



Performance Management

Description and Key Elements

Reforms of the size and scale of those that Race to the Top States are undertaking require more comprehensive oversight, planning and problem solving than most state education agencies (SEAs) and local educational agencies (LEAs) are used to. While many factors will contribute to the short- and long-term success of Race to the Top, one overarching influence is the performance management that SEAs and LEAs adopt to ensure that their initiatives are on track to meet the program's goals for student achievement.

Key Elements

Performance management is a systemic approach to assure quality and progress toward organizational goals by aligning structures, processes and routines through a set of reinforcing activities. Performance management activities include the following key elements:

- 1. Clarity of Outcomes and Theory of Action:** Establishing and widely communicating priorities, and setting ambitious, clear and measurable goals and outcomes with aligned strategies and activities
- 2. Alignment of Resources:** Directing or redirecting resources (time, money, people) to priority efforts that produce results and establishing clear roles and responsibilities
- 3. Collection and Use of Data:** Establishing and implementing routines and processes for collecting, analyzing and monitoring data, including leading and lagging indicators, to inform continuous improvement, provide feedback and make decisions
- 4. Accountability for Results:** Making decisions to continue improvement or end practices based on data; implementing incentives tied to performance; and engaging and communicating results with internal and external stakeholders

Project management, which is used primarily to track tasks and deadlines of projects across the system, is an essential part of performance management. But the two differ: Whereas project management focuses on specific tools and systems for **how** to do something, performance management focuses on strategies for **what** to do.

Performance management consists of structures, processes and routines developed, implemented and

managed by the SEA or LEA. Examples include easily understood data-tracking mechanisms; consistent routines such as weekly or biweekly meetings focused entirely on examining outcomes; or transparent and ongoing ways that the SEA gets feedback on implementation challenges from LEAs.

Reform Support Network Activities to Drive Reform Performance Management Practices

This "Performance Management: Description and Key Elements" document provides a general framework for SEAs, LEAs and partners in the Reform Support Network (RSN) to understand and plan for the important work of performance management. The RSN provides opportunities to move this description into practice at all levels (for example, U.S. Department of Education, SEA and LEA). A variety of activities will support SEAs and LEAs through the RSN, including Working Groups, Individualized Technical Assistance, Webinars, Print and Communications and Convenings. Projects and products may be part of the SEA Capacity Building work stream or may be embedded in other Communities of Practice as appropriate.

For further information about the SEA Capacity Building work stream, contact Jamila Smith, U.S. Department of Education, (202) 453-6360.

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The Reform Support Network, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, supports the Race to the Top grantees as they implement reforms in education policy and practice, learn from each other, and build their capacity to sustain these reforms, while sharing these promising practices and lessons learned with other States attempting to implement similarly bold education reform initiatives.