

RACE TO THE TOP

Pennsylvania 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 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>.

Executive Summary

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 agenda⁵

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) designed its Race to the Top Phase 3 application to accelerate key aspects of the State's strategic plan for education. As one of seven States to receive a Race to the Top Phase 3 grant, Pennsylvania received a total of \$41.3 million over four years. In school year (SY) 2011-2012, Pennsylvania's education system included 642 LEAs and 3,127 schools. Just over 40 percent of the State's more than 1.7 million students lived in poverty. One hundred ninety three LEAs are participating in Race to the Top. These LEAs represent 1,145 schools, 625,000 students, and 336,000 students in poverty.

As part of its efforts to implement a comprehensive and coherent approach to education reform, Pennsylvania has been working to improve its standards and assessments through the adoption and implementation of the Pennsylvania Common Core Standards (PACCS). This includes updating the State's Standards Aligned System (SAS) portal, an interactive website for teachers throughout the Commonwealth, with resources to support the transition from Pennsylvania's existing State standards to the PACCS. The State has also revised its regulations on standards and assessments to reflect the transition to PACCS and the end-of-course Keystone Exams. Beginning with the class of 2017, students must demonstrate proficiency through the Keystone Exams, which will replace the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment standardized tests that were previously used to measure student proficiency in mathematics, science and language arts to earn a high school diploma.

The State is also committed to improving educator effectiveness. As part of this effort, Pennsylvania is implementing new teacher, specialist (non-classroom teacher), and principal evaluation systems that evaluate educators' professional practices and incorporate student performance results as a significant factor. Pennsylvania will provide professional development in the use of the new evaluation systems, including how to utilize the information to improve teacher

and principal effectiveness. The State is also working to improve access to data that can be used to inform instruction.

In addition to these education reform efforts, Pennsylvania is working to expand the availability of high-quality charter schools.

Pennsylvania's Race to the Top application includes several initiatives that PDE believes will have the greatest impact on student outcomes and contribute to the State's education reform efforts. Pennsylvania will focus on expanding student and teacher access to quality courses and instructional resources, increasing access to data that can be used to inform instruction, implementing new educator evaluation systems, and expanding access to high-quality charter schools. Specifically, this involves:

- Improving student performance on the new Keystone Exams in Algebra I and Biology through improved instruction and higher expectations in upper elementary and middle school grades;
- Strengthening resources available on PDE's SAS Portal, including diagnostic, curriculum and tools/resources for science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).
- Analyzing the quality of STEM courses available via online course providers;
- Developing Math Design Collaborative (MDC) common mathematics tasks aligned to the PACCS for inclusion on the SAS portal;
- Creating an educator dashboard that will provide real-time data for use by educators;
- Developing a publicly accessible school performance profile for each school in the State;
- Implementing new teacher and principal evaluation systems that take into account student achievement as a significant factor; and
- Supporting the growth and expansion of charter schools.

State Year 1 summary

Accomplishments

In the first year of Race to the Top implementation, Pennsylvania focused on piloting its educator evaluation systems. Building upon lessons learned in the pilots conducted in SY 2010-2011 and SY2011-2012, the State began using its teacher observation rubric in all LEAs. It also moved into the second year of piloting the professional practices portion of its principal rubric in 237 LEAs. PDE trained its Intermediate Units (IUs) on the teacher observation rubrics and the IUs will soon begin training in LEAs.⁶ The State also provided inter-rater reliability training for those individuals who will be conducting classroom observations as well as professional development modules on the observation rubric.

⁴Additional 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.

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

⁶Pennsylvania's Intermediate Units (IUs) are part of the State's public education governance structure serving in a role between the State Education Agency (SEA) and the LEAs. The IUs provide region-based services to LEAs across the State. Under the State's Race to the Top plan, the IUs are providing a variety of professional development opportunities to LEAs as well as assisting the State in providing oversight of LEAs and their use of Race to the Top funds.

Executive Summary

Challenges

Many of Pennsylvania's Race to the Top projects experienced delays in Year 1 due, in part, to a lack of sufficient State-level staff and management. This led to a significant delay in Pennsylvania submitting an approvable Scope of Work to the Department. In addition, PDE was delayed in a portion of its standards and assessments efforts, in particular the evaluation of STEM courses available from online course providers and developing MDC common mathematics tasks for inclusion on the SAS portal. Pennsylvania also experienced delays in recruiting and convening members of the Strategic Leadership Council (SLC). Finally, the State experienced challenges in determining the best direction for its educator dashboard. PDE discussed multiple visions for this project with Department staff without choosing a specific direction and has only recently settled on the model it is implementing. These delays have led to concerns about Pennsylvania's ability to execute against all elements of its Race to the Top plan in a high-quality and timely manner.

The Department is also concerned about the State's oversight of its participating LEAs. As discussed below, the Department does not believe that Pennsylvania is working closely enough with its LEAs to ensure that they are meeting their Race to the Top commitments. The State appears to be focused on fiscal accountability within LEAs while relying predominately on expenditure and usage reports to gauge the quality of programmatic implementation.

Looking ahead to Year 2

During Year 2, Pennsylvania will continue to focus on the rollout of the educator evaluation systems as well as the related trainings. The State plans to make up for time lost in Year 1 on the online course catalogue and MDC projects. Pennsylvania will release the school performance profiles and move forward with the development of the educator dashboards. Finally, if the legislature passes charter school reform legislation, PDE will begin to enact changes related to the new law.

State Success Factors

Building State capacity to support LEAs

Pennsylvania's goals for this sub-criterion are three-fold:

- Staff the Race to the Top team;
- Create and utilize the SLC to advise PDE throughout the grant period and beyond; and
- Provide technical assistance and professional development to LEAs through expansion of the State's existing IU infrastructure.

Pennsylvania planned to staff its Race to the Top team early in Year 1 in order to move quickly to launch its Race to the Top work. The Race to the Top director has been in place since the grant was awarded, but the remaining members of the lead team were not hired until September 2012. According to Pennsylvania, this lack of lead team staff led to the delays across the State's Race to the Top projects. The State is still experiencing delays in hiring staff to support specific Race to the Top projects.

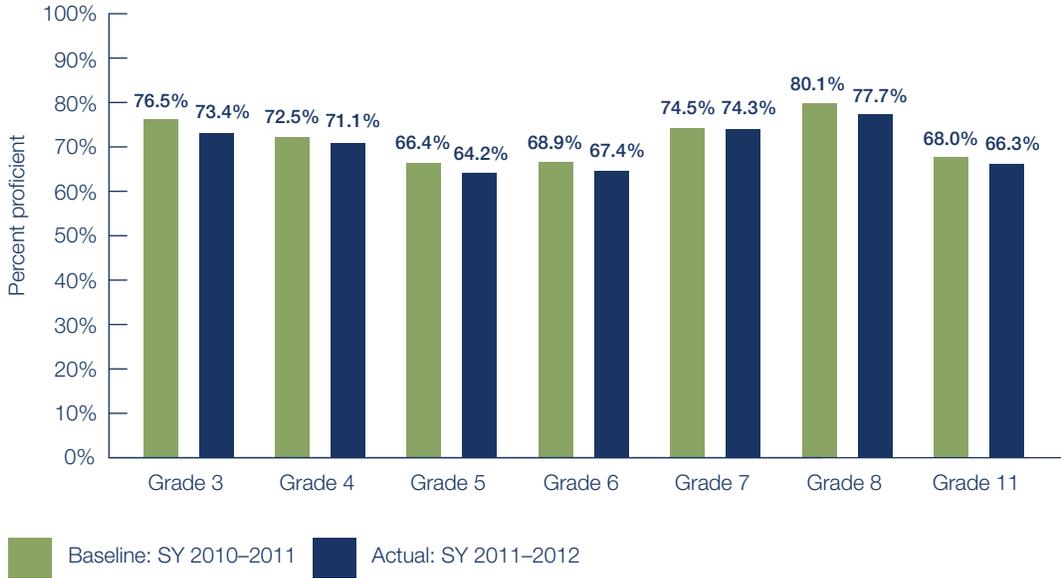
In addition to the oversight provided by the Race to the Top lead staff, PDE has created the SLC to advise on its Race to the Top work. In Year 1, the State recruited and established the membership of the SLC. The group consists of school superintendents, early childhood education advocates, higher education representatives, non-profit partners, elected State-level officials, teachers' union representatives, and other education stakeholders. This group was to be established and begin meeting in summer 2012 but due to lack of capacity to recruit and support this group, the formation was delayed until additional Race to the Top staff were hired. The first full membership meeting will be held in February 2013.

Pennsylvania's IUs are also playing an important role in the implementation and oversight of the Race to the Top grant, especially in the support of participating LEAs. In Pennsylvania, each participating LEA must use its Race to the Top funds to support the implementation of the State's new teacher, specialist, and principal evaluation systems. Allowable uses include paying for training related to the evaluation systems and purchasing equipment and supplies for use as tools in conducting the evaluations. In Year 1, the IUs began providing training to LEAs on the implementation of the teacher observation rubric. Over the course of the grant, the IUs will continue to provide professional development for educators in participating LEAs and monitor LEAs to ensure proper fiscal and management controls and program implementation.

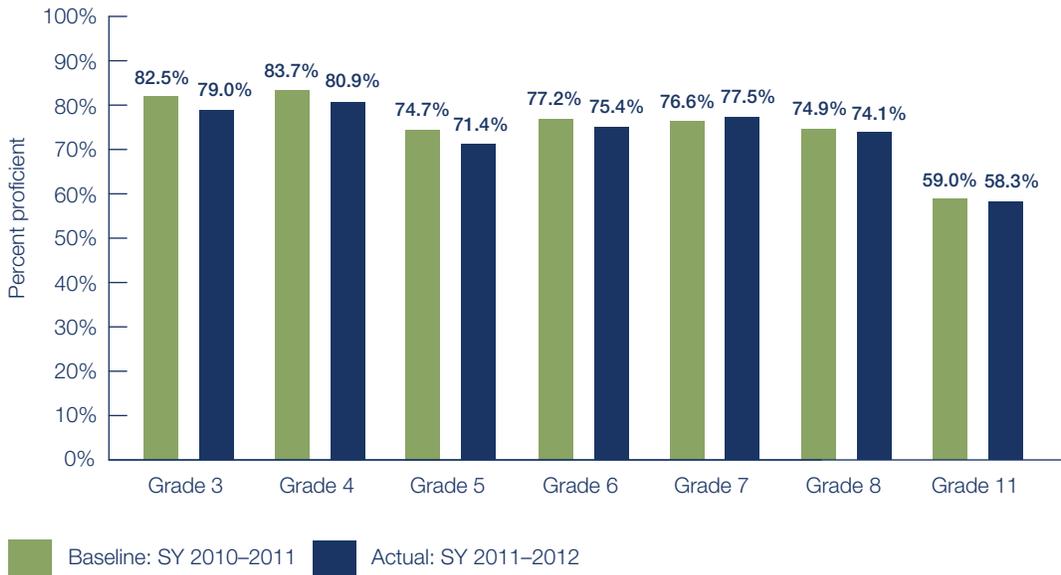
PDE and the IUs appear to be providing sufficient fiscal oversight of the LEAs, but the Department is concerned about the State's programmatic oversight of LEAs. Each LEA was required to submit a Scope of Work detailing its plan to support implementation of the new educator evaluation systems in order to receive Race to the Top funds, but PDE does not require that an LEA update its Scope of Work if its approach changes. PDE has indicated that it is providing programmatic oversight by tracking expenditures and evidence of LEA training to ensure that LEAs are meeting their commitments, but the Department does not feel that this is being tracked in a manner that is frequent or timely enough to sufficiently track LEA progress against its Race to the Top commitments. Additionally, the Department is concerned about the State's process to oversee the quality of LEA implementation. A large portion of the LEA funds are being used to purchase training on the educator

State Success Factors

Student Proficiency on Pennsylvania's ELA Assessment



Student Proficiency on Pennsylvania's Mathematics Assessment



Preliminary SY 2011-2012 data reported as of: August 27, 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.

State Success Factors

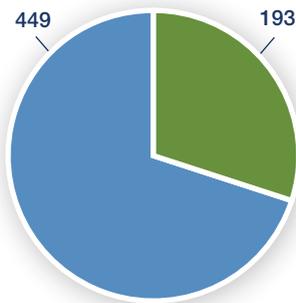
evaluation systems from the IUs, but Pennsylvania does not have a well-developed plan in place to gauge the quality of the training. The Department continues to work with the State to improve upon

its sub-recipient monitoring plan and will publicly post this plan once the Department agrees that Pennsylvania has submitted an acceptable plan.

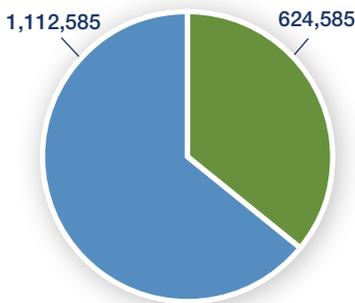
LEA participation

Pennsylvania reported 193 participating LEAs as of June 30, 2012. This represents nearly 36 percent of the State's kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12) students and 48 percent of its students in poverty.

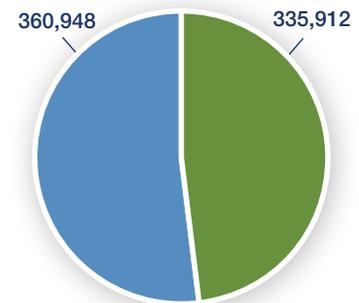
LEAs Participating in Pennsylvania's Race to the Top Plan



K-12 Students in LEAs Participating in Pennsylvania's Race to the Top Plan



Students in Poverty in LEAs Participating in Pennsylvania's Race to the Top Plan



■ Participating LEAs (#)

■ Other LEAs (#)

■ K-12 Students (#) in participating LEAs

■ K-12 Students (#) in other LEAs

■ Students in Poverty (#) in participating LEAs

■ Students in Poverty (#) in other LEAs

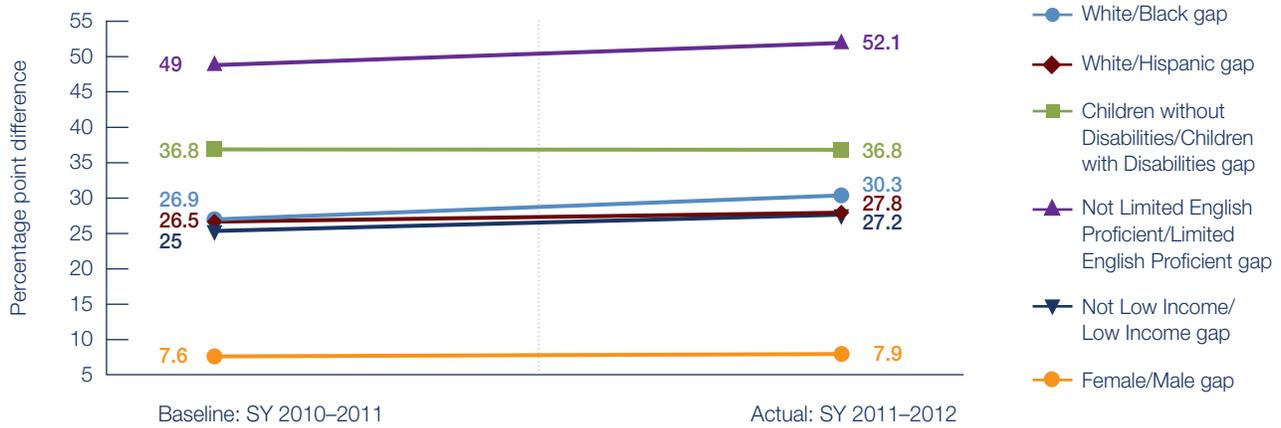
For State-reported context, please refer to the Race to the Top APR at www.rtt-apr.us.

Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

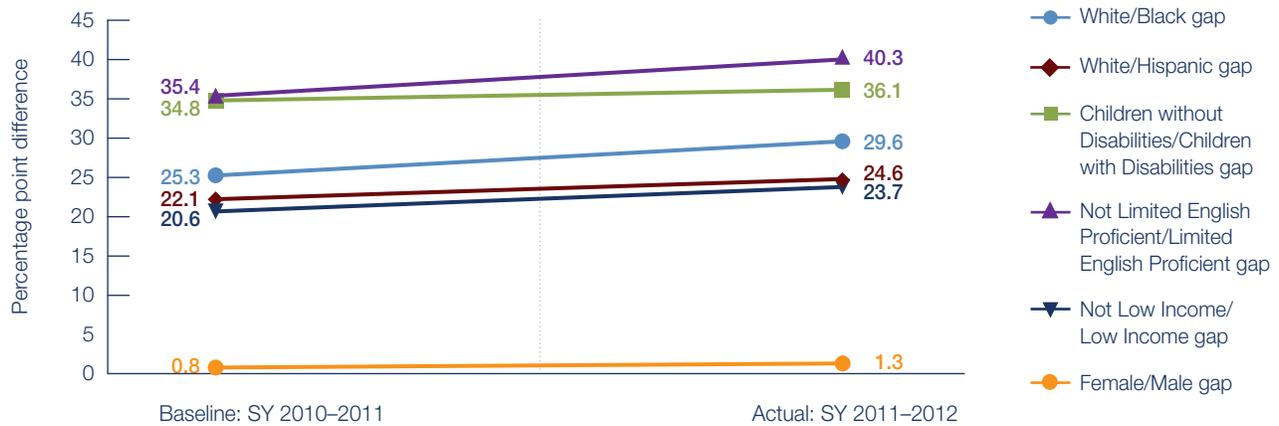
In Year 1, the State faced significant challenges in meeting timelines, planned expenditure rates, and proposed performance measures. As noted in the overview, according to the State, delays in staffing the program hindered much of Pennsylvania's Race to the Top work including finalizing its Scope of Work, forming and convening the SLC, developing a plan for the educator dashboard, and beginning work in some of the areas of the standards and assessments assurance area. The State's efforts have recently advanced, but there is still much work to be done if they are to meet their commitments for Year 2. PDE must work to improve and further articulate plans for programmatic oversight of the LEAs as described above. The Department expects to learn more about the State's plan in this area.

State Success Factors

Achievement Gap on Pennsylvania's ELA Assessment



Achievement Gap on Pennsylvania's Mathematics Assessment



Preliminary SY 2011-2012 data reported as of: August 27, 2012.

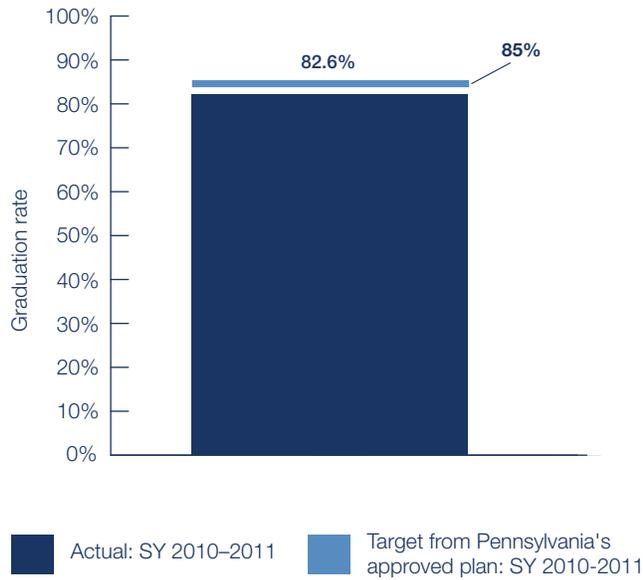
NOTE: Over the last two years, a number of States adopted new assessments and/or cut scores.

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.

State Success Factors

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.

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

Pennsylvania adopted the PACCS in July 2010. Since then, the State has focused on developing MDC common tasks, rubrics and exemplars; producing high-quality online courses; and offering the necessary professional development, technical assistance, instructional coaching and tools to support educators. Pennsylvania has committed to using its Race to the Top resources to support this transition.

PDE is using Race to the Top funds to improve student performance on Algebra I and Biology Keystone Exams by increasing the expectations for students in upper elementary and middle school grades. PDE plans to do this by:

- Adding classroom diagnostic tools in mathematics (aligned to the PACCS) and science for use in third through twelfth grade (3-12) to the SAS portal;
- Completing the Voluntary Model Curriculum for mathematics (aligned to the PACCS) and science, grades 3-12, on the SAS portal;
- Enhancing the materials available and improving the quality of the instructional and intervention components of the SAS portal in mathematics and science for grades 3-12, as well as supporting new and existing professional learning communities (both on-site and online) to advance the use of these SAS portal resources;
- Developing and implementing curriculum analysis processes to assist educators in ensuring that their written, taught, and tested curricula align with Keystone content, including analyses of diagnostic and summative assessment data, in order to inform appropriate adjustments;
- Establishing IU-based regional networks of higher education and K-12 professionals, in order to develop continuity and commonality of rigorous expectations for students and educators; and
- Identifying and implementing family involvement strategies to promote STEM learning.

Work is underway on these efforts.

PDE has also outlined an online course access project, to analyze the quality of STEM courses available via online course providers.

In Year 1, this work progressed slowly, and the State and the Department have now determined that the timeline proposed by the State in its original Race to the Top Phase 3 application was overly ambitious. While the State intended to begin developing the rubric to assess the courses in summer 2012, delays in staffing this project caused a substantial postponement in the start of this work. The State has also altered its hiring plans, relying on existing PDE staff members to lead this effort, rather than hiring a manager as originally planned. The State has adopted a rubric to assess the quality of available courses as well as the alignment to Pennsylvania PACCS. The State plans to begin evaluating courses in June 2013. The initial review will focus on Algebra I and Biology, and extend to other STEM-focused courses once the process is established. As gaps are identified, additional high-quality STEM courses will be added.

The State is also delayed in its work to develop MDC materials and resources for inclusion on the SAS portal. Pennsylvania plans to work with educators to develop MDC common mathematics tasks and rubrics to facilitate implementation of the PACCS in mathematics. However, the State has not yet hired the staff necessary to lead this project. This work was slated to begin in fall 2012, but due to delays in staffing, this work will not begin until summer/fall 2013.

Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

As part of its efforts to improve student performance on Algebra I and Biology I Keystone Exams, Pennsylvania has been working to strengthen the resources available via the SAS portal, including diagnostic tools, Voluntary Model Curriculum, and STEM resources and is making progress. However, due to staffing challenges and a lack of focus in these areas, the State has experienced delays in its efforts to develop MDC common mathematics tasks and analyze STEM courses available from online course providers. PDE has pulled together a team and begun work on analyzing online STEM courses but has not yet begun work on the MDC common mathematics tasks. The Department is concerned about the ability of PDE to complete the MDC project if it does begin this work soon. The Department expects to learn more about the State's plan over the coming months.

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 its Race to the Top plan, Pennsylvania committed to creating access for members of the public to school-level data and continuing to improve the State SLDS known as the Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS). Pennsylvania plans to accomplish these goals by developing a publicly accessible, web-based school performance profile for each school in the State and creating an educator dashboard that will provide real-time data for use by educators.

In Year 1, Pennsylvania began work on the development of school performance profiles. The State researched how other States and organizations rated schools and settled on a formula that takes into account academic achievement, closing achievement gaps, academic growth, and other academic indicators such as graduation rates and attendance. Throughout the year, PDE representatives have been traveling the State to present its selected model to stakeholder groups. In December 2012, the State issued preliminary school performance profile results using data from previous school years to demonstrate the outcomes to LEAs and schools. Pennsylvania plans to publicly release the school performance profiles in fall 2013. As part of its Race to the Top plan, the State committed to developing policy guidance on the intended uses of the school performance profiles. Thus far, PDE has determined that these profiles will be used to provide transparency about the performance of schools across the State and to inform the new educator evaluation systems. In addition, under the State's pending Elementary and Secondary Education Act flexibility request, the results of the school performance profiles will be used to determine which schools will be classified as Reward, Focus, and Priority and therefore, what interventions they may receive.⁷ The Department recognizes that Pennsylvania has made progress in setting some policy guidelines for the use of these profiles, but believes that the State should continue to develop and expand upon its existing policies as the results of the profiles could have wide-reaching effects beyond those areas covered in existing policy.

A second and complementary effort is the development of an educator dashboard. The goal is to build upon the State's existing SAS portal to create a user-friendly solution that provides real-time data for use by educators in the classrooms, schools, and LEAs, as well as by PDE personnel. In Year 1, the State proposed to research available solutions, establish criteria for the educator dashboard, and begin training educators on use of the dashboard by summer 2013. However, the State struggled to determine exactly what the educator dashboard would include. Throughout the course of the year, representatives from PDE proposed multiple visions for the dashboard but were unable to settle on one plan. In January 2013, the Department was informed that the State has developed a plan. The Department appreciates that PDE has determined a path forward for the development of the educator dashboard but is concerned about how the previous delays and will affect the development of the dashboard. The Department awaits additional information about this project once the State has finalized its plans.

Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

In Year 1, the State made progress in developing and releasing its school performance profiles but struggled to make progress in creating an educator dashboard. PDE recently settled on a plan for the educator dashboard and began work; however, the development timeline is aggressive and the Department will continue to monitor this activity.

⁷On September 23, 2011, the Department offered each interested State educational agency (SEA) the opportunity to request flexibility ("ESEA flexibility") on behalf of itself, its LEAs, and its schools, regarding specific requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), in exchange for rigorous and comprehensive State-developed plans designed to improve educational outcomes for all students, close achievement gaps, increase equity, and improve the quality of instruction. For more information on ESEA flexibility, see www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility.

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

In 2010, PDE launched the development of its teacher evaluation system, starting with the selection of a teacher practice observation tool based on Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching. A pilot was conducted in spring 2011 involving four LEAs and one IU. In SY 2011-2012, the pilot was expanded to over 100 LEAs. As part of its Race to the Top plan, the State committed to finalizing its classroom teacher observation rubric. This was accomplished in summer 2012. Updates have been made to the rubric based on lessons learned in the first two pilots and the rubric has been rolled out to all districts.

Also in Year 1, the State continued its pilot of the principal evaluation rubrics. The pilot began in 27 LEAs in SY 2011-2012 and was expanded to 237 LEAs for SY 2012-2013. During summer 2013, the rubrics will be revised based on lessons learned from the pilots and rolled out to all LEAs in SY 2013-2014.

In addition to the work being done on the educator observation rubrics, Pennsylvania is also working on developing the student performance portion of the educator evaluation systems. The State plans to develop a value-added model to measure student growth on State assessments and LEAs will be responsible for the development of Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) to measure student progress in non-tested grades and subjects. In an effort to support LEAs in the development of SLOs, PDE has created a rubric that outlines general requirements for developing SLOs and has indicated that it will provide training to districts.

In June 2012, House Bill (H.B.) 1901 was approved requiring that 50 percent of an educator's (including teachers, principals, and specialists) overall evaluation score be based on multiple measures of student performance (ranging from graduation rates to demonstrated

growth on State assessments) with the remaining portion of the overall rating based on measures of professional practice such as observations and professional responsibilities.⁸ As part of this policy, the number of possible rating categories was expanded from two to four: distinguished, proficient, needs improvement, and failing. Teachers will begin receiving ratings based on the results of the new evaluation systems in SY 2013-2014 and specialists and principals will receive ratings beginning in SY 2014-2015.⁹ Once ratings have been given, LEAs can begin to use evaluation results to inform retention decisions.

In order to implement the full evaluation system, including multiple measures of student performance, the State must enhance its data systems so that it is able to link teachers to their respective students. PDE is in the process of developing a system to make this linkage.

Providing effective support to teachers and principals

As part of its Race to the Top plan, Pennsylvania committed to providing training to educators on the educator effectiveness rubrics. PDE will provide training to IUs and leverage these regional networks to provide training to educators and to teacher and principal preparation programs. A three-day training on the classroom teacher observation rubric was held for the IUs in June 2012. This initial training has been supplemented by monthly webinars that focus on topics related to the rubric. The IUs are rolling out regional training for educators and will continue to provide training throughout the school year and into the summer.

Formal training has not yet begun on the specialist and principal rubrics. PDE representatives have indicated that the LEAs that are participating in the principal evaluation pilot also participated in the development of the rubric and the related training sessions and

⁸Teacher evaluation results for educators in tested grades and subjects will be based on observations (50 percent), school performance profile results (15 percent), elective data and SLOs (20 percent), and student growth (15 percent). Evaluation results for teachers in non-tested grades and subjects and specialists will include observations (50 percent), school performance profile results (15 percent), and elective data and SLOs (35 percent). Principal evaluation results will be based on observations (50 percent), school performance profile (15 percent), correlation between teacher State assessment data and the observation rating (15 percent), and elective data and SLOs (20 percent).

⁹H.B. 1901 states that three years of student growth data must be used to inform the student growth portion of the teacher evaluation for teachers in tested grades and subjects. Three years of data will be available for the first time in SY 2015-2016. Until student growth data is available, the observation portion of the evaluation for teachers in tested grades and subjects will count for 65 percent of the evaluation. If SLOs are not in place, the observation portion of the evaluation will be used in lieu of SLOs.

Great Teachers and Leaders

therefore, did not need additional training on implementing the rubric. According to the State, the LEAs involved with the principal rubric pilot meet with PDE on a regular basis to discuss progress and lessons learned in implementing the rubric. PDE plans to implement training similar to the training on the teacher rubric beginning in summer 2013.

The State has purchased 1,200 licenses from a vendor to provide online inter-rater reliability training to those individuals conducting teacher observations. The State is in the process of working with the vendor to gather data on user progress (*e.g.*, completion, success rate).

PDE is developing professional development modules aligned to the educator evaluation rubrics to be included on the SAS portal. To date, 20 modules have been developed and embedded on the SAS portal. These modules are aligned to the Danielson domains, and if the educator observation reveals that a teacher is in need of support in a domain, he/she can access related professional development via the SAS portal. Once the principal and specialist rubrics are finalized, PDE will begin work on developing professional development modules aligned to these rubrics.

Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

Pennsylvania is making progress in piloting its educator evaluation systems. The observation rubric has been finalized for the teacher evaluation system and the professional practices portion of the specialist and principal evaluation system is being piloted. However, the Department is concerned that the State does not have a more developed plan for training on the principal evaluation system and expects PDE to create a more in-depth plan once the pilot is complete.

The Department also has concerns about the student growth portion of the evaluation systems. Pennsylvania is currently in the process of developing the direct teacher-student data linkages in its value-added model of student growth. PDE is making progress, but if the State is delayed in making this linkage, it may cause delays in using the value-added student growth measure in SY 2015-2016 as three years of data will be used to inform an educator's evaluation. In addition, the Department has concerns about the LEA development of SLOs. PDE has created a rubric that provides general requirements for development and will provide training, but it is unclear how and if this rubric and training will facilitate the development of high-quality SLOs by the LEAs.

The Department is concerned that the State does not yet have a clear vision around the use of the results from the evaluation system to inform decisions related to professional development, compensation, promotion, retention, and removal for teachers, specialist, and principals. H.B. 1901 states that educators can be dismissed if a rating of "failing" is earned or two ratings of needs improvement are earned within a ten-year period. However, the State does not have a plan to offer LEAs guidance for how the results might inform promotion, retention, or compensation decisions.¹⁰ The State has indicated that it has online professional development modules in place that can be used if the teacher evaluation identifies a weakness in one of the Danielson domains, but PDE has not articulated a systematic plan to identify and provide professional development if weaknesses are identified through the student performance portion of the evaluation. Additionally, it has not provided a plan for identifying the professional development needs of principals identified via the principal evaluation system.

While Pennsylvania has made some progress in piloting the professional practices portion of its educator evaluation systems, much work remains to be done on the development of student performance measures and in determining how the results of the evaluation system will be used to inform professional development, compensation, promotion, retention, and removal decisions for educators. The State must carefully consider the timeliness and quality of its work if it is to meet its timelines for fully implementing its educator evaluation systems.

¹⁰Educator evaluations are to be used locally for tenure and retention/non-retention as governed by State law. Compensation is collectively bargained and promotion is a local policy issue. PDE can offer guidance, but, at this time, cannot require LEAs to use the evaluation results to inform decisions in these areas.

Charter Schools and Other Initiatives

Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charters and other innovative schools

Pennsylvania has committed to using Race to the Top funds to support a more coordinated effort to support the growth and expansion of charter school options. In Year 1, the State compiled an online list of public charters and the authority under which they exist, and plans, in Year 2, to develop this effort further in order to provide more transparency around charter school options. PDE has also been working to develop a more rigorous approval process for cyber charter schools and is encouraging LEAs to do the same for brick and mortar charter schools.¹¹ In addition, PDE has worked to create an orientation that cyber charter school operators must attend before receiving final approval for their charter. Through this orientation, potential charter school operators learn about various State and federal requirements for operating a charter school.

Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

PDE plans to support the growth and expansion of charter schools with Race to the Top funds but this depends, in part, on the passage of pending legislation. Charter school legislation was introduced in the last legislative session, which would have authorized PDE as a statewide authorizer for charter schools, thereby leading to changes in funding formulae related to charters. However, this proposed legislation did not pass. In the meantime, PDE will continue to act within the scope of existing legislation to support charter schools across the State.

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

State's STEM initiatives

The *Standards and Assessments* section above outlines several key aspects of the State's efforts to implement STEM curricula and related supports. Pennsylvania is working to improve student performance on Algebra I and Biology Keystone Exams by increasing the expectations for students in upper elementary and middle school grades. Along with the aforementioned expectations, materials, tools and resources on the SAS Portal have been expanded. In addition, the State is beginning its efforts to analyze the quality of STEM courses available via online course providers and has plans to add MDC common mathematics tasks to the SAS portal.

Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

As discussed in the Standards and Assessments section above, the State has been slow in initiating the online course catalog and MDC project due, in large part, to lack of staffing on these projects. A project lead has been assigned to the online course catalog project and PDE plans to begin work on the MDC common mathematics tasks project in summer/fall 2013, so the Department expects to see progress on these projects in Year 2.

Looking Ahead to Year 2

As it moves into Year 2, the State will continue work on the rollout of its teacher, specialist, and principal evaluation rubrics. It will build upon the lessons learned in Year 1 and revise the observation and professional practices portion of the evaluations accordingly. Pennsylvania will also continue preparations to incorporate student growth into its evaluation systems. The State will begin working with LEAs on the development of SLOs for use in non-tested grades and subjects. IUs will continue their work with LEAs including providing training on the teacher and principal rubrics as well as begin training on the student growth portion of the evaluation system.

In the area of Standards and Assessments, PDE will begin to analyze the quality of STEM courses available via online course providers and develop MDC common mathematics tasks for inclusion on the SAS portal. The State will focus on developing the educator dashboard with the support of its Statewide Longitudinal Data System grant and will begin to develop and provide training on using the dashboard. Finally, PDE will build upon its existing charter school work and expand its efforts if the legislature passes proposed charter school legislation.

¹¹Authority to approve brick and mortar charter schools resides with districts. PDE has the authority to approve cyber charters.

Budget

For the State's expenditures through June 30, 2012, please see the APR data display 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 mathematics 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."