RACE TO THE TOP

Rhode Island Report

Year 2: School Year 2011–2012

U.S. Department of Education
Washington, DC 20202

February 1, 2013

Executive Summary

Race to the Top overview

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

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

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

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

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

Race to the Top program review

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

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

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

[2] Participating LEAs are those LEAs that choose to work with the State to implement all or significant portions of the State's Race to the Top plan, as specified in each LEA's Memorandum of Understanding with the State. Each participating LEA that receives funding under Title I, Part A will receive a share of the 50 percent of a State's grant award that the State must 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 ARRA.

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

Executive Summary

State-specific summary report

The Department uses the information gathered during the review process (*e.g.*, through monthly calls, onsite reviews, and Annual Performance Reports (APRs)) to draft State-specific summary reports.[4] The State-specific summary report serves as an assessment of a State's annual Race to the Top implementation. The Year 2 report for Phase 1 and 2 grantees highlights successes and accomplishments, identifies challenges, and provides lessons learned from implementation from approximately September 2011 through September 2012.

State's education reform agenda

In January 2010, the Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education (Board of Regents) approved the *Transforming Education in Rhode Island* strategic plan, which established five priorities to guide broad-based education reforms in the State: (1) ensure educator excellence, (2) accelerate all schools toward greatness, (3) establish world-class standards and assessments, (4) develop user-friendly data systems, and (5) invest resources wisely. The new strategic plan has statewide stakeholder support and forms the basis for the State's Race to the Top initiatives. In September 2010, Rhode Island received a $75 million Race to the Top grant. Under the terms of the Race to the Top grant, the State distributed at least half of the award amount to participating LEAs.

State Year 1 summary

Rhode Island increased its capacity to implement Race to the Top programs through a strategic realignment of the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) and the implementation of performance management processes like EdStat (see *State Success Factors*). In addition, the State prepared educators to transition to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) through a series of professional development opportunities called Study of the Standards sessions that reached more than 2,300 educators in Year 1. The Board of Regents approved new educator evaluation standards that required the use of student performance as a measure of educator effectiveness, and RIDE launched an induction program for new teachers at the beginning of school year (SY) 2011-2012. RIDE also created the foundation for cross-cutting data systems including the Instructional Management System (IMS) and the Educator Performance Support System (EPSS).

State Year 2 summary

Accomplishments

RIDE fully implemented its EdStat data-driven performance management structure, allowing the State to track project implementation and identify areas of improvement. In addition, during quarterly Collaborative for Learning Outcomes (CLO) meetings, RIDE brought together all 50 participating LEAs in facilitated leadership teams to discuss implementation and report to RIDE on progress. Based on LEA feedback, the State revised its LEA performance management processes to more effectively support LEAs.

In Year 2, RIDE and LEAs created curricular resources to assist educators in transitioning to the CCSS, including 10 model curricula in core subjects. RIDE exceeded its goal of training 4,100 educators on CCSS; 5,800 educators attended Study of the Standards sessions during the first two years of Race to the Top implementation. Additionally, the State developed four modules to train educators in formative assessment practices and piloted these modules in six schools in SY 2011-2012.

RIDE also developed and launched the EPSS and IMS in Year 2. Beginning in Year 3, the EPSS will collect and store LEA educator effectiveness data. RIDE also made significant progress in developing several data systems, such as the IMS to provide instructional resources and student data to educators, an Early Warning System (EWS) to identify students at risk of academic failure or dropping out, and the Rhode Island Certification System (eCert) to link certification and certification renewal to educator evaluation data. Educators played a key role in the development of each system.

In Year 2, RIDE made progress in its initiatives to support its educators (see *Great Teachers and Leaders*). The State gradually implemented educator evaluation models while two LEAs fully implemented State's evaluation model, called the Rhode Island model. Every Rhode Island teacher and principal was evaluated and identified as performing in one of four levels: ineffective, developing, effective, or highly effective. Based on feedback from LEA experiences, RIDE made revisions to the Rhode Island model in preparation for all LEAs to fully implement either the Rhode Island model or another State-approved evaluation system in Year 3. In Year 2 the State also held trainings on educator evaluation, including 102 sessions for educators evaluating teachers and/or building administrators. The State placed 44 educators in urban or charter schools using alternative routes for teachers, and provided funding to support LEA use of a statewide educator recruitment platform to manage the State's distribution of effective teachers. The State also provided new teachers with a new teacher induction program, which includes at least 75 minutes per week with induction coaches and regular professional development.

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

Five Rhode Island persistently lowest-achieving (PLA) schools implemented one of the four school intervention models in Year 2, and the State selected eight additional schools to begin interventions in Year 3.[5] Through the Academy for Transformative Leadership, leadership teams from PLAs participated in professional development institutes in spring and summer 2012. Rhode Island formed its first partnership with an outside charter management organization in Year 2, securing approval to open two Achievement First elementary schools. Further, Rhode Island awarded its first charter school expansion grant.

Challenges

Although RIDE exceeded its CCSS training goals, it is unclear whether all LEAs will be ready to fully implement the CCSS by SY 2013-2014, particularly those LEAs that did not participate in the State's curricular development work. RIDE made revisions to the educator evaluation system to increase the weight of the Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) component, a change that will require RIDE to provide additional support to ensure that educators and LEAs implement SLOs rigorously and consistently. Additionally, RIDE experienced significant delays in its projects to intervene in its lowest-achieving schools, including hiring staff and providing professional development training for school leaders, which led to concerns about both State and LEA capacity to meet milestones in the State's Scope of Work (see *Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools*). To address these concerns RIDE hired additional personnel, amended implementation timelines, and used budget savings from Year 1 to get back on track toward the end of Year 2.

The State identified LEAs' varying levels of technological readiness to implement data systems, as well as educator readiness to use data-informed instructional practices. As a result, RIDE requested and was approved for a $20 million technology bond for the General Assembly and the Governor. RIDE also created a three-tier professional development framework to match LEAs' preparedness to implement data-informed instruction.

Looking ahead to Year 3

According to the State's Race to the Top plan, in Year 3 Rhode Island will continue to support LEAs and improve its Race to the Top program oversight and monitoring through EdStat and the CLO process. LEAs will take critical steps toward implementing the CCSS by developing CCSS-aligned units of study for use in classrooms. In addition, LEAs will fully implement new educator evaluation systems that use student growth data, differentiate educators into performance levels, and suggest professional growth supports for educators. The State will also take steps toward rewarding effective educators by developing and piloting new compensation structures. Additionally, it will place more educators certified through alternative routes in schools and will continue its efforts to transform PLA schools through interventions and support.

State Success Factors

Building capacity to support LEAs

Rhode Island continued to use the EdStat performance management process established in Year 1 to manage and track performance in most of its Race to the Top projects. In Year 2, RIDE conducted over 20 EdStat sessions across four strategic priorities: World-Class Standards and Assessments, Educator Excellence, Accelerating All Schools Towards Greatness, and User-Friendly Data Systems. Sessions for each area occur every four to six weeks and provide a comprehensive and objective assessment of each project's status. Participants in each session included the project teams, the performance management executive, and a RIDE leadership panel including the Commissioner. Using documentation and data that depicted the progress and the quality of implementation, the leadership panel delved into each project's status and helped project managers identify and resolve potential problems or areas of concern.

After identifying lessons learned through a pilot and partial implementation in Year 1, the State enhanced the EdStat process in Year 2. The State added evidence-based color assessments of implementation progress against pre-selected indicators that provide an objective measure of progress to track implementation and help keep projects on track. The State also added an assessment of quality of implementation at both the State educational agency and LEA levels. Evidence included summaries of survey and focus group feedback and LEA self-assessments from the CLO process.

[5] Race to the Top States' plans include supporting their 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.

RIDE monitored its alternative certification programs and teacher preparation reforms (see *Great Teachers and Leaders*) through its pre-existing Rhode Island Program Approval Process, a system of protocols, methods and standards used to approve any program that prepares educators, including alternative certification programs. Once approved, the State monitors these programs through a series of monthly progress updates.

The State utilized additional structures to support the Race to the Top projects, including the Project Management Office Coordination (PMOC), the Internal Oversight Team, and the Adaptive Leadership Team. After realigning 134 staff positions to support these structures and its broader Race to the Top plan in Year 1, Rhode Island fully implemented each structure for the entirety of Year 2, enabling the State to make considerable strides in its performance management efforts.

The PMOC monitors the implementation and integration of RIDE's Race to the Top data systems, including the interim and formative assessment work (see *Standards and Assessments*) and its IMS, EWS, and Educator Performance and Support System (see *Data Systems to Support Instruction*). For each of these projects, RIDE assigned a team comprising a sponsor from RIDE leadership, a business lead from RIDE's data systems team, and a technical lead. The PMOC lead supported projects by tracking work plans, timelines, and deliverables. Additionally, the PMOC operated a dashboard that supplied biweekly updates on project progress to RIDE stakeholders.

The Internal Oversight Team, a problem-solving group that includes Race to the Top performance management executives and project leads, conducted a quarterly review of the Internal Oversight Quarterly Progress report, which mirrors the State's Race to the Top Scope of Work. Using this process, the State verified that projects were progressing on time and provided an additional opportunity to identify potential risks, specifically with regard to completing key deliverables. The Internal Oversight Team was also responsible for recommending amendments to the Department and identifying issues that potentially required policy changes at the State level.

The Adaptive Leadership Team, made up of senior RIDE leadership, ensured agency-wide coordination by providing broader accountability across divisions and coordinating Race to the Top projects and their intersections with existing RIDE work. The Adaptive Leadership Team provided feedback to the Internal Oversight Team regarding potential areas of improvement. Together, the Internal Oversight Team and Adaptive Leadership Team promoted collaboration and accountability across RIDE's various areas and offices by addressing implementation challenges and ensuring that RIDE addresses each issue identified in EdStat sessions.

The Internal Oversight Team and Adaptive Leadership Team also played a critical role in ensuring long-term sustainability of Race to the Top reforms. The State charged the Internal Oversight Team with developing recommendations for sustainability, and the Adaptive Leadership Team with analyzing those recommendations to determine which are most appropriate for implementation.

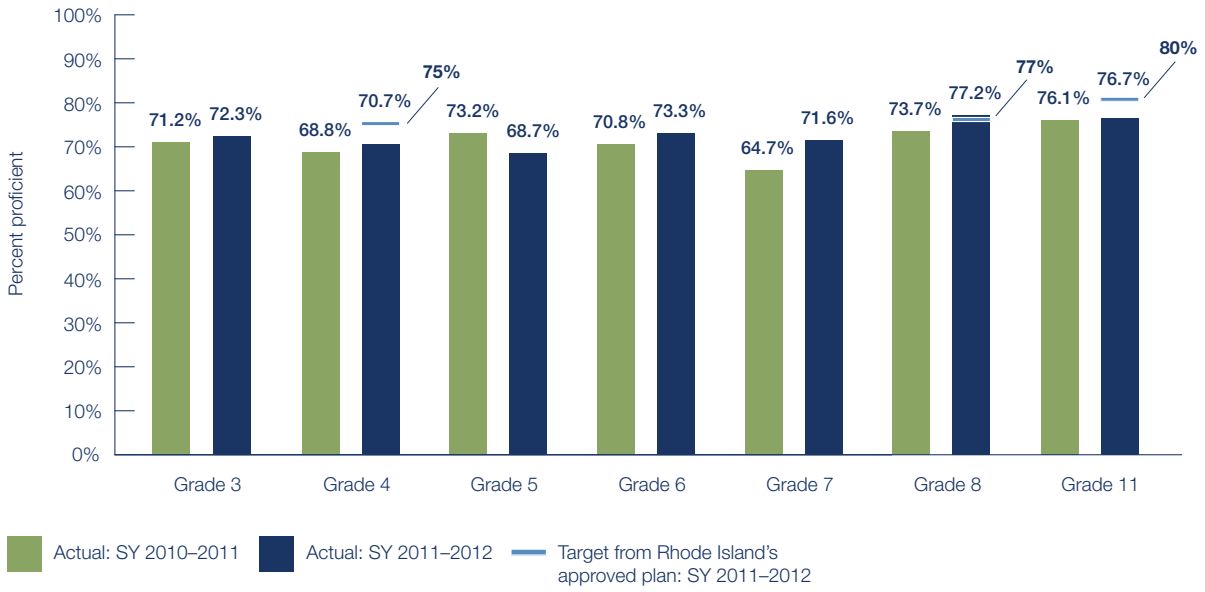
RIDE's strong commitment to rigorous performance management in Year 2 represents a significant change to its institutional culture. EdStat altered the way that RIDE evaluated its work, as well as how project staff members interacted with senior leadership. Additionally, the cooperation between the Adaptive Leadership Team and the Internal Oversight Team facilitated clearer messaging of Race to the Top issues, improved coordination across RIDE agencies, and encouraged agency-wide problem-solving.

Support and accountability for LEAs

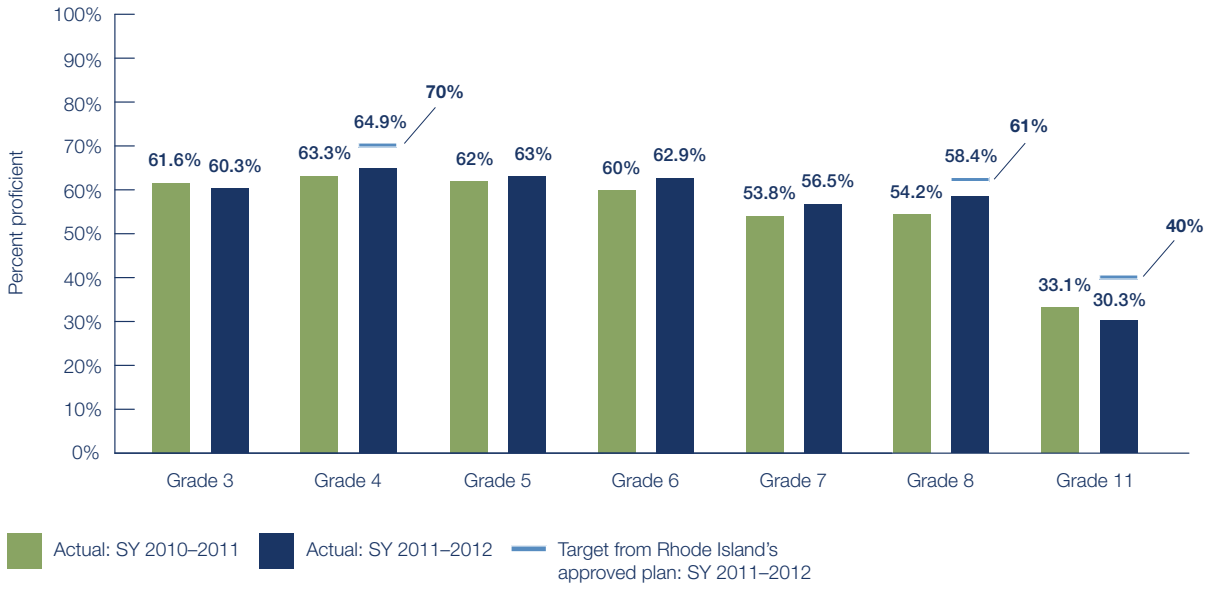
RIDE implemented the CLO process to support and manage LEA performance in Year 1 and built upon that process in Year 2. The CLO process included quarterly progress reports, data reports, and meetings between RIDE and LEAs. Prior to each CLO quarterly meeting, LEAs submitted Quarterly Progress Reports providing information on their major activities and progress toward project goals. At the meetings, a trained RIDE facilitator met with LEA leaders integral to the LEAs' Race to the Top program implementation. Together, the RIDE facilitator and LEA personnel reviewed data reports that depicted project-by-project data from the Quarterly Progress Reports and the LEAs' color-coded assessment of their implementation, as well as LEA accomplishments, challenges, and questions.

The CLO provides an opportunity for all 50 participating LEAs to collaborate with their peers that are also implementing Race to the Top initiatives. Each CLO comprises LEAs with similar size, student composition, geographic location or interests. Team members include staff critical to the Race to the Top implementation such as superintendents, assistant superintendents, principals, charter school directors, information technology directors or other staff in charge of curriculum and instruction. During the first three rounds of CLO meetings, the State learned a great deal about LEA capacity, potential for collaboration, and readiness to implement projects. Towards the end of Year 2, Rhode Island shifted the meeting agenda to focus on sharing best practices and responding to challenges. To complement the CLO process, RIDE provided each LEA with "stocktaking" reports that use aggregated quarterly report data to indicate the LEA's progress toward meeting the Year 2 goals and objectives outlined in its Scope of Work.

Student Proficiency on Rhode Island's ELA Assessment



Student Proficiency on Rhode Island's Mathematics Assessment



Preliminary SY 2011–2012 data reported as of: September 17, 2012

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

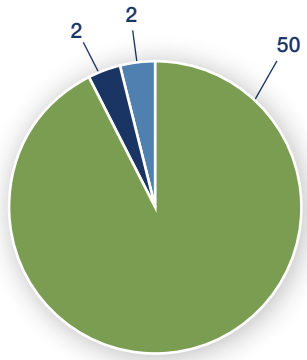
For State-reported context, please refer to the Race to the Top APR at www.rtt-apr.us.

LEA participation

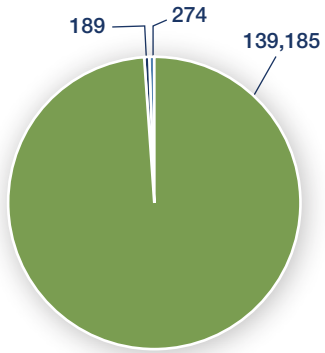
Rhode Island reported 50 participating LEAs as of June 30, 2012. At the time of its Race to the Top application in June 2010, 48 LEAs were participating in the State's plan; two additional participating LEAs joined the grant during Year 1. In addition, through an approved amendment in Year 2, two charter LEAs, the Greene School and Trinity Academy for the Performing Arts, joined the grant as involved LEAs.

As depicted in the graphs below, LEAs participating in the State's plan serve 99.8 percent of the State's kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12) students and 99.7 percent of its students in poverty.

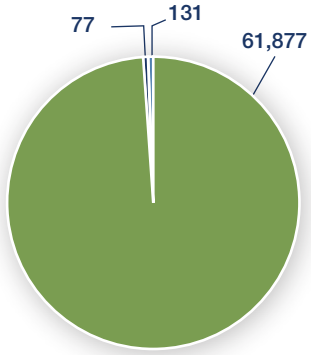
LEAs Participating in Rhode Island's Race to the Top Plan



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



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



- Participating LEAs (#)
- Involved LEAs (#)
- Other LEAs

- K-12 Students (#) in participating LEAs
- K-12 Students (#) in involved LEAs
- K-12 Students (#) in other LEAs

- Students in Poverty (#) in participating LEAs
- Students in Poverty (#) in involved LEAs
- Students in Poverty (#) in other LEAs

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

Stakeholder engagement

Rhode Island's Race to the Top communication plan uses a variety of methods to regularly engage educators and other stakeholders. In Year 2, the Commissioner visited every LEA in the State and held community forums to discuss aspects of the State's Strategic Plan, including educator evaluation and other Race to the Top initiatives. RIDE also reached out directly to education stakeholders from across the State through three "Moving Forward Together" meetings in Year 2. More than 200 people attended each meeting, including superintendents, school committee chairs, charter school leaders, charter board chairs, and union leaders. The meetings allowed leaders to ask questions about Race to the Top project implementation, focusing especially on the implementation of educator evaluation systems and their impact on collective bargaining. RIDE also provided regular updates to LEA superintendents and principals through weekly field memos.

RIDE used the Race to the Top Steering Committee to engage educators and stakeholders in the broader community. The Steering Committee focused on communication assistance and statewide community engagement, drawing in previously less-engaged constituencies such as business, community, and civic leaders. In Year 2, the Steering Committee secured additional funding from the Rhode Island Foundation to work with RIDE on a statewide education marketing campaign in Year 3. The "I Pledge" campaign, launched in September 2012, seeks to celebrate teachers and demonstrate that all Rhode Islanders have a stake in education. The Steering Committee also facilitated opportunities for educators to present their experience with CCSS and educator evaluation to lawmakers and business leaders.

Continuous improvement

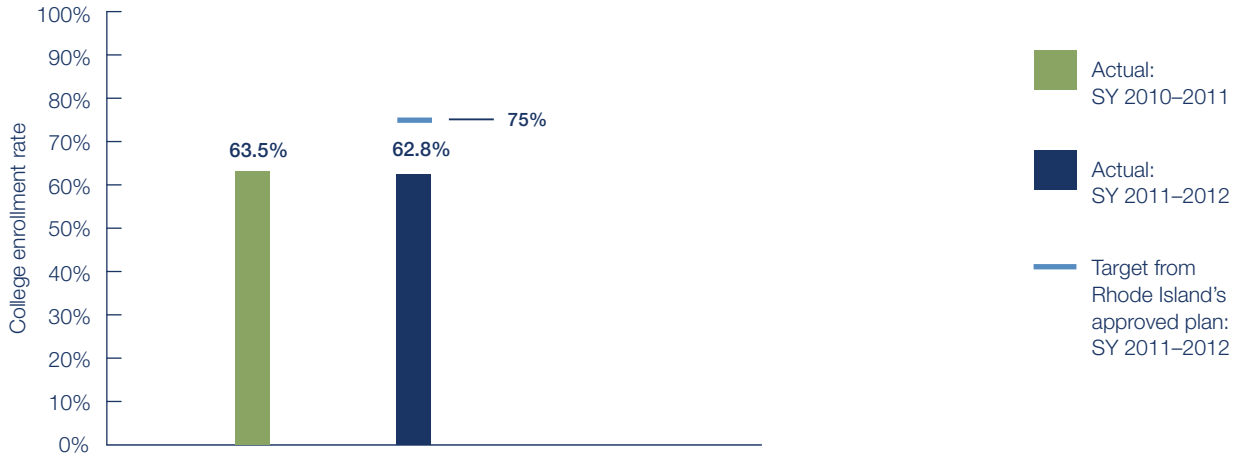
Rhode Island worked to promote a culture of collaboration and reform within the agency and built feedback loops to ensure that it best serves the needs of project teams and LEAs. The collaborative relationship between the Internal Oversight Team and the Adaptive Leadership Team ensured accountability between different offices of RIDE. The State gathered educator and LEA feedback on an ongoing basis through a variety of mechanisms, including surveys, focus groups, in-person meetings, needs assessments, and the CLO process. In Year 2, the State made several important changes to its practices based on stakeholder feedback loops, such as adjusting educator evaluation system requirements to better accommodate LEA and school capacity. Similarly, LEA feedback on the CLO process led to a revision of reporting requirements for Year 3 and an emphasis on sharing best practices through the meetings.

In order to ensure that communication efforts were comprehensive in both reach and focus, RIDE maintained a communication log that tracked each communication event's content, number of participants, and mode of communication. This enabled RIDE to produce reports with details about each event or outreach effort, helping RIDE pursue continuous examination and improvement of its communication efforts.

Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

In Year 2, Rhode Island fully implemented several key structures, including EdStat, the Internal Oversight Team, the Adaptive Leadership Team, the Steering Committee, and the CLO process. These structures gave Rhode Island the necessary capacity to coordinate resources and implement its Race to the Top projects. The State also improved several of these structures and processes in Year 2, incorporating stakeholder feedback into revisions to EdStat, the Steering Committee, and the CLO processes. The State's commitment to strong communication has also been valuable to LEAs and stakeholders. RIDE quickly responded to LEA inquiries and kept LEAs abreast of new developments through weekly field memos.

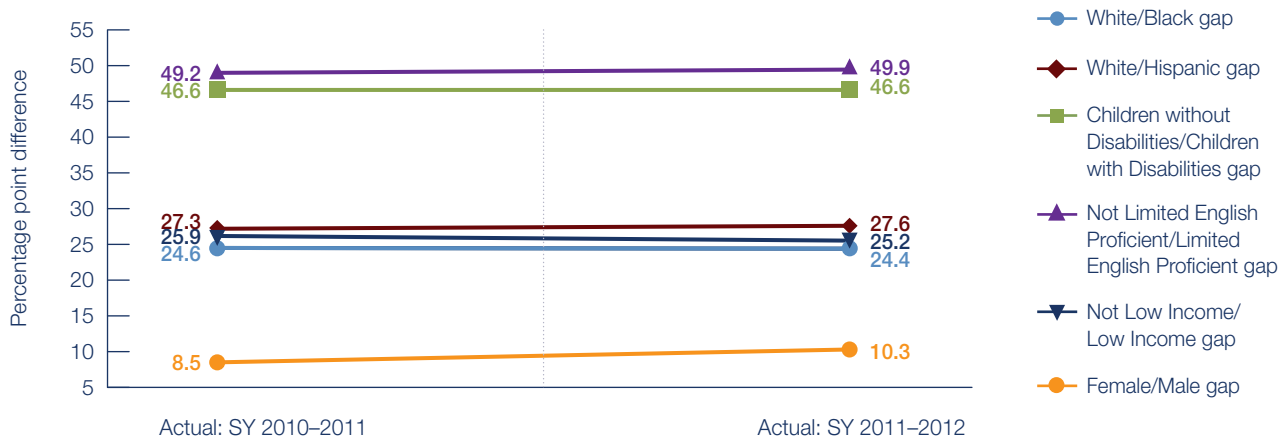
College Enrollment Graph



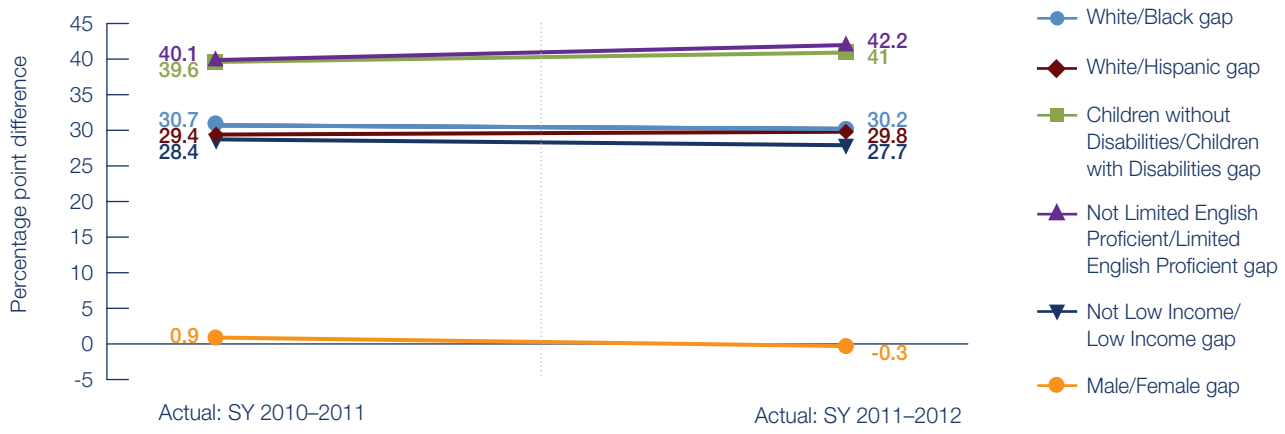
Preliminary SY 2011–2012 data reported as of: January 4, 2013

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

Achievement Gap on Rhode Island's ELA Assessment



Achievement Gap on Rhode Island's Mathematics Assessment



Preliminary SY 2011–2012 data reported as of: September 17, 2012

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

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

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

Standards and Assessments

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

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

In July 2010, the Rhode Island Board of Regents adopted the CCSS, and committed to fully implementing the CCSS statewide in SY 2013-2014. Rhode Island joined the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) as a governing member in 2010. In Year 2, Rhode Island continued contributing to the development of PARCC assessments, and will adopt PARCC's assessments in SY 2014-2015.

Standards

RIDE is assisting LEAs with the transition to CCSS through State-developed model curricula and State-guided LEA development of CCSS-aligned materials. In Year 2, the State partnered with a vendor and 10 LEAs to complete its model curricula in core subjects across grade levels. It developed four model curricula in mathematics, three in science, and one in English language arts (ELA). In fall 2012, the State will share these model curricula through the IMS.

Year 2 was the first of a two-year process during which LEA work groups developed their own CCSS-aligned curricula. LEAs developed CCSS-based scope and sequence documents, and in Year 3, they will pair those documents with the State's model curricula and other resources to develop CCSS-aligned units of study. Some LEAs developed these materials internally through consortia or existing Math Science Partnership grants, while other LEAs partnered with a vendor and involved at least two teachers for each grade level in their curriculum alignment work.

Assessments

RIDE worked in partnership with a vendor to create fixed-form and free-form interim assessments in Year 2, which will be available for LEAs to administer three times throughout SY 2012-2013. In addition to the tests themselves, RIDE developed interim assessment training modules, processes, and protocols, as well as administration and scoring protocols. RIDE announced to LEAs that they have the option to implement the interim assessments in SY 2012-2013 or SY 2013-2014; however, the State did not designate a date for full statewide implementation.

RIDE piloted a web-based course on formative assessment for teams of educators in six schools. The formative assessment modules included an individual online course component and a group component where the team collaborated on the module's activity. The modules included case reviews, vignettes of classroom practices, student and teacher interviews, and examples of lesson plans and other classroom tools. RIDE and the vendor used feedback from the pilot to inform changes to the full rollout in Year 3. Thirty-four LEAs indicated to RIDE that they planned to implement the formative assessment professional development in some capacity in fall 2012.

In order to keep LEA and school-level leadership informed of the latest developments regarding changes to Rhode Island's assessment system, the Commissioner disseminated regular updates to superintendents and principals through a Quarterly Updates memo that contained detailed information about new work and the latest timelines for release. RIDE was responsive to LEA questions and feedback and provided assistance to LEAs that lacked the capacity to fully implement curriculum development projects.

Supporting educators in implementing common standards

Rhode Island continued to provide extensive training to help educators integrate the CCSS into their daily practice, primarily through Study of the Standards training sessions that provided guidance on how to understand the CCSS within and across grade levels. Over 5,800 teachers, principals, superintendents, and higher education faculty had participated in Study of the Standards sessions as of April 2012, exceeding the State's target of training a total of 4,100 educators by June 2012. Throughout the summer months, RIDE hosted additional Study of the Standards sessions for core educators in urban, urban-ring and suburban schools, training an additional 275 educators by August 31, 2012.

Through the Study of the Standards sessions, the State helped create a common language regarding the CCSS and facilitated collaboration among LEAs, some of which formed consortia to develop curricular materials. LEA feedback on the Study of the Standards sessions was positive, and many LEAs negotiated additional professional development days within their collective bargaining agreements or leveraged other funding sources to train more educators than RIDE required. This suggested that LEAs found the Study of the Standards sessions important for supporting the transition to CCSS.

Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

RIDE supported the development of 10 model curricula in core subjects to assist LEAs with CCSS implementation, and LEAs embarked on a two-year process to develop their own CCSS-aligned curricula. RIDE also provided extensive CCSS training for 5,800

educators through the Study of the Standards in Years 1 and 2. Still, there may be significant variation among LEAs in terms of their actual progress in transitioning to CCSS, as not all schools and LEAs had the opportunity to participate in the curriculum alignment and professional teaching model work or the benefit of RIDE's structured resources in unit and lesson planning.

RIDE experienced some delays with its interim assessment work in spring 2012 but was successful in mitigating the timeline issues. During Year 2, the State was able to get the work back on track and by the end of the year developed a timeline to roll out the fixed-form interim assessments by October 2012. The State was successful in developing the formative assessment modules as a training tool for teachers, and garnered buy-in for the system from 34 LEAs. However, implementation is expected to vary across the State with anywhere from all teachers in an LEA to just a few teachers in a single school planning to use the formative assessment tool.

Data Systems to Support Instruction

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

Accessing and using State data

Rhode Island is creating or redesigning four data systems to support its Race to the Top reforms: an IMS, an EPSS, eCert (formerly RICERT - the Rhode Island Certification System), and an EWS. To oversee the data collection activities utilized by the Race to the Top data systems, the State created a Data Governance Board. The Board meets weekly and is charged with reviewing the data to be collected for all Race to the Top-supported data systems. RIDE also created a Data Team that oversees messaging regarding data systems to stakeholder groups, and executed a contract to create a comprehensive data systems help desk.

In Year 2, Rhode Island selected a vendor to complete the IMS and worked with that vendor to develop detailed work plans and business requirements. RIDE consulted with LEAs through focus groups composed of teachers, leaders, and LEA staff to determine what system requirements and functions would meet educator needs. Starting in spring 2012, LEA technology staff and LEA leadership received IMS training. In turn, these staff trained their colleagues in their home LEAs and schools. The State officially launched the IMS in September 2012. The system will make available curricula, assessments, instructional practice tools, and student data for educators and administrators. The State intends that this system will facilitate access to curricular materials, manage lesson planning, and share best practices for instruction and formative assessments.

The EPSS collects and stores data for all three components of the educator evaluations: student learning, professional practice, and professional foundations. In addition, the system manages other evaluation-related activities such as scheduling observations and conferences, storing evaluators' notes and ratings, storing and displaying student growth scores, and drafting and editing SLOs. The EPSS also contains a two-way communication platform for educators and evaluators. In Year 2, the State finished developing the system and previewed it in early adopter LEAs (see *Great Teachers and Leaders*). The State made the EPSS available for full statewide implementation at the beginning of SY 2012-2013.

The Board of Regents approved new educator certification regulations in November 2011. The new regulations address certification methods, the types of certification Rhode Island offers, certification renewal, and educator movement between certification tiers. As part of the reforms, the Board of Regents also created new cut scores for certification tests. To create the new regulations, RIDE examined best practices from other States, feedback from 50 stakeholder groups, and survey data from over 2,000 concerned individuals. RIDE will continue to meet with these stakeholders to gather feedback and shape its communication initiatives related to certification regulations throughout the course of the grant.

The new regulations enabled Rhode Island to redesign its educator certification database and website, eCert. The redesigned eCert will link licensure to student achievement and educator performance. Among other functions, it will support the issuance of new certifications and facilitate the link between evaluation data and certification renewals. In Year 2, RIDE hired programmers and contracted consultants to begin developing the new eCert database. The State will use the redesigned website to communicate information regarding the new regulations to the field through means such as webinars, presentations, and answers to frequently asked questions.

Rhode Island's EWS is designed to help educators identify and address students who may be at risk of failing academically or dropping out of school. RIDE conducted a study that assisted in developing five metrics that link academic failure and dropping out of high school. New statewide regulations mandate LEA- and school-level action once the EWS identifies a student as at-risk of failure or dropping out, which increases buy-in to use the system. The State launched a beta validation study of the measures for the EWS in summer 2012 that the State used to confirm the measures, and inform the design and implementation of interventions to prevent dropout or academic failure.

RIDE undertook efforts to engage stakeholders in the design, development, and rollout of each data system project. The State solicited LEA feedback during the request for vendor proposals process and enabled thousands of individuals to provide feedback during the design process. Rhode Island revised the features and characteristics of the systems based on this feedback. RIDE also worked to establish points of integration between the IMS and the EWS, interim assessments, the formative assessment modules, and the professional development modules.

Using data to improve instruction

The two IMS platforms (curriculum and assessment, and response to intervention) provide key sources of data to assist Rhode Island educators to improve instruction. To ensure that educators have the requisite knowledge and skills to use these data effectively, the State conducted training on each system starting in spring 2012. The State also contracted with an external vendor to design professional development on the use and collaboration of data within an LEA.

Before designing these Using Data professional development trainings, RIDE and its external vendor conducted a needs assessment with each LEA to assess their professional development needs. The assessment revealed substantial differences in LEAs' readiness to implement data-informed instructional practices. To fill the gaps, the professional development modules included training materials, facilitation guides, and other targeted resources. In addition to demonstrating methods and tools for interpreting data, the trainings focused on building collaborative communities of practice to help educators learn, share best practices, and problem solve with one another.

Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

RIDE made progress on its data systems projects in Year 2, developing and launching the EPSS and IMS by the end of Year 2 and readying other systems for use in Year 3. It selected an IMS vendor and worked with educators throughout the year to determine system requirements. RIDE redesigned the eCert database to support links between educator evaluations and recertification. Educators played a key role in the development of each system.

To help LEAs take advantage of the new data systems, RIDE conducted a needs assessment that showed that LEAs varied widely in their understanding and use of data and that LEAs lacked structured opportunities to discuss data and data's potential implications for instruction. As a result, the State created three tiers of professional development: one for LEAs with limited experience with data, a second for LEAs that have some familiarity but lack established protocols, and a third for LEAs experienced in data use and application. The State worked to combine professional development activities, especially where potential overlap existed. The State also conducted surveys and focus groups with LEAs to inform the design of the professional development modules.

In Years 1 and 2, the State identified potential problems with sustainability and technological capacity at both the State and LEA levels. During the course of its needs assessments, RIDE learned that many LEAs lack the technological infrastructure, such as hardware and bandwidth, to take full advantage of the State's new data systems. In response, RIDE requested and received a $20 million technology infrastructure bond from the State legislature and the Governor. The bond will expand wireless access to classrooms across the State during the next three to five years.

Great Teachers and Leaders

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

Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals

Rhode Island operates two alternative certification programs through its Race to the Top grant, the Rhode Island Teaching Fellows (sponsored by The New Teacher Project) and Teach for America. These programs brought 44 educators to the State's urban and charter schools in Year 2. RIDE continued to strengthen its relationship with these providers by increasing support to recruit and train teachers in hard-to-staff areas. In Year 2 Rhode Island experienced lower teacher turnover than anticipated, which limited opportunities for new teacher placement and prevented the State from achieving its goal of placing 30 teachers from each alternative certification program in urban and charter schools.

The State worked closely with its LEAs to maximize the impact of its alternative certification programs. RIDE solicited feedback from LEAs to understand their staffing needs and assesses the quality of teachers placed through alternative certification routes. RIDE staff also met directly with alternative route providers to assess quality of implementation.

In addition, the State began creating an alternative certification program for principals, the Turnaround Leaders Program. RIDE applied for alternative certification program approval in June 2012 and launched the program in June 2012.

RIDE also drafted regulations for a redesigned educator certification system that links licensure to student achievement and educator performance. Following public hearings from September 2011 to October 2011, the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education voted to approve the revised regulations in November 2011. Regulations that went into effect in January 2012 included a tiered certification system, certification renewal based on effectiveness, and changes to the certificates available.

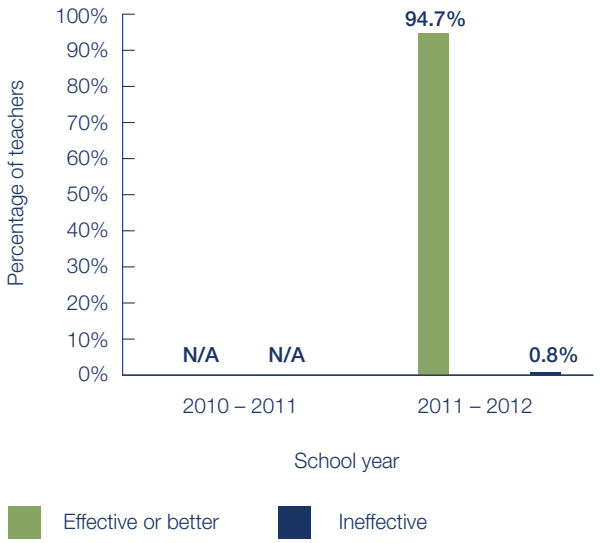
Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance

Beginning in September 2011, Rhode Island announced a new statewide educator evaluation system, the Rhode Island model. All but seven participating LEAs have agreed to use the Rhode Island model. Six LEAs are implementing the Rhode Island Innovation Consortium model supported by the Rhode Island Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals (the Innovation model) and one LEA, Coventry, is using its own approved evaluation model (the Coventry model). All approved models meet the educator evaluation system standards, and include three main components—student growth on standardized tests or through SLOs; professional practice; and, professional responsibilities—with the goal of providing actionable and continuous feedback based on a common understanding of expectations for educator quality.

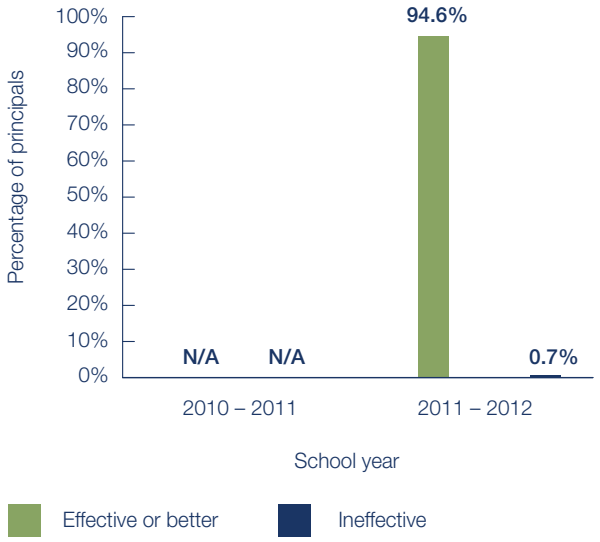
Gradual implementation

A "gradual implementation" approach to the introduction of the educator evaluation system allowed the State to pilot all components of the system in every LEA, but to a lesser degree than full implementation will require. During gradual implementation in Year 2, two early adopter LEAs fully implemented version 1.0 of the Rhode Island model and worked closely with RIDE and educators to refine the model for full implementation in Year 3. To inform revisions, RIDE gathered extensive data and feedback from pilot LEAs through educator surveys, the CLO process, a dedicated email account, and monthly meetings with Instructional Support Providers (ISPs). In addition, the State gathered artifacts such as student work and educator observation forms. State revisions to the model included adjustments to the number and length of observations, adding a post-observation conference, reducing the number of SLOs on which each educator is evaluated, and streamlining rubrics to reduce redundancy. Every LEA in the State implemented all components of an educator evaluation system, some at a reduced level in Year 2, as part of the State's gradual implementation plan. In Year 3, every LEA will fully implement evaluations for both teachers and principals.

Percentage of teachers in participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems who were evaluated as effective or better or ineffective in the prior academic year



Percentage of principals in participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems who were evaluated as effective or better or ineffective in the prior academic year



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

In April 2012, RIDE decided against developing additional assessments to be used as part of the student learning component of its educator evaluation systems. Instead, the State requested and was approved for an amendment to focus on the use of existing statewide test scores and SLOs for tested grades and subjects. The State collected feedback that indicated educators preferred SLOs, a component of the evaluation system which is common across the three approved educator evaluation systems, despite struggling during the gradual implementation in Year 2 to understand how to select measures or what the measures should represent. RIDE responded by providing additional resources and guidance to educators, and conducted statewide summer training on the SLO-setting process.

Evaluation supports for LEAs

RIDE supported LEA implementation of the educator evaluation system in SY 2011-2012 by hiring and matching 21 ISPs with LEAs implementing the Rhode Island model. ISPs work individually with LEAs to support implementation by providing customized support to principals and educators, including scheduling observations, collaborating on the development of SLOs, and creating systems to ensure LEAs execute the system with fidelity. Additionally, RIDE conducted monthly meetings with ISPs to gather feedback from the field and identify common trends and challenges. To facilitate ISP collaboration, the State created an online community of practice that enabled the ISPs to share best practices and ask questions. LEAs implementing the Innovation model are not assigned ISPs, but Innovation model LEAs with low-performing schools hired their own evaluation implementation specialists (see *Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools*).

LEAs oversee their educator evaluation system implementation through District Evaluation Committees (DECs). The State evaluation standards require each LEA to establish such a committee to oversee implementation and ensure fairness. The role of DECs varies among LEAs, but activities may include communicating data to LEA personnel, ensuring that the LEA reviews evaluation instruments for bias, creating procedural safeguards, or reviewing data validity.

State training and dissemination of resources

In Year 2, RIDE conducted 102 training sessions explaining each step of the evaluation process to educators. RIDE created four modules for principals: an introduction, one on the pre-observation conference, one on classroom observations and the mid-year conference, and one on the end-of-year conference. The State also created three modules to train superintendents on the principal evaluation system. In addition, RIDE developed summer training academies for all ISPs and evaluators, including a two-day training for superintendents and a four-day training for principals. One day of these trainings focused on SLO development. RIDE provided SLO training to the Innovation model and Coventry model LEAs in fall 2011 and again in summer 2012. In addition, in June 2012,

RIDE provided all educators and evaluators with guides to the Rhode Island model and, in summer 2012, released a guide on creating SLOs.

RIDE also implemented other communication, support, and feedback collection methods in Year 2. The State conducted two joint webinars about the educator evaluation system with the National Education Association Rhode Island and the Rhode Island Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals. It also created presentations and talking points to assist principals as they introduce components of the system to educators. The State held monthly progress update meetings with superintendents and conducted a statewide survey of principals and teachers. In Year 3, RIDE will launch the EPSS, which will store data and manage activities related to the evaluation process (see *Data Systems to Support Instruction*).

Despite some promising communication strategies, gaps in educator knowledge remained, particularly regarding Rhode Island's rationale for fully implementing educator evaluation systems in SY 2012-2013, and how educator effectiveness data would be used. Additionally, stakeholder feedback indicated that LEAs hoped to receive training modules and other resources sooner than they did. After revising the system based on feedback, RIDE released the version 2.0 guide prior to the end of the school year.

Rhode Island began the process of acquiring contractor support to work with LEAs as they research, develop, and pilot compensation reform plans. RIDE released an application to LEAs interested in developing and piloting alternate compensation systems. The State seeks to issue grants to develop a plan that would replace the traditional step-and-lane salary schedule, as well as grants that include whole-school rewards.

Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals

Rhode Island's efforts to equitably distribute its effective teachers and principals center on educator recruitment. To increase the pool of teacher candidates in the State, Rhode Island supported LEA use of an online statewide educator recruitment platform. The State worked with a vendor to provide a statewide recruitment portal, allowing LEAs to post jobs, email alerts to candidates, collect applications, and schedule job interviews. The State held trainings for LEA human resources representatives to increase awareness of the tool. Use of the enhanced portal represents a shift in recruitment processes, which formerly centered on newspaper ads and internal hiring. The State is working to support LEAs in leveraging the new recruitment system to implement criterion-based hiring and assignment following the expiration of their current collective bargaining agreements.

Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs

Rhode Island will be able to connect educator effectiveness data to teacher preparation programs thanks to upgrades to eCert and other State data systems. In Year 2, RIDE piloted teacher-student-course data collections for teachers in grades three through seven and tested a verification process that allows teachers to certify that their class rosters are correct. Once eCert and other data system upgrades take full effect, the State will be able to assess teacher preparation programs based on effectiveness data. In Year 2, the State began to engage its Educator Preparation Partnership, an advisory committee of local college and university faculty, to develop a comprehensive timeline for integrating evaluative feedback into its educator preparation programs. This consultation helped RIDE incorporate plans and projects from the field into its plans. The State is on track to create a preliminary teacher preparation program report card by SY 2013-2014. The report card will be made public by fall 2014. RIDE also engaged with educator preparation program personnel to gather feedback on the effective use of publicly reported data and to review the educator preparation program approval process.

Providing effective support to teachers and principals

Through Race to the Top, the State created a new teacher induction and mentoring program to support new teachers. Each new teacher in Rhode Island spends at least 75 minutes per week with an induction coach and participates in regular targeted professional development sessions. RIDE selected 17 induction coaches from Rhode Island educators to support first-year teachers by observing them, offering assistance in implementing effective strategies, and providing coaching on how to review student assessment data. Induction coaches used a Collaborative Assessment Log to document their observations of new teachers and provide formative instructional feedback to them.

After early implementation challenges in Year 1 that delayed progress, Rhode Island established the Academy for Transformative Leadership in Year 2. The Academy provides support and professional development for leaders in the State's PLA schools. The State hired a director for the Academy as well as a school and LEA monitoring and accountability specialist, which increased the State's capacity to execute the Academy according to the amended timeline. After conducting a turnaround leadership gap analysis with three LEAs, RIDE determined the knowledge and skills a turnaround leader would need. To that end, RIDE released a request for vendor proposals for the Turnaround Leaders Program in April 2012 and executed a contract in May 2012. As part of this alternative certification program for aspiring principals, the State

intended to place six candidates in year-long residencies in PLA schools beginning in SY 2012-2013. After the recruitment period, only four candidates were placed. RIDE's Year 3 work to recruit its second cohort will be critical to ensuring that the project meets its revised targets.

Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

Every Rhode Island LEA gradually implemented educator evaluations in Year 2, and two LEAs fully implemented the Rhode Island model. The State undertook a thorough assessment and revision of the Rhode Island model in response to educator feedback and lessons learned at the early adopter schools. Major concerns among LEAs included the aggressive implementation timeline and lack of clarity regarding all of the required components of the system. RIDE will have to thoughtfully communicate the purpose and components of the educator evaluation system in light of these concerns. Additionally, because multiple educator evaluation systems exist in the State, RIDE must expand their LEA monitoring to ensure that all LEAs are implementing educator evaluation with fidelity.

The State's use of ISPs to assist LEAs in executing the educator evaluation system with fidelity was promising. RIDE carefully selected highly qualified educators to fill the role, trained them on the system, and matched them with LEAs that were a good fit. More support is required as LEAs and educators create SLOs to ensure that the SLOs are rigorous and comparable across LEAs. The State must focus on providing more detailed guidance on how to set SLOs, including how to balance mastery and progress; select SLO subjects for teachers who teach more than four subjects; provide guidance for special education educators; select a rigorous measure; set appropriate targets; and maintain realistic alignment between the classroom and LEA. In addition, the State must continue to support and communicate with LEAs regarding the SLO process and the timeline for full implementation of educator evaluations.

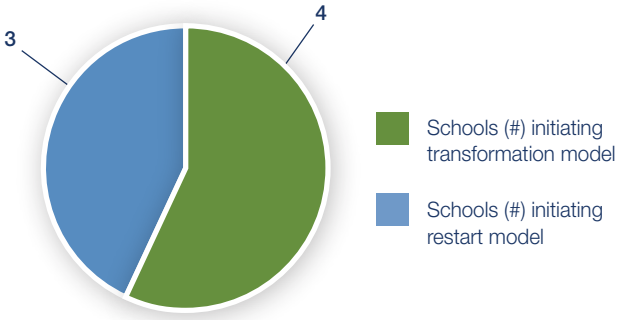
RIDE supported gradual implementation of the educator evaluation system by hiring and matching 21 evaluation ISPs with an LEA. Each evaluation ISP was assigned to support two to four LEAs and assisted with a variety of evaluation activities such as assisting principals with scheduling observations, assisting educators with developing SLOs and creating evidence collection systems. ISP support in LEAs served two purposes: create capacity in LEAs to implement the educator evaluation system well, and provide RIDE with high-quality information regarding implementation.

The State supported two alternative routes for teachers that brought 44 educators to the State's urban and charter schools in Year 2. Low teacher turnover in Year 2 prevented the State from meeting its placement goals for new teachers from these programs. The State began the process to establish a new alternative certification pathway for principals through the Turnaround Leaders Program. Although enrollment in the program was less than expected in Year 2, the State successfully resuscitated this program after missing milestones in Year 1. New regulations passed in Year 2 will enable Rhode Island to link educator licensure to student achievement and educator performance, and the upgraded eCert system will enable the State to connect educator effectiveness data to preparation programs. A new online statewide educator recruitment platform aims to help LEAs increase the applicant pool and simplify the hiring process. However, there does not appear to be a well-defined connection between the recruitment platform and the State's overarching goals regarding increasing equity that are articulated in the State's Race to the Top application.

Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

Race to the Top States are supporting LEAs' implementation of far-reaching reforms to turn around lowest-achieving schools by implementing one of four school intervention models.

School Intervention Models Initiated in Rhode Island in SY 2011–2012



These data represent schools that initiated (that is, school(s) in the first year of implementation of) one of the four intervention models in SY 2011-2012.

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

Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools

Five PLA schools implemented intervention models in Year 1, and the State formally named a second cohort of eight PLA schools in October 2011. Of the eight schools that began implementation in Year 2 four used the transformation model and four used the restart model.

The State supported LEAs with schools implementing an intervention model through biweekly strategic meetings. At the meetings, RIDE worked with LEAs to define roles and responsibilities, set expectations for implementation, and devise tactics and strategies for improving student achievement. It also used the meetings to select intervention models and to frame technical assistance needs.

Supporting leadership

As RIDE worked to accelerate its progress in response to the Year 1 delays, the State requested and received Department approval to revise its Year 2 timelines and approaches to supporting its lowest-performing schools. The State shifted the content of the 2011 Summer Institute to occur instead during spring 2012. The Institute brought together leadership teams from PLA schools to engage in evidence-based action planning to support the school's School Reform Plan. Thirty-one representatives from nine PLA schools attended this training in spring 2012. The State incorporated feedback from the spring training series to develop new modules and sessions for the 2012 Summer Institute, which took place according to the amended timeline between June and August 2012 and included twenty-nine representatives from seven PLA schools.

The State was unable to place School Achievement Specialists (SAS) and evaluation specialists at PLA schools in Year 2 as originally intended. Instead, RIDE shifted the day-to-day management and hiring of these personnel from the State to the three participating LEAs. Each of the three LEAs hired a SAS and an evaluation implementation specialist and assigned him/her to a school by the start of SY 2012-2013. SAS personnel assist with professional development design and delivery, monitor school performance, and provide direct support for leadership and educators in PLA schools. In Year 3, evaluation implementation specialists will assist PLA schools as they fully implement their respective educator evaluation models. The State will secure a vendor that will assess the quality of SAS services, the extent to which they meet performance and delivery targets, and SAS' role in the overall success of their schools.

Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

In March 2012, RIDE received Department approval to adjust the approach, timeline, and budget for all of the projects related to supporting its PLA schools and LEAs. The revision attempted to address serious delays in hiring departmental staff to manage this work and timely deliver the projects. As a result, the State made considerable progress in meeting the amended timelines and getting the projects on track. For the SAS project, this included expanding the number of PLA schools receiving support from 5 to 13, and the number of LEAs from two to four. The SAS and evaluation implementation managers hired by LEAs will support Year 3 implementation. For the Summer Institute project, RIDE revised the delivery schedule to include training modules during SY 2011-2012 and summer 2012. RIDE also better defined State and LEA responsibilities for this work, particularly by shifting responsibility for hiring and managing SAS and evaluation implementation specialists from the State to select LEAs. While the progress the State has made is commendable, overall success of the new approach will depend on LEAs' abilities to implement against their new responsibilities and RIDE's ability to provide support and ensure that statewide commitments are being met.

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

State's STEM initiatives

RIDE laid the groundwork for intensive STEM curricular development by creating Grade Span Expectations in Engineering and Technology. The Grade Span Expectations identify the concepts and skills K–12 students need to achieve literacy in engineering and technology. Based in part on this work, seven LEAs participated in intensive curriculum development sessions to support STEM instruction: three in mathematics curriculum development, and two in science. These curricula have been distributed to LEAs via the IMS. An additional mathematics curriculum and science curriculum will be posted to the IMS in June 2014.

Rhode Island also made progress on its Project-Based Learning (PBL) initiative in Year 2. PBL is a student-driven instructional model that encourages critical thinking, problem solving and collaboration to teach key academic content and 21st century skills. The State observed two schools that currently use the process, which will help the State build its implementation plan. After a slight delay, the State also finalized a contract with a vendor to implement professional development for educators on implementing PBL in their own classrooms. The State launched these new professional development programs at two Providence high schools in summer 2012.

Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

The State increased its STEM capacity by engaging educators in developing curriculum documents in mathematics and science. Although RIDE faced a tight timeline for PBL due to initial contracting delays in Year 1, it began training teachers on how to implement PBL in their classrooms in summer 2012.

Charter Schools and Other Initiatives

Expanding charter schools

In February 2012, Rhode Island took a key step toward expanding the number of charter schools in the State, granting Achievement First, a charter management organization, preliminary approval to open two elementary schools in 2013. Achievement First is the first national charter organization to gain approval to operate in Rhode Island. The State reached out to its charter school community to advertise opportunities for charter school expansion and development subgrants. In Year 2, the State awarded a $250,000 charter school expansion grant to Paul Cuffee Charter School to support technology professional development as the school expands into the high school grade levels.

Multiple pathways innovations

In Year 2, RIDE selected a vendor to develop Virtual Learning Math Modules (VLMM). In Year 3, these modules will offer online tutoring to all students in each LEA that chooses to participate. The State piloted three of the eight VLMM in 12 high schools in late summer 2012 and adjusted all of the modules based on the feedback from the pilot. RIDE released all eight VLMMs in fall 2012. RIDE initially envisioned VLMM as an eleventh grade remediation tool, but amended the program structure to enable the modules to also benefit high school or advanced middle school students who need enrichment opportunities. The State expanded availability of VLMMs to all LEAs by revising the subscription fee structure to be on a per-LEA rather than per-student basis. In Year 2, RIDE worked with LEAs to frame a policy for using the modules, as well as to train personnel who will implement them at the LEA. A learning management system houses the modules and allows LEA staff to monitor student progress and completion. In turn, these data will feed into the IMS, which enables RIDE to monitor progress and evaluate the program.

Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

Rhode Island's partnership with Achievement First demonstrated the State's ability to engage with stakeholders and bring a national charter management organization to Rhode Island. The State awarded its first charter school expansion grant in Year 2 and continues to strengthen its relationship with the State's charter schools through development and expansion grants. Knowing LEAs have several new systems and opportunities available to them in SY 2012-2013, RIDE has to take steps to collaborate with LEAs to assist them in prioritizing and implementing new programs like VLMM.

Looking Ahead to Year 3

In Year 3, much of the responsibility for implementing the systems and opportunities that RIDE developed throughout Year 2 will transition to LEAs. As it implements existing programs and launches new ones, the State will, according to its Race to the Top plan, continue to support LEAs through the CLO process and improve its own implementation through EdStat and other State-level feedback mechanisms.

In Year 3, LEAs will continue the transition to implementing the CCSS. Based on the State's model curricula and LEA scope and sequence documents, LEAs will develop CCSS-aligned units of study for use in classrooms during full implementation in Year 4. Rhode Island has already met its statewide training goals, but in Year 3, it must ensure that all LEAs reach a level of CCSS readiness prior to full implementation. In addition, some LEAs will administer the new interim assessments in Year 3 and some teacher teams will engage with the formative assessment modules.

RIDE will make the EPSS and IMS fully operational and launch the EWS and eCert systems. The EPSS will facilitate the State's full implementation of new educator evaluation systems. The IMS will support improvements to educational programs and classroom instruction throughout the State. The EWS will allow educators to easily identify and support students at risk of academic failure. The Using Data professional development will help educators use data in the classroom, and the redesigned eCert will enable Rhode Island to improve teacher preparation through research and accountability.

Every LEA will fully implement their educator and principal evaluation systems in SY 2012-2013. Educators will develop SLOs to evaluate student growth, use with the observation rubric, and develop professional growth plans. RIDE will also continue to provide professional development to help educators and evaluators understand and implement the new evaluation systems.

Rhode Island will work to improve the workforce through updated recruitment and hiring practices. It will place more alternatively certified Rhode Island Teaching Fellows and Teach for America corps members in schools, expand its educator recruitment portal, and work to establish an alternative principal certification program. The Academy of Transformative Leadership will begin to support existing leaders in the State's lowest-performing schools through ongoing professional development and a 2013 Summer Institute. Finally, through the Academy, the Turnaround Leadership Program will place its first cohort of leaders in PLA schools.

The State will provide targeted supports to its two cohorts of SIG schools. Thirteen PLA schools will be implementing intervention models. Additionally, PLA schools will begin to receive assistance from SAS and building-level evaluation implementation specialists.

Students will experience new instructional methods through Rhode Island's Year 3 implementation of VLMM and PBL. VLMM will help high-achieving and struggling students achieve their potential in mathematics, and PBL will offer dynamic and relevant opportunities for students to engage with science and technology.

Budget

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

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

For the State's fiscal accountability and oversight report, please see http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/performance.html.

Glossary

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Effective teacher: A teacher whose students achieve acceptable rates (*e.g.*, at least one grade level in an academic year) of student growth

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

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

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

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

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

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

Involved LEAs: LEAs that choose to work with the State to implement those specific portions of the State's plan that necessitate full or nearly-full statewide implementation, such as transitioning to a common set of K-12 standards (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements). Involved LEAs do not receive a share of the 50 percent of a State's grant award that it must 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, (i) any Title I school in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring that (a) is among the lowest-achieving five percent of Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring or the lowest-achieving five Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring in the State, whichever number of schools is greater; or (b) is a high school that has had a graduation rate as defined in 34 CFR 200.19(b) that is less than 60 percent over a number of years; and (ii) any secondary school that is eligible for, but does not receive, Title I funds that (a) is among the lowest-achieving five percent of secondary schools or the lowest-achieving five secondary schools in the State that are eligible for, but do not receive, Title I funds, whichever number of schools is greater; or (b) is a high school that has had a graduation rate as defined in 34 CFR 200.19(b) that is less than 60 percent over a number of years. To identify the lowest-achieving schools, a State must take into account both (i) the academic achievement of the "all students" group in a school in terms of proficiency on the State's assessments under section 1111(b)(3) of the ESEA in reading/language arts and mathematics combined; and (ii) the school's lack of progress on those assessments over a number of years in the "all students" group. (For additional information please see http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/index.html.)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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