RACE TO THE TOP

Colorado Report

Year 1: 2012

U.S. Department of Education
Washington, DC 20202

June 2013

Executive Summary

Race to the Top overview

On February 17, 2009, President Obama signed into law the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), historic legislation designed to stimulate the economy, support job creation, and invest in critical sectors, including education. ARRA provided $4.35 billion for the Race to the Top fund, of which approximately $4 billion was used to fund comprehensive statewide reform grants under the Race to the Top program.[1] In 2010, the U.S. Department of Education (Department) awarded Race to the Top Phase 1 and Phase 2 grants to 11 States and the District of Columbia. The Race to the Top program is a competitive four-year grant program designed to encourage and reward States that are creating the conditions for education innovation and reform; achieving significant improvement in student outcomes, including making substantial gains in student achievement, closing achievement gaps, and improving high school graduation rates; and ensuring students are prepared for success in college and careers.

Since the Race to the Top Phase 1 and 2 competitions, the Department has made additional grants under Race to the Top Phase 3, Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge, and Race to the Top – District. In 2011, the Department awarded Phase 3 grants to seven additional States, which were finalists in the 2010 Race to the Top Phase 2 competition. Also in 2011, the Department made nine awards under the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge to improve quality and expand access to early learning programs, and close the achievement gap for children with high needs. In 2012, four more States received Early Learning Challenge grants. Additionally, in 2012, the Department made awards to 16 applicants through the Race to the Top – District competition to support local educational agencies (LEAs) implementing locally developed plans to personalize and deepen student learning, directly improve student achievement and educator effectiveness, close achievement gaps, and prepare every student to succeed in college and careers.

The Race to the Top program is built on the framework of comprehensive reform in four education reform areas:

- Adopting rigorous standards and assessments that prepare students for success in college and the workplace;
- Building data systems that measure student success and inform teachers and principals how they can improve their practices;
- Recruiting, developing, retaining, and rewarding effective teachers and principals; and
- Turning around the lowest-performing schools.

Since education is a complex system, sustained and lasting instructional improvement in classrooms, schools, LEAs, and States will not be achieved through piecemeal change. Race to the Top requires that States and LEAs participating in the State's Race to the Top plan (participating LEAs) take into account their local context to design and implement the most effective and innovative approaches that meet the needs of their educators, students, and families.[2]

Race to the Top program review

As part of the Department's commitment to supporting States as they implement ambitious reform agendas, the Department established the Implementation and Support Unit (ISU) in the Office of the Deputy Secretary to administer, among others, the Race to the Top program. The goal of the ISU is to provide assistance to States as they implement unprecedented and comprehensive reforms to improve student outcomes. Consistent with this goal, the Department has developed a Race to the Top program review process that not only addresses the Department's responsibilities for fiscal and programmatic oversight, but is also designed to identify areas in which Race to the Top grantees need assistance and support to meet their goals. Specifically, the ISU works with Race to the Top grantees to differentiate support based on individual State needs, and helps States work with each other and with experts to achieve and sustain educational reforms that improve student outcomes. In partnership with the ISU, the Reform Support Network (RSN) offers collective and individualized technical assistance and resources to Race to the Top grantees. The RSN's purpose is to support Race to the Top grantees as they implement reforms in education policy and practice, learn from each other, and build their capacity to sustain these reforms.

Grantees are accountable for the implementation of their approved Race to the Top plans, and the information and data gathered throughout the program review help to inform the Department's management and support of the Race to the Top grantees, as well as provide appropriate and timely updates to the public on their progress. In the event that adjustments are required to an approved plan, the grantee must submit a formal amendment request to the Department for consideration. States may submit for Department approval amendment requests to a plan and budget, provided such changes do not significantly affect the scope or objectives of the approved plans. In the event that the Department determines that a grantee is not meeting its goals, activities, timelines, budget, or annual targets, or is not fulfilling other applicable requirements, the Department will take appropriate enforcement action(s), consistent with 34 CFR section 80.43 in the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR).[3]

[1] The remaining funds were awarded under the Race to the Top Assessment program. More information about the Race to the Top Assessment program is available at www.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-assessment.

[2] Participating LEAs are those LEAs that choose to work with the State to implement all or significant portions of the State's Race to the Top plan, as specified in each LEA's Memorandum of Understanding with the State. Each participating LEA that receives funding under Title I, Part A will receive a share of the 50 percent of a State's grant award that the State must sub-grant to LEAs, based on the LEA's relative share of Title I, Part A allocations in the most recent year, in accordance with section 14006(c) of the ARRA.

[3] More information about the ISU's program review process, State APR data, and State Scopes of Work can be found at http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/index.html.

State-specific summary report

The Department uses the information gathered during the review process (*e.g.*, through monthly calls, onsite reviews, and Annual Performance Reports (APRs)) to draft State-specific summary reports.[4] The State-specific summary report serves as an assessment of a State's annual Race to the Top implementation. The Year 1 report for Phase 3 grantees highlights successes and accomplishments, identifies challenges, and provides lessons learned from implementation from approximately December 2011 through December 2012.

State's education reform agenda[5]

Colorado's State plan for education reform focuses on increasing student achievement and graduation rates so that all students are prepared for success in a competitive world that will demand much higher-level skills. As of 2012, the State has 178 LEAs with more than 1,800 schools. A workforce of approximately 51,000 teachers and leaders educate almost 825,000 students, nearly 350,000 of them eligible for free and reduced price lunch. The State is committed to serving the needs of all of these stakeholders while transforming education in the 21st century by implementing the key pillars of its reform agenda.

Colorado was one of seven states receiving a share of the $200 million in Race to the Top Phase 3 funds to advance targeted reforms aimed at improving student achievement from kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12). Colorado's share of the funds was $17.9 million. The announcement of the Race to the Top Phase 3 award marked the culmination of Colorado's multi-year effort to secure additional funds to support its education reform agenda. Colorado had begun implementing its reform agenda before receiving the Race to the Top grant and, with the help of key stakeholders, had already crafted a vision for the State's education system.

Colorado's overarching goals for its Race to the Top grant are aligned to the key components of its reform agenda. Specifically, it focuses on advancing four high-leverage components:

- Strong statewide capacity: Leveraging and expanding the State's capacity to implement the grant's various reform initiatives and ensuring the reforms are integrated and coordinated so that LEAs are supported in implementation and student achievement ultimately rises;
- Transition to college- and career-ready standards: Helping schools and LEAs transition to the State's new standards through the creation of Content Collaboratives (teams of talented educators and content experts from across the State) that will develop instructional materials and classroom-based assessments to support educators in implementing Colorado's new Academic Standards and inform educator effectiveness;
- Educator effectiveness: Putting in place new, more robust evaluation systems to gauge the effectiveness of teachers and leaders by clearly articulating the standards of performance; and
- STEM integration: Infusing robust opportunities for students to develop STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) knowledge and skills across all content areas and connecting teachers to STEM resources outside their classrooms to better prepare all students for college and careers in STEM-related areas.

The success of Colorado's Race to the Top grant lies in the connection and integration of these four elements that are part of the State's overall reform initiatives. The grant supports the State's vision of students ready to meet the challenges of the 21st century and of an educator workforce that helps them get there — all bolstered and enabled by strong State capacity and support.

State Year 1 summary

Accomplishments

Colorado's Year 1 accomplishments include completing the development of new principal and teacher evaluation rubrics and providing training to 27 pilot LEAs; the organization and implementation of Content Collaboratives; the launch of the Resource Bank; the dissemination of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) aligned assessments and sample curriculum frameworks to promote the transition to new statewide standards; and fully staffing the Vision 2020 office that has primary responsibility for coordinating Race to the Top activities as well as the State's broader reform efforts.[6]

Building statewide capacity for reform

The State organized its Vision 2020 office to support implementation of Race to the Top activities that are aligned with Colorado's reform initiatives, filled all of its key positions, including adding two new positions to support the Colorado Department of Education's (CDE) ability to analyze data in order to advance its strategic priorities. Additionally, CDE has developed systems to monitor implementation of Race to the Top projects at the LEA level.

[4] Additional State-specific data on progress against annual performance measures and goals reported in the Year 1 APRs can be found on the Race to the Top APR at www.rtt-apr.us.

[5] This section reflects counts of schools and students reported in the State's Phase 3 application.

[6] The Colorado Academic Standards, which include ten content areas, are aligned to the CCSS and demonstrate the expectations of what Colorado students need to know and demonstrate at the end of each grade.

Executive Summary

Promoting rigorous college- and career-ready standards

Colorado established Content Collaboratives, which are comprised of experts in 10 content areas. The Content Collaboratives are assisting the State in the development and dissemination of high-quality resources that can be accessed by educators to support the implementation of the new CCSS-aligned Colorado Academic Standards (CAS).

Improving educator effectiveness

The State developed state model systems for principal and teacher evaluations and created materials to support LEAs should they choose to use this system. Twenty-seven LEAs initially piloted the principal evaluation rubrics in school year (SY) 2011-2012 and are continuing the pilot in SY 2012-2013. The teacher evaluation rubrics are being piloted in SY 2012-2013. CDE also developed an assessment review tool used to vet more than 800 classroom-level assessments to inform instruction aligned with the new standards and for use, as appropriate, with educator evaluations.

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)

CDE hired a STEM Coordinator who completed a STEM program needs assessment. The results are being used to develop a STEM in Action plan where LEAs will partner with community and business organizations to provide students with real life experiences with STEM-related content.

Challenges

While the State has initiated sound systems for program management aligned with the State's Scope of Work, it is challenged by using data to proactively identify areas of technical assistance and support for targeted LEAs that need assistance to implement State reform initiatives, including Race to the Top projects.

CDE struggled to develop a framework for the assessment of the student learning standard in principal and teacher evaluation rubrics. In order to address this challenge, CDE hired an Assessment Implementation Specialist to work with LEAs on the selection and combination of multiple measures to assess student learning over time for the purposes of educator evaluation. Additionally, CDE contracted with a national researcher to develop guidance documents on the selection and combination of the assessments that comprise the 50 percent student growth score for teacher and principal evaluations.

Looking ahead to Year 2

In accordance with State law, Colorado LEAs must implement the CCSS-aligned CAS and educator evaluation systems in SY 2013-2014. The State will continue to develop, vet, and disseminate CCSS-aligned classroom-level assessments, instructional resources, and additional resources to support LEAs in implementing the CAS and educator evaluation systems. Also, the State plans to award the first round of STEM in Action grants.

State Success Factors

Building State capacity to support LEAs

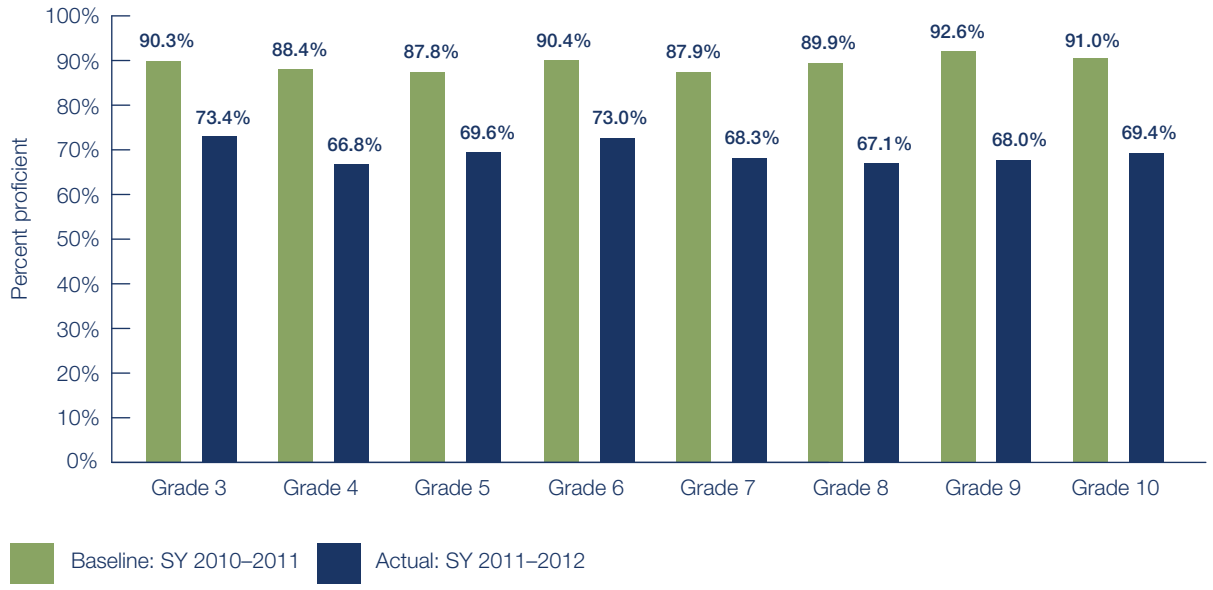
In Year 1, Colorado moved forward with all aspects of its work under Race to the Top. The State's goal for building capacity as set forth in its Race to the Top application included the creation of a Race to the Top program office, known as "Vision 2020," to help the State build capacity to: (1) manage Race to the Top projects, implement the State reform plan, and disburse grant funds; (2) ensure that participating LEAs implement the State's plan and properly account for funds used; and (3) ensure that Colorado executes its plan in a coherent manner to generate the greatest impact on student achievement. Furthermore, the State felt its success was based on integrating all parts of its plan and ensuring connectivity. The State planned to administer the grant and closely monitor results through the Vision 2020 Office within the CDE. By the end of the grant period, CDE plans to have built State capacity as well as LEA capacity to sustain the work into the future.

The State completed projects connected with their commitments in this area on time. This included recruiting and hiring of staff; developing and implementing the Race to the Top project management plan and budget; developing and implementing the strategic communications plan supporting the State's reform agenda; and developing and implementing the strategic information management plan and the monitoring plan for participating LEAs.

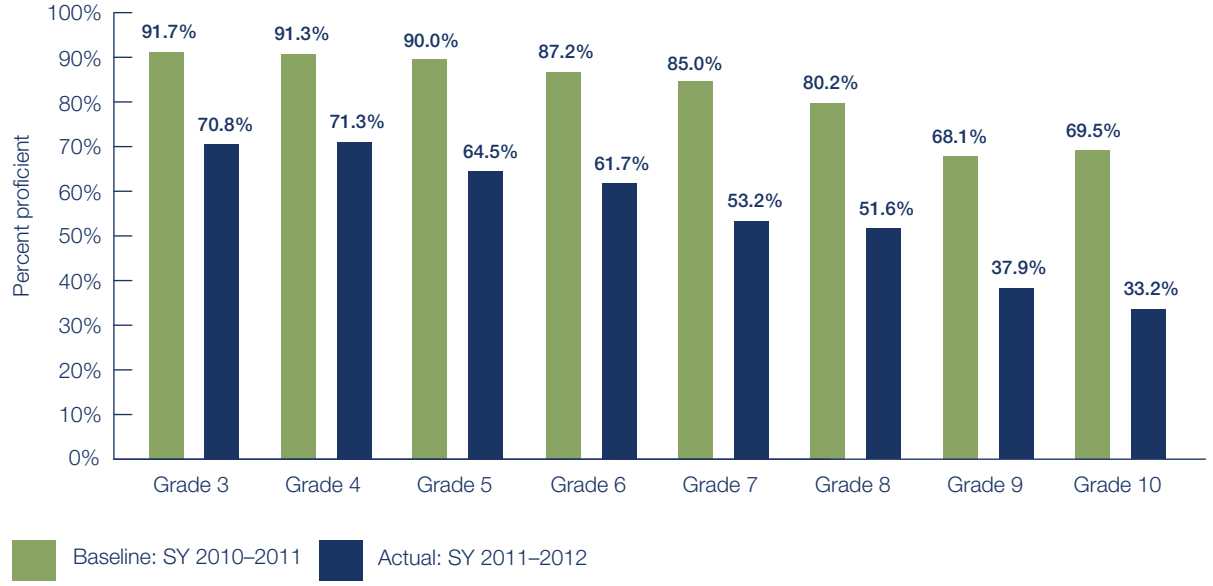
Currently, Race to the Top projects are aligned with the State's reform initiatives and the CDE's strategic goals. CDE staff provide support, oversight and capacity building for the Race to the Top projects, and meets monthly in order to ensure that projects are integrated throughout CDE efforts, timelines are met, and expenditures adhere to approved budgets.

All participating LEAs and Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) received a survey inquiring about the satisfaction of LEAs with CDE grant administration, communications and usage of resources and tools disseminated by CDE to determine SY

Student Proficiency on Colorado's ELA Assessment



Student Proficiency on Colorado's Mathematics Assessment



Preliminary SY 2011-2012 data reported as of: December 20, 2012.

NOTE: Over the last two years, a number of States adopted new assessments and/or cut scores.

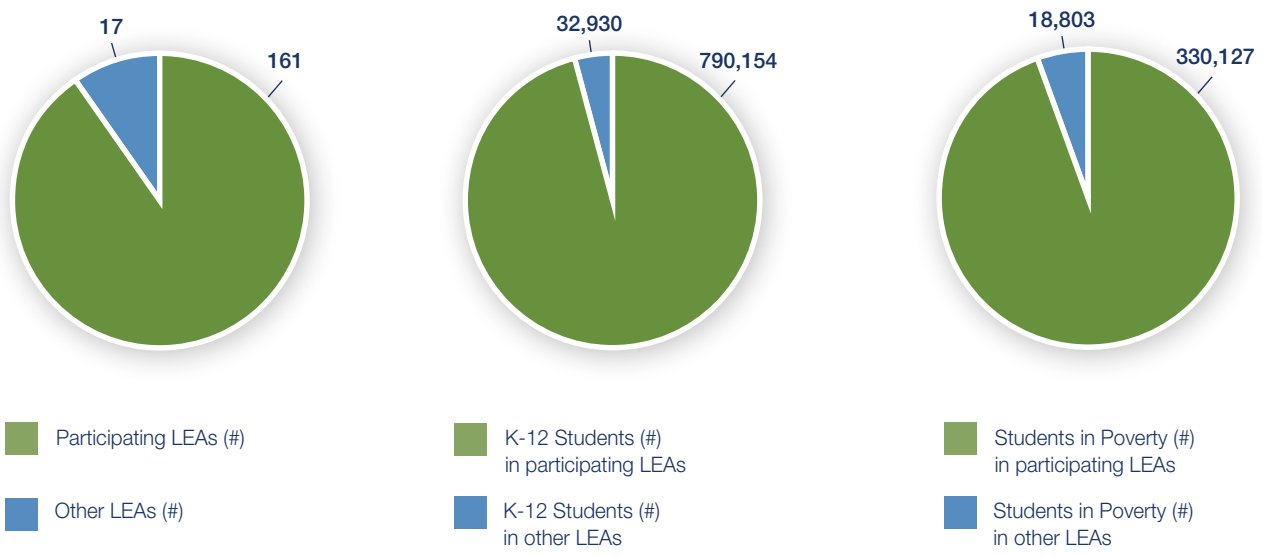
For State-reported context, please refer to the Race to the Top APR at www.rtt-apr.us.

2011-2012 baseline data on key performance measures. CDE is also implementing a project management system using project dashboards. The dashboards currently consist of 15-20 mission critical projects that have been identified as priority projects based on CDE's strategic goals. All project plans within the dashboards are updated by unit project managers, monitored by the Race to the Top project manager, and reviewed by the commissioner and the executive team on a monthly basis. The State Board of Education reviews the status on each of the project's timeline, scope, and budget through the main project management dashboard on a quarterly basis.

CDE's Race to the Top information management will leverage SchoolView, a one-stop provider of information and resources located on the CDE website. LEAs have access to all webinars, trainings, tools, and resources developed through the Race to the Top efforts through the Resource Bank and CDE websites. As part of its communications plan, CDE disseminated customized Race to the Top talking points for various audiences (*e.g.*, State Board, CDE Leadership, conferences, education support and advocacy organizations) and developed communication resource materials (*e.g.*, fact sheets, example presentations, drop-in articles, and FAQ's) related to Race to the Top grant initiatives. Also, CDE distributes a weekly electronic message to LEAs as well as disseminating a monthly CDE Update and a monthly Educator Effectives newsletter.

LEA participation

Colorado reported 161 participating LEAs (out of 178 statewide LEAs) as of June 30, 2012. This represents 96 percent of the State's K-12 students and 95 percent of its students in poverty.



For State-reported context, please refer to the Race to the Top APR at www.rtt-apr.us.

Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

By aligning Race to the Top grant activities with the Colorado reform initiatives and its ongoing partnerships with a variety of nonprofit and advocacy organizations, CDE has been able to foster a strong foundation for coordination within, and outside of, the State organizational structure. These efforts are intended to help promote sustainability for the Race to the Top projects beyond the grant years.

CDE established systems to monitor implementation of Race to the Top projects at the LEA level. CDE also established communication systems to provide on-going information to LEAs through a multiple avenues; however, CDE staff are not certain that crucial information is reaching school-level educators.

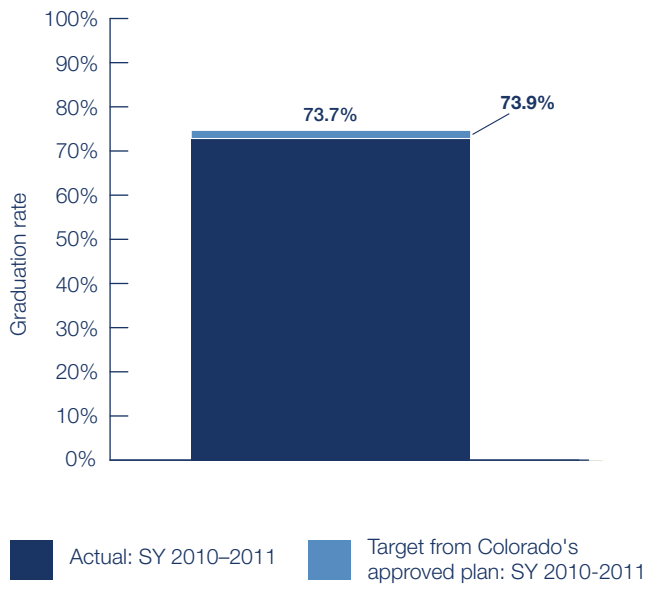
CDE created the Resource Bank and has uploaded initial information for LEA access. The Resource Bank is the main

repository for tools and resources to implement activities related to Race to the Top grant initiatives.

CDE is making several strategic decisions to advance their Race to the Top efforts. The team hired staff to organize and analyze the current data collections and identify gaps in data for measuring LEA and State Race to the Top project implementation progress.

CDE has initiated sound systems for program management aligned with the State's Scope of Work, and the State appears to have a strong understanding of both its progress and the areas that require additional support. One of the greater challenges for CDE is the development of a more robust system to identify LEAs that are struggling with implementation of Race to the Top initiatives and need targeted training and technical assistance. The State is considering options to address this challenge.

High School Graduation Rates

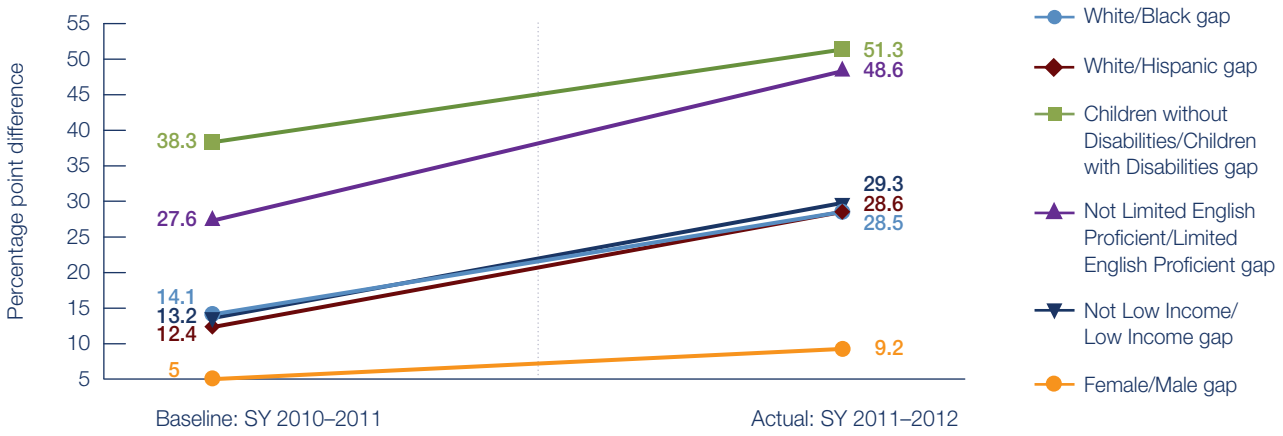


Preliminary SY 2011-2012 data reported as of: August 8, 2012.

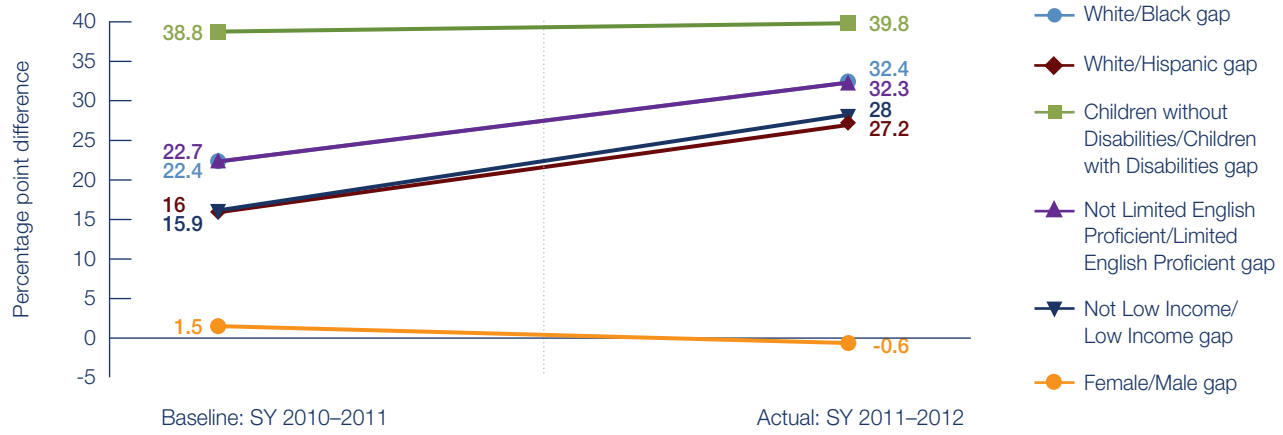
NOTE: The Department has transitioned to the four-year regulatory cohort graduation rate. Additionally, the Department has transitioned from five to seven racial and ethnic groups used for reporting data. For graduation rates, States will report on the seven racial and ethnic groups for the SY 2010-2011 data.

For State-reported context, please refer to the Race to the Top APR at www.rtt-apr.us.

Achievement Gap on Colorado's ELA Assessment



Achievement Gap on Colorado's Mathematics Assessment



Preliminary SY 2011-2012 data reported as of: December 20, 2012.

NOTE: Over the last two years, a number of States have adopted new assessments and/or cut scores.

Numbers in the graph represent the gap in a school year between two subgroups on the State's ELA and mathematics assessments. Achievement gaps were calculated by subtracting the percent of students scoring proficient in the lower-performing subgroup from the percent of students scoring proficient in the higher-performing subgroup to get the percentage point difference between the proficiency of the two subgroups. If the achievement gap narrowed between two subgroups, the line will slope downward. If the achievement gap increased between two subgroups, the line will slope upward.

For State-reported context, please refer to the Race to the Top APR at www.rtt-apr.us.

Standards and Assessments

Implementing rigorous college- and career-ready standards and assessments that prepare students for success in college and career is an integral aspect of education reform in Race to the Top States.

Supporting the transition to college- and career-ready standards and high-quality assessments

Colorado joined the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) as a participating State in the spring of 2010 and helped to shape PARCC's proposal for a common, next-generation assessment system. In August 2012, Colorado became a governing State in the PARCC consortia.

Colorado also proposed using $3.0 million in Race to the Top funds over four years to support two cohorts of Content Collaboratives, each composed of talented educators and content experts from across the State, to help develop and disseminate high-quality tools that can build local capacity to implement the new CAS that are aligned with the CCSS.

The Content Collaboratives are made up of experts in the content areas (social studies, reading & writing & communication, dance, music, drama & theatre arts, visual arts, comprehensive health & physical education, mathematics, science, and world languages). The Content Collaboratives are designed to create and disseminate standards-based assessments and instructional materials for use in the classroom and to transform the way that Colorado educators view the interaction between standards and assessments. The Content Collaboratives will provide educators with concrete tools that they can use to improve practice. The Content Collaboratives will specifically focus on the following activities:

1. Supporting the creation of instructional materials and classroom-level assessments in the content areas;
2. Supporting the creation, vetting, and dissemination of assessment items to inform instruction in the new standards and for use, as appropriate, with educator evaluations; and
3. Ensuring STEM concepts are integrated in tools for all subject areas, and not relegated only to science and mathematics, drawing on Colorado's external STEM resources (*e.g.*, business/industry, higher education, science partners).

The Colorado Content Collaboratives project also includes a Technical Steering Committee (TSC), comprised of psychometric experts from Colorado and around the country who oversee and facilitate the work of the Content Collaboratives.

The Content Collaboratives developed an Assessment Review Tool to rate the assessments' alignment to the CCSS-aligned CAS. The tool also helps measure the extent to which an assessment includes rigorous scoring criteria, is fair and unbiased, and provides opportunities for learning. CDE released this tool to LEAs in response to their request to have access to this resource so that the LEAs could review local assessments.

As of December 2012, Cohort 1 of the Content Collaboratives had reviewed 616 assessments in six of Colorado's ten content areas: reading & writing & communication, social studies, dance, music, drama & theater and visual arts. Cohort 2 has reviewed over 200 assessments in four of Colorado's content areas: comprehensive health & physical education, mathematics, science and world languages. Career and Technology Education (CTE) assessments are included in the reviews. CTE educators completed the reviews with the Content Collaboratives staff using the same Assessment Review Tool.

Additionally, members of the Content Collaboratives are involved in the District Sample Curriculum project. Through this project, CDE staff, content specialists, and educators from across the State are creating sample curriculum frameworks that incorporate the new standards for all ten of the content areas that comprise the CAS. These sample curriculum frameworks are available for use by LEAs. Currently, there are more than 650 sample curriculum frameworks.

Colorado is also positioned to contribute to and access anticipated resources from the Shared Learning Collaborative, a multi-State-led initiative funded by a private foundation, to create online repositories of outstanding lessons, tools, and instructional modules aligned with college- and career-ready standards. Colorado is a pilot State for this initiative.

Although initially planned to launch in October 2012, CDE launched the Resource Bank in December 2012. CDE will upload approved assessments and sample curricula into the Resource Bank and make them available to all LEAs for their use as they are available. CDE will monitor the Resource Bank and implement systems to ensure the resources stay up to date by the end of the grant period.

Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

The State successfully designed, organized and implemented the Content Collaboratives cohorts in order to provide CCSS aligned resource support to educators for the transition to the new standards and high-quality assessments in the State's 10 content areas. The State also completed contracts and agreements needed to establish the infrastructure to implement and sustain the Resource Bank, which will be the primary portal for LEAs to access the reviewed assessments, sample curriculum frameworks and instructional tools.

While CDE experienced some challenges in launching the Resource Bank as planned in the State's Scope of Work, the completed resources were made available on an existing, redesigned CDE website.

Great Teachers and Leaders

Race to the Top States are developing comprehensive systems of educator effectiveness by adopting clear approaches to measuring student growth; designing and implementing rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation systems for teachers and principals; conducting annual evaluations that include timely and constructive feedback; and using evaluation information to inform professional development, compensation, promotion, retention, and tenure decisions. In addition, Race to the Top States are providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals, ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals, improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs, and providing effective supports to all educators.

Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance

The State's efforts are largely directed by the Great Teachers and Leaders Act (Senate Bill (SB) 10-191), which launched Colorado's ambitious plan to ensure that all teachers and principals are evaluated annually in a way that is rigorous, transparent, and fair. Under the law, educators must receive three consecutive years of effective or higher evaluation ratings to earn non-probationary status. Educators can lose their non-probationary status after two consecutive ineffective ratings.

The State plans to use Race to the Top funds to provide resources and training to prepare LEAs to implement new educator evaluation systems that meet the requirements of SB 10-191. These resources include a State model evaluation system that districts may choose to implement. The implementation plan was designed to ensure broad stakeholder engagement and multiple opportunities for improvement along the way.

CDE finalized a teacher evaluation rubric, a principal evaluation rubric, and accompanying professional practices manual after receiving input from multiple LEAs and educators. Training on both of the new rubrics has been completed in the 27 pilot LEAs.

CDE created communication resources (such as fact sheets) to provide concise and easily comprehensible information about the educator evaluation systems. CDE also produced training guides and four videos describing the educator evaluation systems including processes and timelines.

The second year of piloting the principal evaluation rubric was initiated in SY 2012-2013. CDE revised the principal evaluation rubric based on input from educators and other stakeholders and feedback from the pilot in SY 2011-2012. Also, CDE revised the teacher evaluation rubric based on input from educators and other stakeholders and is piloting this rubric in SY 2012-2013. CDE made the rubrics available on the CDE website.

Each LEA is allowed to select the student growth measures that will be used and determine how much each measure will be weighted in order to meet the requirement that 50 percent of the educator evaluation be comprised of multiple measures of student growth.

CDE reported that the Assessment Implementation Specialist has drafted a plan for the peer review and piloting of assessments that will be used to measure student learning over time, as part of the educator evaluation systems. Content Collaboratives members have been asked if they would voluntarily pilot assessments. Teachers in the peer review process would participate in focus groups to provide feedback and any thoughts for improvement, and psychometricians would support the process. The State has also created draft guidance documents to support LEAs when determining how to select, weight, and combine the multiple measures of student growth. The guidance includes all but the final step that relates to combining the student outcome rating and the professional practices rating to determine the overall evaluation rating. Because of the complex process of weighting and combining multiple measure of student growth, CDE was six months behind schedule in making the draft guidance document available to LEAs.

CDE contracted with a national expert, sought feedback from local assessment experts, and reached out to other States to help develop the decision framework to support the process of determining the overall evaluation rating. CDE plans to implement an online system, making use of video exemplars for each of the sections available to the field to support inter-rater reliability; however, the State is overdue in developing these resources which were due to be drafted by June 2013.

CDE staff conducted workshops with the 27 pilot LEAs, and additional LEAs that chose to attend, for implementing the State model educator evaluation systems which included strategies for effectively communicating the information to LEA and school staff. CDE intends to further develop and implement a program for approving evaluator training programs. CDE is significantly behind schedule in developing this program to approve non-CDE entities to train evaluators on the State model evaluation system or district-developed evaluation systems because of the delay in developing the Decision Framework.

As of November 2012, CDE began the process of designing a model evaluation system and training documents for other licensed personnel (*e.g.*, school audiologists, psychologists, nurses, physical therapists). While CDE has created work teams for this undertaking and these teams have begun meeting, production is behind schedule.

CDE delayed starting this work for several months based on direction from the statutorily-created State Council for Educator Effectiveness in response to concerns from LEAs that implementing a new evaluation for other licensed personnel at the same time as the teacher and principal evaluations were initially implemented would be too challenging. The State achieved broad stakeholder buy-in (including support from the bill sponsors) to phase in the other licensed personnel recommendations over time.

Because many assessments are vendor products, CDE will select a management entity to assist LEAs in selecting and using appropriate assessments to measure student learning in all grades and subjects. The State will identify a range of assessments for use in instruction and educator evaluation and seek opportunities for cross-State procurement agreements that could help reduce testing costs for LEAs.

Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

The State was successful in developing model principal and teacher rubrics with the input and feedback from educators and stakeholders. As all LEAs implement the educator evaluation systems in SY 2013-2014, an LEA may choose to develop its own educator rubrics that are comparable with the State model rubrics. CDE provided training for implementing the State model educator evaluation systems to the 27 pilot LEAs and some additional LEAs that chose to attend the trainings. While CDE is considering several avenues to scale up this training to all LEAs, there is a lack of State management systems to identify and support struggling LEAs that may hinder efforts to successfully implement the educator evaluation systems statewide.

Colorado is developing support processes for LEAs as they begin to combine assessments and other measures to determine the student growth component of the educator evaluation. This work posed a significant challenge for the State and work in this area was delayed due to its complexity. CDE hired an Assessment Implementation Specialist to work with LEAs and CDE contracted with a national expert to develop guidelines for LEAs on using multiple measures to determine student growth. This support and State-level expertise is important to ensure that LEAs implement the educator evaluation systems with fidelity.

Due to the time invested in the principal and teacher evaluation systems, the State is delayed in beginning work on creating an evaluation system for other licensed personnel which was scheduled to begin in March 2012.

CDE recently reported that it has created a document in which each LEA attests to its compliance with the requirements of SB 10-191regarding implementing annual evaluation systems. In addition to the assurance document, CDE has created instructions for uploading the document into a Tracker system (this system is used for all grant reporting and requests for funds) and a checklist of essential elements for a quality evaluation system in accordance with SB 10-191. The documents were provided to each LEA with a letter from the Commissioner.

Emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)

State's STEM initiatives

Colorado views its STEM initiatives as important levers in achieving its college and career readiness goals for all students. Therefore, Colorado proposed using Race to the Top funding to focus on the following key activities: ensuring that high-quality STEM themes, lessons, and content are integrated into instructional resources; making new tools (*i.e.* videos, virtual field trips and other multimedia) available to all LEAs; and connecting educators to STEM resources within as well as outside their school and LEA boundaries.

CDE hired a STEM Coordinator who is leading both the mathematics and science Content Collaboratives, helps to ensure that STEM is integrated across the other content areas, and acts as the primary representative of CDE with the Colorado STEM Network. The STEM coordinator conducted an assets and needs assessment of the State's STEM activities to date to ensure that the activities that are integrated will be useful and can be sustained. The State found a significant gap in student outcome results for English learners, especially for English learners in rural areas. The State is considering developing an action plan specific to the English learner population. Additionally, the STEM Coordinator is facilitating the development of STEM curriculum samples designed to support STEM instruction and the infusion of STEM across the curriculum.

Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

The State's STEM work supported under the Race to the Top grant has been integrated into the standards implementation projects. In general, as discussed above, Colorado has made some progress in the area of STEM education; however, the State is delayed in creating a clear plan for integration of STEM content into State-provided tools and resources. The plan was to be completed by August 2012.[7] While the work is generally on track, the State needs to continue to work in the area to ensure the impact of this work on its students' academic growth.

[7]CDE reported that the STEM plan was completed in February 2013 and is being used to develop and award the STEM in Action grants.

Looking Ahead to Year 2

Colorado plans to support LEAs as they implement educator evaluation systems that meet the requirements of SB 10-191 in SY 2013-2014. The State will finalize the teacher and principal evaluation rubrics, user guides, decision matrix, weighting guidance, inter-rater reliability processes, and training materials based on pilot feedback. Additionally, the State will develop model evaluation tools for other licensed personnel.

The State will continue to develop, vet and disseminate CCSS-aligned classroom-level assessments, curriculum, and additional resources to support its LEAs in implementing the State standards and educator evaluation systems. CDE will continue to populate the Resource Bank with Content Collaboratives measures, instructional tools, and web-based tutorials on how to use the resources and tools.

The State will build on its work from the STEM assets and needs study and design the STEM in Action program to fill needs and connect teachers to STEM resources outside their classrooms. The State plans to award the first round of STEM in Action grants. STEM resources will be loaded into the Resource Bank on ongoing basis.

Budget

For the State's expenditures through June 30, 2012, please see the Race to the Top APR at www.rtt-apr.us.

For State budget information, see http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/state-scope-of-work/index.html.

Glossary

Alternative routes to certification: Pathways to certification that are authorized under the State's laws or regulations that allow the establishment and operation of teacher and administrator preparation programs in the State, and that have the following characteristics (in addition to standard features such as demonstration of subject-matter mastery, and high-quality instruction in pedagogy and in addressing the needs of all students in the classroom including English learners and students with disabilities): (a) can be provided by various types of qualified providers, including both institutions of higher education and other providers operating independently from institutions of higher education; (b) are selective in accepting candidates; (c) provide supervised, school-based experiences and ongoing support such as effective mentoring and coaching; (d) significantly limit the amount of coursework required or have options to test out of courses; and (e) upon completion, award the same level of certification that traditional preparation programs award upon completion.

Amendment requests: In the event that adjustments are needed to a State's approved Race to the Top plan, the grantee must submit an amendment request to the Department for consideration. Such requests may be prompted by an updated assessment of needs in that area, revised cost estimates, lessons learned from prior implementation efforts, or other circumstances. Grantees may propose revisions to goals, activities, timelines, budget, or annual targets, provided that the following conditions are met: the revisions do not result in the grantee's failure to comply with the terms and conditions of this award and the program's statutory and regulatory provisions; the revisions do not change the overall scope and objectives of the approved proposal; and the Department and the grantee mutually agree in writing to the revisions. The Department has sole discretion to determine whether to approve the revisions or modifications. If approved by the Department, a letter with a description of the amendment and any relevant conditions will be sent notifying the grantee of approval. (For additional information please see http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/amendments/index.html.)

America COMPETES Act elements: The twelve indicators specified in section 6401(e)(2)(D) of the America COMPETES Act are: (1) a unique statewide student identifier that does not permit a student to be individually identified by users of the system; (2) student-level enrollment, demographic, and program participation information; (3) student-level information about the points at which students exit, transfer in, transfer out, drop out, or complete P–16 education programs; (4) the capacity to communicate with higher education data systems; (5) a State data audit system assessing data quality, validity, and reliability; (6) yearly test records of individual students with respect to assessments under section 1111(b) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)); (7) information on students not tested by grade and subject; (8) a teacher identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students; (9) student-level transcript information, including information on courses completed and grades earned; (10) student-level college-readiness test scores; (11) information regarding the extent to which students transition successfully from secondary school to postsecondary education, including whether students enroll in remedial coursework; and (12) other information determined necessary to address alignment and adequate preparation for success in postsecondary education.

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA): On February 17, 2009, President Obama signed into law the ARRA, historic legislation designed to stimulate the economy, support job creation, and invest in critical sectors, including education. The Department of Education received a $97.4 billion appropriation.

Annual Performance Report (APR): Report submitted by each grantee with outcomes to date, performance against the measures established in its application, and other relevant data. The Department uses data included in the APRs to provide Congress and the public with detailed information regarding each State's progress on meeting the goals outlined in its application. The final State APRs are found at www.rtt-apr.us.

College- and career-ready standards: State-developed standards that build toward college and career readiness by the time students graduate from high school.

Common Core State Standards (CCSS): Kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12) ELA and mathematics standards developed in collaboration with a variety of stakeholders including States, governors, chief State school officers, content experts, States, teachers, school administrators, and parents. The standards establish clear and consistent goals for learning that will prepare America's children for success in college and careers. As of December 2011, the CCSS were adopted by 45 States and the District of Columbia.

The **education reform areas** for Race to the Top: (1) Standards and Assessments: Adopting rigorous college- and career-ready standards and assessments that prepare students for success in college and career; (2) Data Systems to Support Instruction: Building data systems that measure student success and support educators and decision-makers in their efforts to improve instruction and increase student achievement; (3) Great Teachers and Great Leaders: Recruiting, developing, retaining, and rewarding effective teachers and principals; and (4) Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools: Supporting LEAs' implementation of far-reaching reforms to turn around lowest-achieving schools by implementing school intervention models.

Effective teacher: A teacher whose students achieve acceptable rates (*e.g.*, at least one grade level in an academic year) of student growth (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements). States, LEAs,

or schools must include multiple measures, provided that teacher effectiveness is evaluated, in significant part, by student growth (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements). Supplemental measures may include, for example, multiple observation-based assessments of teacher performance.

High-minority school: A school designation defined by the State in a manner consistent with its Teacher Equity Plan. The State should provide, in its Race to the Top application, the definition used.

High-poverty school: Consistent with section 1111(h)(1)(C)(viii) of the ESEA, a school in the highest quartile of schools in the State with respect to poverty level, using a measure of poverty determined by the State.

Highly effective teacher: A teacher whose students achieve high rates (*e.g.*, one and one-half grade levels in an academic year) of student growth (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements). States, LEAs, or schools must include multiple measures, provided that teacher effectiveness is evaluated, in significant part, by student growth (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements). Supplemental measures may include, for example, multiple observation-based assessments of teacher performance or evidence of leadership roles (which may include mentoring or leading professional learning communities) that increase the effectiveness of other teachers in the school or LEA.

Instructional improvement systems (IIS): Technology-based tools and other strategies that provide teachers, principals, and administrators with meaningful support and actionable data to systemically manage continuous instructional improvement, including such activities as instructional planning; gathering information (*e.g.*, through formative assessments (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements), interim assessments (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements), summative assessments, and looking at student work and other student data); analyzing information with the support of rapid-time (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements) reporting; using this information to inform decisions on appropriate next instructional steps; and evaluating the effectiveness of the actions taken. Such systems promote collaborative problem-solving and action planning; they may also integrate instructional data with student-level data such as attendance, discipline, grades, credit accumulation, and student survey results to provide early warning indicators of a student's risk of educational failure.

Invitational priorities: Areas of focus that the Department invited States to address in their Race to the Top applications. Applicants did not earn extra points for addressing these focus areas, but many grantees chose to create and fund activities to advance reforms in these areas.

Involved LEAs: LEAs that choose to work with the State to implement those specific portions of the State's plan that necessitate full or nearly-full statewide implementation, such as transitioning to a common set of K-12 standards (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements). Involved LEAs do not receive a share of the 50 percent of a State's grant award that it must sub grant to LEAs in accordance with section 14006(c) of the ARRA, but States may provide other funding to involved LEAs under the State's Race to the Top grant in a manner that is consistent with the State's application.

Participating LEAs: LEAs that choose to work with the State to implement all or significant portions of the State's Race to the Top plan, as specified in each LEA's agreement with the State. Each participating LEA that receives funding under Title I, Part A will receive a share of the 50 percent of a State's grant award that the State must sub grant to LEAs, based on the LEA's relative share of Title I, Part A allocations in the most recent year at the time of the award, in accordance with section 14006(c) of the ARRA. Any participating LEA that does not receive funding under Title I, Part A (as well as one that does) may receive funding from the State's other 50 percent of the grant award, in accordance with the State's plan.

The **Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC):** One of two consortia of States awarded grants under the Race to the Top Assessment program to develop next-generation assessment systems that are aligned to common K-12 English language and mathematics standards and that will accurately measure student progress toward college and career readiness. (For additional information please see http://www.parcconline.org/.)

Persistently lowest-achieving schools: As determined by the State, (i) any Title I school in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring that (a) is among the lowest-achieving five percent of Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring or the lowest-achieving five Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring in the State, whichever number of schools is greater; or (b) is a high school that has had a graduation rate as defined in 34 CFR 200.19(b) that is less than 60 percent over a number of years; and (ii) any secondary school that is eligible for, but does not receive, Title I funds that (a) is among the lowest-achieving five percent of secondary schools or the lowest-achieving five secondary schools in the State that are eligible for, but do not receive, Title I funds, whichever number of schools is greater; or (b) is a high school that has had a graduation rate as defined in 34 CFR 200.19(b) that is less than 60 percent over a number of years. To identify the lowest-achieving schools, a State must take into account both (i) the academic achievement of the "all students" group in a school in terms of proficiency on the State's assessments under section 1111(b)(3) of the ESEA in reading/language arts and mathematics combined; and (ii) the school's lack of progress on those assessments over a number of years in the "all students" group. (For additional information please see http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/index.html.)

Qualifying evaluation systems: Educator evaluation systems that meet the following criteria: rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation

systems for teachers and principals that: (a) differentiate effectiveness using multiple rating categories that take into account data on student growth as a significant factor, and (b) are designed and developed with teacher and principal involvement.

Reform Support Network (RSN): In partnership with the ISU, the RSN offers collective and individualized technical assistance and resources to grantees of the Race to the Top education reform initiative. The RSN's purpose is to support the Race to the Top grantees as they implement reforms in education policy and practice, learn from each other and build their capacity to sustain these reforms.

The **School Improvement Grants (SIG)** program is authorized under section 1003(g) of Title I of the ESEA. Funds are awarded to States to help them turn around persistently lowest-achieving schools. (For additional information please see http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/index.html.)

School intervention models: A State's Race to the Top plan describes how it will support its LEAs in turning around the lowest-achieving schools by implementing one of the four school intervention models:

- ***Turnaround model:*** Replace the principal and rehire no more than 50 percent of the staff and grant the principal sufficient operational flexibility (including in staffing, calendars/time and budgeting) to fully implement a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student outcomes.
- ***Restart model:*** Convert a school or close and reopen it under a charter school operator, a charter management organization, or an education management organization that has been selected through a rigorous review process.
- ***School closure:*** Close a school and enroll the students who attended that school in other schools in the district that are higher achieving.
- ***Transformation model:*** Implement each of the following strategies: (1) replace the principal and take steps to increase teacher and school leader effectiveness, (2) institute comprehensive instructional reforms, (3) increase learning time and create community-oriented schools, and (4) provide operational flexibility and sustained support.

Single sign-on: A user authentication process that permits a user to enter one name and password in order to access multiple applications.

The **SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (Smarter Balanced):** One of two consortia of States awarded grants under the Race to the Top Assessment program to develop next-generation assessment systems that are aligned to common K-12 English language and mathematic standards and that will accurately measure student progress toward college and career readiness. (For additional information please see http://www.k12.wa.us/SMARTER/default.aspx.)

The **State Scope of Work:** A detailed document for the State project that reflects the grantee's approved Race to the Top application. The State Scope of Work includes items such as the State's specific goals, activities, timelines, budgets, key personnel, and annual targets for key performance measures. (For additional information please see http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/state-scope-of-work/index.html.) Additionally, all participating LEAs are required to submit Scope of Work documents, consistent with State requirements, to the State for its review and approval.

Statewide longitudinal data systems (SLDS): Data systems that enhance the ability of States to efficiently and accurately manage, analyze, and use education data, including individual student records. The SLDS help States, districts, schools, educators, and other stakeholders to make data-informed decisions to improve student learning and outcomes, as well as to facilitate research to increase student achievement and close achievement gaps. (For additional information please see http://nces.ed.gov/Programs/SLDS/about_SLDS.asp.)

Student achievement: For the purposes of this report, student achievement (a) for tested grades and subjects is (1) a student's score on the State's assessments under the ESEA; and, as appropriate, (2) other measures of student learning, such as those described in paragraph (b) of this definition, provided they are rigorous and comparable across classrooms; and (b) for non-tested grades and subjects, alternative measures of student learning and performance such as student scores on pre-tests and end-of-course tests; student performance on English language proficiency assessments; and other measures of student achievement that are rigorous and comparable across classrooms.

Student growth: The change in student achievement (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements) for an individual student between two or more points in time. A State may also include other measures that are rigorous and comparable across classrooms.

Value-added models (VAMs): A specific type of growth model based on changes in test scores over time. VAMs are complex statistical models that generally attempt to take into account student or school background characteristics in order to isolate the amount of learning attributable to a specific teacher or school. Teachers or schools that produce more than typical or expected growth are said to "add value."