

RACE TO THE TOP

Phase 3 Grantees

Arizona
Colorado
Illinois
Kentucky
Louisiana
New Jersey
Pennsylvania

Year 4 (December 2014-December 2015)



U.S. Department of Education
Washington, D.C. 20202

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Introduction

Race to the Top overview

On February 17, 2009, President Obama signed into law historic legislation, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), 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 2009, the U.S. Department of Education (Department) designed a four-year competitive grant program to encourage and reward States that were 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. The Department awarded Race to the Top Phase 1 and Phase 2 grants to 11 States and the District of Columbia in 2010. Following the Race to the Top Phase 1 and 2 and Race to the Top Assessment competitions, the Department made additional smaller 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 States that were finalists in the Race to the Top Phase 1 and Phase 2 competitions. Race to the Top Phase 3 focuses on supporting efforts for comprehensive statewide reform, while also improving science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education. Since less funding was available for Race to the Top Phase 3 grants than for Phase 1 and Phase 2 grants, Phase 3 grantees focused their scopes of work on a subset of initiatives proposed in their original Race to the Top applications. As a result, Phase 3 grantees carried out projects and initiatives that varied in their areas of focus.

Phase 1, 2, and 3 of the Race to the Top program was 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 to 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 change unless it is comprehensive and involves a variety of stakeholders. 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

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 receives 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).

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 Phase 3 summary report

The Department was committed to supporting States as they implemented unprecedented and comprehensive reforms to improve student outcomes. Grantees were accountable for the implementation of their approved Race to the Top plans, and the information and data gathered throughout the program review process helped 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. This report serves as an assessment of Year 4 of States’ Race to the Top implementation. To report on each year of Race to the Top implementation, the Department has published summary reports using information the Department gathered during the program review process (*e.g.*, through monthly calls, onsite reviews, and Annual Performance Reports (APRs)).⁵ For Phase 3 States in Years 1 and 2, the Department published individual State-specific summary reports.⁶ For Year 3, the Department issued one report that provided a summary of Race to the Top implementation across all Phase 3 States.⁷ As was the case for the Year 3 summary, this report summarizes Race to the Top implementation across all Phase 3 States in Year 4 (December 2014-December 2015). In addition to a summary of Year 4 accomplishments and challenges, the report includes a list of notable accomplishments that States made during Years 1-3, as well as examples of projects that States worked on over the course of their Race to the Top grants. Year 5 (December 2015 – December 2016) was the final project year for Phase 3 grantees. All Phase 3 States requested, and were granted, a “no-cost extension.” The no-cost extension provided grantees with additional time (with no additional funding) to complete activities aligned with their existing project goals and objectives.

⁵ Through the Annual Performance Report, Race to the Top States reported against their progress in meeting Race to the Top goals.

⁶ See <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/performance.html#phase-3> to access previous Phase 3 State-specific reports.

⁷ See <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/phase-3-year-3-report.pdf>.

Arizona

Arizona's education reform agenda

Arizona developed its Race to the Top plan to improve the State's education system and ensure that students are well prepared for the 21st century. The State recognized the urgent need to prepare students to be leaders in a new economy that values advanced knowledge and skills, particularly in STEM subjects, and worked with its P-20 Coordinating Council and Arizona STEM Network to set a vision and lay the foundation for a plan to accomplish these objectives.

Supporting the successful implementation of the Arizona College- and Career-Ready Standards (AZCCRS) was central to the State's Race to the Top Phase 3 plan with a focus on the following priorities:

- Creating Regional Centers as support to LEAs to help facilitate the transition to the State's college- and career-ready standards and assessments.
- Rolling out the AZCCRS, and ensuring that the State-level rollout is well aligned with STEM activities already under development.
- Providing educators with assistance in understanding and adjusting instruction based on the student data provided.
- Supporting the transition to high-quality standards and assessments with resource sharing tools.

The State received a \$25 million Race to the Top Phase 3 award to focus on transitioning to the AZCCRS; integrating STEM teaching and learning with the AZCCRS, especially for rural and Native American students; and updating its data collection capabilities. In Year 4, Arizona's Race to the Top grant included 221 participating LEAs.

Arizona's notable accomplishments in Years 1-3

- The Arizona Department of Education (ADE) implemented a Regional Center structure that significantly changed how technical assistance, service, and professional learning support is provided to LEAs, schools, leaders, teachers, and parents statewide. The regionally-based approach focuses on providing more efficient and timely services and supports aligned with local needs, and reduces the need for staff to travel to participate in trainings, workshops, and other meetings.
- ADE worked in partnership with the Governor's Office and Regional Centers to implement a public awareness campaign and gather information from the public, teachers, trainers, and principals to support the successful implementation of the AZCCRS.
- As part of the transition to its new standards, Arizona created a new Content Management System (CMS) that houses online professional development courses and webinars. In addition, a new Learning Management System (LMS) was established to increase ADE's ability to engage in online professional learning to support educators statewide through both online courses and webinars.
- Arizona implemented a deliberate approach to professional development to support the standards transition. Phase 1, or foundational, training focuses on overall awareness; Phase 2 training delves deeper into content and pedagogy and focuses on effective instructional practices; and Phase 3 training focuses on integration across subjects, particularly the integration of STEM knowledge and skills across all content areas. By the end of school year (SY) 2013-2014, a

Arizona

cumulative total of 37,025 educators had participated in ADE and Regional Center trainings on AZCCRS, up from 15,651 educators at the end of the previous school year.

- In collaboration with the Governor’s Office, ADE developed a new Arizona Report Card to provide parents, the community, and other stakeholders with visually-appealing data showing how Arizona is progressing on specific data points. The report card uses “data stories” (*e.g.*, third grade reading goals, eighth grade National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) mathematics goals, high school graduation goals) that include data, graphs, analysis, implications, and actions to consider from multiple perspectives – from the classroom to the State level.

Arizona Year 4 summary

Accomplishments

In Year 4, ADE continued to provide fiscal and programmatic technical assistance to LEAs that they would otherwise not have received. This model has been so successful that it is informing ADE’s new approach to cross-federal program monitoring. In addition, ADE reflected that the process of developing LEAs’ Scopes of Work, as well as the structure of the Scope of Work, effectively prompted strategic planning, particularly in small LEAs that received comparatively small amounts of funding (in many cases less than \$20,000). ADE worked closely with LEAs to determine how the limited amount of funding could be targeted to support teachers and leaders through the standards transition.

The Regional Education Centers continued their focus on coaching, leadership, classroom instruction and the integration of STEM knowledge into all content areas. Regional Center staff provided professional development for teachers and principals in the areas of data use, standards and assessments, and STEM. To support the transition to college- and career-ready standards and high-quality assessments, the Regional Centers continued to provide LEAs with tailored supports based on local need, including supporting teachers to produce rigorous, AZCCRS-aligned lessons and other instructional resources.

After delays in Year 3, ADE and the Regional Centers completed and released a vetting process in Year 4, using a rigorous rubric, to support teachers and leaders in developing high-quality instructional resources and ensure that resources posted on ADE’s website are of high quality. Additionally, the State launched the CMS publicly, after completing the system in Year 3, so that resources can now be made readily available statewide. Teachers develop resources that are reviewed by the LEA, the Regional Center, and then ADE. Resources ultimately posted to the statewide resources site in the CMS must be rated “exemplary” according to the rubric. Progress in increasing the number of exemplary resources was limited, but appeared to be the result of a commitment to quality and the challenges of creating locally-developed items.

At the request of teachers, the Regional Centers developed a professional development series on formative assessment and data-driven instruction. In addition, short three-minute trainings were developed to help educators answer questions about the standards and curriculum that they may receive from parents and community members. In Year 4, Regional Center staff established collaborative relationships with LEA staff and shared resources to support LEAs.

Arizona

As in prior years, ADE continued to provide Phase 1, 2, and 3 trainings to support the standards transition. To further support the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments for all students, ADE worked across functional areas by integrating standards implementation training with educator effectiveness trainings and summits.

Challenges

As part of its administrative oversight, ADE collected and analyzed implementation information from its participating LEAs. However, it is unclear whether this information informed the continuous improvement of State- or LEA-level implementation of Race to the Top initiatives. Additionally, according to ADE, it faced challenges in developing resources that met the high bar for quality necessary for posting to the statewide resources site in the CMS. ADE was also delayed in providing LEAs with an online platform to share instructional resources due to a shift in strategy based on available technology.

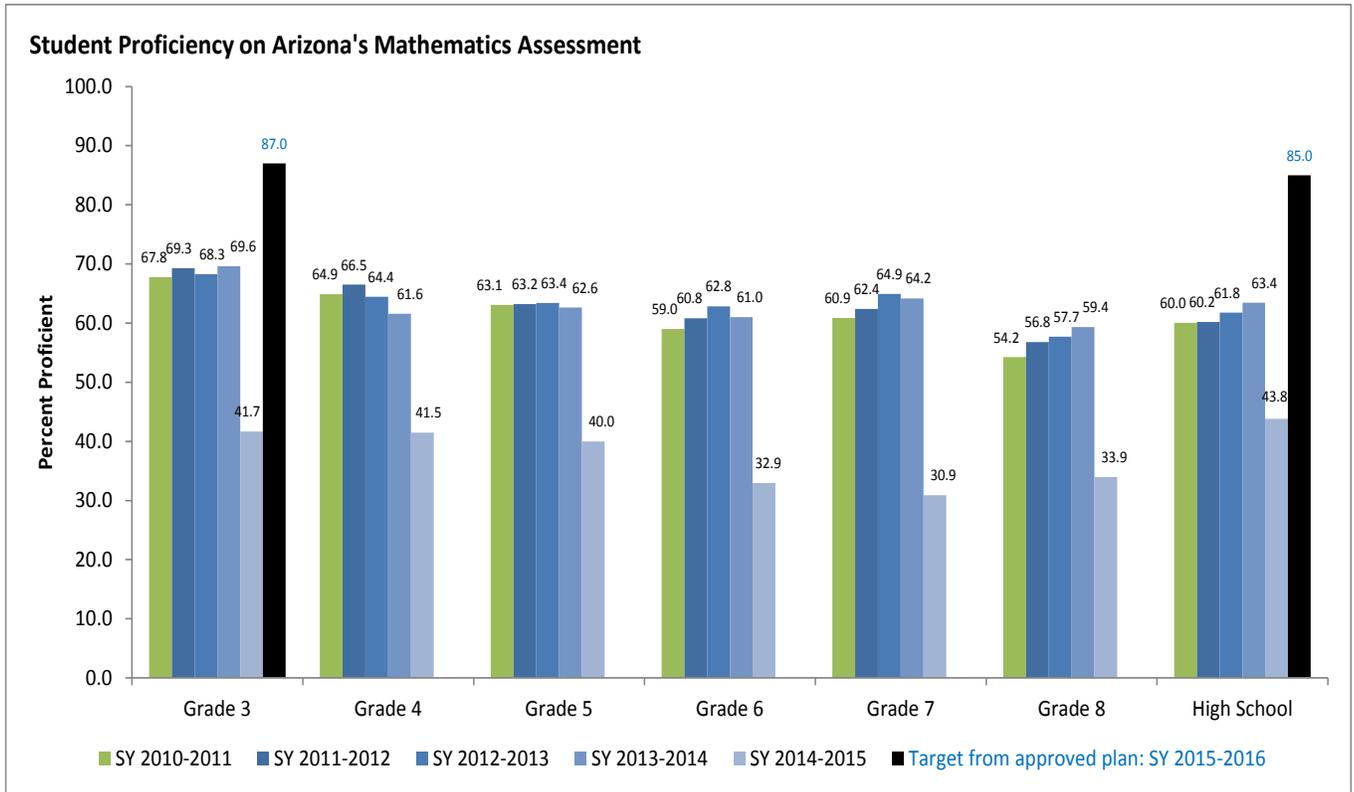
The capacity of the Regional Centers to support LEAs in their regions through professional development and technical assistance, as well as the development of instructional resources, varied. Upon completion of the Race to the Top grant, the work of the Regional Centers will shift based on LEA needs and availability of funding. ADE and the Regional Centers are working to identify new areas of collaboration to sustain the work they began during the grant period, such as supporting data literacy professional development and supporting schools identified for improvement.

Given the transition to a new governor in January 2015, Arizona adjusted its approach to the new Report Cards. In 2015, the State did not update data on the site and stopped developing and distributing “data stories” but in 2016 resumed the “data stories.”

Arizona student outcomes data

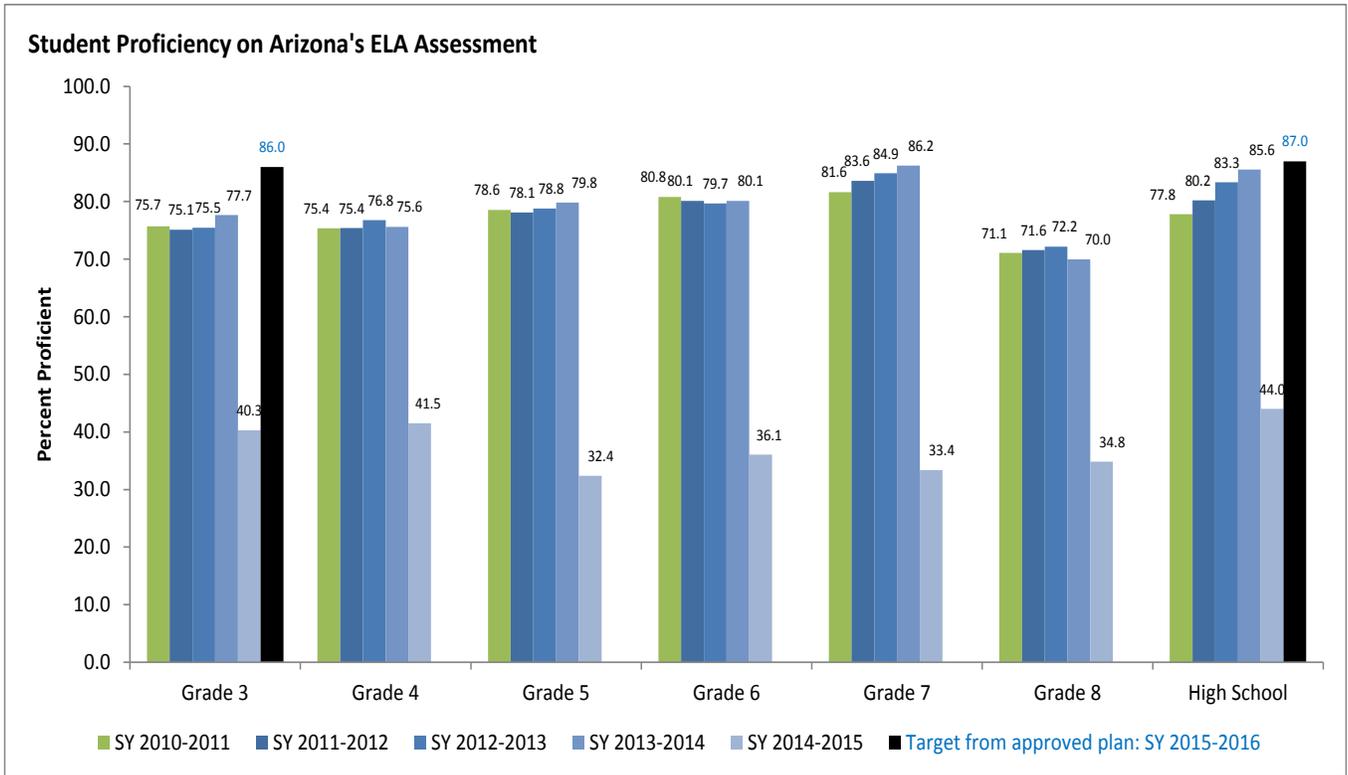
In November 2014, the Arizona State Board of Education voted to replace Arizona’s Instrument to Measure Standards assessment with a new test, Arizona’s Measurement of Educational Readiness to Inform Teaching (AzMERIT). As a result, the graphs below display results from Arizona’s Instrument to Measure Standards assessment for SY 2010-2011 through SY 2013-2014 and results from AzMERIT for SY 2014-2015. Changes in assessment results may be due to the fact that the State changed assessments during this period, resulting in data that may not be readily comparable. Arizona’s SY 2014-2015 assessment results show a decline in proficiency in all grades for English language arts (ELA) and mathematics as compared to prior years. Arizona’s high school graduation rate increased from SY 2013-2014 to SY 2014-2015.

Arizona

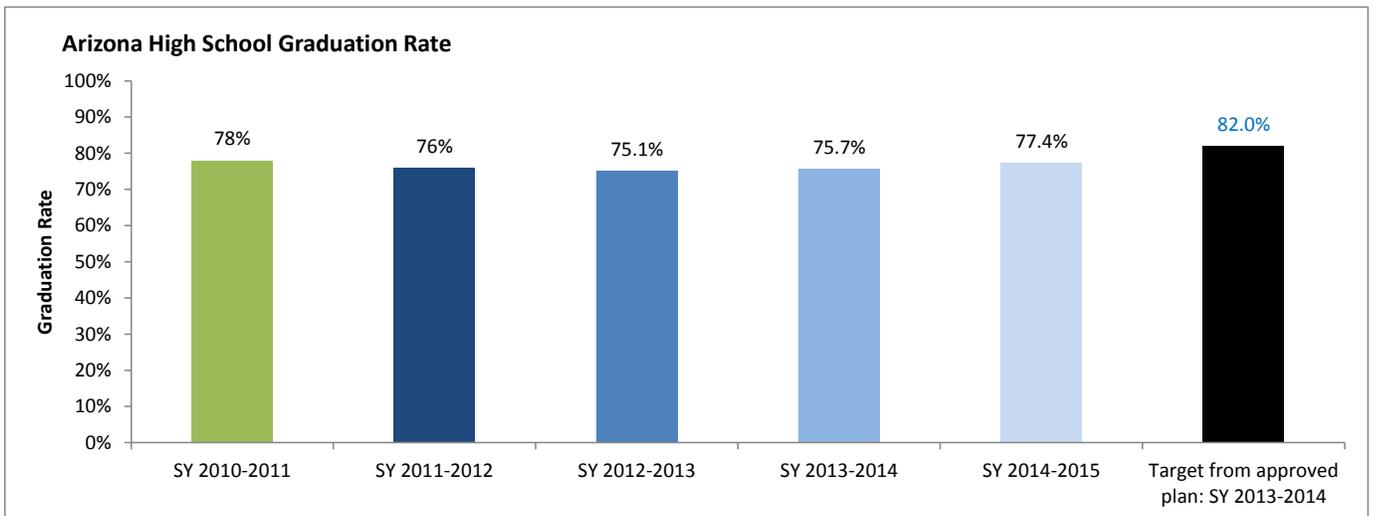


Note: Over the last few years, a number of States adopted new assessments and/or cut scores.

Arizona



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Arizona

Arizona's interactive educator dashboard provides educators with 10 years of longitudinal student data

The Arizona Department of Education (ADE) worked with nearly 600 local educational agencies (LEAs) over the course of the grant period to implement the Student-Teacher-Course Connection (STCC) project, which enabled LEAs to report data and have access to better information on student learning progress to inform instruction. In completing this project, ADE effectively created the foundation for greater data use from the classroom to the State level.

The STCC project provided the data necessary for ADE to develop interactive educator dashboards (AzDASH), which provide 10 years of longitudinal student data. According to the State, AzDASH saves classroom teachers and administrators up to a week or more of data preparation time by making a variety of data, including State assessment data, easily accessible. As a result, educators have more time available to use these data to inform instructional planning. During Year 4, 10,210 unique users accessed AzDASH, representing a combination of 885 districts and charter schools, including all 221 Race to the Top participating LEAs.

Now that LEAs have the ability to access AzDASH, and have been trained on how to access AzDASH from a technical perspective, ADE's strategy has shifted to professional learning. An AzDASH Steering Committee was formed to help guide future development and enhancements, and ensure that agency staff have access to AzDASH, and are trained in its use and capabilities. Additionally, a Data Literacy Initiative was initiated as part of the transition from technical training to professional learning. The intent is for agency staff to collaborate with Regional Centers through this initiative on the development and delivery of professional learning modules focused on how to effectively use AzDASH, and other data sources, to support student learning and professional practice.

Colorado

Colorado's education reform agenda

The goals of the Colorado Department of Education's (CDE) plan for education reform are to improve student achievement, increase graduation rates, and prepare students with the higher-level skills that are necessary to be successful in an increasingly competitive world. Colorado's Race to the Top grant program focused on two reform areas: Standards and Assessments, and Great Teachers and Leaders. These areas mirror Colorado's reform efforts that began in 2008 before receiving its Race to the Top grant. Colorado's Race to the Top grant connected and integrated the following four elements that are part of the State's overall reform initiatives:

- **Strong statewide capacity:** Leveraging and expanding the State's capacity to implement the grant's reform initiatives and ensuring that the reforms are integrated and coordinated so that LEAs are supported in implementation and student achievement ultimately rises;
- **Transition to college- and career-ready standards:** Helping schools and LEAs transition to the State's new standards through the creation of Content Collaboratives (teams of talented educators and content experts from across the State) that create tools, resources, and trainings designed to deepen educators' assessment literacy, their facility in implementing Colorado's new Academic Standards, and to inform educator effectiveness;
- **Educator effectiveness:** Putting in place new, more robust evaluation and support systems to gauge the effectiveness of teachers and leaders by clearly articulating the standards of performance and assessing performance against those standards; and
- **STEM integration:** Infusing robust opportunities for students to develop STEM knowledge and skills across all content areas and connecting teachers to STEM resources outside their classrooms, and to each other, in order to ensure students are better prepared for college and careers in STEM-related areas.

Colorado received an \$18 million grant to implement its Race to the Top Phase 3 plan. In Year 4, 161 LEAs participated in the State's grant activities.

Notable accomplishments in Years 1-3

- CDE established Content Collaboratives to provide high-quality resources and guidance to LEAs in implementing the Colorado Academic Standards, the State's college- and career-ready standards, and identifying assessments aligned to those standards. For example, the Content Collaboratives reviewed and vetted existing assessments and created performance assessments intended for use by educators to: (1) inform and improve classroom instruction, and (2) serve as one of the multiple measures of student growth in the educator evaluation and support systems.
- The State created an optional Resource Bank for classroom teachers including more than 600 vetted assessments that address all ten content areas in the Colorado Academic Standards and nineteen Career and Technical Education clusters. The Resource Bank also includes resources to support the implementation of the educator evaluation and support systems.
- CDE created and implemented an internal District Dashboard (DISH) to aggregate and display comprehensive LEA information (*e.g.*, district profiles, fiscal information, and accountability data). The dashboard supports LEAs in their data analysis activities and helps CDE identify challenges and provide LEAs with more targeted assistance. After piloting the use of DISH in 10 LEAs, CDE made the system available to all LEAs in fall 2014.

Colorado

- CDE developed, piloted, and updated model evaluation rubrics to assess the professional practices component of the educator evaluation and support systems during Years 1 and 2. In SY 2013-2014, all LEAs implemented their teacher and principal evaluation and support systems. Of 178 LEAs statewide, 160 elected to use the model evaluation and support system developed by CDE.
- In addition to model evaluation and support systems for teachers and principals, in Year 3, CDE developed model evaluation and support systems for specialized services professionals.⁸
- The State implemented *Elevate Colorado*, an online inter-rater agreement training system to help evaluators develop a deeper understanding of the professional practices embodied in the Colorado State Model Evaluation System's teacher rubric and provide useful and actionable feedback to educators based on information and data collected through observations. At the end of Year 3, *Elevate Colorado* included 11 videos aligned to professional practices in the State's model evaluation and support system.
- CDE provided training to LEAs to support implementation of their evaluation and support systems. CDE approved 56 trainers for all evaluators (principals, teachers, and specialized services professionals) in LEAs that use the State's model evaluation and support systems and six trainers for evaluators in LEAs that use district-developed evaluation and support systems.
- CDE communicated with educators, parents, students, and the public using a variety of outreach techniques. For example, the State used social media to interact with the public on a variety of education issues; developed and disseminated a new assessment communications toolkit with multiple resources (*e.g.*, drop-in articles, sample PowerPoint presentations, fact sheets, and frequently asked questions) to LEAs; and launched an assessment e-newsletter to disseminate important information, dates, and resources to the field.
- In Year 3, CDE funded STEM in Action competitive grants to four LEAs to improve student outcomes and reduce achievement gaps for English learners (ELs) and rural students in STEM content areas. The grants provide supports and resources for LEAs to partner with community and business organizations to give students real-life experiences with STEM-related content. In addition, the State developed and distributed an array of STEM resources and provided opportunities for STEM in Action grantees and LEAs implementing STEM activities as part of Race to the Top to collaborate.

Colorado Year 4 summary

Accomplishments

In Year 4, CDE continued its efforts to build strong statewide capacity, focused on expanding the strategic use of communications and continuing its monitoring and support of LEAs participating in Race to the Top. CDE also continued to focus on improving the content, reach, and utility of communication resources to inform the field of requirements, timelines, and opportunities. For example, CDE expanded DISH to include school-level information and in September 2015 both the district and school versions of DISH were made available on CDE's website so that the all stakeholders can easily access a variety of school- and LEA-level data.

⁸ These professionals include school audiologists, psychologists, nurses, physical therapists, occupational therapists, counselors, social workers, speech language pathologists, and orientation and mobility specialists.

Colorado

Colorado's Content Collaboratives continued to support the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments. During Year 4, CDE partnered with the National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST) to develop an Assessment Literacy Framework that describes the functions, components, and processes included in a quality, comprehensive assessment system.

CDE created the Colorado Assessment Literacy Program, based on the Assessment Literacy Framework, to assist Colorado educators in deepening their understanding of the varied purposes and uses of assessment information that guide actionable educational decisions. CDE and CRESST developed a series of optional modules to help districts and schools analyze, evaluate, and use assessment data to make decisions to advance student learning. CDE piloted the online Assessment Literacy modules with Steamboat Springs School District and gathered detailed feedback on the quality, relevance, and value of the training and online system. The feedback was positive about the training materials and the Assessment Literacy modules. Participants reported having a greater understanding of their own assessment practices and a need to revise their curricula based on this training.

In Year 4, CDE further developed two online systems designed to support and enhance district implementation and use of the State's model evaluation and support systems – The Colorado State Model Performance Management System and *Elevate Colorado*. The Colorado State Model Performance Management System is an optional tool that includes electronic interfaces and data collection tools for the State model evaluation rubrics, measures of student learning/outcomes, final effectiveness ratings, and aggregate reports to support principals and district leaders to provide useful and actionable feedback and possible professional development opportunities for educators. In order to develop a system with optimal usability, CDE engaged educators in creating and testing this system.

CDE also further developed its online inter-rater agreement training system in partnership with My Learning Plan. Using the system, evaluators can view short videos of practicing teachers, rate the videos according to the Colorado State Model Evaluation System rubric and then receive feedback showing how closely they rated the videos relative to ratings from master scorers. In this way, *Elevate Colorado* can be used for individual professional development, staff development, and evaluator training, as well as a tool to improve inter-rater agreement.

In Year 4, CDE continued to convene cross-district STEM workshops. These workshops were open to all STEM-focused participating LEAs and STEM in Action grant recipients. The workshops included a morning session in which the hosting district highlighted its work – often including a tour of STEM sites, classes, and schools. In the afternoon session districts worked with representatives from the host district to gather more information and act as a thought partner for their own work, or met as a team to work together away from the interruptions of their workplaces.

Challenges

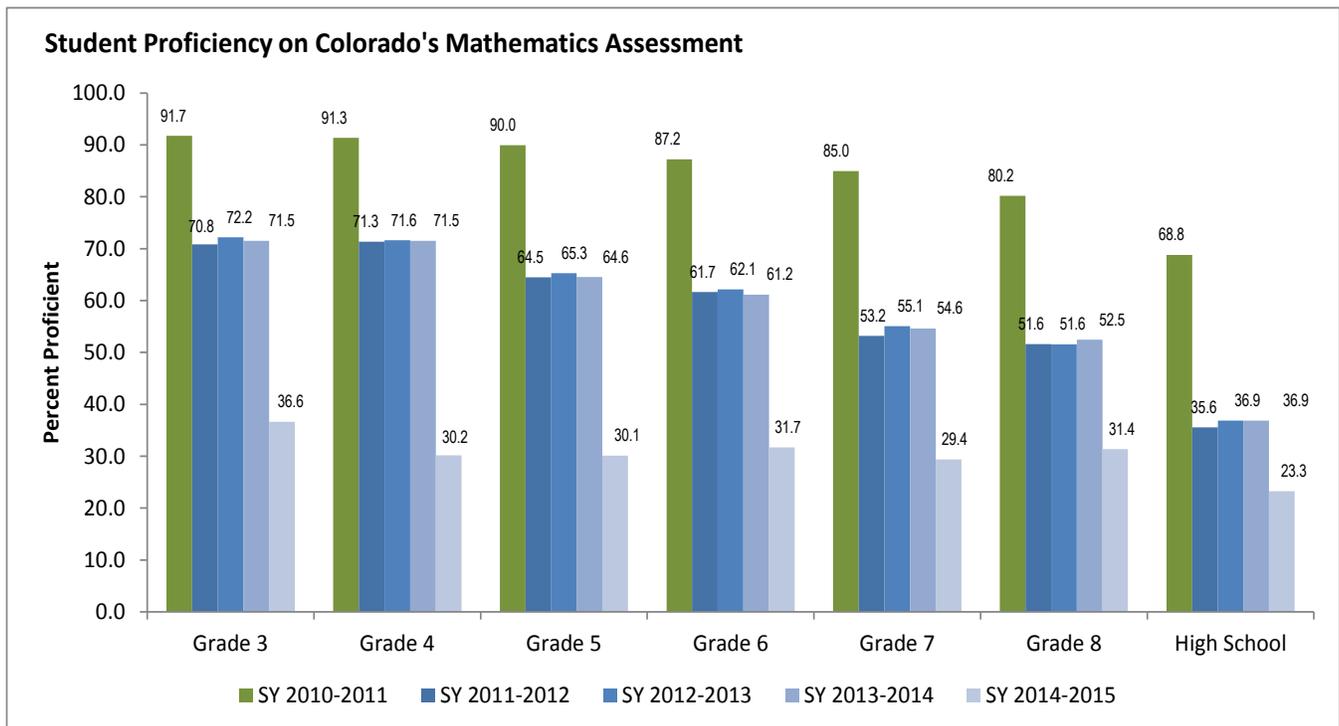
During Year 4, there were significant changes to CDE's leadership structure due to the resignations of key leaders who led major bodies of work under the Race to the Top grant. Additionally, the Colorado legislature passed bills related to assessment and the uses of assessment results in educator evaluations that required CDE to re-conceptualize its work in these areas.

Colorado

In the area of advancing STEM education, CDE continued to face challenges in implementing a comprehensive STEM program in the State. Advances in STEM education were limited to districts that received STEM in Action grants and in districts that selected STEM as a focus of their Race to the Top activities.

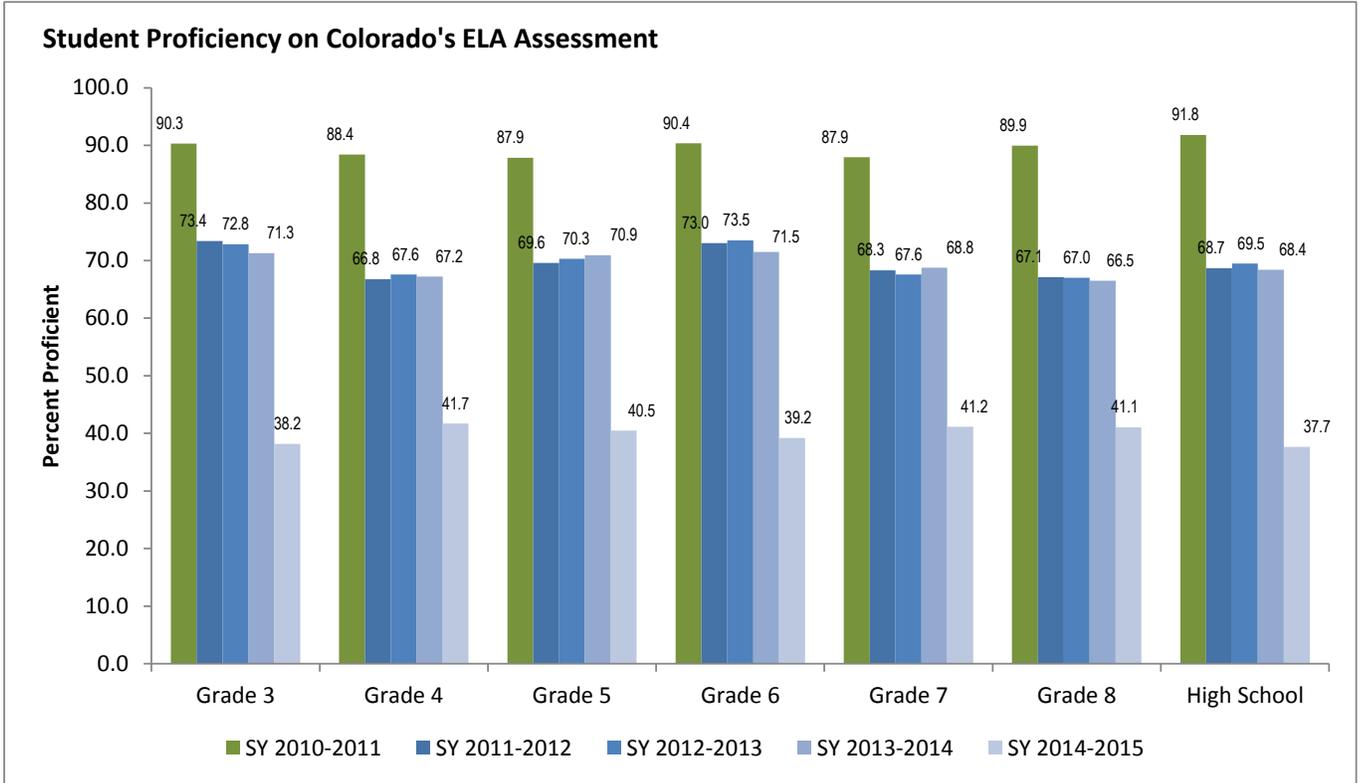
Colorado student outcomes data

Colorado began using a different definition of proficiency in SY 2011-2012. Additionally, the State administered the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment for the first time in SY 2014-2015. Student proficiency rates in grades three through eight and high school in both ELA and mathematics decreased notably from SY 2013-2014 to SY 2014-2015. Changes in assessment results may be due to the fact that the State changed assessments during this period, resulting in data that may not be readily comparable. After increasing slightly from SY 2012-2013 to SY 2013-2014, Colorado's graduation rate remained the same in SY 2014-2015.

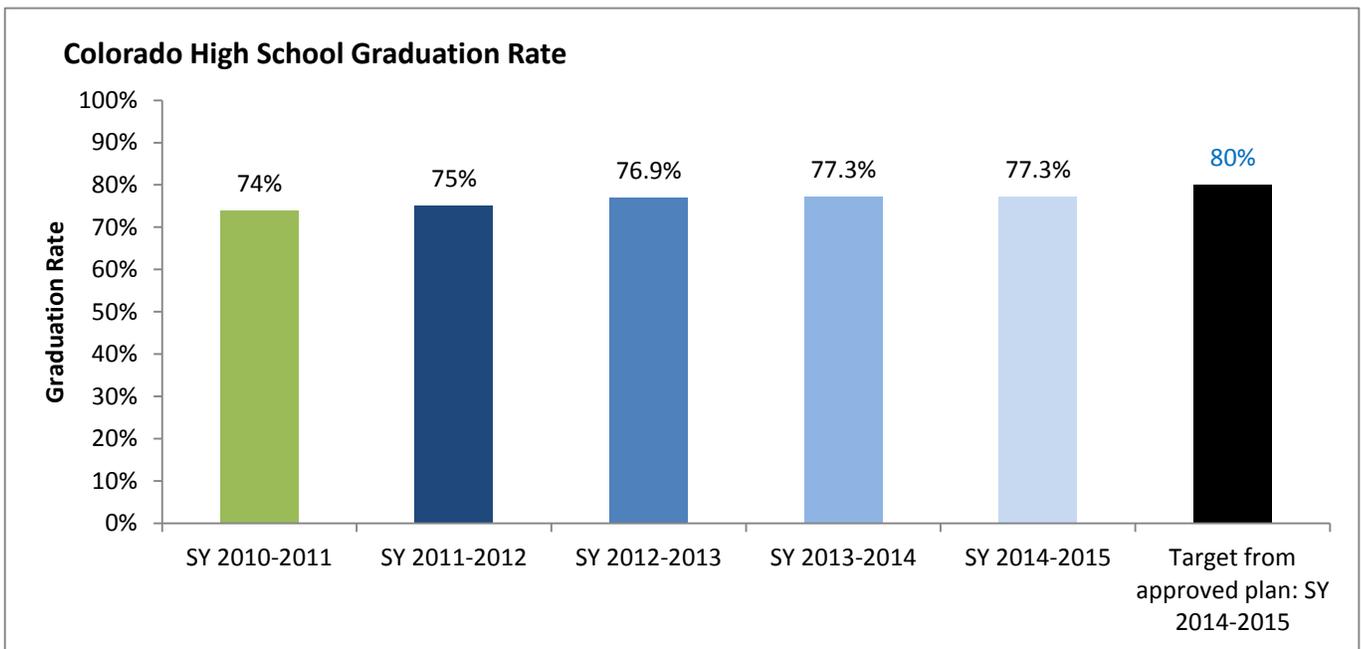


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Colorado

Colorado focuses on improving assessment literacy

The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) worked with National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards and Student Testing (CRESST) to develop an Assessment Literacy Framework and the Colorado Assessment Literacy Program to assist Colorado educators in deepening their understanding of the varied purposes and uses of assessment information and how it can guide instruction and improve student achievement. The primary driving force for these activities was the recognition that facility with the use of assessments and resulting data is vitally important for teachers to be able to effectively monitor student progress and adjust their instruction to meet individual student needs. Many districts also identified assessment literacy as an area of need for their principals and teachers.

Based on feedback from the field and CDE staff, CDE focused on building out a series of optional training modules on interim assessment and classroom formative assessment. The section on interim assessment includes information about its uses and actions specific to signaling important learning goals, monitoring and evaluating student achievement, and informing improvement strategies. The classroom formative assessment section includes a self-assessment survey to gauge initial literacy on this type of assessment. There are currently four modules in this section: Introduction to Formative Assessment, Classroom Talk, Students at Work, and Student Work and Student Peer and Self-Assessment. The modules allow users to pause and reflect by providing guiding questions and note-taking space.

Illinois

Illinois' education reform agenda

Illinois' Race to the Top grant focused on improving educational outcomes for all students in Illinois and bolstering the State's ongoing work in six areas: building State capacity and support; transitioning to enhanced State 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.

While the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) worked to build its capacity for statewide implementation of key initiatives and systems, Race to the Top participating LEAs were charged with building systems and processes to accelerate and sustain improved student outcomes and 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 worked 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.

Illinois was awarded a \$42.8 million Race to the Top Phase 3 grant. During Year 4, Illinois' Race to the Top grant included 32 participating LEAs.

Illinois' notable accomplishments in Years 1-3

- ISBE developed and administered the Illinois 5Essentials Survey of Learning Conditions in every school across Illinois in SY 2012-2013. The survey is a diagnostic tool intended to assist schools in gathering data on five leading indicators for school improvement: Effective Leaders, Collaborative Teachers, Involved Families, Supportive Environment, and Ambitious Instruction.
- ISBE partnered with the Center for School Improvement (CSI) to assist in the transition to new college- and career-ready standards. In Year 3, CSI staff focused on providing support to the five lowest-achieving LEAs and developed online classroom resources and supports for ELA and mathematics curriculum implementation.
- To support LEAs and schools in their improvement efforts, ISBE implemented the Rising Star Continuous Improvement Platform, which guides districts and schools through the procedures and practices for instructional improvement and systemic change.
- ISBE redesigned its school report card to be more user-friendly using input from a broad range of stakeholders that included the general public, as well as regional and district staff. New measures on the School Report Card include: information about student academic growth and school performance trends; athletic, extracurricular, and afterschool programs; available Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate, and dual enrollment courses; data on the percentage of students on track for college, career, and the next step of their education; and summary data from the new Survey of Learning Conditions. In 2014, the Education Commission of the States identified the Illinois accessible accountability reports as the best report cards out of all 50 States and the District of Columbia.
- In Year 1, Illinois created the Performance Evaluation Advisory Committee (PEAC) to develop and finalize the State teacher and leader evaluation model, inform the development of support

Illinois

resources, provide guidance to LEAs on the State's Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA),⁹ and ensure that teacher and principal evaluators in participating LEAs are trained under timelines required by PERA. PEAC developed and disseminated multiple guidance documents and recommendations to ISBE regarding the types of supports and guidance needed in the field to ensure high-quality implementation of PERA. Principal evaluation and support systems were fully implemented statewide in SY 2012-2013.

- ISBE implemented an evaluator prequalification program to train evaluators to assess teacher and principal effectiveness. Through this program, Illinois trained over 14,000 teacher evaluators. As of Year 3, the majority of districts in Illinois had a process to train evaluators and a process to ensure inter-rater agreement.
- Illinois partnered with the Illinois Collaborative for Education Policy Research to meet the PERA requirement to conduct a research-based study on the validity and reliability of teacher and principal evaluation and support systems, and their contribution to the development of staff and improving student performance. In SY 2013-2014, ISBE made progress with the study by releasing an interim report on the implementation of Illinois' educator evaluation and support systems.
- ISBE supported its LEAs to integrate their data systems with the Illinois Shared Learning Environment (ISLE) technology platform. ISLE was designed to connect teachers and students with content, resources, and applications based on individual student needs. In Year 2, LEAs began piloting some of the ISLE applications (*e.g.*, content tagging/search applications and assessment tools) and by the end of Year 3, 94 percent of participating LEAs had some type of assessment data (*e.g.*, local assessment data) residing in the ISLE system. These data provide teachers with a longitudinal view of student achievement and support their efforts to provide individualized instruction.
- Illinois worked to improve outcomes in STEM education. ISBE established the Illinois Pathways Resource Center to support participating LEAs to develop and implement their STEM Programs of Study through career pathways.¹⁰ The Pathways Resource Center assisted LEAs by providing one-on-one assistance and holding a number of regional and statewide meetings and webinars to provide information and share best practices.
- Illinois created eight STEM Learning Exchanges to support and expand the implementation of STEM Programs of Study for grades 9-12. The STEM Learning Exchanges formed a public-private education infrastructure to coordinate statewide networks of P-20 education partners, business, labor, and other organizations to provide resources, services, and supports such as professional development for teachers of students participating in a STEM Program of Study and mentors and internships for students.
- ISBE established partnerships with seven community colleges and participating LEAs to increase alignment between high school and college curricula with a focus on STEM areas.

⁹ The Performance Evaluation Reform Act of 2010 required districts to design and implement performance evaluation and support systems to assess teachers' and principals' professional skills using student growth as a significant factor.

¹⁰ A program of study is a comprehensive, structured approach for delivering academic and career and technical education to prepare students for postsecondary education and career success. A career pathway is a way of organizing career and education information into categories to help students connect their interests with different types of occupations and the related levels of education and training needed for them.

Illinois

Illinois Year 4 Summary

Accomplishments

In Year 4, Illinois made progress in building State capacity to implement its reform efforts. ISBE demonstrated effective mid-course corrections, including increasing and reorganizing its Race to the Top staff to more effectively manage the State’s Race to the Top grant and strengthen the technical assistance supports for its LEAs. Based on feedback from participating LEAs, ISBE contracted with a Regional Center to provide coaches to support LEAs with customized technical assistance, identify implementation challenges to share with ISBE, and identify best practices to share with LEAs across the State. To ensure that LEAs were equipped with information and resources to continue their reform efforts beyond the grant period, ISBE conducted sustainability meetings and provided resources to LEAs during Year 4.

The State Report Card project expanded the content of the new State Report Card to include additional data elements and enhancements such as improvements to the search function, new “at-a-glance” school-level reports, and district-level data from the 5Essentials Survey of Learning Conditions.

The CSI provided all LEAs with supports for the implementation of the State’s college- and career-ready State standards throughout Year 4 and used continuous improvement processes to assess the impact of its work. The CSI bolstered its repository of online resources to support all LEAs; offered additional online courses for teachers; and held training sessions open to all LEAs that focused on implementing the new ELA and mathematics standards, balanced assessments, teacher evaluations, and continuous improvement planning.

To support the transition to college- and career-ready State standards and high-quality assessments, Illinois made progress in a variety of projects focused on LEA assessment support, STEM support, and college- and career-readiness. ISBE made available to LEAs resource banks of evidence-based materials along with other resources on assessment development, assessment tools, Programs of Study, curriculum alignment, and appropriate interventions for students transitioning from high school to post-secondary programs.

STEM Learning Exchanges continued to host webinars and provide materials and resources to LEAs implementing Programs of Study. In Year 4, all participating LEAs implemented at least two Programs of Study and had supplementary components, above the minimum course requirements, such as work-based learning, student organizations, industry credentials, dual credit, and articulation agreements.

With the goal of reducing college remediation and improving the likelihood of a student’s success in post-secondary settings, ISBE worked with the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) to develop a toolkit aimed at increasing the alignment between secondary and post-secondary curricula. The toolkit was used in a series of three regional workshops hosted by the ICCB, the Illinois Board of Higher Education, and ISBE. The toolkit was designed to increase awareness of the CCSS, deepen an understanding of alignment strategies and concepts, and support successful partnerships between secondary and post-secondary schools to improve the college- and career-readiness of students.

Illinois

To improve teacher and principal effectiveness, ISBE continued to offer online performance evaluation training to evaluators to ensure the State has properly trained educators to conduct teacher and principal evaluations. As of August 2015, ISBE reported that approximately 90 percent of registered teacher evaluators had engaged in pre-qualification training. Additionally, 69 percent of principal evaluators had started pre-qualification training.

The PEAC continued to develop guidance and identify problems of practice from the field regarding the implementation of teacher and principal evaluation and support systems. PEAC developed and made available a number of guidance documents to support local implementation, such as *Recommendations for Supporting Evaluators of Teachers, Principals, and Assistant Principals* and *Guidance on Needs Improvement Rating in Teacher Evaluation Systems in Illinois*. Race to the Top participating LEAs fully implemented teacher evaluation and support systems in SY 2014-2015.

ISBE administered the 5Essentials Survey of Learning Conditions to all LEAs in January and March 2015. The State more than doubled its school survey participation rate, from 35.2 percent of schools participating in Year 3 to 78 percent of schools participating in Year 4, the majority of which had a sufficient completion rate to receive survey data. ISBE used the survey data to help identify the supports needed by its focus and priority schools. The survey data helped LEAs in their school improvement planning and parent engagement efforts.

In order to ensure the equitable distribution of teachers and principals, the State sought to create a pipeline of highly effective teachers to serve high-poverty, high-minority schools by working with teacher preparation programs to embed college- and career-ready standards in existing courses and place teacher candidates with extensive training on college- and career-ready standards in selected high-poverty, high-minority schools. Nearly all participating teacher preparation programs reported that their participation in Race to the Top provided the needed impetus to examine and revise courses to embed college- and career-ready standards in existing coursework. Six of the seven teacher preparation programs participated in a blind peer review process to evaluate their amended courses.

Despite initial delays in its induction and mentoring project, the State made substantial progress in Year 4. ISBE developed a State Mentoring and Induction program model and provided training and targeted technical assistance to LEAs, as well as a venue for LEAs to share best practices and engage in peer-to-peer support. ISBE also provided sub-grants to LEAs to support induction and mentoring activities and developed resources and tools in partnership with the Illinois Principal Association (for the principal induction and mentoring program), and with the Consortium for Educational Change (for the teacher induction and mentoring program).

Challenges

ISBE continued to lack processes to systematically gather data to demonstrate that projects are having their intended effect and to improve upon the services provided for many of its key programs. For example, ISBE has not demonstrated that it has continuous improvement processes in place for the State's Report Card project and the Rising Star continuous improvement platform. While the State has successfully progressed along its milestones for these projects, it is unclear whether there are processes in place to gather ongoing, formative feedback from stakeholders (*e.g.*, educators, LEA staff, parents) regarding their quality and utility.

Illinois

In addition, while the State made significant progress in many of its projects during Year 4, it continued to experience challenges in the following areas:

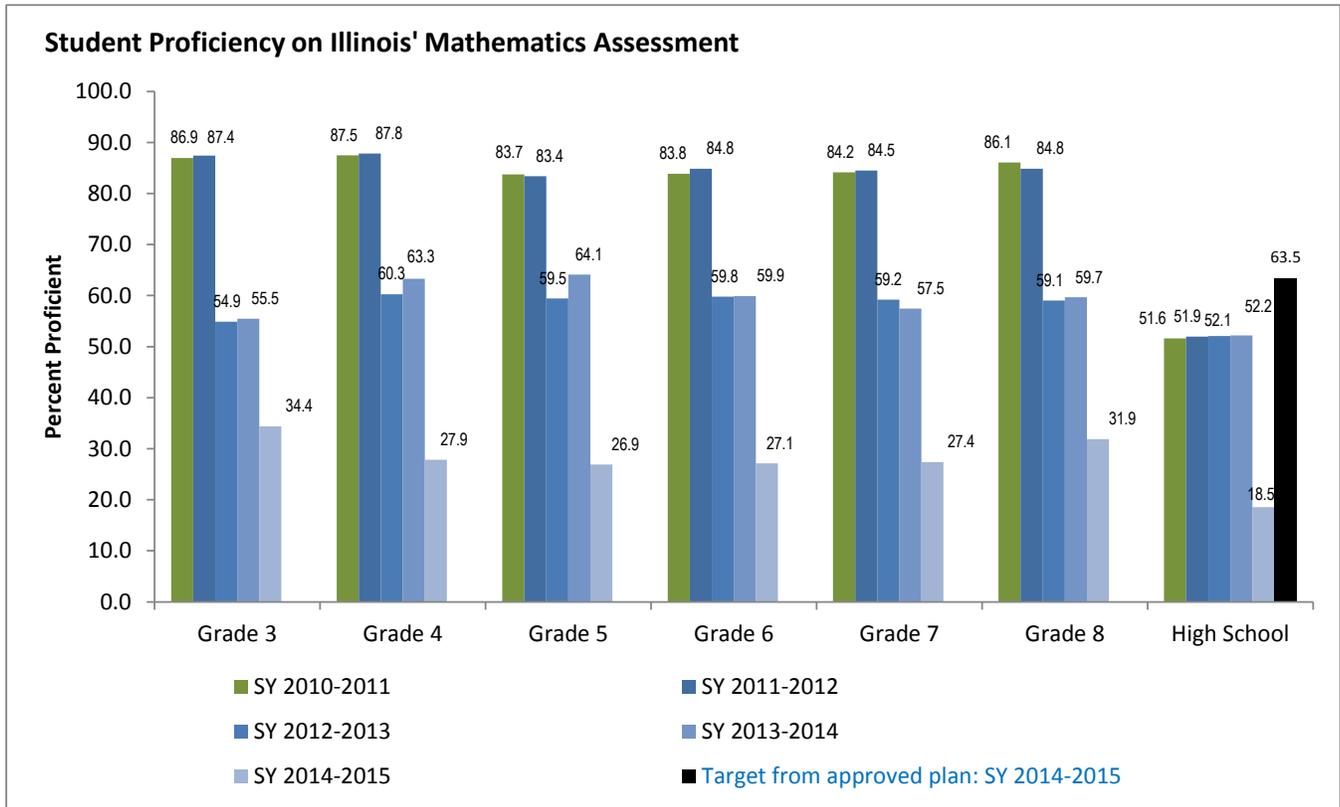
- Developing collaborative relationships between the staff of the Pathways Resource Center and staff of the STEM Learning Exchanges continued to be a challenge, which could adversely impact the sustainability of the work that is focused on developing Programs of Study.
- ISBE encountered several programmatic and technical challenges with the ISLE project resulting in a delay in the State's timeline for completing the ISLE system. In addition, ISBE did not provide evidence of a systematic process to gather feedback from users of ISLE and it has not met its commitment to conduct a complete evaluation of the ISLE system.

Initial outcome data are inadequate to demonstrate that efforts to create a pipeline of highly effective teachers to serve high-poverty, high-minority schools were successful – only seven percent of graduates from the participating universities are teaching in high-poverty, high-minority schools. Delays in implementation resulted in only one year of implementation data; therefore, there is limited feedback and information to make meaningful program adjustments at this time.

Illinois student outcomes data

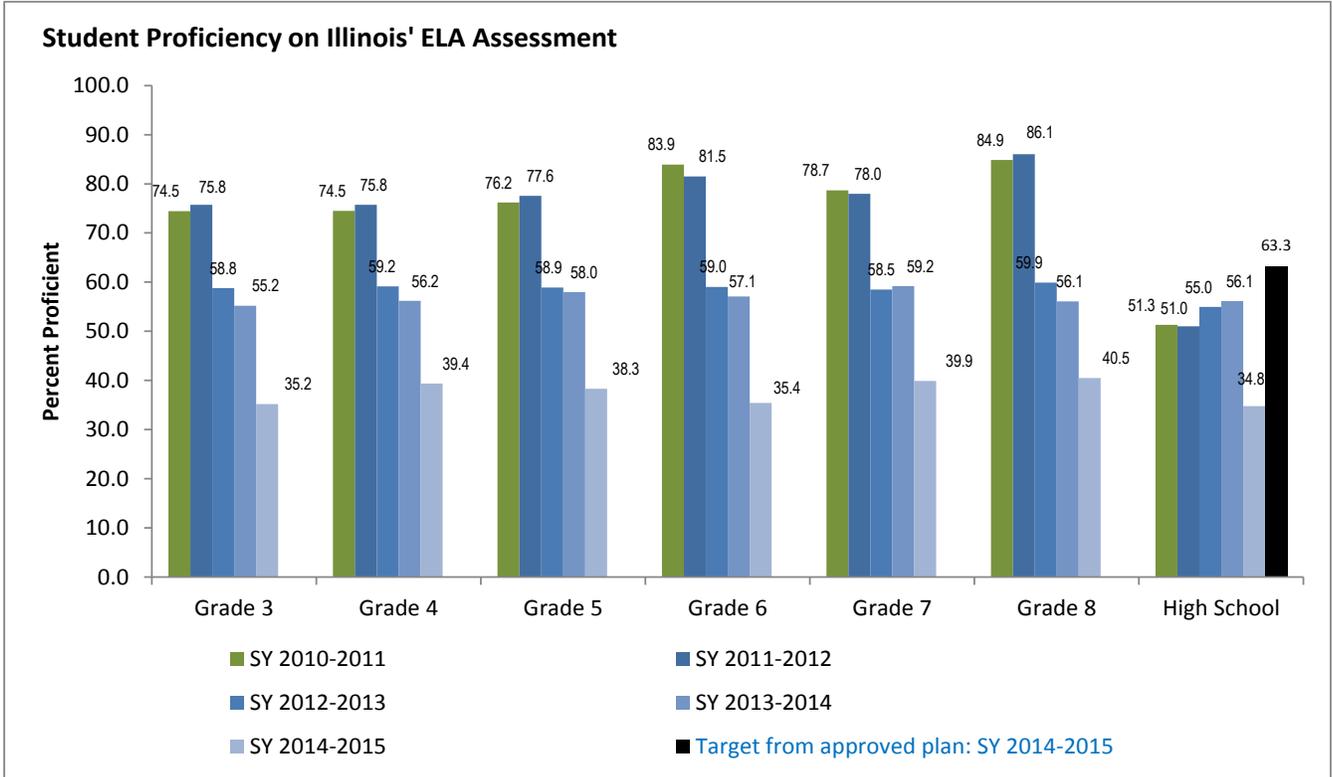
In order to raise the bar on how well students are prepared to meet college- and career-readiness benchmarks, ISBE raised performance level cut scores for the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) and reported that 20 percent of the items on the ISAT were aligned to the State's new college- and career-ready standards in SY 2012-2013. In SY 2014-2015, Illinois administered the PARCC assessment in grades three through eight and high school. For all grade levels in both ELA and mathematics, proficiency decreased significantly from SY 2013-2014 to SY 2014-2015. Changes in assessment results may be due to the fact that the State changed assessments during this period, resulting in data that may not be readily comparable. Illinois' graduation rate decreased slightly from SY 2013-2014 to SY 2014-2015.

Illinois

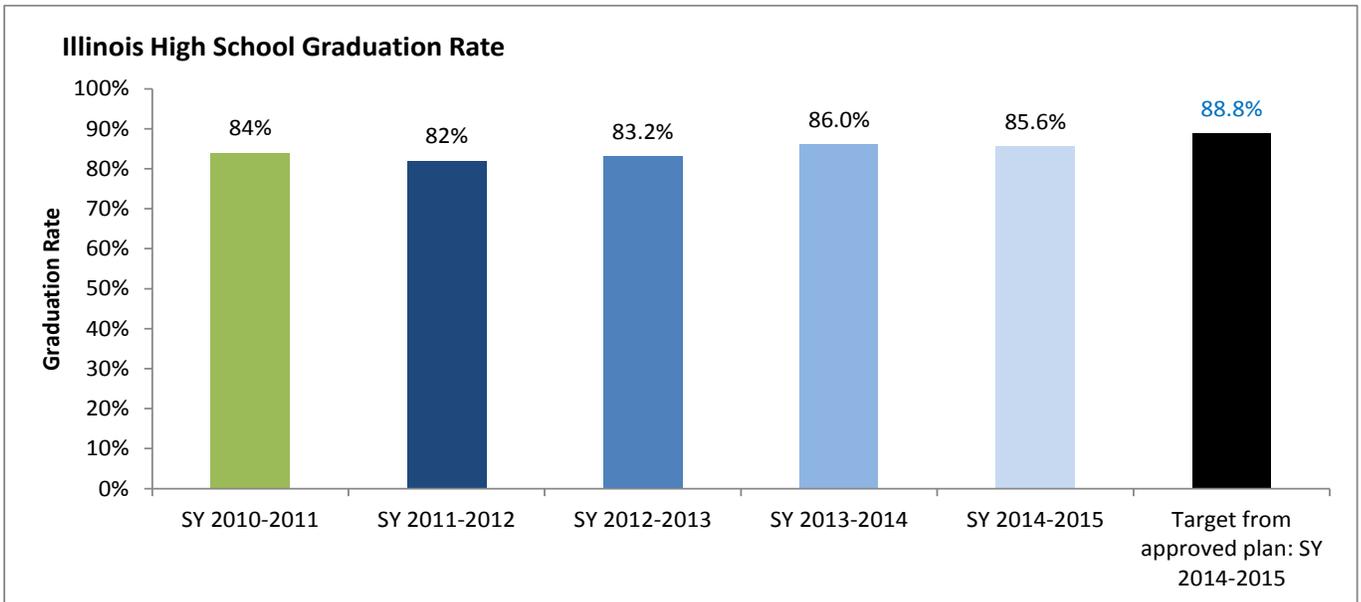


Note: Over the last few years, a number of States adopted new assessments and/or cut scores.

Illinois



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Illinois

Illinois conducts annual survey of learning conditions to improve student performance

Under Race to the Top, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) provided support for districts and schools to administer the 5Essentials Survey of Learning Conditions. The survey provides data on key elements of school climate: Effective Leaders, Collaborative Teachers, Involved Families, Supportive Environment, and Ambitious Instruction. Survey results provide schools with fine-grained data on these five leading indicators for school improvement. Over 20 years of research show that schools strong on three or more of the 5Essentials were 10 times more likely to improve student learning than schools that were weak on the 5Essentials.

The State's original Race to the Top plan included a pilot survey of only participating local educational agencies (LEAs), but instead, ISBE opened up the pilot to all LEAs. In 2014, 304 LEAs participated. By 2015, 764 LEAs participated, including 84 percent of teachers and 88 percent of students statewide.

The 5Essential survey is available for all pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade teachers, sixth through 12th grade students, and all parents of students across the state. The survey is web-based and all responses are anonymous. Survey results are shared with parents, teachers, and the public via the districts' Report Cards, and schools and LEAs are encouraged to use the data for continuous improvement.

Kentucky

Kentucky's education reform agenda

The passage of Senate Bill 1 during the 2009 session of the Kentucky General Assembly launched Kentucky's education reform initiative, "Unbridled Learning," to ensure that every child reaches his/her learning potential and graduates from high school ready for college and career.¹¹ In 2010, Kentucky adopted new college- and career-ready standards and began developing new assessment and accountability models.

The State's Race to the Top Phase 3 application focused on furthering the implementation of the State's Continuous Instructional Improvement Technology System (CIITS). CIITS is designed to customize learning experiences for students, personalize professional growth for educators, coordinate LEA- and school-level planning and monitoring of student success, and disseminate promising practices and effective instructional models.

Kentucky's plan also included assisting LEAs and schools to offer more meaningful STEM experiences for middle and high school students by scaling up its AdvanceKentucky program. AdvanceKentucky is a statewide mathematics-science initiative designed to expand access to and participation in AP mathematics, science, and English courses, particularly among student populations traditionally underrepresented in these courses.

Kentucky received a \$17 million Race to the Top Phase 3 grant award. In Year 4, Kentucky's Race to the Top grant included 170 participating LEAs.

Kentucky's notable accomplishments in Years 1-3

- In Years 1-3, the State developed, rolled out, and supported the implementation of CIITS, the extensive, multifunctional system designed to serve as a "one-stop shop" for providing LEAs with resources to support implementation of the State's rigorous standards. CIITS usage rose over the first three years of the grant period, and by the end of Year 3 over 60 percent of teachers in participating LEAs had created and published lesson plans in CIITS.
- The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) improved CIITS by enhancing two of the system's modules: (1) the CIITS Classroom module, a repository of resources on the State's standards and aligned instructional materials (*e.g.*, learning targets and suggested sequences of learning, sample aligned units and assessments; formative and summative assessments) and (2) the Classroom Assessment module, which includes a test item bank that educators can use to create and administer classroom-specific formative assessments.

¹¹ Senate Bill 1 called for the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) to implement a comprehensive process for revising the academic content standards in all areas, and required KDE to consider comments from teachers, postsecondary faculty and others when revising those standards to ensure alignment with entry-level college course requirements and inclusion in teacher preparation programs. Kentucky's education reform agenda is anchored in the following four activities: (1) Adopting new standards and balanced assessments; (2) Establishing the Continuous Instructional Improvement Technology System (CIITS) that provides student data and teaching resources directly to teachers and principals; (3) Developing a new teacher and principal evaluation and support system; and (4) Increasing capacity to turn around persistently failing schools. Race to the Top funding provided the State with an opportunity to accelerate progress in implementing these four activities and to provide incentives for school and LEA implementation.

Kentucky

- KDE added an Educator Development Suite (EDS) to CIITS to house teacher and principal evaluations and enable teachers and school leaders to track their goals, measure their performance, and access tools and training for continuous improvement.
- The State provided in-depth training to teachers and administrators to increase their awareness of CIITS tools and resources and how to effectively use these tools and resources to continuously improve classroom instruction using data. In Year 3, over 5,000 KDE educators attended online or onsite training.
- KDE communicated regularly about CIITS to support teachers and leaders in using the system's resources, tools, and data. For example, KDE created CIITS webcasts on specific functions or topics and posted them to the KDE website. The State enhanced communication with the field by publishing *CIITS News* and through its use of social media (e.g., Twitter and Facebook) to share up-to-date information about CIITS and other KDE activities.
- KDE routinely collected feedback to continuously improve CIITS. For example:
 - The State collected feedback from users via surveys and reviewed help desk logs to determine needed system upgrades and enhancements.
 - The CIITS Team completed onsite visits with all 173 LEAs to assess LEA CIITS implementation and provide support. After each visit, the CIITS Team completed an onsite analysis reviewing the LEA's implementation strategy, identifying lessons learned, and noting the functions and supports users said were most helpful. The CIITS Team used information from the site visits to improve implementation.
- KDE added content and developed quality control processes for existing content resources and standards. Examples of these efforts include:
 - Content specialists mapped over 15,000 instructional content items from outside vendors to the State's new mathematics and ELA standards in CIITS so that users can easily determine how the items align with State standards.
 - KDE added CIITS instructional items for college and technical education courses.
- KDE supported teachers and leaders participating in the statewide pilot of the new teacher and leader evaluation and support system, Professional Growth and Effectiveness System (PGES), including utilizing the EDS to track their goals, measure their performance, and access tools and training for continuous improvement.
- Following the statewide field test of PGES, KDE gathered information about the field test through focus groups and collected feedback after various CIITS EDS trainings. The State used this feedback to inform changes to EDS (e.g., the ability for staff to co-author instructional items) as well as training and support to prepare teachers and leaders for statewide implementation of PGES and EDS in SY 2014-2015.
- In Years 1-3, AdvanceKentucky made progress in expanding access to AP courses to students traditionally underserved and underrepresented in those courses. Race to the Top funds supported the launch of 15 AdvanceKentucky sites across three cohorts, and all schools operated on schedule and consistent with the AdvanceKentucky framework. The increase in the number of AP STEM-related courses offered in AdvanceKentucky schools outpaced the increase in similar courses at other Kentucky schools.

Kentucky

Kentucky Year 4 summary

Accomplishments

In Year 4, the State improved the quantity and quality of items available to create formative assessments and corrected technical issues with the EDS. KDE continued to improve its monitoring of CIITS and the training and support to the field on the use CIITS. As a result of these efforts, KDE reported that all 173 LEAs in the State (including three LEAs that did not participate in the Race to the Top grant) are fully implementing CIITS and using all CIITS modules.¹² Since January 2016, there have been 2,318,825 logins into CIITS and 75 percent of teachers have used CIITS. In addition, 99 percent of superintendents, 54 percent of principals, 86 percent of chief academic officers, 98 percent of district assessment coordinators, and 72 percent of chief information officers/technology leaders have used CIITS since January 2016.

By the end of Year 4, new academic standards were implemented in all content areas and teachers used CIITS to develop materials for their instruction and assessment of those standards in CIITS. In Year 3, CIITS users expressed concern regarding the quantity and quality of items available to create formative assessments. CIITS now includes 315,500 formative assessments created by CIITS users. In addition, CIITS users created over 688,000 lesson plans. In response to feedback, schools and districts are now able to share instructional content and assessment items that they created with other schools and districts using CIITS.

KDE continued to scale up its AdvanceKentucky program by starting to train five new schools for cohort four that began during SY 2015-2016, bringing the total number of AdvanceKentucky schools funded through Race to the Top to 20. AdvanceKentucky schools typically receive funding and support for three years. In anticipation of the end of the Race to the Top grant, other funding was raised to support schools to complete their three-year cycles.

In 2016, the number of unique students participating in AP courses more than doubled in cohort four schools. Across all Race to the Top cohorts, the percentage of students participating in AP courses and taking AP exams was well above baseline (*i.e.*, compared with participation in the year prior to implementing AdvanceKentucky). Data show that Race to the Top AdvanceKentucky schools are performing at least as well as other AdvanceKentucky schools.

Challenges

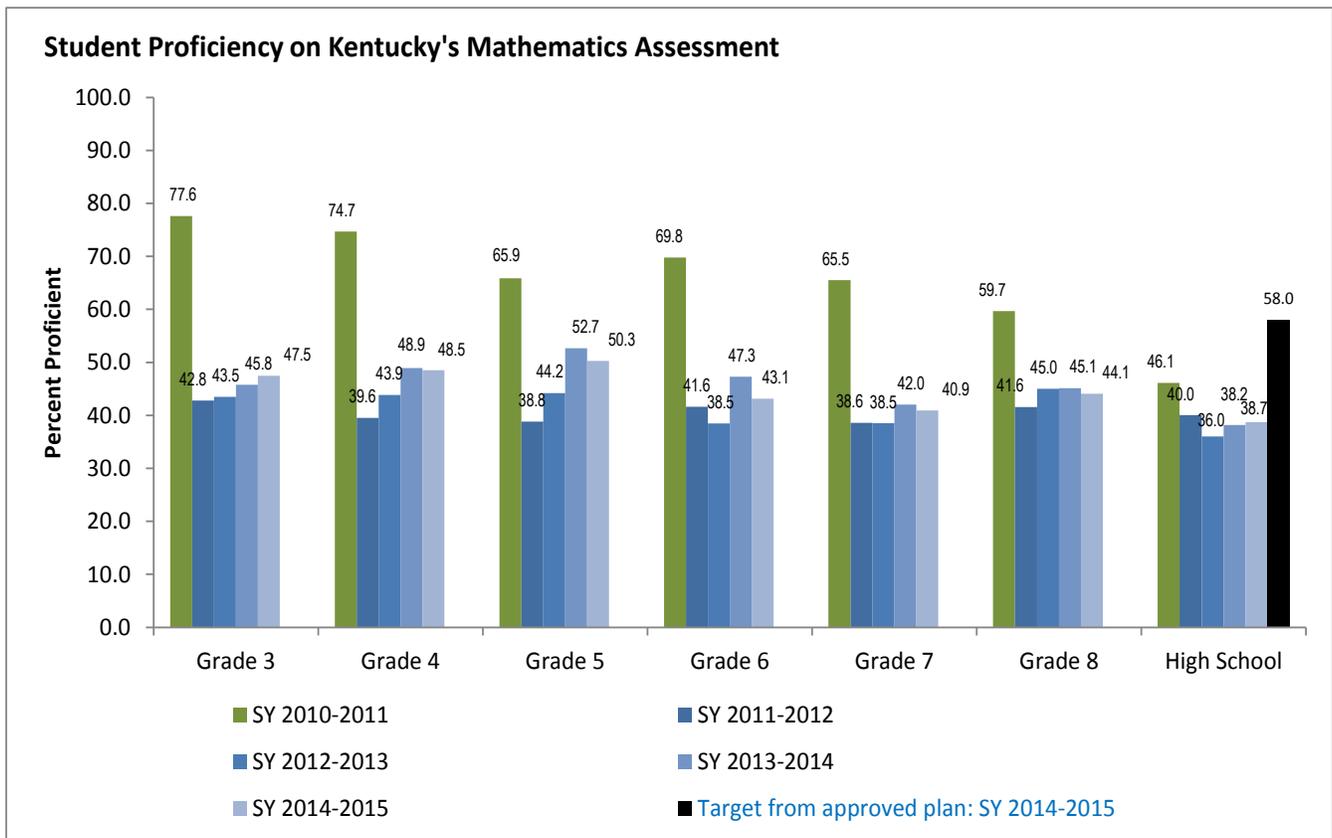
Sustaining the work supported by Race to the Top funding will be a challenge for the State. A primary concern moving forward is anticipated steep budget cuts for both KDE and LEAs, which could result in a reduction in support for CIITS. Another challenge is sustaining the focus on at-risk students in the AdvanceKentucky program. Many schools are interested in participating in this program, which must meet the needs of all schools, not just those with substantial at-risk populations.

¹² 170 of the 173 LEAs in the State are Race to the Top participating LEAs, and received grant funds to assist them in their implementation of CIITS.

Kentucky

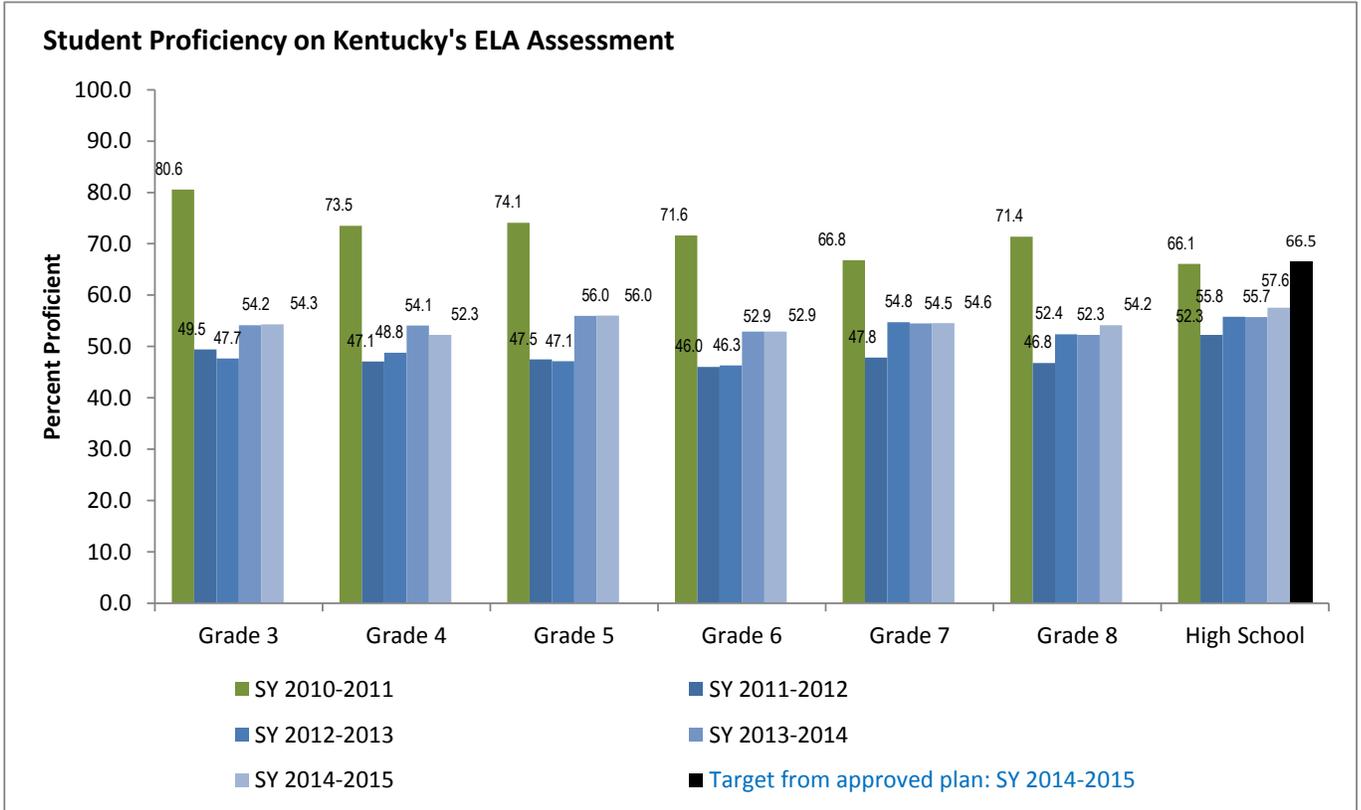
Kentucky's student outcomes data

In the spring of 2012, the State's assessments for grades three through twelve were aligned to Kentucky's new college- and career-ready standards. In mathematics, student proficiency rates did not change significantly from SY 2013-2014 to SY 2014-2015. The State experienced small increases in grade three and high school and in other grades, proficiency decreased. Student proficiency in ELA in SY 2014-2015 in grades three, five, six, and seven was the same or very close to performance in SY 2013-2014. In grade four, proficiency decreased by about two percentage points, while in grade eight and high school, proficiency increased by about two percentage points. Changes in assessment results may be due to the fact that the State changed assessments during this period, resulting in data that may not be readily comparable. Kentucky received a waiver from the Department allowing a delay in transitioning to a cohort model for reporting graduation rate data. Accordingly, the State reported its first adjusted cohort graduation rate in SY 2012-2013. Kentucky's high school graduation rate increased to 88 percent in SY 2014-2015.

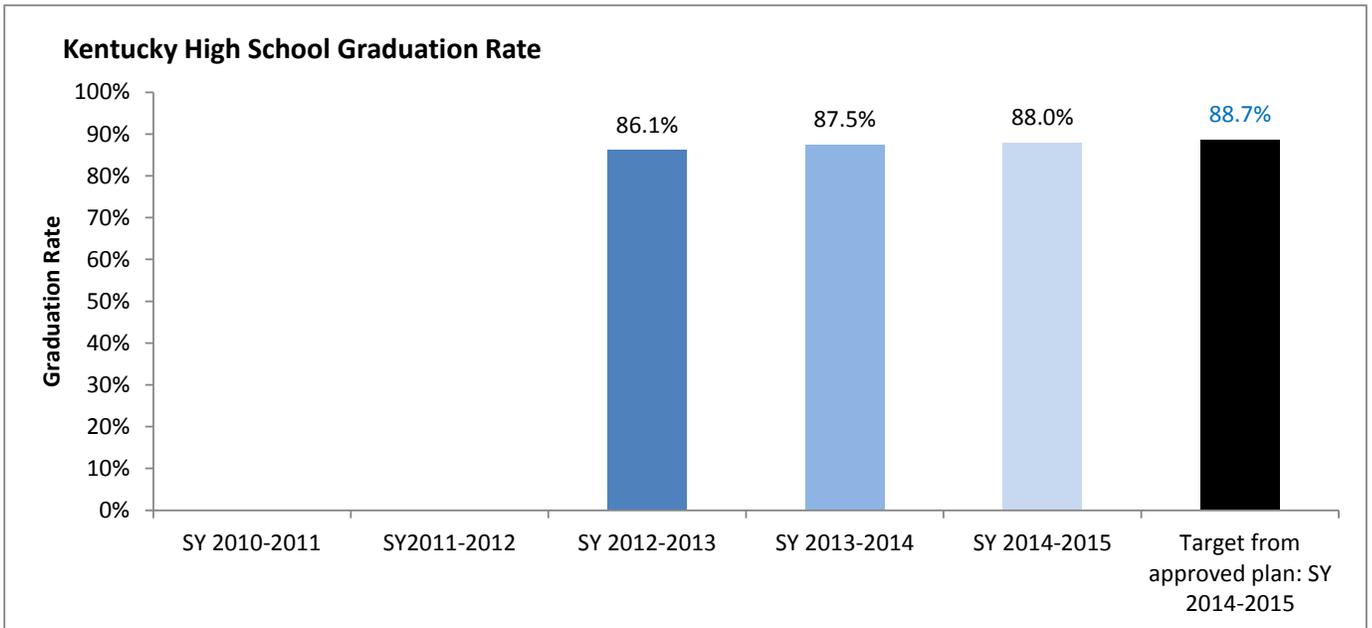


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Kentucky

Kentucky's Educator Development Suite supports educator effectiveness

Kentucky's Educator Development Suite (EDS) is the professional development arm of the State's technology support system and also serves as the reporting mechanism for the State's new Professional Growth and Effectiveness System (PGES). EDS has allowed the State to introduce a multiple measures approach to organizing educator effectiveness ratings through PGES that will enable Kentucky to integrate new models for measuring effective teaching and capturing the data required to generate educator effectiveness ratings. This analytical capability is being used and reported through interactive options and dashboards within the suite. The modular components of the EDS include the incorporation of Kentucky's educator observation tools, educator reporting tools, educator profiles, links to professional development, professional development logistic tools, and peer-mentoring program management options.

EDS provides immediate access to professional development resources linked to educator effectiveness ratings. Individual teachers and leaders can access their own professional growth plan and access resources to improve practice. Linking professional growth experiences to the multiple measures, including student growth, that are a part of Kentucky's educator evaluation and support system has created a fundamental shift in the support available to teachers and leaders.

In addition, this new level of support provides educators with the ability to:

- Access video clips of master teachers teaching the next set of content;
- Review his or her understanding of the content with help from online access to peers and university faculty, and;
- Build evidence of student growth through multiple measures to gauge educator effectiveness.

At the conclusion of Year 4, 80 percent of teachers participated in high quality professional learning experiences on the effective use of EDS and 77 percent of teachers used the professional development arm of EDS to access professional development resources.

Louisiana

Louisiana’s education reform agenda

Louisiana launched its comprehensive reform plan known as *Louisiana Believes* in pursuit of the State’s objective of ensuring that all students graduate high school ready for college or career. *Louisiana Believes* seeks to: (1) raise basic expectations for students and schools; (2) provide educators with tools to teach, hold educators accountable for student achievement, and empower educators to make decisions that support student achievement; and (3) engage families and provide them with options to support their child’s needs. Louisiana’s Race to the Top plan aligned with *Louisiana Believes* and focused on: building LEA capacity to implement Compass, the teacher and principal evaluation and support system; supporting the transition to the State’s new college- and career-ready standards; adding content and functions to Louisiana’s online instructional improvement system, Enhanced Assessment of Grade-Level Expectations¹³ (EAGLE); expanding the number of charter schools; and increasing the number of AP courses.

Louisiana was awarded over \$17 million to support its Race to the Top Phase 3 plan. In Year 4, Louisiana’s Race to the Top grant included 46 LEAs.

Notable accomplishments in Years 1-3

- The Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) created a new district support structure that divided the State into five networks and assigned a team of experienced LDOE staff to assist districts in planning and implementing their reform initiatives, including projects funded under Race to the Top. These “Network Support Teams” allowed LDOE to work collaboratively with LEAs and became the State’s primary vehicle for communicating with and providing technical assistance to LEAs. For example, Network Support Teams:
 - Provided technical assistance, resources, and training to support LEAs to implement the State’s new college- and career-ready standards and transition to the new teacher and principal evaluation and support system, Compass.
 - Trained teachers and principals to use Louisiana’s online instructional improvement system, EAGLE.
 - Supported LDOE’s communication to the field and served as a vehicle for the field to provide feedback to LDOE on the status of the State’s new college- and career-ready standards and Compass implementation, and to identify areas in which additional supports and resources were needed.
- To support the transition to its new standards, LDOE provided a variety of resources and trainings to teachers and leaders. For example, LDOE held summer institutes on the new standards for all grades and released two online resources – the Teacher Support Toolbox, and District and School Support Toolbox – to support the transition to the State’s new standards and the new teacher and principal evaluation and support system. The Teacher Support Toolbox included resources such as guides to understanding the mathematics and ELA standards and instructional and assessment materials (*e.g.*, student work samples, end-of-year assessment guides and items for ELA and mathematics).

¹³ The Enhanced Assessment of Grade-Level Expectations (EAGLE) includes a formative assessment component, an item bank of various items and questions for kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12), and a content assessment reporting system.

Louisiana

- LDOE selected over 4,000 classroom teachers to be Teacher Leaders in Year 2 to serve as building-level contacts and provide support and assistance in implementing the State's college- and career-ready standards. In Year 3, LDOE increased the number of Teacher Leaders from 4,000 to 5,500. LDOE provided targeted training on implementing the State's new standards to these Teacher Leaders, including through a Teacher Leader summit, summer institutes, and monthly newsletters.
- In Year 3, LDOE recruited classroom teachers to serve as Teacher Leader Advisors to take on additional responsibilities related to implementing the State's new college- and career-ready standards. Teacher Leader Advisors developed new items for EAGLE by writing, reviewing, and editing EAGLE assessment items and created curriculum guidebooks aligned to the State's new standards; created assessment guides and sample tests for ELA and mathematics in grades kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12); and facilitated virtual book clubs to encourage and provide assistance to teachers using curriculum resources aligned to the State's new standards.
- To increase the number of students taking AP courses, LDOE funded 82 teachers and administrators in Year 1, 427 teachers and administrators in Year 2, and 317 teachers in Year 3 to attend the College Board's AP Summer Institutes. These intensive three-day trainings were designed to provide teachers with the requisite knowledge to teach AP courses.
- LDOE also launched a new registration platform, Course Choice, offering 109 online AP courses, of which 46 were STEM-focused. In Year 3, LDOE added 92 more AP courses; 36 of those courses were in STEM subject areas. This increase in course offerings led to 1,000 more students enrolling in courses in 2014 than 2013. Further, the number of college credits earned by students in 2014 as compared to 2013 increased by 1,250. According to LDOE, this was the greatest increase in the number of students taking AP exams and earning credits in the State's history.
- LDOE enhanced and supported use of the EAGLE system. The EAGLE system includes an online assessment tool that supports formative assessments in the classroom and can be used to aid and enhance student learning throughout the year. Using this system, Louisiana teachers can build online tests, assign them to students, and receive student and class performance reports on items aligned to State standards. The system also provides teachers statewide with access to a common assessment tool to support the development of Student Learning Targets as part of the Compass teacher and principal evaluation and support system. In Year 3, LDOE began to offer EAGLE training at every statewide and regional training event.
- In Years 1-3, LDOE supported and refined the implementation of Compass. LDOE developed training, resources, and tools to assist teachers and administrators to implement the system. For example, LDOE provided videos demonstrating how to prepare for and participate in productive feedback conversations. Additionally, LDOE updated the Compass Information System (CIS) for SY 2013-2014 to improve feedback loops between evaluators and educators and create real-time reports to track LEA progress in improving instruction.
- To support the State's objective of ensuring equitable access to effective teachers and leaders, LDOE provided training to Network Support Teams and administrators across the State on Act 1, a State law that allows districts and schools to use measures of teacher effectiveness to guide personnel policies and decisions. LDOE also rolled out the Talent Recruitment System, a free, web-based service that allows job-seeking educators to search for employment opportunities in the State.
- To expand and increase the number of high-performing charter schools in areas of need, LDOE used Race to the Top funds to provide start-up funding for new schools launched by successful charter management organizations. All charter schools that received Race to the Top funds satisfied a set of pre-opening conditions related to enrollment, operations, school policies, facilities, and other topics. Over the course of two years, 13 new charter schools opened.

Louisiana

Louisiana Year 4 summary

Accomplishments

In Year 4, the Network Support Teams continued to be the primary vehicle for communicating with and providing technical assistance to Louisiana's LEAs. However, due to State budget cuts (that resulted in a reduction in force), changes had to be made. Instead of bringing the five Network Support Teams together for training, LDOE hosted four Regional Collaborations across the State. LDOE content teams traveled to the different regions of the State to provide information and updates to district planning team and Network Support Team members. Network Support Team members then followed up with LEAs to provide support in particular areas identified by each district.

LDOE continued to offer a blend of in-person and virtual trainings to support educators to implement Louisiana's college- and career-ready standards. These professional development opportunities covered a variety of topics related to ELA, mathematics, social studies, science, early childhood education, and special education.

Recruitment of Teacher Leaders continued to increase in Year 4, with 5,500 teachers participating in the Teacher Leader program in 2015. Teacher Leaders engaged in a variety of activities to support their home LEAs and schools. Many delivered the same training they received in annual and quarterly meetings to other teachers in their schools, using a train-the-trainer model. Some led professional learning communities, while others mentored other teachers and observed their colleagues' classroom practice. Some Teacher Leaders worked with their principals to improve instructional leadership.

Approximately 100 teachers participated in the Teacher Leader Advisor Program in Year 4. The Teacher Leader Advisors engaged in a variety of tasks, including working on benchmark assessments aligned to standards, acting as facilitators for quarterly Teacher Leader meetings, building ELA curriculum materials, and creating scope and sequence resources for social studies instruction.

LDOE continued its efforts to increase the number of schools offering AP courses in order to increase student access to more rigorous coursework. In Year 4, Race to the Top funding supported 251 teachers to participate in AP Summer Institutes. Additionally, the number of AP courses offered in Louisiana in Year 4 increased by 14 percent from the previous year. In SY 2014-2015, 1,081 AP courses were offered, while 945 were offered in SY 2013-2014. Similarly, the number of STEM AP courses offered in SY 2014-2015 increased by 10 percent from SY 2013-2014, increasing from 331 to 365 courses offered.

Louisiana's plan to expand advanced coursework offerings included administration of the ACT test series to eighth grade to twelfth grade students statewide. The final activity for the ACT project was the administration of the eleventh grade ACT assessment in March 2015.

In Year 4, LDOE continued to improve its online instructional improvement system, EAGLE, and to increase teachers' use of the EAGLE system and its reporting function to improve classroom instruction. Throughout fall 2015, LDOE released additional EAGLE tools and resources, including: a new

Louisiana

mathematics equation editor to support student responses in the platform; over 900 new mathematics and ELA items; and 26 mathematics fluency tests to help strengthen students' fluency skills.

In SY 2014-2015, all LEAs in the State implemented Compass. In Year 4, LDOE developed and posted a number of resources to support the implementation of Compass, including training materials focused on teacher goal setting, principal goal setting, and observation and feedback, as well as a Teacher Goal Setting Decision document. Additional resources were developed to support the use of the CIS, the web-based system that is available to districts and charter schools to support their implementation of Compass. In addition, LDOE held a training session for new CIS LEA administrators.

LDOE provided funding for schools and districts to implement the Believe and Prepare program, which provides year-long apprenticeships to aspiring teachers to prepare them for the realities of the classroom. Cohorts 1 and 2 launched programs for SY 2015-2016 in 21 school systems and charter schools, which included recruitment and preparation of teachers to meet critical staffing needs in high-need subject areas and school sites. Together both cohorts prepared and placed 224 teacher candidates in SY 2015-2016. In Year 4, LDOE created and shared a Believe and Prepare toolkit that provides tools and resources to support the design and implementation of high-quality teacher preparation programs. LDOE funded a third cohort of Believe and Prepare pilots in August 2015, adding 33 school systems (traditional districts and charters) and five providers to the community in fall 2016.

LDOE invested critical start-up funding in new schools launched by successful charter management organizations with the goal of expanding and increasing the number of high performing charter schools in areas of need. Race to the Top investments supported the creation of seven new charter schools in SY 2013-2014, four new charter schools in SY 2014-2015, and two new charter schools in SY 2015-2016. All of these schools serve students who previously attended low-performing schools.

Challenges

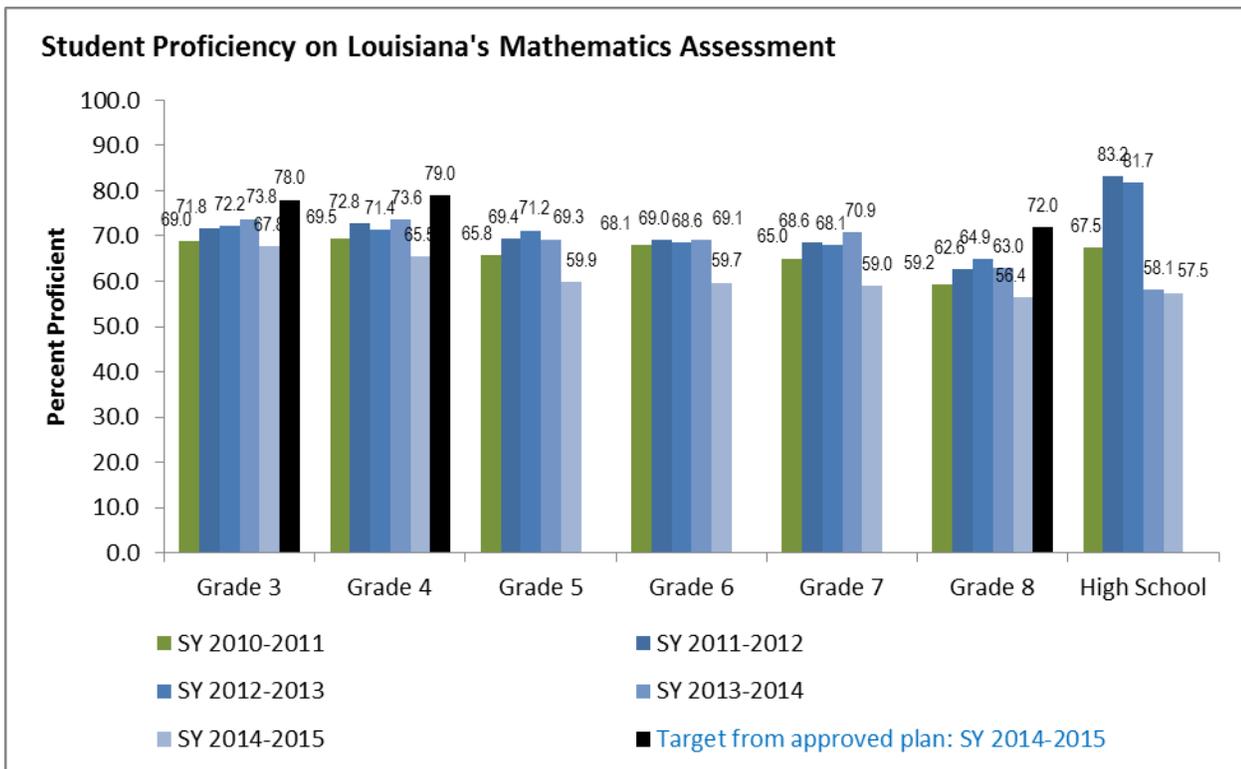
The number of teachers participating in AP Summer Institutes declined in Year 4, most likely because LDOE was unable to secure a site for an AP Summer Institute in the New Orleans area. As a result, fewer teachers (250) participated in the AP Summer Institute in Year 4 than in the previous year (317 teachers in Year 3). While the number of AP courses offered increased by 14 percent from SY 2013-2014 to SY 2014-2015, the number of LEAs offering courses increased by only four percent, and the number of schools offering courses decreased by three percent. Therefore, while the State has made progress in expanding access to AP courses over the past four years, it is not clear that students in more parts of the State have access to AP courses.

LDOE has had difficulty finding ways, other than anecdotal evidence, to measure the effectiveness and quality of the Teacher Leaders Program and the Teacher Leader Advisor Program, and has not yet developed adequate means to assess the quality of the products produced by the programs, the quality of the training provided, or the effects of the programs on classroom instruction. Similarly, LDOE has not yet developed adequate means to measure the quality and effectiveness of the Believe and Prepare program and assess whether it helps aspiring teachers better prepare for the classroom in difficult-to-staff schools.

Louisiana

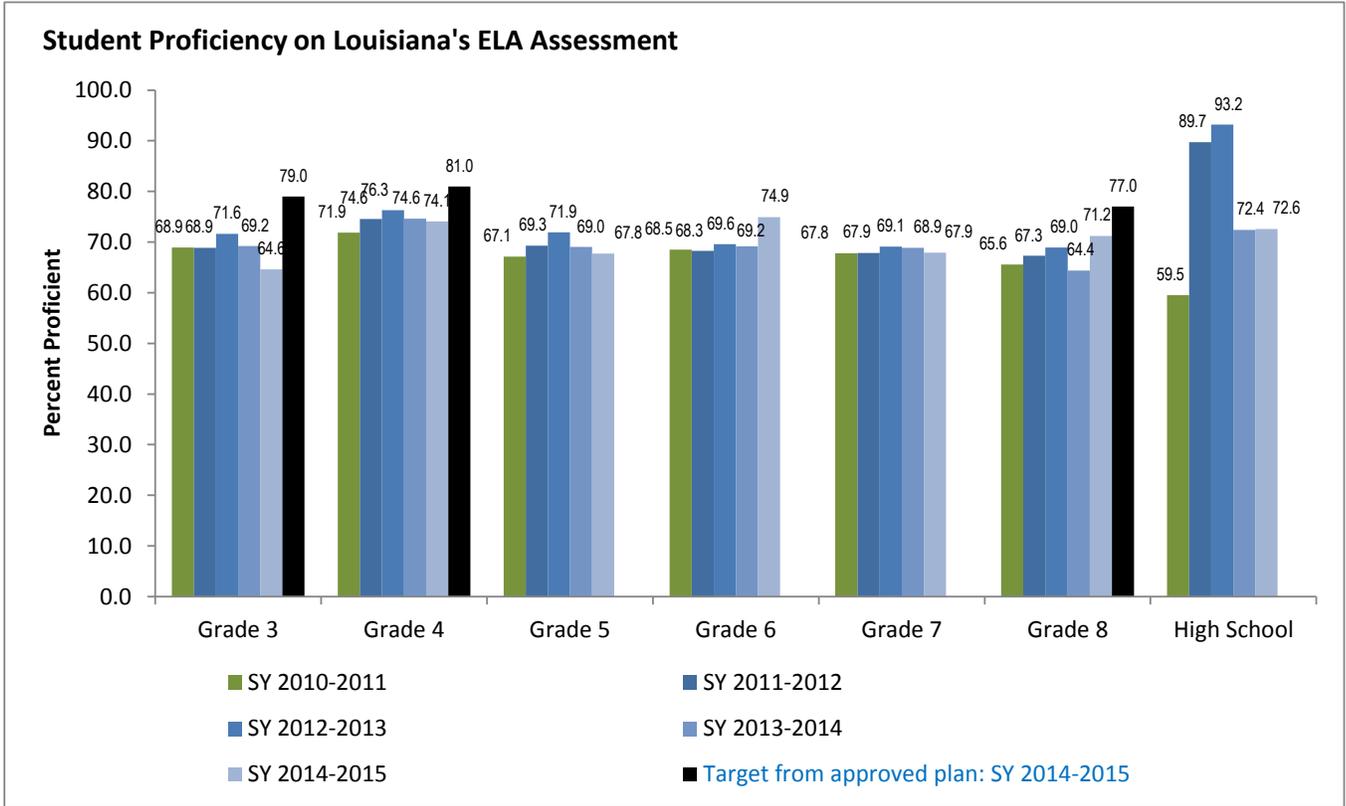
Louisiana student outcomes data

Student proficiency rates decreased in mathematics in grades three through eight from SY 2013-2014 to SY 2014-2015 and decreased slightly at the high school level. In ELA, Louisiana student proficiency results were mixed in SY 2014-2015. In grades three, four, five, and seven, proficiency rates decreased, while proficiency levels increased in grades six and eight and increased slightly at the high school level. Louisiana reported that decreases were due to its increased expectations, more rigorous standards, and the implementation of more challenging assessments. The State's high school graduation rate increased by three percentage points from SY 2013-2014 to SY 2014-2015.

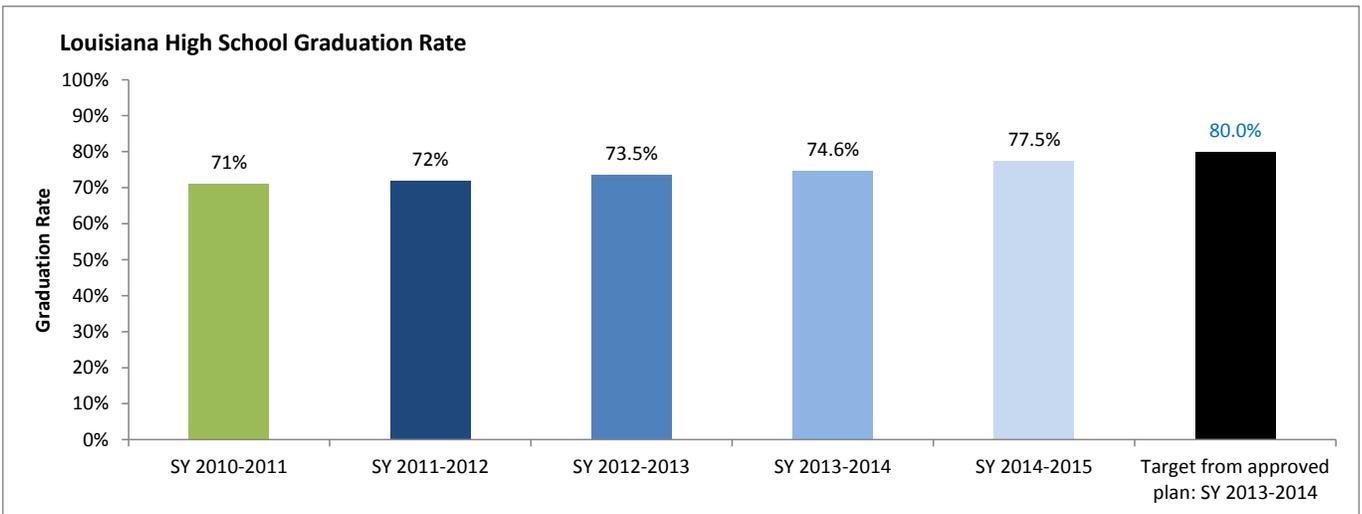


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Louisiana



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Louisiana

Teacher Leader Program supports Louisiana educational reform efforts

Louisiana created the Teacher Leader Program based on the belief that instructional decisions should be made by the professionals closest to the children. The Teacher Leader Program was the core strategy to roll out instructional reforms and curriculum changes to teachers statewide and the primary means for teachers to receive information from their peers and for the State to receive feedback from teachers. Teacher Leaders vetted instructional materials, created sample lesson plans, conducted webinars to inform teachers statewide, conducted local face-to-face trainings for teachers in their school systems, led book studies for teachers in their regions, and assisted in the development of an online Teacher Toolbox accessible to teachers statewide.

The program grew significantly over the four years of the Race to the Top grant. In Year 4 of the grant, there were Teacher Leaders in every subject area representing all districts and most schools statewide. According to the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE), the Teacher Leader program reinforced how powerful it is to involve educators in implementing a statewide education strategy. Prior to the development of Teacher Leaders, LDOE depended on a multi-level process to place resources in the hands of teachers that played out differently in each district. With Teacher Leaders in place, information flows directly into classrooms and provides coordinated training aligned to the State standards and curriculum.

Creating a pool of excellent and motivated educators also provided the opportunity for LDOE to provide resources for Louisiana teachers created by Louisiana educators. In addition to providing training in their districts, Teacher Leaders assisted in the brainstorming, drafting, and review of resources developed by LDOE. According to LDOE, an unplanned but positive outcome has been the impact of the program in elevating the teaching profession. As LDOE explains, the majority of educator leadership programs focus on promoting teachers to coaches and administrators. The Teacher Leader program, on the other hand, promotes leadership and opportunities within the classroom – keeping the best teachers in front of students every day.

New Jersey

New Jersey's education reform agenda

To help ensure that all children, regardless of life circumstances, graduate from high school ready for college and careers, New Jersey established education reform goals that include closing the achievement gap and improving the academic achievement of all students; producing high school graduates who are ready to succeed in college and careers; and substantially improving college attendance rates for students statewide.

In a reorganization that directly aligns with Race to the Top priorities, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) created four divisions, each corresponding to a basic building block of its reform plan. The four divisions are: Academics (standards, assessments, curriculum, and instruction); Talent (educator effectiveness); Performance (targets, measurement, analysis, and accountability); and Innovation (high-quality, nontraditional methods of delivering K-12 schooling and technology). These divisions focus on the State's priority initiatives of: implementing college- and career-ready standards and the PARCC assessments; developing a statewide framework for educator evaluation and support; leveraging the effective use of data to improve instruction; and increasing the number of effective charter schools.

New Jersey received a \$37.8 million Race to the Top grant to bolster its efforts to implement this reform agenda. In Year 4, New Jersey's Race to the Top grant included 322 participating LEAs.

Notable accomplishments in Years 1-3

- New Jersey developed and disseminated resources to support the transition to its enhanced standards and high-quality assessments. For example:
 - The State completed model curriculum units and formative assessments in mathematics and ELA aligned to the standards and made them available statewide.¹⁴ In Year 2, Priority schools implemented those units and assessments. In addition, NJDOE provided enhanced Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) and classroom resources for teachers.
 - NJDOE created curriculum scaffolds for kindergarten through fifth grade for mathematics and ELA and launched them in Year 3.
- After some initial delays in Years 1 and 2, the State developed its instructional improvement system (IIS), to support statewide efforts to more effectively use data to improve instruction, in Year 3. NJDOE completed the IIS pilot in spring 2014 and made the IIS available to participating LEAs for SY 2014-2015.
- In Years 1 and 2, LEAs piloted teacher and principal evaluation and support systems and provided feedback to inform the State's educator effectiveness law and regulations that were put in place in fall 2013. All non-charter LEAs fully implemented AchieveNJ, the State's teacher and principal evaluation and support system that includes student growth, in SY 2013-2014. District Evaluation Advisory Committees, composed of a variety of LEA stakeholders, assisted LEAs in solving problems and making recommendations to improve the system. School

¹⁴ The model curriculum includes all standards of the grade-level content organized into units of study. It was designed to assist districts and schools implement the State's college- and career-ready standards.

New Jersey

Improvement Panels were established to ensure that evaluation procedures and mentoring processes were implemented at the school level; and that appropriate professional development was provided, and corrective action plans put in place.

- The State tightened the standards for opening a charter school in New Jersey to ensure that only applications for charter schools with great potential to be high-performing schools are approved. In Years 1 and 2, the application process resulted in the approval of nine new charter schools. Out of 50 applications in the Year 3 spring and expedited review cycles, five applications were granted final approval. The percent of high-quality charter school seats increased from 47 percent in SY 2011-2012 to 58 percent in SY 2012-2013.¹⁵ In addition, New Jersey revamped the process to renew charter schools, by aligning the renewal application to the measures described in the Performance Framework of 2012, and streamlined the new charter school application process by using cloud-based management software in Year 3. The State reported positive feedback on the software and increased communication between the State and charter schools as a result of using this system.

New Jersey Year 4 Summary

Accomplishments

To support the ongoing transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments, during Year 4, NJDOE completed the model curriculum units for visual and performing arts, science, and social studies, and also created an online scaffolding tool for special education students and ELs. The scaffolding tool provides supports (*e.g.*, breaking skills into smaller units of learning, providing additional examples and resources) to help special education and EL students meet their learning goals. The State formally adopted the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) in July 2014 and hired two mathematics and science consultants to support the implementation of the State’s mathematics and science standards.

Based on user feedback, NJDOE made adjustments to its approach to providing professional development and resources to support standards implementation. For example, the State began developing model curriculum frameworks, instead of model curriculum units, for mathematics and ELA. The curriculum frameworks cluster standards and break them apart into critical skills (rather than SLOs), a format that New Jersey’s educators stated would be more useful. NJDOE also moved away from traditional types of professional development to, instead, involve educators in developing the curriculum frameworks. The State also partnered with the New Jersey Institute of Technology to develop blended learning modules for professional learning communities across the State to use to understand the shifts in instruction needed to teach students college- and career-ready skills.

As of Year 4, NJDOE accomplished the major goals and activities related to its IIS. In SY 2015-2016, over 40 participating LEAs were actively using the IIS, an increase from 33 LEAs in SY 2014-2015. NJDOE continued to gather feedback from LEAs and support implementation of the IIS through regular

¹⁵ New Jersey defines “high-quality” charter seats as those in a kindergarten through eighth grade school that meets or exceeds the standard in absolute performance or meets or exceeds the standard in student growth and the district comparison, while not falling far below the standard in absolute performance.

New Jersey

working sessions and by deploying “implementation managers.” In Year 4, NJDOE launched a series of open working sessions held across the State through which LEAs received one-on-one support from the implementation managers. These implementation managers served as a main point of contact for LEAs at NJDOE and conducted monthly visits to LEAs to answer questions, troubleshoot issues, and provide general support for implementation.

As in Year 3, AchieveNJ, the State’s educator evaluation and support system, was implemented in all LEAs in Year 4. With the support of three implementation managers, the State visited 185 LEAs to observe how the educator evaluations were being implemented. NJDOE continued to provide training and support for all LEAs to implement the evaluation and support system with fidelity.

In Year 4, after experiencing prior delays due to staff turnover, NJDOE made progress and met several major STEM project deliverables and commitments. The State completed a model science curriculum and curriculum frameworks for sixth grade through twelfth grade and began work on curriculum frameworks for kindergarten through fifth grade. A science specialist began development of comprehensive professional development to support LEAs and streamline STEM training to accommodate LEA requests for assistance.

NJDOE continued its efforts to build statewide capacity to implement its plans through coordinated communication, LEA monitoring, and its Race to the Top management office. The State uses its Race to the Top website and dedicated email account to provide updated information and guidance to LEAs. As in previous years, in Year 4, NJDOE received progress reports from all participating LEAs and conducted onsite visits to the 22 LEAs with the largest Race to the Top allocations.

Challenges

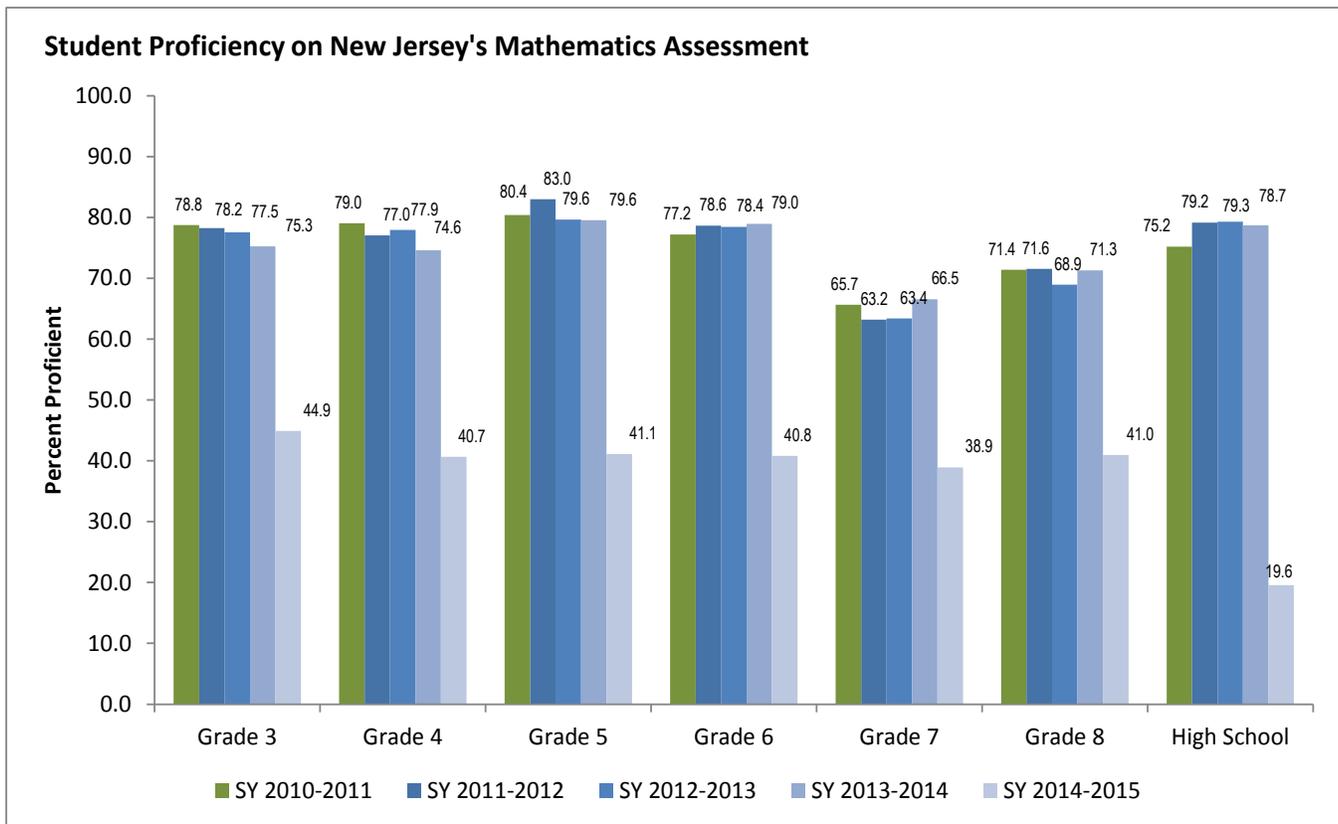
NJDOE faced challenges in coordinating the technical assistance and intervention supports for Priority and Focus schools through the Regional Achievement Centers (RACs) and ensuring that the RACs were fully equipped with the knowledge and resources to provide adequate support to these schools. Additionally, the State was challenged with supporting high-quality implementation of the model curriculum units and Achieve NJ. User feedback indicated that the model curriculum units were not addressing LEA needs. Although the State responded to user feedback by redesigning the model curriculum units into curriculum frameworks, it did not have a plan to provide professional development on the curriculum frameworks or to collect feedback on the quality and fidelity of implementation. NJDOE cited issues with variances in the quality of implementation of the educator evaluation and support system across LEAs and concerns regarding inter-rater reliability in conducting classroom observations and the use of SLOs.

NJDOE faced challenges in expanding its IIS to fully meet LEA demand for additional test bank items, particularly for science and social studies. Further, some LEAs were reluctant to use a State-developed, rather than a locally-developed, system. With regard to its STEM goals, the State did not complete development of the STEM Network or hold the STEM Conference as planned.

New Jersey

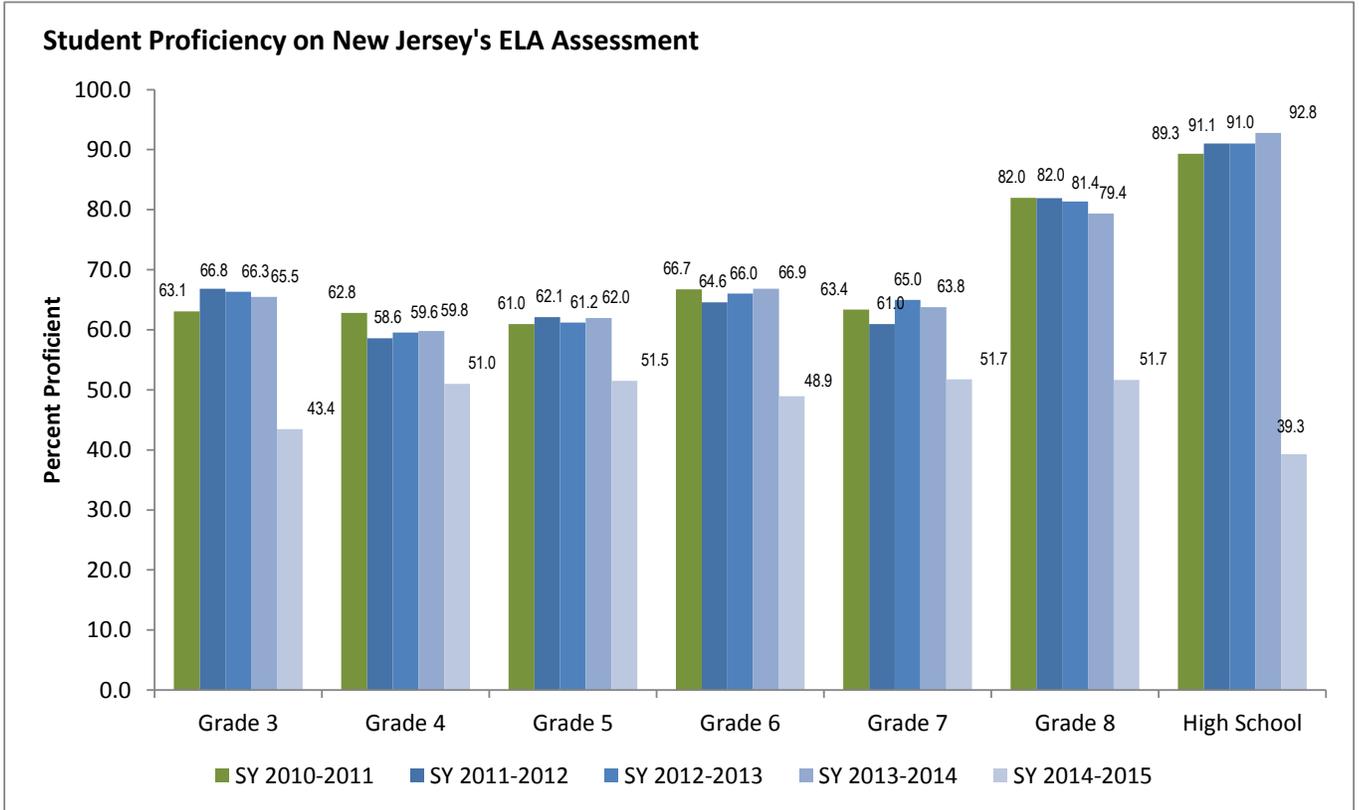
New Jersey student outcomes data

In SY 2014-2015, New Jersey administered the PARCC assessment for the first time. In SYs 2010-2011 through 2013-2014, the State's summative assessment was the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge. In both ELA and mathematics, proficiency rates decreased significantly at all grade levels from SY 2013-2014 to SY 2014-2015. Changes in assessment results may be due to the fact that the State changed assessments during this period, resulting in data that may not be readily comparable. New Jersey's high school graduation rate increased by approximately one percentage point from SY 2013-2014 to SY 2014-2015.

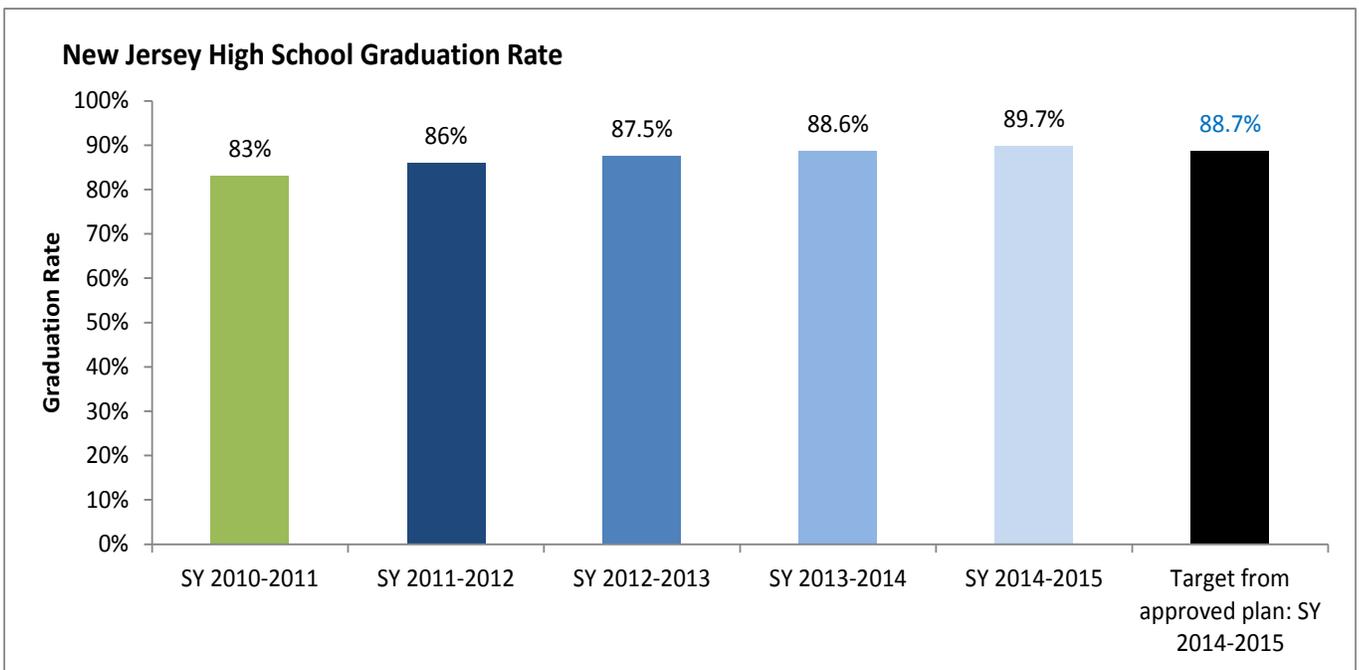


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New Jersey



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New Jersey

New Jersey's instructional improvement system increases the use of data to improve instruction

One of the goals of the New Jersey Department of Education's (NJDOE) instructional improvement system (IIS) was to greatly expand the State's data capacity, make use of economies of scale, and provide a tool that allowed its educators and leaders to easily access data to improve instruction and drive student achievement.

In pursuit of this goal, NJDOE used Race to the Top funding to:

- Support a portion of the overall cost to design, procure, and operate the IIS that LEAs could use to access model curriculum units aligned to the State standards, six-week unit-aligned formative assessments, teacher-rated instructional resources, student-level reports to inform and drive instruction, and online professional development resources;
- Fund implementation of the IIS in all Priority schools, and in Focus schools identified by the Regional Achievement Centers as having critical need for quality curriculum, assessment and data-driven instruction;
- Provide \$2 million in grants to participating LEAs to support implementation of the IIS; and
- Allow LEAs to use a portion or all of their Race to the Top funds to support the implementation of the IIS in any or all of their schools.

NJDOE reported that a powerful shift occurred over the course of IIS implementation in the attitude and culture of educators about using data. NJDOE stated that educators are using reports, asking for data, and seeing value in the IIS as a tool to inform instruction. As districts, schools, and teachers began to see the data at their fingertips and experience how easy it was to access, the State reported that demand for additional data and new types of reports increased. In addition to increased usage of the IIS, the State reported that the IIS has led to more meaningful, data-driven discussions in schools and classrooms across New Jersey.

Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania's education reform agenda

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) designed its Race to the Top Phase 3 application to accelerate the following key aspects of the State's strategic plan for education:

- Expanding student and teacher access to quality courses and instructional resources to improve student achievement on the Pennsylvania Core Standards (PA Core Standards), including STEM.
- Providing easy access to meaningful student, school, and district data for parents, educators, and the general public to improve decision-making processes.
- Implementing new teacher and principal evaluation and support tools and processes to ensure effective educators in every classroom and building.
- Further developing opportunities for alternative approaches to schooling to meet the changing needs of students and their families.

Pennsylvania received a Race to the Top Phase 3 grant of \$41.3 million. In Year 4, Pennsylvania's Race to the Top grant included 182 participating LEAs.

Notable accomplishments in Years 1-3

- To build State capacity, PDE leveraged its intermediary units (IUs)¹⁶ to provide a variety of professional development opportunities to LEAs and assist the State in overseeing LEAs and their use of Race to the Top funds.
- PDE increased its internal staffing and monitoring of its IUs and LEAs. During SY 2013-2014, PDE monitored each of its 29 IUs, which included all 182 Race to the Top participating LEAs, to review Race to the Top grant requirements, assess LEA progress, and gather feedback regarding PDE's implementation of grant projects. PDE used information from these visits to provide individualized technical assistance to LEAs when necessary, and to communicate implementation successes and challenges.
- In Years 1-3, PDE developed and made available a number of resources for educators to support the implementation of PA Core Standards.
 - PDE made available a wide variety of resources through the Standards Aligned System (SAS) portal including Classroom Diagnostic Tools and online courses.
 - In fall 2014, PDE launched *Pennsylvania Learns*, a web-based repository of resources (e.g., lectures, assignments, assessments) for educators and students. *Pennsylvania Learns* provides free or low-cost educational resources aligned to the PA Core Standards that educators can incorporate into the lessons and courses they teach.
 - PDE piloted the Math Design Collaborative (MDC) in spring 2014 and launched the project statewide in fall 2014. This initiative provides middle school educators with training and access to formative assessment lessons in mathematics. The project emphasizes students working through problems, and uses a hybrid of assessment and instruction as a key tool for implementation. In order to promote and sustain the MDC

¹⁶ Pennsylvania's Intermediate Units (IUs) are part of the State's education governance structure serving in a role between the State educational agency and the LEAs. The IUs provide region-based services to LEAs across the State.

Pennsylvania

- project, PDE developed a repository of resources on the SAS portal available for all educators.
- PDE expanded the availability to students of online courses aligned to the PA Core Standards and Charlotte Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*. Over the first three years of the grant, PDE added 40 courses total in Algebra, Biology, AP Biology, AP Calculus, and Grade 10 ELA. In SY 2013-2014, PDE reported that over 13,000 students in participating LEAs enrolled in PDE-certified online courses.
 - The State developed and made available its Early Warning System (EWS) for drop-out prevention that provides LEAs with access to real-time student level data to help educators identify middle school students in need of additional academic interventions or support services.
 - In fall 2013, PDE launched an online School Performance Profile (SPP), a publicly accessible report card for every school in the State.
 - PDE continued to streamline its processes for collecting data from LEAs through the Pennsylvania Information Management System (the State's longitudinal data system) and ensure data quality. In order to support its data strategy initiatives, PDE provided annual training and technical assistance for Pennsylvania Information Management System administrators and users in LEAs and IUs.
 - In order to support LEAs in implementing the new educator evaluation and support systems, PDE provided professional development through its IUs, web-based modules, and webinars. As of the end of Year 3, PDE had trained 100 percent of principals and 97.5 percent of teachers in participating LEAs on the teacher observation and practice rubric.
 - Following multiple pilots of various aspects of Pennsylvania's educator evaluation and support systems, in SY 2013-2014, all LEAs implemented teacher evaluation and support systems, which are based 85 percent on observation and practice evidence and 15 percent on building-level data, a school academic performance score calculated through Pennsylvania's SPP.
 - In SY 2013-2014, PDE assisted LEAs as they prepared to include SLOs in teacher evaluations in SY 2014-2015 by developing a repository of documents, including an SLO template and guidance documents. One hundred and twenty LEAs participated in an SLO pilot.

Pennsylvania Year 4 summary

Accomplishments

PDE continued to implement its plan for oversight and monitoring of the State's sub-recipients throughout Year 4. The State implemented a process to identify high-performing LEAs and those facing implementation challenges for onsite reviews. PDE continued to use its onsite visits to provide targeted technical assistance to its LEAs. In order to gather more formative feedback regarding a number of Race to the Top initiatives, PDE created a survey to disseminate to IUs and LEAs during its onsite visits in Year 4. PDE used the LEA survey feedback immediately following the LEA onsite visit to offer timely and individualized supports to address any issues identified.

During Year 4, Pennsylvania continued to progress toward its goal of increasing student achievement in STEM and supporting the transition to the PA Core Standards. PDE hosted a highly successful "STEM-a-thon," a statewide initiative that drew students from across the State to a STEM competition. PDE

Pennsylvania

continued to implement the MDC in middle schools statewide, engaging almost 1,000 teachers with training and access to formative assessment lessons in mathematics.

Additionally, PDE is on target to meet its goal to revise the SAS portal to ensure the site is compatible with portable devices, and to develop a process to evaluate components of the site for effectiveness, efficacy, and value, based on data analytics.

The State continued to expand resources available through *Pennsylvania Learns* (a web-based repository of resources for educators and students). A financial literacy course designed for high school students ranked as one of the courses with the largest number of hits across *Pennsylvania Learns*. During Year 4, PDE established agreements with the IUs to continue the work of *Pennsylvania Learns* and contracted with Harrisburg University to develop a bank of online self-paced hybrid learning courses, which were made available on the SAS portal.

PDE made progress on its projects to increase access to high-quality data by expanding LEA participation in the State's EWS for dropout prevention. A total of 92 LEAs submitted applications to participate in the EWS, and of these LEAs, 20 were making full use of the system and five were in the staging phase. In addition, PDE condensed data collection reports in the State's longitudinal data system from over 2,000 to 800 in order to reduce burden on LEAs. PDE also provided resources to ensure LEAs are better equipped to submit high quality data to PDE.

In Year 4, PDE continued its work with the online SPP in order to provide better information to improve school performance. PDE developed a media kit for LEAs to use to communicate results of the SPP to local school boards and the public. Based on concerns raised in the field related to the composition of SPP ratings, PDE began a series of stakeholder engagement sessions that were held across the State to share information regarding the SPP and gather information and suggestions for how to improve the SPP.

Participating LEAs met the Year 4 timelines to implement their teacher, principal, and non-teaching professional evaluation and support systems. PDE continued to gather feedback from participating LEAs regarding the successes and challenges in implementing educator evaluation and support systems through onsite visits and stakeholder meetings with superintendents, educator associations, workforce partners, and community members. In addition, during Year 4, PDE received two final reports from third-party researchers with whom PDE partnered to validate and study the State's teacher and principal professional practice rating tool based on pilot data from SY 2012-2013. The findings from these reports will be used to continue to improve educator evaluations and supports.

PDE continued to leverage its IUs to disseminate educator effectiveness training using a train-the-trainer approach to build local capacity. In order to help sustain PDE's educator effectiveness investments beyond Race to the Top, PDE invested funds in producing online professional development modules for principals, specialists, and non-teaching professionals, in addition to modules for the supervisors of these roles.

PDE supported charter schools in preparing the State's required Annual Charter School Report, as well as documents related to Comprehensive Planning and Improvement Planning. Guidance documents were

Pennsylvania

developed and training provided on how to complete these reports with a focus on using data to drive school improvement.

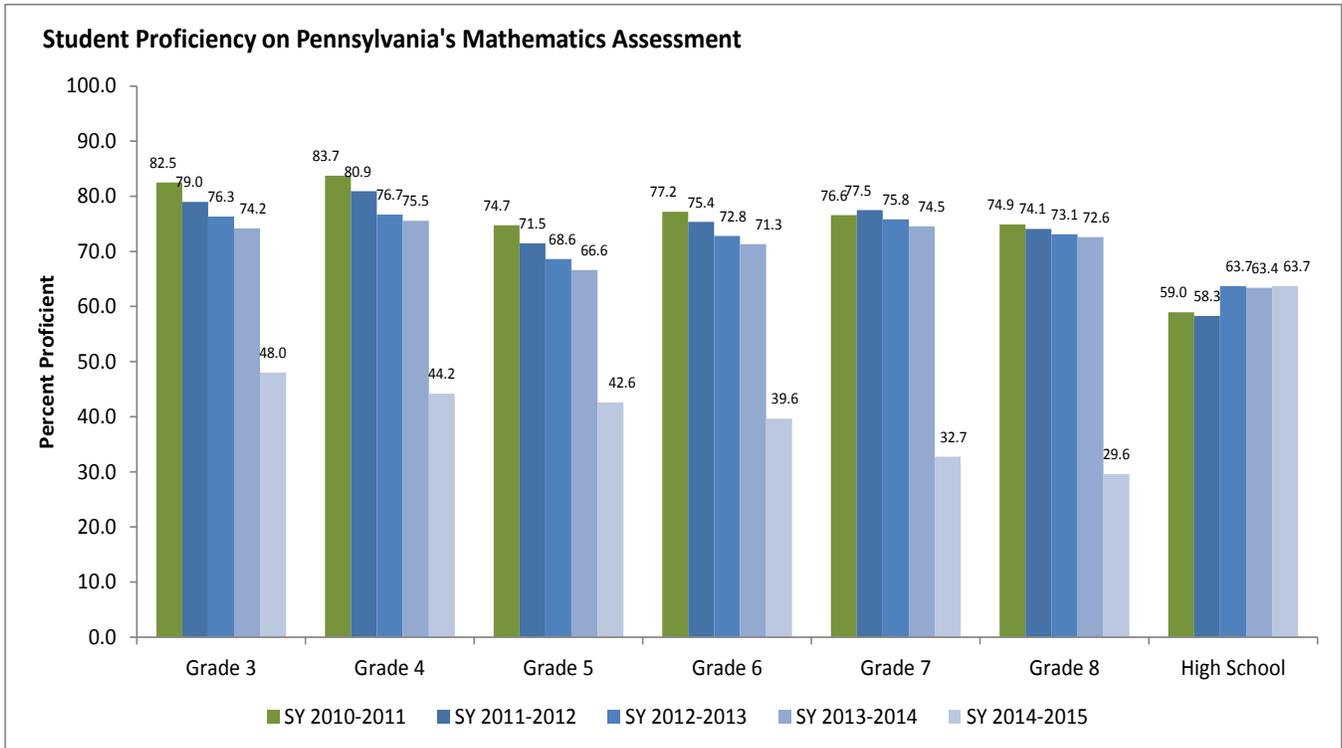
Challenges

PDE continued to face challenges in implementing systematic feedback loops to ensure strong continuous improvement and high-quality implementation of grant activities. For example, PDE did not have a systematic process in place to gather feedback regarding the extent to which educators find the professional development resources effective and whether the training provided has an impact on the practices of evaluators and educator instruction. Likewise, PDE did not have a formal process in place to ensure that all participating LEAs are implementing rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation and support systems. It is not clear whether the State met its goal to provide the public with information and resources regarding charter school options. Although the State utilized PDE's charter school webpage as a hub of information, the resources were not clearly directed toward the public or presented in a manner that would be navigable to the general public.

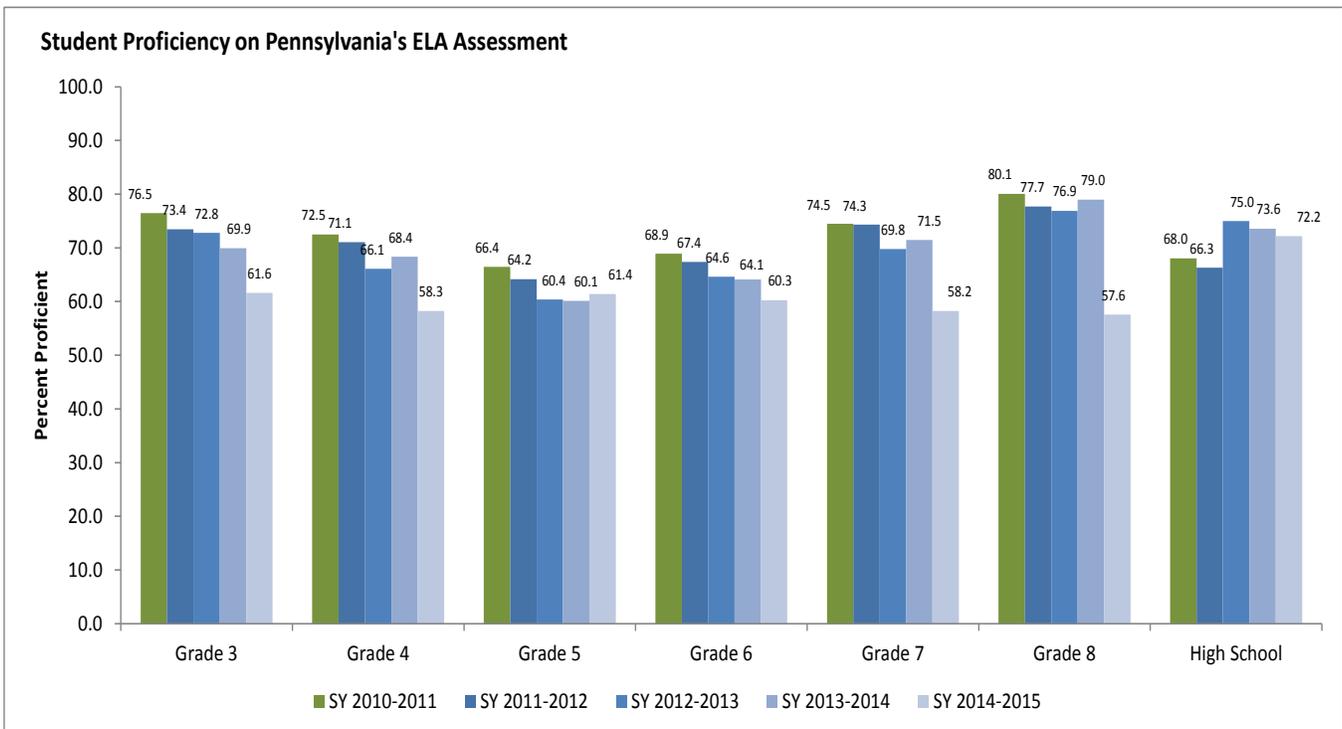
Pennsylvania student outcomes data

In SY 2012-2013, Pennsylvania implemented new end-of-course Keystone Exams in Algebra I, Biology, and Literature. In SY 2014-2015, Pennsylvania administered statewide assessments fully aligned to the PA Core Standards for the first time in grades three through eight in ELA and mathematics. Student proficiency in mathematics for grades three through eight decreased notably from SY 2013-2014 to SY 2014-2015, while proficiency at the high school level remained relatively the same. The State also experienced decreases in proficiency rates in ELA in most grades, although declines were less significant than for mathematics. Pennsylvania reports that these decreases were due to the transition to revised, more rigorous assessments. After remaining the same in SY 2012-2013 and SY 2013-2014, Pennsylvania's graduation rate decreased slightly in SY 2014-2015.

Pennsylvania

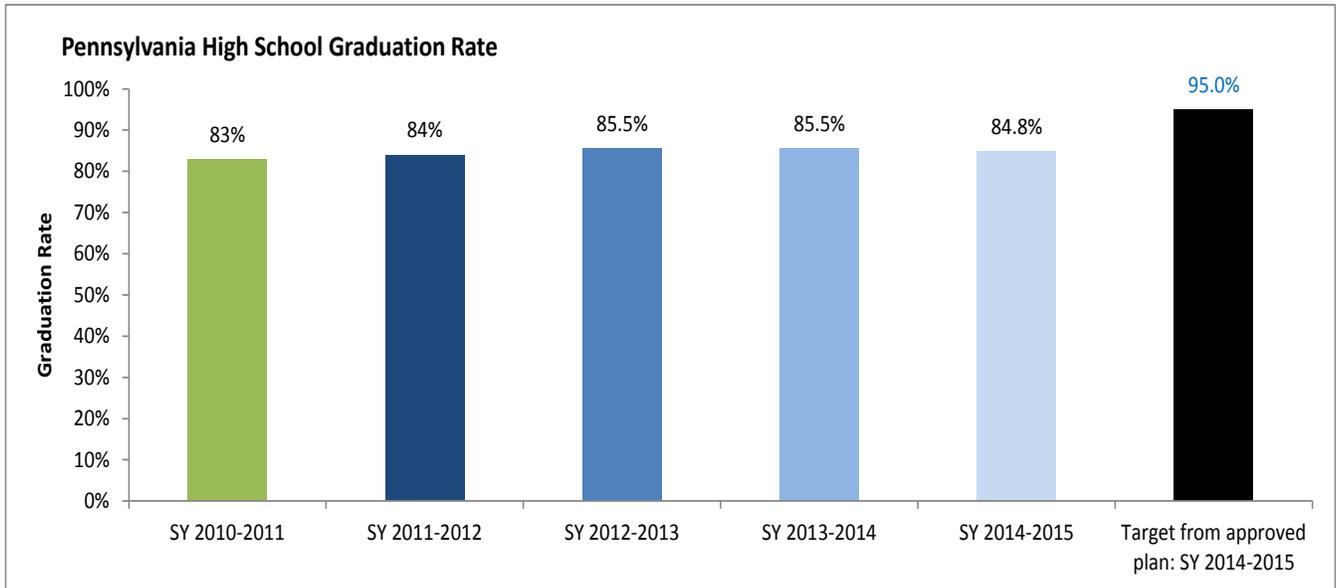


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Pennsylvania



Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania's online system provides extensive resources to inform teaching and learning

The Standards Aligned System (SAS) is the Pennsylvania Department of Education's (PDE) online system designed to provide educators – and the community – with materials and resources to inform teaching and learning. Both the SAS portal and the PDE website provide venues to support student achievement.

Over the last four years, Race to the Top funding permitted the State to make several upgrades and enhancements to the SAS in support of standards-based instruction:

- SAS Assessment Builder – PDE updated and enhanced the SAS Assessment Builder to offer hundreds of additional mathematics and English language arts (ELA) test items for educators to use to create classroom assessments. Users can search and identify items aligned to the PA Core Standards, download them into customized assessments, print for student use, and store in the SAS ePortfolio.
- Classroom Diagnostic Tools – The Pennsylvania Classroom Diagnostic Tools (CDT) is a set of online assessments, organized by content area, designed to provide diagnostic information in order to guide instruction and remediation. PDE added assessments for the elementary grades, skills pamphlets, and metacognitive templates to expand the value of CDT in the classroom. The CDT is currently being offered to students in grade 3 through high school and is a widely-used tool across schools in the State.
- Math Design Collaborative (MDC) – Through this project, PDE engaged educators in implementing MDC tasks in classrooms across the region, provided extensive staff development, and made available approximately 100 MDC formative assessment lessons (FALs). Aligned to PA Core Standards, FALs reveal and develop students' understanding of key mathematical ideas and applications. To promote sustainability, the MDC project implemented a train-the-trainer model in all 29 Intermediate Units.
- Online Course Development – Pennsylvania educators created kindergarten through twelfth grade online courses in ELA, mathematics, and science. Aligned to the PA Core standards, these *Pennsylvania Learns* courses are available in iTunesU and integrate a wide array of online assets designed to engage students in authentic learning.
- Online Course Catalog (OCC) – PDE identified and posted on the OCC website online high school courses meeting rigorous standards. Identified courses emphasize STEM, in addition to ELA. The courses are designed to prepare students for the Keystone Exams (end-of-course assessments) but can also be used for supplementary instruction. The courses have been reviewed through an application process and the PDE-adopted International Association for Online Learning (iNACOL) rubric to ensure alignment to the iNACOL Standards for Quality Online Courses.

Conclusion

Over the course of the grant period, Race to the Top States made progress implementing their comprehensive reform initiatives and toward meeting the goals established in their applications. States also faced challenges in meeting their goals, and took action to address those challenges. For many Race to the Top States and participating LEAs, the initiatives they implemented during the grant period remain priorities. The Department encourages States to consider how they can build on the initiatives and reforms underway as a result of Race to the Top to inform their efforts going forward.

Budget

For State budget information, see <https://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): (1) 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; (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 <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/amendments/index.html>.)

America COMPETES Act elements: The 12 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.

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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.

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

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 growth in student learning (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 growth in student learning (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, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 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 growth in student learning (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 growth in student learning (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.

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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

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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 and support systems that meet the following criteria: rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation and support systems for teachers and principals that: (1) differentiate effectiveness using multiple rating categories that take into account data on growth in student learning as a significant factor, and (2) are designed and developed with teacher and principal involvement.

Reform Support Network (RSN): In partnership with the Implementation and Support Unit, 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.

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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 (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.

Growth in student learning: 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."