



# RACE TO THE TOP



## Information for Finalists Provided to States July 27, 2010

### The Presentation

1. The purpose of the Tier 2 review is to allow the reviewers to validate and clarify their evaluations of your application and ensure that you have the understanding, knowledge, and capacity to implement your plans.
  - a. It's up to you to determine what to emphasize and how to tell your story. Your presentation does not have to touch on each criterion or priority.
2. Your audience will be up to five independent, expert reviewers who reviewed your application in depth during the first stage (Tier 1) of the review. In addition, a small number of Department program staff will be present.
3. You will have a 90 minute block of time. You may use up to 30 minutes of that time for your presentation. The remainder will be for Q&A led by the reviewers. Time limits will be strictly enforced.
4. Following your State presentation, the assigned reviewers will meet to discuss your application and presentation, finalize their individual scores and comments, and submit them to the Department. Reviewers will be scoring against the criteria and priorities, just as they did in the first tier of the review.
5. In order to maintain a level playing field and ensure the continued integrity of the competition, the presentations may only be attended by your five-person presentation team, the peer reviewers, and program staff from the Department.
6. Your presentation will be videotaped and posted on the Department's Web site after awards are announced. Each member of your presentation team will be required to sign and submit an appearance release prior to your presentation. Peer reviewers and Department staff are also required to sign this release prior to participating in the Tier 2 presentations. This release will be provided to your team by the contractor.

### Adoption of Common College- and Career-Ready Standards

7. As stated in the Notice Inviting Applications, applicants for Phase 2 of this competition have the opportunity to submit amendments specifically regarding the adoption of common college- and career-ready standards by August 2, 2010 at 4:30:00 pm Washington, DC time. If you provide evidence of adoption according to the guidelines provided by the Department, this evidence will be shared with peer reviewers prior to your State presentation. (Please see the attached document titled "Submitting an Amendment on Adoption of Common Standards" for further information. This is the same information emailed to all applicants on July 23, 2010.) **Amendments received after the**

**deadline of 4:30:00 pm Washington, DC time on August 2 will not be considered;** presenters will not be permitted to reference this information in their presentation if it is not received by the deadline.

8. As part of your presentation, you MAY reference the evidence you provided regarding the adoption of common standards and you should be prepared to respond to questions from reviewers on the evidence you provided.
9. If you do not provide the Department with evidence of adoption by the August 2 amendment deadline, you may NOT reference any information beyond that which was included in your original Phase 2 application during your presentation.

### The Presenters

10. Your State's presentation team may include up to five individuals. All presenters must have a deep knowledge of your application and have significant, ongoing roles in and responsibilities for executing your State's Race to the Top activities. The Department is aware that in some cases, consultants or other outside experts (e.g., from law firms or foundations) assisted in the development of States' Race to the Top applications. In order to allow reviewers to validate and clarify their evaluations of your application and understand the extent to which your team has the knowledge and capacity to implement your plans, these consultants and outside experts may not be members of your five-person State team. Your State team may include elected officials, State education executives, district superintendents, teacher leaders, and others with ongoing leadership roles and deep knowledge of your State's application.
  - a. The only personnel from your State who may attend are the members of the presentation team.
  - b. The Department will contact you if there are any concerns regarding your State team.
11. **Please email your list of presenters to [racetothetop@ed.gov](mailto:racetothetop@ed.gov) as soon as possible, but no later than noon ET on Monday, August 2, 2010.** Please include in your list each person's name, title, and their role in executing your State's Race to the Top plan. We will provide this information to the peer reviewers and include the list on the Department's Web site when the videotaped presentations are posted after the Phase 2 awards are announced. If reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities are needed, please include those requests with your list.

### Other Presentation Rules

12. Your presentation may not include any information beyond what is contained in your application narrative, appendices, and the information you may have provided to the Department by August 2, 2010 at 4:30:00 pm Washington, DC time regarding the adoption of common college- and career-ready standards. With the exception of information regarding the adoption of common college- and career-ready standards provided by your State by the August 2 amendment deadline, reviewers may not consider any new information, including new or changed plans, accomplishments, laws, policies, data, or performance measures.
13. You may use a projection system for your presentation; we will provide a laptop and projector. It is permissible to use poster boards in your presentation. If you choose to use poster boards, you must bring 7 paper copies of the information on the poster boards (on letter-sized paper). These copies will become part of the application record and will be posted on the Department's Web site after Phase 2 awards are announced. Note that you may not use Web-based information, video presentations, or embedded video resources, nor may you use any resources that provide information

beyond what is contained in your original application and the information you provided by August 2 regarding the adoption of common college- and career-ready standards.

14. You must bring paper copies of your presentations. These copies may include only the slides you are using in your presentation – not your notes and not any other supporting materials. Reviewers may only look at slides that you actually present during your 30 minute presentation. The slides presented to reviewers, the videotape of your presentation, and the list of presenters will become part of the application record and will be posted on the Department’s Web site after awards are announced. Please bring 7 paper copies of your presentation (one each for the reviewers and two for the application file).
15. No additional materials may be provided to reviewers.
16. The reviewers are responsible for ensuring that the Q&A time is well spent; as such, they may ask you to stop your response so that they may move onto the next question. Please cooperate with these requests.

#### Peer Reviewer Identities

17. To ensure a level playing field for all applicants and maintain the integrity of the competition, we have informed our peer reviewers that we will not release their names to the public until the grant awards are announced in late August or early September. In addition, when we post peer reviewers’ comments on all of the Phase 2 State applications, the peer reviewers’ personal identities will not be associated with specific State applications.
18. Due to the nature of the Tier 2 presentations, your five State participants will be aware of the identities of your State’s peer reviewers. We expect all State presenters to assist us in maintaining the integrity of the competition and allowing the reviewers to complete their work without being subject to outside influences. As a result, we remind you that, at a minimum, you should not talk to others, including presenters from other finalist States, about the identities of your peer reviewers.

#### Physical Arrangements of the Room in Which You will be Presenting

19. You will be seated at a table large enough for your five-person State team to sit facing the peer reviewers who will be seated at a table facing your team. You may present at your seat or you may stand, but there will not be a podium. Each member of your presentation team will have a table-top microphone that can be removed from its stand, if desired.
20. A Windows-compatible laptop will be available for your use during your presentation. If you choose to use a PowerPoint presentation, your team may view the presentation on the laptop, as well as on an 18 inch confidence monitor (i.e., a monitor that can be seen by the presenters but not the audience). A handheld remote-controlled slide advancer will be available for the presenter or a member of your five-person team to use to advance the slides. The peer reviewers will view any slides you present on a 32 inch LCD monitor.
21. There will be a countdown timer on the presenters’ table that will allow your team members to keep track of the time. The timer will be set to 30 minutes for your presentation, and you must stop when time runs out. At the end of your presentation, the panel monitor (who is a member of the Department’s staff) will verbally confirm that your presentation is complete; the panel monitor will then re-set the timer for the remaining block of Q&A time, which will take the balance of the 90 minutes allotted to your State.

### Budget Conversations

22. Department officials will meet with you shortly after your presentation to discuss general budget issues and principles. The purpose is to outline the Department's standard operating procedures to finalize budgets for applicants that receive a discretionary grant award.
23. These will not be individual meetings about your State's specific budget request. Rather, we will meet with several States at a time for a more general discussion. These meetings will be with Department staff, not with peer reviewers; as such, the meetings will not affect the peer reviewers' evaluation or scoring of your State's application.
24. Others from your State besides your five-person presentation team may participate in these meetings, and they may choose to participate by phone. We will provide the conference call logistics to you the week of August 2.

### Communications with the Department

25. We will work with you over the next week to make sure you have the information you need for Tier 2. Because this is a competitive process, there are a few ground rules:
  - a. We may not discuss pending applications. This means we are unable to respond to inquiries and questions pertaining to the substance of a finalist's application.
  - b. We will only respond to logistical questions pertaining to the Tier 2 review process. Please direct those questions to [racetothetop@ed.gov](mailto:racetothetop@ed.gov). All Race to the Top questions that are sent to the Department will be directed to and processed through the Race to the Top email box.
  - c. We cannot provide additional guidance such as who should be on the presentation team, what information they should present, what questions reviewers are likely to ask, etc.
26. Please understand that these ground rules are in place to continue to maintain a level playing field for all finalists and to ensure the continued integrity of the competition.

**Again, congratulations on being selected as a finalist. We look forward to seeing you in Washington, DC the week of August 9.**