

Female Speaker: We're going to get started in just a couple of minutes. Thank you for your patience.

Ann Whalen: Welcome. I am Ann Whalen, Director of the Implementation and Support Unit at the US Department of Education and I am joined by my colleague Renee Faulkner. Thank you so much for participating in today's call on the FY 2013 Race to the Top – District competition. During this presentation, we are going to review the components of the FY 2013 Race to the Top – District competition that are relevant to applicants that are applying as a consortium.

As mentioned in our previous webinar on August 7, although the vast majority of the competition is the same for individual and consortia applicants, there are a few differences that are worth highlighting.

Please note that due to the large number of participants on today's webinar, we will only be accepting questions via the chat feature and will try to get to as many as possible at the end of today's webinar. We will not respond to questions individually; instead we will share the questions and responses with all participants. Please feel free to send in technical, clarifying, or logistics questions. As mentioned in the RSVP message, we are unable to answer questions about a specific approach or individual proposal. If you have questions that are not addressed during the webinar or in the FAQs, please submit them by email to 2013.racetothetop.district@ed.gov. We will be hosting additional webinars to answer questions submitted to our email box. Our first one will be this Thursday, August 15th. These additional webinars will be held approximately every other week depending on the number of questions that we receive. Please see the Department's website for dates and registration for future webinars. Today, in addition to a quick overview of the program, we will walk through the elements of the competition that may assist consortia applicants as they develop their proposals. These include elements of the eligibility requirements, application requirements and assurances, components of the memorandum of understanding (MOU), and examples from the application. As I indicated earlier, we will have time at the end of the presentation to answer as many questions as possible. If you have any remaining questions after the webinar, again please feel free to send them to our email box: 2013.racetothetop.district@ed.gov.

So before we dive deep into the context of the actual notice and application, we wanted to remind everyone what a consortium is. A consortium is a group of school districts or LEAs that apply to the Race to the Top - District competition together as one applicant. All members of the consortium must be eligible LEAs. Consortia may include LEAs from multiple states as long as each member of the consortium is an eligible LEA. To establish a consortium, LEAs can 1) designate one member of the consortium to apply for a grant on behalf of the consortium as a lead LEA, or 2) establish itself as a separate eligible legal entity and apply for the grant on its own behalf. Since this is a competition, the Department will not advise individual prospective applicants if they qualify as separate eligible entities for the purpose of this competition and proposal. Local educational agencies is an entity as defined in section 9101 (26) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and must meet the expectations of applicable state law to meet the definition of local educational agencies.

While applicants cannot form a consortium with entities that are not eligible LEAs, applicants may work with entities in other ways. For example, an applicant may choose to partner with organizations that do

not meet the eligibility requirements of the FY 2013 Race to the Top - District competition. An Intermediate Service Unit, Educational Service Agency, or Charter Management Organization would only be eligible to apply for the award under the FY 13 Race to the Top competition if it meets the definition of an LEA as defined in the notice. Again, under that definition, an eligible entity must be recognized under applicable state law as an LEA and every state in which the LEA exists and must meet the definition of an LEA under section 9101 (26) of the ESEA. But again, eligible applicants may choose to partner with entities that do not meet this definition.

We'd like to clarify the difference between a consortium and a partnership. A consortium must be made up of eligible entities, specifically districts that meet the definition of LEA in the Notice Inviting Applications (NIA). These are the only entities that should be listed as part of a consortium and must be members or party to the MOUs and may be listed as an LEA. A partnership can include additional parties such as the Educational Service Agency, Regional Centers Institutions of Higher Education or local or nonprofit organizations. These additional parties can provide support in the application; however, a non-eligible partner cannot be a signatory on the application, nor can they be a member of the consortium.

To support districts in completing the FY 13 Race to the Top application, the Department has released several documents that provide information about the program. The FY 2013 Executive Summary provides key information and definitions from the Notice Inviting Applications. The application includes all of the required components as well as detailed instructions for completing and submitting the application to the Department. The Frequently Asked Questions document includes answers to common questions about the competition. This document may be updated as needed over the next several months. The FY 13 Notice of Final Priorities (NFP) is a regulatory document that establishes the priorities, requirements, definitions, and selection criteria of the competition. The FY 13 Notice Inviting Applications explains how the priorities, requirements, definitions, and selection criteria established in the NFP apply to the 2013 competition. The definitions for all defined terms can be found in both the NIA and the Executive Summary. The Fast Facts document provides key information for the FY 13 Race to the Top - District program. The Background document explains how the program priorities will be deployed and will help applicants understand how the program priorities were developed and will help applicants understand the Department's approach the competition. Again, all of these resources are available on the Department's website.

In addition, the Department conducted a technical assistance webinar on August 7, 2013 that provided an overview of the 2013 Race to the Top - District competition. Materials from that webinar are available on the Race to the Top - District website. Following this webinar, if you have specific questions about the program, please send them to the FY 13 Race to the Top - District mailbox at 2013.racetothesup.district@ed.gov. Again, the Department may update the FAQ document as needed as additional questions come in or answer them on our webinars. For more information on either of these materials, please feel free to visit our website.

While it's optional, we strongly encourage each potential applicant to notify us of the applicant's intent to submit an application for funding by completing a web-based form by August 23, 2013. The form is

available on the Department of Education's Race to the Top - District website's Applicant Information page. The intent to apply will enable us to develop a more efficient process for reviewing grant applications. We also encourage LEAs that submit a Notice of Intent to Apply to also notify relevant local stakeholders, so that such stakeholders are aware of the applicant's intent to apply and can engage in the application process as appropriate. After the August 23rd deadline, the Department will publicly release a list of the applicants intending to apply for the FY 13 Race to the Top - District grants. The list will only include the LEA's name, including the name of each proposed member LEA in the consortium, type of application, and expected budget request. Applications from the competition must be received by the Department no later than October 3, 2013. We provided more information regarding application submission in last week's webinar and will have a separate webinar in the near future about the process to apply.

Please note that as with the FY 12 Race to the Top - District competition, there are no in-person presentations as part of this competition. Finally, the Department will award FY 13 Race to the Top - District grants by December 31, 2013.

For today's conversation, we will not review the FY 13 Notice Inviting Applications in great detail. Instead, we will focus on the key aspects that pertain to consortia. For more detailed information on the competition, including the requirements and selection criteria, we encourage you to review the NIA or the August 7th webinar slides and documents listed under the resource slides of this presentation.

We'll focus first on the eligibility criteria. In order to be considered for a grant, all applicants must meet the eligibility criteria. As we walk through the presentation, we will highlight the key definitions from the NIA and helpful FAQs, including notes and references that highlight information that pertains to consortia applicants. As with individual LEAs, a consortium of LEAs must serve a minimum of 2000 participating students. However, a consortium of LEAs may serve fewer than 2000 participating students provided that those students are served by a consortium of at least ten eligible LEAs and at least 75% of students served by each LEA are participating students. Additionally, a consortium of LEAs may be made up of fewer than ten LEAs if it serves more than 2000 participating students. Again, a consortium of LEAs may serve fewer than 2000 participating students provided that those students are served by a consortium of at least ten eligible LEAs and at least 75% of students served by the LEAs are participating students. This does not preclude a consortium being made up of fewer than ten LEAs so long as it serves more than 2000 students. LEAs are the only eligible applicants for this competition.

Once again, an LEA is an entity that is defined in section 9101 (26) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, or ESEA, and recognized under applicable state law as a local educational agency. LEAs may apply individually or as a consortium. LEAs applying as a consortium may include LEAs from multiple states in their consortium. An LEA may only participate in one Race to the Top - District application. Successful applicants, i.e. current grantees from past Race to the Top - District competitions, including previously successful individual applicants, lead LEAs or members of a previously successful consortium, may not apply for additional funding.

For the purpose of this competition, “participating schools” means a school that is identified by the applicant and chooses to work with the applicant to implement the plan either in one or more specific grade bands, subject areas, or throughout the entire school and affecting a significant number of its students.

“Participating students” means students enrolled in a participating school and directly served by the applicant’s plan. At least 40% of participating students across all participating schools must be from low-income families. We will walk through an example of how to calculate the percentage of participating students from low-income families on the next slide. An application must be signed by the superintendent or CEO, local school board president, and local teachers’ union or association president if applicable. LEAs may apply for all or a portion of their schools or specific grade bands or subject area bands.

This table includes the data you will need to calculate the percentage of students from low-income families to determine whether you meet the requirements that at least 40% of participating students across all participating schools must be from low-income families. A student is determined to be from a low-income family based on his or her eligibility for free or reduced-priced lunch subsidies under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, or other poverty measures that the LEA uses to make awards under section 1113(a) of the ESEA. This calculation should be done across all participating schools in all participating LEAs. Each LEA and school does not need to meet this requirement individually; the requirement must be met across the consortium. When completing this table, include the name of each LEA, each participating school, and provide the raw data in columns A through F. Based on those data, the applicant can calculate the percentages of students that are from low-income families in column G, H, and I. An applicant determines the percentage of students from low-income families by dividing the number of participating students who are from low-income families by the total number of participating students across all participating schools in all participating LEAs. Again, in the case of a consortium, the applicant should calculate the percentage of participating students from low-income families in the same way.

This is an example of the table that includes all of the required information. We’re going to focus on calculating the percent of low-income students in a consortium. If the consortium includes two LEAs, school district A and B, and three participating schools (elementary one, middle school two, and middle school three) like in this slide’s example, you would first calculate the percentage for each school. For example, elementary one in school district A has seven hundred participating students, of whom five hundred students are low-income. To calculate the percentage, divide five hundred by seven hundred; this results in 71.4% of participating students who are from low-income families in elementary school one in school district A. For middle school two in district A, only 35% of students are from low-income families. To calculate if the consortium is eligible, divide the total number of low-income participating students found in column D by the total number of participating students found in column B. In this example, 52.27% of participating students across the consortium are from low-income families. Again, note that this percentage is calculated across the entire consortium, not by individual schools. We encourage you to look at FAQ C-9 for more information on this example and how to calculate this percentage.

Now we will discuss the eligibility requirements with regard to an applicant's commitment to core educational assurance areas. To be eligible for Race to the Top - District grant each member of the consortium must demonstrate a commitment to each of the core educational assurance areas by assuring that 1) each LEA, at a minimum, will implement no later than the 2014/15 school year a teacher evaluation system, a principal evaluation system, and a superintendent evaluation system. Again, please pay special attention to these definitions in the Notice. 2) The LEA is committed to preparing students for college or career as demonstrated by either a) being located in a state that has adopted college- and career-ready standards, or b) measuring all students' progress and performance against college- and career-ready graduation requirements. 3) Each LEA has a robust data system that has, at a minimum, an individual teacher identifier with a teacher/student match, and the capability to provide timely data back to educators and their supervisors on student growth. 4) The LEA has the capability to receive or match student-level preschool-through-twelfth grade and higher education data, and 5) that each LEA ensures that any disclosure of or access to personally identifiable information in students' educational records complies with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Again, each consortium must adhere to each of these requirements. We encourage you to review FAQ C-30 and C-31 for additional guidance on the data systems and data use. Please note, that the Department will review all eligibility and application assurances, and an application that does not meet these requirements is not eligible for funding.

We will now discuss the absolute priorities. There is one absolute priority that all applicants must address. This absolute priority cuts across the entire application and should not be addressed separately. Peer reviewers will assess whether applicants meet this absolute priority after the proposal has been fully reviewed and evaluated. Applicants that do not meet the absolute priority will not be eligible for funding. In selecting grantees, the Department may consider high-ranking applications meeting Absolute Priorities two through five separately when making grants. Absolute Priorities two through five are not judged by peer reviewers. Consortium applicants indicate in the application assurances in part VI of the application which absolute priority applies. Absolute Priority two is for non-rural LEAs in Race to the Top states. Absolute Priority three is for rural LEAs in Race to the Top states. Absolute Priority four is for non-rural LEAs not in non-Race to the Top states, and Absolute Priority five is for rural LEAs in non-Race to the Top states. As a reminder, "rural LEA" means an LEA at the time of the application that is eligible under the Small Rural School Achievement (SRSA) program or the Rural or Low-income School (RLIS) program authorized under Title VI, Part B of the ESEA. If you're still unsure of whether an LEA qualifies as a rural LEA, please see the Notice Inviting Applications definition section for more details.

As a consortium, to identify which absolute priority you are in, calculate where 50% or more of your participating students are from. In the FY 13 Race to the Top - District application includes specific assurance sections in Section VI for consortia applications. Once you have determined which of absolute priorities two through five meets your consortium, please check the applicable absolute priority.

A consortium applicant provides the name of each member consortium, its State, its National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) identification number, and an indication of whether it is a lead or member LEA. In the application on page twenty-three, we've included a table to help with this information.

Again, you'll list the name of the LEA, the state in which the LEA is from, the role in the consortium the LEA will play (for example, the lead, member, fiscal agent, and the NCES district ID number). An applicant must provide the names of the superintendent or chief executive officer, local school board president, and local teachers' union or association president if applicable. If an applicant indicates that the signature of the president of the local teachers' union or association is not applicable, then the applicant must provide a rationale in the table and Program-Specific Application Assurances section of the application. This example is from page twenty-three of the application and is for a consortium application.

We'll now briefly review the selection criteria. Section criteria and the competitive preference priority are what applicants respond to in order to earn points. The peer reviewers will be reading the applications to judge and score your proposal against these criteria. There are six selection criteria and one competitive preference priority. The selection criteria focus on an applicant's vision, prior record of success, preparing students for college and careers, LEA policy and infrastructure, continuous improvement, and budget and sustainability. The competitive preference priority: Results, Resource Alignment, and Integrated Services focuses on the applicant's integration of public and private resources in a partnership designed to augment the school's resources and providing additional student and family supports to schools that address the social, emotional, or behavioral needs of the participating students, giving the highest priority to high-need students in participating schools. Consortia applicants should submit one proposal that includes all LEAs in the consortium. For more information about the selection criteria and the competitive preference priority, please see the NFP, or Notice of Final Priorities, and the NIA, or Notice Inviting Applications, Executive Summary, and FAQ documents on the Race to the Top - District website.

As a consortium applicant, it's important to note that some selection criteria ask for responses detailing the activities of each LEA. For example, selection sub-criterion B-3 asks for the extent to which each LEA has demonstrated evidence of successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement the personalized learning environments described in the applicant's proposal. Other selection criteria ask applicants to describe a high-quality plan for all LEAs included in the application. For example, selection criterion C asks for a high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready. While its proposal may include initiatives that apply to each LEA, we encourage a comprehensive narrative versus a fragmented piecemeal approach.

The selection criteria identified on this slide are those that explicitly ask for information for each LEA. Again, that's (A)(4) LEA-wide goal for improving student outcomes that should be completed for each participating LEA; (B)(1) demonstrating clear track record of success; (B)(2) increasing transparency in LEAs processes, practices and investments; (B)(3) State context for implementation; (B)(4) stakeholder engagement and support; and (D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure.

Renee, from the Implementation and Support Unit, will now review the next portion of the webinar.

Renee Faulkner: Thanks, Ann. We will now discuss the program and application requirements and the memorandum of understanding. As mentioned earlier, there are several program requirements once grants are awarded. Today we will focus on the program requirements regarding the budget. An applicant's budget requests for all four years of its project must fall within the applicable budget range based on the number of participating students in the district's grant application. For applicants that will serve between 2000 and 5000 students, the Race to the Top - District budget request project must fall between four and ten million dollars. For applicants that will serve between 5,001 and 10,000 students in their proposal, the Race to the Top - District budget requests must fall between ten and twenty million dollars. For applicants that will serve between 10,001 and 20,000 in their proposal, their Race to the Top - District budget requests must fall between twenty and twenty-five million dollars. For applicants that will serve more than 20,001 students in their proposal, the Race to the Top - District budget requests must fall between twenty-five and thirty million dollars. The Department will not consider an application that requests a budget that is less than or greater than the applicable range of awards.

We want to highlight that a consortium applicant may serve fewer than 2000 participating students provided that it is a consortium of at least ten LEAs and at least 75% of students served by each LEA are participating students. In this instance, the Race to the Top - District budget request must fall between four and ten million dollars. With the exception of an applicant that is a consortium consisting of more than ten LEAs, all other applications must serve the minimum number of 2000 participating students at the start of their grant. The applicant's plan may not begin with fewer than 2000 participating students and later phase in a greater number of students that surpass the 2000 participating students minimum. Please note that an applicant may plan in its proposal to increase the number of participating students over the course of the grant, but again, unless it's a consortium with ten or more LEAs, the application must serve a minimum of 2000 participating students starting in the first year of the grant and then may increase the number of participating students from there. For more information, see FAQ C-6. For more information on the budget, we will be holding a webinar titled "Preparing the Budget" on September 4, 2013. Please continue to check our website for updated information on how to register.

As part of its application, each LEA in a consortium must provide its state and mayor or city or town administrator with at least ten business days to comment on the LEA's application. With its application package, each LEA included in the application must submit the State and mayor and city or town administrator's comments or evidence that the LEA offered those parties an opportunity to comment. LEAs may also submit their responses to those comments. LEAs applying as part of a consortium that are in the same state or have the same mayor or comparable official may jointly solicit comments from shared states or mayors or comparable officials. The Department has not identified a specific agency or office within the state that must comment on FY 2013 Race to the Top - District applications. LEAs should consult with their states to determine the appropriate agency or office within the state, such as the Governor's office, the State Educational agency, or Attorney General's office that will comment on the FY 2013 Race to the Top - District application. At a minimum, these comments will be part of the evidence considered in B-3 and B-4.

We wanted to highlight two FAQs that are particularly relevant for consortium applicants. FAQ F-8 asks whether each LEA in a consortium must give its state or mayor or comparable official an opportunity to comment on the application. The answer is yes. And in F-9: “if an LEA has more than one Mayor or comparable official, must the LEA give each Mayor or comparable official an opportunity to comment on the application?” The answer to this FAQ is also yes. Each mayor or comparable official must have an opportunity to comment on the application.

As mentioned earlier, a consortium applicant must indicate in its application whether one member of the consortium is applying for a grant on behalf of the consortium, meaning there is a lead LEA for that consortium, or whether the consortium has established itself as a separate eligible legal entity and is applying for the grant on its own behalf. If one member of the consortium is applying for the grant on behalf of the consortium the application must be signed by the superintendent or CEO, local school board president, and the local teachers’ union or association president where applicable of the lead LEA. Alternatively, if the consortium has established itself as separate eligible legal entity and is applying for a grant on its own behalf, a legal representative from the consortium must sign the application. The program-specific assurances for consortia applicants are in Section VI of the application. A consortium applicant must also include copies of all memoranda of understanding, or MOU, or other binding agreements that among other things bind each LEA to every statement and assurance made in the application. The MOU must be signed by the superintendent or CEO, the local school board president, and local teachers’ union or association president where applicable of that LEA. Each LEA including the lead LEA in the consortium must execute an MOU. All MOUs must be included in the application. We’ll walk through the requirements of the MOU and the required application assurances over the next few slides.

The section of the application regarding the MOU is Section XIII. Consistent with the 34 CFR 75.128, MOUs must 1) detail the activities that each member of the consortium plans to perform; 2) describe the consortium governance structure as defined; 3) bind each member of the consortium to every statement and assurance made in the application and must also include an assurance signed by the LEA’s superintendent or CEO that the LEA is committed to the four core educational assurance areas as defined as described in the eligibility requirements; 4) include assurances signed by each member of the consortium related to the core educational assurance areas. These are the same assurance areas that are listed in the eligibility requirements section and that we reviewed earlier on slide eighteen. However, because the applications of consortia applicants are only signed by individuals from the lead LEA or the separate eligible legal entity, all LEAs in a consortium must make these assurances through the MOU. These should be signed by the superintendent or CEO of each LEA.

Here, we once again present the core educational assurance areas we introduced on slide eighteen. Each LEA must also assure that it has a robust data system with an individual teacher identifier with a teacher/student match and the capability to provide timely data back to educators and their supervisors on student growth. As stated earlier, a consortium applicant is not required to create a single data system to share student-level data as defined among participating LEAs. We encourage LEAs to use existing data systems such as state-wide longitudinal data systems if those systems enable the applicant to meet the relevant eligibility requirements. If a consortium applicant decides to create a single data

system that would require student level data sharing among participating LEAs, this system must comply with FERPA. LEAs must also have the capability to receive or match student-level preschool-through-twelfth grade and higher education data and ensure that any disclosure of or access to personally identifiable information in students' education records complies with the FERPA.

To support consortia in working together effectively, the Department has drafted a model MOU that can be found in the application and in the Notice Inviting Applications. This model MOU may serve as a template for eligible LEAs that are considering entering into a consortium for the purpose of applying for an FY 2013 Race to the Top - District grant. However, consortia are not required to use it; they may use a different document that includes the key features noted in the model, and they should consult with their attorneys on what is the most appropriate for their consortium. The purpose of the model MOU is to help to specify a relationship that is specific to the FY 13 Race to the Top - District competition. It is not meant to detail aspects of consortium grant management or administration. At a minimum, each MOU must include the following key elements, each of which is described in detail: 1) terms and conditions, 2) consortium governance structure, and 3) signatures. Again, although applicants are not required to use the model MOU, you do need to submit a signed MOU for each participating LEA that includes the required information with your application.

Now I'm going to review some of the expectations in more detail. In the terms and conditions, each member of a consortium should sign a standard set of terms and conditions that includes, at a minimum, key roles and responsibilities of the applicant for the consortium, which is the lead LEA, and member LEAs and assurances that make clear what the applicant and member LEAs are agreeing to do. As we mentioned previously, the MOU must: 1) designate one member of the group to apply for the grant or establish a separate legal entity to apply for the grant; 2) detail the activities that each of the entities plans to perform; 3) bind each member of the consortium to every statement and assurance made by the applicant in the application; 4) state that the applicant for the consortium (the lead LEA) is legally responsible for the following: the use of all grant funds, ensuring that the project is carried out by the consortium in accordance with federal requirements, ensuring that the indirect cost funds are determined as required under 34 CFR 75.564 E, carrying out the activities it has agreed to perform, and using the funds that it receives under the MOU in accordance with the federal requirements that apply to the Race to the Top - District grant. 5) The MOU should state that each member of the consortium is legally responsible for the following: carrying out the activities it has agreed to perform and using the funds it received under the MOU in accordance with the federal requirements that apply to the Race to the Top - District grant. Also, the MOU should contain all of the necessary assurances.

As defined in the Notice Inviting Applications and the Notice of Final Priorities, at a minimum, the MOU must describe the consortium's structure for carrying out its operations, including: 1) the organizational structure of the consortium and the differentiated roles that a member LEA may hold (for example, the lead LEA or a member LEA); 2) for each differentiated role, the associated rights and responsibilities, including rights and responsibilities for adopting and implementing the consortium's proposal for a grant; 3) the consortium's method and process (ie consensus vs. majority) for making different types of decisions whether policy or operational; 4) the protocols by which the consortium will operate, including the protocols for member LEAs to change roles or to leave the consortium; 5) the consortium's

procedures for managing funds received under the grant; 6) the terms and conditions of the memorandum of understanding or other binding agreements executed by each member LEA; and 7) the consortium's procurement process and evidence of each LEAs member's commitment to that process.

As stated in the NIA and the NFP, each MOU must be signed by each LEA's superintendent or CEO, the local school board president, and local teachers' union or association president where applicable. An applicant must submit all signed MOUs with its application. To review, the application must be signed by the superintendent or CEO, the local school board president, and the local teachers' union or association president where applicable of the lead LEA. If one member of the consortium is applying for a grant on behalf of the consortium, or the legal representative of the consortium establishes itself as a separate eligible legal entity and is applying for the grant on its own behalf. Each memorandum of understanding must be signed by the LEAs superintendent or CEO, the local school board president, and the local teachers' union or association president.

As you can see, the application is designed with specific sections for consortia to help respond to the requirements and criteria. The application requirements are specific to consortia include Section VI: Program-specific assurances for consortia applicants, Section XIII: memorandum of understanding for consortia applicants, and section 20: an application checklist for consortia applicants.

We will now discuss some lessons learned since previous competitions. Based on the Department's experience with other grants, we recommend that applicants ensure they set themselves up for success when working in a consortium. Some critical success factors include: 1) having a common vision and goals across members, 2) defining in writing clear roles and responsibilities and decision-making processes or specific processes for agreeing on these roles, responsibilities, and decision making processes, 3) agreeing in advance on procurement practices (for example, members may need to be sure that their state, and local laws and regulations allow for the kinds of joint procurement they anticipate, if any. A consortium should also establish which entity or entities will procure on behalf of the consortium and ensure that entities involved in the procurement, have the experience and staff capacity to manage such a joint procurement. 4) On the procurement topic, be sure to follow all federal, state, and local procurement laws, regulations, and procedures. Often, those require that you not identify any contractors in advance of releasing a solicitation, so it's often helpful to omit any names of specific potential contractors from your completed proposal. 5) Finally, communications, both internal and external, are both critical for success and setting up strong structures and protocols in advance with help to facilitate communication.

As you think about forming your consortium, it is important to consider the following questions: 1) do all members have a similar vision for the proposal? 2) Has the consortium developed a coherent and comprehensive proposal? The proposal should not have a fragmented or piecemeal approach. 3) Do all members understand their contribution and responsibilities related to meeting the application goals, performance measures, and annual targets? All consortia members must work together to implement the proposal in a high-quality way. 4) Finally, how will the consortium track progress and make adjustments to ensure high-quality implementations through the grant period? We encourage consortium applicants to consider these questions carefully as you form a consortium and develop your

proposal. I will now turn it back to Ann Whalen who will respond to some of the questions we have received through the chat feature.

Ann Whalen: Great. Thanks, Renee. That was a lot of wonderful information about MOUs and application requirements and the fun of lessons learned from past competitions. Again, we will now use the remainder of today's webinar to answer questions that you submitted through the webinar chat feature. These should be technical, clarifying, or logistics questions. Please note that due to the large amount of participants, we will only be able to answer some of the questions that are submitted. As a reminder, we are only answering questions that are specific to consortia applicants on this webinar. We are unable to answer questions about specific approaches, proposals, or individual plans. We will respond to all questions over audio so all participants can hear the responses. And if we don't get to your question, or if you have a follow up questions that you would like answered, feel free to look at the FAQ document or submit them via email to 2013.racetothetop.district@ed.gov.

Go ahead and start sending in your questions.

We've had a couple of great questions that have come in so far looking for some clarification. One participant asks: "Are school districts applying for Race to the Top grants as well as an Early Challenge Grant? Can we apply for the two applications?" This is a good question. We want to be really clear about the eligibility requirements for these two separate competitions. For the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge applications, eligible applicants are states, not districts, so only states may apply for the Early Learning Challenge grant. And those are states that have not previously received a grant under Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge. Districts, or a consortium of districts, are the eligible applicants for the Race to the Top - District grants. Under Absolute Priorities two through five, you check which absolute priority your consortium applies to. Those are driven by the states that have received grants under the Race to the Top State or K-12 program in Phase one, Phase, two, or Phase three. Paul is quickly going to that slide where we show the list of states that are Phase one, Phase two, and Phase three states. Again, that's for the K-12 program, and for the Race to the Top - District application, districts are eligible, not states. For the Early Learning Challenge grant, states are eligible but not districts.

Another participant on today's webinar asked for additional information: "If someone is looking to partner with someone on a consortium or join a consortium, how can they get in touch with districts?" One great way is if you're interested in submitting a letter of intent to apply for a grant and you're an eligible applicant, you should do that by August 23 on our website. And you can be listed, and maybe people can find you for partnership so you can find somebody else to join a consortium. The Department will not be facilitating any actual matches, but it is a great way to signal that you're potentially interested in joining a consortium, and it's also a great way if you are not an eligible applicant to look for potential LEAs that may be looking for partners. Again, partners, such as non-eligible LEAs or non-eligible entities, should not submit letters of intent; we will not be posting your name if you're interested in looking for partnership.

Another great question is about our 2000 and over 2000 quandary with our budget slide. If you go to slide thirty-one, one question asks: "Can two LEAs form a consortium if a combined total of students to

be served is over 2000?" The answer is yes. A consortium may serve any one of these different budget bands. It could be two LEAs forming a consortium and serving 25,000 students, and that consortium could apply for anywhere between twenty-five and thirty million dollars. You could be a consortium of four LEAs serving 7000 students and apply for a budget between ten and twenty million dollars. The only issue is that if you have fewer than 2000 students, you must be a consortium of ten or more LEAs and at least 75% of students served by each LEA are participating students. In the past, we have found that small rural LEAs have found that ability really useful when forming a consortium.

Another great question is about the specific 2013 data we used for free and reduced-priced lunch slide. If you go to slide fourteen, you can see the data that we are looking for in terms of participating schools, participating students, participating students that qualify for free and reduced-price lunch. Please use the best data possible, so the best data available. FAQ C-10 provides some additional information on that. Again, use the most current and accurate data you have when filling out this chart and applying for any of these proposals.

Another reviewer who participated on today's webinar commented that, in the past, applications have not completed this full chart and noticed that people have been not receiving full points if they don't take the time and really make sure that they're including all of the necessary information for peer reviewers to assess and review the applications. So again, we encourage anybody interested in applying to make sure you're taking the time to provide all of the needed information to make your proposal compelling against the selection criteria, and that includes filling out the chart. Peer reviewers find these very helpful as they go through many applications.

Great, another question asks: "If we receive some of the Race to the Top Phase three funding through our state of Illinois Race to the Top Phase three grant award, are we still eligible for Race to the Top - District grant?" That's a great question, and the answer is yes. You may be a participating district in a Race to the Top state grant Phase one, Phase two, or Phase three grant. You could be from Springfield, Illinois and be receiving a portion of the Race to the Top State grant and still be eligible to apply for a Race to the Top - District grant. It is only districts that have received grants under the previous Race to the Top - District competitions, so the sixteen grantees or fifty-five LEAs from last year's competition who won grants, that are not eligible to apply for additional funding.

Another question: "Is a grant forward-funding or is it on a continuation basis?" The answer is these grants will be forward-funded all four years so that money will be part of what is used up front, but you will be drawing down funds on a reimbursement basis or following the cash management rules as appropriate. Again, these are not going to be continuation grants, so they're not going to be potentially at risk due to sequestration or future Appropriation Acts. But you will be expected to follow and prove all of the cash management rules as applicable.

Another question asks: "Must a consortium have a 501C3 designation?" The answer is no. A consortium must be made up of eligible entities, which are only LEAs that meet the definition in the Notice Inviting Applications. Again, consortia must only be made up of entities that are LEAs and meet that definition.

A partner to a consortium applicant may be a 501C3, but again, that partner should not sign on to the actual application or serve an official role within that consortium.

Another great question asks for additional clarity on B-1. It says: "Please clarify response to B-1: demonstrating a track record of success. I understood the response should address only the lead LEA in a consortium application." The answer is that if you look at the actual language in B-1, it requires that it be for each participating LEA in the consortium. If you happen to have your application in front of you, then that would be page thirty-nine of the application (B-1: demonstrating a clear track record of success, which is worth 15 points). The actual stem of the selection criterion is the extent to which each LEA has demonstrated evidence of a clear record of success in the past four years of advancing student learning and achievement, and increasing equity in learning and teaching, including a description, charts, or graphs, raw student data, and other evidence that demonstrates the applicant's ability to a) improve student learning outcomes and close achievement gaps, including raising student achievement, high school graduation rate and college enrollment rates; b) achieve ambitious and significant reforms in persistently low-achieving schools or low-performing schools. Again, that evidence should be provided for each LEA participating in the consortium; and finally, c) make student performance data available to students' educators and parents in ways that inform and improve participation instruction services. In the text box we provide, the applicant should provide a narrative for what that looks like for each LEA in the consortium.

As additional questions keep coming in, we're going to put you guys on mute for one second. Please keep on writing in if you need additional clarity or there are things that we haven't touched on that you have questions about when you're thinking about applying as a consortium. We will be back in one moment.

Great, thank you guys for being patient as we have been looking at some of the additional questions that have been coming in. We have a few more that we would like to go through. One asks for additional clarity on what roles partnerships could play within a consortium. Again, if you go to slide six, you can see some of the information about the difference between a consortium and a partnership. In past proposals, we have seen partners play roles in after school and before school opportunities for students or educators providing professional development. Again, partners are encouraged as part of the proposal, and we welcome the participation; we just note that you make sure you follow your local procurement laws when you're thinking about listing an actual partner. And yes, partners are eligible to receive funds if an applicant is successful in winning a grant. If you're a partner and you provide services before or after school, it's possible to be compensated for the grant if you were in the approved budget.

Another question asks for additional clarity on whether charter schools are eligible entities, especially charter schools that are for-profit. The answer is that it depends on the charter school; you must meet the definition of a local educational agency. Again, that definition is provided both in the NIA and in the Executive Summary, and it's basically the definition in ESEA in addition to any expectations that the state may have for the districts within its state.

A question asks: “In 2012, how many of the winners were consortia versus single districts?” We actually had three consortia winners out of the sixteen in the FY2012 competition. Just in case you were curious, we also had three charter school applicants successfully win Race to the Top grants last year.

We’ve had a repeat question coming in asking when we will be posting the names of districts who have indicated their intent to apply and how they can get a hold of that list. Again, as we mentioned, letters of intent are not due until August 23. Once we have those names, we will make them publicly available on our website in the following week or two after that. We will not be posting personally identifiable information, but we will be posting any LEAs who have indicated their intent to apply for Race to the Top grants. Again, these are optional; they are not binding, and you can still apply for a grant even if you do not submit a letter of intent to apply. But again, the federal government and the Department of Education will not be helping match up LEAs or LEAs with partners.

Another great question asks: “Does the intent to apply letter require multiple signatures from all of the LEAs that may join as part of the consortium?” The answer is no. We actually don’t even require signatures on the letters of intent. You can just list the LEAs and the contact information. Again, the purpose of the letters of intent is just to help us run a better competition and make sure that we have the right number of peer reviewers, are managing the work load, and can appropriately serve the proposals that are coming into us.

Another question asks for clarity on the 2000 student expectation: “What if we have less than 2000 students in the district and only three schools district-wide? Can we apply for a grant?” The answer is no. If you have fewer than 2000 students, it must be a consortium made up of at least ten LEAs serving at least 75% of their students. A single district coming in with fewer than 2000 students would not be eligible for this grant and would not be able to receive an award.

Another great question asks for additional clarity on the 40% free and reduced-price lunch expectation: “If the lead LEA has less than 40% free and reduced price lunch, but the consortium meets the threshold overall, can the LEA be the lead?” The answer is yes. Again, the 40% free and reduced-price lunch participating students eligibility requirement is for the consortium-wide proposal and application. Each individual school or individual LEA does not need to meet that expectation, but all participating students in the application in total must meet that expectation. So again, the lead LEA could have less than 40% free and reduced-price lunch as long as the consortium altogether has over 40% free and reduced-price lunch participating students.

We had another question come in asking for clarity around MOUs and signatures. Again, the expectation is that, on the application, it’s the lead LEA or eligible legal entity that must sign the application as well as the superintendent or CEO, the president of the local school board, and the president of the local teachers’ union or association. Again, all three signatures must be on the application from the lead LEA. If you’re applying as a consortium, you must include the MOUs or contracts or agreements between each member LEA and the consortium on those MOUs or agreements. Each LEA must have the applicable required signatures. Again, that’s the local superintendent or CEO, the president of the local school board, and the president of the local teachers’ union and association. On the application, it’s the

signature from the lead LEA, but again, each participating LEA must meet those eligibility requirements as evidenced by the signatures on the MOUs. Again the MOUs must be attached as part of an appendix to any application, and it is what the Department will look at as part of our screening for eligibility. If you do not meet those eligibility requirements, you will not be eligible for a grant.

Another question asks for additional clarity about the ten day expectation for giving mayors and states the opportunity to comment on a proposal. The question asks if that applies to districts from across multiple states: "If you have five districts from three different states, do you need to give each state agency and each mayor an opportunity to comment on the proposal?" The answer again is yes. If you look at F-8 and F-9, you can see that when you're applying as a consortium, you must provide as part of the application requirement the opportunity for the state and the local mayor or comparable official from each participating LEA to give comment on that. If you are from within the same state, you may ask for a comment just once from that state. You don't need to ask them multiple times if you're from a district from within the same state. Again, that's an application requirement.

Another question asks for again additional clarity on table A-2 around participating students and total students. The expectation in the proposal is to meet the eligibility requirements: 40% of the participating students must be from free and reduced-priced lunch families or low-income families. Not all students, but we do ask that in the tables here in A-2, which is located in the application, you provide the information about the participating students from low-income families and the total number of students in the schools when you're looking at the budget bands to see which budget band you're eligible for. That is based on the number of participating students, not the total number of students in the LEA or across the consortium. It's only the participating students in the application.

Another individual asked for additional clarity around Educational Service Agencies or Intermediate Agencies, asking whether they're eligible to apply or to be part of a consortium. Again, the answer is it actually depends on whether that entity is an ESA or a Regional Service Agency that meets the definition of an LEA in section 9101 (26) of the ESEA and meets the definition of LEA that's defined by your state. Again, states vary in what they do consider or don't consider an LEA, so if you have questions of whether you are an LEA, look at the definition in the NIA and consult your state for additional clarity.

So with that we're going to put you guys on mute one last time and answer and give one last chance for people coming in with some last-minute questions.

Great so we're going to answer these last few questions that have come in. One person asked: if they are a charter or organization that has multiple schools that have open enrollment across the state, may they apply as a consortium? At least we think that was the essence of the question that came in. The answer is that it depends. If you are a charter school and meet the definition of an LEA, then you would be eligible to apply. If you have multiple charter schools that each meet the definition of an LEA, you may apply as a consortium. And again, the consortium requirements and selection criteria and information that we have provided on the webinar will apply to you. But again, you should really investigate whether your charter school or your charter schools meet the definition of an LEA.

Another question asks: “do you have to procure the partner services prior to the application in order to include them in the application?” The answer is no. We actually have an FAQ on this in G-16, and we also actually encourage to really know your local procurement rules and regulations. You actually may be precluded from naming that partner before going through a request for proposal or request for information or appropriate procurement process. Make sure that you do a little research there before actually naming a partner in your application.

Another question asks: “Under what conditions will you not pass an application or proposal onto reviewers?” This is a great question. There are a couple of things, and one is the eligibility requirements, which we’ve reviewed a few times on today’s webinar. You can go back to the Executive Summary, NIA, or NFP to review those again. In addition, there are the application requirements that must be met. Finally, we do have a hard deadline of October 3rd 2013 at 4:30 PM Eastern time. Applications submitted after that will not be considered for review for a grant.

And then the last question we have received is asking about how many people have participated on today’s webinar. It’s been up and down throughout the course of the webinar, but we think it tipped out at over a hundred at one point. I can’t tell you how many of those were calling in multiple times from different lines, but that’s basically the participant count.

We hope you have found today’s webinar useful as you’re thinking about pulling together your application as a consortium of LEAs. Again, here are a few last minute reminders about where you can find resources on our website. And if you have questions that we were unable to get to on today’s webinar or questions that you didn’t think were really pertinent to the consortium webinar, please feel free to submit them to our email at 2013.racetothetop.district@ed.gov. Again, we will be holding webinars to respond to these questions together. The first of these webinars are going to be this Thursday, August 15th at 2:30 PM. Registration information will be available on our website. Thank you again for your participation, your attention and your great questions. We will look forward to receiving your proposals.