

Jennifer: Welcome to the Overview of the FY 2013 Race to the Top - District Competition Webinar. The webinar is hosted by the US Department of Education. Today's webinar is conducted using Windstream web conferencing, and everyone is encouraged to listen into the conference through the computer audio cast on your computer speakers. For log in help or any technical issues throughout this webinar, please call 800-500-7045; an operator is on call to assist participants as needed. We will now turn the call over to Ann Whalen who will be leading the call, which begins now.

Ann Whalen: Great, thank you so much, Jennifer. Welcome, everybody. I'm Ann Whalen, Director of the Implementation Support Unit at the US Department of Education (Department). I am joined by my colleagues Meredith Farace and Renee Faulkner. Thank you so much for participating in today's call on the FY 13 Race to the Top - District competition. During this presentation, we're going to review the information released last Tuesday, and spend some time walking through the content of the Notice Inviting Applications (NIA) and how all the different parts fit together. The webinar covers a lot of information so we'll split this presentation into two parts with a short ten-minute break in between. 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 answer as many as possible. 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 logistical questions. As mentioned in the RSVP message, we are unable to answer questions about a specific approach or individual proposal or application. If you have questions that are not addressed during the webinar or in the Frequently Asked Questions document available on our website, please submit them to our email address at 2013.racetothetop.district@ed.gov. We'll be hosting additional webinars to Answer Questions Submitted to the Email Box. 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 information for future webinars.

So let's go over today's agenda. In part one of the webinar we will provide an overview of the FY 13 Race to the Top - District competition. This overview will include a discussion of the background and purpose as well as the content of the FY13 Notice Inviting Applications including the eligibility requirements, absolute priorities, and selection criteria. The FY 13 competition has very few differences from the FY 12 competition (last year's competition) and we'll spend a little bit of time explaining these very small changes near the end of part one of this webinar. When we reach the end of part one, we will take time to answer questions before taking the ten-minute break. In part two of the webinar, we will continue our overview of the FY 13 NIA; discuss the competitive preference priority and additional requirements. Part two will also include a discussion on completing the application, submitting the application, and the peer review and scoring process. Finally, we'll also highlight additional resources and answer additional questions that we receive through the chat function. We will answer as many questions as possible as we move through part one and part two of the presentation.

So let's start with some context, background, and purpose of the FY 13 Race to the Top - District competition. In the past, the Department conducted the Race to the Top State Competitions, which provided incentives for states to adopt bold and comprehensive reforms in elementary and secondary education and laid the foundation for unprecedented innovation. The Race to the Top State

Competitions provided the opportunity to implement system-changing reforms designed to improve student achievement, narrow achievement gaps, and increase graduation and college enrollment rates. The purpose of the Race to the Top - District program is to build on the reforms and to support bold locally directed improvements in learning and teaching. The goal of the Race to the Top - District program is to directly improve student achievement and close achievement gaps.

In 2012, the Department awarded approximately \$380,000,000 to sixteen Race to the Top grantees representing fifty-five local educational agencies or districts. For the FY 13 competition, we will award approximately \$120,000,000 in grants. The Race to the Top - District program focuses on classrooms and the relationship between educators and students. The Notice invites applicants to demonstrate how they can personalize education for all students in their school. Similar to FY 12, the FY 13 Race to the Top - District competition will encourage and reward those districts or LEAs that have the leadership and vision to implement the strategies, structures, and systems needed to implement personalized student focused approaches to learning and teaching. They'll produce excellence and ensure equity for all students. On our website, we have posted a background document on the Race to the Top - District program. This document provides additional detail on the program.

To be clear, Race to the Top - District is designed to support districts with a personalized learning environment that will use collaborative database strategies and twenty-first century tools to deliver instruction and supports tailored to the needs and goals of each student, with the aim of enabling all students to graduate college- and career-ready. Implementation of a personalized learning environment is not achieved through a single solution or product, but rather requires a multifaceted approach that addresses the individual and collective needs of students, educators, and families and that dramatically transforms the learning environment in order to improve student outcomes. A successful applicant will provide teachers with the information, tools, and supports needed to enable them to meet student needs and substantially accelerate and deepen learning. These districts will have the policies, systems, infrastructure, capacity, and culture to enable teachers, teacher teams, and school leaders to continuously focus on improving individual student achievement and close an achievement gap. These districts will also make equal access a priority. They need to prepare each student to master the content and skills required for college and career readiness as well as provide each student the opportunity to pursue a vigorous course of study and accelerate and deepen student learning through attention to their individual needs. As important, they will create opportunities for students to identify and pursue areas of personal academic interest as well as insuring that each student masters critical areas identified in college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready high school graduation requirements.

As mentioned earlier, the Race to the Top - District program builds on the core educational assurance areas that were in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, or ARRA, and embedded in programs such as Investing in Innovation Fund, School Improvement Grants, Teacher Incentive Funds, State Wide Longitudinal Data Systems, and the Race to the Top State grants. The first assurance area focuses on adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and in the work place and to compete in the global economy. The second is data systems that measure student growth and success in order to inform and improve instruction. The third is recruiting, developing, rewarding, and

retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they're needed most. And finally, the fourth assurance area focuses on turning around our lowest-achieving schools.

To support districts in completing the FY 13 Race to the Top - District Application, the Department has released several documents to provide information about the program. The Executive Summary provides key information and definitions from the Notice of Final Priorities and Notice Inviting Applications. The application includes all 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. The document may be updated as needed over the next several months to include additional questions that we receive regarding the FY 13 Race to the Top - District competition. The Notice of Final Priorities (NFP) is a regulatory document that establishes priorities, requirements, definitions, and selection criteria for the program. The FY 13 Notice Inviting Applications explains how the priorities, requirements, definitions, and selection criteria established in the NFP apply to the FY 13 competition.

The definition for all defined terms can be found in the NIA as well as the Executive Summary. The Fast Facts document provides key information for the FY 13 Race to the Top - District program, and as I mentioned, the background document explains how the program's priorities were developed and will help applicants understand the Department's approach to the competition. All of these resources are available on the Department's Race to the Top - District website. While it is 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 23rd. The form is available on the Department of Education's Race to the Top - District website under the applicant information page. The intent to apply will enable us to develop a more efficient process for reviewing grant applications and help us better inform the number of applicants that intend to apply under this competition. Applications for the competition must be received by the Department no later than October 3, 2013. We will provide more information regarding application submission in part two of this webinar. Please note, as with the FY 12 Race to the Top - District competition, there are no in-person presentations as part of this competition. Meaning when you submit your application, you're not required or expected to come in and give a presentation about your application.

Finally, the Department will award Race to the Top - District grants by December 31, 2013. The Department will post a transcript of this webinar on our website within a few days and will offer several additional technical assistance webinars. The first will be aimed at applicants who would like to apply for a grant as a consortium. In some areas, consortium applicants have slightly different requirements that must be met in order to apply for grant funding. Throughout today's webinar, we will point to several examples, but we'll take more time and explicitly reference some of these expectations and requirements of districts interested in applying as a consortium during that webinar.

The Department will also offer a webinar with more information about completing the budget section of the application. Among other topics, the budget webinar will include a discussion of indirect costs, pre-award costs and completing the narrative component of the budget. For more information and registration details on these and other technical assistance webinars, please look to the Department's

website. In addition, we will conduct webinars responding to questions submitted through the Department's email box. Following this webinar, if you have specific questions about the program send them the Race to the Top - District mail box at 2013.racetothetop.district@ed.gov to be considered for inclusion in upcoming webinars to Answer Questions Submitted to the Email Box. The first such webinar will be held on August 15th. Information for these webinars and other future webinars is available on our website.

Finally, an additional resource that some may find helpful are successful FY 12 applications. Those applicants that submitted and won grants under last year's competition are available on the Department's website. Now we're going to dive into the NIA.

First we'll start by looking at the specific sections of the NIA and provide a quick orientation to each section. Let's start with the eligibility requirements. Applicants must meet the eligibility requirements in order to be eligible to apply and receive a grant under the Race to the Top - District competition. Absolute Priority one must be addressed throughout an applicant's proposal. While Absolute Priority one is not scored, applicants must meet the priority in order to receive funding. Applicants must identify which one of Absolute Priorities two through five apply to their application. Please note that applicants may not select more than one Absolute Priority in two through five. There's only one competitive preference priority, which includes an emphasis on results, resources, alignment and integrative services. The competitive preference priority is optional and worth up to ten additional points. The selection criteria are what applicants write to throughout an application to earn points. Program requirements are those that must be met throughout the grant period by all applicants who receive a grant. And finally, application requirements include information about what must be included in an application including requirements regarding the comment period and required signatures.

So we're now going to take a closer look at the eligibility requirements. As we walk through the language of the Notice, we will highlight key definitions and helpful FAQs. Definitions are included in the Executive Summary, and NIA document and FAQs are included in the Frequently Asked Questions document, which are all available on our website. Local educational agencies, or LEAs, are the only eligible applicants for this competition. An LEA is an entity as defined by section 9101 subsection 26 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, or ESEA, and also recognized under the 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. Individual LEA applicants must serve a minimum of 2000 participating students. A consortium of LEAs may serve fewer than 2000 participating students provided that those students are served by a consortium of at least ten LEAs and at least 75% of the students served by those LEAs are participating students. An LEA may only participate in one Race to the Top - District application. Successful applicants from the past Race to the Top - District competition (including previously successful individual applicants, lead LEAs, or members of previously successful consortia) are not eligible to apply for FY 13 funding.

At least 40% of participating students across all participating schools must be from low-income families based on eligibility for free and reduced priced lunch subsidies under the Richard B. Nelson National School Lunch Act or other poverty measures that LEAs use to make awards under section 1113A of the

ESEA. An application must be signed by the superintendent or CEO, local school board president, and other local teacher union or association presidents if applicable. As mentioned earlier, in order to apply, applicants must meet all these eligibility requirements.

For the purpose of this competition, “participating school” 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 spans or 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 an applicant’s plan. An applicant determines the percentage of students from low-income families by dividing the number of participating students as defined in the Notice from low-income families by the total number of participating students across all participating schools. In the case of a consortium, the applicant should calculate the percentage of participating students from low-income families in the same way. Again, LEAs may apply for all or a portion of their schools for specific grades or for specific subject area bands.

Again, on August 13th the Department will conduct a webinar that goes into detail on consortia applications, but we want to take a moment to provide an overview in discussion. A consortium is a group of LEAs that apply to the district competition together as one applicant. All members of the consortium must be eligible LEAs. Consortia may include LEAs from multiple states so long as each member of the consortium is an LEA. To establish a consortium, an applicant may 1) designate one member of the consortium to apply for the 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. Whether the consortium qualifies as a separate, eligible legal entity depends on the facts specific to that consortium. Since this is a competition, the Department will not advise individual perspective applicants if they qualify as separate, eligible legal entities. Please reference FAQs C-1, C-2, and C-4 for more details on who qualifies as an eligible legal entity.

To be eligible, an applicant, either an individual LEA or all members of a consortium, must demonstrate a commitment to the core educational assurance areas by assuring that 1) the 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. Please pay special attention to the definitions of the educator evaluation systems. The Notice includes additional requirements for the superintendent evaluation, which can be found in FAQ C-23. 2) The LEA is committed to preparing all students for college or career as demonstrated by 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) The LEA has a robust data system that has at a minimum an individual teacher identifier with 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) the LEA ensures that any disclosure of or access to personally identifiable information in students’ education records complies with Family Education Rights and Privacy Act or FERPA. We encourage you to review FAQs C-

30, C-31, and C-32 for additional guidance on data systems and data use. Please note the Department will review all eligibility and application assurances. An application that does not meet these requirements is not eligible for funding.

We'll now move to the absolute priorities. There's one absolute priority for all applicants, which is Absolute Priority one. This must be addressed through every application. Absolute Priority one should not be addressed separately in the application. It should be addressed throughout the application. It is assessed by peer reviewers after the proposal has been fully reviewed and evaluated to ensure that an application has met this priority. Again, to receive funding under this grant, an application has to have met Absolute Priority one. In selecting grantees, the Department may consider high-ranking applications meeting Absolute Priorities two through five separately when making grants.

Absolute Priority two through five are not judged by peer reviewers. Applicants indicate in the application assurances in part five or part six of the application which absolute priority applies. Applicants' responses to Absolute Priorities two through five will not affect an applicant's score or provide additional points. Instead, this information will allow the Secretary to select a diverse group of grantees among those high-quality applications that score well enough to fund. The Secretary may separately consider applicants located in rural or non-rural LEAs as well as applicants located in Race to the Top and non-Race to the Top grantee states.

Absolute Priority two: non-rural in Race to the Top states. To meet this priority an applicant must be in an LEA or consortium of LEAs in which more than 50% of the participating students are in non-rural LEAs in states that have received awards under the Race to the Top Phase one, Phase two, or Phase three competition.

Absolute Priority three: rural LEAs in Race to the Top states. To meet this priority an applicant must be an LEA or consortium of LEAs in which more than 50% of the participating students are in rural LEAs in states that have received awards under the Race to the Top Phase one, Phase two, or Phase three competition.

Absolute Priority four: non-rural LEAs in non-Race to the Top states. To meet this priority an applicant must be an LEA or a consortium of LEAs in which more than 50% of participating students are in non-rural LEAs in states that did not receive awards under the Race to the Top Phase one, Phase two, or Phase three competition.

Absolute Priority five: rural LEAs in non-Race to the Top states. To meet this priority an applicant must be an LEA or a consortium of LEAs in which more than 50% of the participating students are in rural LEAs in states that did not receive awards under the Race to the Top Phase one, Phase two, or Phase three competition.

As a reminder, rural local educational agency means an LEA that at the time of the application is eligible under the Small Rural School Achievement, SRSA, program or the Rural and Low-Income School, RLIS, program, which are authorized under section 6 part B of the ESEA. If you are unsure whether your LEA qualifies as rural LEA, please see the NIA definition section for more detail.

We are now going to review the selection criteria. To reiterate, the selection criteria and competitive preference priorities are what the peer reviewers will be reading in order to judge and score your proposal. In part two of today's discussion, we will view how to complete that section of the application. So let's start with selection criterion A: vision. Each selection criterion within A is worth ten points for a total of forty points. Sub-criterion (A)(1) asks applicants to describe the extent to which the applicant has set forth a comprehensive and cohesive and coherent reform vision that a) builds on its work in the four core educational assurance areas, b) articulates a clear and credible approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student support grounded in common and individual tasks that are based on student academic interests, and c) describes what the classroom experience will be like for students and teachers participating in the personalized learning environment.

Sub-criterion (A)(2) asks applicants to describe their approach to implementing its reform proposal and how the specific schools, grade bands, and subject areas selected at participating schools will support high-quality LEA-level and school-level implementation including a) a description of the process that the applicant used or will use to select schools to participate. The process must ensure that participating schools collectively meet the competition eligibility requirements; b) a list of schools that will participate in grant activities if available; and c) the total number of participating students, participating students from low-income families, participating students who are high-need students, and participating educators. If participating schools have not yet been selected, then the applicant may provide approximate numbers.

Sub-criterion (A)(3) asks the applicants to include a high-quality plan. Please note this is a defined term describing how the reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change beyond the participating schools and will help the applicant reach its outcome goals (for example, how the applicant's logic model or theory of change of how its plan for improved student learning outcomes for all students who would be served by the applicant). Again, Race to the Top - District should not be a niche or siloed program within your district. Instead, an applicant's proposal should address how its approach will improve student learning outcomes for all students. We'll discuss the components of a high-quality plan later in this webinar.

Finally, sub-criterion (A)(4) asks how the applicant's vision is likely to result in improved student learning and performance and increased equity as demonstrated by ambitious yet achievable annual goals that are equal to or exceed the state's ESEA targets for the district overall and by student subgroup in the following areas: a) performance of summative assessments including proficiency status and growth, b) decreasing achievement gaps, c) graduation rates, and d) college enrollment rates. Again, these targets should be at the district-level overall and by student subgroup. Sub-group is a defined term within the Notice. There is also an optional goal for post-secondary degree attainment. Again, these ambitious yet achievable goals should be set at the LEA level for each participating LEA. We will discuss the specific components of ambitious yet achievable goals later in this webinar.

Each LEA, including each LEA in a consortium, should set targets and goals for all students in the LEA. We have included a table in the application with space for applicants to include information about the

assessments used and what methodology will be used to determine status and growth. These performance measures apply to all students and schools in the LEAs, not just the participating students or participating schools. Please note that districts must use sub-groups under ESEA, which would include new sub-groups and approved ESEA flexibility requests. Section criterion B focuses on evidence of the applicant's prior record of success and conditions for reform. The Department wants to invest in districts that have not only a high-quality plan and an ambitious vision but also a track record of success in implementing reform and accelerating student achievement.

In sub-criterion (B)(1) applicants should describe and provide evidence of a clear record of success in the past four years in 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 demonstrate the applicant's ability to a) improve student learning outcomes and close achievement gaps including by raising student achievement, high school graduation rates and college enrollment rates, b) achieve ambitious and significant reform in consistently lowest achieving schools, and c) make student performance data available to students, educators, and parents in ways to inform and improve participation, instruction, and services. (B)(1) is worth fifteen points. Next, an applicant must demonstrate a high level of transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments including by making public, by school, actual school level expenditures for regular K-12 instruction, instructional support, pupil support, and school administration. We encourage you to review FAQs E-11 through E-13 for additional guidance. (B)(2) is worth five points.

Sub-criterion (B)(3) requires an applicant to demonstrate 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. This is an area where the reviewers may consider the state comments on the application as well as the optional applicant's response to the state's comments. We will say more on this application requirement in Part Two. (B)(3) is worth ten points.

Sub-criterion (B)(4) addresses meaningful stakeholder engagement throughout the development of the proposal and meaningful stakeholder support for the proposal. This includes providing a description of how students, families, teachers, and principals in participating schools are engaged in the development of the proposal and, as appropriate, how the proposal was revised based on their engagement and feedback. For LEAs with collective bargaining representation, the application should provide evidence of direct engagement and support for the proposal from teachers in participating schools. For LEAs without collective bargaining representation, at a minimum applicants should provide evidence that at least 70% of teachers from participating schools support the proposal. Where applicable all applicants should include letters of support from key stakeholders, which should be included in the appendix of the application. (B)(4) is worth fifteen points. In total selection criterion B or prior record of success and condition for reform is worth forty-five points.

Selection criterion C focuses on preparing students for college and careers. In selection criterion C, applicants will be scored based on the extent to which the applicant has a high-quality plan. Again, this is a defined term for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order

to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready. This plan must include an approach to implementing instructional strategies for all participating students that enable participating students to pursue a rigorous course of study aligned to college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements and accelerate his or her learning through support of his or her needs.

As part of the review, peer reviewers consider the quality of the high-quality plan and the extent to which it addresses (C)(1) (learning), and (C)(2) (teaching and leading). In the Notice, we have included additional sub criteria to help guide your proposal development. Where applications will be judged and scored at the selection criterion or (C)(1) or (C)(2) levels, reviewers will be looking at these additional criteria to judge whether the plan is high-quality. While we are not going to get to discuss these in detail today, we encourage all participants to review the Notice and Executive Summary as they prepare their plans.

We also want to highlight that in criterion (C)(1), reviewers will be judging whether the approach to learning engages and empowers all learners, in particular high-need students, in an age-appropriate manner such that with the support of parents and educators all students: 1) understand that what they are learning is key to their success and accomplishing their goals; 2) identify and pursue learning and development goals linked to college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements; 3) understand how to structure their learning to achieve their goals and measure progress toward their goals; 4) are able to be involved in deep learning experiences in areas of academic interests; 5) have access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning; and 6) master critical academic content and develop skills and traits such as goal setting, team work, perseverance, critical thinking, communications, creativity, and problem-solving.

Moreover, with support of parents and educators, each student has access to a personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development designed to enable the student to achieve his or her individual learning goals and ensure he or she can graduate on-time college- and career-ready, have a variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments, have access to high-quality content including digital learning content (as appropriate) aligned with college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements, receive ongoing and regular feedback, and have access to accommodations and high-quality strategies for high-need students to help ensure that they are on track towards meeting college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements.

Finally, LEAs must ensure that mechanisms are in place to provide training and support to students that will help ensure that students understand how to use the tools and resources provided to them in order to track and manage their own learning.

Again, criterion (C)(2) focuses on teaching and leading. An applicant's plan should include its approach that helps educators, meaning all education professionals and paraprofessionals in participating schools, to improve instruction and increase their capacity to support student progress towards meeting college-

and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements by enabling the full implementation of personalized learning and teaching for all students (in particular high-need students).

This includes A) educator engagement and training and professional teams or communities that support their individual or collective capacity to 1) support the effective implementation of a personalized learning environment, 2) adapt content instruction in response to students' academic needs, academic interests and optimal learning approaches, 3) frequently measure student progress towards meeting college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements, and use data to inform both the acceleration of student progress and the improvement of individual and collective practice of educators, and 4) improve teachers' and principals' practice and effectiveness by using feedback by the teacher and principal evaluation systems as well as by providing recommendations, supports, and interventions as needed for improvement.

And B) All participating educators have access to and know how to use tools, data, and resources to accelerate student progress towards meeting college- or career-ready graduation requirements. Those resources must include 1) actionable information that helps educators identify optimal learning approaches that respond to individual student's needs and interests, 2) high-quality learning resources including digital resources as appropriate that align with college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements, and the tools to create and share new resources, and 3) processes and tools to meet student needs with specific resources and approaches to provide continuously improving feedback about the effectiveness of the resources in meeting these students' needs. This high-quality plan must address how all participating educators have access to and know how to use these tools, data, and resources to accelerate student progress towards meeting college- and career-ready graduation requirements. Finally, the applicant has a high-quality plan for increasing the number of students who have received instruction from effective or highly-effective teachers and principals including in hard-to-staff schools, subjects, and specialty areas. Again, (C)(1) and (C)(2) are really the heart and soul of a personalized learning environment, so we encourage you to pay special attention to those sub criteria.

Selection criterion D also focuses on the extent to which an LEA's policies and infrastructure supports the implementation of a high-quality plan. This will be determined based on the extent to which the applicant meets the standards and sub criteria (D)(1) and (D)(2). Sub-criterion (D)(1) is about the practices, policies, and rules that facilitate personalized learning and includes: 1) the applicant's organization of the LEA central office or the consortium governance structure to provide support and services to all participating schools, 2) the applicant's school leadership teams, i.e. the teams that lead the implementation of improvement and other initiatives at the participating schools with sufficient flexibility and autonomy over factors such as school schedules and calendars, school personnel decisions and staffing models, rules and responsibilities, and school level budgets, 3) opportunities for students to progress and earn credits based on demonstrated mastery, not the amount of time spent on a topic, 4) opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways, and 5) providing learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully acceptable to all students including students with disabilities and English learners. D-1 is worth fifteen points.

Sub-criterion (D)(2) focuses on the LEA and school infrastructure that support personalized learning. Applicants should describe the extent to which they are: a) ensuring that all participating students, parents, educators, and stakeholders, regardless of income, have access to necessary content, tools, and other learning resources both in and outside of school to support the implementation of the applicant's proposal, b) ensuring that students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders have appropriate levels of technical support, c) are using information technology system that allow parents and students to export their information in an open-data format and to use the data in other electronic learning systems, for example, electronic tutorials, tools that make recommendations for additional learning supports, or software that securely stores personal records, and d) ensuring that LEAs and schools are using interoperable data systems. Criterion (D)(2) is worth ten points.

I will now turn it over to my colleague Meredith Farace to go through the rest of the selection criteria.

Meredith Farace: Good afternoon, I'm going to start with selection criterion E. Selection criterion E focuses on continuous improvement. Because the applicant's plan represents the best thinking at a point in time and may require adjustments and revisions during implementation, it's vital that, from even the proposal stage, there's a clear and high-quality approach to continuously improve. This includes a high-quality plan for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process that provides timely and regular feedback on progress towards project goals, as well as opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements during and after the term of the grant. The strategy must address how the applicant will monitor, measure, and publicly share information on the quality of its investments funded by Race to the Top - District, such as investments in professional development, technology, and staff. The high-quality plan should also include ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. In order to inform whether the applicant is on track during implementation, plans must also include annual performance measures or leading indicators of progress in order to ensure that these measures best reflect the context and needs of the individual applicant's proposal. There are two types of performance measures: 1) performance measures that apply to all applicants, and 2) performance measures that apply to specific grade bands. Within both of these categories, there are common required performance measures as well as an opportunity for applicants to propose measures tailored to their plan. For the applicant's proposed measures, reviewers will judge: a) the applicant's rationale for selecting that measure, b) how the measure will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information tailored to its proposed plan, and c) how the applicant will review and improve the measure over time if the measure is insufficient to gauge implementation progress. Applicants should have approximately twelve to fourteen performance measures including the required and applicant-proposed measures. Again these performance measures only apply to students and schools participating in the implementation of the plan.

The Department recognizes that applicants will have different leading indicators of success and will therefore need performance measures tailored to their own proposal. For example, if an applicant is proposing to serve students from pre-kindergarten through grade three through its project, the applicant might propose as a performance measure the number and percentage of children who demonstrate at the beginning of kindergarten mastery of age-appropriate standards across multiple domains of early learning as determined using developmentally appropriate early learning measures.

The final element under continuous improvement, or (E)(4), is the applicant's plan to evaluate the effectiveness and productivity of the funded activities.

While we will discuss the budget narrative and tables in a future webinar, we want to highlight a few key points in the selection criteria. There are very few restrictions on use of funds. As part of sub-criterion (F)(1), the applicant's budget including the budget narrative and tables: a) identifies all funds that will support the project, for example, Race to the Top - District grants, external foundation support, district, state, or other federal funds, b) is reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the applicant's proposal, and c) clearly provides a thoughtful rationale for investments and priorities, including description of all the funds that the applicant will use to support the implementation of the proposal. This description should include total revenue from these sources, and identification of the funds that will be used for one-time investments versus those that will be used for ongoing operational costs that will be incurred during and after the grant period as described in the proposed budget and budget narrative with a focus on strategies that will ensure the long-term sustainability of the personalized learning environment. We would like to point out that the budget does ask what funds will be used for one-time investments versus those that will be used for ongoing operational costs.

Finally, sub-criterion (F)(2) asks for a sustainability plan for the project's goals after the term of the grant. Please note that we have revised the language for sub-criterion (F)(2) so that FY 2013 applicants are asked to plan how they will evaluate past investments and use data to inform future investments. We have also added language to this criterion noting that this plan may address how the applicant will evaluate improvements in productivity and outcomes to inform a post grant budget and may include an estimated budget.

Now that we have reviewed the content of the selection criteria, we want to remind participants of additional resources available. While the vast majority of the priorities, criteria, and the rest of the competition are the same as the 2012 competition, we did make a few changes. We are no longer providing the option of applying for an optional budget supplement. We have also reduced the minimum and maximum grant amount for which an applicant may apply. We believe these changes enable the Department to maximize the number of grantees that would receive funding under a competition while still awarding grants of sufficient size to support bold improvements in learning and teaching. Finally, we have removed selection criterion B-5: Analysis of Needs and Gaps. Based on our experience from the FY 2012 competition as well as feedback that we received prior to this year's competition, we believe that this criterion can be addressed in a much more integrated way in other parts of the application.

As mentioned in the FY 2013 NFP and NIA, other changes from the fiscal year 2012 competition are minor language clarifications. Please refer to the NFP for further information on those changes.

As mentioned in the beginning of today's call, the Department will offer several more technical assistance webinars, in addition to this webinar. The next webinar will be aimed at applicants applying for a grant as a consortium. Another webinar will provide more information about completing a budget

for the application. Among other topics, this webinar will include a discussion of indirect costs, pre-award costs, and completing the narrative component. The Department will conduct an application and submission technical assistance webinar. This will include a detailed look at selected aspects of the program requirements. Any other technical assistance opportunities offered by the Department will also be posted on the Race to the Top - District website on the resources page. More information about the webinars to Answer Questions Submitted to the Email Box will also be posted on the Race to the Top - District website on the resources page. As mentioned throughout, the Department has developed a Frequently Asked Questions document that is currently available on the Race to the Top - District website. This document will be updated as necessary over the next several months, so please check the website often.

Please feel free to send in technical, clarifying, or logistics questions through the chat function. As mentioned previously we are unable to answer questions about a specific approach or individual proposals. We will not answer individual questions through the chat function. However, the questions we will answer will be provided over the audio portion of the conference to all participants. We will be muting the line periodically while we review the questions submitted through the chat function. We will return momentarily, and Ann Whalen will be answering questions when we return.

Ann Whalen: Great, so we've got a number of great questions that have come in through the chat function. Thank you guys and please keep them coming. We'll do our best to try to go through them, and then we'll make sure we take a break soon. The first question we received is: "Can a consortium be comprised of both rural and non-rural local education agency support?" The answer is yes. If you look at FAQ D-3 or on slide thirty-two you can see that participating LEAs may be from multiple states, and you can decide how you qualify or select which absolute priority applies to you depending on the percent of participating students. So if 60% of your participating students are from rural LEAs in Race to the Top states, you would apply to Absolute Priority three; if 80% of your participating students were from non-rural LEAs and non-Race to the Top states you would apply to Absolute Priority four. Again, the Race to the Top states are located at the bottom of the slides, and it includes Phase one, Phase two, and Phase three states, and please remember to only check one of Absolute Priority two through five. Check the one that applies to your application.

The second question we received is: "Must I address Absolute Priority one in my application?" Again, applicants must incorporate Absolute Priority one throughout their entire application. You do not apply to it a specific section of the application, but at the end of reviewing what was submitted, each peer review will make a determination whether they believe the application has met or not met Absolute Priority one. In order to be eligible to receive a grant, an application has to have been determined to have met that absolute priority.

The next question we received is: "What is my role if any as a third party organization or district partner? Can I play a supporting role for the application of LEAs or a district proposal?" We have an FAQ on that: FAQ C-4. While a third party organization or a non-LEA is not an eligible applicant, they may elect to partner with an eligible LEA or a consortium of LEAs to be part of their proposal. This will be

especially clear when we get to the competitive preference priority in part two. So again, third party partners are encouraged to partner with applicants; they're just not eligible applicants.

We had a few questions looking for additional clarity about the 40% free and reduced lunch requirement. We were asked: "Is that 40% calculated at each school level or is it the average across all schools? If you look at FAQ C-1 and C-9, you can see a little bit more about the 40% eligibility requirement. Again it's 40% of all participating students across all participating schools, so again you can take the average of the participating students across all participating schools. FAQ C-9 actually runs through an example of how an applicant could potentially calculate what their percentage is and C-1 helps give a little additional information on the requirement.

We received another question about local teacher unions and association participation: "What makes it applicable for a local teacher union association president to sign on the application, in addition to the district superintendent?" So just as a reminder it takes three signatures to be eligible for this application: the signature of the superintendent or CEO, the signature of the president of the local school board, and the signature of the local teachers' union association president. We have two FAQs on this: C-33 and C-34, and I'd be happy to read those out loud for you guys. C-33 references an eligibility requirement 1-E: "What does it mean for a signature of a local teachers union of association president to be applicable?" If an LEA employs teachers who are represented by a teachers' union or association in a bargaining or non-bargaining state, then the signature of the local teachers' union or association president is applicable. If the signatures are not applicable, then the absence of these signatures will not affect the application. But you'll see in part two that we are asking for applicants to describe their rationale for why a signature may not be applicable. The application directs LEAs to provide an explanation as to why the signature of the teacher union is not applicable in the table provided in their program specific assurance section of the application. For an individual LEA, applicants can find the table on page seventeen in section five of the application, and for consortium applicants the table can be found on page twenty-three in section six.

FAQ C-34 asks: "What does it mean to be represented by a teachers' union for LEAs located in states where collective bargaining is prohibited or where laws about collective bargaining are ambiguous or silent?" In states where collective bargaining is prohibited the teachers union signature is not applicable under eligibility requirement 1-E or application requirement three and the LEA could receive points under selection criterion (B)(4) and (A)(2) by submitting, at a minimum, evidence that at least 70% of teachers from participating schools support the proposal. In states where the laws about collective bargaining are ambiguous or silent, decisions about representation are made at the local level. In such cases, it's typically up to the local school board to recognize a representative. And there's a little more information there in the FAQ document and we encourage you to go and look at it.

Another question asked: "Do consortia applicants need to get signatures from the superintendent, school board, and union for each and every LEA or just the lead LEA?" The requirement is that each participating LEA has all three signatures so for each participating LEA in a consortium the expectation to be eligible for this grant is that you have the signature for the superintendent or CEO, the school board

president, and the local teacher's union president as well. Again, we are hosting a separate webinar on August 13th to provide some more detail on applying as a consortium.

We received another question asking: "If I'm applying as consortium, do I have to set goals for each LEA or do I set it as the applicant as a whole?" So if you go to slide thirty-nine you'll look at selection criterion (A)(4), we provide information about the expectation that each participating LEA sets goals and targets for itself across the grade levels and subgroups that are under ESEA. And again we've included in the application a helpful chart to assist you in filling that out.

We received another question: "What is a time frame for the high-quality plan? That is, do we need results within one year two years three years or what?" We direct you to FAQ B-4 for additional information on high-quality plans. No, I take that back that's about our budget ranges we'll get back to you on that one; I apologize. We'll go on to the next question as we try to figure that one out.

Next, "Can technology infrastructure be funded i.e. building wireless infrastructure using Race to the Top - District grant funds?" The answer is yes. Applicants may propose to use funds for modernization, renovation, or repair projects to the extent that they are consistent with the proposed plan. There's additional information on this in FAQ G-15.

We received another question about space for districts that do not have a preschool due to lack of space: "Can space be purchased with monies from Race to the Top - District plans?" So first let me just take a step back and remind people that Race to the Top - District is about personalized learning and supporting that within a school district and is not a formula fund or a niche program or a way to get additional resources into the district budget. You will be reviewed against the selection criteria. So when thinking about purchasing space the answer is no. Race to the Top - District funds cannot be used to purchase additional buildings or space to support a program.

We've been asked to clarify eligibility that relates to a separate, eligible legal entity. Again, just to remind people, this language comes from eligible applicants who are applying as a consortium so you can apply and choose different ways as eligible applicants to form a consortium. You can establish yourself as a consortium by either: 1) designating one member of the consortium to apply for the grant on behalf of the consortium or lead LEA, or 2) a consortium may establish itself as a separate, eligible legal entity and apply for the grant on its own behalf. There's some additional information about separate, eligible legal entity in FAQ C-4. Again, as we mentioned earlier, we have found that this is often very case- and context-specific, and I'm afraid that because this is a competition we cannot weigh in on individual situations. We just encourage you to reference that FAQ and really make sure that as that eligible legal entity you're really only made up of other eligible LEAs. You can't have an additional for-profit or non-profit entity be a part of that eligible separate legal entity. Really scrutinize whether you believe you fall within that bucket or not. And with that we're going put you guys on mute for one second as we look at some of the additional questions that have come in.

Great, so we have a few more questions that have come in and we're going to get going. I'm going to go back and answer the one that I flubbed a couple of moments ago, which is what is a time frame for a high-quality plan? That is: "Do we need results within year one, year two, year three?" We're going to

go to slide seventy-nine. We're going to jump way ahead to part two just to be able to answer this question. Where you see the definition of a high-quality plan, and it means a plan that includes key goals, activities to be undertaken, and the rationale of the activities, and the timeline, deliverables, and the parties responsible for implementing these activities. These are four-year grants, so high-quality plans should include these goals, activities, and rationale and timeline for across all four years; we do have expectations around performance measures and targets that are annual. It is up to an individual applicant to set what ambitious yet achievable targets are within each of these four years of the plan, and those should be at least annually set targets that you should be managing to. And those are separate from the outcome goals that we referenced earlier in (A)(4), which is about performance on your state assessments and reading, language arts, and mathematics.

Another couple questions: "Is there a 'do not supplement' rule for this competition?" The answer is no. We have FAQ G-5 that provides some additional information on this question.

Another question asked: "Are applicants required to engage in external evaluators?" The answer is no. There is not a requirement that you engage an external evaluator; you may elect to work with an external evaluator as part of your response in selection criterion E around evaluating the impact of this program. I would also like to flag that we do have a program requirement that if you receive a grant that you may be asked, and you would be required, to participate in a cross-grantee evaluation, and that's FAQ H-2.

Another question: "Is a 100% FTE for a project director required under the grant?" And the answer is no. Each individual application should put together a budget that best meets their needs and supports the implementation of their proposal. Again, we had very few restrictions on the use of these funds. We really want to make sure about investing in the best proposals possible and getting to really high-quality personalized learning environments that support accelerated student achievement and growth, college-going as well as closing achievement gaps.

We have another one about: "Please clarify public charter school eligibility. Are CMOs eligible to apply?" So let me take the first part of this question around just charter school eligibility. It depends on the state and the district in which the charter school is located. If the public charter school is recognized as an LEA and meets the definition of LEA under ESEA and state law, then that individual charter school is eligible to apply for the grant. If the public charter school is not recognized as an LEA and instead is part of a larger LEA district within that state, it cannot apply on its own, but it may participate in the district's application if it so chooses. The second part of this question asks about: "Are CMOs eligible to apply?" Again it's really going to depend on the context; if the CMO meets the definition of an LEA under ESEA and under state law, then it's possible that it's eligible to apply, or it would be eligible to apply. We again encourage you to look at FAQ C-4 for some additional guidance on that.

So we have a few more questions that actually have to do with some program and application requirements that I think we're going to hold off until the second part of the webinar because we will definitely be answering those in a little bit. So with that I think we're going to go to our ten-minute

break. We will be coming back at 3:50 Eastern time. We're going to put you guys on mute and we'll give you a one-minute notice when we'll be on our way back.

Ann Whalen: Hi everybody, welcome back. Before we dive into part two of the agenda, we just wanted to review a few things; we saw a bunch of similar questions about the last part one section. So we just wanted to make sure everybody was on the same page, and we are able to address the questions for part one before we moved on to part two. We have received a number of questions asking for additional clarity about how to calculate the percentage of students that qualify for free and reduced price lunch. We are going to encourage everybody to look at FAQ C-9, which asks: "How does an applicant calculate the percent of participating students from low-income families in order to determine whether it meets the eligibility requirement 1-C?" An applicant determines the percentage for 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. Therefore, it's possible for an individual participating school to have less than 40% participating students who are low-income as long as overall, across all participating schools, 40% of the participating students are low-income. And again there is table (A)(2), which is an example of how an LEA may be able to calculate its own participation toward meeting the 40% requirement. So we encourage everybody to go to those FAQ documents and look up FAQ C-9 and kind of walk through the example of the chart that may be able to help address some of those questions.

A couple more questions before we jump into part two: "Can an LEA adopt a school from another LEA under their application as a participating school?" The answer is no. LEAs may only apply with the participating schools from within their own district. Again, LEAs may join together and form a consortium of LEAs, but an LEA may not choose some schools from their LEA and some schools from a different district that is choosing not to participate. All schools have to be associated with an eligible LEA that is signed on to the application.

Another great question about whether the Q&A will be posted on our website. The FAQ documents are already posted on our website and a transcript from this webinar will also be posted on the website, so if you missed any of our wonderful, eloquent answers to these earlier questions, you'll get to flub through them a second time as you did with me the first time in an actual written form. We will also be posting the webinar itself because we find that it's pretty useful.

Another great question is: "How likely is it for a district to receive Race to the Top - District funds if the district is in a non-Race to the Top state?" Again, we encourage you to look at FAQ D-5. Your response to Absolute Priorities two through five are not worth points. They're just there to ensure that we get a diverse set of districts across the nation. If you look at the grantees from the FY 12 competition, it actually was half and half. Half came from districts in Race to the Top states, and the other half came from districts in non-Race to the Top states. So we actually had a really good balance in that one.

Another great question is from a district that applied last year and asked if they can build upon their proposal from last year. And the answer is, of course. We encourage you to look at what you submitted last year. Look at those peer reviewer comments and feedback and adjust your proposal. Make sure that

your adjusting is appropriate to the small changes from the FY 12 application to the FY 13 application as you are looking to submit it.

And a participant asked: "Will we be looking at last year's proposals as part of our review process this year?" And the answer to that is no. Whatever you submit for the FY 13 application will stand on its own.

Another great question is: "What signatures are required for multiple districts as a part of a consortium?" Again, we do have a separate webinar planned for August 13th for parties interested in applying as a consortium. But just as a quick reminder, each LEA that is joining a consortium must have the signature of their superintendent or CEO, their school board president, and their union president if applicable. Again, each participating LEA must have all three of those signatures, and again, in our application we've added a chart to help ensure that you have all of those signatures.

So with that please keep the questions coming. We will have another opportunity a little later in the webinar to go through some more. But we're going to move on to part two. The second part of today's presentation will be spent reviewing the competitive priority and additional requirements. We will also review information on completing the application, submitting the application, and the peer review and scoring process. As a reminder, participants are encouraged to send in logistical, technical, or clarifying questions during the webinar through the chat function.

So we're going to start with the competitive preference priority. The competitive preference priority provides the opportunity for additional points for an applicant that addresses this priority. The FY 13 Race to the Top - District competition includes one competitive preference priority: Results, Resources, Resource Alignment, and Integrated Services, which focuses on the applicant's integration of public or private resources in a partnership designed to augment the schools' resources by providing additional student and family supports to schools that address the social, emotional, or behavioral needs of participating students, giving highest priority to students in participating schools. Again, this is optional, and an applicant may receive up to ten additional points if the applicant successfully addresses this priority. More specifically, in order to address this priority, an applicant must address six elements: 1) provide a description of the coherent and sustainable partnership to support the plan described in Absolute Priority one that is formed with public or private organizations such as public health, before school, after school, or social service providers, integrated student service providers business, civic groups and other community based organizations, early learning programs, and post-secondary institutions.

2) Identify no more than ten population-level desired results for students in the LEA or consortium of LEAs that align with and support the applicant's broader Race to the Top - District proposal. These results must include both a) education results or other educational outcomes, for example, children enter kindergarten prepared to succeed in school, children exit third-grade reading at grade level, and students graduate high school college- and career-ready, and b) family and community supports. Again this is a defined term in the Notice.

3) Describe how the partnership would a) track the selected indicators that measure each result at the aggregate level for all children within the LEA of consortium at the student level for the participating students, b) use the data to target its resources in order to improve results for participating students with special emphasis on students facing significant challenges such as students with disabilities, English language learners, and students affected by poverty, including high mobile students, family instability, and other child welfare issues, c) develop a strategy to scale the model beyond the participating students to at least other high-need students and communities in the LEA or consortium over time, and d) improve results over time.

4) Describe how the partnership would, within participating schools, integrate education and other services such as services that address social-emotional and behavioral needs, and acculturation for immigrants and refugees for participating students.

5) Describe how the partnership and LEA or consortium would build the capacity of staff at participating schools by providing them with tools and supports to a) assess the needs and assets of participating students that are aligned with the partnership goals for improving the education and family and community support identified by the partnership, b) identify and inventory the needs and assets of the school and community that are aligned with the goal of improving the education and family and community support identified by the applicant, c) create a decision-making process and infrastructure to select, implement, and evaluate supports that address the individual needs of participating students and support improved results, d) engage parents and families of participating students in both the decision-making about solutions to improve results over time and in addressing students and families in school needs, and e) routinely assess the applicant's progress in implementing this plan to maximize impact and resolve challenges and problems.

And finally, 6) identify annual ambitious yet achievable performance measures for the proposed population-level and describe desired results for students.

Next, we're going to review the application and program requirements. As part of this application, each LEA must provide its state and mayor or city or town administrator at least ten business days to comment on the LEA's application. With this application package, each LEA included in an application must submit the State's and mayor or 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 in a consortium that are located in the same state can have the lead LEA or eligible legal entity submit the application to the state on behalf of the consortium. The Department has not required a specific agency or office within the state that must comment on the Race to the Top - District application. LEAs should clarify with their states to determine the appropriate agency or office within the states such as a governor's office, state educational agency, or attorney general's office that will comment on the Race to the Top - District application. At a minimum, these comments will be part of the evidence considered in sub-criterion (B)(3) and (B)(4).

Please note that the application requirements include additional information requirements for consortia applicants. We go through these in more detail on the webinar on August 13th. Consortia applicants

must also include copies of all Memoranda of Understanding 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, local school board president, and local union association president where applicable for that LEA. If an LEA has more than one local teachers' union/association, the LEA should submit the signature for either a representative of the exclusive agent or a signature from the chair of the union round table. Again, each LEA in the consortium including the lead LEA must execute an MOU. All MOUs must be included in the application.

Let's move on to program requirements. As mentioned earlier, there are several program requirements once grants are awarded. Today we're going to 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 individual applicants that will serve between two thousand to five thousand students, the Race to the Top - District budget requests must fall between four and ten million dollars. For individual applicants that will serve between five thousand and one and ten thousand students in their proposal, the Race to the Top - District budget requests must fall between ten to twenty million dollars. For applicants that will serve between ten thousand and one and twenty thousand students in their proposal, their Race to the Top - District budget requests must fall between twenty to twenty-five million dollars. For applicants that will serve more than twenty-thousand and one students in their proposal, the district project 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 its applicable range of awards.

A consortium applicant, however, may serve fewer than two thousand participating students provided that it's in a consortium of at least ten or more LEAs and at least 75% of the students served by each LEA are participating students. In this instance, the Race to the Top - District budget requests fall between four to ten million dollars. An applicant may plan its proposal to increase the number of participating students over the course of the grant, i.e. by adding participating schools or students; however, an applicant must propose in its application to serve at least two thousand participating students at the time of award. However, an applicant must base its requested award amount on the number of participating students it proposes to serve at the time of the application or within the first one hundred days of the grant award. Budget requests must be within the award range of the number of participating students at the time of application. At the time of the application, an applicant must provide an actual or approximate count of the number of participating students who would receive services for each year under the project. This actual or approximate count of the participating students must not be cumulative. Please see FAQ C-6, C-7, and H-1.

I will now turn it over to Renee, who will provide information on completing the application, submitting the application, and the peer review and scoring process.

Renee Faulkner: Hi everyone. I'm Renee Faulkner and like Ann said I'll be walking through the pieces of the application and how the application will be reviewed and scored. When applicants are writing their application, there are three parts of the application to keep in mind. First, for every sub-criterion, each applicant will write a narrative response. This may include text, tables, charts, or graphs. Any medium is

permissible as long as applicants ensure clarity of their response. Some criteria also ask for goals, performance measures, annual targets, and baseline targets. We will provide more information about these criteria in a few moments.

In addition to the narrative goals and performance measures, some selection criteria require applicants to provide specific evidence. This is indicated in the criteria where they are required. In addition, an applicant may provide additional evidence for any criterion it chooses. An applicant may provide the evidence in the narrative text below each selection criterion or provide an attachment in the appendix. Where an applicant chooses to include evidence in the appendix, the applicant must describe the evidence in the narrative and noted location in the appendix. The appendix must include a complete table of contents. Each attachment in the appendix should include page numbers and be described in the narrative text of the relevant selection criterion with a rationale for how its inclusion supports the narrative and a notation of its location in the appendix. As a review, there are six selection criteria and a competitive preference priority. The application provides space for an applicant to address the selection criteria including performance measures and supporting evidence. In responding to the selection criteria, an applicant must coherently and comprehensively address how it will build on the four core educational assurance areas to create personalized learning environments. Applicants need not address every individual selection criterion; however, an applicant will not earn points for the selection criteria that it does not address.

Now, we will review how to complete the application. We'll start with an example from the application. This is an excerpt from selection criterion A: vision. Specifically this is for (A)(2), which is an applicant's approach to implementation. It's found on pages twenty-nine through thirty-one of the application. All selection criteria and the competitive preference priority have a similar format. At the top of each box noted with the arrow, you'll see the criterion or priority text, which is the same as in the NIA. Some sections will include just one criterion while others will include a few criteria to respond to together. We'll show an example of that later.

Throughout the application, we use "as defined" to highlight terms that are defined in the NIA; please pay special attention to these terms. In italics, you'll find directions to help you as you write your response; these include general directions and more detailed directions for evidence, plans, and goals, performance measures, and annual targets. We'll talk further about these on the next few slides.

The general directions are prompting applicants to describe their narrative of their prior record of success and conditions for reform or their future plans as appropriate in response to each criterion the applicant chooses to address. The response should be included in the text box below each criterion or group of criteria. It may include text, tables, charts, or graphs. Again, use whatever medium you need in order to ensure clarity and remember that length does not equal quality.

These instructions are related to evidence. Some selection criteria require applicants to provide specific evidence; this is indicated in the criterion. The instructions state that the narrative or attachments should also include any supporting evidence the applicant believes will be helpful to peer reviewers, including at a minimum the evidence listed in the criterion if any and how each piece of evidence

demonstrates the applicant's success in meeting this criterion. An applicant must provide the evidence in the narrative text below each selection criterion or provide an attachment in the appendix. Where an applicant chooses to include evidence in the appendix, it must describe the evidence in the narrative and noted location in the appendix. In addition to the required evidence an applicant may provide additional evidence for any criterion it chooses. Evidence that applicants submit may be relevant both to judging whether the applicant has a high-quality plan or whether its goals, performance measures, and annual targets are ambitious yet achievable as well as for judging the prior record of success and conditions for reform.

Reviewers will allot points based on the extent to which the applicant meets the criteria and the competitive preference priority including existing track record and conditions for reform as well as future plans. For plans, viewers will allot points based on the quality of the applicant's plan and where specified in the text of the criterion or competitive preference priority whether the applicant has set ambitious yet achievable goals, performance measures, and annual targets. These directions provide a reminder about the components of a high-quality plan since reviewers will allot points based on the extent to which the applicants plan is of high-quality. We'll highlight these components further in this next slide.

The slide shown depicts components of a high-quality plan. High-quality plan means a plan that includes key goals, activities to be undertaken, and the rationale for the activities, the timeline, the deliverables, and the parties responsible for implementing the activities. Please note that high-quality plan is a defined term and can be found in the definition section of the application on page eighty-four.

These directions provide a reminder about setting ambitious yet achievable goals, performance measures, and annual targets. Where goals or performance measures are required, we have put tables right into the application that come just after the narrative. Peer reviewers will reward applicants for developing goals that, in light of the applicant's proposal, are ambitious yet achievable. In determining whether an applicant has ambitious yet achievable annual goals, peer reviewers will examine the applicant's goals in the context of the applicant's proposal and the evidence submitted in support of the proposal. There is no specific goal that peer reviewers will be looking for here. Nor will higher goals necessarily be rewarded above lower ones. Reviewers will consider how applicants connected the plans in their narrative with their targets. They'll be asking themselves: are applicants being ambitious in what they are attempting to do? Are they also being realistic in proposing a plan that they can achieve? And have they balanced ambition and achievement thoughtfully and well? To help reinforce the importance of these questions we want to remind you that funding events could be triggered or delayed or even withheld based on the applicant's actual performance against the annual targets you set in your application, so consider them carefully. Again, this is where you start typing. Enter your response directly in the application, which is a standard Microsoft Word document that you can download from the Department's website.

In addition to the narrative, the application also includes tables for three sub criteria: (A)(2), (A)(4), and (E)(3) and also for the competitive preference priority. To complete the tables, applicants fill in the cells that are blank or where text is in brackets and or italicized. Applicants may add or delete rows as needed

or provide additional information in other formats. For example, in this table applicants enter the names of the participating schools and the requested information for each school. Some columns include raw data and others include calculations based on the data. For consortium applicants, the name of the LEAs should be included as well. This table provides an example of a performance measure table. Some performance measures include required information for all applicants while other performance measures vary based on what each applicant proposes. For applicant proposed measures, please adapt the charts as needed to ensure appropriate data is submitted.

We also want to note the difference between the goals in sub-criterion (A)(4) and the performance measures in sub-criterion (E)(3). The goals in (A)(4) are applied to all students and schools in the LEA and measure student outcomes. The performance measures in (E)(3) apply only to participating students and participating schools and measure ongoing progress during implementation by providing leading indicators of success. As we talked about briefly before, some sections will include just one criterion while others will include a few criteria to respond to together. Where multiple criteria are grouped together, applicants should address them together in one text box. For example, the application provided one space for section A: vision for applicants to include their responses to selection criteria (A)(1), (A)(2), (A)(3), and (A)(4). In other cases, individual text boxes are provided for each criterion in a section. For example, each selection criterion in B will have a separate text box for each of the five criteria. It's important to note that peer reviewers will assign points for each criterion regardless of whether the criterion is addressed individually in one text box or together with other criteria.

There are four separate assurance sections. The two for everyone are part four and part seven. One is just for LEA applicants (part five) and one just for consortium applicants (part six). The example provided is from part five, page seventeen of the application. The assurance section also requires the signature of the certifying official for all responses to section five in the application. That official could be a superintendent, CEO of the lead LEA in a consortium, or the legal representative of the eligible legal entity. There is a similar requirement for consortia applicants. Please refer to part six of the application: program specific assurances for consortia applicants. If an applicant indicates that the signature of the president of the local teacher union or association is not applicable, the applicant must provide a rationale on the table in the program-specific application assurances section of the application. This example is from page twenty-three of the application and is for a consortium applicant.

We will now walk through peer review and scoring. Race to the Top - District applications will be reviewed and scored by external expert peer reviewers, not US Department of Education employees. In response to an open call for applicants, the Department has received an overwhelming number of high-quality peer reviewer applications and expects to designate peer reviewer finalists and alternates in September. As part of the screening process, peer reviewer applicants are thoroughly screened by the Department for expertise in the core educational assurance areas, district-level implementation, continuous improvement, personalized learning, integrated service support, district- and school-level operations, application review and evaluation, and serving high-need students. To ensure a fair review process, all peer reviewer applicants will be screened for conflicts of interest. Additionally, reviewers' names will be redacted from all scores, comments, and specific reviews given. Peer reviewers will be expected to read, score, and provide comments on the Race to the Top - District applications during an

off-site individual review in October and November. The allotment of points will be based on how well applications meet the criteria and the competitive preference priority.

Reviewers will be assessing multiple aspects of applicants' proposals. It is possible that an applicant that fails to earn points or earns a low number of points on one criterion might still win a grant by earning high points on other criteria. The highest scoring applications will advance to a panel review later in November where the reviewers will meet in person to discuss and finalize their individual scores. The Department has specified a maximum point value at the criterion level, and for each maximum point value the Department has developed a range of point values for low, medium, and high-quality responses. Peer reviewers will allot points based on the quality and extent to which the applicant responds to the criteria. For example, for a criterion with a maximum point value of twenty points with a low-quality response, peer reviewers will assign a score of zero, one, two, three, or four points. In addition to assigning points to an applicant's response to a criterion, the applicant will also provide a comment justifying the score. The peer reviewers' comment will specify the strengths and weaknesses of the applicant's response to the criteria.

Reviewers will be required to make many thoughtful judgments about the quality of the applications. As stated earlier in this presentation, applicants will be required to set ambitious yet achievable goals, performance measures, and annual targets, and reviewers will be assessing these goals, measures, and targets in the context of the applicant's proposal and evidence submitted, if any, in support of the proposal and assigning points. There are no specific goals, performance measures, or annual targets that reviewers will be looking for and again setting high goals does not translate into high scores. Rather, reviewers will reward applicants for developing goals, performance measures, and targets that are meaningful for the applicant's proposal. By providing reviewers with a range of scores for low, medium, high-quality responses, we believe we ensure consistency across and within review panels. It is important to remember that reviewers will be assessing multiple aspects of applicants Race to the Top - District application. It is possible that an applicant that fails to earn points or earns a low number of points on one criterion might still win a Race to the Top - District award by earning high points on other criteria. It is important that applicants take into consideration the total points that can be earned as outlined in the scoring chart. This scoring chart provides detailed maximum point values by selection criteria as well as the maximum point value for each section. For example, the four criteria in section A: vision are each worth a maximum of ten points for a total of forty points for this section. The chart also shows that section A: vision makes up 19% of the total points that can be earned if all criteria are responded to. As shown on the chart, you can see that by responding to the competitive preference priority, an applicant can earn up to ten additional points. These additional points will be added to the applicant's total score earned in responding to selection criteria A through F. You can find additional information about scoring in section fourteen of the application.

I will now pass it back to Meredith who will talk about the application submission process.

Meredith Farace: Thank you, Renee. Applicants for a grant under this competition must submit two things: an electronic copy of the application and signed originals of certain sections of the application. Applicants must submit their application in an electronic format on a CD or DVD with CDROM or

DVDROM preferred. We strongly recommend that the applicant submit three CDs or DVDs. Each of these three CDs or DVDs should include the following four files: 1) a single file that contains the body of the application narrative including required budget tables that has been converted into a searchable PDF document. Note that a PDF created from a scanned document will not be searchable. 2) A single file that contains all application appendixes in a PDF format. 3) A single file in a PDF format that contains all the required signature pages. The signature pages may be scanned and turned into a PDF. Consortia applicants should also include all signed MOUs or other binding agreements for each LEA in a consortium. And 4) a single separate file of the completed electronic budget spreadsheets, for example, in Excel XLS or Excel XLSX formats that includes the required budget tables and budget justifications, and these spreadsheets will be used by the Department for our budget review. Application and submission information can be found in section I of the FAQ document. Each of these items must be clearly labeled with the LEAs' or lead LEA's name, city, state, and any other relevant identifying information. Applicants must not password protect these files. Additionally please ensure that all three CDs or DVDs contain the same four files and that the files are not corrupted and all files print correctly. In addition to the electronic files, applicants must submit signed originals of certain sections of the application. An individual LEA applicant must submit signed originals of parts four, five, and seven of the application. An application from a consortium of LEAs must include signed originals of parts four, six, and seven of the application as well as a signed memorandum of understanding from each LEA in the consortium. The Department will not review any paper submissions of the application, narrative, and appendices. It's important that you know that the October 3rd due date is a received-by date, not a postmark date. This means that the Department must receive all grant applicants on or before 4:30 PM exactly. Any time after 4:30:00 PM is considered late and the applicant will not be considered for funding. We strongly recommend you send the application via overnight delivery. We also advise that you be sure to plan and provide adequate time for delivery by the 4:30:00 PM deadline on October 3rd. All applications must be submitted by mail or hand delivery. Whether you submit an application by mail or hand delivery, you must indicate on the envelope the CFDA number, including suffix letter if any of the competition under which you are submitting your application. Please note that the mailing address is different for applications submitted by mail including commercial carriers than the address for hand delivery locations including courier services.

The Department requests that all applicants submit an intent to apply. We will be able to develop a more efficient process for reviewing grant applications if we know the approximate number of applicants that intend to apply for funding under this competition. Therefore, the Secretary strongly encourages 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. When completing this form, applicants will provide: 1) the applicant's name and address, 2) whether the applicant is applying as an individual LEA or as a consortium of LEAs; if applying as a consortium, please provide a list of all LEAs in the consortium, 3) expected budget requests, and 4) a contact person, a phone number, and an email address. Applicants that do not complete the form may still apply for funding. After the August 23rd deadline, the Department will publicly release a list of applicants intending to apply for Race to the Top - District awards. The list will only include the LEA names, including the names of each proposed LEA in a consortium, type of application, and expected budget requests. We will conclude the webinar by

reviewing additional resources and responding to questions. In addition to this webinar, which is posted on our website, the Department will offer additional technical assistance opportunities. More information about the upcoming technical assistance and webinars to Answer Questions Submitted to the Email Box will be posted on the Race to the Top - District website listed on this slide. If you have questions about the program, please send them to the Race to the Top - District mail box at 2013.racetothetop.district@ed.gov. Again, please feel free to send in technical, clarifying, or logistics questions through the chat function. And as we mentioned previously we are unable to answer questions about a specific approach or individual proposal. As we mentioned before, we're not going to answer through the chat function; instead, we'll continue to restate all the questions and provide answers over the audio portion of the conference so that all participants can hear this information. We may mute the line periodically while we review the remaining questions submitted through the chat function. If you have questions that are not addressed through the webinar or in the FAQs, please submit them by email to 2013.racetothetop.district@ed.gov.

Ann Whalen: Great, thanks Meredith. So we have a number of questions that continue to come in through part two of the webinar. The first is a great question: "What time will the webinar on applying as a consortium be on August 13th?" It's going to be at 2:30 PM Eastern time. Again, on August 13th at 2:30 PM Eastern time, we will be hosting another webinar specifically for LEAs who are interested in applying as a consortium. Again, information will be available on our website about registration for that upcoming webinar as well as the additional ones on the budget and filling out the application and answering additional questions that come in through our email box.

We have received a question asking about selection criteria in (A)(3). They are wondering if they are planning to apply as an entire LEA, how can they describe how they will be scaling up their proposal. So again, if you are applying with all of your schools within your district, how do you then respond to selection criteria in (A)(3)? We actually have an FAQ about that: FAQ E-1. In the event that an applicant includes all of its schools and students as participating schools and students, how will it address selection criteria in (A)(3) regarding how will it "support district wide change in all participating schools." And the answer to this is an LEA that proposes to serve all schools and students in the LEA will not be penalized. In responding to selection criterion (A)(3), the applicant may simply note that all schools and students will be served and are participating.

Another question asks: "What percent of student population of an LEA must participate in a grant in the application in order to be eligible?" Again, we've required that a minimum of two thousand participating students be a part of any application; that's a requirement. But we don't have a specific number that's required. FAQ C-12 may help and provide some additional context.

For those who are interested in asking whether an applicant must include all of its students or schools served by the LEA in its proposed project, the answer is an applicant may include in its proposed project all or a portion of its schools. For example, you may want to include your lowest performance schools, just your secondary schools, or you may want to select a community within your district and do a feeder pattern. You may also select to just do specific grade bands so, for example, just preschool- through third-grade or even just specific subject area bands like middle school math. One applicant is not

Comment [LB1]: Is this correct?

required to include all of its students or schools served by the district in this application. An applicant must demonstrate how the total number of participating students is a significant number of students in the participating schools.

We've had another set of questions around early learning students. So, a question asked: "Are pre-k students served by Title I considered eligible students to participate?" We actually have an FAQ, FAQ C-8, which talks about early learning and also adult education students. And it's a question of: "May an applicant include early learning or adult education students in its town of participating students?" And the answer is an LEA may apply for the FY 13 district grant for all or a portion of its schools. For a student to count as a participating student, the student must be considered part of the LEA and again part of the LEA as defined in the Notice. The LEA definition references the ESEA definition of both elementary and secondary schools, which defers to how the state law defines the term except the ESEA definition of secondary schools specifically excludes any education beyond twelfth grade. So, it's possible that your prekindergarten program may be considered part of participating students, but you really should consult your state on whether you actually meet the definition there.

Another question asks: "Concerning the applicable population, if we choose to serve students in grades four through eight, do we have to serve all those grades? In other words, can we serve grades six through eight or do we also have to serve fourth and fifth grade?" As I just mentioned in FAQ C-12 you do have the discretion to serve a portion of your grade bands or even a specific subject band or a portion of your schools. If you're thinking about how this applies to selection criterion (E)(3), you can see that we also have performance measures that apply to specific populations. So in this case if you are applying just with your sixth through eighth grade participating students, you would then make sure your performance measures for grades four-eight A, B, and C addressed just your sixth through eighth grade students; you do not also have to serve your fourth and fifth grade students.

Another question asked: "Can funds be carried over?" Again, as we mentioned earlier, this is a four year grant and your project budget should cover all four years of the grant. So, if you are applying for ten thousand and five kids, you could apply for a total grant of twenty to twenty-five million. That twenty to twenty-five million covers all four years of the budget. We are planning and anticipating to forward fund these budgets, so you would have to ensure that you have all four years at one time, and in your application it will be for a year-by-year budget of how you plan to spend that money.

Our next similar question is the award range: "Is four through ten million the amount of the awards spanning all four years, or is it amounts for each of the four years?" Again, it's the amount for all four years and FAQ B-4 addresses this question, as well.

Another great question asked on an early slide stated that: "One of the changes from the FY 12 competition was the reduction of the maximum amount of funding for which an applicant may apply and yet there's an award range on the maximum on program requirements. Please clarify." So in our FY 12 budget, we actually had a higher budget award range; for the max amount of students, an applicant could apply to up to forty million dollars. In the FY 13, we've adjusted that band to apply to only up to thirty million dollars if you're serving more than twenty thousand and one students. So that's what that

referenced. Again, the program requirement is depending on your number of participating students, which will give guidance to which budget bands you may apply for. If you go below or above your prescribed budget band, you would not be eligible for this grant. So, if you apply with ten thousand students and you apply for only four million dollars, you will not be eligible for this grant, so make sure your participating student count matches the award range budget band, please.

Another individual asks: "The actual number of students must be based upon what date?" FAQ C-6 and C-7 provide some additional guidance about this. We ask that you inform your proposal based on the best data you have at the time of the application that comes in. Again, if you don't have your specific participating schools selected, you must give us a process by which you will select participating schools and your approximate count. And then if you receive a grant, you have a hundred days from the time of the grant award to finalize your list of participating schools.

Another question asks: "Can an LEA apply as part of a consortium and apply as an individual district?" I'm afraid the answer is no. An LEA may only apply on one application and FAQ C-14 provides some additional information on that.

Another set of questions is asking for additional clarity around the eligibility requirement for data systems. Each participating LEA is expected to make an assurance that the LEA has a robust data system that at a minimum has an individual teacher identifier and a teacher/student match and the capability to provide timely data back to the educators and their supervisors on student growth. Additionally each LEA must make an assurance that the LEA has a capability to receive and match student-level preschool-through twelfth-grade and higher education data. We have some additional FAQs, FAQ C-31 and FAQ C-30, that provide some additional information about potentially using your state longitudinal data system to meet that expectation and assurance requirement. And then also potentially how you can think about this as a consortium in C-31.

Another individual wrote in asking: "For the application requirement, how many days must we provide the state and mayor to comment on our application?" The answer is you must provide your state and your mayor or local town official or administrator at least ten business days to comment on the application. They may be simultaneous, so you can give it to both the state and the mayor, or the local administrator at the same time, and then as an applicant it's optional that you may choose to respond to those comments; that's not a requirement, but it's an option that you do have.

So we have a few other questions coming in: "Can a K-12 LEA form a consortium with institutes of higher learning?" The answer to this is that no, the consortium may only be made up of eligible entities, so eligible LEAs, and an IHE does not meet the definition of an LEA although it's possible that the consortium chooses to partner with your local university or IHE. Again, there's FAQ C-19, which may provide some additional guidance on this.

Another question asks: "If we have a grant from our state Race to the Top funding, does that make us ineligible for Race to the Top - District grant?" This is a wonderful question, so if you're a participating district in one of the Phase one, Phase two, or Phase three state grants for Race to the Top, you are

eligible to apply for the Race to the Top - District grant. The only districts that are ineligible to apply are those that received a Race to the Top - District grant out of the FY 12 competition.

A next question asks: "Can a partnership be with a for-profit organization (for example, a local business)?" The answer is yes, but you have to make sure that it's not a part of a consortium. Again, a consortium must only be made up of eligible applicants or LEAs that meet the definition. A local business organization or other for profit-organization may only be partners to your application.

Another question asks: "How should the district determine which mayor should receive the proposal? So if you're in a consortium and you have multiple mayors, or if you're in a district that spans across multiple towns, must all of the mayors have an opportunity to comment on the proposal?" The answer is yes. All mayors or local town officials or administrators that cover your district must have ten business days to comment on the proposal. FAQ F-12 and F-2 and FAQ F-9 provide some additional information on that.

Another question asks about teachers unions: "If we do not have a teachers' union, do we need to do an MOU?" I want to make sure that we are being really clear about the requirements here. For every application, an eligibility requirement is to have three signatures: the superintendent or CEO, the local school board president, and the president of the local teachers' union if applicable. So, if you do not have a teachers union, you have to provide your rationale in the chart that Renee walked through that explains why you do not have a local union representation. If you do have local union representation and you're applying as an individual LEA, there's not a requirement to have MOUs. MOU requirements are for consortium applicants and, again, we will go in much more detail in the webinar next week on August 13th at 2:30 PM Eastern time.

Another question asks: "For competitive preference priority points, can the plan include using proposed grant funds to meet the competitive preference? For example, if the proposal includes alignment with non-profit out-of-school-time providers to offer math tutoring to English language learner students, can Race to the Top - District funds be used to support the non-profit to provide these services?" The answer is yes, but we want to make sure we draw your attention to the procurement procedures and make sure that you don't violate any local procurement rules if you elect to name that partner. So again, FAQ G-16 may provide some additional guidance, but in terms of use of funds an applicant may propose to use your Race to the Top - District grant to support services that are aligned to the competitive preference priority.

A great question for Renee is: "Do you want the final narrative to actually include those instructions and hints?"

Renee Faulkner: No.

Ann Whalen: FAQ I-2 provides some additional information, but please feel free to delete those instructions if they're just taking space. They're just for your benefit, and we're happy to be without them as long as you're fully responsive to those selection criteria including the narrative, the evidence, as well as any chart and data information.

Another question asks: "Can schools not in a proven status be included in you LEA application?" The answer is yes; it's up to an individual applicant to identify participating students as long as you make sure you're reading those eligibility requirements and meeting the participating student requirements in the program requirements for the budget bands.

Another great question asks: "Where do we find the application?" As noted on the previous page under the resource slide of the webinar, you can see that a bunch of our resources are available on our website. Again if you look at the bottom, you'll see www.ed.gov/program/racetothetopdistrict and you'll find webinars, our previous webinars, our future webinars, FAQs as well as other resources including the application, the Executive Summary, the NIA.

We've been asked: "Where can we find the additional FAQs around the state and mayor or city administrator comment period and deadline?" Again, FAQ F-2 and FAQ F-3 through F-9 provide some additional information about the application requirements for state and mayor comment periods. We hope you find those helpful; if you need additional clarification, you should feel free to send in an email to 2013.racetothetop.district@ed.gov, and we can include that in a future webinar.

Another question asks: "Please clarify whether you want one disc with four electronic documents or three discs with four documents on them?"

Meredith Farace: Three discs with four documents on them.

Ann Whalen: Three discs with four documents on them, please. Again, we will be hosting another webinar on the application submission processes, and in the near future if you have additional questions as you get further along in the process we will definitely have an opportunity for you to you to ask them.

Meredith Farace: And the reason we ask for three discs is sometimes they're corrupt, so if we have one that's corrupt we can still use one of the other ones.

Ann Whalen: Another question: "When will the list of LEAs intending to apply be released?" Again, the intents to apply are optional, but we strongly encourage it because it really does help us plan to run a smooth competition ensuring that we have enough resources, peer reviewers, and everything to make sure we do things in a timely manner. These are due into us by August 23rd; we will then quickly turn them around in the next week or so, and they will be publicly available on our website. There will be no personally identifiable information that will be made public. We will just be listing the actual districts and their state in which we've received intents to apply.

Another great question is: "Are applicants from last year's FY 12 application required to obtain new letters of support if there have been no changes since October 2012 submission?" The answer is yes; if you are planning to resubmit as part of the FY 13 application, we do need a full application submitted that meets all of the eligibility requirements, which includes the signatures on the application, so yes, please.

Another question: “Are there page number recommendations for selection criteria sections in the applications in this round?” Within the application, there are suggested page numbers recommendations for responses within the narrative. It’s strongly recommended that you keep your proposals under two hundred pages. But again, this is not a requirement, but we have found that the ability to succinctly make a compelling rationale for the proposal is very convincing to peer reviewers. That is supported by robust evidence.

So with that we are going to put you guys on mute for a minute just to make sure we’ve covered all questions that have come in.

So we are approaching the last few minutes of today’s webinar. We’ve been asked just to make sure we keep up our email address on the website. If you look on this slide, we do have the email address. You can submit questions to 2013.racetothetop.district@ed.gov, as well as our website below. The last few questions that have come in: “How are students counted? Are they counted each year i.e. can the same students be counted each year if they are participating each year, or are these unduplicated students? And if so how do we ensure that students are not counted multiple times?” The expectation and requirement with these are that you do not use a cumulative count. FAQ C-7 provides some additional information and detail on this.

Next: “When determining the number of participating students, may an applicant use a cumulative count of students over the grant period to determine the applicable award range?” The answer is no; at the time of the application, an applicant must provide an actual or approximate count of the number of participating students who receive services in the first year of the project. The actual or approximate count of participating students must not be cumulative.

Next question is: “If a state has not identified what office or department will review the district applications, how should the applicant address the comment requirement?” FAQ F-3 provides some additional guidance around this, but we really need you guys to reach out to your state to determine the appropriate agency and ensure that you are providing documentation that you gave them that ten business day opportunity.

Next question: “In regards to the Race to the Top - District competition, what is the difference of being in a consortium or having a partnership?” FAQ C-19 provides some additional clarity on partnership support in the application. But just as a reminder, a consortium is made up of only a group of eligible entities, so only districts that meet the definition of LEAs underneath this grant. So, a consortium is only eligible districts while partnerships could be additional parties including non-profits, IHEs, community partnerships, after-school partnerships, but those are not people who are applying for the grant. They’re not signed on as eligible entities or eligible districts.

Another question: “Is there a Race to the Top grant available for small districts?” Again, if you look at the FAQs in the program requirements, you will see that in order to be eligible for the grant, you must commit to serve a minimum of two thousand participating students through either an individual LEA or

as part of a consortium of LEAs. An exception to this is that if you are a consortium with less than two thousand students, you may be eligible if you are applying with ten or more districts that serve at least 75% of your students. So I know this is a little difficult to follow so if you go back to the slide around the eligibility requirements, slide twenty-six, you can see that eligible applicants are individual LEAs or a consortium of LEAs serving a minimum of two thousand participating students or a consortium of LEAs serving fewer than two thousand participating students provided that those students are served by a consortium of at least ten LEAs and at least 75% of the students served by each LEA are participating students.

Great so our final question has come in: "Can the Department of Indian Education Schools participate as a member of a consortium?" FAQ C-18 asks: "are BIE funded LEAs eligible to apply for FY 13 Race to the Top - District grants?" The answer is the Department of Interior and Bureau of Indian Education or BIE schools that meet the definition of LEA in the Notice and meet other eligibility requirements set forth in the Notice are eligible to apply for FY 13 Race to the Top - District grants individually or as members of a consortium.

So with that we are approaching the five o'clock hour here on the East coast. We would like to thank all of those who have stuck it through to the very end of this very long two and a half hour webinar. We really appreciate your time and participation and your great questions. We have upcoming webinars to deal with specific areas of interest in terms of applying as a consortium, filling out the budget information, the applications, submission requirements, and we will continue to host webinars responding to questions that come in through our email box. So we encourage you to continue to go back to our website for additional updates and information. Thank you so much and good luck with your proposals.

Operator: This ends today's conference. Thank you for your participation. You may now disconnect.