The vision of Ohio's education leaders was simply to improve the quality of education students are receiving in Ohio schools. That vision has framed the state's recent education policy and transformed educational practice to make school improvement and student success its focal points. This has fueled a common conviction that providing a college- and career-ready education to all of Ohio's children is an obligation that cannot be ignored.

The objective of Ohio's Race to the Top (RttT) reform agenda was to provide guidance and support for implementation of RttT grant strategies in participating schools. These strategies were aligned with the Ohio Department of Education's commitment to a world class education system in which all students will graduate college- and career-ready.

For the efforts of Ohio's Race to the Top team to be successful, shared consensus had to be developed among Ohio's leaders, including the Ohio Department of Education, State Board of Education, Ohio Board of Regents, school districts, community schools, educators, parents, elected officials and business leaders. In Ohio, there are 611 school districts operating 3,545 traditional school buildings, 376 community schools and 68 joint vocational schools. The diversity of these schools, of course, made the work challenging, but it also made the importance of working together critical.

The four-year action plan for Ohio's Race to the Top was designed to include multiple ways of building student support systems, as well as create training opportunities aligned to school improvement efforts. Improving student achievement for all of Ohio's children is one of the state's most pressing social and economic concerns, and it was central in all RttT plans and activities. The Ohio RttT initiative sought to make changes that improved learning, supported school improvement and raised college and career readiness for students in every grade.

What changed in Ohio's districts, schools and classrooms as a result of RttT?

Specific changes are outlined under Assurances A through E on the following pages. To place those changes in context, it is worthwhile to note some of the particular challenges facing Ohio's RttT schools.

When comparing RttT schools with non-RttT schools, Ohio's Race to the Top schools had:

- A higher rate of poverty (+22 percent);
- More minority students (+56 percent); and
- More students with disabilities (+16 percent).

These differences made reaching targeted benchmarks more challenging, yet in some areas, RttT schools met or exceeded performance measures compared to non-RttT schools.

Assurance Area A - Building Strong Statewide Capacity for Improvement

Ohio's work in Assurance Area A focused on the goal that Ohio would assure the capacity needed to implement, scale up and sustain meaningful reform across participating school districts. This meant ensuring that Ohio could sustain the capacity to execute RttT work statewide and engage stakeholders in implementation of the RttT reforms.

For districts' and schools' RttT efforts to succeed, they needed support at the building and classroom levels. Ohio's RttT staff began by forming local district transformation teams and installing state regional coordinators and specialists to work directly with schools. These groups worked together to help establish clear communication so all involved could share their expectations with each other, ask questions and maintain clarity of purpose. This approach helped to engage and support stakeholders as well as provide oversight to ensure that required elements of the grant were properly implemented in RttT districts.

Additional support to help build strong, statewide capacity was provided through a variety of professional development opportunities related to the implementation of key initiatives. More than 50,000 teachers and administrators were trained in a variety of areas associated with the RttT grant. Some examples of those training opportunities are listed below:

- *Executive Leadership Academy*
- *Peer Assistance & Review Model (PAR)*
- *Value-Added*
- *Formative Instruction*
- *Electronic Evaluation Systems*
- *STEM*
- *Annual State RttT Conferences*
- *Resident Educator/Mentor Program*
- *Parent Leadership*
- *Assessment Literacy*

- *Regional Training/Focus Groups*
- *Urban Education*
- *Principal Leadership*
- *Instructional Information System*
- *Advanced Placement*
- *Instructional Leadership Academy*
- *Student Surveys/Results*
- *Teacher Evaluation System*
- *Principal Evaluation System*

Ohio's RttT team also oversaw the development of many partnerships between RttT districts, higher education institutions and other partners. Major Race to the Top partners included the Ohio Education Research Center and Battelle for Kids, a national not-for-profit organization that supports the use of strategic measures, practices for improving educator effectiveness and communication among school stakeholders. These partnerships helped bring school stakeholders together to form a common vision. The partnerships also produced data, led to frameworks for improvement and enabled professional development.

Race to the Top funds helped create the OERC to evaluate targeted education programs statewide. Since its establishment, OERC has conducted 28 research projects related to (1) using learning standards and assessments; (2) using data to improve teaching and student outcomes; (3) developing strong teachers and leaders; (4) producing future-ready students; (5) school improvement and innovation; (6) STEM education initiatives; and (7) early childhood education. The center has disseminated the results and conclusions from its research to educators, administrators, policymakers, education researchers and the public – both through its website and through two statewide conferences. The findings will inform future practices in Ohio's schools and help fuel statewide school improvement over time.

Battelle for Kids came aboard to support the RttT work of the Ohio Rural Education Collaborative, which includes 74 schools in 21 Appalachian Ohio districts. The work and training were organized around 10 strategies. One of those was to open the opportunity for students to take college-level courses and earn college credit while still in high school. The work of the collaborative resulted in the following improvements, since 2010:

- **The number of OREC high school students participating in college-level coursework grew by 186 percent.**
  (With its RttT grant funding now expended, the Ohio Appalachian Collaborative is continuing to offer high school students the chance to earn college credit through a grant from Ohio's Straight A Fund, created to promote innovation in schools.)

- **Performance improved for OREC students on the Ohio Achievement Assessment:**
Grade 3 reading	+3.9 percentage points
Grade 3 math	+3.0 percentage points
Grade 4 reading	+1.7 percentage points
Grade 4 math	+2.0 percentage points
Grade 8 reading	+4.4 percentage points
Grade 8 math	+9.2 percentage points

- **Performance improved for OREC students on the 10th grade Ohio Graduation Tests:**
Reading	+3.0 percentage points
Writing	+3.2 percentage points
Social Studies	+2.8 percentage points
Science	+1.7 percentage points

  Source: Battelle for Kids

Assurance Area B – Standards and Assessments

The Ohio RttT work in Assurance Area B focused on the goal that by 2014, all Ohio Race to the Top schools would implement a more rigorous college- and career-ready curriculum; new, aligned assessments; and greater teacher supports to improve student learning.

Support for this was built into the Ohio Department of Education's simultaneous goal that *all* Ohio schools would implement these improvements by 2014. State education leaders made RttT schools their top priority for implementation of all three initiatives, and they took advantage of RttT resources by first training RttT regional coordinators for the work. These regional coordinators then trained and coached district RttT coordinators to help ensure implementation of the initiatives in classrooms.

Ohio's New Learning Standards

In 2010 the State Board of Education adopted Ohio's New Learning Standards in English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies and in 2012 added new learning standards in fine arts, world languages and financial literacy. The standards set higher expectations for what students should know and be able to do in each grade and include skills students will need in the workplace, such as critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration and interpersonal communication.

The Ohio Department of Education developed a four-phase plan to assist districts in their adoption and implementation of these standards at the local level, starting with RttT districts. The phases were:

1. **Communication and Awareness:** Phase 1 involves communication to all audiences (e.g., educators, parents, policy makers) about the importance of college and career readiness, including why, when and what changes to the educational system will occur.
2. **Alignment and Refinement:** Phase 2 supports the change process that will occur at the state and district levels to support college and career readiness (e.g., curriculum alignment, teacher preparation and growth).
3. **Transition and Implementation:** Phase 3 supports opportunities to learn and the application of change. For example, at the state and district levels, transition work is complete, revised curriculum is implemented and assessment items are field-tested.

4. **Complete Implementation:** Phase 4 represents full implementation by introducing the new assessment and accountability systems and is a platform to evaluate the results of a complete college- and career-ready system. RttT districts were the first to fully implement.

Ohio continues to provide statewide and regional professional development to all Ohio teachers as they transition and implement Ohio's New Learning Standards.

Ohio's State Tests

The Ohio Department of Education is in the final stages of transitioning from the existing Ohio Achievement Assessments (OAA) and the Ohio Graduation Tests (OGT) to Ohio's New State Tests for mathematics, English language arts, science and social studies, including in RttT schools.

These tests include grades 3-8 for mathematics and English language arts; grades 5 and 8 for science; and grades 4 and 6 for social studies. The following end-of-course exams also will be used as part of Ohio's high school diploma system for the graduating classes of 2018 and beyond: English language arts I and II, algebra I, geometry or Math I and II, American history, American government, physical science (2018 graduating class only) or biology.

Third Grade Reading Guarantee

The Third Grade Reading Guarantee was written into law in 2012 and is a support program that spans kindergarten through grade 3. Under the guarantee, teachers assess each student's reading skills at the beginning of each school year. If a student is reading below grade level, the school creates a reading improvement plan for the child. That plan includes extra reading help right away and for as long as the child needs it.

Although the implementation target of school year 2013-2014 was to apply to both RttT schools and non-RttT schools, the Ohio Department of Education first trained and worked with RttT regional and district coordinators to prepare for implementation. This helped to raise questions from the field that would help in future, statewide training efforts.

The guarantee in 2013-2014 helped most students, including those in RttT schools, get back on track in reading by the end of the school year. But, students who enter grade 3 still struggling to read receive the added help of specially trained teachers. There is a final strategy to protect these students from long-term academic failure: students who have not gained third grade reading skills before the fourth grade begins must continue in third grade to build their reading skills. These children may do fourth grade work in other subjects, if they are able. The children also may be promoted to fourth grade mid-year, if their districts' policies permit it.

Formative Instructional Assessments

Formative assessment and formative instructional practices (FIP) are other areas where concentrated Race to the Top efforts provided support needed for school improvement. Race to the Top funds paid for the development of these formative instructional practices, which are the formal and informal ways that teachers and students gather and respond to evidence of learning. Race to the Top coordinators also were the first to be trained and work with their schools to implement FIP. Through an initiative called FIP Your School Ohio, RttT funds made online learning modules, blended-learning facilitation guides, a resource library and a video library available free to all Ohio educators. All of the FIP resources focus on four research-based components:

- Creating and using clear learning targets;
- Collecting and documenting evidence of student learning;
- Analyzing evidence and providing effective feedback; and
- Preparing students to take ownership of their learning.

State-sponsored regional FIP specialists also helped train local facilitators to lead blended-learning professional development in teacher-based teams in all Ohio districts. More than 40,000 teachers, administrators and regional

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specialists now have been through these online modules. One hundred higher-education faculty members and their students – from 30 institutions – also participate. Many educators have used the system since its creation, with more than 122,500 online courses already having been completed. The FIP library now includes 50 videos showcasing Ohio teachers and students using formative instructional practices as they work toward Ohio's New Learning Standards.

Improved, Teacher-created Assessments

Ohio's RttT funds secured Battelle for Kids website access for RttT teachers to give them specific resources for creating high-quality assessments for their classrooms. The resources helped RttT educators:

- Understand and implement balanced assessment systems, including diagnostic tools that may be used to measure student growth;
- Acquire knowledge and skills essential to aligning the rigor and cognitive complexity of standards, assessment and instruction;
- Develop a trained eye to determine which measures can generate data for making valid, reliable inferences; and
- Create assessment-planning blueprints and high-quality selected response, constructed response, and performance measures as well as rubrics and scoring guides.

The knowledge and resources are now being shared with non-RttT schools in Ohio.

Expanded Kindergarten Readiness Assessment

Using $1 million in funds from Ohio's Race to the Top grant, Ohio partnered with the state of Maryland to begin creating a new Kindergarten Readiness Assessment. The KRA measures all essential areas of school readiness, including language and literacy, math, social studies, science, social skills and physical well-being. The new assessment allows teachers to individualize instruction for every child. It identifies individual strengths and educational needs that inform the teacher's plan for his or her students.

Ohio's Race to the Top money helped to pay for the early work of developing the assessment, the training kindergarten teachers would need and the necessary materials and supplies. Later, Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant funds awarded to Ohio helped to complete the assessment and train 10,000 kindergarten teachers and administrators statewide.

The assessment was implemented in fall 2014, with 137,938 kindergarten students from 1,733 buildings in 791 districts and community schools participating.

Assessing Schools and Districts

Ohio's Race to the Top helped fund the new Ohio School Report Cards that grade every Ohio public school and district annually on a range of measures. The report cards grade districts and schools on an A-F scale. The performance data contained in the report cards helps both parents and schools understand what needs to happen to improve student and school performance.

The Ohio School Report Cards cover multiple areas and collect data on each of the following:

- **Student achievement:** This grade combines two results for students who took the state tests. The first result, Performance Index, answers the question, "How many students passed the state test?" The second result, Indicators Met, answers the question, "How well did students do on the state test?"
- **Progress:** This measure looks at a school's or district's average progress for its students in math and reading, grades 4-8. It looks at how much each student learns in a year. Did the students get a year's worth of growth? Did they get more? Did they get less?

- **Gap Closing:** This grade shows how well all students are doing in their schools or districts in reading, math, and graduation. It answers the question, "Is every student succeeding, regardless of income, race, ethnicity or disability?"
- **Graduation Rate:** This grade answers the question, "How many ninth graders graduate in four years or five years?"
- **K-3 Literacy:** This grade answers the question, "Are more students learning to read in kindergarten through third grade?"
- **Prepared for Success:** This grade answers the question, "Are students who graduate from your district ready for college or a career?" There are many ways to show that graduates are prepared.

Assurance Area C – Building Data Systems to Support Instruction

To support quality instruction, quality resources had to be made available to teachers. Ohio's Race to the Top team made providing those resources a high priority. The new Instructional Improvement System was created in partnership with the state of Massachusetts to provide information and resources to teachers and administrators, including student-specific data that can be used in instructional planning. The IIS also was designed to provide:

- Curriculum customization;
- Online access to curriculum and standards;
- Online and test options for measuring student progress; and
- Data analysis, reporting capabilities and a portfolio of student work.

More than 80 percent of the RttT districts committed to adopting the IIS. For districts that chose to remain with existing systems, the Ohio Department of Education created a gap analysis tool that enables their schools to accurately evaluate their systems against the Instructional Improvement System.

Ohio RttT funds also made data system advancements possible through these additional projects:

- **Improving Student Privacy** - Ohio Department of Education procedures for protecting the privacy of individual student educational records now exceeds the requirements of the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). All Ohio districts and community schools now use a Statewide Student Identifier (SSID) to report student-level data to the state. Ohio is one of only three states that do not collect student names as part of their student data systems. Ohio law prohibits the reporting of a student's name, address and social security number to the State Board of Education or the Ohio Department of Education.

  Ohio also has established an approval process for formal data requests that ensures that no personally identifiable information about a pupil is publicly released. Ohio has a centralized Privacy and Security Office that provides the Ohio Department of Education with a full-time chief information officer. The officer ensures that the department is leveraging the appropriate technology, policies and standards to protect the privacy of Ohio's data systems.

- **Creating eTranscripts** - Institutions of higher education have used RttT funding to revise their Student Information Systems to: (1) receive high school transcript data in a ready format; and (2) have the capacity to easily report data to the Ohio Board of Regents. eTranscripts also make applying to colleges much easier and more convenient for Ohio's students.

Value-Added Reporting - Ohio's RttT work helped the state reach its goal of having 100 percent of eligible teachers receive a Value-Added report, based on data collected from the 2013-2014 school year. The state also implemented several important support processes. One of those was a statewide "roster verification" system that allowed every Value-Added-eligible teacher – near the end of the school year – to review his or her class roster as recorded earlier in that school year in the state's Educational Management Information System. By making that review, teachers were able to ensure that their Value-Added measures for the next year's teacher evaluations accurately reflected the influence of their instruction on student progress. Other support services the state created

include professional development, webinars and other online training sessions to ensure high-quality, Value-Added trainings.

Assurance Area D – Great Teachers and Leaders

Educator Evaluation System

The implementation of a statewide educator evaluation system supports the goal of ensuring that all students are taught and supported by highly effective educators. This evaluation system includes structured frameworks, guidelines, standards, training, credentialing and the public reporting of educator evaluation results. Multiple stakeholders developed the current evaluation frameworks, which include both performance and student growth measures for teachers and principals. Race to the Top funds were used to support the development of this evaluation system, which was made available to all Ohio public schools. These funds also supported the training, credentialing and re-credentialing of evaluators and the creation of the statewide electronic Teacher and Principal Evaluation System (eTPES). Public schools report their evaluation data via eTPES to meet state reporting requirements.

Woodrow Wilson Ohio Teaching Fellowship

Race to the Top funds were used to help facilitate the Woodrow Wilson Ohio Teaching Fellowship to lure highly accomplished non-educators to Ohio's high-need classrooms. The Ohio Department of Education, Ohio Board of Regents and several Ohio universities collaborated to seek out accomplished career changers and outstanding recent college graduates in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine who were interested in entering the teaching profession in high-need schools. Many Fellows hold advanced degrees in STEM fields with career experiences in a broad array of industries and specialty fields, including nutrition, genetics, applied mathematics, physics, aeronautics and rocket science. The participating institutions have redesigned teacher preparation to give Fellows a full year of preparation in high-need classrooms, as well as specific teaching approaches for the STEM fields. Nearly 300 individuals became Woodrow Wilson Fellows in Ohio as part of this program. Each fellow received a $30,000 stipend while completing an intensive master's-level teacher education program at one of seven participating Ohio universities. As a condition of the stipend, Ohio Fellows must teach in a high-need Ohio classroom for three years. This requirement assures that Fellows with deep content knowledge in STEM fields are supporting the success of learners in Ohio's highest need schools.

Ohio STEM Learning Network

Leveraging RttT funds, Ohio's education system worked toward the goal that by 2014 the state would double the number of students pursuing STEM academic majors in college and quadruple the number of students from under-represented populations.

The effort added 21 districts to the Ohio STEM Learning Network and increased the number of STEM hubs to seven. Program staff trained teachers in the use of STEM as an instructional focus and strategy. The STEM hubs provided professional development, coaching, modeling activities, site-visits and other opportunities for enhancing STEM education in districts. Through a combination of direct instruction, video analysis and hands-on collaborative work, participants planned, designed and received peer feedback on their engaging and rigorous project-based learning lessons. Since the project started, an estimated 8,500 educators (some unique and some repeat participants) have been trained or exposed to STEM-related instruction and learning strategies. RttT funds also paid for training to help educators learn how to interest more female students in STEM careers.

Improving Post-Secondary Teacher Prep Programs

Ohio's Race to the Top supported the development and implementation of a transparent accountability system for Ohio's educator preparation programs. Ohio Board of Regents designed and implemented improvements to the accountability system for educator preparation programs in the state. Beginning in 2012, the Board of Regents began an annual process to publish performance reports for each educator preparation program in the state.

The annual reports present a dashboard of metrics, including licensure pass rates; admission requirements; field and clinical placements and practices; K-12 student performance data for learners taught by program graduates; teacher/principal evaluation results of graduates; and survey results from candidates, graduates, employers and mentors. These metrics are now incorporated into the state review and approval process for all licensure programs in Ohio's public and private colleges and universities. This increased rigor in review has resulted in program improvements and the closure of some licensure programs.

In addition to the development of performance metrics and enhanced program review practices, Race to the Top funds supported incentive grants for the state's highest performing educator preparation programs, based on the same set of performance metrics used to inform program review and provide annual performance reports. Programs receiving these incentive grants have used the funds to support their highly effective practices to prepare new Ohio educators and support the ongoing professional development of Ohio teachers.

Guidance Documents

Creating and implementing the Ohio educator evaluation system was the major focus of the Race to the Top grant in Assurance Area D. Supplemental guidance documents were needed to help districts develop local policies and procedures to implement the evaluation system and report their results to the state through the electronic reporting system eTPES. The Race to the Top initiative also helped create supplemental guidance documents for student growth measures, student learning objectives, teacher assessment literacy and the state's Resident Educator program. These documents are posted on the Ohio Department of Education website and are available to all Ohio schools, teachers, administrators and the public.

Assurance Area E – Turning Around the Lowest Achieving Schools

Improving High School Graduation Rates

Ohio targeted a 0.5 percent improvement in statewide graduation rates annually under the RttT grant. This annual growth of 0.5 percent would have led to a statewide graduation rate of 80.2 percent by 2014. The statewide graduation rate in 2013 was 82.3 percent – two percentage points above the 2014 goal (Figure 1). *(Note: graduation rates are always reported one year behind in Ohio.)*

Figure 1: Four-year longitudinal high school graduation rates for Race to the Top schools and all schools in Ohio 2010-2013

Source: Ohio Department of Education iLRC Database
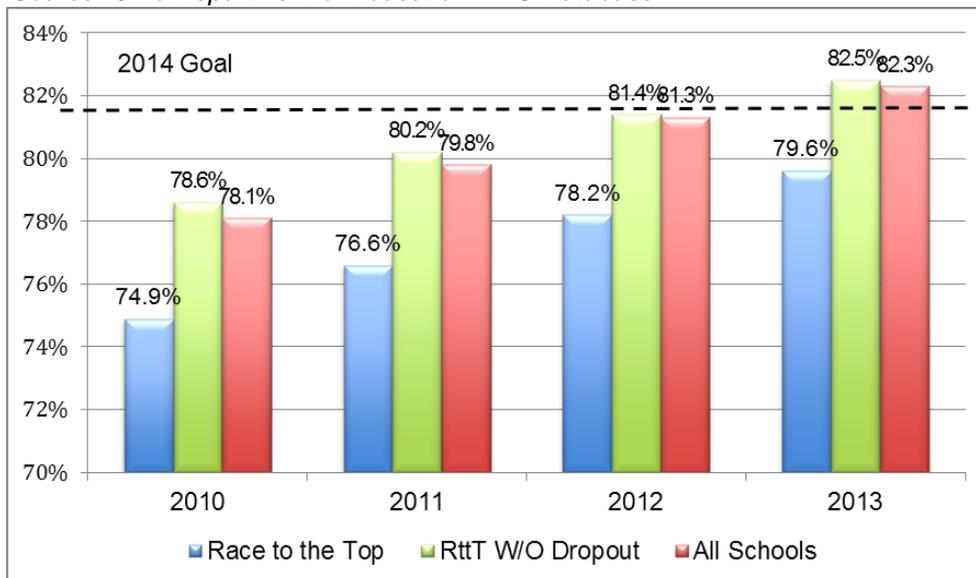
Race to the Top schools increased their graduation rates from 2010 to 2013 by slightly more than the statewide average (+4.7 percent), indicating that Race to the Top efforts may have had a slight positive impact on graduation

rates in Ohio – though not a statistically significant one. Improved graduation rates are an important benchmark because high school graduates typically earn much more than high school dropouts – ensuring a more comfortable lifestyle.

Improvement in graduation rates occurred with the following student groups in RttT schools:

- Economically disadvantaged   +6.4 percent
- Economically advantaged   +5.8 percent
- Non-white   +8.7 percent
- White   +3.0 percent

Graduation Rate Gaps

Ohio schools on the whole, including RttT schools, have improved their graduation rates, but gaps have not been significantly reduced. Clearly this will require continued attention. For example, the gap between economically disadvantaged and other students did not meaningfully improve, and this must continue to be addressed. Some improvement did occur in the graduation rate gap between white and non-white students in RttT schools, from 22.2 percent in 2010 to 16.5 percent in 2013.

The graph below shows that there are large differences in performance between subgroups within Ohio's Race to the Top schools (Figure 2). Community schools showed the biggest improvement at 11.7 percent. They were closely followed by urban traditional schools, which had a 7.5 percent improvement rate. Suburban and rural schools also showed improvement and stayed above the graduation rate target established in the grant.

Figure 2: Four-year longitudinal high school graduation rates for RttT schools by school type, 2010-2013

Source: Ohio Department of Education
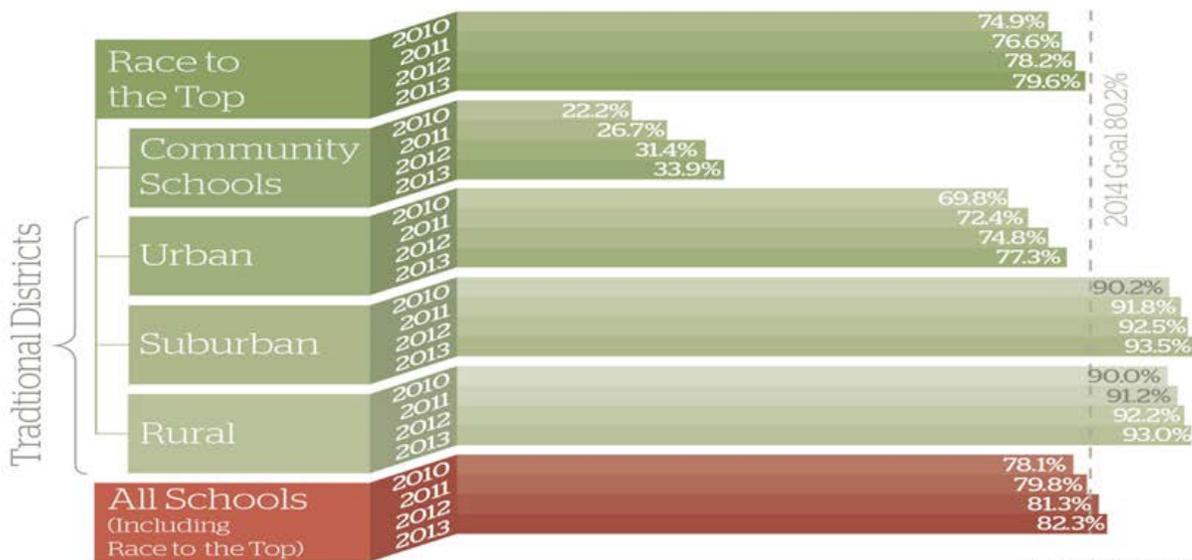
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Promoting New School Models

Through RttT Innovative Grants, new school models were established to help schools better meet their students' needs. A few are listed below:

* **Academy of Global Studies**
  * *An individualized learning approach focused on global issues.*

* **AVID** (Advancement via Individual Determination)
  * *Focused on helping low-income students become college ready through rigorous courses and support.*

* **Early College High Schools**
  * *Students earn college credits while attending high school.*

* **STEM Schools** (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math)
  * *Supported by the Ohio STEM Learning Network.*

* **New Tech Network**
  * *Focused on technology-enabled collaborative learning projects.*

Improving Teaching and Learning in High Poverty/High Minority Schools

Improving teaching and learning opportunities in high poverty/high minority schools was another point of emphasis for Ohio's Race to the Top. This work was focused on three goals:

- Gathering teacher and student perceptions about their schools;
- Offering additional Advanced Placement coursework and training; and
- Creating Early College learning opportunities for students.

Gathering teacher and student perceptions – The Quaglia Institute surveyed more than 20,000 students in low-achieving schools and found that a "relationship gap" often exists between adults and students in those schools. The survey also found that race plays a role in students' academic motivation. Teachers also were surveyed under the TELL (Teaching, Empowering, Leading, and Learning) Ohio initiative. As part of the RttT efforts, professional development was planned and delivered in areas identified on the teacher survey as needing support.

Offering additional Advanced Placement coursework and training - Advanced Placement course expansion and related training was another area of emphasis in RttT efforts to improve consistently low-performing schools. The team provided free professional development to help AP teachers improve their instructional practices. During the sessions, teachers were asked to review their current teaching practices and explore new ways to enhance instruction and engage students with the goal of boosting student achievement. Schools were asked to reflect on how they could build strategic AP programs with an emphasis on collecting data to build infrastructure, setting policies, preparing and supporting students, and training and supporting teachers. As a result of these efforts, 32 RttT schools added a total of 112 new AP courses to meet their strategic AP program goals.

Creating Early College learning opportunities – Ohio's Early College High Schools are a statewide initiative funded through state's general revenue funds. However, RttT funds helped to support these schools and the creation of new Early College High Schools.

Students in these Early College High School programs were found to be:

- 5 percent more likely to graduate from high school;
- 9 percent more likely to enroll in college; and
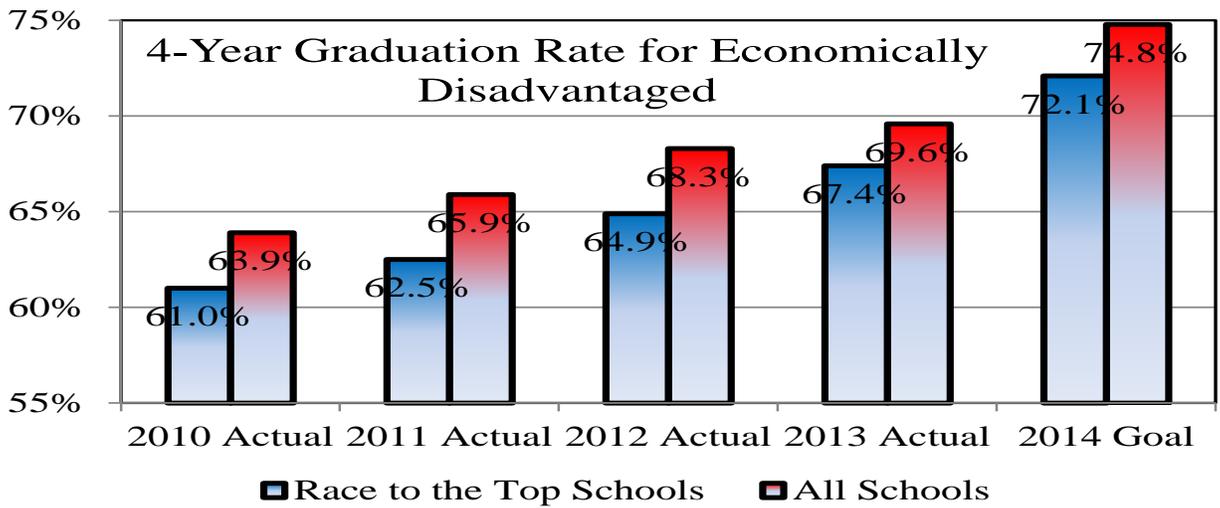- 20 percent more likely to earn college degrees.

These findings were consistent across gender, race/ethnicity, family income, first generation college-going status or pre-high school achievement.

Reducing Student Performance Gaps

Reducing performance gaps across student groups was another major target in Ohio's RttT grant. Ohio has significantly improved graduation rate gaps for economically disadvantaged students (Figure 3).

- Race to the Top Schools have achieved an average 6.4 percent graduation rate improvement since 2010 for economically disadvantaged students. This was a larger percentage of improvement than in all Ohio schools.
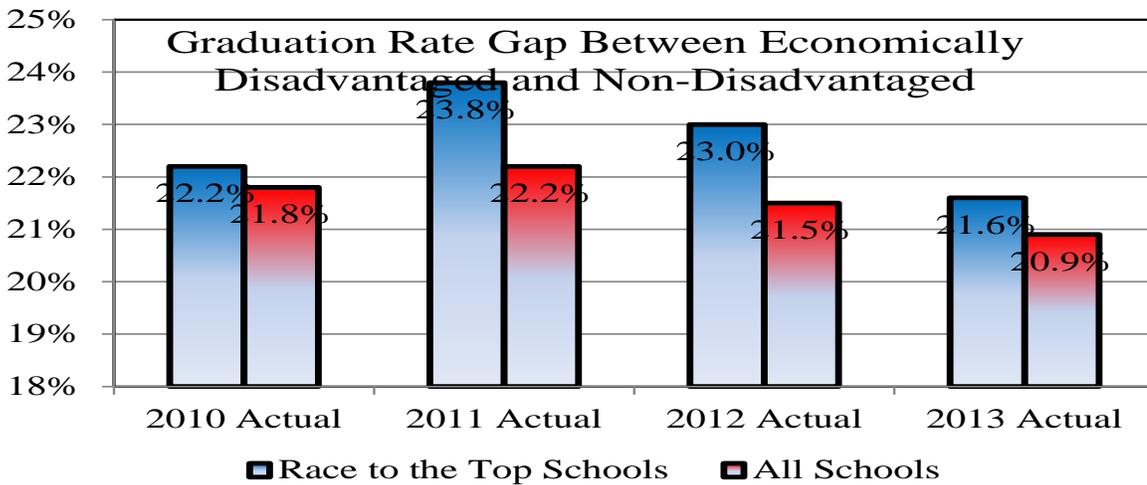
Figure 3: Four-year longitudinal high school graduation rates for *economically disadvantaged* students for Ohio's Race to the Top schools and all schools in Ohio, 2010-2013.

4-Year Graduation Rate for Economically Disadvantaged

	Race to the Top Schools	All Schools
2010 Actual	61.0%	63.9%
2011 Actual	62.5%	65.9%
2012 Actual	64.9%	68.3%
2013 Actual	67.4%	69.6%
2014 Goal	72.1%	74.8%

*(Source – Ohio Department of Education)*

- The gap between economically disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students has been reduced in both RttT and all other schools, but not at an appreciable rate. (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Four-year, longitudinal, high school graduation rate gaps between *economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged students* for Ohio's Race to the Top schools and all schools in Ohio, 2010-2013.

Graduation Rate Gap Between Economically Disadvantaged and Non-Disadvantaged

- Ohio improved the graduation rates of non-white students in both RttT schools and non-RttT schools. Race to the Top schools improved graduation rates by 8.7 percent for non-white students, slightly higher than non-RttT schools (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Four-year longitudinal high school graduation rates for *non-white* students for Ohio's Race to the Top schools and all schools in Ohio, 2010-2013

4-Year Graduation Rate for Non-White Students
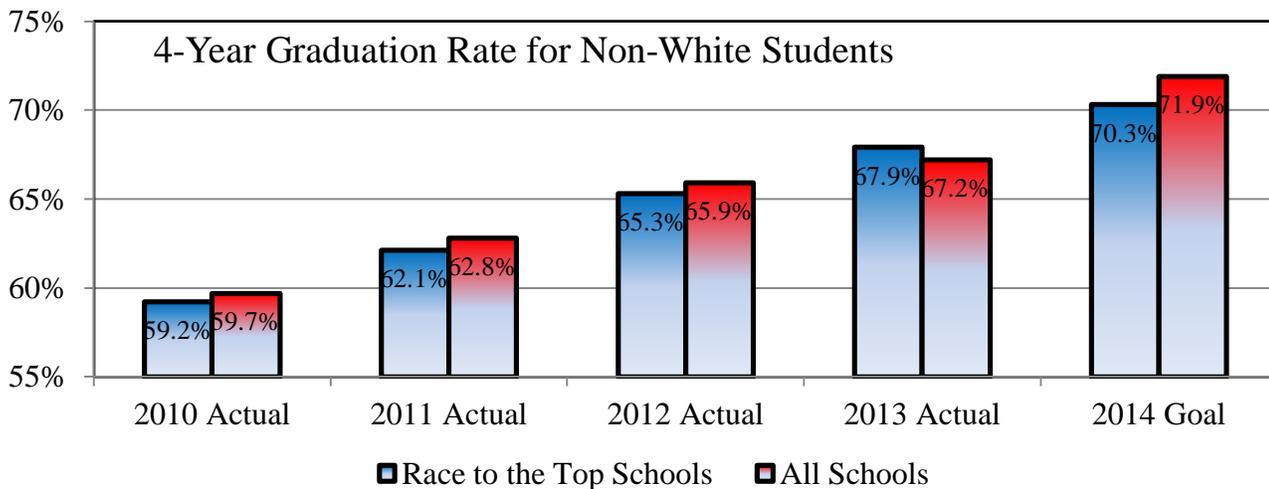
- As stated earlier, the graduation gap between white and non-white students has been reduced (Figure 6). In 2010, the graduation rate gap between white and non-white students was 22.2 percent in RttT schools. By 2013, the gap had shrunk to 16.5 percent, an improvement of 5.7 percentage points. However, the 12.2 improvement rate targeted has not yet been reached.

Figure 6: Four-year longitudinal high school graduation rate gaps between *white and non-white* students for Ohio's Race to the Top schools and all schools in Ohio, 2010-2013.

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Race to the Top
Schools

81.4%   82.9%   83.7%   84.4%
22.2   20.8   18.4   16.5
59.2%   62.1%   65.3%   67.9%

2010   2011   2012   2013   2014 Goal

Graduation Rate
White students

Graduation Rate
Non-White students

Graduation Rate Gap
(in percentage points)

All Schools
(including
Race to the Top)

84.1%   85.6%   86.9%   87.3%
24.4   22.8   21.0   20.1   12.2
59.7%   62.8%   65.9%   67.2%

Source: Ohio Department of Education

Though, as stated earlier, graduation rate *gaps* have not been significantly reduced and will require continued attention, some progress has been made in reading, as shown in the table below. Ohio Graduation Tests results from 10th-graders showed a fairly substantial improvement in reading since 2010 for both African American and Hispanic students. Math performance on Ohio Graduation Tests showed improvement in some subgroups but did not change significantly from 2012 levels.

Ohio Graduation Tests Performance

|	TRADITIONAL SCHOOLS READING			COMMUNITY SCHOOLS READING		
	2014	*2010*		*2014*	*2010*	
White	92.0	87.6	+ 4.4%	98.5	97.9	+ 0.6%
African American	78.7	63.8	+14.9%	92.3	88.0	+ 4.3%
Hispanic	80.9	73.5	+ 7.4%	94.0	93.0	+ 1.0%
All	**89.4**	**83.3**	**+ 6.1%**	**97.5**	**96.5**	**+ 1.0%**
	MATH			*MATH*		
White	87.4	86.1	+ 1.3%	94.9	95.1	- 0.2%
African American	60.7	56.6	+ 4.1%	74.4	75.0	- 0.6%
Hispanic	66.5	70.1	- 3.6%	82.6	83.3	- 0.7%
All	**82.3**	**80.8**	**+ 1.5%**	**92.3**	**92.5**	**- 0.2%**

- RttT schools improved reading and math performance for economically disadvantaged students. The percentage of economically disadvantaged students rated proficient or better on Ohio tests increased in RttT schools by 2.3 percent (Figure 7). Note, however, that all schools performed better on this measure.

Figure 7: Percent of *economically disadvantaged* students rated proficient or higher in READING in Ohio's Race to the Top schools and all schools, from 2011-2014 on Ohio Achievement Tests.
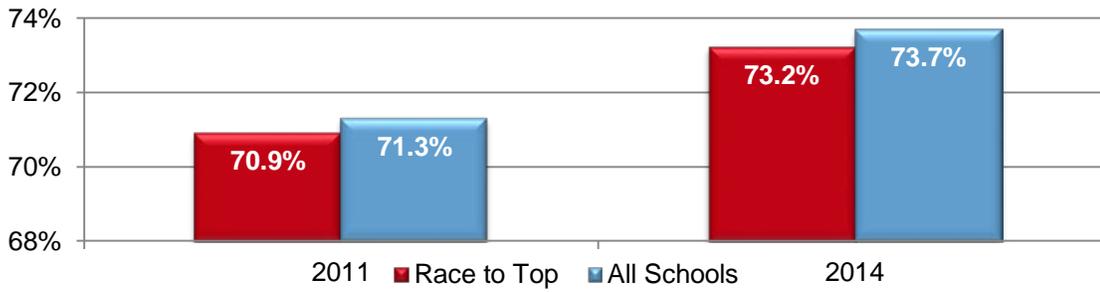
- Race to the Top schools have also increased math scores slightly (Figure 8). RttT schools do not perform above the total of schools statewide.

Figure 8: Percent of *economically disadvantaged* students rated proficient or higher in math on Ohio Achievement Tests from 2011-2014.
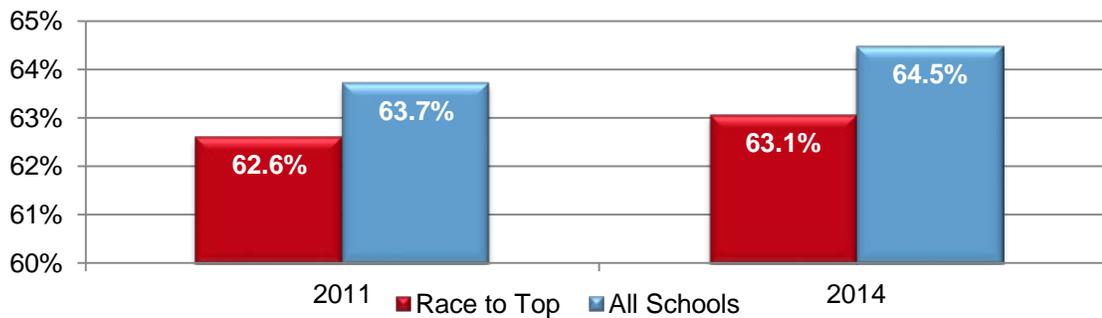
- Reading performance gaps for economically disadvantaged students have diminished slightly in both RttT and all schools (Figure 9). In math, both RttT schools and all schools stayed virtually the same (Figure 10).

Figure 9: Performance gaps in READING between *economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged* students on the Ohio Achievement Tests from 2011-2014 (Goal is dashed bar.)
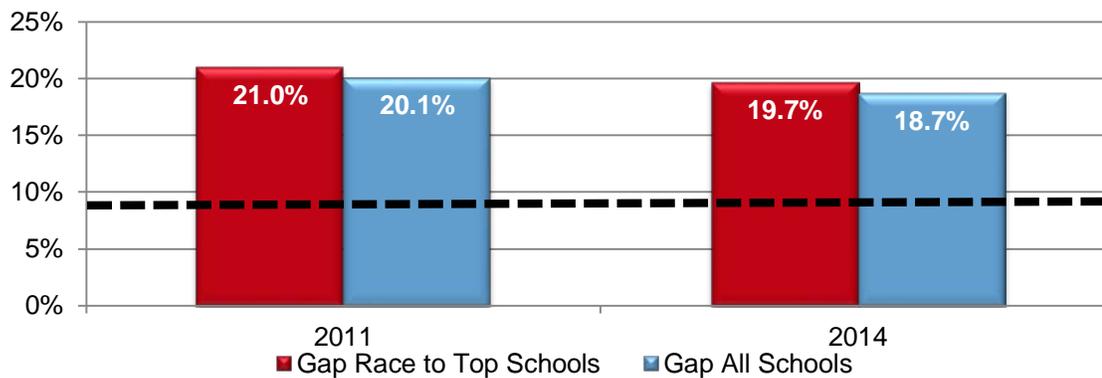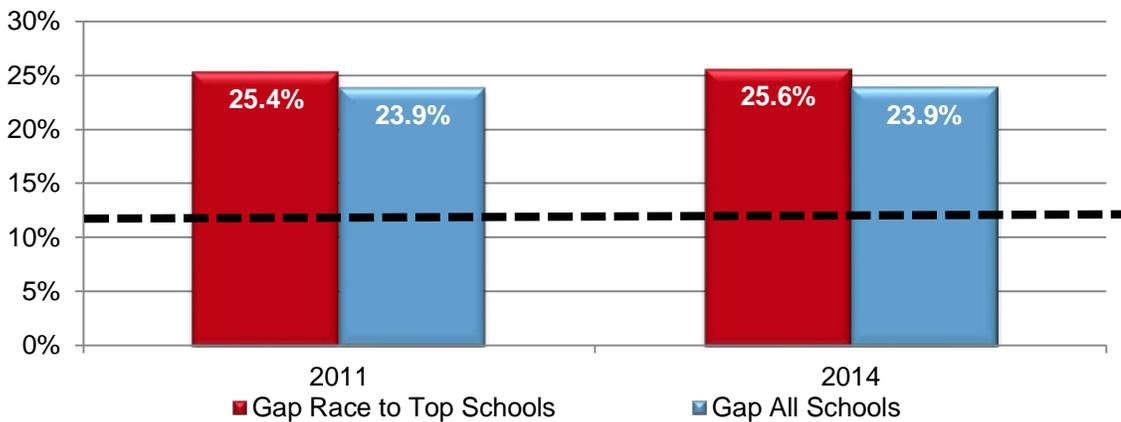
Figure 10: Math performance gaps between *economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged* students on Ohio Achievement Tests from 2011-2014. (Goal is dashed bar.)

- Ohio's RttT schools made some progress in reducing achievement gaps between economically and non-economically disadvantaged students. Race to the Top schools were not successful in reducing the gap between white and non-white students. There was virtually no change in the gap between these student groups over the life of the grant.

- The state's Performance Index calculation shows that Ohio is making improvement across grade levels. Students are rated advanced, accelerated, proficient, basic or limited, based on reaching a certain score on an Ohio state test. Even though overall enrollment declined by 67,478 from 2010 to 2014, the number of students who moved from lower performance categories to the accelerated and advanced categories in 2014 was 72,298 higher than the number who did so in 2010.

- Ohio was not successful in reducing the gap between itself and the best performing U.S. states on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) test.

  - Ohio's number of proficient students improved by 5 percent in grade 8 math;
  - Ohio's number of proficient students improved by 3 percent in grade 8 reading;
  - Ohio remained well above the national average scores of all states in grade 4 math and reading;
  - Ohio showed the most improvement in its ranking compared to other high-performing states in grade 8, moving from 24th to 11th in the nation.
  (Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics, NAEP)

- Ohio also was unsuccessful in its goal of increasing college enrollment during the grant period. As mentioned earlier, Ohio's student enrollment has declined by 67,478 since 2010, making Ohio's graduating classes smaller now than when this goal was established. Fewer graduating seniors and lower enrollment across the state translates to fewer college entrants.

- Expanding STEM programs and other innovative learning opportunities was another key focal point of Ohio's RttT efforts. Ohio's work centered on trying to increase the number of poor or minority students pursuing STEM-related majors in college. Ohio is making progress toward this goal. As of September 2013, the state was on track to double the number of students pursuing STEM academic majors in college and quadruple the number of students from under-represented populations who choose STEM academic majors in college.

Lessons learned from implementing Ohio's comprehensive reform agenda

Ohio's RttT team learned many lessons during Ohio's Race to the Top grant.

Involving multiple stakeholders was critical to successful implementation. Ohio has long been a "local control" state. For new initiatives to become effective at the teacher and student levels, change had to take place in a way that involved local stakeholders.

Time is a key factor. Teachers and administrators needed to find time to work together in collaborative teams to accomplish the tasks needed to transition successfully to Ohio's New Learning Standards, prepare for the corresponding new state tests and meet the academic needs of each student.

Grant reporting requirements, state directives or deadlines for grant initiatives created the need for rapid implementation. Often, schools had very short windows of time to develop their activities, train others and do the work. This resulted in delays in their implementation of some initiatives.

Flexibility and coordination were key components for successful completion of grant commitments. It took the ongoing efforts and coordination of many people at all levels of the educational spectrum to effectively implement Race to the Top. Teachers, principals, central office staff, grant coordinators, regional specialists, RttT coordinators and state-level personnel all had to be committed to the goals of the grant and focus their efforts on school improvement. The availability of specialists and coordinators in the field supported ongoing two-way communication between schools and the Ohio Department of Education. Additionally, partnerships, contractors, parents and community members needed to do their parts to assist in making the grant's vision a reality.

Successful completion of grant initiatives required relationship building, clear communication, and training and support. The delivery model allowed RttT personnel enough flexibility to monitor and provide the appropriate interventions for districts that were not implementing grant initiatives and/or reporting requirements as agreed.

Grant activities, initiatives and timelines didn't always match. Ohio school district calendars run from late August until June. District budgets run from July 1 to June 30. RttT grant timelines ran from Oct. 1 through Sept. 30. This made certain things problematic at times, including communication about finances and timelines for the distribution of funds, coordination of deadlines set by the grant and time available to do the work. Many Ohio districts also handle their finances according to local practices, which added further complications.

In summary, Ohio has learned the following lessons:

1. A clear vision for expectations, strategies and timelines needs to be set and continually supported.

2. Building a collaborative culture that includes continuous two-way communication is necessary to provide needed support and properly implement grant initiatives.

3. Extensive time is needed to implement key strategies and build the knowledge and skills required for successful grant implementation

4. A clearly defined accountability and monitoring system promotes fidelity of grant implementation.

5. High-quality professional development must be focused and supported.

6. Flexibility is a key component in effectively delivering change initiatives and improvements.

Looking ahead, what are the next steps for Ohio's work?

Alignment of Ohio's Race to the Top initiatives with state law may make continuing the work easier in Ohio than in other states. The Ohio Department of Education already has chosen to continue employing a number of staff involved with RttT grant projects whose positions ended after Year Four. These hires were made so the state could continue to provide support to the field at the conclusion of the grant.

The data collected on Ohio's state report card clearly shows Ohio's continued commitment to many areas that were key focal points of the RttT grant. Gap closing, student growth and sub-group performance, as well as overall student achievement and improvement, are central parts of Ohio's report card and show Ohio's commitment to future improvement efforts.

Ohio's lawmakers and education leaders also have put in place many other ways to measure and support school improvement efforts. The state will continue to use its Ohio teacher and principal evaluation systems, including the electronic data platform eTPES, for schools and districts to report evaluation data. Maintaining and updating of the eTPES system will permit the state to continually monitor and report on local evaluation systems and schools' educator evaluation ratings.

Additionally, Ohio will continue its work focused on student growth. This is essential if the state is to continue to support local educator evaluation systems that purposefully incorporate student growth into the final teacher and principal evaluation ratings.

Formative instruction and assessment are other areas Ohio will continue to support. The formative instructional practice resources and video library will continue to be available to all Ohio teachers. Additionally, plans are to continue developing the FIP library to include additional related areas of support.

Ohio's new Instructional Improvement System will be made available to all Ohio districts. It has never before been easily accessible statewide. The system will be available for a small subscription fee and will provide access to student data at the teacher and building levels.

The Ohio Department of Education plans to continue its new Kindergarten Readiness Assessment, with the kinds of revisions that are customary with any new program. This newly developed state assessment is designed to analyze student readiness, complete standard-setting based on those results and enhance reporting capabilities. The instrument will help ensure that kindergarteners get off to a good start in school and that early intervention is provided to students who need it.

Ohio's education leaders are working toward the goal of a seamless, preK-16 education for Ohio students. A high school/higher education alignment toolkit is being created to reside on a publicly accessible website. The toolkit will provide guidance to Ohio school districts and higher education institutions for curriculum and course alignment as well as student achievement.

Future innovation and school improvement are key parts of the state's $250 million "Straight A Fund" grant program. Straight A Fund grants over the last two years have encouraged innovation and school improvement efforts. Additionally, Ohio's Third Grade Reading Guarantee will continue to improve the reading skills and early literacy of all students.

The Ohio Department of Education also will modify, but sustain, the Resident Educator program to help ensure meaningful experiences that build competency among Ohio's newest teachers. The department will continue to provide state support for local program implementation, mentor training, and maintaining and updating of the platform used to submit and score the Resident Educator Summative Assessment. The department is committed to developing a data reporting tool that will help districts ensure the equitable distribution of effective and highly effective teachers and principals in classes and buildings with high-need students. The tool will help the field and the state education leaders gather evidence for meeting the state and local goals of equitable distribution of high-quality educators.

Ohio's state education leaders plan to continue providing programs targeted at gap closure and improving participation of under-represented student populations in advanced coursework. Increasing enrollment in Advanced Placement courses and STEM opportunities will be central to those efforts. But with hundreds of districts and thousands of buildings across Ohio, differing districts have different needs. Providing support that matches those varied needs is worthy of Ohio's future attention.

Finally, Ohio education leaders must continue to find ways to streamline the delivery of multiple programs and supports. Finding ways to better align all of these programs, and their fiscal support, would greatly clarify the education system's most important future needs and the best systems to effectively deliver programs. This will be critical as Ohio works to reduce achievement gaps and improve its standing compared to other high-performing states.

What specific work will occur in Year Five with no cost extensions?

Continued support will be provided for U.S. Department of Education-approved, Year Five amendments and work related to those amendments. Additionally, completing an accurate closeout of spending will be a focal point during Year Five. Specific examples include:

1. Budget review and approval for Year Five carryover funds will be continued;
2. Monthly coordinator meetings will continue to help in monitoring and supporting Year Five projects and closeout and final planning;
3. Coordinators will continue their regular communication with specialists in the field to ensure effective delivery of Year Five work and to provide support on district progress monitoring;
4. An effective working relationship will be maintained with project partners; and
5. Accurate and timely reporting will be provided to the U.S. Department of Education.

Ohio's Race to the Top initiative also will continue to implement and sustain meaningful reform in Year Five across participating districts and community schools. Many areas already identified in this report will be continued during Year Five and beyond. Ohio's emphasis on K-3 literacy, the Third Grade Reading Guarantee, college and career readiness, new graduation requirements, data collection for the report cards and new educator evaluation systems will continue.

Ohio's assessment and accountability systems will continue to be focal points. Ohio will support and monitor an effective system of student assessment that: (1) contains multiple measures used throughout the course of learning; (2) blends traditional testing with curriculum-embedded performance tasks; (3) engages teachers as partners in the process; (4) uses technology to assess various test item types, provides immediate feedback and offers reliable data; and (5) promotes a culture of continuous improvement tied to student growth.

Ohio's education leaders plan to continue moving toward a new set of state achievement tests aligned to Ohio's New Learning Standards. The Ohio Department of Education's Office of Curriculum and Assessment will continue to develop model curriculum and instructional supports for Ohio teachers and educate them on any changes in assessments related to Ohio's New Learning Standards. High school end-of-course exams also will be part of Ohio's assessment system. The combination of rigorous standards, high-quality assessments and ongoing efforts to support the field will continue school improvement efforts across the state.

Additional professional development also will be targeted at improving formative instructional practices and assessment, kindergarten readiness and the continued improvement of persistently low-performing schools. State leaders also will continue their work in expanding Advanced Placement, Early College and STEM learning opportunities for poor and minority students.

Continuing to improve data accessibility to educators in preK-16 is another ongoing target in Ohio. The statewide data system will allow user-friendly access to data analysis and reporting systems. Additionally, the Ohio Department of Education will support the effective delivery of the new Instructional Improvement System.

In accordance with recent Ohio law, all districts and community schools will use annual performance reviews for teachers and principals built around direct observation and data-related information that includes student growth. As educator effectiveness is improved, Ohio's target of all students being college- or career-ready will be better supported.

The Resident Educator program also will be carried forward, including state support for local program implementation, mentor training, and the maintenance and updating of the platform used to submit and score the

Resident Educator Summative Assessment. The state remains committed to developing a data reporting tool to help districts analyze the equitable distribution of effective and highly effective teachers and principals in classes and buildings with high-need students.

The state also plans to continue providing supports for persistently low-achieving schools that have instituted an innovative improvement model. The Ohio STEM Learning Network will continue to assess and support these schools. Transformation specialists and state support team members will continue to work closely with these districts as well.

Ohio will continue its Year Five work and its efforts to better streamline its delivery processes to best serve the needs of all Ohio school districts. The commitment to improve Ohio's schools is not yet fully realized, but Ohio educators are committed to this work and the long-term goal of making Ohio's one of the best educational systems in the nation.

SUMMARY

Overall, the Race to the Top story in Ohio is positive. RttT schools:

- Boosted graduation rates;
- Improved math and reading skills in some areas;
- Provided training for teachers and administrators;
- Expanded STEM and other advanced coursework for poor, minority and Appalachian students;
- Provided researchers tools to conduct more in-depth analysis of Ohio's schools; and
- Improved their Performance Index scores.

While the initial vision for school improvement has now been implemented in many different ways, the work is not complete. Much has been accomplished, but there were several targets that were not achieved. Additional work will be needed in these areas, and Ohio is well positioned and committed to making future improvements.