

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

RACE TO THE TOP

GRANT REVIEW

Phase 1 Tier 2 State Presentation

The District of Columbia

8:30 a.m.

Wednesday, March 17, 2010

Holiday Inn Capitol Hill
550 C Street. S.W.
Washington, D.C.

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 MAYOR FENTY: Well, thank you very much and good
3 morning to you all.

4 First of all, I want to start out by thanking
5 you for your consideration thus far, for supporting our
6 application getting to this point and we certainly are
7 excited about your considering us to go even further.

8 Let me introduce the team. Of course, my name
9 is Adrian Fenty, Mayor of the District of Columbia. To my
10 right is Kerri Briggs, our State Superintendent of
11 Education, who is the person in the office responsible for
12 overseeing the Race to the Top grant, and, of course,
13 working with all of our LEAs to raise student achievement.
14 To her right is the Deputy Mayor for Education, Victor
15 Reinoso.

16 In education, you have lots of agencies outside
17 of the traditional school cluster that support schools,
18 and the Health Department is just one example how the
19 Deputy Mayor pulls all the agencies of the government
20 together to help make sure that the schools succeed.

21 To his right is the Chancellor Michelle Rhee,
22 the person who is in charge of the entire school system.
23 She has responsibility for about two-thirds of the

1 children educated in the public schools of the District of
2 Columbia.

3 To her right is Jennie Niles, who is the head of
4 one of our best charter schools in the District -- best
5 charter schools in the country, and there really is a
6 great working relationship between the charters in
7 Washington, D.C. and the traditional public schools.

8 Let me just do the intro. We, of course, in my
9 term have taken a step that only three other cities have
10 taken, New York, Boston, and Chicago, is to have the
11 school system report directly to the mayor.

12 As we said at the time that we took over the
13 schools, we didn't believe the mayor needed more power, we
14 believed that the school system needed more
15 accountability, having been a city council member, been a
16 lawyer for the city's education committee, what we saw for
17 the past couple of decades was a city that knew the
18 problems and saw them slowly but consistently deteriorate
19 in the school system, also, a city that knew a lot of the
20 solutions, but never had the appetite to take on those
21 solutions head on, because of the controversy or because
22 of the disparate decision-making, and under the Board of
23 Education model, a good idea would come to the Board, but

1 because of special interests or because of hearings and
2 debate, what have you, the decision would never get
3 approved.

4 We believed as they did in those other three
5 cities, that we needed to change that, and for the past
6 two and a half years, under a much more focused and
7 accountable system, we have been able to move a lot of the
8 great proposals that have been around this city for a long
9 time, and because of that we believe that we are on the
10 cusp of the type of reform changes and improvements to
11 student achievement that the residents of this city have
12 been demanding for a long, long time.

13 The team will talk a little bit about it, but
14 the only other thing I would add is that the mayor is the
15 person who is in charge of the entire government and can
16 wield great influence on the private sector.

17 We have not only made education our number one
18 priority, but in large measure have tied the entire City's
19 political future and political results, including my own,
20 towards making sure that we fix the schools, and we are
21 really excited to be here to talk to you all about it.

22 I am going to turn it over to Superintendent
23 Briggs, and she will tell you a little bit more about our

1 application.

2 MS. BRIGGS: Thank you.

3 For me, it was when I was thinking about the
4 work that had been going on with our charter districts
5 DCPS, I was very drawn to the City and to think about why
6 D.C., why D.C. for Race to the Top. For me, it's a lot
7 about reform is happening here in ways it's not happening
8 anywhere else in the country.

9 You see it with the Mayor, you see it with
10 Michelle or with Jennie, with Victor, I was really drawn
11 to the focus and the courage and the purpose. All 16 of
12 the States that you have probably heard from or read
13 through will say they have courage. I think we have
14 demonstrated here, to put more of a face to it, why D.C.,
15 why are we a smart investment.

16 One it's about our students. Race to the Top is
17 designed for them. Ninety-four percent of our students
18 are minority students, 70 percent of our students live in
19 poverty. These are the very kids that when we talk about
20 reform, these are the children that we think about reform
21 for, and that is our City.

22 It is also about our schools. We have a very
23 interesting mix of schools in our city. Two-thirds of our

1 students are educated under the traditional public school
2 system by Michelle Rhee, and then the rest of them are in
3 57 different charter districts, so that is about a third
4 there.

5 It has created a lot of innovation and it has
6 also created, on the grounds, conditions that make Race to
7 the Top a very viable and vibrant opportunity for us.

8 We have 200 schools, around 75,000 students, so
9 we are able to move quickly, we are able to make change
10 happen in a way that, as faster like when you were saying,
11 we have kind of don't have to work through a lot of
12 bureaucracies, we got things done, we can move quickly.

13 The last thing is to point out about our City.
14 I mean we are the Nation's Capital, the world is watching
15 us. We are able to attract talent. We have aside from
16 the folks here, we have tons of folks back in our office
17 that are very focused on this work and have the capacity
18 to do it, and we are also willing to be bold and
19 aggressive.

20 Many of us know that work on reform that these
21 daily decisions take a lot of courage, and they take a lot
22 of commitment, and we are not afraid, and I think that
23 probably one of our best persons for why we are not afraid

1 is Michelle.

2 CHANCELLOR RHEE: Good morning. Before I took
3 this job in D.C., I was in education for 16 years and
4 probably, like you, the reputation of the jurisdiction
5 preceded itself, so I knew a tremendous amount about D.C.
6 including the fact that it was the only school district in
7 the country that was on high-risk status with the U.S.
8 Department of Education, that of all of the ninth graders
9 who began high school in the District of Columbia, only 9
10 percent of them would end up graduating from college
11 within five years, that there was an enormous achievement
12 gap in the City, that in some cases, was up to 70
13 percentage points between white students and black
14 students, and probably most disheartening was the fact
15 that according to the [inaudible] examination, only 8
16 percent of the City's eighth graders were on grade level
17 in mathematics, which meant that 92 percent of the young
18 people in the City did not have the skills and knowledge
19 necessary to be productive members of society.

20 So, when the Mayor first called me about taking
21 this job, I was skeptical, but somewhat intrigued, and I
22 remember in one of the first meetings that I went to with
23 him, I said, "So, what are you hoping to accomplish?" And

1 he said, "Well, I want to have the top performing school
2 system, public school system of any urban jurisdiction in
3 the country, and I want to close the achievement gap."

4 I thought, okay, that's crazy, number one, but
5 incredibly inspiring and one of the reasons why I thought
6 it made sense to come here and take this job, and over the
7 last two years, we have actually made a tremendous amount
8 of progress.

9 According to the D.C. CAS [ph], which is our
10 local examination, we have seen about 19 percentage point
11 gains in elementary math in DCPS, which is tremendous.
12 The gains that we have seen in two years, in the last two
13 years, has actually eclipsed the prior decade all put
14 together.

15 We have, the State has seen significant gains
16 for every single subgroup in the City, and we have made
17 some good progress in closing the achievement gap. Also,
18 on examination, which as you know is the gold standard,
19 also is the standard by which D.C. had always been dubbed
20 the laggard or the worst performing school district in the
21 country, we just recently got the results of the 2009
22 examination, which is a good indication of our work,
23 because of that two-year time period.

1 What it showed is that although we still have an
2 incredibly long way to go, we actually changed the story
3 from D.C. is last to D.C. was actually first in the
4 country in a number of different areas.

5 First, we were one of the only jurisdictions
6 that saw solid gains in both the fourth and eighth grade
7 in mathematics. Our fourth graders actually led the
8 nation in gains. Our eighth graders saw about triple the
9 national average in gains, and we were the only
10 jurisdiction in which every single subgroup of fourth
11 graders saw academic progress.

12 So, again, although we have a long way to go, we
13 think that the progress we have made in the last two years
14 has been pretty significant. There are a few reasons why
15 we feel like we have been able to achieve what we have
16 over the last couple of years.

17 The first is the Mayor's leadership. He has, as
18 he said, put education at the forefront of this city, and
19 he has given us the charge of being bold. He is saying as
20 long as you think that what you are doing is in the best
21 interests of kids, then, I am not scared of the opposition
22 or the blowback that you might get, just go.

23 So, we focused on a few things across the City.

1 The first is human capital and one example of this is
2 about teacher evaluation systems, which I think everyone
3 in public education knows needs to be revamped.

4 I talked earlier about the fact that in 2007, 8
5 percent of the children in the City were on grade level in
6 mathematics. It was interesting because if you were to
7 have looked at the performance evaluations of the adults
8 in the City at that same time, you would see that almost
9 everyone was exceeding expectations.

10 So, how do you have a system where all the
11 adults are running around thinking they are doing an
12 excellent job, and what they are producing in terms of
13 outcomes are these dismal, you know, sort of 8 percent of
14 kids being on grade level, it just doesn't make any sense.

15 So, what we knew is that we thought we had to
16 bring those two things into alignment, and so we created a
17 new teacher evaluation system called IMPACT in DCPS, and
18 basically, one of the things that distinguishes IMPACT is
19 the fact that 50 percent of the teachers' evaluation is
20 based on student achievement gains, and this was the one
21 way that we knew we were going to be able to bring the
22 achievement levels of students and the way that we were
23 evaluating ourselves as adults into alignment.

1 So, that is one example. The second example is
2 we have been incredibly aggressive about turning around
3 failing schools. Within my first few months in office, we
4 made the announcement that we were going to close 23 of
5 the District's failing schools. It was 15 percent of our
6 inventory, which was very significant, but we have also
7 been aggressive about school transformations and
8 turnarounds.

9 One example of this is a story I like to tell
10 about Sousa Middle School. When I first got here in 2007,
11 Sousa was one of the worst performing middle schools in
12 the City. I went to visit one day, I mean the kids were
13 all over the hallways, they were swearing at teachers,
14 nobody was learning.

15 The next year, my second year, I brought a
16 brand-new principal in who was incredibly aggressive about
17 both professionally developing teachers, but also
18 evaluating poor performers out. That year, his first year
19 as principal, the school saw 17 and 25 percentage point
20 gains in reading and math separately, which was a huge
21 improvement.

22 So, in December of this year, I actually went to
23 the school, I wanted to see what was going on, and it was

1 amazing to walk through the hallways and the kids were
2 focused, things were structured, there was quality
3 instruction going on, and so I decided that I wanted to
4 actually talk to the teachers.

5 So, I went to the school one day and I pulled
6 up, I got out of the car, and the school was just letting
7 out. Usually, when I show up at a school, the kids look
8 around like, well, who is the crazy Chinese lady running
9 around, but I got out of the car at this particular
10 school, and the kids were like, "Chancellor Rhee,
11 Chancellor Rhee, can we take a picture with you?"

12 I said, "Sure." I was talking to one of the
13 students and I said, "So, do you think that your
14 elementary school prepared you for the rigors of Sousa?"
15 And he said, "Well, it was very different." I said,
16 "How?"

17 He said, "Well, the teachers here teach." I
18 thought, well, that is sort of low bar, so I said, "Well,
19 what does that mean to you?" He said, "You know, they
20 really push you to think outside of the box here." It was
21 a sixth grader, which I was impressed by.

22 When I went in to talk to the teachers, it was
23 interesting because basically, you know, I walk in, and

1 they seemed very nervous, and I wanted to kind of put them
2 at ease, so I said, "Look, you know, you saw huge gains
3 last year, and after a gain like that, my expectation is
4 that you are not going to see those kinds of gains again.
5 If you saw, you know, 4 to 6 percent every year from this
6 year out, I would be satisfied."

7 I thought I was going to kind of, you know, put
8 them at ease, and they looked at me and they said, "You
9 know what, Chancellor Rhee, the horse is out of the barn
10 with the children at this school. They will not be
11 satisfied with 4 percent, they are shooting for 20
12 percentage point gains in reading and math, and anything
13 short of that, they are not going to be happy."

14 And they said, "So, we need more lesson plans,
15 more unit plans, more standards, more mapping, because the
16 kids here, you can't hand them a worksheet anymore, they
17 won't accept it from us," and it was this incredible
18 dynamic where within 18 months, not only had the culture
19 of the school turned around, but the pressure to perform
20 was actually coming from the students themselves.

21 That is an example of an aggressive turnaround
22 that we have had. We have also adopted and partnered with
23 our charter partners to take one of the things that they

1 are best at, and one of the things that has improved their
2 academic gains the most, which is data-driven instruction.

3 So, we have partnered with them. Actually, a
4 number of our schools came to us and said, you know, we
5 heard that a number of charter schools are using something
6 called AchievementNet, which is benchmark interim
7 assessments.

8 They are aligned to the standards and to the CAS
9 [ph] and we want to use them, as well, so through that
10 partnership, we have begun to actually use data in a much
11 more significant way as well.

12 That is sort of what we have accomplished to
13 date. In terms of moving forward, you know, I have
14 recently had a conversation with a guy named Lou Gerstner
15 who used to run IBM, and one of the things he said to me
16 is, you know, when you are trying to transform an
17 organization, the first couple of years are relatively
18 easy to see gains in, because you are picking all the low-
19 hanging fruit.

20 He said the second part, the middle years, he is
21 like those are the hardest. If you can muscle your way
22 through those years, then, the years after that, you have
23 got the wind at your back, and so we think that one of the

1 ways that we can muscle through our middle years is with
2 Race to the Top support.

3 Our goals are very significant, as you saw from
4 our application. We are hoping to get to the point with
5 Race to the Top support that approximately 70 percent of
6 our kids would be at proficiency, which is a huge jump
7 given that, for example, less than a third of our children
8 were on grade level proficiency in mathematics when we
9 entered the District in 2007.

10 We want to make significant progress in closing
11 the achievement gap, hoping to get from a gap of about 57
12 percent in 2006, shrinking that to about 25 percent at the
13 end of the grant period, and ensuring that all of our kids
14 are college and career ready by drastically improving the
15 high school graduation rates and our college enrollment
16 rates.

17 We are going to do that through a number of
18 different areas. The first and foremost, as you read in
19 our application, our theory of change is really around
20 human capital. We want to make sure that we have the most
21 aggressive evaluation tool of any city in the country, but
22 also that we have good professional development to couple
23 with that.

1 We want to turn around our struggling schools,
2 not just at the rate that the Administration would like us
3 to, which is the bottom 5 percent, but we are going to be
4 even more aggressive within DCPS and tackle the lowest 20
5 percent, hoping to create more Sousa-like environments.

6 We think that we have what it takes in terms of
7 nimbleness and flexibility in the District to ensure that
8 within very short order, we have not only adopted the new
9 Common Core standards, but we have implemented them and we
10 are using new assessments in a time frame that most other
11 States will still be arguing about the Common Core in
12 their legislatures and making sure that we have data at
13 the fingertips of every single teacher, principal, and
14 parent in the District to drive everything that we are
15 doing.

16 I am going to hand it over to Jennie, one of our
17 charter partners, to talk through our vision of how Race
18 to the Top will play out in D.C.

19 MS. NILES: I hope you could hear the impatience
20 in Michelle's voice, because as the charter leader in this
21 city, I am somebody who runs a school, I, too, share that
22 impatience. We have made tremendous gains, but we are
23 nowhere near where we need to be.

1 When you look at where we are now, we have a
2 disproportionate number of low performing schools, and we
3 do have some high-performing schools, but as you will
4 notice in this graphic, with Race to the Top we flipped
5 that and we drastically reduced the number of low-
6 performing schools, we have moved the mid-performing
7 schools into high performing and have a significant number
8 of high performing schools, so that it dominates the
9 District.

10 As Michelle referred to, our theory of action is
11 in some ways quite simple. It's about human capital, and
12 the human capital manifests itself in many ways. You
13 heard Michelle talk about IMPACT.

14 One of the things that is clear, that we decided
15 as a team across the State, was that we wanted every LEA
16 who participated in this grant, and actually wanted every
17 LEA in the State, to say that we wanted each one of them
18 to use achievement gains for 50 percent of those teacher
19 evaluations.

20 What we also wanted to do, though, was give the
21 flexibility to the different LEAs, so that that is the
22 criteria, but every LEA can come up with their own system,
23 so it is not about adopting IMPACT wholesale, but rather

1 this core piece that we knew would be critical to
2 achieving student gains.

3 Interestingly, in my conversations with teachers
4 in DCPS, I have often asked them about how IMPACT is
5 going, because we are already in full swing for this year,
6 and they said it is the first time that they actually know
7 what is truly expected of them, and instead of grumbling,
8 I have heard at times reluctance, but that clarity is
9 exactly what we need to make sure that our kids get there.

10 In terms of data systems and assessment,
11 Michelle mentioned some ways that we are already
12 partnering. What Race to the Top will do is allow for
13 every single school, not simply the schools that I believe
14 that D.C.P.S. is going to be able to turn things around,
15 but not every single charter school would necessarily have
16 those data systems in place, and that acceleration of
17 making sure that teachers have in their hands the data
18 about where students are and what they can do the very
19 next day.

20 One of our partner schools is a DCPS school that
21 is using it in their middle school, the Columbia Heights
22 Education Campus, and in talking to the leaders at that
23 school, they have been using it in the sixth, seventh, and

1 eighth grade.

2 It turns out that while their high school
3 doesn't have interim assessments per se, they have adopted
4 the data analysis system that is mirroring what is
5 happening in the middle school, and that is happening on
6 the ninth grade, tenth grade, eleventh grade, and twelfth
7 grade teams, so we are already seeing that impact, and the
8 leaders of that school have described it as
9 "transformative."

10 Lastly, the school turnaround. Clearly, this is
11 one of the key issues, and in the proposal, you will see
12 that one of our strategies is to create a leadership
13 degree that really focuses on, not just the mission-
14 specific and the educational instructional team, but also
15 the change management, budget management, resource
16 allocation to make sure that we are training both for DCPS
17 and for charter schools, the ability to turn around
18 schools.

19 The undergirding piece of this is the schools
20 are a unit of change, and in D.C., that can actually truly
21 be the case, not just in a theoretical sense, but in a
22 real sense.

23 So, what Race to the Top will do for D.C. is not

1 only accelerate and get us further and faster, it would
2 also give us the affirmation from the Administration of
3 the work that we have been doing and give us that rocket
4 fuel, in a sense, that takes us not just from steaming
5 along, but getting us through over this hump, if you will,
6 that Lou Gerstner and Michelle were talking about.

7 MR. REINOSO: So, we recognize that our Race to
8 the Top plans are ambitious and that ambitious plans are
9 meaningless without the courage, capacity, and commitment
10 necessary to implement.

11 It has taken a long time for D.C. to get to
12 where it is today, but today we stand out across all three
13 of these elements. We have demonstrated across our
14 traditional public schools and our charter schools, the
15 courage to make tough decisions.

16 Just in the last three years, we have closed 30
17 failing DCPS schools and 12 failing charter schools. That
18 is 20 percent of DCPS schools closed down, 12 percent of
19 charter schools closed in three years alone.

20 So, we are talking about real aggressive and
21 meaningful change. In addition to those closures, we have
22 put 24 other schools into other forms of turnaround.

23 These haven't always been easy or popular

1 decisions, but they have been the right decisions for kids
2 and I think our willingness to demonstrate that courage
3 has led to a surge in our capacity across all sectors.

4 We are now drawing talent across the city, the
5 region, and the country here to D.C. to join Kerri's team
6 to build a high-functioning state agency, Michelle's team
7 to turn around one of the country's lowest performing
8 school districts, and to Jennie and her colleague's teams
9 to build what has to be the Nation's most robust charter
10 sector.

11 As a result, all three of them have an
12 incredibly deep bench, and we, as a city, have an
13 unprecedented level of capacity to implement across all
14 sectors, capacity that Race to the Top will allow us to
15 leverage to get further, faster, and for the first time we
16 have an aligned governance structure in which all the key
17 players, the State Board of Education, the Public Charter
18 School Board, the City Council, all of us here are on the
19 same page, committed to aggressive reform.

20 We may not always agree on all of the details,
21 but we share that commitment to aggressive reform, and
22 just a determination to invest whatever is necessary to
23 succeed.

1 We now have a State Agency that just two years
2 from its inception is already tackling head-on, shortfalls
3 in grants management, providing LEAs with the tools and
4 information they need to be successful, and is ready to
5 hit the ground running to implement these Race to the Top
6 plans.

7 So, clearly, we have made tremendous progress in
8 terms of demonstrating courage and capacity, but in many
9 ways, a commitment is the most important.

10 We have today I think an unprecedented level of
11 commitment because the folks you see here, and the dozens
12 of people behind them, are committed to these plans,
13 because they put these plans together.

14 This is not an application that was drafted in
15 some distant state capital and is now being foisted on
16 cash start LEAs we are signing up out of desperation.

17 This is a plan that from its very inception was
18 written collaboratively by the folks responsible for
19 implementing it, and as a result, I think we stand out in
20 our commitment to make sure that we follow through on our
21 plans.

22 The Mayor has charged me with ensuring that all
23 these reform efforts stay on track. I am absolutely

1 confident that they will.

2 Mr. Mayor.

3 MAYOR FENTY: So, in closing, we want to
4 emphasize to you that we believe that the District, as
5 much as any other jurisdiction that you will hear from,
6 has the opportunity to really make the types of gains and
7 reforms that we all know are necessary.

8 We think there is a couple of reasons for that.
9 When I interviewed Chancellor Rhee and tried to sell her
10 on taking the chancellor position, we agreed on two
11 things. The ones she talked about, that every decision we
12 make would be in the best interests of the kids, and if it
13 was, we would be willing to let the chips fall where they
14 may.

15 The second, however, was just as important. She
16 and I both instinctively believe that the District, maybe
17 more than any other of the other cities that had taken on
18 mayoral control had the opportunity because of its size
19 and because of the talent that we would be able to attract
20 being in the Nation's capital, to really move fast and to
21 be able to show the types of dramatic improvements that a
22 bigger jurisdiction like in New York or Chicago would take
23 more time to show.

1 Two years in, I think that has been proven true
2 as we have made probably double the gains that we thought
3 we would make in about half the time when you look at
4 student achievement and test score increases, but we are
5 on the verge of doing some great things from our
6 collective bargaining agreement and the impact that is
7 going to have on teacher flexibility and the ability to
8 really do different things inside the classroom.

9 We believe that the Race to the Top dollars and
10 the wind behind our sails that it will give our school
11 system and our charters is going to move us even faster,
12 and that together by us being able to be a showcase city
13 for what you are trying to do and what the President is
14 trying to do in making education the highest priority in
15 the country, and then again what you can do for us in
16 giving us that extra support to move even faster in tough
17 economic times is just a great partnership and a great
18 marriage, if you will, and something that we think lends
19 even more credibility to our application.

20 So, thank you very much. As is obvious, we have
21 eliminated all the blurring of the governance structure.
22 The other thing I have been able to do is to hire great
23 people, which is the best thing that a mayor or governor

1 can ever do, and I was just very proud to hear the
2 presentation. Hopefully, you all were excited by it, as
3 well.

4 Thank you.

5 MS. SCOTT: Thank you for your presentation.

6 All right. We will begin the questions and
7 answers. You will have 62 minutes.

8 REVIEWER 1: Thank you. I am going to try to
9 facilitate the question and answer period. Thank you for
10 your presentation. We deeply appreciate it. I do want to
11 mention that your application was read by five reviewers,
12 unfortunately, he could not be here today because of
13 illness, because we did receive input regarding his
14 questions, so we will try to integrate them before us.

15 Let me start by this issue of [inaudible]. You
16 have a very unique application, you point out you have a
17 unique set of circumstances in the District.

18 Could you help us by explaining or clarifying
19 how the proposed plan will integrate these unique
20 circumstances in which you have charter schools, you have
21 a new state system, you have a large district, and you
22 have a charter board.

23 All these essentially are different entities.

1 What we would like you to do is help us understand how
2 those entities essentially what roles they play, what
3 responsibilities they have in moving to your very
4 ambitious goals, your very ambitious targets, particularly
5 around data assessment, student achievement, how you do
6 that across the system that is that unique, and then,
7 secondly, professional development, which you argue is
8 key, human capital, to try to ensure that you have that
9 human capital in this unique set of circumstances, please.

10 MS. BRIGGS: Why don't I take the State piece of
11 it, and then I can have the District chime in with how
12 their role fits into it.

13 One of the things that we have done, the State
14 agency, is that we are responsible for the things that go
15 across all of the different LEAs and what you see in our
16 application, and what we have been doing is we have a
17 bigfocus on standard assessments and also data.

18 So, the State agency is the one that is
19 responsible for designing and implementing the
20 assessments, we are responsible for developing and
21 analyzing the data to do the accountability work.

22 So, with Common Core, we will continue that, but
23 we are doing it in a way that is collaborative, so the

1 State agency is the convener of people to come together
2 and think about if we are going to make the Common Core,
3 and we are, we will adopt within a couple of months, what
4 do our teachers and our principals need, and so we will
5 bring those folks together from the districts to convene
6 and think about these are our current standards, and these
7 are the new standards, what's that gap and what do the
8 teachers and principals need.

9 So, we have set forth some pieces in the
10 application, so the State will take responsibility for
11 doing that, so the standards counsel that we will be
12 building, we are introducing some website work, so that
13 there is information that will sustain the process in all
14 the districts.

15 From that, what we have done, you can see there
16 is a lot in our application that we are providing money to
17 our districts to do on the grounds of special development
18 for their teachers and to work with parents, so the
19 parents understand what these new standards mean.

20 So, the state of the convener, particularly
21 around standards and assessments, and the move to your
22 Common Core with the districts to kind of fill in what
23 they need and can build on their unique skill set.

1 CHANCELLOR RHEE: I think one of the things that
2 is unique about this jurisdiction, that you probably are
3 not going to see in any other State, is the fact that the
4 Mayor convenes us on a weekly basis.

5 He has what is called the "Education Front
6 Burner Meeting," where the State Superintendent, the
7 Deputy Mayor, who represents the interests of the charter
8 schools, myself, the City Administrator, and then Allen
9 Lou, who is the head of our Public Education Facilities
10 Management Department and other agencies, are actually
11 represented in the same room.

12 On a weekly basis, we are in a meeting where we
13 are aligning ourselves, we are having the conversations,
14 we are sort of slogging through the tough issues with the
15 Mayor actually engaged in this, so that ensures that as we
16 leave that meeting every week, we all know what the
17 priorities of the other folks are and making sure that we
18 are aligned in all of those actions.

19 I know that we lay out in our application the
20 fact that we are going to have a human capital task force,
21 that we also are going to have a student growth
22 measurement task force, a Common Core task force, and
23 although they may seem like, you know, random entities for

1 this jurisdiction, it will actually be meaningful, because
2 we will pull together the top members of our staff to work
3 hand in hand on these things, and I think it will go much
4 like the application process did, where we were in rooms
5 together saying that 50 percent of the teacher evaluation
6 based on student achievement makes sense, should everybody
7 adopt IMPACT or not.

8 We actually, as the principals worked through
9 all those issues together and came up with this
10 application, we feel like with that momentum, we are going
11 to continue to do that kind of hard work together through
12 these task forces, and I think we will be more aligned and
13 acting in concert in a much more significant way than you
14 are going to see in other States.

15 MS. NILES: In terms of one way to think about
16 the question you ask is also how do the charter schools,
17 as independent LEAs, come together and are coherent around
18 this.

19 I think that the way that we had thought of
20 operationalizing, for instance, the assessment systems and
21 having every school embrace those is that the Office of
22 the State Superintendent would actually put forward
23 criteria, and so this part of the grant, what we did was

1 we created the non-negotiables for every LEA that signed
2 on.

3 All of those non-negotiables were funded through
4 the formula, but that said, there is still going to be an
5 application creating the criteria with which every charter
6 school who wants to receive those funds will meet around
7 data and assessment.

8 So, for instance, not only could there be
9 preferred vendors who are articulated, but it will allow
10 schools to develop their own interim assessments if they
11 so choose, but it is that criteria that we already in our
12 human capital meeting and in our data meetings, have
13 already set out that criteria, so that the coherence comes
14 from having those core principles around those or having
15 those criteria be common.

16 Then, also, we have some outside support, for
17 instance, from new school's venture fund who is very
18 interested in helping the charter sector in particular get
19 up to speed and with guidance about how to make those
20 choices, for instance, around vendors, for instance,
21 because that is something that Michelle's staff has the
22 horsepower to do that analysis, and so we are already
23 talking with other groups that could help give charters

1 that are smaller, for instance, the horsepower to make
2 those smart decisions.

3 In many ways, the Race to the Top dollars are
4 really going to be able to propel the charter sector, as a
5 whole, perhaps to even further or in a different way than
6 what DCPS is able to do, because we are like herding cats,
7 but all of the folks who signed on to the MOU absolutely
8 believe in the core components of what is in this
9 proposal.

10 So, now, we just need to use those criteria to
11 create the commonalities that will allow us to get every
12 school that is participating.

13 REVIEWER 1: Just a follow-up on the particular
14 since you place such a high regard on human capital, the
15 professional development assessment systems, like IMPACT,
16 40 percent or so of the students are not in your district,
17 they are in the charter schools, how do you see that role
18 particularly in the human capital area, professional
19 development and assessments, teachers, and the rest of
20 that?

21 MS. NILES: Why don't I start with evaluation
22 and then we can switch to professional development. For
23 the evaluation piece, this, too, was very similar in that

1 it was going to set out this criteria starting with the
2 only -- the key point was having 50 percent of the
3 evaluation be based on student achievement.

4 One of the things that is dynamic within the
5 charter group, although we are herding cats, we do have
6 the highest performing charters, have many commonalities
7 among them, so while not identical in their human capital
8 system, they share some things, and just that [inaudible]
9 alone had 300 visitors from both D.C. and around the world
10 to come and visit us last year.

11 We are constantly being asked by our colleagues
12 in the District, everybody wants to become a high-
13 performing school. That is the conversation that is now
14 happening throughout the District. It is not DCPS versus
15 charter anymore, it's how do I become high performing.

16 So, the same way I think that there is the
17 analogy to the assessment would be around the evaluation
18 system, but there again we are also going to need the
19 support of both the high-performing charters and also
20 taking the best elements from IMPACT and then probably
21 having to help us, outside organization, help smaller
22 charters be able to make those decisions around human
23 capital decisions.

1 Michelle, do you want to talk a little bit about
2 the PD part and then I can tag on?

3 CHANCELLOR RHEE: Sure. From the personal
4 development standpoint, I do teach our listening sessions
5 a couple of times a week as where I just go out into the
6 community, any teacher at any school can come and talk to
7 me.

8 It was interesting because a few weeks ago, one
9 of the teachers said in that session, you know, I don't
10 mind being a part of a system that has the most rigorous
11 teacher evaluation and accountability system in the
12 country, as long as we also have the best professional
13 development to go with it.

14 That is exactly what we aspire to. So, what we
15 have envisioned is an entire PD platform that would be
16 linked to the evaluation system. We affectionately refer
17 to it in DCPS as the "world of wizards and unicorns,"
18 because it sort of seems way out there, but we can get
19 there faster with the Race to the Top funds.

20 Basically, what we are looking to do is to have
21 the ability for any teacher, once they receive their
22 impact evaluation, to be able to go on-line and say they
23 are weak in Teach 8Subsection 3, they would be able to

1 click on to that and they would be able to open one link
2 and watch videos of other teachers in the district,
3 teaching lessons who are very strong in that area.

4 They could click on another link and they could
5 download lesson plans or unit plans that were specifically
6 focused on that. Another link would allow them to access
7 readings and books that were specifically focused on that
8 strategy.

9 They could, you know, find a list of master
10 educators both in the charter and DCPS schools that they
11 could go and observe, and so what we are hoping to create
12 is very teacher-centered, also very sort of self-service
13 oriented, so that what we envision is a teacher having a
14 PD wallet or voucher, say it's \$3,000 a year, and with
15 that money if you are the kind of person who needs to see
16 something in action, you could take \$180 of that and hire
17 a sub, so that you can go out and watch one of those
18 master educators.

19 We think because this entire thing is going to
20 be on-line and accessible to teachers at any time, that it
21 would be very easy, not only to have the charters be part
22 of the development, so that we are going out and
23 videotaping the best charter teachers, as well, but that

1 charter educators could also access that PD platform.

2 So, that is one of the most important things
3 that we are doing.

4 The second thing that we share is teacher
5 pipeline. The State Board of Education made some changes
6 that are much better in terms of teacher certification and
7 principal certification rules that allow providers much
8 more flexibility and to allow alternative certification
9 providers more flexibility.

10 That benefits all of us, and so one of the
11 things that will be a subgrant were we to receive the Race
12 to the Top dollars, is more alternative pathways. If you
13 look at the major pathways like D.C. teaching fellows
14 through TNTP, Teach for America, et cetera, they bring in
15 cores of core members and teachers, and they actually
16 serve both in the charter sector and in DCPS, so the more
17 that we can broaden those pathways specifically focused on
18 areas like science, technology, math, et cetera, that is
19 going to benefit both of us.

20 Then, I would say last is we have sort of the
21 feelings of a lot of collaboration. We have actually one
22 collaborative school that involves Jennie's school, it is
23 called "The power of planning." It also involves some

1 DCPS schools, and they actually work together on planning,
2 on professional development, on data analysis.

3 One of the things that we outlined in our grant
4 proposal is to create more of those collaborative
5 approaches. We have a DCPS specific one that is called a
6 D.C.-3 collaborative. We have got The Power of Planning,
7 and so what we have outlined in our proposal is a pretty
8 significant amount of money going to grow that concept and
9 make sure that there is collaboration and professional
10 development across the sectors.

11 REVIEWER 1: Thank you very much.

12 MS. NILES: Just to pick up on that, just to
13 look at The Power of Planning project alone, we already
14 have the seeds, because I think that with the wizard and
15 unicorns is something that charters actually will be very
16 interested in. That said, no charter would have to do
17 that.

18 Not only our charters are already using uncommon
19 schools has a taxonomy that was actually highlighted in
20 the recent New York Times Sunday Magazine section, but
21 many of our schools, us included, are using those video
22 clips.

23 So, the Power of Planning project alone, we have

1 actually created a Wiki site, that we had a number of
2 experts come over the summer and we videotaped all of
3 those, and so all of the schools have access to those
4 three-hour workshops, and then we have a whole host, in
5 fact, I think it would have stunned the recent folks who
6 came from the Department, who got to see, it's part of the
7 dissemination grant from Title 5B of all of the -- we have
8 individual lesson plans for every grade level from pre-K
9 now to twelfth grade.

10 We have video clips from all the different
11 teachers involved, so many of the things that are the
12 wizards and unicorns are actually already taking place in
13 a very sort of simple way, but the schools are already
14 using that, and so there is going to be tremendous
15 opportunity for the professional development to take hold
16 through all the ways that Michelle described, and we are
17 already doing that, so that coherence and consistency is
18 just a couple of steps away.

19 REVIEWER 1: Thank you.

20 REVIEWER 2: I am going to follow up with a
21 question about the PD, the pipeline, and the platform.

22 What is your timeline on that? I mean that is
23 partly answered because you have got some groundwork and

1 some "seeds," quote, unquote, but what do you think?

2 CHANCELLOR RHEE: Well, we are actually in the
3 midst of the planning for this now, and what I have told
4 the teachers is that -- because we have been thinking
5 about this prior to Race to the Top, and we were really
6 looking at sort of the three- to five-year time horizon to
7 be able to do that.

8 Given where we are now, if we are able to get
9 the Race to the Top funds, what we anticipate is that we
10 would start to build the interface in the winter of 2010.
11 We would do most of the acquiring of the content by spring
12 of 2011, and then we would add the external providers and
13 resources by the spring of 2012.

14 So, we want it to be functional as we build it,
15 so some of the early pieces that we use, we will be able
16 to do now, like the videotaping, we are bringing teachers
17 together right now to do some development of lesson plans.

18 We want to start infrastructure now, but in terms of the
19 major milestones, those are exactly what they will look
20 like.

21 REVIEWER 2: Great. Thank you.

22 REVIEWER 1: As a follow-up on the PD, let's
23 [inaudible] that.

1 REVIEWER 2: Uh-huh.

2 REVIEWER 3: Earlier, you had a slide that
3 showed your theory of change and one of the strategies by
4 which you get great teachers and leaders is professional
5 development. For several minutes here, you have been
6 going through in great detail, it's obviously a really key
7 part of getting to where you want to go.

8 If you look at the summary information regarding
9 MOU elements for various aspects of Race to the Top, only
10 2 of 31 LEAs signed on or bought in to the professional
11 development provisions.

12 What is going on there, why only 2, and tell us
13 how you will deal with that, and doesn't that somehow
14 signal real problems for you and getting to where you want
15 to go with your professional development?

16 CHANCELLOR RHEE: I think that if you look at
17 the three areas where charters in large part did not sign
18 on, it was in the assessment of that professional
19 development and then the access of data for researchers.

20 I think that you are talking about the two LEAs
21 that did sign on, but having talked to a number of the
22 other LEAs, many of whom are incredibly high quality LEAs,
23 I think the biggest concern on their side was really

1 making sure that they had the capacity to be able to sort
2 of match what the expectations were, so especially on the
3 research side, you know, when you have researchers coming
4 in and trying to gather all this data, do you really have
5 the capacity to be able to serve their needs.

6 On the professional development side, I think
7 the worry was more about is there going to be a set of
8 requirements around what professional development looks
9 like because so many of our best charter schools, the way
10 that professional development happens is incredibly
11 organic, incredibly customized for the specific school and
12 circumstance, because they are dealing with such a small
13 group of teachers.

14 I think that they were worried somewhat about
15 how the PD would be assessed and what kinds of
16 requirements would be put on.

17 Is that what you think, as well?

18 MS. Niles: I think that one of the pieces of
19 the wizards and unicorns that is going to be so incredibly
20 useful is how it is going to pull from the evaluation data
21 to dictate what PD is going to be most necessary.

22 Most charter schools don't need a whole system
23 to do that, because they are small enough so that we can

1 assess what is needed even in our school without doing a
2 pull from a data system, so I think that one of the things
3 that the charters, while very -- the charters that signed
4 on were absolutely focused on becoming high performing
5 schools, were anxious that between compliance and other,
6 that they didn't want to sign on to too many things that
7 they would not be able to execute within this time frame
8 in the same way that would make it coherent, I mean,
9 excuse me, consistent with the way that we framed it in
10 the application.

11 The amount of professional development in
12 charter schools, I would actually venture is probably
13 higher than the typical DCPS school at this time
14 consistently, even though schools that are not yet high
15 performing.

16 It is something that because we can craft the
17 schedule, so for our school, for instance, we are open
18 earlier and later every single day, and then on Fridays,
19 we have an early dismissal, but we have an after-school
20 program that has all the kids, but we have from 1:30 to
21 4:00 every single Friday for professional development,
22 every year, along with five professional development days,
23 two weeks in the summer.

1 REVIEWER 1: I want to get back to this.

2 REVIEWER 2: I want to change the direction for
3 a moment. We are a bit concerned about the lack of
4 involvement from the Washington Teachers' Union. That is
5 a big concern of ours.

6 Can you address how you will secure the
7 involvement of teachers who are members of the union? You
8 state in your application that while the union would not
9 openly support the proposal, the District strongly
10 believes that broad-based reform oriented teachers and
11 school leaders would support the plan.

12 What gives you evidence for that, and has any
13 progress been made since the application?

14 CHANCELLOR RHEE: Yes. Actually, contrary to
15 popular belief, we have a very strong relationship with
16 the WTU. Although we have locked in negotiations on this
17 particular contract for a while, I think the union would
18 also say that there is more communication and more
19 collaboration with our administration than they have had
20 before with any other administration.

21 Just to give you a couple of examples of this,
22 in the development of the teaching and learning framework
23 which was rolled out this year, that was developed by

1 teachers. So, we had somewhere between 50 and 60 both
2 focus groups and working sessions with teachers to develop
3 that.

4 We are right now in the midst of implementing
5 our first year of IMPACT, but are already in development
6 for the second phase of IMPACT. We have 75 working group
7 sessions scheduled right now with teachers by grade level
8 and subject area to get their input and insight on how we
9 can improve IMPACT.

10 So, we really feel like we have a robust
11 infrastructure through which we can ensure that teacher
12 feedback is coming in to what we are doing.

13 At the end of the day, my sense based on my
14 conversations with George Parker from the WTU, is that
15 they felt that signing on to our Race to the Top
16 application would mean that they wholeheartedly endorse
17 IMPACT, because as you have read, a lot of our focus is on
18 the redevelopment of that.

19 Because of the precedent that IMPACT sets with
20 putting this 50 percentage point mark on, and because of
21 the ramifications that I think they believe that would
22 have on other evaluation systems across the country, and
23 how that would become political, I understand what their

1 hesitation was, but despite that, we are very confident in
2 our ability to have the teachers collaborate with us all
3 along the way in terms of everything having to do with
4 human capital, but also on the standards and data print as
5 well.

6 REVIEWER 2: So, do you think that these
7 meetings, these 75 meetings that you have scheduled, and I
8 don't know what your timeline is in terms of your
9 collective bargaining and the next contract, do you think
10 -- well, maybe I should ask the Mayor, do you think that
11 this is going to actually be resolved enough that it can
12 be included in the collective bargaining agreement that
13 the teachers will vote on, and therefore, then support?

14 MAYOR FENTY: Well, the Chancellor knows the
15 details of the collective bargaining agreement. Let me
16 just say, though, having been around the government going
17 back to 1998, what the Chancellor said about the working
18 relationship between the Washington Teachers' Union and
19 management, I think needs to be emphasized.

20 There is real substance in the discussions
21 wherein before it really was just two sides demanding from
22 each other and little meeting of the minds. Now, I think
23 one or two disagreements are bookended by eight or nine

1 things that we really do work together on, so I think you
2 have got a foundation for whatever things haven't been
3 agreed upon, to be agreed upon in a very professional way.

4 CHANCELLOR RHEE: So, we are very close to
5 coming to a final agreement on the collective bargaining
6 agreement, and we actually think that it is going to be a
7 good synergy between what we have in the Race to the Top
8 application. I can't talk about the specifics of what is
9 in the agreement, but let me sort of, in a broad way, say
10 that one of the areas of emphasis is stronger professional
11 development for our teachers.

12 So, I think that you will see once that
13 collective bargaining agreement actually is ratified, that
14 there is going to be a tremendous amount of alignment
15 between the things that we outline in the contract and the
16 priorities that we laid out here in the application.

17 REVIEWER 1: Thank you very much.

18 REVIEWER 2: Thank you.

19 REVIEWER 1: [Reviewer 4], please.

20 REVIEWER 4: In this next question, we will
21 allow Superintendent Briggs maybe to respond to this one.

22 The D.C. application certainly establishes a
23 sense of urgency for the proposed ambitious achievement

1 targets. In order to determine if the targets and the
2 achievement trajectory are realistic and attainable, could
3 you clarify for us two aspects of your plan?

4 The first is what growth expectations did you
5 use to establish the annual percentage point gain in
6 achievement, and the percentage point reduction in
7 subgroup achievement gaps, and the second question is have
8 you experienced an achievement plateau?

9 If so, what do you plan to do if a plateau
10 occurs during the four-year window of the Race to the Top
11 funding, and particularly if you experience a plateau
12 during the transition to new standards?

13 MS. BRIGGS: Good question. A lot of our --
14 when you look down at the growth targets that we set in
15 place with Race to the Top, we were looking at historical
16 trends, and so D.C. has certainly achieved a great deal in
17 the last two to three years in student achievement.

18 We kind of took what we had done and said, okay,
19 if we are able to do the kinds of things that we think
20 matter for student data, new standards, professional
21 development, folks on turnaround, what kind of gains can
22 we see, and so we projected out sort of ambitious targets
23 for what we would have to see in both the D.C. CAS and

1 NAPE, and grad rate, and college enrollment.

2 So, it's kind of looking at historical trends
3 like where do we think we can go with Race to the Top. I
4 don't think we have gotten to an achievement plateau. We
5 at this point have around half of our students that are on
6 grade level in reading and math. That is no place to
7 plateau.

8 We have to go further. I think we absolutely
9 feel, like Michelle said, we have done some of this sort
10 of early work where we can start to see some gains, but we
11 are all very aware of where we need to go next in order to
12 see additional gains.

13 We need to focus more on our students'
14 disabilities, which is why you saw that piece in our
15 Common Core discussion where we want to have these entry
16 points for kids who need kind of access points into the
17 curriculum, so we are building that in because we know
18 that that in particular is a challenging subgroup for us.

19 So, we have tried to put in place, in this
20 application, those places where we are like, okay, we have
21 to focus here, because this is a tough group. I mean
22 students with disabilities have different needs, and if we
23 can help our teachers understand best how to get them into

1 the curriculum and help them achieve grade level, that is
2 going to be great for everybody.

3 So, not at a plateau, we definitely think we can
4 go up.

5 MR. REINOSO: I should say just to emphasize
6 that the slope of our projections are certainly better
7 under Race to the Top, because Race to the Top allows us
8 to double down on some of these efforts and to compress
9 time frames for these, and to be intensifying the PD and
10 accelerating our interventions in the turnaround, et
11 cetera, and so we are aware of the risk of a plateau.

12 As Kerri said, we are not there yet, but we need
13 Race to the Top in essence to help us keep a steep slope
14 on that curve in terms of our achievement gains.

15 REVIEWER 4: So, you use the historical
16 percentage gains factored in your current two-year
17 accelerated gains, and then just added percentages on to
18 that?

19 MS. BRIGGS: We have tried to estimate. One of
20 our big gains is we are hoping for five points a year with
21 our D.C. CAS. I mean that is pretty aggressive to be able
22 to every year say we want 5 percent more improvement in
23 our assessments.

1 We know what we have achieved. Like I said,
2 even that has been tremendous, and we feel like this is
3 what we can get to with Race to the Top, adding on to
4 that.

5 CHANCELLOR RHEE: As an example, when we were
6 setting the goals for the NAPE growth, we set those as 10
7 scale score points within a four-year period, which would
8 really be historic for any district that either
9 participates in tutor or the statewide.

10 Without the Race to the Top funding, we think we
11 could probably compete with some of the jurisdictions who
12 have really been pushing the envelope on reform, which
13 would look more like four to six scale score points six at
14 the fourth grade level, four at the eighth grade level,
15 because there is a little bit more difficulty there.

16 So, we are not saying that without the money, we
17 are not going to grow. We still think that we can,
18 without the money, we can keep pace probably with some of
19 the other, more aggressive reform efforts.

20 We just think that with the Race for the Top
21 money, we can see historic growth as opposed to what the
22 other jurisdictions are seeing.

23 Ms. Niles: Lastly, we did spend some time

1 looking at the specific schools, especially the D.C.
2 [inaudible] colleagues and looked at each school and said
3 how much can this school do with these kinds of -- so it
4 wasn't simply a statistical suggestion, it was actually we
5 know all the schools in the District, and we could do
6 that.

7 So, I participated with the Public Charter
8 School Board in estimating where we thought different
9 charter schools could go if they implemented interim
10 assessments, and if they had this professional development
11 that was provided. So, it also is sort of like a zero-
12 based budget, you know, a ground up for each institution,
13 each school and what gains they could make.

14 REVIEWER 4: Thank you.

15 REVIEWER 1: With regard to that kind of
16 achievement gain, just a technical question. Does D.C.
17 CAS include the charter schools?

18 MS. Niles: Yes.

19 REVIEWER 1: They started in 2006, 2007?

20 MS. Briggs: 2006.

21 REVIEWER 1: So, that is when you got your first
22 sort of statewide assessments that were common. You did
23 make achievement gains in areas that Hispanic students do

1 not do as well as instituting in terms of achievement gap
2 reduction.

3 How do we deal with the issue of sort of floor
4 effects and ceiling effects, so you have, as you said, you
5 have students who are not doing well, 9 percent, so you
6 can pick off the low-hanging fruit.

7 Talk a little bit more how you are going to, in
8 your IBM metaphor, how you are going to move essentially
9 from that when you are really down, the only way to go is
10 up, but when you are getting there, how do you really move
11 and what are the key elements?

12 I am thinking here of the data systems itself
13 that are unique. You talked of the human capital issue,
14 but talk a little bit more about how, in sort of the two
15 sectors, the charter and the public district, how you are
16 going to essentially move on that, given that you have
17 some mixed results with some students?

18 Chancellor Rhee: I just want to be clear that
19 actually, our Hispanic students are outliers on the
20 positive side. They have seen growth that have outpaced
21 the other subgroups, and right now for our English
22 language learners, interestingly, they are outperforming
23 the average students in the District.

1 So, that is a huge achievement, and on the NAPE,
2 as well, our Hispanic students are now performing at the
3 national public school district average, not the average
4 for Hispanic students across the country, so they have
5 essentially closed the achievement gap that existed there.

6 REVIEWER 1: Okay. I will look at that again.

7 CHANCELLOR RHEE: Sure, so if you look at the
8 application, we actually talk about our low achieving or
9 sort of failing schools, what interventions we are going
10 to put in place there.

11 We talk about the need to quickly accelerate the
12 learning in our mid-range schools, and then we want our
13 highest performing schools to share what they are doing
14 with other schools.

15 When we are talking about the mid-range schools,
16 so schools that may have seen some growth over the last
17 couple of years, but making sure that they continue on
18 their projectory, we are going to focus on a few things.

19 One that we think is incredibly important is the
20 adoption of the Common Core, because part of what I think
21 for those mid-range schools, what is happening is the
22 rigor is not there.

23 So, they may have gathered some low-hanging

1 fruit in terms of improving the general quality of what is
2 going on in classrooms, but because the rigor is not
3 there, if they don't adopt the Common Core and have a very
4 clear set of aligned assessments of, well, then, then they
5 are not going to get to the next level of achievement.

6 So, that adoption, the partnership that we will
7 have with the State on the professional development of
8 those standards, for those standards, and then the aligned
9 assessments are going to be incredibly important.

10 So, that is one. Two, we are hoping that
11 through the collective bargaining agreement, we are going
12 to be able to reward the best performing teachers, and so
13 we think that that is going to provide an increased
14 incentive for our folks.

15 We think that both the PD platform and the
16 increased data access is really going to help support
17 those teachers, as well, and to have all of these things
18 connected, which is what we are hoping to do.

19 So, for example, one of the things that we hope
20 to do with Race to the Top dollars and IMPACT is to be
21 able to, for a particular school, say, you know, run a
22 query to say what are the weakest areas of the faculty in
23 this school, and then can we actually customize our

1 professional development specifically towards that group.

2 So, for example, one of things was mid-range
3 schools and what makes a determination about whether it
4 was able to break out or not, is their ability to
5 differentiate instruction for a variety of learning
6 levels.

7 So, if we find that is a weakness in the faculty
8 overall, then, we would be able to deploy those
9 professional development resources accordingly.

10 MS. NILES: One of the things that really became
11 clear over the course of doing this proposal was that we
12 really have shifted the conversation in D.C., and so we
13 are really talking about what it takes to become a high-
14 performing school, so everything that Michelle just talked
15 about in terms of the mid-performing schools becoming
16 high-performing schools are a twin in charter schools.

17 I mean it's this spiraling of standards, long-
18 term plans, interim assessments, and then taking that up a
19 level each time.

20 We see schools coming to visit us, and we are
21 not -- while E.L. Haynes has had some terrific gains, we
22 are not at the absolute levels that we need to see, but
23 just in regards to in our last four years, our latino

1 students have increased in their percentage point
2 proficiency by nearly 70 percent on the D.C. CAS in that.

3 So, schools have been coming --

4 REVIEWER 1: Just to charters, and you broke
5 that up --

6 MS. NILES: That is the specific school where I
7 am. So, other charters in other schools, and colleagues
8 from D.C. have also come to see us and said what is
9 happening.

10 We say there is no magic wand there is no magic
11 ball, this is around being really careful, really
12 thoughtful about knowing what the standards are, aligning
13 and having long-term plans, having interim assessments
14 that are aligned to those, and having the level of rigor
15 match all the way along, and that takes honestly years to
16 continue to get better and better and better at.

17 I see that those charters continue to want to do
18 those pieces.

19 MS. BRIGGS: I think just to add from the
20 State's point of view, the things you hear from Jennie and
21 Michelle are kind of when we talked about the high-
22 achieving schools, utilizing their talents and their
23 learning, and what they know about how students achieve

1 and how schools improve, it's how we are going to build
2 out the State system.

3 So, instead of creating smart capacity around
4 student achievement and how do we best train all the
5 professional development at the State level, this happened
6 to folks like Jennie and Michelle who have been doing this
7 work, and say, okay, your school acts that aren't
8 achieving at the level that you need to, bring that
9 structure, the places we talked to, the structure where
10 you can go and observe Jennie and sort of formalize some
11 of these things that have been slightly informal so far,
12 provide some formal structure to that, provide some
13 funding and help more schools utilize the talent that is
14 there and what they have been learning, so that teachers
15 can learn from their peers.

16 REVIEWER 1: I think [Reviewer 2] had some
17 questions about performance issues.

18 REVIEWER 2: Yes. I think perhaps Ms. Briggs
19 will be able to answer this, kind of focused on your new
20 office. According to your application, the Office of
21 State Superintendent of Education will be piloting new
22 techniques in performance of measure tracking and
23 reporting through the effectiveness managers?

1 MS. BRIGGS: Yes.

2 REVIEWER 2: Would you share with us what these
3 techniques are and where they have been used elsewhere,
4 and the track record?

5 MS. BRIGGS: Sure, yeah. It is something that
6 we have actually been developing throughout the City,
7 particularly with the recovery work. In D.C., we have
8 something, the Mayor has, CAPSTAT [ph], Michelle has
9 SCHOOLSTAT [ph], where we bring together sort of people
10 who have a real deep background on numbers and looking at
11 data, and can kind of go and analyze trends and think
12 about, okay, if we are looking at this problem around
13 trust grants management, what is our history, how do we
14 map out the flow of things, where are we seeing things get
15 slowed down, where are we not meeting our targets, and we
16 will set targets along each piece along the way.

17 It would be like, okay, if we are expecting to
18 get the grant out within 60 days, what is our flow and how
19 do we get there. So, it's those kinds of systems that we
20 have been developing over the past couple of years with
21 [inaudible] for us, and the different system pool use dot
22 [ph] learning in this model, to kind of track those
23 numbers and have that be the grants management tool.

1 REVIEWER 1: [Reviewer 4], go ahead.

2 REVIEWER 4: Yes, thank you.

3 Your theory of change is all around human
4 capital, so the next question I want to drill down into
5 your theory of change and particularly in human capital.

6 In the D.C. application, you propose to attain
7 the achievement targets by having the LEA develop and
8 implement an approved workplace.

9 How do you plan to build the structural and
10 human capacity of the LEA to design, implement, and
11 monitor a work plan that will take them beyond, that would
12 be a visionary work plan that would take them beyond their
13 current performance that they are already experiencing,
14 and how would you control for potential variability in the
15 LEA work plan in the design, as well as the final results?

16 MS. BRIGGS: Sure, great question. We want to
17 make sure that what you propose you can implement. I
18 think a big part of how we built this application has set
19 a great foundation for us in that work, and that this
20 wasn't an application that was really designed by the
21 State.

22 The State was in the discussions for each of the
23 different work groups that we had, but frankly, the

1 balance of work was done by our districts, and so they had
2 people there, and so as we crafted these things and we
3 crafted these plans, we already have buy-in from everybody
4 in terms of what we are going to do for data and our
5 teacher leaders, and turnaround.

6 So, that is part of it, like we set the
7 foundation. People aren't going to be surprised when we
8 get this application and we say like okay, so now you are
9 going to have to do your MOU plan and your Scope of Work.
10 They are not going to be surprised at what is there.

11 In terms of what we are going to do at the State
12 level, we are starting the Race to the Top team. We have
13 got about half of our people focused on the grant
14 management pieces of it, kind of reporting financial
15 tracking, all those kinds of operational pieces.

16 Then, we are going to have the effectiveness
17 managers to help our districts understand what it means to
18 set up the data system or to deal with professional
19 development, and then like we said, we are going to set up
20 these different work groups and rely on the capacity at
21 the local level to provide some of the real deep content
22 that is needed, so that we can connect Jennie with a
23 charter school that maybe is struggling around if I have

1 to do this evaluation, and we have all agreed that 50
2 percent of it is going to be on the student growth
3 measure, what does the rest of it look like.

4 We can make those connections and make sure that
5 if we have districts that are struggling, we can put them
6 together with them.

7 So, I mean that is our thinking. That is our
8 plan is to kind of build on what we have done with the
9 Race to the Top. We have got this team that we are ready
10 to get going, and we will get the work plans in place for
11 90 days. We will use the web-based structure, like I
12 said, a lot of what we have done with recovery in terms of
13 our ability to track as a city in some of the models that
14 the Mayor's team has put together will really help us with
15 that.

16 A lot of it is on-line and web-based, so that
17 people can get easy access to information. A lot of it is
18 actually covered with the available aside from what
19 recovery asked for. To, those are going to be a lot of
20 our accountability measures, as well.

21 CHANCELLOR RHEE: One of the things that we
22 struggled with when we actually wrote the application was
23 trying to strike a balance between making sure that there

1 was consistency in quality across the LEAs, but also that
2 we weren't putting a stranglehold on the charters and
3 their autonomy.

4 I think we sort of managed to do that. You are
5 not going to see a tremendous amount of variability in
6 those human capital plans, because we set out certain
7 things that are non-negotiable, so it is not just about
8 the fact that the evaluation tool has to be created and
9 that 50 percent have to be based on student achievement.

10 We also lay out what the other components have
11 to be. So, for example, the teachers need to click into
12 four tiers of effectiveness, highly effective, effective,
13 minimally effective, or ineffective.

14 That means then that, you know, we don't have a
15 definition of what a good teacher is from Jennie, from Kip
16 from D.C. press. We are all operating with the same
17 definitions, and then we have the same requirements to
18 report back to the State on the percentage of our teachers
19 that fall into each bucket, and as it pertains to, you
20 know, is this teacher sort of seeing the adequate amount
21 of growth.

22 We are going to evolve a statewide growth model
23 and expectations, so that everybody can be on the same

1 page, so that if I think that Teacher X has a three point
2 value, I am seeing that person in the same way that Jennie
3 would if she had the same person on her staff as opposed
4 to all of us having different expectations.

5 We actually have laid a lot of that out or will
6 develop it in the working group together, and those will
7 be the State standards.

8 REVIEWER 4: Thank you.

9 REVIEWER 1: [Reviewer 2] had a follow-up. I
10 want to be sure that she gets a chance.

11 REVIEWER 2: You did answer it, I got it, the
12 effectiveness managers. So, are the effectiveness
13 managers going to be assigned, the D.C. managers, the
14 charter managers, or everyone is going to kind of work
15 together, are they going to be assigned to schools?

16 MS. BRIGGS: Yes, we will have them assigned to
17 content for sure. There will be an effectiveness manager
18 to assess the data. We will have a line for evaluation,
19 kind of the teacher leader piece, and we will have it for
20 turnaround. Within that, we will also have [inaudible]
21 contact, so everybody will be very clear if they have a
22 problem, who they can go to.

23 I think that maybe there are finer points of

1 that, too. We have also built into this, a monthly
2 project, meaning for all the people who have been involved
3 in this, at the Mayor's level, and then we will be
4 convening people on a regular basis to make sure that
5 things are moving along if they need to.

6 REVIEWER 3: This is really a related question.
7 It has to do with evaluation, not teacher evaluation, but
8 evaluation of your efforts as a whole, and you have many
9 different processes, very ambitious, complicated
10 undertakings, and if they are like most human endeavors,
11 some of them might not come off quite as planned in the
12 contract, and so on.

13 Could you speak to how you will look at the
14 implementation of your Race to the Top efforts from a
15 monitoring sense, from a continuous improvement and
16 evaluation sense, to know whether your processes are on
17 track and working or not as you go?

18 MS. BRIGGS: Sure. I mean I think we will use a
19 couple of different models in that. We will obviously do
20 the required monitoring that is occurring with any sort of
21 Federal grant that needs to be in place, but we will also
22 have -- I mean we have got a reporting person who will be
23 collecting very regular data on the different plans as

1 they are going along.

2 That is one of the Race to the Top people, and
3 then the State's team. We will be collecting information
4 on some of the financial side in the way that we
5 distribute grants and making sure that the districts are
6 spending the money in the way that they have committed to,
7 in the MOU and in the different competitive pieces that we
8 have laid out.

9 Then, as we go along, we will have regular
10 check-ins to make sure that if you decide you are going to
11 do the professional development piece, you know, we are
12 getting to the evaluation of teachers, we will collect
13 that data we will monitor that data, and we will make sure
14 it is there.

15 MR. REINOSO: Kerri made reference to the
16 Mayor's CAPSTAT program, which is the way that we monitor
17 the performance of agencies and we will have something
18 similar to that to track our performance in addition to
19 the work that happens at the State level in terms of the
20 day-to-day management and oversight of the application.

21 We will track is as a city, because as I said,
22 this is a citywide commitment, and so we will, at that
23 level, independent of the operations of the LEAs, also be

1 tracking at the city level to ensure that we are on track
2 and to see if there is any point at which the City itself
3 needs to intervene and to provide additional support at
4 any level of this process to get us back on track.

5 No doubt we will face challenges along the road,
6 and will fall slightly off the planned trajectory, and so
7 we need to identify those things as early as possible in
8 the CAPSTAT structure that the Mayor has set up for the
9 City as a whole allows us to do that, as well.

10 REVIEWER 3: In this evaluation, who makes the
11 call? You have got an LEA that is not doing what they
12 ought to be doing, you have got every indication that that
13 is the case, you monitor them, you have looked at it, who
14 is responsible? I imagine in your district you are, or is
15 it the State? Who is responsible in this set of
16 circumstances?

17 MS. BRIGGS: We have built into the MOU that the
18 State is ultimately responsible for making the --

19 REVIEWER 3: So the State is ultimately, so you
20 could override a decision by any of the charter --

21 MS. BRIGGS : Yes, we could.

22 REVIEWER 3: You could say to even the charter
23 board or wherever, you make that decision when it comes to

1 the Race to the Top kinds of things?

2 MS. BRIGGS: Right, the State is ultimately
3 responsible for how this works, and I think that we have
4 put in enough things along the way that we hope that we
5 never get to that point.

6 Reviewer 3: Sure, I understand.

7 MS. BRIGGS: But we have been working with
8 everybody that we have got -- I mean there is 58 districts
9 here. We are not talking about a universe of 100,000, so
10 it is pretty easy to get them together and figure out how
11 is it going and what will they be doing along the way,
12 where are you having problems.

13 CHANCELLOR RHEE: I think that is the importance
14 of the fact that all the application requires is for us to
15 be very clear about what the measures are, the success
16 measures are.

17 So, all of the LEAs who signed on to Race for
18 the Top understand very clearly what the expectations are.
19 They understand, for example, that we are defining what a
20 failing school is with a point system like we have never
21 done before, and that that point system includes what your
22 AYP status is, how far you are from your proficiency
23 targets, and that sort of thing.

1 So, we know that all the LEAs are sort of doing
2 their own calculations to figure out if I participate and
3 I get this money, am I going to be able to nationally meet
4 these targets, and I think that is why you saw that some
5 LEAs didn't sign on, because of their lack of confidence
6 in being able to actually meet those targets.

7 So, I think that from the beginning, both the
8 Deputy Mayor's Office and the State Superintendent's
9 Office made very clear to us, as LEAs, that there was
10 going to be a very strong accountability system with this
11 money.

12 REVIEWER 1: Very good.

13 [Reviewer 4], do you want to ask a
14 sustainability question?

15 REVIEWER 4: I will be happy to do that,
16 [Reviewer 1], thank you.

17 In the D.C. application, you indicate that you
18 plan to continue the reform initiative that are funded
19 under Race to the Top grant. Given the expansive nature
20 of your plan and the high achievement levels that you
21 intend to attain within the four-year window, what do you
22 plan to do under a sustainability plan particularly if you
23 don't achieve the goals that you want or you find, as

1 Steve asked, that some of your interventions are not being
2 evaluated and are not proving to be as effective as you
3 want?

4 Could you talk with us about your
5 sustainability, the plans and efforts?

6 MS. BRIGGS: Sure, but there is a number of
7 things in the proposal that are the development of like a
8 one-time kind of cost structure. There is the Common Core
9 adoption and the development of implementation. There is
10 sort of building out in terms of [inaudible], and the cost
11 from that goes down.

12 We also anticipate that again with the real
13 focus around ensuring that our teachers can understand the
14 standards and can differentiate instructions, particularly
15 for students with disabilities, that we will be able to
16 use funds that we currently now have dedicated for other
17 special education services, that we can use those funds to
18 come in on the back end and continue to work with them
19 doing.

20 We talk about that in the proposal. Right now
21 we spend roughly \$150 million for non-public placement of
22 students with disabilities. That number, we are intensely
23 focused on both improving services for children to make

1 sure that they are being educated [inaudible] strict
2 environment and that we can bring them back into the
3 public system.

4 As we start to address that issue with a lot of
5 this work, then, we have new funds that have purposely
6 been used for something else, that we can use on the back
7 of this to kind of continue the work.

8 CHANCELLOR RHEE: I think given the experience
9 that we had with the error [ph] funding, we were
10 particularly cognizant about the funding cliff. So, if
11 you look at our application, we specifically said that
12 about 74 percent of the funding of the Race to the Top
13 dollars would go specifically towards things that we felt
14 could be sustainable in the long term.

15 So, 48 percent spent on infrastructure, so the
16 development of the instructional management systems at the
17 charter schools, the teacher evaluation systems, once we
18 create that PD platform, those things then will be
19 sustainable for the long term, 16 percent of the State
20 Superintendents that are really focusing in on the Common
21 Core.

22 We believe that once we do the rollout, the web
23 site development, the training of teachers on that Common

1 Core, then, maintenance of that will be relatively minimal
2 from there, and then about 10 percent of that funding is
3 going specifically into the development of the teacher and
4 principal preparation program.

5 We have outlined this in a way that beyond the
6 grant period, those should be self-sustaining through
7 tuition dollars. So, we are really talking about just 25
8 percent of the money that we are going to be spending,
9 that we would have to worry about how we are going to
10 sustain it in the long term.

11 As the Superintendent said, we have actually had
12 Parthenon come in to do a financial analysis for us of the
13 kinds of savings that we would need to see as a State from
14 things like special education, special education
15 transportation, non-public placements, also food service
16 recruitment because of reimbursements, and that sort of
17 thing, so we actually have a plan for how, over the next
18 five years, we can recoup some of those savings and push
19 them back into these initiative.

20 REVIEWER 4: Thank you, [Reviewer 1].

21 REVIEWER 1: [Reviewer 3].

22 REVIEWER 3: One of the Race to the Top
23 priorities is STEM. Give us a review about STEM as you

1 see it being implemented and particularly address how you
2 will be integrating STEM across grades and disciplines.

3 CHANCELLOR RHEE: I can talk about that from a
4 DCPS perspective. There are a few areas in which we are
5 going to do this.

6 One of the things that we know we have to do --
7 and if you look at our five-year plan, one of the main
8 things is to build more compelling schools, and the way
9 that we want to do that is to identify schools that are
10 kind of in that mid-range that we talked about earlier,
11 and putting new programs in place in those schools.

12 So, we have something called the "catalyst"
13 school initiative, and this was within the school, the
14 school improvement OSI, and you will see in the grant
15 application that part of the dollars that we are asking
16 for are going to the capacity development of that
17 department.

18 So, we have a number of schools who are becoming
19 STEM campuses, and this is across the grade levels. They
20 will be integrating science technology, engineering, and
21 math through the entire curriculum.

22 We have already actually received some external
23 funding for the planning year of those STEM campuses, and

1 then they will have three years worth of implementation
2 money that we have already garnered from external support
3 to make sure that we are actually able to grow that.

4 The second thing that I would say -- and this is
5 sort of from the statewide perspective -- is that we have
6 specifically identified the human capital and teacher
7 quality issues that are linked to our lack of movement in
8 both science and math.

9 So, as you see from our application, we actually
10 set very specific targets and measures that I think are
11 incredibly aggressive about increasing the effectiveness
12 of our science and math teachers.

13 We expect to see off of the baseline, in the
14 first year 5 percent, the second year 10 percent, and then
15 ultimately, for the four-year period, 15 percentage point
16 growth in the effectiveness of both math and science
17 teachers, and we think that is going to have a tremendous
18 impact long term on our ability to provide higher quality
19 science and math education to our students.

20 MS. BRIGGS: On the standards front, we have the
21 math standard with the Common Core, that will drive a big
22 part of just how we improve overall, what we expect our
23 students to know, and then consult on how a teacher will

1 teach towards that, so that is going to be one piece of
2 it.

3 One of the places that [inaudible] into
4 collaboratives, we think will be focused on STEM, as well,
5 to kind of build out across the City to kind of draw on
6 the catalyst schools we are still talking about, and there
7 is also a number of charter schools that are STEM-focused
8 as well, and so we will use those higher achieving in some
9 places to kind of build out across the City.

10 REVIEWER 3: Excuse me, but what are the grade
11 level ranges of the catalyst schools?

12 CHANCELLOR RHEE: They actually span all of the
13 grade levels. The majority of our catalyst schools are
14 actually at the elementary level right now. We have a
15 much more significant problem at our high schools, so more
16 of our high schools fall into the failing school category,
17 so we are looking at whole school turnaround models as
18 opposed to the catalyst model for those schools.

19 The other thing I wanted to quickly add is that
20 in the assessment that was done of the current D.C.
21 standard versus the Common Core, one of the things that
22 was outlined was the fact that we have got a pretty major
23 measure shift to do in terms of math and moving to it from

1 more of the algorithmic fluency, to sort of the conceptual
2 understanding, which means fewer standards and much deeper
3 in those math standards, and we think that again, more
4 training from the State Superintendent's Office on the
5 shift to that is going to have a big impact on our math
6 achievement, as well.

7 REVIEWER 1: Are there any other questions?
8 We have got three minutes.

9 REVIEWER 3: I do.

10 REVIEWER 1: [Reviewer 3], go ahead.

11 REVIEWER 3: Looking at your data and the
12 progress you have made, remarkable progress you went into
13 it, one of the areas that I had some question or a little
14 concern about, had to do with graduation rates.

15 If I remember correctly, in the application for
16 charter schools, no data were reported for 2007 for
17 graduation rates. Can you explain why?

18 And then the second part is it actually did show
19 a drop in graduation rates of I think 4 percent or so from
20 '08 to '09 for charter schools. Can you speak to that?

21 CHANCELLOR RHEE: We actually had a rise in
22 graduation rates statewide from '08 to '09, from 70
23 percent to 74.7 percent, and actually, that was mostly

1 driven by the charter schools, because from the DCPS
2 perspective, we went from a graduation rate of about 69
3 percent in '07, we are currently a little above 72 percent
4 now.

5 We realize that from the fact that you are
6 probably looking at those graduation rates and thinking,
7 really, that is because we actually use the lever rate
8 calculation right now, and we are now moving towards the
9 cohort model, so within the next couple of years, we will
10 have a complete recalculation based on a couple of
11 external organizations that have come in to do that
12 analysis. They are putting our graduation rate more in
13 the mid-40s based on the cohort model.

14 MR. REINOSO: On the charter school drop, the
15 school board definitely, well, it raised a number of flags
16 for them, and it appears to have been driven by some
17 issues at a couple of the charter high schools.

18 I should say there are not very many charter
19 high schools, so any drop in the performance of one of the
20 charter high schools is reflected very directly in the
21 aggregate rate.

22 They have intervened at the high schools where
23 this happened and have put in place essentially more

1 monitoring and an intervention plan there to try to change
2 the trajectory of that number, so it did not go unnoticed.

3 REVIEWER 3: What about where no data were
4 reported in a table for '07? Any explanation there?

5 MR. REINOSO: Honestly, I am not sure what
6 happened there.

7 MAYOR FENTY: Let me just say that hopefully, in
8 reviewing the application and some of the benchmarks and
9 projections of improvement that the team has put before
10 you, you will see what the Chancellor and I saw two and a
11 half years ago, that because of the size of our system,
12 that in comparison with other jurisdictions, the
13 opportunity to move fast and efficiently is probably on
14 our side; and then, second, because of the changes we made
15 in the bureaucracy, we will be able to make financial or
16 management decisions fast, where we see either the needs
17 improve or do even better than we are doing.

18 So, thank you all again for your time.

19 REVIEWER 1: Thank you, appreciate it.

20 That ends the session.

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