on the size of any individual charter school.

As of December 31, 2009, there were 68 charter schools opened and operating in New Jersey, categorized by grade ranges as follows:

Elementary	Middle	High	K-12	Total
46	8	8	6	68

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(ii) CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZATION AND MONITORING

The State has always been a conscientious authorizer, demanding quality from those hoping to run schools. Since charter legislation was adopted by New Jersey in 1995, the NJDOE has received 365 charter-school applications, of which 111 were approved and five were never granted their final charter. From the 111 charters approved, 105 schools were opened.

The state has also been a tough monitor of school quality. Thirty-eight charters have been closed by charter-revocation, charter surrenders, withdrawal, or non-renewal.

The table below summarizes New Jersey’s charter-school activity over the past five years:

New Jersey Charter-School Activity Since 2005-2006 School Year

Academic Year	Applications	Approvals	Denials	Opened²	Closed
2005-2006	25	6	0	4	2
2006-2007	30	6	0	6	7
2007-2008	24	1	0	6	3
2008-2009	25	6	0	6	0
2009-2010	40	11	0	6	1

The number of charter-school applications under consideration for the Fall openings has increased from last year. Thirty-seven new applications have been submitted for 2011-12 as of May 25, bringing the total number of applications submitted to 402. The expedited application process will allow for additional applications to be submitted for consideration as to whether they may become operational in the 2011-2012 school year.

The large number of unsuccessful applications in earlier years is also attributable to the relative inexperience of applicants, local resistance (which included zoning and related red tape), limited access to facilities, and tight timelines. The NJDOE recognized the importance of increasing both the number of potential applicants and the preparedness of the applicants to open and operate charter schools. NJDOE introduced numerous initiatives to increase the number of applications, including extending the duration of the planning-year option and the enhanced technical assistance to support quality applications.

Among the most effective efforts have been dissemination grants to highly-effective charter schools, which are designed to address the most daunting issues facing charter applicants and operators: the need to secure facilities, the need to provide special

² The Opened category applies to both new schools and campuses. Existing charter schools with clear evidence of success can open an additional campus without reapplying for a new charter. The Opened category applies to both new schools and campuses.

education, governance issues, and issues regarding staff recruitment and retention. The grants have also promoted the identification and sharing of best practices, including by offering workshops to prospective applicants.

The regulations have been amended twice, to foster growth in the quality and quantity of charter schools. The authorization of a charter school in New Jersey is a three-step process: Interested parties must (1) submit a complete, comprehensive application that addresses curriculum and instruction, assessment, governance and administration, fiscal management and operations; (2) complete the interview process if qualified; and (3) satisfy the terms of the preparedness process, which includes a site visit with the board and leadership team to review the essential readiness of staffing, student recruitment and enrollment, equipment and supplies, fiscal and operational matters, policy development, board training and board training. These requirements, as well as the requirements of a walk-through of the facility and the submission of requisite, essential documentation, must be fulfilled before the charter may be granted.

In more recent years, as charter-school applicants were provided with extended time and support, including contact with experienced and effective charter operators, applicants were much better-prepared to open within 12-18 months of approval, resulting in a closer match between the number of approvals and the number of openings in a given year, after adjusting for the typical 12-month lag between the two.

The number of approvals dropped from an average of six per year to one in 2007-2008, but this was because several experienced charter-operators were permitted to open schools as expansions under existing charters. Therefore, charter growth is not fully reflected in the number of new charters approved in that year. Six schools opened the following year (2008-2009), five of which were expansions.

The number of approvals during the 2009-2010 school year increased to eleven, with eight meeting the September 30th approval deadline, and an additional three under the new Early Action process, which promises approval by January 15th for applications received before October 15th of the prior year. Early Action provides an additional application opportunity, and is designed to shorten the application-and-approval timeline

for new charter schools, while maintaining the rigorous review by NJDOE. It is anticipated that this will also increase the number of quality charter schools, by employing two timelines for the same operational year.

The current administration is fully committed to helping increase the number of high-quality charter-applicants, approving promising proposals, and assiduously monitoring charters for academic, financial, and operational quality.

Legislation for a rolling application process, Bill # A-2142, introduced February 11, 2010, has been drafted and referred to committee. This legislation offers multiple times for application submissions throughout the year, and a shorter time for application review. NJDOE anticipates that a bill will be introduced to allow a higher-education organization to authorize charters. If enacted, this should expedite the authorization process and the increasing the number of successful applicants that are opening high-quality charter schools in New Jersey.

Under section 18A:36A-16 of New Jersey state law, the Commissioner must conduct an annual review of every charter school to determine whether it is meeting its goals, and must conduct a more comprehensive review prior to granting the renewal of the charter. The county superintendent is granted ongoing access to the records and facilities of the charter schools within the county, to ensure that each school is in compliance with its charter, and that each is meeting all of the state- and federally-mandated requirements.

To facilitate the annual review, the charter school must submit an annual report to the Commissioner. These reports must also be distributed to the parents of each student who is enrolled in the school, and the district or districts of residence. The Commissioner may revoke a school's charter if the school either has not fulfilled the conditions required by its charter, or has violated any such condition. The legislature granted the Commissioner full authority to develop procedures and guidelines for the revocation and renewal of a school's charter.

According to NJDOE administrative code, 6A:11-2.2, each charter school must include in its annual report a review of its assessment program results to date, relative to its goals. The review must show the results on state-test data for grades 3-8 and/or 11, as well as

setting forth any and all criteria that are used to determine the school's AYP status under ESEA. Schools were required to present current baseline data and/or current cohort data in reading/language arts, writing, and mathematics. Although baseline data may come from both state assessments and standardized tests, cohort data must come from standardized tests.

Gains are expected in the achievement of student cohorts over time, and will evidence that a school is exhibiting AYP. In the absence of the expected levels of achievement, the NJDOE expects to see problem areas being identified and changes in curriculum and/or instruction being proposed, in order to address the issues relating to achievement. Schools that serve students through eighth or twelfth grade must list the high schools or colleges that the students will be attending, and in the case of twelfth-grade students, must also include the percentage of students going on to college.

The annual review also includes an evaluation of progress along several dimensions other than test scores. For example, the school must demonstrate that the delivery of its curriculum is in compliance with New Jersey's Core Curriculum Content Standards. It must also show that it is providing the supplementary services to at-risk students that are necessary to ensure their success.

According to sections 18A:36A-7 and 18A:36A-8 of New Jersey law, charter schools in New Jersey must be open to all students on a space-available basis. Their admission policies are subject to the same anti-discrimination requirements as apply to public schools, with the exception that the charter school may limit admission to students interested in specific areas of concentration such as mathematics, science, or arts, as outlined in the school's charter. Preference for enrollment is granted to students who reside in the LEA where the charter school is located. In instances where there are more applicants than available spaces, the charter school must select students using a random-selection process. To the maximum extent possible, charter schools are required to seek the enrollment of a representative cross-section of the community's school-age population, including racial and academic factors in its determination of what selection of students would be representative.

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(iii) EQUITABLE FUNDING OF CHARTER SCHOOLS

Charter schools in New Jersey receive funding on the same basis as traditional public schools.

For funding purposes, all charter school students are included in the resident-enrollment count on the school registers of the traditional public school. In other words, school funding for the school LEA is calculated based on the total resident student population, which includes charter students. Charter school state aid flows from the school LEA to the charter school.

Charter-school aid is calculated pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36A-12b, which stipulates that the school LEA must pay directly to the charter school, for each student enrolled in the charter school, an amount equal to 90% of the sum of the budget-year wealth-equalized state aid per pupil and the pre-budget-year general-fund local tax levy per pupil inflated by the corresponding CPI rate.

The remaining 10% is retained by the school LEA to help cover the cost of administering the charter-school program, including the student-registration-and-verification process. Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36A-13 and N.J.A.C. 6A:27-3.1, the school LEA also provides transportation, or aid in lieu of transportation, to charter-school students in K-12 on the same terms and conditions that apply when it provides transportation, or aid in lieu of transportation, to students attending the traditional public schools. The charter school is not responsible for the funding of any mandated student transportation.

Additionally, the school LEA is required to pay to the charter school 100% of the categorical state aids (that is, those determined on a per-pupil basis) attributable to the student, and a percentage of the LEA's special-education categorical aid equal to the percentage of the LEA's special-education students that are enrolled in the charter school. If applicable, the school LEA is required to pay to the charter school 100% of preschool education aid.

Charter schools apply directly for, and receive 100% of, all federal entitlement and discretionary funds for which they qualify, pursuant to N.J.A.C 6A:11-4.1. Some minor state-aid categories not discussed above are not required to be passed on to charter schools. These aid categories represent the phase-in portion of New Jersey’s school funding law, and will be eliminated when the law is fully implemented.

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(iv) CHARTER SCHOOLS’ FACILITIES

In order to facilitate the acquisition of a safe and viable facility, charter schools are granted flexibility in regard to the type of facility in which they are permitted to locate. They are exempt from NJDOE public-schools facility regulations, except those pertaining to the health or safety of students. Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36A-10, charter schools are permitted to locate their facilities in part of an existing public-school building, in space provided on a public work-site, in a public building, or in any other suitable location.

Charter schools are permitted to use local and state sources of revenue for facility costs, including lease payments and mortgage payments. They also have access to any discretionary federal grants that are available for facility expenditures.

In 2002, New Jersey charter schools received millions of dollars under the School Renovation Grant. Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36A-6, charter schools are permitted to acquire real property from public or private sources by purchase, lease, or lease with an option to purchase, or by gift, for use as a school facility. The New Jersey Economic Development Authority (EDA) currently has flexible, affordable loan funds available to charter schools through its Main Street Program.

In addition, charter schools have access to tax-exempt bonds from the EDA and local-improvement-authority bonds. In more recent years, credit-enhancement grants have been available for charters through New Jersey Community Capital. The NJDOE worked in partnership with NJCC to make this program available.

Under section 18A:7F-60 of the state statute, the Commissioner “shall be authorized to take any affirmative action as is necessary to ensure the effective and efficient

expenditure of funds by school district [LEAs]...” The Commissioner can use this authority to free up underutilized school-building space in some urban LEAs that have experienced recent declines in school-age population. Because of these declines, the NJDOE has initiated a space-utilization survey in over a dozen districts.

The study is identifying underutilized space for takeover within major urban centers. This space will be made available first for charter schools. There are other instances where urban schools are overcrowded, and traditional routes will not produce additional space. In these instances, creative solutions will be sought to find space for charter schools.

The facilities analysis examines the following key questions:

- What is the maximum capacity of all existing district-owned and -leased facilities, based on existing school grade-assignments?
- Does the district have deficient or surplus capacity based on existing enrollments? Will there be deficient or surplus capacity based on projected enrollments?
- Are there opportunities to more efficiently utilize available capacity, and possibly consolidate district functions in fewer buildings, should the district be willing to change school sending areas or school grade configurations?
- What are the short- and long-term capacity implications of pending and proposed school-construction projects?

Based on the answers to the above questions, options are developed that explore opportunities to use available capacity. These options may explore changes to school grade alignments and the subdivision of existing building(s) to allow different schools to independently function within one building.

In addition, the NJDOE requires all public school districts in the state to maintain and update Long Range Facilities Plans (LRFP) at least once every five years on a web-based

reporting system. This system provides a powerful tool to both the district and the NJDOE in assessing efficiency, adequacy, and utilization. In particular, the LRFP data allows the State to quickly evaluate instances where a district can consolidate its operations in fewer buildings without sacrificing program-delivery. The LRFP provides a routine mechanism for assessing the availability of space for charter use statewide.

In the 31 districts that are part of the court-mandated, State-funded facilities-improvement program, the reuse of swing space that is required to accommodate students off-site during construction is being evaluated for charter-school use. The NJDOE is working with the Schools Development Authority to identify appropriate space after it is no longer needed for district purposes. This repurposing of swing space could provide charter schools with recently-renovated instructional space in “move-in” condition that meets State standards. There are other instances where urban schools are overcrowded and traditional routes will not produce additional space. In these instances, creative solutions will be sought to find space for charter schools. For example, READS, an active partner, assists charter schools by providing pre-development loan funds and has enacted a new development model which ensures quality schools, expedites development projects, reduces costs, and builds on equity for the school.

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(v) SUPPORT FOR INNOVATIVE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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

Applications for designating a school as an Interdistrict Public School were evaluated on, among other criteria, the basis of the quality and variety of academic programs that are offered within the LEA, and the impact on student-population diversity in the LEA. Admission policies for students from outside the LEA are subject to the same federal and

State anti-discrimination laws as apply to admission policies affecting students inside the LEA.

Due to the program's success, the State is preparing to expand interdistrict school choice. A bill, S1073, that makes interdistrict school choice permanent was introduced on February 4, 2010 and passed both the Education Committees and the full Assembly. It is currently awaiting Senate Budget Committee and full Senate approval before becoming law.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions (5 points)

The extent to which the State, in addition to information provided under other State Reform Conditions Criteria, 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.

In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State’s success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Evidence for (F)(3):

- A description of the State’s other applicable key education laws, statutes, regulations, or relevant legal documents.

Recommended maximum response length: Two pages



Other significant reform conditions

There are many significant reform conditions of which New Jersey is proud. Three of these (providing alternative pathways for teaching certification, emphasizing STEM, and charter-school program conditions) have been described extensively in other portions of this proposal.

The next three reform conditions are in the areas of Equitable Funding, Early Childhood Education, and the State’s commitment to history and cultural heritage.

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

Equitable Funding Formula

As described briefly in (F)(1), since the early 1990's there has been a series of decisions in the Abbott v. Burke matter that resulted in a specific group of poor urban districts receiving significant levels of State aid along with Court-mandated programs. These decisions were followed by years of court-driven, ad-hoc approaches to school expenditures. In December 2007, the NJDOE proposed a new funding formula designed to ensure that all children in all communities within the State have the opportunity to succeed. The proposal is a culmination of five years of work by the NJDOE to develop an equitable and predictable way to distribute State aid for education. In 2009, in a landmark decision, the new formula was approved by the state Supreme Court. The new formula provides the most generous resources in the nation for children at risk. In Education Week's recently-released report *Quality Counts*, New Jersey received among the highest grades in the nation for its school-funding formula.

Methodology

The State retained three school-finance experts to analyze existing conditions and to make recommendations based upon their research. A model was created through their work and vetted through an Advisory Panel. Stakeholder and legislator meetings were held to encourage stakeholder buy-in. As a result of public feedback, the model was adjusted and implemented.

The model includes two types of aid: wealth-equalized and categorical. Wealth-equalized aid is allocated according to each LEA's ability to raise enough local revenue to support its adequacy budget. The equalization formula used in New Jersey considers both a community's property wealth (measured by equalized property-valuation) and its aggregate income to determine the local ability to pay. Both measures are considered equally and indexed by the statewide wealth-multipliers. The multipliers ensure equalization of the local tax effort, and are similar to applying a local property-tax rate equally to all districts. The wealth-equalized portion of the funding formula is applied

uniformly to all districts, distributing state aid equitably, based on each community's ability to pay relative to that of all others in the state. Categorical aid is allocated regardless of a district's ability to raise local revenue.

Results

The result is a formula that directs funds toward serving poor **children**, rather than poor LEAs.

After thirty years of strife relating to inequitable services, the funding formula is now in place, and its acceptance in LEAs is increasing. Most importantly, the high-poverty children of New Jersey are being served more equitably across the state.

Early-Childhood-Education Initiative

Methodology

Early Childhood education has been a strong priority in New Jersey for the past ten years. New Jersey offers every child in high-poverty districts the opportunity to attend a high-quality preschool program.

The New Jersey PK3 work is organized within a framework that includes structural components (administration, class-size, teacher-child ratio, etc.), process components (quality of classroom environments, teacher-child interactions, etc), and alignment components (standards, curriculum, assessment) that are associated with children's social and academic outcomes.

Results

Considerable resources have been directed at this work. As a result of this emphasis, preschool enrollments in high-need districts have gone from 5,000 to 45,000 children.³

³ The Apples Blossom: Abbott Preschools Longitudinal Effects Study, June 2009.

The impact of this work is demonstrated in the improvement in NAEP scores for students in grade 4, as discussed in Section (A)(3).

The result is a set of positive impacts upon children’s learning in oral focus, early literacy and mathematics and kindergarten entry. More information is available in Appendix II (F).

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Commitment to History and Heritage

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New Jersey has deep roots in American and world history. Great inventors like Edison, great thinkers like Einstein, great leaders like Wilson, and great poets like Joyce Kilmer, all called New Jersey home. While we celebrate the contributions to America that these and others from our state have made, we contend that the children of New Jersey will be more compassionate, engaged members of society by truly understanding the past. We want to produce college- and career-ready students who are able to master challenging content and succeed in work and life. We also want to produce citizens who are well-informed and compassionate on matters involving humankind. The two following examples of instances in which New Jersey has led in creating such an understanding are included to provide evidence as to precisely how deep our commitment to teaching and understanding history and cultural context is.

New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education

Coordinated Holocaust Education efforts began in New Jersey in 1974. Prior to that date, some teachers, a few Jewish Federations, a small number of college professors, survivors, and others were educating students and the public, in their own area of expertise, and within their scope of responsibility and geographic area. The International Gathering of Holocaust Survivors and the inception of a coordinated effort in New Jersey occurred at about the same time (1973/74).

Individuals from two school districts, one in Northern New Jersey (Teaneck) and one in Southern New Jersey (Vineland), met at a school conference and discovered that each was exploring efforts in the area of Holocaust Education. They approached the State of New Jersey Department of Education and were able to obtain a few thousand dollars of Federal money (Title III, Innovative Grants) to develop a curriculum. Their task, which was to develop curriculum materials and training programs, was completed in about four months and a series of State-wide workshops were organized to present the material. The curriculum, which was field-tested and ultimately published and distributed nationally in 1983 by the Anti-Defamation League, was entitled “The Holocaust and Genocide: A Search for Conscience.”

The core mission of the New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education is to promote Holocaust education in the State of New Jersey. On a continual basis, the Commission surveys the status of Holocaust Education; designs, encourages and promotes the implementation of Holocaust and genocide education and awareness; provides programs in New Jersey; and coordinates designated events that will provide appropriate memorialization of the Holocaust on a regular basis throughout the state. The Commission provides assistance and advice to both public and private schools, and will meet with county and local school officials, and other interested public and private organizations, to assist with planning courses of study on the Holocaust.

Extensive curriculum guides have been developed for grades K-12 and include discussion of the role of compassion, studies on genocide, terrorism, slavery, and a range of related historical events.

Amistad Commission

On August 27, 2002, the governor of New Jersey signed into law the “Amistad Bill” (A1301). The bill created an “Amistad Commission” in honor of the enslaved Africans who gained their freedom after overthrowing the crew of the Amistad ship in 1839. The Commission’s mandate was to promote a wider implementation of educational awareness programs regarding the African slave trade, slavery in America, and the many contributions Africans and African-Americans have made to American society.

The Amistad Bill created historic legislation that not only affected the teaching of history in the State of New Jersey, but also opened a revolutionary new chapter in the teaching of our nation’s history across the country. The New Jersey legislation was, and remains, an important national landmark event.

When the Amistad legislation was introduced and passed, the public, as well as many K-12 educators and even many of the Commissioners, presumed that the goal would be to introduce African-American history into the K-12 curriculum, and to develop public programs on African-American history for children, families, and communities.

However, instead of following this more obvious strategy, New Jersey took on a more complex challenge. The Amistad Commission’s goal is to change the landscape for the study of United States and world history by placing Africans and African-Americans at the center of the narrative as agents, rather than reaffirming historical narratives that had painted them as bystanders or victims who lived, or live, on the margins of the United States and the world.

Thus, our mandate has shifted from one of inclusion to one of infusion. Our goals are revolutionary because they challenge the “either-or” notion that if you study African-Americans, then you have to leave out the important events and people in our national narrative. The New Jersey Amistad Commission’s revolutionary goal is to demonstrate that while everyone on the national stage plays a major role, the lives of the powerful and the less powerful are intertwined and sometimes interdependent, and sometimes, these roles are reversed when “the meek inherit the earth.” In the case of Supreme Court Justice John Marshall, for example, if students truly understand the significance of judicial review as established by *Marbury v. Madison*, then they will also understand the significance of judicial power in the lives of black people, whether the case is *Dred Scott v. Sandford* or *Brown v. Board of Education*. We do not exclude the traditional historical narrative or its players. Rather, the Commission’s curriculum committee asserts that African-Americans, and all others who have traditionally been excluded from the national narrative, shaped this nation’s trajectory in important ways. The primary work of this Commission is to provide an inclusive Social Studies curriculum, especially in United

States and world history. The Commission's curriculum committee approached its work with a sense of thoughtful urgency.

The Amistad Commission supports teacher professional-development activities and curriculum development. The Amistad Commission exists to be a resource and support for New Jersey classroom teachers who provide our children with an exemplary educational experience that not only imparts knowledge, but also teaches them to think critically and never to stop asking "Why?" Such an approach, on the part of their instructors, teaches them to be good citizens who care for their families, communities, and nation and who recognize their deep connections to all humanity, of whatever gender, nationality, religion, or ethnicity. This approach teaches them to be unafraid to search for their own truths.