

RACE TO THE TOP

Illinois Report

Year 2: December 2012–December 2013



U.S. Department of Education
Washington, DC 20202

June 2014

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 the Race to the Top Phase 3, Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge,² and Race to the Top – District³ competitions.

In 2011, the Department awarded Phase 3 grants to seven additional States, which were finalists in the Race to the Top Phase 1 and Phase 2 competitions. Race to the Top Phase 3 focuses on supporting efforts to leverage comprehensive statewide reform, while also improving science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education.

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, local educational agencies (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)⁴ 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.

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).⁵

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).⁶ The State-specific summary report serves as an assessment of a State's annual Race to the Top implementation. The Year 2 report for Phase 3 grantees highlights successes and accomplishments, identifies challenges, and provides lessons learned from implementation from approximately December 2012 through December 2013.

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 More information on the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge can be found at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-earlylearningchallenge/index.html>.

³ More information on Race to the Top – District can be found at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-district/index.html>.

⁴ Participating local educational agencies (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 subgrant 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 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA).

⁵ More information about the Implementation and Support Unit's (ISU's) program review process, State Annual Performance Report (APR) data, and State Scopes of Work can be found at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/index.html>.

⁶ Additional State-specific data on progress against annual performance measures and goals reported in the Year 2 APRs can be found on the Race to the Top Data Display at www.rtt-apr.us.

Executive Summary

State's education reform agenda⁷

Illinois was awarded a \$42.8 million Race to the Top Phase 3 grant in December 2011 to improve educational outcomes for all students in Illinois and to bolster its ongoing work in six areas: building State capacity and support; transitioning to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments; using data to improve instruction; improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance; ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers; and providing effective support to teachers and principals. As of December 2013, there were 863 LEAs in Illinois, serving 3,862 schools and a workforce of approximately 130,000 teachers and leaders educating almost 1,983,000 students, nearly 1,031,000 of them eligible for a free or reduced price lunch.

The State's plan focuses on supporting implementation of the new rigorous Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in mathematics and English language arts (ELA); using innovative data systems to inform educators to enable them to improve classroom instruction; utilizing a new, comprehensive principal and teacher evaluation system that includes student growth indicators; ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers; and improving STEM education through stronger connections to postsecondary education and training, as well as business and industry.

For the purposes of this grant, 34 LEAs currently have signed memoranda of understanding with the State to serve as participating LEAs in the State's Race to the Top plan.⁸ While the State is working to build its capacity for statewide implementation of key initiatives and systems, these participating LEAs are charged with building systems and processes to accelerate and sustain improved student outcomes and are intended to serve as leaders of reform for the State. By participating in a comprehensive set of reforms designed to increase student achievement in ELA and mathematics, the participating LEAs are working to decrease achievement gaps between student sub-groups, improve high school graduation rates, and increase both college enrollment and the number of students who earn at least one year's college credit toward completion of a two- or four-year degree.

State Year 1 summary

In Year 1, Illinois took steps to build the capacity of the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) by creating dedicated teams to implement the State's Race to the Top plan. The State engaged in ongoing communication with participating LEAs through webinars, email, and periodic convenings. ISBE established several projects designed to support college and career readiness for all students and began working with LEAs to integrate their data systems with the Illinois Shared Learning Environment (ISLE). Additionally, the Performance Evaluation Advisory Committee (PEAC) was created to develop and

finalize the State teacher and leader evaluation model, inform the development of support resources, provide guidance to LEAs on the State's Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA, PA 096-0861) and to ensure that teacher and principal evaluators in the participating LEAs were trained under timelines required by PERA. The State also administered the Illinois 5Essentials survey of learning conditions in every school across the State and entered into a contract for a PERA Research-Based Study.

State Year 2 summary

Accomplishments

In Year 2, the State continued to work on fully staffing the Race to the Top leadership team within the Center for Performance at the ISBE. ISBE also continued to build its partnership with the Center for School Improvement (CSI) to assist participating LEAs with implementing their continuous improvement efforts and transitioning to the CCSS.⁹ To support performance management of each project, the project teams began developing performance agreements that document project timelines, short- and long-term goals, and performance outcomes. ISBE engaged in ongoing communication with participating LEAs through webinars and email. Additionally, ISBE established a quarterly schedule to convene and provide regional support to participating LEAs aimed at increasing local staff capacity through training, technical assistance, and networking opportunities on selected topics essential to local implementation of the LEAs' Race to the Top projects. The State also administered the 5Essentials Survey of learning conditions and included pertinent data from the survey in the release of a new School Report Card.

The Pathways Resource Center (PRC) supported participating LEAs to continue development of at least two STEM Programs of Study (POS) by holding a number of regional and statewide meetings and webinars to provide information and share best practices, as well as identifying four PRC coaches to provide one-on-one assistance to LEAs. The State completed contract negotiations and established steering committees for each of the nine STEM Learning Exchanges that will support POS implementation. Additionally, the State's College and Career Readiness (CCR) program partnered high schools with community colleges to begin aligning secondary and postsecondary curricula with a focus on STEM areas and to begin providing high school intervention activities to ensure that high school students successfully graduate college and career ready.

PEAC continued to develop State teacher and principal evaluation models and provide guidance to assist newly trained evaluators to implement educator evaluation systems. In addition, the State identified a contractor to design, develop and complete a study of the State's PERA implementation. The contractor designed

⁷ This section reflects counts of schools and students reported in the State's Phase 3 application.

⁸ Illinois reported having 35 participating LEAs in the Race to the Top annual performance report (www.rtt-apr.us) as of June 30, 2012. On September 18, 2013, the State reported that one LEA, General George S. Patton, withdrew from participation in Race to the Top due to limited funding and staff capacity to fulfill its commitments for the grant.

⁹ The Center for Performance staff oversees the Data and Accountability Division, as well as, many of the Illinois State Board of Education's (ISBE) initiatives including Race to the Top, 5Essentials Survey, Illinois' Collaborative for Education Policy Research (ICEPR), Illinois Shared Learning Environment (ISLE), and the Illinois School Report Card.

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the study approach and project plan; however, the contractor still needs to finalize the identification of the necessary data and data collection processes.

Thirty-four LEAs integrated their student data into the ISLE and in August 2013 two participating LEAs began piloting some of the ISLE applications. In addition, the Illinois Collaborative for Education Policy Research (ICEPR) finalized the State research agenda and developed a system for outside research entities to access and gather data.

Challenges

The State's continued adjustments to its organizational structure impeded the process for hiring necessary personnel in a timely manner. As of December 2013, the State Race to the Top positions were not fully staffed but anticipated being so by spring 2014. In addition, due to the lengthy procurement process, the State experienced several challenges in executing contracts for the State's Local Assessment System (LAS), STEM Learning Exchanges, and mentoring and induction projects which negatively impacted project timelines. Finally, some aspects of the State's CSI and ICEPR projects, along with the teacher preparation program redesign project, have been delayed while the State reevaluates potential changes to these workstreams to ensure the best approach moving forward.

Looking ahead to Year 3

In Year 3, the State plans to complete the hiring of Race to the Top leadership staff. All project leads intend to initiate their performance agreements to help ensure effective implementation across all areas of the State's plan. To increase opportunities for communication and collaboration, the State also plans to continue to hold regional meetings to support participating LEAs with their project implementation and develop an online collaborative space where ISBE and participating LEAs can communicate best practices and implementation ideas, and LEAs can request resources and/or support. The State expects to create and implement a professional development program to train educators on the use of the ISLE system. The State also expects to determine the best course of action for the ICEPR project and the teacher preparation program redesign and begin implementation of both projects. Additionally, the State anticipates securing contractors and beginning implementation of the LAS and mentoring and induction projects. ISBE plans to continue to roll out guidance to LEAs on how to measure and incorporate student growth measures into educator evaluation systems for all grades and conduct the PERA Research-Based Study to determine if any changes should occur for pre-qualifying evaluators. In addition, the State expects to finalize its approach to implementing and completing projects that were significantly delayed in Year 2.

State Success Factors

Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans

ISBE capacity

In Year 2, Illinois took steps to begin building a performance system to more effectively monitor and implement its Race to the Top projects by initiating the development of performance agreements. The performance agreements document project timelines, short- and long-term goals and performance outcomes and were designed to support more efficient ways to measure project success and to foster greater staff ownership of project management. Several Race to the Top staff positions were vacated during Year 2; however, work was managed by remaining full time staff, contracted support and Center for Performance staff. According to the State, in Year 3 ISBE will adjust the Race to the Top staffing to provide the necessary supports to implement the Race to the Top plan and will complete hiring by spring 2014.

ISBE continued to facilitate ongoing monitoring of the Race to the Top initiatives through a number of processes, such as holding monthly meetings and drafting a monthly progress report for project leads, to share progress and address problems. The State summarized monthly project information in a one page project dashboard that assists with identifying any concerns, such as delays in meeting timelines and challenges in project implementation. The project dashboard is shared with the ISBE Roundtable and leadership to support decision-making. Processes are also in place to elevate difficult issues to the Superintendent, if needed.¹⁰

LEA supports

ISBE partners with CSI to provide training and technical assistance to participating LEAs. CSI staff include Capacity Building Coaches and content specialists who work with all LEAs to implement their Rising Star continuous improvement efforts and activities to support local efforts for transitioning to CCSS. In Year 2, CSI staff built the Professional Learning Series (PLS), an online library of items, to support LEAs to facilitate and maintain local implementation of

¹⁰ The ISBE Roundtable is a cross-divisional leadership committee that provides oversight, guidance, alignment, and support to the Illinois Center for School Improvement (Illinois CSI) to ensure that Illinois CSI's goals and practices support ISBE's vision and improvement initiatives.

State Success Factors

CCSS. Additionally, CSI staff offered training and technical assistance for implementing ELA and mathematics CCSS-aligned curriculum and for supporting school and LEA-level efforts towards continuous improvement processes. Beginning in school year (SY) 2013-2014, there was a break in CSI services and supports while the CSI restructured the delivery system it used to provide support to all LEAs. The State is considering a new structure of CSI services and supports to begin by March 2014 and participating LEA services and supports will align to the new structure.¹¹ In SY 2012-2013, participating LEAs met often, and had bi-weekly calls with Capacity Building Coaches to develop foundational understanding of the Race to the Top expectations and the Rising Star indicators. In SY 2013-2014, and moving forward, the Capacity Building Coaches will support all LEAs statewide, not just participating LEAs, based on their level of need. Capacity Building Coaches will provide general, regional professional development training and materials to 80 percent of all LEAs statewide. Twenty percent of all LEAs will have an identified team and district liaison for support and will receive intensive supports from the Capacity Building Coaches.

The State also focused on increasing the capacity of its participating LEAs to implement the approved projects successfully. ISBE maintained ongoing communication with these LEAs through regular emails and initiated a weekly email Race to the Top communication to relay important and timely information. Additionally, ISBE has scheduled quarterly Networking and Support Meetings focused on essential topics for local implementation of Race to the Top projects. The first meetings were held in November 2013 and centered on the topic of assessing student growth. Feedback from the participating LEAs indicated that the meetings were well-received and the topic was valuable to the LEAs, who requested to continue the topic in the January 2014 meetings. ISBE also hosted several webinars and conference calls with participating LEAs to inform them of upcoming

events, grant requirements, and opportunities for collaboration. The State indicated that LEAs have provided positive anecdotal reactions to the webinars, and the State plans to gather more feedback through polls of future participants on the usefulness of each webinar. The State is working to develop an online collaborative space where ISBE and participating LEAs can communicate best practices and implementation ideas, and LEAs can request resources or support. Despite these communication structures, the State identified the need to focus on building in feedback loops and mechanisms to gauge the quality and impact of its communication efforts to ensure that they are optimally efficient and effective.

Monitoring progress

In Year 2, Illinois' Race to the Top staff focused primarily on continued planning and launching of LEA individual projects. The LEAs completed a mid-year and annual report. The reports included information about the progress on each LEA's projects' development and implementation. Race to the Top staff use the information to assist with identifying LEAs with specific implementation challenges in order to provide those LEAs with additional materials, resources and connections to staff or other LEAs for additional ideas and information to get back on track. The State began implementation of onsite monitoring reviews in fall 2013.¹² Additionally, the State launched a new, simplified, and more user-friendly School Report Card in October 2013. The new School Report Card included information such as student growth and school performance trends, percentage of students on track for college and career, extracurricular programs and summary data from the 5Essential survey of learning conditions. ISBE created principal communication toolkits and email templates to support dissemination of information regarding the new report cards and to encourage active engagement from staff, parents and community members with local initiatives.

¹¹ The CSI launched its new regional delivery system in March 2014.

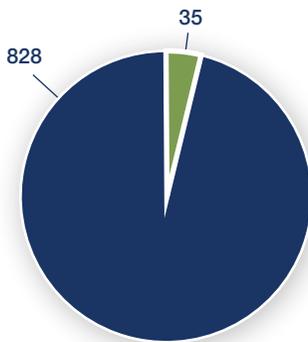
¹² The Illinois monitoring plan includes at least one onsite review for each of the participating LEAs during the grant period. LEAs that do not receive an onsite visit in a given year will participate in a desk monitoring process. Both onsite and desk monitoring processes include programmatic and fiscal reviews.

State Success Factors

LEA participation

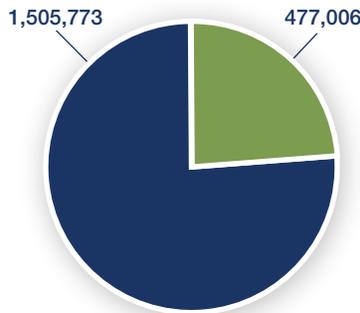
Illinois reported 34 participating LEAs, including the State's largest LEA (Chicago Public Schools), as of September 2013. This represents 20 percent of the State's kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12) schools, 24 percent of its K-12 students, and 41 percent of its students in poverty.

LEAs participating in Illinois' Race to the Top plan



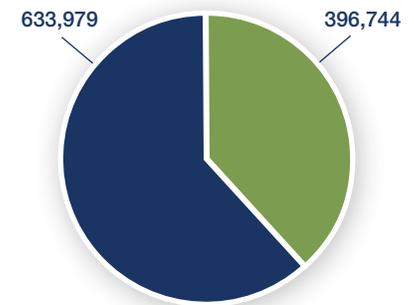
■ Participating LEAs (#)
■ Involved LEAs

K-12 students in LEAs participating in Illinois' Race to the Top plan



■ K-12 students (#) in participating LEAs
■ K-12 students (#) in involved LEAs

Students in poverty in LEAs participating in Illinois' Race to the Top plan



■ Students in poverty (#) in participating LEAs
■ Students in poverty (#) in involved LEAs

The number of K-12 students and number of students in poverty statewide are calculated using pre-release data from the National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) Common Core of Data (CCD). Students in poverty statewide comes from the CCD measure of the number of students eligible for free or reduced price lunch subsidy (commonly used as a proxy for the number of students who are economically disadvantaged in a school) under the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National School Lunch Program. The students in poverty statewide count is an aggregation of school-level counts summed to one State-level count. Statistical procedures were applied systematically by CCD to these data to prevent potential disclosure of information about individual students as well as for data quality assurance; consequently State-level counts may differ from those originally reported by the State. Please note that these data are considered to be preliminary as of December 17, 2013.

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

Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

The State continued its internal processes to organize the Race to the Top work, such as establishing ongoing meetings of Race to the Top project leads and providing the information to ISBE leadership. Project leads began to develop performance agreements to support effective project management and continuous improvement processes. ISBE and CSI provided training and technical assistance to participating LEAs centered on transitioning to CCSS-aligned curriculum, continuous improvement at the school and LEA level and effective implementation of LEA Race to the Top projects. ISBE established supports for participating LEAs, including frequent and varied communication, an updated webpage, and provided numerous webinars. In addition, the State began to implement its annual onsite and desk monitoring processes.

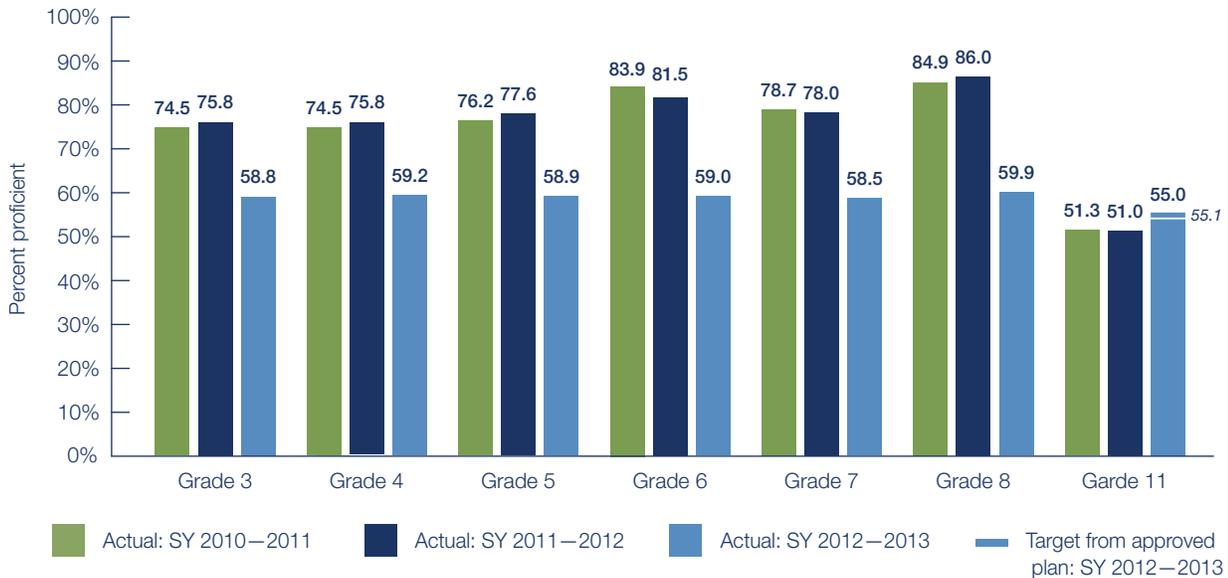
There are still several areas that presented challenges to the State's implementation. ISBE was delayed in hiring several Race to the Top staff members. Though the State established ongoing meetings with project leads to ensure clear and consistent communication and to monitor project implementation, many projects are delayed. In addition, the State must continue to build and sustain a solid foundation for implementation after months of ongoing adjustments due to delays in procuring contracts and several changes in project implementation. The State must work quickly and efficiently to continue to get on track with its approved timelines and milestones, while assessing effectiveness in implementation and measuring quality. To accomplish this, the State must continue to work on identifying and creating feedback loops in its communications strategy with participating LEAs and gathering data from consumers of resources, supports, and trainings.

State Success Factors

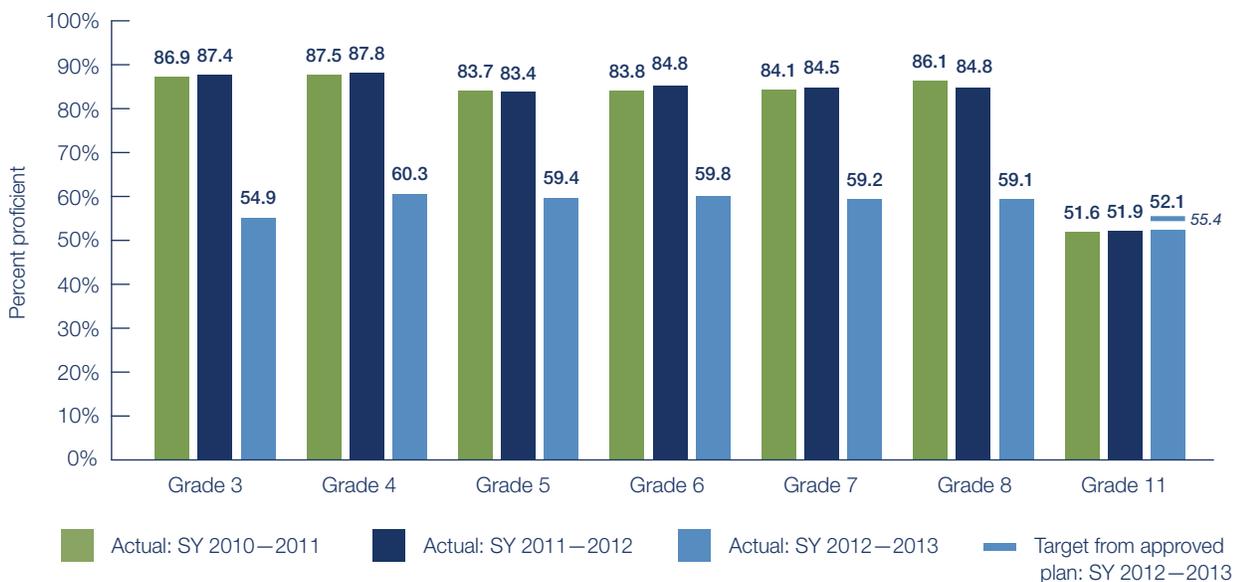
Student outcomes data

Student proficiency on Illinois' mathematics and ELA assessments decreased in grades three through eight. Additionally, student proficiency in grade eleven ELA increased from SY 2011-2012 to SY 2012-2013 while student proficiency in grade eleven mathematics stayed relatively the same. In explaining the decrease in performance, the State noted that, in order to raise the bar on how well students are prepared to meet college- and career-readiness benchmarks, 20 percent of the items on the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) were aligned to the CCSS in SY 2012-2013. In addition, ISBE raised the performance level cut scores of the ISAT for elementary students in January 2013.

Student proficiency on Illinois' ELA assessment



Student proficiency on Illinois' mathematics assessment



Preliminary SY 2012-2013 data reported as of: November 12, 2013.

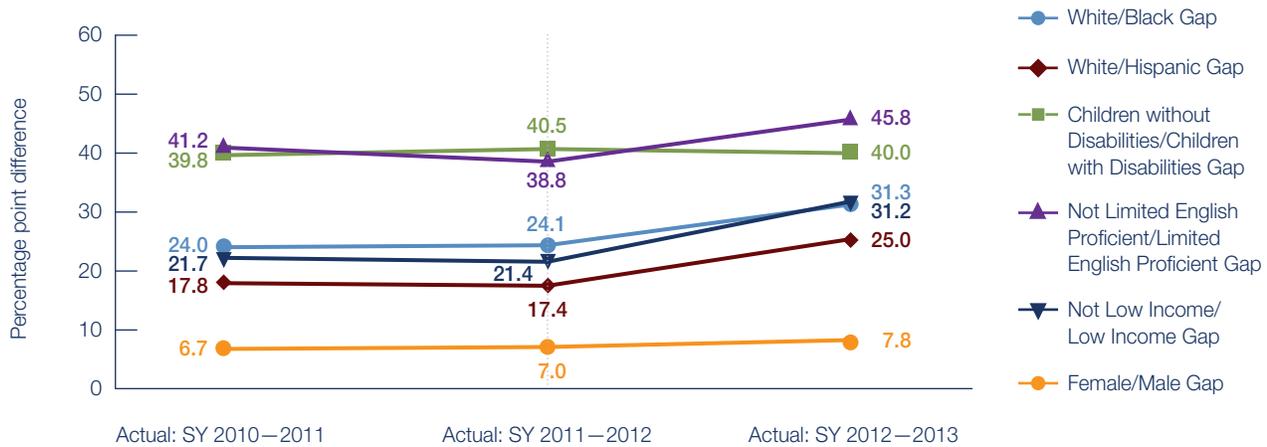
NOTE: Over the last three years, a number of States adopted new assessments and/or cut scores.

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

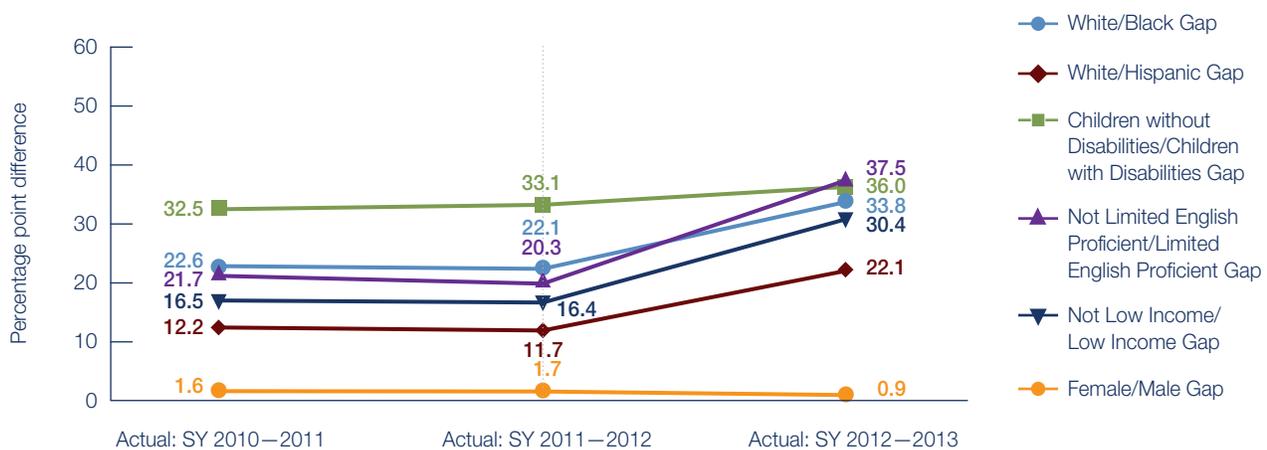
State Success Factors

Achievement gaps between SY 2011-2012 and SY 2012-2013 for both Illinois' ELA and mathematics assessments increased, with the exception of children with disabilities compared to children without disabilities in ELA.¹³

Achievement gap on Illinois' ELA assessment



Achievement gap on Illinois' mathematics assessment



Preliminary SY 2012-2013 data reported as of: November 12, 2013.

Numbers in the graph represent the gap over three school years between two sub-groups on the State's ELA and mathematics assessments.

Achievement gaps were calculated by subtracting the percent of students scoring proficient in the lower-performing sub-group from the percent of students scoring proficient in the higher-performing sub-group to get the percentage point difference between the proficiency of the two sub-groups.

If the achievement gap narrowed between two sub-groups, the line will slope downward. If the achievement gap increased between two sub-groups, the line will slope upward.

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

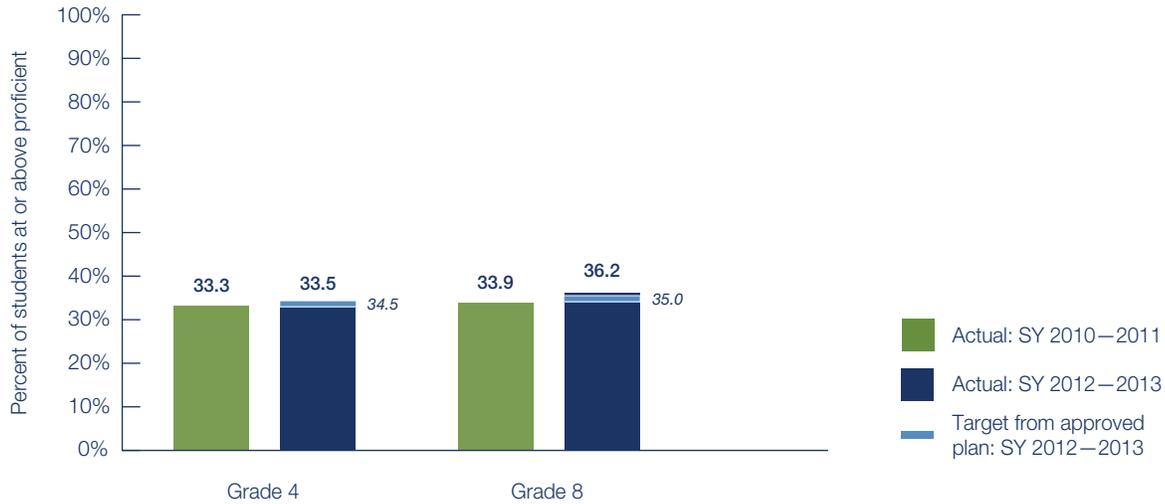
For State-reported context, please refer to the Race to the Top APR at www.rtt-apr.us.

¹³ As noted previously, in 2013, the State adjusted its Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) cut scores.

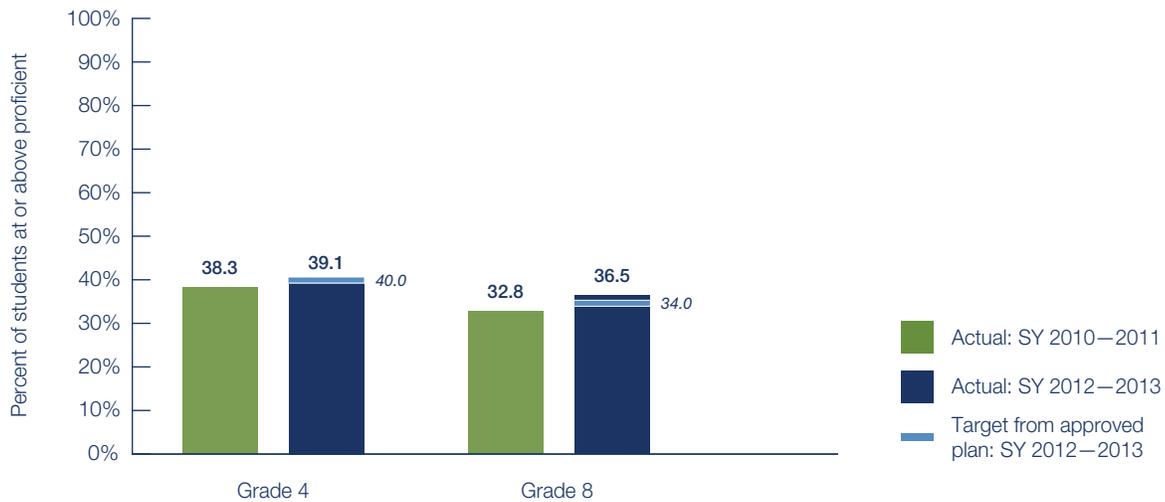
State Success Factors

According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), the percentage of Illinois' grade four and grade eight students who were at or above Proficient in reading and mathematics increased in 2013 compared to 2011.

Student proficiency, NAEP reading



Student proficiency, NAEP mathematics



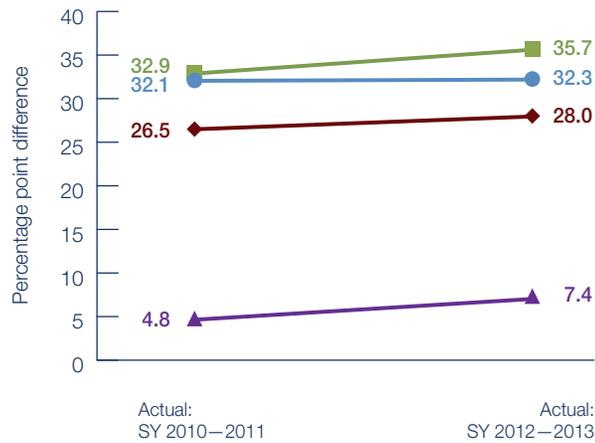
NAEP is administered once every two years. The two most recent years are SY 2010-2011 and SY 2012-2013. NAEP reading and mathematics results are provided by the Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences. To learn more about the NAEP data, please visit <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>.

Illinois' approved Race to the Top plan included targets for NAEP results based on percentages, not based on students' average scale scores.

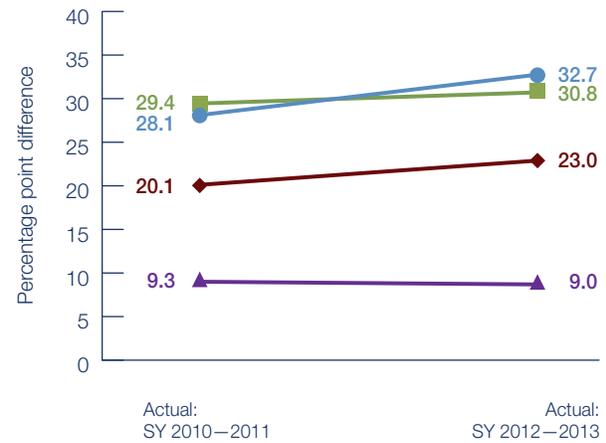
State Success Factors

NAEP data showed a general increase in the achievement gaps for grade four and grade eight reading between SY 2010-2011 and SY 2012-2013, with the exception of grade four white students compared to black students where gaps remained relatively flat. NAEP mathematics data showed that results for achievement gaps were mixed for grade four and grade eight between SY 2010-2011 and SY 2012-2013.

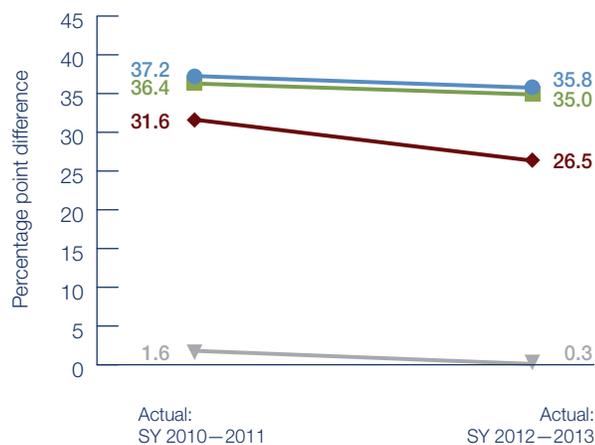
Grade 4 achievement gap on NAEP reading



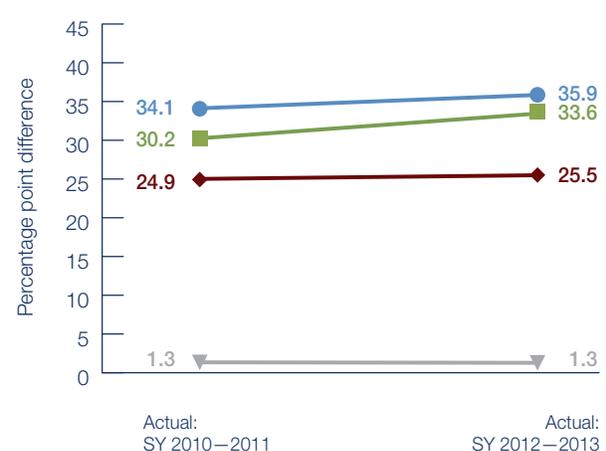
Grade 8 achievement gap on NAEP reading



Grade 4 achievement gap on NAEP mathematics



Grade 8 achievement gap on NAEP mathematics



- White/Black Gap
- ▲ Female/Male Gap
- Not National School Lunch Program Eligible/
National School Lunch Program Eligible
- ◆ White/Hispanic Gap
- ▼ Male/Female Gap

NAEP is administered once every two years. The two most recent years are SY 2010-2011 and SY 2012-2013. Illinois' NAEP reading and mathematics results are provided by the Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences. To learn more about the NAEP data, please visit <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>.

Numbers in the graph represent the gap in a school year between two sub-groups on the NAEP reading and NAEP mathematics.

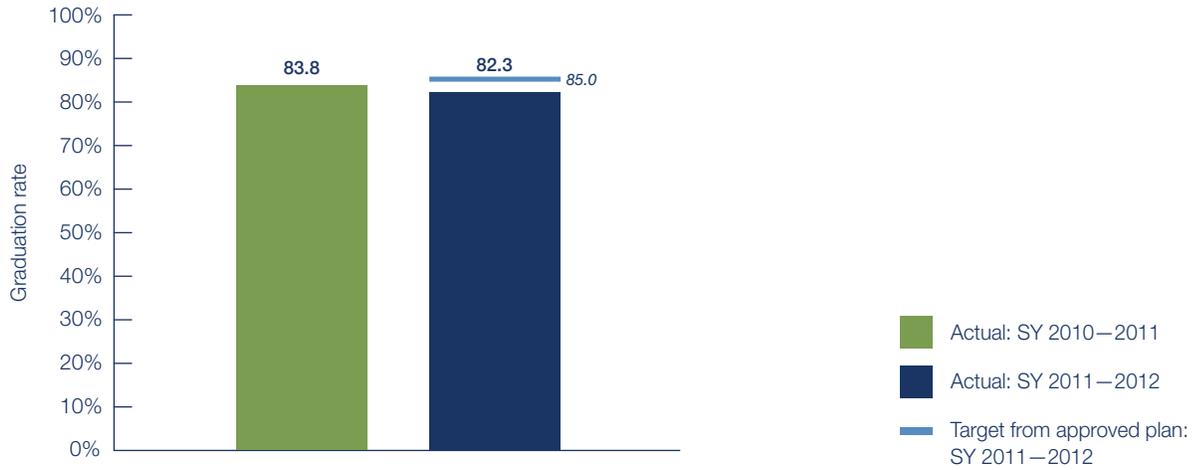
Achievement gaps were calculated by subtracting the percent of students scoring proficient in the lower-performing sub-group from the percent of students scoring proficient in the higher-performing sub-group to get the percentage point difference between the proficiency of the two sub-groups.

If the achievement gap narrowed between two sub-groups, the line will slope downward. If the achievement gap increased between two sub-groups, the line will slope upward.

State Success Factors

Illinois' high school graduation rates remained relatively flat between SY 2010-2011 and SY 2011-2012.

High school graduation rate



Preliminary SY 2011-2012 data reported as of: August 13, 2013.
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

Illinois adopted the CCSS in June 2010 and is a governing State in the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). To aid in the transition to rigorous standards and high-quality assessments, the State began developing and implementing services and resources that supported participating LEAs with standards implementation so that educators were able to deliver standards-aligned instruction in every classroom. These supports focused on providing assessment tools to inform classroom instruction, promoting instructional alignment, and delivering high-quality STEM instructional resources.

The State continued working to select an LAS management entity to make assessment resources available to LEAs to support the measurement of student growth for educator performance evaluations. Over the course of SY 2012-2013, the State issued three requests for vendor proposals. The first two releases did not attract bidders that met the project requirements. However, ISBE is in the process of vetting a vendor from the third request. In order to ensure that crucial LAS work was completed according to the State plan, ISBE began to draft an assessment literacy framework and a template to support local assessment development while securing an LAS management entity. Additionally, ISBE began to create basic student learning objectives (SLO) webinar training programs. Once secured, the LAS contractor will work with ISBE, professional organizations, and teachers to develop local assessment resources that will be made available through a shared resources bank.

The PRC, which is supported by a partnership (entitled the Illinois Pathways) among the State of Illinois' lead education and economic development agencies, provided information and a variety of resources to participating LEAs to support implementation of STEM POS and use of the STEM Learning Exchanges. During SY 2012-2013, the PRC held a number of regional and statewide meetings, including the Scaling Up Pathways Networking Conference and the Pathways to Results conference, where PRC staff shared information regarding best practices and allowed for networking among participating LEAs. Additionally, in spring 2013 the State identified four PRC coaches to provide one-on-one technical assistance for implementing POS to participating LEAs. PRC staff provided monthly updates

and quarterly detailed reports to ISBE regarding progress toward implementation of specific project activities. Participating LEAs also provided information regarding their interactions and support from the PRC staff through the LEA mid-year and annual self-assessments.

Participating LEAs committed to implementing at least two POS for high school students in grades 9-12. The POS will include sequences of courses, assessments, and applied learning experiences organized around a career cluster through options like dual credit courses, work-based learning experiences, or other opportunities to earn stackable credentials and degrees. In SY 2012-2013, participating LEAs worked to design and begin implementation of their POS programs.

Each POS will relate to one of the eight STEM Learning Exchange areas.¹⁴ The Learning Exchanges, organized by career topic areas, are public-private education infrastructures that coordinate statewide networks of pre-kindergarten through higher education (P-20) partners, which includes business, labor and other organizations, to provide resources, services, and supports in their specific career areas. Each Learning Exchange is overseen by a steering committee of individuals from all of the partnership offices and appointed a lead with specific Learning Exchange industry experience to monitor implementation progress. In SY 2012-2013, six of eight Learning Exchanges completed their three-year strategic plans to provide resources and services to support participating LEAs' POS. Two of the Learning Exchanges encountered procurement challenges causing implementation delays of a few months.

The State also expanded the Illinois Community College Board's CCR Project, which is designed to increase alignment between high school and college curricula and support student pathways from high school to postsecondary education. The State established partnerships between seven community colleges and several participating LEAs with students that feed into those colleges to participate in the CCR program. In SY 2012-2013, this project focused on interventions in mathematics and ELA. Career services will also be provided to students as part of the project interventions. Five of the seven partnerships provided four-week Summer Bridge programs and all partnerships provided Fall Intervention programs. In order to assess student progress when participating in the project interventions, several tools (*e.g.*, American College Testing (ACT), ACT Compass and ASSET tests) were identified and disseminated to all of the partners for pre- and post-testing. Additionally, the State identified an outside entity that will conduct an overall evaluation of the project.

¹⁴ Illinois identified nine science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) application areas in its Race to the Top Phase 3 application: agriculture, food, and natural resources; energy; manufacturing; information technology; architecture and construction; transportation, distribution, and logistics; research and development; health sciences; and finance. During a request for information (RFI) process, the State received no feedback from Architecture and Construction and believed this was an area not ready to become a collaborative learning exchange. Therefore, there are currently eight areas of focus for the STEM Learning Exchanges in Illinois.

Standards and Assessments

Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

The State made initial progress toward developing supports for local assessments but has not yet secured a contractor to lead the project. As a result, some of the LAS work is delayed. The State hopes to get the project back on track once the contractor is secured.

The State made progress supporting implementation of LEAs' STEM POS and establishing STEM Learning Exchanges. Contracts for each of the STEM Learning Exchanges have been secured and most have completed three-year strategic plans. The State is working to develop

systems to track progress and implementation of each Learning Exchange's strategic plan and to collect feedback from participating LEAs regarding access to services and products provided by the Learning Exchanges; as well as, to track the utility of those services and products for supporting LEAs' POS.

Community colleges and participating LEAs involved in the CCR project began working to align curricula and to provide identified services and interventions to students. Several assessment tools were identified to track student progress and an outside entity will complete an overall evaluation of the project.

Data Systems to Support Instruction

Statewide longitudinal data systems (SLDS) and instructional improvement systems (IIS) enhance the ability of States to effectively manage, use, and analyze education data to support instruction. Race to the Top States are working to ensure that their data systems are accessible to key stakeholders and that the data support educators and decision-makers in their efforts to improve instruction and increase student achievement.

Using data to improve instruction

In an effort to make data more useful and effective for improving classroom instruction, the State is building the ISLE, a technology platform that connects teachers and students with content, resources, and applications based on individual student needs in order to foster personalized learning.

In SY 2012-2013, participating LEAs began working with the ISLE team to assess their data capabilities and begin the data mapping required for integration onto the ISLE platform. The State anticipates that all participating LEAs will have their data integrated into ISLE by the end of January 2014.¹⁵ In August 2013, two participating LEAs began piloting ISLE and some of the applications. The dashboard is available for teachers in the classrooms of these pilot LEAs with access to learning map applications, content tagging/search applications and assessment tools. ISBE was working with inBloom to expand application resources at a cost savings; however, according to the State, the role of inBloom has changed due to community stakeholder concerns with privacy issues.¹⁶ ISBE will not require participating LEAs to use inBloom applications but will provide those applications to LEAs that voluntarily request them. Additionally, LEA data will not be uploaded into the inBloom database.¹⁷ ISBE is gathering feedback

from educators in the pilot districts to inform the State about ISLE functionality and to support decisions regarding modifications that should be made before full roll-out to all participating LEAs in SY 2014-2015. ISBE is communicating directly with each participating LEA to ensure that staff understand the function and value of the ISLE applications and to support development of the LEA implementation plans specific to each of the LEAs' system requirements.

ISBE plans to work with a full time contractor for 12 months to create professional development for participating LEAs around ISLE implementation and use. A coordinating team of representatives from ISBE, outside consultants and participating LEAs will guide the planning process. The State plans to host trainings on how to effectively use ISLE no later than summer 2014, which is seven months later than originally intended. Due to funding constraints on the ISLE project, ISBE is currently exploring funding options that will keep the project moving forward as planned.

In order to improve the impact that educational data can have on policymaking, ISBE established the ICEPR in October 2012 through Race to the Top funding to coordinate education policy research being performed around the State and focus this research on answering the questions most important to educational leadership in Illinois.

¹⁵ Thirty-four LEAs integrated their student data into the ISLE by December 2013.

¹⁶ inBloom is an independent nonprofit organization resulting from efforts within the education community beginning in 2011 to solve a common technology issue facing school districts.

¹⁷ In April 2014, inBloom stopped offering these products. The State reports it is working with LEAs to offer flexibility in using other applications.

Data Systems to Support Instruction

In SY 2012-2013, ICEPR finalized the State research agenda and developed a system for outside research entities to access and gather State data. In June 2013, ISBE's agreement with the ICEPR vendor was terminated and ISBE is currently considering a new vision for this project where the State would collaborate with a lead partner to establish a Data Center that would create a unique portal to access a significant amount of ISBE data for those with appropriate data security credentials in compliance with FERPA. In addition to conducting regular and customized research, both on behalf of ISBE and independently, the lead partner would also make data available to third party researchers.

Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

ISBE began integrating data from the participating LEAs into ISLE and began piloting the ISLE system with two of the participating LEAs. ISBE will continue to upgrade ISLE and the teacher dashboards using feedback from the pilot. Additionally, ISBE began planning for professional development for supporting educators to effectively use ISLE, which will be rolled out to participating LEAs in spring and summer 2014. ISBE also completed the State research agenda and has a system for outside entities to access State data. Since most of the ICEPR activities have been completed, ISBE is currently reconsidering the vision for the project.

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

To help ensure that there are effective teachers in every classroom and effective principals leading every school, ISBE developed teacher and principal evaluation systems that focus on both effective practice and student growth. Critical to ISBE's efforts are the investments in the components of the PERA of 2010, PERA Evaluator Prequalification and Training Program, PERA Research-Based Study, PEAC supports, and a statewide survey of learning conditions.

PEAC and PERA components

To facilitate the development of recommendations for the teacher and principal evaluation systems' components and frameworks for ongoing implementation, the State created PEAC, comprised of 32 education stakeholders, including teachers, administrators, and union leaders,

who are charged with developing the State teacher and principal evaluation models and informing the development of support resources. In SY 2012-2013, PEAC developed multiple guidance documents for the educator practice component of the teacher evaluation system. In August 2013, PEAC members held discussions in order to develop guidance on the student growth component that will include information regarding how the State models are structured for each educator category. The State anticipates that the guidance will be available for use in SY 2014-2015 to support LEAs as they fully implement their evaluation systems.¹⁸

PERA Evaluator Prequalification and Training Program

In Year 2, the State ensured that the training modules were available to teacher and principal evaluators within the PERA-required timeline.¹⁹ Roughly 6,900 Illinois educators completed all five Modules of

¹⁸ Illinois' implementation of qualifying evaluation systems will take place on the following timeline: Chicago Public Schools in school year (SY) 2013-2014, LEAs whose student performance ranks in the lowest 20 percent among all school districts of their type (e.g., elementary, high school) in the State in SY 2014-2015, and the remainder of participating LEAs in SY 2015-2016. The State's application stated that participating LEAs would measure student growth and implement qualifying evaluation systems one year ahead of that timeline.

¹⁹ Under the Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA, PA 096-0861), as of September 1, 2012, the authority for all principals or other administratively certified personnel authorized to provide evaluation of teachers and other administrators expired. Only individuals who had completed Modules 1-4 of the Teacher Evaluation Training provided by the State, except Chicago Public Schools' evaluators, who must have completed Module 5 as well, could provide an evaluation of a teacher. An observation of a teacher can take place if the evaluator has only completed Modules 1-3 of the training, but the evaluator cannot provide the summative evaluation until he or she has completed Module 4. Module 5 must be completed by November 1 of the year for which the LEA includes student growth in the teacher evaluation. Principal evaluators must complete the Principal Evaluation Training Modules 1-3 in order to conduct an observation of a principal and the final Modules 4 & 5 in order to provide the summative evaluation of the principal.

Great Teachers and Leaders

Teacher Evaluation Training and approximately 9,800 evaluators completed the first four modules. Additionally, approximately 2,400 evaluators completed all five Modules of Principal Evaluation training. The State is continuing to work with the Consortium for Educational Change (CEC) Partnership Group to provide the ongoing PERA pre-qualification training. As of June 30, 2012, the State no longer pays for the training. Instead, the training is available for a fee to the LEAs. CEC provides a price break (\$500 for teacher evaluation training and \$200 for principal evaluation training) to individuals who are registered through their Regional Office of Education (ROE).

State regulations allow for peer evaluations and ISBE is requiring participating LEAs to pilot a form of the peer evaluation system during SY 2013-2014. To assist with building LEA capacity for performing peer evaluations, the State developed a plan to create an endorsement of teacher leaders who can be evaluators. As of September 2013, five institutions were approved by ISBE to offer the teacher leader endorsement. The endorsement is not required, but will assist by providing evidence that particular staff members are trained to perform peer evaluations. The State also began to hold meetings with several stakeholders on the evaluator certification renewal process and completed a requirements document for the review of the evaluation distributions of ratings. ISBE will use this information to determine next steps for the implementation process.

Bensenville Peer Evaluation Process

Bensenville School District 2 created the Bensenville Peer Evaluation Program as a way to support and mentor new teachers. The peer evaluation process typically occurs within a three-step process. In the fall, the consulting teacher works with the new classroom teacher to understand self-reflection processes and set end-of-the-year instructional goals. Over the next few months, the consulting teacher performs informal classroom observations, provides feedback, and meets with the new teacher to discuss instructional improvements. At mid-year, the consulting teacher and the classroom teacher review student data and reflect on the initial instructional goals set at the beginning of the year. Again, the consulting teacher and classroom teacher engage in discussions related to instructional improvement. After several additional months of informal classroom observations and follow up support from the consulting teacher, an end-of-the-year conference is held to revisit and measure progress toward the educator's original instructional goals. As a result of the peer evaluation process, an educator receives ongoing feedback that supports continuous instructional improvement throughout the school year. Information collected through the peer evaluation process is used as a data point in the educator evaluation system.

Survey of Learning Conditions

In Year 2, Illinois implemented the 5Essentials Survey of Learning Conditions, which is a diagnostic tool that provides LEAs and schools with data on five leading indicators of school environment: Effective Leaders, Collaborative Teachers, Involved Families, Supportive Environment, and Ambitious Instruction. ISBE provided a variety of supports and resources to LEAs to assist in developing communication plans to inform stakeholders of strategies for successful implementation of the survey. ISBE reported that it exceeded its goals for response rates from the survey.

Once the survey results were collected and analyzed, ISBE provided a series of webinars to help LEAs access and use the data. Due to school leaders' concerns about some of the survey results, the State focused on assisting LEA staff to understand and use the data for school improvement planning. Further, the State made some changes to the survey questions based on LEA feedback. ISBE plans to use the SY 2012-2013 data to further improve the survey for SY 2013-2014. In October 2013, information from the 5Essentials Survey was integrated into the redesigned School Report Card and was also reported on the State website.

PERA Research-Based Study

Illinois entered into a contract for the PERA Research-Based Study focused on collecting reliable information to strengthen the effectiveness of reforms in the State. The contractor will engage in a four year, three-strand approach reflective of the context of Illinois schools and aligned to PERA legislation. The first strand will focus on assessing the reliability and validity of teacher practice rating measures and student growth measures. The second will focus on the implementation of evaluation systems and experiences of stakeholders within those systems to determine lessons learned from early implementers. The third strand will examine the impact of initial implementation on student performance. The study will also examine the correlation of growth as measured by the LEAs with their self-selected assessments and growth using State assessments.

In Year 2, the vendor finalized the study project plan; however, the plan to identify the necessary data and the process to gather the data was delayed. Due to these delays, participating LEAs did not have the information needed to prepare for their participation in the study data collection processes. ISBE reported that it has been working closely with the vendor and the LEAs to ensure that data collection processes are on track with timelines. The data collected through the initial study is due from the contractor in September 2014, and the supplemental study data are due in late 2015. Reports will be made available to the public, State legislature, the Board, PEAC and all external stakeholders. Illinois plans to use this data to refine the evaluation systems across the State.

Great Teachers and Leaders

Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals

As part of its Race to the Top application, ISBE made a commitment to ensuring that a pipeline of highly effective teachers and principals was available to the State's neediest schools. In Year 2, the State amended several aspects of its original approved plan and budget for this project, including shifting the timeline of the project by one semester to provide additional time to develop program interest and faculty knowledge as well as to further develop program designs.²⁰ Illinois was also approved to shift the types of teacher preparation programs and the curriculum content areas targeted for redesign. Specifically, the State's original plan focused on redesigning curriculum in four content areas (ELA, mathematics, science, and social studies) of elementary and middle school preparation programs, but revised its approach to focus on redesigning the ELA and mathematics curriculum of high school preparation programs. The State is significantly delayed in this project's implementation. It is again reconsidering its approach to this project to allow more teacher preparation programs to participate and to provide opportunities for modifying existing curriculum to include CCSS-aligned ELA and mathematics resources during the redesign process.

Providing effective support to teachers and principals

Illinois committed to assisting participating LEAs to establish, improve or expand their mentoring and induction programs for beginning teachers and principals. The State's plan included assembling a team of support staff to provide tailored technical assistance to participating LEAs for the use of formative assessments for new teacher practice protocols and local teacher evaluation and for enhancing mentoring services for first-time STEM teachers via online technology. Additionally, the State plans to support the Illinois New Principal Mentoring Program, which matches experienced principals who can provide on-the-job guidance and support with new principals; however, ISBE was not able to secure a contractor to lead this project, resulting in a one-year delay in State-provided supports and services for local project implementation.

In order to mitigate the effects of the delay, ISBE identified 17 participating LEAs that demonstrated the greatest need for mentoring and induction program implementation and contracted with Illinois State University to provide regional trainings to those LEAs. The regional training provide by Illinois State University will dovetail with training and services provided by the contractor, once identified.

Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

In Year 2, PEAC completed multiple guidance documents for the educator practice component of the teacher evaluation system and began to develop guidance on the student growth component. The State successfully trained substantial numbers of teacher and principal evaluators, including peer evaluators, but has not yet developed systems to provide support for participating LEAs as they implement the pilots of their evaluation systems. Additionally, the State made progress in developing a plan for the PERA Research-Based Study, but is delayed in identifying the specific research data for use in the study and the process to collect it from LEAs.

ISBE provided training and support to participating LEAs, which resulted in 93 percent of all districts successfully administering the 5Essentials survey and gathering results for the State to analyze and disseminate. The State faced challenges regarding the survey results and used them as an opportunity to enter into dialogue with LEA staff to support understanding of the results and how to use the information to impact LEA school improvement planning. Additionally, ISBE is using the experiences in the initial administration of the survey to improve the survey questions and the survey implementation process in SY 2013-2014.

The State's work redesigning teacher preparation programs is significantly delayed due to changes in the State's approach to identifying preparation programs to participate in the project and redesigning curricula. Additionally, the mentoring and induction program is delayed due to challenges in procuring a contractor to lead the project. ISBE is working to provide interim solutions to keep the projects moving forward; however, focused attention is needed to get the projects back on track.

²⁰ Amendment approval letters can be found at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/amendments/illinois.pdf>.

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

Race to the Top Phase 3 States are committed to providing a high-quality plan with a rigorous course of study in STEM. In their applications, grantees committed to allocating a meaningful share of their award to advances in STEM education in the State. A focus on STEM furthers the goal of preparing more students for an advanced study in sciences, technology, engineering, and mathematics, including among underrepresented groups such as female students.

State's STEM initiatives

Illinois's Race to the Top Phase 3 plan includes a focus on the establishment of a rigorous course of study in STEM for all students within participating LEAs, including addressing the needs of

underrepresented groups. The projects encompassing this work include initiatives discussed earlier in this report. They include the STEM Learning Exchanges, the Illinois Pathways Resource Center, and the College and Career Readiness Program (see *Standards and Assessments*).

Looking Ahead to Year 3

Building on its work in Year 2 to effectively support project implementation, Illinois will focus in Year 3 on continuing project work while measuring success and quality with defined metrics.

ISBE expects to finalize an organizational structure for Race to the Top staff and fill all positions to help support implementation across all areas of the State's plan. Additionally, the State plans to complete all project performance agreements to help ensure fidelity and quality of implementation. To increase opportunities for communication and collaboration, the State intends to continue providing regional networking and support meetings for participating LEAs and to develop an online collaborative space. ISBE anticipates using this space for sharing best practices and ideas for implementation and collecting LEA requests for resources or support. ISBE plans to execute a contract and finalize its approach to developing local assessment systems, and support LEAs implementing these assessments. ISBE expects to continue supporting implementation of LEAs' STEM POS and STEM Learning Exchanges strategic plans as well as developing a progress-monitoring tool to track ongoing progress for the projects. The State also anticipates offering professional development to educators around functionality of the ISLE system and determining a new plan for the ICEPR project.

ISBE plans to provide continued guidance to LEAs about how to best assess student growth and incorporate student growth measures into teacher evaluations for all grades and subjects, and continue to support implementation of PERA evaluation systems for principals and teachers. The State also intends to continue its work with a contractor on the PERA Research-Based Study to use reliability and validity data of teacher practice rating measures and student growth measures to determine and share lessons learned from early implementers. In addition, the State hopes to identify a plan for recalibrating and re-credentialing educator evaluators. ISBE also anticipates finalizing its approach and beginning implementation of its projects for educator preparation program redesign and mentoring and induction supports.

Finally, as ISBE moves beyond its Year 2 efforts to support Race to the Top project implementation, it should focus Year 3 on developing comprehensive and intentional feedback loops to assess the quality of implementation and design data collections that will inform its continuous improvement efforts.

Budget

For the State's expenditures through June 30, 2013, please see the APR Data Display at <http://www.rtt-apr.us>.

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

For the State's fiscal accountability and oversight report, see <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/performance-fiscal-accountability.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): (1) can be provided by various types of qualified providers, including both institutions of higher education (IHEs) and other providers operating independently from institutions of higher education; (2) are selective in accepting candidates; (3) provide supervised, school-based experiences and ongoing support such as effective mentoring and coaching; (4) significantly limit the amount of coursework required or have options to test out of courses; and (5) 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 annual 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) English language arts and mathematics standards developed in collaboration with a variety of stakeholders including governors, chief State school officers, content experts, teachers, school administrators, and parents. (For additional information, please see <http://www.corestandards.org/>.)

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 local educational agencies' (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.

Glossary

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 subgrant 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 subgrant 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, (1) 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 (2) 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 (1) 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 (2) 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: (1) differentiate effectiveness using multiple rating categories that take into account data on student growth as a significant factor, and (2) are designed and developed with teacher and principal involvement.

Glossary

Reform Support Network (RSN): In partnership with the Implementation and Support Unit (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's projects 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 (1) for tested grades and subjects is (a) a student's score on the State's assessments under the ESEA; and, as appropriate, (b) other measures of student learning, such as those described in number (2) of this definition, provided they are rigorous and comparable across classrooms; and (2) 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."