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8 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PLANNING WORKSHOP

9 RACE TO THE TOP

10 APRIL 21ST, 2010

11 MILLENNIUM HOTEL

12 1313 NICOLLET MALL

13 FORUM BALLROOM

14 MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA 55403

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5 ED Team Introductions

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7 Joanne Weiss, Director, Race to the Top
Program

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9 Josh Bendor, Race to the Top Team

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Jessica Clark, Office of Elementary and
Secondary Education

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Meredith Farace, Office of Elementary and
Secondary Education

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Jane Hess, Office of the General Counsel

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16 Ann Whalen, Special Assistant to the
Secretary

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Jessica McKinney, Office of Elementary and
Secondary Education (and supporting the webinar
participants)

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1 (Whereupon, the proceeding
2 commenced at 8:30 a.m.)

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4 MS. WEISS: I want to begin by
5 welcoming you and a very, very sincere thank
6 you for all the hard work that everybody has
7 done over the past few months.

8 We realize that just huge, huge
9 amounts of effort went into putting together
10 your application for Phase 1 and that
11 everybody is probably feeling a little
12 exhausted about now. We feel your pain, for
13 whatever that's worth. So, we do understand
14 where everybody's at.

15 But, I think it's also worth
16 saying the secretary really felt that there
17 was more opportunity out there, that there
18 was more we could do on behalf of our
19 nation's kids.

20 And, in a sense, sent us back
21 for some final tweaking and revisions and
22 improvements to the plans that you already
23 have made such a fantastic start with.

24 So, one more set of revisions,
25 hopefully, informed by some good feedback

1 that you have gotten from the peer reviewers,
2 who have really spent many, many hours
3 wrestling with and talking about your
4 applications.

5 As well as from all of the
6 experts that you've all been talking with
7 locally to help you with that work.

8 So, it's in that spirit that we
9 wanted to talk to you today, give you one
10 more set of options to ask the questions that
11 you've got on your mind. And do our best, as
12 a Department, to continue to support your
13 efforts over the next couple of months to get
14 the best applications you can out there.

15 In that regard, you can rest
16 assured that we're all mobilized and really
17 providing rapid response to the questions
18 that you send in. And we will do our best
19 to get you quick, accurate, clear answers to
20 your questions, both today and over the
21 coming few weeks.

22 So, with that, let me just
23 spend a couple minutes talking about what the
24 agenda is for today so that you can see the
25 big picture and how we planned the day for

1 you and then we'll get into content.

2 So, we're going to start the
3 day by talking about the priorities and the
4 selection criteria. Since you have all
5 listened to us contemplate on these for hours
6 and hours at prior meetings, we're going to
7 spare you that today.

8 We, instead, are going to talk
9 about a couple of the lessons that we saw at
10 the Department when we were looking at the
11 Phase 1 applications and outcomes.

12 So, a couple of lessons from
13 our point of view for Phase 1. And then a
14 couple of places in which either the criteria
15 have changed for Phase 2 or -- and these are
16 changes that were in the original NIA, so
17 there's no changes to the document that was
18 originally published.

19 But, in the document, there is
20 one criteria that's different for Phase 2, so
21 we want to highlight that for you.

22 And we also want to talk to you
23 about a couple of places where there was
24 really uneven understanding of how to
25 implement a couple of the criteria and how to

1 talk about it and represent information in
2 your application for the peer reviewers and
3 we want to talk about that, as well.

4 So, we have highlighted a
5 couple of things that we want to talk to you
6 about and we also plan to leave plenty of
7 time in that session for you to ask us any
8 questions that you've got about our
9 criteria.

10 Then, the next few hours are
11 going to be, are going to be occupied mainly
12 by having conversations with the folks from
13 Delaware and from Tennessee.

14 As you know, we, the
15 Department, can't comment on any of your
16 applications, on any of your comments, on any
17 of the specific things that you heard back
18 from peer reviewers about your
19 applications.

20 But we know that you actually
21 have a lot of useful things to say to one
22 another. And we're certainly all allowed to
23 have those conversations.

24 So we thought that perhaps by
25 inviting Tennessee and Delaware to come share

1 with you what they've done, as well as engage
2 in what we hope will be deep conversations
3 and back and forth with all of you, where
4 you're not only asking questions but also
5 sometimes answering them.

6 Because you have a tremendous
7 amount of expertise and a lot of ideas at
8 this point that are going to be worth
9 sharing, that we'll be able to get deeper and
10 really help answer questions for you in a way
11 that you can see what the Department and the
12 panel do.

13 So, that's what the next
14 several hours are going to be. After that,
15 we're going to end with sort of a quick
16 wrap-up on a number of specific things.

17 We want to talk about the
18 budgets with you. There's a lot of reasons
19 why we need the budget to come in for Phase 2
20 to be a little tighter and clearer or more
21 specific than the versions we got in Phase 1
22 because we won't have very much time to
23 actually wrap it up and make awards.

24 We won't have time to go back
25 and forth and ask for a lot of clarification,

1 so we want to be a little bit more specific
2 with you now about what those budgets should
3 look like when you present them in order for
4 us to be able to approve things faster than
5 we can in Phase 1.

6 And we'll also talk to you more
7 about what the peer review process actually
8 looked like. We've gotten a bunch of
9 questions about that from folks and so we
10 want to just sort of walk you through the
11 details of how that worked.

12 We can try to explain, and I
13 know, about the black box, so we thought we'd
14 sort of take you through it a piece at a time
15 and help make sure people understood it.

16 So, that's what we've got on
17 tap for you. The ground rules for today are
18 pretty similar to the ones you know. The
19 first one is please ask your questions as we
20 go.

21 We really encourage this not to
22 be like the way it looks up here, a
23 hand-in-the-air type thing, but an
24 interactive conversation where we're able to
25 take your questions and answer them as we

1 go. There's a bunch of folks from the
2 Department, and maybe you could raise your
3 hands, who are also going to be handling the
4 mics.

5 And why don't you guys grab
6 them, because we should be ready whenever.
7 You don't need to come up here if you've got
8 a question. Just raise your hand and
9 somebody will come up here with a microphone
10 next to you. When you ask a question, please
11 do let us know your name and what State
12 you're from.

13 We are going to give States
14 priority. There are members of the public
15 here, as well. If we have time, we'll
16 certainly take questions from you, but we do
17 want to make sure that the State folks get
18 their questions answered first.

19 And we do have time sort of at
20 the very end of the day when we'll be happy
21 to take questions from everybody. In
22 addition, we wanted to let you know that we
23 have quite a number of people participating
24 today via webinar and we'll be answering
25 their questions with you on the webinar.

1 So if you will ask your
2 questions through your chat window, that will
3 be terrific. And we've got somebody here who
4 will then voice your questions on your behalf
5 and we'll get you into the conversation that
6 way.

7 Please submit any additional
8 questions that you're either not comfortable
9 asking today or that you think of as soon as
10 the meeting is over and you wish you'd
11 asked. Just send them into our mailbox and
12 we will answer them quickly.

13 I think you all know that in
14 addition to answers, if they seem to be just
15 sort of general common questions, we'll post
16 them in our FAQ documents, which we'll
17 continue to update regularly.

18 And in fact, I think there is a
19 new one up today, that just has information
20 about the budget and regulations and some of
21 those things in it.

22 We are doing a lot of
23 timekeeping up here, so you'll hear us
24 talking about how much time we have left for
25 things and we're going to make sure that

1 we're staying on schedule. We do ask that
2 everybody put their cell phones on vibrate.

3 And then I'll remind you that
4 all of this is being transcribed and the
5 questions, and transcription all will be
6 posted on our website, in case sitting
7 through it wasn't enough and you want to go
8 through and read all about it.

9 Okay. A couple of key dates.
10 The first thing is that the intent to apply
11 for Phase 2 is due May 4th. Now, it's
12 optional.

13 In other words, if you send us
14 an intent to apply, it's not binding. It
15 doesn't mean you have to. And if you don't
16 send us an intent to apply, you are still
17 certainly allowed to send us an application.
18 But, all those of you who participated in
19 Phase 1 now know the amount of planning that
20 goes into figuring out how to manage the
21 competition and how many hours we need and
22 how many peer reviewers we need.

23 So, I beg of you, on behalf of
24 your poor civil servant at the Department of
25 Education, to please do let us know by May

1 4th if you intend to apply. That will really
2 helps us enormously as we're trying to plan
3 for the summer.

4 Tier 1 -- the applications are
5 due June 1st at 4:30 p.m., Eastern time, for
6 those of you in different time zones. The
7 Tier 1 part of the competition will happen in
8 June and July. The Tier 2 presentations will
9 be reviewed by August 9th.

10 And the awards will be
11 announced in late August or early September.
12 So, that's the schedule. And with that, let
13 me turn to our team and do some quick
14 introductions of the folks who are up here
15 answering your questions and participating in
16 the presentations today.

17 MS. WHALEN: Ann Whalen, Office
18 of the Secretary.

19 MS. HESS: Jane Hess, Office of
20 the General Counsel.

21 MR. BENDOR: Josh Bendor, Race
22 to the Top Team.

23 MS. FARACE: Meredith Farace,
24 Office Elementary and Secondary Education.

25 MS. CLARK: Jessica Clark,

1 Office of Elementary and Secondary Education.

2 MS. WEISS: I'm Joanne Weiss.

3 I am the director for the Race to the Top

4 Program. So, with that, let me launch into

5 our next section. But let me just first

6 pause and see if anybody's got any questions

7 about the agenda or the flow of the day. Or

8 something that you thought we were covering

9 but you don't see up here and you would like

10 us to address.

11 PARTICIPANTS: (No response).

12 MS. WEISS: Okay. We want you

13 to raise your hands pretty soon and break the

14 silence.

15 PARTICIPANTS: (No response).

16 MS. WEISS: Okay. So, we're

17 going to start with understanding the

18 priorities and the selection criteria. And

19 what we want to start with, as I said, are

20 lessons from Phase 1. Then we're going to

21 talk about specific issues in the criteria

22 that we wanted to clarify for you.

23 We also plan to leave at least

24 half an hour at the end for the questions

25 that you guys have about the criteria or

1 priorities themselves -
2 things that either you're
3 confused about when you were filling in your
4 Phase 1 applications or things that you
5 thought you understood but now you're not
6 totally sure if you understand it right. So
7 you'll have an open time to ask questions
8 about any part of the application. This
9 would be your time to do that.

10 Because after this, we're
11 really moving more into process, content,
12 ideas and we'll get a little bit more away
13 from the facts of the application and into
14 the ideas behind it. Okay. Can you click
15 it?

16 REPORTER'S NOTE:

17 [Inaudible side conversation
18 regarding advancing the slides].

19 MS. WEISS: Oh. Okay. Back to
20 life. Okay. Terrific. So, the first thing
21 that we noted when we were looking through
22 the high-scoring applications, one of the
23 things that we worried about was when we said
24 here's the State that -- here's the kinds of
25 things that they did, we were worried just in

1 the aspect of thinking about this problem,
2 and you know, what these States did.

3 And they maybe sound sort of
4 like Mom, apple pie, and that it was going to
5 come out and you're sitting around and
6 saying, "Well, I did that, too. I did that,
7 too. I don't get it."

8 And when we actually dove
9 deeper into the Tennessee and Delaware
10 applications, the truth was that both of
11 those applications were very, very content
12 specific.

13 They built very deeply off
14 specific strengths that they had in their
15 State and were now taking to scale statewide
16 or trying to replicate.

17 So, the first thing is I know
18 there's a lot of people out there who sort of
19 covered their reform ideas and certainly
20 the marketplace of ideas is a great thing for
21 education.

22 But, the one thing that we
23 wanted to say was, that from where we're
24 sitting, it looks like building from your
25 strengths, building from your core assets,

1 building from what you know is sort of one of
2 the key messages of this, rather than
3 grabbing for whatever the du jour idea is
4 that is floating out there in the
5 marketplace.

6 This is not to say that some
7 combination of what we're already doing can't be
8 enhanced, but the bright ideas you hear might not be
9 exactly the right thing for your State. But,
10 we do think that it's important to sort of
11 look deep first.

12 So, look at the high performing
13 districts, the high performing charters in
14 your State to see what they're doing right
15 and what's worth replicating. Look to the
16 universities and the nonprofits for help in
17 evaluation or for their thoughts on what
18 programs might be worth replicating.

19 And certainly, in a lot of
20 places, the local foundation and business
21 communities and advocacy groups were huge as
22 partners in helping everybody at the table to
23 focus on what they thought mattered and would
24 work in their States. So, we just want to
25 make sure that everybody's working from their

1 strength and not just counting the people
2 that you've got at your table.

3 Also, it's our hope, I guess,
4 that building on these kinds of relationships
5 and cementing these assets is also going to
6 help you go forward as you start working to
7 implement the plans.

8 And then having that sort of
9 deep base of people in your State who
10 understand they are committed to doing the
11 reform efforts that you put forward,
12 executing the plans with you, is going to be
13 a good thing. Which leads us to the fact
14 that implementation mattered a lot in this
15 contest.

16 So, the reviewers were looking
17 for information to determine if the plans
18 were high quality and they felt they were
19 going to be successful.

20 And they thought it was maybe
21 worth reviewing with you the application in
22 here, that described what our high quality
23 plan looks like because this is, there's been
24 a lot of talk in the press, I think, about
25 the, sort of the subjective nature of what

1 high quality plans look like.

2 And obviously, there is a
3 tremendous amount of discretion that we ask
4 our reviewers to exercise. There's no
5 question about that. But, we do in the
6 application, have a specific set of things
7 that we describe, that a high quality plan is
8 including and they are things that you see up
9 here.

10 There key goals is what
11 you're trying to accomplish. There are key
12 activities and also a rationale for how those
13 activities are going to bring about the
14 change that you've described in your goal.

15 So, a sort of a little mini
16 theory of action, how the things you do are
17 going to actually lead to the change that you
18 have described and the goals that you've set
19 and the outcomes that you put on paper.

20 Then, a specific time line.
21 Specific people or teams who are responsible
22 for the implementation. Performance measures
23 that tell us whether you are on the way to
24 accomplishing those goals. Some specific
25 measures that you put in place.

1 And then the last thing,
2 evidence, where applicable, to help the peer
3 reviewers judge the credibility of your
4 plan. Now, this is a tricky one because
5 people put forward all different kinds of
6 evidence and clearly this is a place where
7 there is a lot of judgment that was exercised
8 by the peer reviewers.

9 One thing I will say is that,
10 when we first put this notice together, and
11 you may remember that we have two types of
12 criteria, the State conditions
13 criteria and the reform plans.

14 I think we were thinking at the
15 Department that the conditions were like
16 where a lot of the laws or infrastructure
17 work to be done. And then the plans are
18 more, okay, now what are we going to do with
19 the money?

20 It turned out that a lot of the
21 really good applications did a lot of legal
22 infrastructure work around the plan itself,
23 as well. So, I would say, actually, in both
24 Tennessee's and Delaware's cases, they
25 changed a lot of laws that actually

1 strengthened their plans.

2 It made their plans more
3 credible because now some of the things they
4 were trying to do were in law in the State
5 and, therefore, de facto the credibility
6 level of that plan, whether they were going
7 to execute against it, went right up for
8 the peer reviewers.

9 So, I guess I would urge you to
10 think about credibility in the sort of a
11 broad way as to how can I convince the
12 reviewers that we've actually got the will
13 and the capacity to implement these plans.
14 And there's all different kinds of vehicles,
15 clearly, that you can use as part of that
16 evidence base.

17 REPORTER'S NOTE:

18 [Inaudible side
19 conversation].

20 MS. WEISS: Question? Sure.

21 Speak into the microphone.

22 MR. GRIMSEY: Thank you.

23 Robert Grimesey, Virginia. You cite an
24 example of how a State might do that if the
25 legislature is not going to meet between now

1 and the time of the application's
2 submission. Are you wasting your time?

3 MS. WEISS: Are you wasting
4 your time? No --

5 MR. GRIMESEY: -- if there are
6 laws that need to be changed. To what extent
7 do the laws have to already be changed? To
8 what extent does there have to be a bill?
9 So, just a little bit more specifics.

10 MS. WEISS: No, I mean, really,
11 there's no rule for any of this. This is
12 really about what are the plans you're trying
13 to accomplish in your State. And what are
14 the ways that you can ensure or lend
15 credibility to the fact that you will
16 actually be able to it.

17 In some cases, changing the
18 laws aren't even relevant or applicable, so I
19 was simply giving one example. There's no
20 requirement at all, in the fact, on the way it
21 should be done.

22 In a lot of cases that's
23 probably not the right way to do it. It's
24 just one tool in the tool kit that I
25 personally learned from the applications, as

1 opposed to knowing that before we saw the
2 applications and we wanted to share some of that
3 with you.

4 MS. (INAUDIBLE): (Inaudible),
5 North Carolina. What are the recommendations
6 about how you would cite laws for which you
7 already had in place. So the agreement of
8 the plan.

9 MS. WEISS: Yeah. I mean, this
10 is not only about passing new laws. This is
11 about building on what we have already got
12 and there's a lot of places where there's
13 good infrastructure already in place to do
14 it.

15 And we just have to say that
16 there's nothing in any of these documents
17 that scores for recency. It's not about
18 yesterday, did I pass a law? It's about do I
19 have the infrastructure to support the work
20 that's needed?

21 Okay. Key differentiators.
22 I've just in the last days started seeing
23 more of this coming out from some of the
24 press. But, there were big differentiators
25 between finalists and nonfinalists, in three

1 areas in particular, and we wanted to call
2 your attention to these.

3 Because, interestingly, these
4 three areas, teachers and leaders state success factors

5 and school turnarounds sort of

6 traveled in the applications as a trio. In
7 other words, if you did great in one section,
8 you probably did really well in the other
9 two.

10 So they were very, very highly
11 correlated in terms of the accord. And this
12 is true across all the applications and they
13 were the big determinators between the
14 finalists and the nonfinalists.

15 So, you can see here then, the
16 Great Teachers and Leaders, Section D,
17 finalists scored on average 33 points higher
18 than nonfinalists. Which was, as you know,
19 key in this competition. State Success
20 Factors, finalists score 23 points higher.

21 And in Turning around the
22 Lowest-Achieving Schools, finalists scored 15
23 points higher. So, these are the three
24 places to watch carefully because they did
25 tend to be the places where, in general, if

1 you have sort of high capacity for thinking
2 through these reforms, we're not quite sure
3 why, maybe they are sort of -- they're,
4 they're interrelated, but they may all just
5 be sort of the complex core of the hardest
6 part of doing education reform.

7 And if you kind of engage
8 deeply and try to do things right you're
9 probably doing it across the board.

10 So, we're not totally sure what
11 it means, but wanted to share with you that
12 these are three places to definitely spend
13 your time with those comments and take a deep
14 look at what you have done and what the peer
15 reviewers said because they tended to be very
16 discriminating.

17 Okay. A couple of other
18 observations. This first one that, you're
19 going to hear this refrain today from a whole
20 bunch of us throughout our presentation. So,
21 pardon the repetition, but it's a really
22 important one, which is be clear and be
23 concise.

24 Make it as easy as possible for
25 reviewers to really understand what you're

1 trying to say. The jargon, the buzz words,
2 the acronyms kind of got in the way
3 sometimes.

4 There were plans that I think
5 were sort of purposefully vague because
6 people were trying to, I don't know, were
7 just purposefully vague and the reviewers
8 just kind of went, "I don't know what to do
9 with this." So, the more clear and concise
10 you can be.

11 Also, you'll hear this again,
12 short is better than long. They're reading a
13 lot of stuff and they get really excited when
14 they open a notebook that's this thick
15 (indicating), instead of this thick
16 (indicating).

17 Second, be honest and
18 forthright. You'll see there that you've got
19 some quotes from, or comments coming later
20 on, where they really liked it when States
21 said, "Here's what we've tried in the past
22 and it didn't work."

23 Or, "We can't really do this
24 even though we did it and here's the
25 situation in our State and here's how we're

1 going to sort of manage our way through it."

2 So, being honest with no false roadblocks

3 actually increased the credibility, in

4 general, of the applications.

5 The next thing are these

6 performance measures and, again generally,

7 we're going to talk a little bit more about

8 those later on, as well. But explaining how

9 you arrived at your ambitious yet achievable

10 performance measures was very helpful for our

11 reviewers.

12 The reviewers were really

13 weighing this ambitious and achievable thing.

14 A lot of people ended up with performance

15 measures at year four that were 100 percent

16 thinking that was the right answer.

17 And the peer reviewers were

18 like, "Ha. It's not possible. I don't

19 believe it." So, really, they are looking

20 for things that were ambitious, but

21 achievable.

22 And using your narrative to

23 explain how you thought it through and why

24 you thought these were the right steps to

25 take along this four-year trajectory in order

1 to arrive at this particular outcome by year
2 four.

3 The other thing to remember is
4 that these performance measures that you put
5 in your plan are actually part of what
6 triggers your ability to draw that from the
7 future. Meeting those things is going to
8 make it much easier for you to access
9 out-year funds. So, think about that. You
10 really want to have numbers that you are able
11 to get within spitting distance of.

12 Because it is not... I'm not
13 saying this in order to have people water
14 down their plans because, obviously, that's
15 not a winning proposition either. But think
16 about it as something that's realistic that
17 you're going to be accountable for.

18 And really think through how
19 you're going to do it and explain for the
20 reviewers why you think it's the right set of
21 numbers and how you're going to get there.
22 Okay.

23 So, now a few things that we
24 wanted to talk to you about that you have
25 seen in the media. Our favorite headline is,

1 "This competition was all about," and then
2 goes on to give you the most important thing,
3 that everybody lost because they didn't do
4 blah.

5 And I know you all know this,
6 so I'm kind of preaching to the choir, but we
7 kind of feel a need to say publicly as much
8 as we can here, there is no most important
9 thing. This was a broad, coherent, complex
10 set of reform agendas. And doing reform
11 against such a broad set of items at once is
12 necessarily complex.

13 There is no silver bullet.
14 There's no silver bullet in education, and
15 there's no silver bullet in this competition
16 either. There were a lot of different
17 factors in this competition that are called
18 criteria. There were a lot of different
19 factors that mattered. The scoring was
20 complex.

21 And we felt it was necessarily
22 complex because it was trying to reflect the
23 complexity of the work that you're all trying
24 to do out there and the reality on the ground
25 of what you're facing. So, as you're

1 reapplying, definitely look at the scores and
2 comments more than the media's talking about
3 your scores and comments.

4 We do expect, in Phase 2, that
5 there will be some States who are able to
6 really leap frog up in the competition and
7 the competition will be even tighter than it
8 was in Phase 1.

9 So, certainly, looking across
10 the whole competition, every point, I think,
11 will matter in entering the second phase.
12 So, now we wanted to talk even more
13 specifically about some of the stuff, some of
14 the
15 what-is-the-one-thing-that-mattered-the-most
16 stuff that you've seen in the media and just
17 do some fact-checking with you guys.

18 Because you're the ones who
19 have to actually make the decisions about
20 what you're putting in to your proposals and
21 what process you're going to go through with
22 your LEAs and your unions over the next few
23 weeks, and what matters and what doesn't and
24 how to think about this.

25 Again, all those decisions,

1 ultimately, are going to be very tactical
2 decisions that you're going to need to make
3 in your own States in ways that work best to
4 account for the facts on the ground.

5 We just wanted to talk about
6 the facts in the competition and make sure
7 that you're all doing the math right, because
8 the media isn't.

9 The first thing is, that 100
10 percent union support matters, is something
11 that you've read a lot in the media and we
12 want to sort of walk you through how the math
13 for this works.

14 So, the first thing is broad
15 reform and bold stakeholder support
16 definitely is a winning combination. So, if
17 you can have the best of both worlds, that's
18 fabulous. That's a winning combination.

19 But watered-down reform,
20 together with broad stakeholder support, is
21 most certainly not a winning combination and
22 I'll walk you through the points in a second
23 and show you that broad, bold reform matters
24 a lot in this competition. It's where most
25 of the points are.

1 So, the way that this works is
2 that the competition was really balanced
3 across three interrelated factors: How
4 bold were your reforms? Were you going to be
5 able to implement these bold reforms? That
6 question was are LEAs and unions on board to
7 actually do the work that you're talking
8 about in your plan?

9 And are you doing it across
10 enough LEAs, or are enough LEAs on board, so
11 that you'll be able to move statewide. So,
12 now let's just take this apart for effect and
13 you do the math.

14 So the reform criteria in the
15 competition earned 240 points. So, I
16 probably don't need to say another word
17 because you realize, okay, that's where the
18 bulk of the points lie.

19 Remember, a lot of the other
20 stuff that we're not talking about are the
21 conditions, plans, just sort of the, the, the
22 state of your existing data systems; the
23 state of your existing laws in terms of
24 that.

25 And so that's the other 260

1 points and sort of the broad way that the
2 competition fell. But, in terms of the plans
3 and the support for your plans, reforms are
4 240 points.

5 Then, the next thing, that will
6 be implemented so that unions and LEAs are on
7 board. This one was worth 45... is worth 45
8 points and it's a pretty complicated one. It
9 is not like a formula-driven thing, where the
10 reviewers are looking for specific percentage
11 of LEA support or union support.

12 Reviewers were asked to make
13 judgment on three things as they awarded
14 those 45 points in total. First was the
15 strength of your MOUs, the terms and
16 conditions that you had put forward in your
17 agreements with your LEAs.

18 And we're going to talk more
19 about this in a second. But, like the
20 conditional, that's how you are sort of
21 enrolling people, especially in States with
22 unions and States with collective bargaining
23 agreements those kinds of things. So, what
24 was the strength of those MOUs?

25 The second piece was were the

1 LEAs enough to implement all or a significant
2 portion of your plan, as much of your plan as
3 was committed to the plan? And the third
4 thing was who -- signatures demonstrating
5 that the LEAs and union leaders really were
6 supporting the plans.

7 So there were three things:
8 The MOU terms and conditions, the MOU scope
9 of work and the MOU signature block. Those
10 three things together, reviewers were asked
11 to look at to get a sense of their confidence
12 that this plan would be implemented as you
13 specified in your application.

14 Then the third piece was, not
15 how many LEAs did you enroll. This was worth
16 15 points. And were you enrolling enough
17 LEAs to move the needle statewide. This, too,
18 is not a formula-driven thing. It's not like
19 there was a specific magic number.

20 They looked at how broad your
21 support was among LEAs, what percentage of
22 your State LEAs, students, and students in
23 poverty were signed up to participate,
24 together with your whole narrative explaining
25 why this was a group that would move the

1 State scores forward over the course of four
2 years.

3 So, that's the complex analysis
4 they were doing with these different points
5 that they had. In addition, there was a
6 separate ten points that was for broad
7 stakeholder support. Ten points. That was
8 split between unions, statewide teacher
9 associations or unions and other
10 stakeholders.

11 So, that's the reality of how
12 the numbers work here, which leads me to the
13 same thing, will I need 100 percent LEA
14 participation? No. It's a much more complex
15 thing than that.

16 A hundred percent LEA
17 participation presumably would do a great job
18 of earning you all 15 of those points if the
19 reviewers believe that these LEAs were deeply
20 committed to the action of doing the work. But
21 it doesn't have to be 100 percent at all.

22 In fact, we've had some States
23 that scored really high with less than 50
24 percent of the students in their States
25 represented by the LEAs that had committed to

1 participating.

2 So, I think both the numbers
3 and the way the math works, as well as the
4 actual results of the competition provide
5 both of these things that given, that could
6 be latched on to as silver bullets. And so,
7 before I move off this, let me just check and
8 see whether there is any questions that you
9 guys have about this.

10 MS. MARTIN: Hi, this is Rayne
11 Martin from Louisiana. My question is more
12 around how you guys are defining statewide
13 impact to the reviewers.

14 The way you just laid it out
15 makes it sound like it's about the
16 participating LEAs and how many of them. And
17 we actually kind of debated was it really
18 about the number that came in, or was it
19 about actually being able to make a case
20 about those numbers and how those numbers
21 would ultimately translate into statewide
22 impact?

23 MS. WEISS: It's the latter.

24 MS. MARTIN: Okay.

25 MS. WEISS: It's what you said

1 second. It's here's the group and this group
2 can move the needle statewide for us
3 because...

4 MS. MARTIN: Thank you.

5 MS. SEAGREN: Hi, I'm Alice
6 Seagren, Commissioner of Education, from the
7 State of Minnesota. Just a comment --

8 MS. WEISS: -- thank you for
9 having us here.

10 MS. SEAGREN: You're welcome.

11 And thank you that we didn't have to travel
12 really far. But thank you for coming. Just
13 a follow-up on the question on, that you said
14 the latter definition of what we were looking
15 for.

16 You know, we looked at the
17 numbers of LEAs that had large portions of
18 (inaudible) students in them. And one that
19 we felt that if we could, you know, work on,
20 because we felt like the application really
21 was about that achievement.

22 MS. WEISS: (Indicating).

23 MS. SEAGREN: And all of the
24 strategies were focused on moving the needle
25 in that way. So, we didn't have huge numbers

1 of union members and counseling. But where
2 we did have it was in our critical kinds of
3 schools.

4 And we felt if we could start
5 to make a difference in those and work very
6 intensely with them, then this would impact
7 on the State. Because we also know that we
8 have children all over the State that would
9 be impacted by this strategy that would be
10 implemented over the four years.

11 Yet, the reviewers really --
12 and I know I'm not going to have you comment,
13 Joanne, on that comment on our application.
14 I know you've been through that. But, it's
15 just that point is it sort of intention
16 about, you know, what are we looking for. So
17 I'm glad to hear that that is appropriate.

18 MS. WEISS: So, that is the
19 focus. I will say that it's important in
20 the... So there's the numbers and there's the
21 narrative.

22 And if you want the numbers to
23 make sense to the reader, I would have you be
24 the one interpreting how they should think
25 about those, definitely make sure that your

1 narrative is putting forward a very clear,
2 concise, persuasive case for how you're
3 connecting those dots.

4 MS. (INAUDIBLE): From South
5 Carolina. I have a question about the union
6 participation. Our State does not have
7 unions and we have a very small percentage of
8 teachers who belong to associations, teacher
9 associations.

10 So, we're trying to deal with
11 the teaching profession as a whole. We don't
12 have an organizational structure to -- local
13 unions and that type of thing, to show their
14 support. Do you have any suggestions for
15 States like ours?

16 MS. WEISS: Focus how to show
17 the level of teacher support? Is that what
18 you're asking?

19 MS. (INAUDIBLE): Yes.

20 MS. WEISS: Yes, if they don't
21 sign an agreement and, you know, and those
22 things. Yeah, I think there's all kinds of
23 ways to do that. It's probably not my role
24 up here to give you specific suggestions.

25 But I do think, in general,

1 that finding other ways, letters of support,
2 surveys, things that you have done and can
3 bring into evidence, some data to show the
4 level of support and commitment that you have
5 by the teachers, since they don't have union
6 representation, is certainly not a bad thing
7 to do for your applications.

8 MR. DOUGHERTY: Good morning.
9 Thank you. Will Phase 1 letters --

10 MS. WEISS: -- sorry. State
11 your name and State.

12 MR. DOUGHERTY: Good morning,
13 Michael Dougherty from Ohio. Will Phase 1
14 letters of support be accepted for Phase 2
15 applications? Or do we need to ask all of
16 our stakeholders to resubmit letters to Phase
17 2?

18 MS. WEISS: We're going to talk
19 about this in a minute related to the MOUs.
20 But it's a good question relating to the
21 letters of support, as well.

22 You know, if the letter of
23 support says, "I support the Phase 1
24 application and only the Phase 1
25 application," I think you probably might want

1 to go get another one that would be
2 essentially supporting the general plan and
3 direction that you're thinking. I think
4 there's no need to go get a whole new set of
5 them.

6 MR. DOUGHERTY: Thank you very
7 much.

8 MS. WEISS: Okay. So, was
9 there -- did you have a question?

10 PARTICIPANTS: (No response).

11 MS. WEISS: Okay. So the next
12 thing that we wanted to just take head-on
13 with you guys, that we've been seeing in the
14 media, is the judging question. Soviet
15 judges and outliers and such.

16 You know, when we had the
17 webinar or the conference call with you guys
18 right after the Phase 1 winners were
19 announced, and we had a call that probably
20 many of you were on...

21 I can't remember who it was...
22 you're probably sitting in this room, asked
23 us to actually go back and do the analysis
24 and look at this and come back and tell you
25 what we found. So, we did that and wanted to

1 tell you what we did and how we did it and
2 what we found.

3 Because we do have -- because
4 we're releasing the names of the reviewers,
5 but we're not connecting the reviewers to the
6 individual applications, you can't do the
7 same level of analysis that we can do on who,
8 on the judges outliers, agendas and anything
9 like that that people might be concerned
10 about in our judging pool.

11 So, let me tell you what we
12 did. We took every single peer reviewer and
13 we looked at the distance between the score
14 that peer viewer gave and the final score
15 that that application got, the average of the
16 peer reviewers for that State.

17 So, it looked at the distance
18 between that applicant, between that judge
19 and the totals. And we did that across all
20 of that person's States. To get an average
21 for each judge of, on balance, is this a hard
22 judge or an easy judge. Okay?

23 Then, we took that number and
24 said, and looked across an application, a
25 State. So, for Ohio, say we took all of

1 these five people who judged Ohio, we took
2 their score for are they easy or hard and
3 averaged them to see whether a State had a
4 general easy or a hard panel. Okay?

5 So, that was the first thing
6 that we did. We talk about outliers in a
7 second in the next slide. And what we found,
8 as you might imagine, is there are easy and
9 hard scorers.

10 So, there were some people who
11 are easier and harder than other people,
12 which is not a surprise. But, there was no
13 relationship between State's score and the
14 average strictness of its panel of
15 reviewers. So, for example, high scoring
16 States did not have panels composed of easy
17 reviewers.

18 In fact, Delaware had one of
19 the panels with the hardest scorers of any
20 State. So, there was really no correlation,
21 there was no correlation between how easy or
22 hard your panel was and what your score ended
23 up being. So, the panels didn't skew
24 anything.

25 Similarly, low scoring States

1 did not have panels comprised of hard
2 scorers. So, the easiest panels were on some
3 of the lowest scoring States in the
4 competition. States that were in the bottom
5 half of the competition had some of the
6 hardest panels and some of the easiest panels.

7 So, that's the first analysis
8 we did. Then, the second analysis we did was
9 looking at outliers. As you know, there were
10 some panels that agreed pretty tightly on the
11 quality of the State's application and there
12 were other panels where peer reviewers had
13 wide divergence in how they reviewed a
14 particular application.

15 So what we did is we laid out
16 all of these scores individually by State and
17 we put the names of the reviewers on every
18 single dot, if you will, in the chart. And
19 for all the low scoring outliers, there was
20 not one peer reviewer's name that was
21 repeated.

22 So, in other words, there's no
23 overlap. There's no one person who's
24 consistently the low scorer anywhere. There
25 was one person who was a high scorer on two

1 applications. So, there was a little
2 repeating on the high outliers and there was
3 no repeating on the low outliers.

4 So, in other words, there's no
5 one judge who came in with what we might,
6 what we could see in the numbers to be an
7 agenda or whatever and was doing anything in
8 the competition.

9 We do think that the
10 applications themselves were sometimes -- I
11 mean, there was, as we have already said, a
12 lot of judgment involved in scoring these
13 applications. I mean, there's a lot in
14 writing them.

15 And certainly you can hit
16 yourself in the shins as a reviewer that, in
17 judging them, there is a lot of judgment
18 involved in this process. And reasonable
19 people who are experts are not going to see
20 it the same way or not going to agree.

21 And I dare say, in some cases,
22 the person who was the low scorer or the high
23 scoring, "outlier", might be the person that
24 you actually agree with.

25 So, we are very loathe to even

1 consider a notion of throwing out those
2 scores, we think they were very, very
3 valuable information to contribute to this
4 conversation.

5 And should we, in any way,
6 indicate that their points of view don't
7 matter, we think it could just put a chill on
8 the conversation that the peer reviewers are
9 having that we think are really valuable
10 conversations and oft times resulted in a
11 bunch of people stating how they thought
12 about things.

13 And that person who maybe
14 started as an outlier, by the time the
15 conversation was over, was no longer an
16 outlier. And that is the nature of this peer
17 review process.

18 So, I think we walked away
19 satisfied that we need to continue the
20 process of sort of averaging all five
21 together to get the best representation of
22 what that application looked like and that
23 there was no particular systemic problem that
24 we could find in how all of this worked out.

25 So, I just want to assure you

1 that we had done that analysis, and it doesn't
2 necessarily mean that there aren't individual
3 peer reviewers who, for a variety of reasons,
4 we might or might not choose to invite back
5 for Phase 2. And this could be one of the
6 things that we consider.

7 But, man, there just weren't
8 many. In general, they did a pretty stellar
9 job, we think, of this competition from what
10 all the statistical analysis we could do
11 showed us. So, we'll see with that, if
12 there's any other...

13 MS. FLACHBART: Hi, I'm
14 Marybeth Flachbart from Idaho. And I just
15 had a question. On average how many reviews
16 the peer reviewers do because of the
17 requirement of the judging. We're used to
18 [being called] Iowa. One of those peer reviewers
19 called us Ohio. And so we had some concerns
20 that we had lost them.

21 MS. WEISS: Oops. So, peer
22 reviewers, in general, review four or five
23 applications. A couple reviewed fewer than
24 that. There were a couple who only had two
25 applications. But most reviewed four or five

1 applications.

2 One of the things that we are
3 looking at for Phase 2 is having fewer
4 applications per reviewer. When we first put
5 this -- and this is one of the other things
6 with Phase 1, we had no idea what we were
7 getting in from you guys.

8 And we had to select peer
9 reviewers and lock in all of our numbers in
10 the absence of seeing how large those items
11 were going to be. So everybody, I think, in
12 Phase 1, peer reviewers did a real nice job.

13 As you'll see later on in the
14 presentation, Jessica is going to sort of
15 walk you through what the process was and how
16 they did it and how many hours they spent on
17 one so that you'll see it. But I just think,
18 in Phase 2, we're looking at having fewer
19 applications per peer. You may have already
20 been...

21 MS. DICKSON: Sydnee Dickson
22 from Utah. We really appreciated all of the
23 great feedback from the reviewers.

24 REPORTER'S NOTE:

25 [Inaudible side

1 conversation].

2 MS. DICKSON: We appreciated
3 the great feedback that helped us clarify --
4 excuse me -- we got choked up over this.
5 (Laughing). We got choked up when we went
6 through it. It really helped clarify for us what
7 we needed to be doing. So, I just wanted get
8 that appreciation to your Department to make
9 sure that we got a very clear, concise
10 feedback.

11 However, having said that, we
12 were going to one of these, 137 points due to
13 outliers and I know our colleagues did, as
14 well. I think you mentioned one strategy,
15 one of the strategies that you mentioned was
16 inter-rater reliability.

17 MS. WEISS: We are going to
18 talk about that later. We're going to do --
19 we're going to talk to you a little bit later
20 on about some of the different kinds of
21 training that we're going to do in Phase 2.

22 We have a great benefit for
23 Phase 2, which is we have real applications
24 and your comments from Phase 1 that we can
25 use for training. And so that's going to

1 allow us to do training that's not
2 theoretical, that's really grounded in
3 reality. That will also help a lot.

4 MR. UNDERWOOD: Steve Underwood
5 from Idaho. And I, again, thank you for the
6 great --

7 MS. WEISS: -- you mean Ohio? [laughter]

8 MR. UNDERWOOD: Yes. My
9 question is, if I remember correctly, it was
10 one person that had done district level
11 intervention and I might be wrong about that.

12 MS. WEISS: That was, I think,
13 one, yes. Reviewers came from all over the
14 place.

15 MR. UNDERWOOD: Okay. Now,
16 using this kind of -- well, one gave us full
17 points and the other four gave us zero. And
18 I just wanted to ask, is there going to be
19 geographical representation, or would you
20 more strongly consider? For example, again,
21 with the outliers and so forth.

22 Now this was -- so, we
23 translated instead of the -- instead of just
24 four intervention models, we've done district
25 level intervention as our kind of process.

1 And so one reviewer out of the
2 five gave us full points for that and the
3 other four gave us zero. And so, it's just
4 context matters. So is there going to be
5 anything like that in the second process?

6 MS. WEISS: So, we certainly do
7 look at geography as one of the things that
8 we're looking at as we... in our, sort of,
9 spectrum of peer reviewers. They are then
10 randomly assigned to States, though. We
11 don't match geography.

12 We don't do any of that and we
13 shouldn't. So, they're randomly assigned to
14 States, so that means that I would say be
15 very clear in your narratives, if there's
16 context somebody needs. I mean, these people
17 are education experts.

18 They do get education and they
19 get the different education context around
20 the country. But, if there's something
21 that's specific to your context, be sure you
22 put it in the application narrative and don't
23 assume that your reviewer will know the
24 details of your context that are needed in
25 order to understand a particular part of your

1 application. Yeah. Let's do one more and
2 then...

3 MS. EDENFIELD: Hi, this is
4 Holly Edenfield from Florida. Some of the
5 finalists only had four of their five
6 reviewers judge the presentation, the Tier 2
7 presentation.

8 And their Tier 1 score was
9 duplicated and then all five scores were
10 averaged for Tier 2. Is that the same
11 process that would be followed for Tier 2 of
12 Phase 2?

13 MS. WEISS: Yes. What Holly is
14 saying is, if a particular peer reviewer was
15 sick or otherwise unable to show up for the
16 Tier 2 presentation, the process said that
17 their score from Tier 1 just went through to
18 the end of the competition, rather than
19 eliminating them totally and only averaging
20 across four.

21 So, that is the way the
22 competition process works and will work in
23 Phase 2, as well. Yeah.

24 Okay. So, the last thing, you
25 can tell I've got the fun job of coming up

1 front and talking about all the issues
2 first to get them on the table. We don't
3 want any elephants in the room for the rest
4 of the day. We want all of this to be sort
5 of stuff that we can all talk about. And so
6 the last one is the budget caps.

7 I think we might have talked
8 this one to death, so I'm not going to
9 belabor it. Just a couple of quick words.
10 We really did put these budget caps in place
11 because there was such gigantic disparity in
12 what we saw in Phase 1 applications in terms
13 of the amount of money people were asking for
14 and therefore, the level of ambition and work
15 behind the plans.

16 And in addition, without the
17 caps for Phase 2, we really felt like we were
18 going to have to deny funding to too many
19 really extraordinary proposals that deserved
20 funding.

21 So, the Secretary really
22 decided that it was in the best interest of
23 more kids in this country to be able to
24 benefit from this funding and, therefore, to
25 cap the scores -- I mean, cap the awards.

1 And I think you all know this,
2 but the caps are the same as the ones that
3 were published as suggestions in the NIA.
4 The chart's up here. You've got them in a
5 whole bunch of different places. And let me
6 see if there is any questions about this
7 before we move on.

8 PARTICIPANTS: (No response).

9 MS. WEISS: Okay. So, now
10 we're going to move into some of the
11 criteria. And I'm going to just handle the
12 first set of criteria and then Josh, you will
13 be relieved from listening to me drone on any
14 further, and Josh is going to come up and
15 handle the rest of this section.

16 So, the first thing that we
17 wanted to talk about was, it's sort of back
18 to the union questions for a few moments,
19 because there was one set of guidance and we
20 didn't issue this guidance until after the TA
21 workshops that we had because it came out as
22 a result of questions that you guys had asked
23 in the TA workshops.

24 So, it's something that was in
25 our FAQs. I think we talked about it in our

1 conference calls. But most States didn't
2 implement this part of the guidance properly,
3 so we wanted to just sort of go through a bit
4 of a training exercise with you and maybe
5 even anchor it in some real examples for you
6 to make it clear how this should work.

7 So, this is the case that says
8 if you've got an MOU that is conditional on
9 collective bargaining agreements or other
10 things, how do you show that, in your
11 application, to the peer reviewers.

12 So, let me walk you through
13 this. First -- oh, whoops. I've got a slide
14 ahead of myself. Let me walk you through
15 this and then I'll go back and talk about
16 MOUs and whether you need to reissue them.

17 So, here's what the guidance
18 requires. If some or all of your State's
19 participating LEAs need to modify collective
20 bargaining agreements before they can commit
21 to implementing certain parts of your plan.

22 Okay?

23 Then, you can draft an MOU in a
24 way that reflects conditional commitment to
25 implement specific plans pending changes to

1 collective bargaining agreements. You all
2 got that part; right?

3 But then, the next part is you
4 cannot count those LEAs as fully
5 participating in those elements of the reform
6 plan. So, there's a detailed table that's
7 evidence for A1, for Section A1.

8 And what we had said to you
9 was, and I'll show you a picture of the
10 table in a second, what we had said to you
11 was, in our original guidance, if
12 participation is conditional on collective
13 bargaining agreements changing, mark, "No."

14 No one clearly liked that
15 guidance, so we made up a new rule.
16 Mark, "C", for, "Conditional"; so now you can
17 have yes, conditional, and no. And it's this
18 table (indicating) that we're talking about.

19 So, this is the detail table for A1. Each
20 row here is an LEA.

21 And you're filling in LEA
22 demographics. You're telling us yes or no
23 whether the signature is on the signature
24 block for that MOU. Whether you have changed
25 the terms and conditions from your standard

1 one. And you'll have explained that
2 elsewhere if there's a, "Yes," for this one.

3 And then, for each of the
4 reform plans that you have proposed, you're
5 saying yes, the LEA has signed up to do it.
6 No, they haven't signed up to do it.

7 A perfect example of where no
8 is a fine answer is that a particular LEA has
9 no turnaround school and so they're not
10 participating in your turnaround. So, no is
11 not necessarily a bad answer; it's just we're
12 looking for an accurate reflection of what
13 those MOUs say.

14 But, if implementing the plans
15 is conditional on collective bargaining
16 happening in the future, put a, "C", for
17 conditional in this column (indicating) going
18 forward. And, on the summary table, which is
19 the (A)(1)(ii)(b) table, only the yeses can move
20 forward to this chart. Okay?

21 So, again, I think that it's...
22 I think we didn't do the right kind of
23 training and catch this in time to really
24 walk you through it last time. Hopefully,
25 it's clearer this time.

1 But, we want to also take you
2 now into a couple of the details of what this
3 meant. So, the peer reviewers do read your
4 MOU. You submit your MOU; obviously, you
5 know this, in your application. And the
6 reviewers will read your MOUs.

7 And they distinguish amongst
8 different types of conditions, and I'm going
9 to walk you through a couple examples in a
10 second. But, one thing I do want to say is,
11 again, now we have real examples. We can do
12 much better peer reviewer training, and we
13 will do better peer reviewer training on
14 this.

15 I think States were very
16 inconsistent in how they recorded this and,
17 similarly, I think peer reviewers were not
18 totally consistent in how they found and
19 looked for this because they did have to dig
20 pretty deeply to find the information.

21 And some of them did it and
22 some of them honestly didn't and we didn't
23 know enough at the time to give them any
24 better training. So, now we do and we want
25 to show you the same things that we're going

1 to show them in their training.

2 The one thing I will say before
3 I march into this is, again, the refrain, use
4 your narratives to be very clear and
5 straightforward about what the conditions are
6 that your LEAs have signed up to.

7 The reviewers, when they have
8 to sniff around and figure out whether
9 they're being spun a little bit or whether
10 it's straightforward, get very skeptical
11 about everything in your application. So,
12 straightforward, clear and honest is... It's
13 better.

14 So, let me just take you
15 through a couple examples. So this is one
16 example of a conditional clause
17 (indicating). This one was actually used in
18 many, many MOUs, so I'm guessing that you all
19 had some workshop someplace that this was a
20 standard term that you came up because a
21 whole lot of applications put this term into
22 their MOUs as a standard term.

23 At the very end you'll see it
24 says, "Those portions of the MOU subject to
25 collective bargaining shall be implemented

1 only upon the agreement of the LEA and the
2 local collective bargaining representative."

3 So, here's what one reviewer
4 said in comments back to one of you about
5 this. They, basically, said, "While there's
6 a lot of participation, that's undercut by the
7 MOUs opt-out provision, which is likely to
8 limit the engagement of districts on some of
9 the sensitive Race to the Top elements, such
10 as teacher evaluation and compensation
11 provisions."

12 So, you can see that the
13 reviewers really do read these and make
14 evaluative judgments based on these. Here's
15 a different example (indicating) that handled
16 the whole question in a totally different
17 way.

18 This was a much stricter
19 example. What they said is, "Failure to
20 negotiate any term or condition in a
21 collective bargaining agreement necessary to
22 full implementation of the State plan will
23 result in termination of the grant."

24 So, that LEA will no longer be
25 allowed to participate. Here the reviewers

1 caught this, too, and said this is a very
2 serious agreement -- commitment to agree to
3 be a participating LEA. So, the point I'm
4 trying to make is you're going to put a C,
5 for either of these cases, you would put a C
6 in that chart. And say it's conditional.

7 These are clearly two very,
8 very different ways of handling the condition
9 and the reviewers understand that. You
10 should also in your narrative use that
11 opportunity to explain it. So, explain what
12 you're doing and how you have structured it
13 and why...

14 And why you think that it is a
15 very meaningful con -- you know, that even
16 if you have got this condition in there, you're
17 very hopeful that it's going to be
18 implemented in exactly this way and here's
19 why.

20 So use that time again, that
21 narrative again, to build your case, very
22 clearly, acknowledge what you have really
23 done in your MOU because the reviewer will be
24 reading it themselves and, as you saw, even
25 without guidance last time making judgments

1 about it, but...

2 So, all Cs are not going to be
3 equal; C is, basically, putting a C in that
4 chart is basically going to be a way to just
5 flag for the peer reviewer, don't forget to go
6 read this MOU and read the narrative very
7 closely and make sure you're connecting all
8 those dots yourself and see how the State did
9 it for you. Okay?

10 So, in both of these cases
11 you'd still put a C. And we just wanted to
12 show you we know that's C's are not all the
13 same. And you guys should be thinking about
14 this, too, because this is the hard stuff.
15 What do these MOUs say and what are people
16 really signing up to is part of the stuff
17 that we know you guys need to be doing and
18 thinking about over the next few days -- I
19 mean weeks.

20 Let me go backwards for one
21 second then and take us to this question of,
22 do you need new MOUs for Phase 2? Obviously,
23 based on what we said, if you're keeping the
24 same conditions and the same plans that you
25 had before, there's no reason you have to

1 reexecute your MOUs.

2 So, you don't need a new MOU as
3 long as the MOU from Phase 1 remains accurate
4 and remains applicable to your Phase 2
5 application. If you make changes that affect
6 the MOU terms and conditions or the scope of
7 work, then you do need to update your MOUs to
8 reflect those changes and reexecute them.

9 Even if you don't make any
10 changes, this probably goes without saying,
11 but you do need to make sure that all of your
12 participating LEAs understand the commitments
13 that they've made in a way that's consistent
14 with whatever you submitted as your Phase 2
15 plans.

16 If the LEAs are on board and
17 understand all the changes that you've made
18 to your plan and say, "Yep. I get it. I
19 know my MOU is still binding and I'm still
20 signed up to do it." So, any last thoughts
21 on that before I turn it over to Josh to
22 handle a couple of things?

23 MS. WALLINGER: Good morning.
24 Linda Wallinger from Virginia. You placed
25 the C criterion under collective bargaining.

1 But is it possible that that might be used in
2 other instances, as well?

3 MS. WEISS: Sure. Anything
4 where it's a conditional because, "C", stands
5 for, "Conditional." And anyplace where the
6 LEA is signed up neither to fully implement
7 your plan or not implement your plan, but
8 "we'll do it if". Collective bargaining,
9 you're right, is probably the most common
10 reason, but there could well be other reasons
11 that that happens.

12 MS. WALLINGER: Thank you.

13 MR. MITCHELL: Brad Mitchell
14 from Ohio or what we like to call eastern
15 Idaho.

16 MS. WEISS: (Laughing).

17 MR. MITCHELL: Could you
18 translate how the conditional MOU evidence
19 case will translate to point scoring.

20 MS. WEISS: Translates what?

21 MR. MITCHELL: To point
22 scoring.

23 MS. WEISS: To point scoring.
24 So, this is part of that 45-point judgment
25 call that they're making. The MOU is the

1 core of the 45-point judgment call that the
2 reviewers are making.

3 And again, what the reviewers
4 are doing is they're judging the strength of
5 the commitment, meaning how conditional is
6 it? What are people really enlisting to do?
7 The scope of work.

8 So, are they implementing all
9 or significant portions of your plan? And
10 who said they're going to do it? Is it just
11 the superintendent; superintendent and school
12 board; superintendent, school board and
13 teachers' union. Or teachers.

14 MR. MITCHELL: Let me ask it
15 more explicitly. Many States have collective
16 bargaining laws and collective bargaining
17 unit variations. The conditions scoring,
18 States will see shifts in the percentages
19 that are complete yes, percentages that are
20 Cs.

21 If a State shifts from yes,
22 complete yes, to Cs, but have strong
23 repercussions... you're just finding
24 afterwards your collective bargaining just
25 didn't work out, how will a reviewer

1 determine the points on that?

2 MS. WEISS: So, let me try to
3 answer it and see if I'm getting to your
4 question. So, first of all, reviewers,
5 needless to say, are not looking at what your
6 old application said versus your new one. So
7 they're not looking at these shifts.

8 They're just looking at your
9 new application for Phrase 2 and judging
10 that. And by, hopefully, doing this training
11 here and making it very clear how this should
12 work, and training the peer reviewers on how
13 to think about this, everybody will be on a
14 new, level playing field where everybody will
15 now be describing their profile of their
16 participating LEAs in a consistent and more
17 accurate way.

18 So, the reviewers will have to,
19 I think, probably sort of reform how they're
20 thinking about this based on what they're now
21 seeing in front of them as the reflection of
22 participation in those States. Is that
23 answering your questioning?

24 MR. MITCHELL: I'm a reviewer
25 and I see a proposal that has 95 percent

1 participation, but doesn't have a collective
2 bargaining aspect to it and so it's not
3 conditional to the MOUs. And a State that
4 has collective bargaining, all the MOUs will
5 be conditional. How will I score that?

6 MS. WEISS: So, welcome to our
7 world. But the answer is those are the
8 things that the peer reviewers have very deep
9 conversations about this as part of their
10 review process. We don't give them
11 guidance. We don't tell them the answer to
12 that.

13 We say this is a place where
14 you need to exercise your judgment. And the
15 question is are people -- the real question
16 they're judging is - are people going to
17 implement this plan? And that's what this
18 criterion is all about. Are schools going to
19 implement the plan that's written down on
20 this piece of paper? That's the question
21 that they're asked to grapple with.

22 MR. MITCHELL: Just one more --

23 MS. WEISS: -- and you're
24 right, different context...

25 MR. MITCHELL: Just one more

1 example --

2 MS. WEISS: -- demand

3 different...

4 MR. MITCHELL: Under your two

5 examples. Example 2, would that petition be

6 scored better than Example 1?

7 MS. WEISS: Well, it would

8 depend because, if Example 2 were up there

9 but no teachers' unions had signed anywhere,

10 you might then go, "Well, it's strong, but

11 I can't see the commitment." If it was there

12 with teacher's union signatures, I think it

13 would probably be viewed as pretty close to a

14 yes.

15 So, that's why it is a complex

16 one and that's why we needed to just give the

17 data to the peer reviewers. And in each

18 context, they're just going to have to judge

19 the strength of that.

20 You all live in this world and

21 know that it's not -- I mean, we're not

22 trying to take something that's as hard as

23 you know it is and reduce it to being an easy

24 question. For what that's worth. Josh, you

25 want to...

1 MR. BENDOR: Thanks, Joanne.
2 So, I'm just going to run through a few quick
3 specific issues and then emcee some Q and A's
4 that you may have not gotten the chance to
5 ask on some of the criteria.

6 And I'm going to start on this
7 one criterion and then, as Joanne mentioned
8 earlier, is different, operates slightly
9 differently in Phase 2 than it did in Phase
10 1. And this is Criterion (B)(1)(ii) and you know
11 that whenever we start to talk about
12 Romanettes, we're getting into very exciting,
13 titillating territory here. That seems to be
14 my speciality.

15 So, this criterion is on the
16 adoption of common standards and both of the
17 ways the Phase 1 and the Phase 2 versions
18 were published in the original notice and in
19 the original application, so you can see
20 that.

21 And just for context in Phase
22 1, what you were writing about was the extent
23 to which you have a high quality plan to
24 adopt these standards. But, in general,
25 States had not actually done any adoption by

1 the time of their Phase 1 applications.

2 Since we are at a later point
3 in time, in Phase 2 the reviewers are looking
4 largely, and you have seen this red text here
5 (indicating), at the State's adoption of a
6 common set of K12 standards. Whether they
7 have actually done so by August 2nd.

8 And if not August 2nd, by a
9 later date in 2010. And if they, if you
10 haven't done it by August 2nd, it's about
11 your plan. So, we also gave you the guidance
12 for how peer reviewers will score this.
13 You'll get high points if you have indeed
14 adopted a common set of standards by August
15 2nd.

16 And you may say, "But your
17 application deadline is June 1st, how will
18 they know if I have adopted between June 1st
19 and August 2nd?" And we'll get to that in
20 just a second. It's a good question. You
21 can't get medium points on this criterion.

22 You get low points if you have
23 a high quality plan to adopt by a date later
24 than August 2nd, that is in 2010. So,
25 sometime between August 3rd and the end of

1 2010. And you don't get any points if you
2 have a plan to adopt later than 2010 or if
3 the reviewers judge it's just not a high
4 quality, persuasive plan and you're actually
5 going to be able to get this adoption done.

6 Let me add, before going to
7 sort of the technical stuff on submitting,
8 that we know the common core standards are
9 coming out later than originally
10 anticipated. Our notice wasn't built around
11 that one specific initiative. And it's set
12 in regulations, so we can't go out and change
13 that.

14 But, since 48 States are
15 working together on that common set of
16 standards, all those States are in the same
17 boat and sort of in the same common playing
18 field here. So, let me show you how this
19 submission works and then let me take
20 questions and we'll see if I answer it
21 there.

22 So, there's sort of three
23 different cases here. If you've adopted a
24 common set of standards by June 1st, put that
25 in your application. Show you adopted it.

1 Show the vote of your legislature, your State
2 board and whatever it is that makes it clear
3 to the reviewers that, yes, you've adopted
4 it. It's pretty straightforward.

5 If you haven't adopted a common
6 set of standards by the time you send in your
7 June 1st application, but you think you'll do
8 so before August 2nd, then you should put in
9 your June 1st application what your plan is.

10 Here's what we're intending to
11 do, here's how we're going to get there by
12 August 2nd and here's a heads-up we're going
13 to be sending you an update by August 2nd.
14 So put that in your application.

15 And then, by the way, if your
16 plans change and you don't send us -- if
17 you're not planning to send us an update, let
18 us know so we know how to plan accordingly.
19 And then, on or before August 2nd, we have to
20 get it by August 2nd, submit an amendment to
21 your application, once you've had that
22 adoption, showing that that adoption
23 happened.

24 And the details for how to do
25 that are on Page 99 of the application. But

1 it's the same kind of application, submission
2 details for the original application. So
3 mail us a CD, put the right number on the
4 envelope and you'll just sort of give us the
5 evidence there.

6 And we have to get that by
7 August 2nd. Just the amendment. You're not
8 sending us your whole application. It's
9 going to be a pretty, you know, probably
10 just, you know, one file on a CD. Here's
11 what we did, here's the certificate or
12 whatever, the vote or whatever. Should be
13 pretty straightforward and simple for you to
14 send us.

15 If you haven't adopted a common
16 set of standards by the time your
17 application, and you know you're not going to
18 do it by August 2nd, but you think you will
19 be able to do it by some later point in 2010,
20 then you should describe in your application
21 what your plan is and reviewers will score
22 you on the basis of that application.
23 Questions about that?

24 MS. SEAGREN: A couple of
25 things. This is Alice Seagren from

1 Minnesota. Our legislature ends its session
2 May 17th. The common core is not going to be
3 ready until the end of May. So, we don't
4 know what we're going to have to adopt and we
5 have two things we could do.

6 What, normally, in Minnesota we
7 have a rule-making process. I brought this
8 up on several conference calls. We have a
9 rule-making process. It's very thorough.
10 The public gets to vet and work through the
11 common core, but it usually takes nine to 15
12 months.

13 Now, we fully intend to do this
14 and have a plan for adoption. However, the
15 other strategy we could do is to have the
16 legislature adopt the standards before they
17 leave May 17th. However, we won't know
18 what's in them.

19 So, what you have here is an
20 all or nothing, zero to five points for a
21 robust commitment, or you have to do this by
22 August 2nd. And you're really penalizing
23 States that have a rule-making process that's
24 thoughtful and involves lots of input.

25 And it results really in a lot

1 of statewide buy-in by the time it's done.
2 So, I have complained, and I'm going to
3 complain again, that I think this is really
4 unfair to those States who are trying to do a
5 thoughtful adoption, so that they have
6 statewide buy-in.

7 And we have asked Secretary
8 Duncan about this and he assured us that he
9 would work with States like ours. But,
10 apparently, the rules now are that you either
11 get 20 points or you get zero to five. And I
12 really think that that is terribly unfair.

13 MR. BENDOR: So, you know, I
14 think we hear that. I think it's a lot
15 easier for -- it's more sound for reviewers
16 to be able to judge something that's
17 happened.

18 So, it is helpful for our
19 review process for them to be able to judge
20 something on the basis of an event that's
21 occurred, rather than something going
22 forward. So, that's part of the reason for
23 that. But --

24 MS. SEAGREN: (Inaudible).
25 (Not using mic). The standards right now.

1 They will have lots of things that they have
2 to do with the standards, even if the State
3 board, or the legislator or the commissioner
4 adopt, saying that you have adopted those
5 standards, is just something on paper.

6 Adoption means a lot of work.
7 And, you know, I think States are very
8 committed to that. And I think that needs to
9 be reflected in the reviewer's training.

10 MS. WEISS: Well, commissioner,
11 I do -- I mean, we do hear you and I do
12 completely understand what you're saying and
13 we really do respect that every State's going
14 to have to really think this through and do
15 what's right in their State context here.

16 We wrote these regulations,
17 obviously, last October, before we knew what
18 any of this would look like. And that's part
19 of the hand that we, unfortunately, dealt you
20 before we had information about anything
21 other than our own deadlines.

22 So, we honestly crafted this
23 around what's the latest possible date, given
24 the September 30th obligation date, that we
25 could get information to peer reviewers and

1 it was early August, and it wasn't built
2 around any knowledge of what this process
3 would actually unfold and look like.

4 And so, I'm sorry, we are -- I
5 think we really do respect, and will make it
6 clear to the peer reviewers as well, that
7 this is an important, important decision and
8 process in each State and you guys need to
9 use your own judgment about how to do this.

10 And as Josh said, everybody's
11 in the same boat now. And we're sorry our
12 boat doesn't look like your boat. It wasn't
13 deliberate. It's just the way it looked last
14 October when we were just looking at
15 obligation dates and deadlines.

16 I know it feels different now
17 than we intended it to. And we certainly
18 respect every State's job that they have to
19 do in figuring out in your own State what the
20 right thing is to do and how you should
21 handle it appropriately.

22 MS. OLSON: Jen Olson,
23 legislator from Minnesota. We do believe we
24 have rigorous standards in this State. And
25 my question is, if our standards are more

1 rigorous than the common standards that come
2 out, are you suggesting that we would have to
3 dumb down our standards in order to comply
4 and meet this criteria?

5 MS. WEISS: So, this criterion
6 is actually about common, commonality and
7 about college and career readiness. So we
8 are certainly not suggesting dumbing down,
9 but we are saying that this particular
10 criterion values States coming together so we
11 don't end up with 50 different goal posts
12 going forward, like we've had historically.

13 So that is the, sort of, policy
14 notion that this is built around. Certainly,
15 dumbing down the standards is the opposite of
16 what we're trying to do here.

17 And again, I mean, I know this
18 is playing out in, you know, 50 or 48
19 different States around the country right
20 now. And I understand that it needs to play
21 out in each State and you're going to have to
22 all sort of look at it compared with what
23 you're doing now and make whatever the right
24 decisions are for each State.

25 MS. OLSON: What I'm hearing

1 you saying then is that you choose one or the
2 other. In other words, you either have to go
3 common or you stay independent. If you
4 believe your standards are rigorous, they
5 encompass the common standards but go beyond,
6 you're saying that that's not assessable --
7 acceptable.

8 That you do have to make that
9 choice. Rather than then being able to
10 continue on the track that has gone through
11 the rigorous process that our commissioner
12 has explained and with legislative support.

13 MS. WEISS: Well, that second
14 choice, I think, would be to stay independent
15 and that's certainly an option every State
16 has, of course.

17 MS. OLSON: So, you view it as
18 an outlier that doesn't want to go along with
19 the crowd in the common standards then?

20 MS. WEISS: I mean, it's an
21 option that every State has and, obviously,
22 and every State has to make whatever decision
23 they feel is right for their kids.

24 MS. WALLINGER: Linda Wallinger
25 from Virginia. I was wondering, since it was

1 possible to make changes in the amounts of
2 the grants awarded and put the cap on, if
3 that same process might be used to address
4 the concept of when the common standards
5 would have to be adopted.

6 MS. WEISS: Yeah, there's a
7 bunch of reasons why we can't do that at this
8 point. We have -- so, no. The short
9 answer's no.

10 MR. MARIANI: This is Carlos
11 Mariani from the State of Minnesota,
12 Minnesota House of Representatives, and
13 welcome all to Minnesota. Obviously,
14 Minnesotans here are a little, there's a
15 little bit of angst over this issue of the
16 common core standards.

17 And I think we get the,
18 although, we're obviously also like most
19 other States, perturbed with the timing
20 issue. But, quite honestly, we have pretty
21 extensive hearings most recently about common
22 core. And basically, I believe where we're
23 at is that we're pretty comfortable with one
24 set of standards that seem to be emerging in
25 language arts.

1 But, the math ones really do
2 disturb us pretty broadly. And it seems to
3 me that the point system here, with 20 versus
4 0 to five, you know, sets up a really, tragic
5 if you will, situation for us.

6 And so I guess what I'm asking,
7 if a State demonstrates that, as I think
8 we're probability willing to do at this
9 point, that we're comfortable with the ELA
10 standards, so we want to be part of a common
11 community.

12 But we are certainly not
13 comfortable with where the math standards are
14 going. But that doesn't mean we don't want
15 to be part of the common community. How will
16 the reviewers handle a situation like that?
17 Or are we just really stuck in this sort of
18 20 versus 0 to five?

19 MS. WEISS: No. That's a good
20 question. And let us we'll get back to you
21 with an answer to that, so we'll get back to
22 everybody around an FAQ that, basically, asks
23 the question if we adopt one content area,
24 but not the other, what's the scoring rubric
25 have to say about that.

1 Because it obviously wasn't
2 something that we contemplated originally.
3 So, let us get back to you with an answer
4 about that. Okay. Last question.

5 MS. GREEN: Trecina Green from
6 Mississippi. We're looking at how we can
7 strategize to get this adopted by this
8 deadline and we are struggling a little bit
9 with the definition of adoption.

10 If we take it to our board to
11 grant approval to start our administrative
12 procedures act, which is required in our
13 State, then do you consider that, because we
14 have to do that and then bring it, it must
15 stay out for a certain period of time and
16 then, when it comes back, our board takes
17 final action. So, can you clarify what's
18 actually meant by 'adoption'?

19 MS. WEISS: So, so, we are
20 talking about the legal process within your
21 State for ultimately saying these are the new
22 standards. It doesn't mean you'll be
23 implementing them as of tomorrow, so the
24 implementation, we know, will happen over the
25 course of many months/years.

1 But it's the process of legally
2 saying in your State, "These are now the new
3 standards that we are going to be using in
4 our State." If you have any more specific
5 stuff than that, I don't know if we can help
6 you with it.

7 But you're certainly welcome to
8 send a question to our e-mail box and we'll look
9 at it and see if there is anything more
10 specific that we can tell you or not. I
11 think the other thing is that we'll rely on
12 you partly to tell us what adoption is in
13 your State. And when your attorney general
14 signs off on the application, we rely on
15 that, as do the reviewers.

16 MR. BENDOR: So, now we're
17 going to, this is sort of another issue that
18 is worth spending a little bit of time
19 clarifying. And that's the interaction
20 between the School Improvement Grants and the
21 portion of Race to the Top that's focused on
22 turning around low performing schools and
23 that's Criterion E 2.

24 So, the definition of
25 persistently low achieving schools should be

1 consistent between those two applications,
2 between the Race to the Top and the school
3 improvement grant applications. And all of
4 you should have approved school improvement
5 grant approved definitions by the time you
6 apply for Phase 2.

7 So, that should make that a
8 little simpler since you will have worked
9 that through with us. There are a few
10 differences in what the programs allow in
11 addition to that sort of core definition of
12 persistently low achieving schools.

13 And Race to the Top allows
14 States to identify for poor turnaround, not as
15 that core definition, but for poor turnaround
16 secondary schools that are not eligible for
17 Title I funds, so that they wouldn't be
18 eligible for school improvement grants, but
19 are performing similarly to your lowest,
20 persistently lowest achieving schools that
21 are eligible for Title I funds.

22 So, for Race to the Top, you
23 can use Race to the Top funds to support
24 turnaround efforts in those schools. You
25 can't use school improvement grant funds for

1 that. So, that's an add-on. That's up to
2 you.

3 You can do it in Race to the
4 Top if you think that's best for your kids.
5 If you think you have some schools there that
6 really do need some support, but that aren't
7 eligible for those School Improvement Grant
8 funds.

9 It's different in SIG - they
10 require States to identify Tier 3 schools and
11 it allows States to add schools to Tier 1 and
12 Tier 2 that are not identified as
13 persistently lowest achieving schools and
14 that's not something that's a part of Race
15 for the Top.

16 Additionally, these programs
17 work very much in concert, but they're
18 supporting slightly different things here.
19 So, Race to the Top is about your State's
20 plan to support your LEAs in turning around
21 their lowest achieving schools over the next
22 four years.

23 And the SIG application
24 requires you to describe how you will review
25 and evaluate LEA application and grant awards

1 and monitor implementation. So, there's
2 somewhat of an overlap there, you know, in
3 monitoring and supporting.

4 But they are, to some extent,
5 doing different things through those two
6 programs, though with a similar goal in
7 mind. And then again, Race to the Top is
8 about your setting up in your application what
9 you're going to do over the next four years,
10 which is how long a Race to the Top grant
11 runs, to support school turnaround efforts in
12 those schools over those four years.

13 Whereas, your FY '09 SIG grants
14 are about the process and implementation of
15 interventions in the next year, so that's
16 school year 2010-2011. So, the money you're
17 getting now for SIG is for this next school
18 year's turnaround.

19 But Race to the Top is about
20 how you're supporting just turnarounds you're
21 going to be doing over a four-year period.

22 Just as a warning, I may turn to my
23 colleague, Ann Whalen, if we have any very
24 technical questions. But it sounds like we
25 have one over there (indicating).

1 MS. HYDE: Good morning.
2 Sheila Hyde from New Mexico. In the SIG
3 application, we could use a small n-size
4 waiver. Is that applicable here at all?

5 MS. WHALEN: So, with any
6 waiver that you submitted as part of your
7 persistently lowest achieving schools, that
8 is part of your approved definition of PLA.
9 So that will then carry over to your Race to
10 the Top grant.

11 Just to clarify, the additional
12 schools that you may add to the SIG
13 application that are not part of your Race to
14 the Top application, are those new schools
15 that were, gain flexibility from States on
16 the interim final regulation, so that there
17 are schools that missed AYP for two years or are
18 in the bottom quintile that you can say are equally
19 performing as my Tier 1 or Tier 2 schools,
20 but those are not part of your definition of
21 persistently lowest achieving schools.

22 MR. BENDOR: Anything else on
23 that? Getting close to the break. So, I
24 also just wanted to flag an issue on the STEM
25 priority because it operates somewhat

1 different from the 19 selection criteria that
2 you may be more used to.

3 So, for the STEM competitive
4 priority, applicants can either receive zero
5 points for that priority, for meeting that
6 priority, if they fail to meet it, or they
7 can receive 15 points if they are seen to
8 have made that priority.

9 So, that's a swing of 15 points
10 and so that can make a very large difference
11 in the State score. And the way that works
12 is, if a majority of the five peer reviewers
13 on your panel determine that you've met that
14 priority, then you get those 15 points.

15 And if you only have two of
16 your five reviewers or zero of your five
17 reviewers, you don't get those points. And I
18 think something that's important, that we
19 really want to flag for you guys, is that the
20 State writes to the priority throughout its whole
21 application, and you can also provide a
22 summary of what you're doing to address the
23 STEM priority in the back part of the
24 application, where the STEM priority is
25 listed.

1 But, something that's very
2 important and the reviewers were looking for
3 is that the response on STEM, keep those
4 coherent and integrated throughout the
5 application, that it not feel like a discrete
6 set of side projects that were not integrated
7 with the whole of the work that the State was
8 doing or it was sort of just a separate piece
9 of the thing.

10 And to refresh your memory,
11 though you've probably memorized each and
12 every word of this, the STEM priority reads
13 as follows, and it has these three separate
14 parts of it here, and reviewers are looking
15 at whether your application addresses all
16 parts of the STEM priority.

17 So, don't, you know, just sort
18 of skip one and say that the reviewers won't
19 consider it if I just skip this one. They
20 are looking at the entirety of these three
21 parts.

22 Any questions on the STEM?

23 PARTICIPANTS: (No response).

24 MR. BENDOR: So, I think we had
25 hoped to take some questions on just larger,

1 other criteria issues here. But, I think
2 everyone needs a break and I think we're at
3 that point.

4 MS. WEISS: No break.

5 MR. BENDOR: No break?

6 Everyone needs to hear from Tennessee and
7 Delaware now.

8 PARTICIPANTS: (Laughing).

9 MR. BENDOR: So, we're going to
10 turn to that now. We do have some question
11 time reserved at the end of our day. And so,
12 you know, save your questions for there. And
13 if you're not able to ask them there, then
14 you can always send them in to the
15 RacetotheTop@ed.gov e-mail box and we try to
16 respond to those as quickly as we can.

17 So now we're going to
18 transition into the presentations from
19 Tennessee and Delaware, and we'll ask those
20 folks to come up now.

21 MS. WEISS: Yes. So, everybody
22 stay put or take a quick one. Take a quick
23 stand-up break if you need it. We're putting
24 chairs down here (indicating). I think we're
25 going to have Delaware first. So, I think

1 the Delaware folks are going to come up
2 first.

3 And Meredith is going to do the
4 introduction of that. Before she does, I
5 just want to set a teeny bit of context for
6 you about this.

7 Our hope in having Delaware and
8 Tennessee each come and spend about 35 or 40
9 minutes talking to you about their pre --
10 about their plans is that, after this point,
11 we get into a lot of two-way conversation
12 with you guys about your plans, their plans,
13 ideas that people have, questions people
14 have.

15 And in order to just make sure
16 that was anchored again, because all of this
17 is so situational and context specific, we
18 wanted them to each spend some time just
19 telling you what they did, how they did it
20 and why it worked in their State, so that we
21 just all are working off that baseline of
22 knowledge when we then start having more of a
23 dialog together about these things.

24 So, we are going to ask that
25 you save your questions, because we have a

1 lot of question time with the Delaware and
2 Tennessee folks scheduled for the parts
3 following this. And with that, let me turn
4 it over to Meredith to make the intros.

5 MS. FARACE: Good morning
6 everybody. I'm happy to be the program
7 officer for the Delaware team and I have
8 gotten to spend some time with them in
9 Delaware.

10 And with us here today, we have
11 Secretary Lillian Lowery. We have Dan Cruce,
12 who is the Deputy Secretary and Chief of
13 Staff. And we have Diane Donohue, Delaware
14 State Education Association President, Emily
15 Falcon, the Director of Financial Reform
16 Resources, and Jim Palmer, of the Race to
17 the Top Implementation Team.

18 So, if they can all come and
19 sit in the chairs in front, we'll try to make
20 this as informal as possible and hold your
21 questions until they're finished. That would
22 be great. Thank you.

23 MS. LOWERY: Good morning
24 everyone. We are here -- before we start, I
25 would just like for each member of the team

1 just to briefly introduce him or herself and
2 give a little bit of bio. Brief bio.

3 I'm Lillian Lowery. I am the
4 Delaware Secretary of Education, appointed in
5 January 2009, by our new governor, Jack
6 Markell.

7 MS. DONOHUE: I am Diane
8 Donohue. I have been a teacher in Delaware
9 for the past 20 years and I am currently the
10 president of the Delaware State Education
11 Association. And I'm proudly representing
12 over 11,000 members in our State who think
13 it's very important to be part of this reform
14 process.

15 MR. CRUCE: Good morning. My
16 name is Dan Cruce. I'm the Deputy Secretary
17 of Education for Delaware.

18 And immediately prior to that
19 role, I was the assistant superintendent and
20 chief of staff with Secretary Lowery, of the
21 Christina School District, which is the
22 largest school district in the State of
23 Delaware.

24 MS. FALCON: Good morning. My
25 name is Emily Falcon, Director of the

1 Financial Reform Resources of the
2 Department.

3 Prior to that, I was the senior
4 policy and fiscal analyst for the Delaware
5 Office of Management and Budget, focusing on
6 education. And I have also served as the
7 policy advisor and legislative assistant.

8 MR. PALMER: Good morning. My
9 name is Jim Palmer. I'm the new kid on the
10 block. I've spent 20-plus years in the
11 business world, with a variety of different
12 companies, as finance person, project
13 management specialist, sig sigma processor,
14 master black belt.

15 And last year I got to spend
16 seven months on a special assignment, from
17 the bank that I was working for, as, you
18 know, I'll call it a special assistant to
19 Doctor Lowery, to help them push through a
20 performance review program.

21 And on to the other, you know,
22 Race to the Top application, strategic plan
23 and development process. So, I'm coming back
24 into the organization now as the director of
25 performance management in the implementation

1 team.

2 REPORTER'S NOTE:

3 [Inaudible side

4 conversation].

5 DR. LOWERY: So, we really like

6 this format because the information that we

7 got that this was going to be very informal.

8 This is just Delaware talking about the life

9 we have lived over the last year and how we

10 came to this point.

11 And three of the

12 differentiators that we saw, that US Ed pointed

13 out, was, one, the State's capacity to get

14 the work done; the teacher leader area, the

15 effectiveness that we're going to do that and

16 it was very dynamic dealing. And then

17 dealing with persistently low performing

18 schools.

19 And we were very proud of the

20 process that the State engaged to actually

21 get the capacity, the buy-in for this work.

22 So, I'm going to ask that Jim begin with just

23 talking about that process and how we got all

24 the stakeholders to the table.

25 MR. PALMER: We actually began

1 last summer developing the strategic plan,
2 bringing together representatives from the
3 business community, myself as one of those,
4 nonprofit organizations, school districts,
5 you know, foundations, a whole variety of
6 individuals that we brought together for it,
7 and we called it an Innovation Action Team.

8 And we, the initial meeting
9 took place, you know, in the end of June to
10 develop this group as a steering committee
11 for the development of the strategic plan,
12 which took place over the course of, you
13 know, all of July and a little bit of
14 August.

15 So we had this 20-member
16 steering committee, you know, across the
17 whole broad representation of the State of
18 Delaware, from education folks inside the
19 classrooms, superintendents, the whole broad
20 range of folks.

21 We then took the next step and
22 set up individual work teams, pulling people
23 out of that steering committee, additional
24 representatives from each of those
25 organizations, into five separate work

1 teams. Four of them for each of the
2 assurances and a fifth team that we worked on
3 for internal process and proof in trying to
4 save some money.

5 But we had, over the course of
6 five weeks, each of those teams met every
7 Monday or every Tuesday or every Wednesday as
8 a forum for three and a half to four hours
9 to, basically, look at what is our current
10 State today?

11 What's the future state? What
12 do we need it to look like? What's the gap?
13 And, collectively, we have got all these
14 subject matter experts in the room here,
15 let's start talking about how we're going to
16 get there and come to as much of a collective
17 agreement as we possibly can.

18 We did not set up those teams
19 to be consensus driven, saying let's go down
20 to the lowest common denominator. They
21 really were brainstorming sessions across the
22 broad range of expertise in the classroom,
23 outside of the classroom, public policy
24 people, foundation people.

25 What do we need to do to hit

1 where we've got to go for each of those four
2 assurances? Then direct that information.
3 My job was, basically, to facilitate all
4 these dialogues. I was there to poke and
5 prod and ask the questions, get us to this
6 agreement.

7 Then come back and we sat down
8 with a, you know, core team of subject matter
9 experts to write the plan. Took the plan
10 back to that steering committee to say,
11 "Look. This is what we came up with.
12 Here's where we think we need to go. Give us
13 your feedback on the plan that we've written
14 because this plan is then going to roll into
15 your Race to the Top application."

16 So, we spent the summer,
17 basically, with this large group of people
18 trying to develop consensus, getting
19 everybody on the same page, getting them to
20 agree on what, how big this challenge really
21 was.

22 And when we walked out the door
23 at the end of August and Dr. Lowery handed
24 the plan to the governor, everybody who, all
25 of the subject matter experts that we needed

1 to see that thing, had seen the plan, had
2 been involved in the development of it and
3 knew what was in there.

4 And basically, their nod that
5 says, "I agree with this. We can move
6 forward with this thing." But we had that
7 level of consensus-building across the whole
8 summer.

9 DR. LOWERY: So one of the
10 key -- thank you, Jim. One of the key pieces
11 that we wrestled with was what do we do about
12 consistently low achieving schools. Because
13 about a third of our students, 30 percent of
14 our students, attend schools that are
15 chronically underperforming year over year.

16 And what we did there was the
17 State Board of Education looked at our
18 regulation for school accountability,
19 Regulation 103, and strengthened that
20 regulation by giving the State permission to
21 address all five of the choices that U.S. Ed
22 has always provided.

23 But, the provision that the
24 State of Delaware and all of our districts or
25 schools chose was that other one, the one

1 that said, "Other", where they would write a
2 plan and give those data points of how they
3 were going to target their data.

4 And then, the next year, if it
5 didn't work, we just added another bullet.
6 Or we did what we were doing longer. And
7 some of us were realizing change, but it was
8 incremental change, and some of us weren't.
9 I was superintendent of the Christina School
10 District and our secondary schools had never
11 made AYP since the State had started.

12 Keeping those measures, even
13 though they were moving in the right
14 direction, it was very incremental. So, we
15 knew that there was a sense of urgency around
16 compelling people to look at those other
17 models, to close, to restart as a charter, to
18 take the transformational model with a new
19 leader and union participation to look for
20 flexibility and for turning the school around
21 with everyone coming to the table and
22 reapplying and starting all over again.

23 And so, what Regulation 103
24 allows is that there will be a 120-day
25 process for schools that we deem eligible for

1 the Partnership Zone. And the Partnership
2 Zone will be our lowest performing, the five
3 percent of our lowest performing schools.

4 And what we're going to do is
5 give them a 120-day period to come up with a
6 plan. So, once these schools have been
7 identified, and we've already identified them
8 because we've identified them for work with
9 the SIG 1003G fines going forward.

10 What these schools will do is
11 have 75 days for the local education agency
12 to sit down, govern its team, whatever team
13 they build, and determine which of the models
14 will be chosen.

15 And then, after they determine
16 that, they have to sit with their local
17 bargaining unit and talk about what that
18 looks like and what the expectations will be
19 and does the model really fit for everyone
20 concerned. In 75 days that plan has to be
21 back to the secretary.

22 And if there is a stalemate of
23 some type, what the secretary will do is give
24 another 30 days to the LEA and the collective
25 bargaining unit to say, "Figure this out

1 please. You have 30 more days because our
2 children are waiting."

3 And then, we take that baseball
4 mediation, where you take, the Secretary can
5 take the best offer of the two, which is
6 going to be the best interest of students.

7 And if there is still an
8 impasse, then the State gets to intervene and
9 say, "Fine. If you can't figure it out, we
10 certainly understand it. Now there are three
11 choices that we have: You can restart the
12 school as a charter yourselves, you can bring
13 in a charter management organization, or do a
14 complete turnaround."

15 And so, that happens over that
16 120 days. And the expectation is that this
17 will, in two years, turn those schools around
18 dramatically. I'm going to now, and I'll
19 answer any questions later. I don't want to
20 get too windy. Diane?

21 MS. DONOHUE: I've been asked
22 to talk about our scope of work and how I was
23 able to -- or we, as Delaware, was able to
24 get all of our local presidents to sign on to
25 the memorandum of understanding.

1 As you have already heard, we
2 have an Innovation Action Team, which
3 Delaware State Education was very much part
4 of that work. And as we moved forward with
5 the scope of work and developing a plan, what
6 we did is we -- we're small, so we're able to
7 do this.

8 We have three counties in
9 Delaware and we called together county-wide
10 president's meetings. And I asked Dr. Lowery
11 and her staff to participate in those
12 discussions with our local presidents and
13 their leadership teams.

14 So, each local president
15 brought a team of people with them to these
16 county-wide meetings. Dr. Lowery came to the
17 meetings. And Governor Markell also sent his
18 policy people to these meetings to answer
19 questions.

20 And so, what we did was we
21 presented the scope of work to all of our
22 leaders, all of the details within the scope
23 of work. We talked about the things that
24 were challenging for us and the things that
25 we were, quite honestly, kind of excited

1 about.

2 Because there are things in
3 Delaware's plan that the union is very
4 supportive of and, then, we are also aware of
5 the challenges. So, we had those meetings.
6 And we did that for all three counties. All
7 of our presidents and their leadership teams
8 came to those meetings.

9 And then, to follow up with
10 that, because after those meetings our
11 presidents and leadership teams had some
12 additional questions. And so, I would travel
13 the State to go to any school, any meeting
14 that I needed to, to answer their questions.

15 Dr. Lowery also came to those
16 meetings to answer questions whenever
17 possible. So, it really was a conversation
18 around the issues. And again, we recognize
19 where the challenges are.

20 We hope that, as adults, we can
21 find a place where we're making it best for
22 all of our students in Delaware because we
23 believe, and I'm speaking for our members,
24 making it best for our students in Delaware
25 also improves our teaching environment. So,

1 to me, it goes hand in hand.

2 I was also asked to talk to you
3 about the changes in our Delaware performance
4 appraisal system, our evaluation system for
5 teachers. Many of you may or may not know,
6 Delaware has had a Statewide comprehensive
7 system in place for, oh, gosh, as long as I
8 can remember.

9 And our evaluation system has
10 gone through many changes over the years.
11 And about ten years ago, the State brought
12 together a committee to look at our
13 evaluation system and to make some changes to
14 it.

15 And I was part of that
16 Statewide committee at that point in time.
17 And what the outcome of that was our current
18 evaluation system, which we call DPAS II.
19 And under Senate Bill 260 in Delaware, about
20 seven years ago, it required the State to
21 develop a system, an evaluation system, that
22 had a fifth component of fully dedicated to
23 student improvement.

24 So, we've been working with a
25 student improvement component to our

1 evaluation system for several years. What we
2 have recently done in Delaware is changed our
3 regulations around that.

4 And now, in order for a teacher
5 to be rated satisfactory in the student
6 improvement component, they have to be rated
7 either, "Effective," or what we now have an
8 additional rating of, "Highly effective."

9 An effective teacher is one who
10 shows sufficient student growth and a highly
11 effective is one who shows more than a year's
12 growth. That their students are achieving
13 more than a year's growth.

14 Now, in Delaware, under this
15 new regulation, which will go into effect in
16 the school year of 2011, teachers will not be
17 rated effective or highly affective unless
18 they meet that criteria.

19 Now, what we need to do in the
20 meantime for the next year, Dr. Lowery is
21 bringing forth a statewide stakeholders group
22 to define both sufficient student growth and
23 the multiple measures used to determine that
24 effectiveness. So, that work is yet to be
25 done in Delaware.

1 We have to define it. And that
2 is really the key to our reform efforts,
3 defining sufficient student growth and what
4 that means for all of our population and the
5 measures that we're going to use, in addition
6 to our statewide assessment system are key to
7 the work.

8 So, that's very challenging
9 work that we have ahead of us. But we
10 believe that it's important for us to be part
11 of those conversations. We would much rather
12 be at the table having those conversations
13 than someone else outside of the classroom
14 environment making those decisions.

15 DR. LOWERY: Because at the end
16 of the day, the regulations have changed and
17 this is going to go forward in a way that we
18 know that it's not go forward in the best
19 interests of anyone if our teachers aren't at
20 the table with us.

21 Governor Markell is often
22 quoted as saying some States or organizations
23 affect change by being bold. Some affect
24 change by gaining consensus. In Delaware,
25 we're doing both.

1 I would like to also say that
2 we practice what we preach. So, not only did
3 we change and tie student achievement to the
4 teacher's evaluations, but we also did it to
5 leader evaluations, too. So now they have a
6 criterion component that also ties it to
7 leader, to school growth, too. And so now,
8 Dan Cruce?

9 MR. CRUCE: And so, the common
10 thread that runs between the work that we did
11 this summer around the Innovation Action
12 Team, that laid the foundation for the
13 development of our Race to the Top
14 application, and then into the challenging
15 piece around the scope of work, also around
16 the regulatory reform, to which Diane
17 referred, is that we continually tried to
18 drive a sense of fairness around the work.

19 Everyone uses the word,
20 "Collaboration"; everyone brings
21 stakeholders to the table. What we tried to
22 do through all of that work was build the
23 opportunity and the time for folks to sit
24 around the table and realize what real
25 collaboration is.

1 And I steal this phrase from
2 Diane on every chance I get because I think
3 it's terrific. It's that when people sit
4 around the table, they need to realize that
5 collaboration actually and often means that
6 not one party gets everything they want.
7 Instead, everyone gets a little bit of what
8 they want and everyone gives a little with
9 the common interest that we're driving
10 towards change for kids.

11 So, there is multiple
12 opportunities from the summer until now, as
13 we enter into our final scope of work effort,
14 is that thread of fairness in collaboration,
15 which I think has served our State and our
16 efforts well and we wanted to make sure we
17 shared that piece with you today.

18 Secretary Lowery spoke to our
19 work around Assurance 4. Diane spoke to sort
20 of our work around Assurance 3. What I
21 wanted to spend just a brief a moment on is
22 our work around Assurance 1 and Assurance 2.
23 As we also heard from our constituencies is
24 that this work can become very complicated
25 and, frankly, we can make it overly

1 complicated.

2 And what our constituencies
3 wanted to hear is that we, whenever possible,
4 made our efforts and our plans succinct, and
5 to the point, and something that could be
6 explained to inside folks in education,
7 parents, teachers and regular constituents.

8 So, what our efforts focused on
9 around Assurance 1 and Assurance 2 really
10 worked to bring forward efforts that laid the
11 foundation for the really tremendous work
12 that needs to happen around Assurance 3, with
13 great teachers and leaders.

14 So, in our Assurance 1, where
15 we talk about standards and assessments, we
16 talk very cleanly and clearly about our new
17 state test. We have a computer adaptive
18 formative test that's coming on line next
19 year, which will serve as the basis for a lot
20 of work in many of our buildings and the
21 professional development that, obviously,
22 needs to occur around that.

23 And also, the logical tie
24 between our adoption of the common core
25 standards, which will need to be reflected in

1 the implementation of our new state test.
2 Those two efforts certainly lay the
3 foundation for the work we need to do in our
4 other assurances, as well.

5 Very important to us in
6 Assurance 1, also, was a specific requirement
7 that we put on our LEAs to identify and
8 support promising opportunities to engage
9 parents and communities.

10 And again, that sounds like a
11 familiar phrase that we have used before, but
12 we are fortunate enough with the Race to the
13 Top opportunity to have additional monies and
14 additional leverage to drive our LEAs to do
15 things differently around how they engage
16 parents and how they engage their
17 communities.

18 And again, that's a critical
19 foundational level, we felt, before we start
20 trying to implement everything, let's say, in
21 Assurance 3, around great teachers and
22 leaders. We need to have our foundation in
23 order around our parents, our community, our
24 state tests and our standards.

25 Similarly, in Assurance 2,

1 we're talking about data systems. And when
2 we talk about data systems, again, Secretary
3 Lowery, I think spoke to this, we are very
4 fortunate in Delaware that we have a very
5 robust data system.

6 But, frankly, it wasn't serving
7 the highest purpose that it could. We didn't
8 have it designed with the end user in mind,
9 whether it be the teacher, the
10 paraprofessional, the family that might be
11 looking to move to our State and want to see
12 in a more robust look at what our public
13 education has to offer.

14 We didn't -- we don't have and
15 we are lucky enough now to have our plan
16 approved to move forward with building a very
17 detailed educational dashboard portal that
18 can be uniquely designed for different
19 constituencies, so that those different
20 parties can drill down and see what type of
21 information that might be unique to their
22 need.

23 And so, again, that very
24 logically ties to the work around Assurance
25 1, to help us lay that very firm foundation

1 before we move forward and take the very
2 aggressive and game-changing initiatives
3 around great teachers and leaders and around
4 our lowest performing schools.

5 MS. LOWERY: I think we're
6 running out of time, so we're going to let
7 Emily talk about the budget piece, which is
8 most important.

9 MS. FALCON: Yeah, as we move
10 forward with trying to figure out how to
11 strike that balance between, you know, making
12 sure that we have everything that we needed
13 in place resource-wise to get everything
14 done, we were mindful of the funding cliff
15 and making sure that, you know, the efforts
16 we were putting forward were going to be done
17 in a sustainable way.

18 We made the decision quite
19 early on in the process that some of the key
20 projects that we really felt were going to be
21 make or break for the entire endeavor, we
22 needed to make sure that they were done
23 consistently and done with a, just a
24 consistent implementation across the State,
25 so we decided we would pay for those projects

1 at the state level.

2 Which, obviously, increased our
3 cost because then we'd have to, you know,
4 double everything to go down to the LEAs.
5 What we did to try to help offset that was to
6 build in some additional buy-in, some
7 additional accountability which is to say
8 that, you know, a lot of our high need
9 schools will be getting a good amount of
10 resources from the effort, so we're going to
11 take that they will contribute to some of our
12 key projects that we're funding at the State
13 level.

14 And that allowed us really to
15 not have to focus on those high need schools,
16 but to be able to really put in place a
17 statewide implementation where every school
18 will get these key projects that we really
19 feel are critical.

20 And most of the budget did
21 focus on the teachers and leaders; 64 percent
22 of the money that we're spending at the State
23 level is going towards Assurance 3 and making
24 sure that we're investing in the systems that
25 they have in place to support them and get

1 their work done.

2 In order to do that, we did
3 have to leverage other funding sources to do
4 some of the work around standards and
5 assessments that we referenced in the
6 application. We found State funds to pursue
7 some of the projects going there around the
8 common core standards.

9 We also pursued the statewide
10 longitudinal data system grant. And putting
11 both sets of work in both applications to
12 make sure that we could leverage those funds
13 as needed.

14 And then, in the turnaround
15 area, we are leveraging the SIG grant, as
16 well, to make sure that those two funding
17 sources are working in concert to make sure
18 that we're getting as much work done as
19 possible with the resources available.

20 And again, the sustainability
21 piece really kind of tempered most of our
22 decisions. We tried to look at things in a
23 way that would allow us to bring in pretty
24 intense efforts and initiatives that would
25 invest in the human capital resources that we

1 have in our buildings and give them the
2 skills and resources to really move forward
3 in a sustainable way.

4 Sort of implementing a train
5 the trainer model where we give the initial
6 set of folks in the buildings over the next
7 four years the skills, the knowledge and the
8 best practices to get this work started and
9 to move the ball forward and then they will
10 be, they will have the buy-in and they will
11 have the skill set to continue to move the
12 ball forward as new folks come into the State
13 and we recruit new and effective teachers and
14 leaders.

15 So, that's really how we kind
16 of were able to, I think, leverage that
17 balance between getting this additional
18 resource to really get the work started, but
19 then making sure that we have an eye on how
20 we were going to actually keep it going.

21 DR. LOWERY: And that was one
22 thing that our State legislators asked about,
23 because everyone is concerned about the
24 funding cliff.

25 And so, we actually costed out

1 how much it would be year over year when Race
2 to the Top funds are no longer available for
3 the State cost. And what was it, 1 percent
4 of our...

5 MS. FALCON: It's roughly one
6 percent of --

7 DR. LOWERY: -- one percent of
8 our State... Is what we would need and we can
9 just sort of reprioritize our spending and
10 make sure that we have the funds to sustain
11 the efforts. So, we'll stop there. So, now
12 will Louisiana come up or will we just --

13 MS. WEISS: Yes. Tennessee
14 will come up.

15 REPORTER'S NOTE:

16 [Inaudible -
17 movement].

18 DR. LOWERY: I'm sorry. Dr.
19 Webb, please forgive me. Dr. Webb, please
20 forgive me.

21 PARTICIPANTS: (Laughter).

22 MS. WEISS: Thank you very much
23 for the presentation and we're going to have
24 Jessica introduce the Tennessee team. And if
25 you could switch places, that would be

1 great. Thank you.

2 REPORTER'S NOTE:

3 [Inaudible side

4 conversation].

5 MS. CLARK: So, I'm going to go

6 ahead and introduce the Tennessee team that's

7 going to be presenting. First is Erin

8 O'Hara, who is the Education Policy Advisor

9 for the Governor's Office of State Planning

10 and Policy. Dr. Tim Webb is the Commissioner

11 of Education.

12 Gwen Watson, the Executive

13 Director of the Office of Achievement Gap

14 Elimination at the Tennessee Department of

15 Education, and Will Pinkston, Managing

16 Director of the Tennessee State Collaborative

17 on Reforming Education. So thank you and

18 I'll turn it over to you.

19 DR. WEBB: Thank you, Jessica.

20 We appreciate the opportunity to be here.

21 We're honored to be here. I'm from Tennessee

22 and Louisiana. (Laughing). I'm kidding.

23 It's fine. It's fine.

24 This little clock down here is

25 strangely reminiscent of a clock that we saw

1 in DC, when we go to [Tier 2](inaudible). So, I'm a
2 little nervous about this ticking clock down
3 here. But, anyway, if we could, just before
4 we begin, just take about ten or 15 seconds
5 to have everybody to reintroduce themselves
6 and tell you a little bit about what they do
7 for the great State of Tennessee.

8 My name is Tim Webb and I get
9 the privilege every day of getting up and
10 going to work to serve in the role of
11 Commissioner of Education for our million
12 students and our 78,000 educators. And so,
13 it's quite an honor and a privilege and one
14 that I will never take lightly. And with
15 that being said, Will?

16 MR. PINKSTON: Thanks,
17 Commissioner. My name is Will Pinkston. For
18 the last few years I was a senior advisor
19 with Governor Bradison, in Tennessee.

20 And I left about 60 days ago,
21 right after our Race to the Top application
22 got filed, to go work in a nonprofit
23 organization, called Tennessee SCORE, which
24 is chaired by a former U.S. Senate Majority
25 Leader Bill Brisk. And it's a nonpartisan

1 organization and we're focus on
2 sustainability of some of these reforms.

3 MS. WATSON: Good morning and
4 thank you. My name is Gwen Watson, of
5 course, and I am the Executive Director of
6 the Office of Achievement Gap Elimination.

7 And that office focuses on
8 statewide efforts to assure that students,
9 subgroups of students, are making the grade
10 into the, and we have a staff that works with
11 our high priority schools to address subgroup
12 needs in Tennessee. Additionally, we work
13 with the elementary education office and the
14 urban school districts around the State of
15 Tennessee.

16 MS. O'HARA: My name's Erin
17 O'Hara. I'm with the Governor's Office of
18 State Planning and Policy. The governor's
19 education policy advisor. I had the
20 privilege of coming on to this effort in
21 December, with a three-month old child, and
22 have since been pretty crazy in the last
23 couple months.

24 But, prior to that, I was with
25 the higher education commission in the State,

1 working on, essentially, college readiness
2 issues. And so that's my short background.

3 DR. WEBB: And actually, Erin's
4 daughter was part of our team. (Laughing).
5 She was actually in the office the Sunday
6 that we were actually amending our plan and
7 modifying our plans, the Sunday before the
8 application was due. And she actually had
9 some key strokes involved, so she is actually
10 in --

11 MS. O'HARA: She pushed the
12 buttons.

13 DR. WEBB: -- a charter member
14 of our Race to the Top team.

15 MS. O'HARA: She pushed the
16 button on the DVD.

17 DR. WEBB: So, we're very proud
18 of her. So, you know, we're all as
19 one-minded States or we wouldn't be here.
20 And I think it's important that we talk
21 about, a little bit about our story and how
22 we tell our story within the application and
23 how we got to where we are.

24 You know, we'd like to think
25 that it's a little bit more than just dumb

1 luck that Tennessee, you know, had done some
2 of the things we needed to do. You know, we
3 have a little saying in Tennessee that every
4 now and then even a blind hog will find an
5 acorn.

6 And we use that occasionally,
7 as well. But, we actually think that there
8 was some strategery [sic] behind how we got
9 where we are. Tennessee has had a long, long
10 history of data and it's usually investment
11 data. In 1992, the Education Improvement Act
12 was passed, which pretty much set in play
13 this whole value added system and this
14 teacher effect data system that we've had.

15 The problem has been that we
16 have never used that data. We have not used
17 it effectively at all. And so, part of our
18 whole strategy around this application was to
19 really begin [to] utilize that data, to take the
20 ceiling off student performance in our State,
21 and actually tell the story and be able to
22 diagnose and prescribe for the individual
23 student and the teacher-administrator level.

24 In 2004, we implemented a
25 statewide student management system and we

1 also began the process of implementing a
2 statewide prekindergarten program. We had
3 about 130 classes in the State before that
4 date, now we have almost a thousand, serving
5 about 20,000 of our most at-risk four year
6 olds across Tennessee. So, we are very proud
7 of that process.

8 In '07, we updated our basic
9 education program, which is our funding
10 formula that was created in '92. So, you
11 know, we had not messed with that much at all
12 until 2007. That was huge lift for us.

13 But I think one of the most
14 significant things that helped posture us was
15 the work of the Tennessee Diploma Project,
16 the American Diploma Project in 2008, where
17 we actually implemented -- developed and
18 implemented some very, very rigorous
19 standards, college and career based standards,
20 as many of you have, and pushed those things
21 out to our educators across the State.

22 We are in the process right now
23 of our first year, first iteration of
24 assessments aligned to those standards. And
25 we are about the process of standard setting

1 and setting new definitions for scores and
2 those kinds of things.

3 And so, we find ourselves sort
4 of in a double-edged sword situation. We
5 have these new standards, these new
6 assessments, and we're about to see a huge
7 implementation in our State from the results
8 of those first assessments.

9 So, we see this sort of as a
10 grand moment in time. When we have this
11 money and this, the momentum to change. But,
12 at the same time, we see ourselves falling
13 into a very, very negative public perception
14 because of the dip around the standards and
15 assessments.

16 All that work, the work that
17 the governor had done in going out and having
18 business round table discussions, engaging
19 the community, the community-based,
20 faith-based organizations across the State
21 and really, really, really making education
22 everybody's Number 1 priority. Not just his,
23 but everybody's Number 1 priority across the
24 State, and actually listening to what they
25 had to say.

1 And so, that's what set the
2 stage for everything that we did. And so
3 then, in '09, we went through the process of
4 changing our charter school law. We had a
5 very, very restrictive charter school law and
6 we went through the process, very painfully,
7 of changing that law in the last session.

8 And probably one of the most
9 significant things that happened to us was
10 the governor, in January of this year, called
11 an extraordinary session, a special session
12 of the Tennessee General Assembly. And had
13 that not happened, Will, you're the political
14 strategist here, but had that not happened,
15 we would not possibly have been able to
16 compete for this application.

17 Our First to the Top
18 Legislation, which we called it, went
19 through. It was actually a pre K through 12,
20 or a pre K through 20 piece of legislation.
21 It actually engaged the pre K through 12
22 environment, as well as the higher ed
23 legislation in our State.

24 But, it did a couple of
25 things. It mandated annual teacher

1 evaluations, teacher-administrator
2 evaluations, with 50 percent data as a
3 primary component of that evaluation.

4 It implemented something we
5 call the achievement school, which is a
6 last-ditch, 'Hail Mary' attempt to turn
7 around our lowest performing, persistently
8 lowest performing schools. It was, actually,
9 a grand form of a State takeover, if you
10 will.

11 Setting up the authorization
12 for an alternative salary schedule. We have
13 a 20-lane, show up every year, alternative
14 salary schedule right now. And so we've
15 changed that to the option of having an
16 alternative salary schedule.

17 And then the final thing is an
18 independent hearing ability for suspended or
19 dismissed teachers, tenured teachers. And
20 that was sort of a key piece of that. At the
21 end of the day, that legislation passed.

22 We had called all of our
23 superintendents together in a grand meeting,
24 some 200 superintendents across the State.
25 We have 136 school districts and four State

1 special schools, so the superintendents and
2 their staff came together and we said to
3 them, basically, this is the way it's going
4 to work.

5 We're doing these things in
6 Tennessee. You can either be part of the
7 process or you can be an object of the
8 process. And as a result of that, all 136 of
9 them signed participating agreements to be a
10 part of the process.

11 Yeah. I'm not sure what I
12 would have done if they hadn't. But, anyway,
13 they signed off on it, all 136 of them. But,
14 the bottom line is this: The money is not
15 that significant. I hate to say that because
16 I don't want to look a gift horse in the
17 mouth.

18 But, the most important thing
19 that this legislation does for us is changes
20 expectations in the State of Tennessee. It
21 gives us the resources to change expectations
22 and I think the governor says is better than
23 I could ever possibly say it and that is
24 that, at the end of the day, if a legacy can
25 be left through our administration.

1 It's not all the things. It's
2 about the fact that Tennesseans expect more.
3 Expect more of themselves, expect more of
4 government, at every level. And so that's
5 where we are. And expect more of education,
6 most importantly. And at the core of our
7 application, great teachers and leaders.
8 With that being said, Will?

9 MR. PINKSTON: I think, you
10 know, we were going to do is just kind of go
11 revisit like parts of what Commissioner Webb
12 talked about and give you a little bit more
13 detail where it's appropriate.

14 I'm going to talk for a couple
15 of minutes about standards and then hand it
16 off to Gwen and Erin. I guess, before we say
17 anything, I want to say something that's
18 going to sound trite, but it's really
19 important.

20 And the fact is: Leadership
21 matters. If you've got a strong commissioner
22 or a secretary of education like we do,
23 that's critical. And if you've got a strong
24 governor like we do, it's critical. And our
25 governor is, and I don't just say this

1 because I work for him, he's the best
2 governor in the country.

3 The two years before Race to
4 the Top -- I want to talk about standards.
5 Two years before Race to the Top, we did, and
6 more specifically, he did some really hard
7 work and cleared some political hurdles on
8 standards. He led a statewide conversation
9 personally on the need for college and career
10 ready standards.

11 Met with educators, met with
12 the business community, met with
13 philanthropies around the State, and really
14 began instilling a sense of urgency around
15 some of these issues.

16 In January of '08, our State
17 Board of Education formally adopted those
18 higher standards. And when common core is
19 finalized later this year, we'll adopt them
20 with ease because we've already... they'll
21 line up closely with the work they have
22 already done.

23 We're equally committed to
24 participating in the national work on common
25 assessment. And so, we travel, in our view,

1 on this particular issue, farther and faster
2 than any other State. And that was a key
3 point that we made in the Tennessee
4 application.

5 And so, and it was not just in
6 the application, but in the pitch. And the
7 governor himself, you know, said, you know,
8 we want to leave you with no doubt, U.S. ED,
9 that we are fully committed to that part of
10 fundamental reform.

11 So, for any of you who are
12 similarly situated, I think that's really
13 important for you to hit that point and hit
14 it really hard, because everybody's in a
15 different place on standards. But I think
16 that, if you have got that kind of story that
17 lines up well, I think it's important to
18 really emphasize it. And hand it off to
19 Gwen.

20 MS. WATSON: I think it's
21 important, as we look at Section C, data
22 systems to support instruction, just to
23 recognize that Tennessee had a long history
24 of having a data system in place.

25 We have continuously, since

1 1997, in our schools and system improvement
2 planning process focused on using data to
3 support instruction.

4 I think what was critical in
5 the Race to the Top application was, however,
6 that Tennessee demonstrated the will to
7 actually use that data system and to remove
8 the barrier from using that data system to
9 ensure that support was there for
10 instruction.

11 So, as Dr. Webb has said
12 before, the State was in a pretty unique
13 position and already had in place a very
14 robust and sophisticated data system. The
15 key was that we use this data in an
16 appropriate way and, by so doing, we at some
17 point were not using the data.

18 All teachers didn't have access
19 to the data to use it, to the degree that
20 they could have used it. So, that hurdle was
21 cleared. Secondly, the use of that data to
22 inform teacher evaluation processes, that
23 hurdle was cleared.

24 And so, Tennessee demonstrated,
25 through the passage of the First to the Top

1 Act, the will to use the data system that was
2 in place and to continue to build out that
3 data system beyond the K-12, K-16, on to a
4 P-20 look at the data.

5 Also, part of our emphasis on
6 the data use was what Dr. Webb often referred
7 to as our 360-degree look at the student,
8 recognizing that those data, that data
9 systems that were outside of schools also
10 impacted student achievement.

11 So, building systems that will
12 allow us to interface, interact with other
13 agencies that impact student achievement, and
14 especially in support of low performing
15 schools, would be essential and so we built
16 that into our plan.

17 Also, when we talk about the
18 data system, how do we, how do we learn from
19 the lessons that we have on data. We built
20 into our system evaluation processes working
21 with folks like the National Center for
22 Performance Incentive to continue to evaluate
23 our processes and help us better use
24 value-added.

25 Higher ed played a role in

1 that, in that part of the teacher preparation
2 program involved bringing the use of, or the
3 knowledge of, the use of data into the
4 teacher preparation programs, making sure
5 that we were using all of the assets that we
6 had from our rural systems, and they're work
7 with the use of data, to our large urban
8 systems and their use of data to the table
9 was critical.

10 I think one word kind of sums
11 it up and that would be, "Synergy"; bringing
12 all of those players to the center, to the
13 point of recognizing that Tennessee is rich
14 in data. We are rich in opportunity. So how
15 we bring everybody to the table with a
16 guiding vision for how we use that data, to
17 truly inform instruction was one of our
18 strengths, I think, in our application.

19 So, I think, again, the key
20 here is to make sure that Tennessee not only
21 use the data, but also serve as a learning
22 lab for other States as we roll out,
23 implement Race to the Top in terms of how
24 data truly is used to inform instruction.
25 Erin?

1 MS. O'HARA: I'm going to talk
2 a little bit about our teachers and leaders
3 section and then a little bit also about how
4 we developed our plan.

5 But, one thing I want to say to
6 preface is that, listening to Delaware tell
7 their story, our story and Delaware's story
8 are really very similar. Very much about
9 collaboration. Very much about having all of
10 the, all of the different partners at the
11 table over a long period of time.

12 When Dr. Webb was talking about
13 the years of reform, having been in higher ed
14 and now more in the K-12 realm, really, we've
15 been having lots of conversations between
16 higher ed and K-12 over the last five to
17 seven years.

18 And I think that's a
19 significant part of what has put us in this
20 kind of position, as well. And at the same
21 time, also having those same conversations,
22 and difficult conversations with our
23 teacher's union over time.

24 The governor had built a good
25 bit of goodwill with the teachers' union and

1 we'll talk a little bit more about that in a
2 minute. But, as it relates to teacher
3 quality and really as it relates to the plan
4 as a whole and the sort of theme that was in
5 Tennessee was that we were building on those
6 things that were happening in the State
7 already and building on our successes.

8 And this was really very much,
9 we're lucky in a lot of ways, this was the
10 next logical step for us to -- the plan that
11 we put together is really where the State was
12 headed anyway. And the message that, Will
13 mentioned the term, "Pitch", that's how we
14 talked about it in State.

15 That when the group went up to
16 DC, it was a pitch for an investment. When I
17 said that to the team from the Department of
18 Education, they sort of laughed because they
19 hadn't heard that term because they use the
20 term, "Presentation." So, I guess we thought
21 about it a little bit differently.

22 But, that this is really an
23 investment in something we're already doing,
24 I think, was a critical message for us. In
25 talking about teacher quality, we really were

1 building on efforts that were happening in
2 Chattanooga, Knox County and Memphis,
3 specifically, but across the State, to look
4 at evaluation, to look at compensation, to
5 look at reform of human resources as a
6 whole.

7 When we moved to make, to
8 putting together legislation and looking at
9 annual teacher evaluation, we were in a
10 position where we needed to do that because,
11 in Memphis, the teacher effectiveness
12 initiative there, funded by the Gates
13 Foundation was the deep drive initiative.

14 They needed to have teacher
15 evaluation and they were moving to a certain
16 percentage of that teacher evaluation that
17 was based on data. And so, it was the next
18 logical step for us and we would have had to
19 remove the barriers that we removed, in terms
20 of annual evaluation anyway, in order to make
21 it possible for them to do the work that they
22 needed to do.

23 As such, it made sense then to
24 do that in a statewide effort. We already
25 did have, or we do have a statewide

1 evaluation system, more or less, in place and
2 so that made it easy for us to do.

3 However, it was not an easy
4 conversation. About getting to a place where
5 we would have 50 percent of our annual
6 teacher evaluations based on student
7 achievement data. And we are not done with
8 that conversation. We're continuing to have
9 it.

10 We have an evaluation committee
11 that is trying to put together the actual
12 framework around that. But, essentially, the
13 point was to make it so that we could have --
14 so that, as Gwen said, we could use data in
15 the evaluation in a way that we hadn't done
16 before.

17 And then that we made that
18 annual and then that we did it 50 percent
19 based on student achievement data. Of that
20 35 percent is based on our value-added data
21 or a comparable measure of growth for those
22 teachers who don't have it.

23 That's going to be a difficult
24 thing for us to figure out. We're still in
25 process on that. And still having that

1 conversation, and very regularly, with the
2 union about what that looks like. The other
3 couple of things that we did within that have
4 already been touched on, so I won't talk too
5 much about them.

6 In forming tenure decisions,
7 teacher prep programs. Teacher prep programs
8 now have the ability to look at their own
9 students. So when they, when the students
10 leave the teacher prep program and go to
11 teach, now the teachers can -- the prep
12 program can actually look at what those
13 students have done and when they have gone in
14 and so we can trace back.

15 That was an important thing for
16 us to be able to change, as well. I want to
17 spend a minute just talking about how we
18 developed our plan, and this -- what worked
19 for us and, you know, just to give you a
20 sense of it.

21 It would not necessarily work
22 everywhere, but we purposely assembled a
23 small group of people around the four
24 assurances. So, people that had expertise in
25 those different areas, who were from

1 different parts of the State or from
2 different backgrounds.

3 So, we had some foundation
4 people at the table. We also had higher
5 education involved in the conversation.
6 State Board of Education, Department of
7 Education, the Governor's Office. Internal
8 and external opinions, that was important for
9 us.

10 And then we had a real
11 strategy, similar to Delaware, around a
12 commitment to sustainability. And that was
13 important to our legislature. It's also
14 important, you know, over time it's important
15 to the governor, as well. And essentially,
16 within our budgets and our plan, we were, as
17 I said, building on things we have already
18 done.

19 So, there's not a lot in there
20 that we haven't done in some way before. We
21 were basically just taking those things that
22 we knew were working and expanded them out.

23 The last thing that I want to
24 say is that we did a lot of change and a lot
25 of review. You heard Dr. Webb mention my

1 daughter at the... On Sunday.

2 We got outside input and we got
3 it at a very late stage of the game. We had
4 a legislative session going on, it's in our
5 last week leading up to the application.
6 And, as well, we were getting last minute.

7 So, if you feel like there are
8 things that you can't change in the latter
9 part of things, we did a lot of changes to
10 things that we had thought might work based
11 on national expert opinion, based on
12 superintendent opinion, based on foundation
13 opinion in that last little bit.

14 And it was difficult. And it
15 was, you know, around-the-clock hours. And
16 we had to bring our children. But, it
17 worked. And so, we were lucky to have that
18 much input.

19 MR. PINKSTON: Yeah. And I
20 think, you know, the result for us was really
21 bipartisan and very deep abiding statewide
22 political support. Once we got to the point
23 where it was time to file the application, we
24 have 100 percent of our districts signed on.
25 As Commissioner Webb said we've got 136

1 districts; 93 percent of our local unions
2 signed on.

3 We even had -- we're in the
4 middle, actually, this year of an election
5 year. We're going to have a new governor in
6 January of 2011. We had all of our
7 gubernatorial candidates sign on to support
8 this, which was, which was a feat.

9 And the key thing, especially
10 when it came to that new law that we passed
11 in January, but also with just making the
12 case of sustained activity over time, our key
13 message to U.S. Ed was that we're not doing
14 pilot projects. Our key reforms are the
15 law. They're going to be implemented
16 statewide.

17 And, you know, this is not
18 Tinker Toy stuff. This is a, this is a real
19 opportunity to scale real reform across an
20 entire State.

21 Erin talked about the
22 difficulty of going into a special session.
23 You know, anytime you try to pass anything
24 through a legislature it's difficult, as you
25 guys know, but particularly when you're doing

1 it with that kind of focused lens, when
2 you're asking them to really upend the
3 education laws in some pretty significant
4 ways, it was tough.

5 And I'll say it wasn't all
6 luck. We spent a good deal of time thinking
7 about a strategy for going in to the
8 legislature. We knew, basically in October
9 of last year, that we were probably going to
10 have to go in to the legislature in early
11 January, which is when they normally come
12 back to do things.

13 And what we did was say, okay,
14 given what we think we need to do, let's
15 spend that 60-day period in November and
16 December creating, if it's possible, an air
17 of inevitability around some things. And
18 that's really what we did.

19 And there were some things that
20 were happening naturally around that time.
21 For example, in mid November, the Gates
22 Foundation invested a significant amount of
23 money in Memphis. As Erin mentioned, that's
24 our largest school district of 100,000
25 students.

1 So, once that happened, that
2 became sort of a pace car in some respects
3 for some of these reforms. We opened
4 negotiations with our union on December 1.
5 The governor did that personally. And
6 Commissioner Webb. To begin kind of talking
7 with them about what he thought was going to
8 be required to make us successful.

9 And of course, everybody, I
10 think, saw the writing on the walls at that
11 point. In mid December, we announced our
12 STEM partnership with Patel, which is a world
13 class research and development enterprise
14 based in Ohio. They manage about a half
15 dozen national labs around the country,
16 including Oak Ridge National Laboratory in
17 our State.

18 The STEM thing was extremely
19 important for us. If you go back and look at
20 the scores, if we hadn't had that 15 points,
21 Georgia would be sitting at this table right
22 now, not us. So, we said we're not going to
23 leave any points on the field. We're going
24 to get everything we can.

25 And the STEM thing was

1 important. So, if you have strong -- you may
2 not have a Patel. But if you have strong
3 STEM industries, health care, other
4 scientific enterprises, I really encourage
5 you to think out of the box with them.

6 Also, in mid-December, our
7 governor was named co-chair of Achieve, which
8 was a big deal for us, given all the work we
9 had done on standards. And, again,
10 positioning us in a national spotlight.

11 That same week, he took
12 advantage of that and basically said, "We're
13 going to gavel on a special session in
14 January. Now let's spend the next 20 days or
15 so talking about what that means."

16 In the middle of it, you know,
17 we launched some new graduation initiatives
18 with the National Governors Association. The
19 governor himself, leadership matters, he
20 barnstormed the State the week of January
21 4th, went to every major media market and
22 made the case for reform.

23 The special session began the
24 week after. He addressed the legislature; we
25 reached an agreement with our union. And by

1 January 15th, which was about four days
2 before the application was due, our First to
3 the Top Act passed in the senate, 29 to 3, in
4 the house 83 to 10. And Erin finished
5 writing the application at that point. So,
6 you know, again, we had --

7 MS. O'HARA: -- I wouldn't
8 recommend doing a legislative session at the
9 same time as you're writing an application,
10 but it did work for us.

11 MR. PINKSTON: (Laughing).
12 Yeah. But the point is, you know, we had
13 some momentum moving on some issues, but we
14 also used the catalyst of Race to the Top to
15 force some things through that, frankly,
16 would not have happened if not for the
17 opportunity to compete.

18 I guess the last thing I would
19 say, you know, referring back to Commissioner
20 Webb, is as you're writing your plans, think
21 about sustainability, political
22 sustainability. That matters, too.

23 Delaware and Tennessee are two
24 extremely different States. One of the
25 things that sets us apart among, you know, a

1 million others is they are at the dawn of a
2 new gubernatorial administration right now.
3 We're actually in the 11th hour almost.

4 Our governor has about nine
5 months left. And so one of our key messages
6 to U.S. ED was, look, the Governor and
7 Commissioner Webb will not be in those
8 positions a year from now, but there will be
9 people who will be supportive, including the
10 future governor and the future commissioner,
11 whoever that will be.

12 We brought with us into our
13 pitch the speaker pro tem of the State
14 senate, who is a Republican. Our governor's
15 a Democrat. I mean she, basically, said, you
16 know, you know, we're here to make sure that
17 these things are sustainable across
18 administrations.

19 And we have got a strong
20 network of philanthropy and education reform
21 activists and people like my new boss,
22 Senator Brisk, who are committed to kind of
23 bridging all that.

24 So, as you think about, not
25 just the application, but just for the

1 purposes of sustaining your reforms in
2 general, think about the sustainability
3 strategies and how you bridge gubernatorial
4 administrations, if necessary, but also
5 legislative cycles.

6 MR. WEBB: What was the score
7 again in the Senate and the House?

8 MR. PINKSTON: 29 to 3 in the
9 S and 83 to 10 in the House.

10 DR. WEBB: Just for the record,
11 I worked the Senate.

12 MR. PINKSTON: I knew that.

13 DR. WEBB: Okay. So, that
14 being said, I think that pretty much tells
15 the Tennessee story. I talked a little about
16 the school district and turning around low
17 performing schools, so I won't bother you
18 with a lot of detail around that.

19 Other than the fact that we
20 have 324 schools right now that are in some
21 sort of status and we anticipate those
22 numbers growing exponentially this summer as
23 we roll out the results of the new assessment
24 and that sort of thing.

25 So, that being said, I guess

1 that pretty much concludes our comments.
2 Good to see Ken Meyer here. We've been
3 playing phone tag for a while and we had to
4 come all the way to Minnesota to see each
5 other. Thank you.

6 MS. WEISS: Great. Thank you.
7 We're going to actually take a break. You
8 guys are going to get a nice long one. Back
9 here at 11:30. And we will go into a Q and A
10 session, so get your questions ready during
11 the break. That's your assignment. Thank
12 you. See you back here at 11:30.

13 REPORTER'S NOTE: Whereupon,
14 a short recess is taken.

15 MS. WEISS: All right. Thank
16 you all for coming back. And now this is the
17 audience participation part of our program.
18 Ann and I were saying before the session that
19 on a successful day, neither of us gets a word
20 in edgewise.

21 So, we really do want to
22 encourage you guys to use this time, not only
23 to ask questions of the folks from Delaware
24 and Tennessee, who are sitting up here with
25 us, but also of each other. So, from our

1 point of view, you're more than welcome to
2 ask questions.

3 You're also more than welcome
4 to answer somebody else's questions. We will
5 be running around with mics, so mic folks are
6 already around the room. Just raise your
7 hand and we'll get a mic to you quickly. And
8 we do want to seriously encourage you to turn
9 this into your time.

10 We have two sessions like this
11 planned, one before lunch and one right after
12 lunch. The before lunch session, as you can
13 see from the slides, is really about the big
14 picture process questions around putting the
15 application together.

16 And the one after lunch focuses
17 more on the content and reform area
18 questions. But, beyond that, there is pretty
19 much no particular ground rules we have.
20 Tennessee and Delaware asked me to make sure
21 and tell you that they're not perfect. No,
22 they got a lot of comments back from their
23 reviewers, too.

24 And for them those comments are
25 things that they'll take into account as

1 they're thinking through the implementation
2 of their plans. But, a lot of you had great
3 ideas in specific areas and have a tremendous
4 amount to offer to each other and to your
5 colleagues.

6 Obviously, Delaware and
7 Tennessee are sort of now out of the compete
8 mode and into the sharing mode, so that's why
9 they're up here. But, just to reemphasize
10 that there is no one right way to do any of
11 this. The answers are going to be very State-
12 dependent and very much rooted in the context
13 of your particular State.

14 So, with that, we did want to
15 just provide a forum for you to ask and
16 answer questions of people who can actually
17 engage in the conversations with you much
18 better than we at the Department can.

19 So, with that, I am happy to
20 sort of kick off the questions. But, again,
21 jump in as soon as you're ready to or with
22 any questions that you have got.

23 So, so, one of the questions
24 that I think you guys touched on a little bit
25 during your, during your presentations, but

1 I'd love to hear more about, is just the
2 process that you went through of developing
3 the strategic agenda for your State. Like
4 very literally, how did you organize
5 yourselves to do this?

6 What committees did you have?
7 What meetings did you have? And how in the
8 process of doing this did you organize it in
9 a way to prevent yourself from getting
10 siloed.

11 Because one of the things that I
12 think did distinguish your plans is that they
13 were very integrated. It wasn't like a bunch
14 of separate fill-in-the-blanks. They were
15 very coherent. So, how did you organize
16 yourselves first for coherence, as well as to
17 get the work done.

18 MR. PALMER: In Delaware, as I
19 said earlier, we put together this Innovation
20 Action Team, you know, this group of
21 stakeholders, across all of the four
22 assurances, brought them together as a group
23 to make sure that we'd get the dialogue
24 going, you know, with all these various
25 stakeholders. Okay. Nonprofit

1 organizations. You know, schoolteachers,
2 principals, superintendents.

3 We then structured it into
4 those four separate teams. I'll just stick
5 with the four. The fifth one was really an
6 internal process improvement program that we
7 did in Delaware. But, we pulled those same
8 stakeholders, other representatives from
9 those organizations, into these separate
10 teams.

11 People, we had individuals who
12 were on multiple teams. Okay? So, we had
13 cross-border, cross-fertilization. People
14 who were on our, you know, the Assurance 3
15 for the teacher effectiveness were also
16 taking part in the Assurance 4 for the
17 turnaround schools dialogue.

18 We had individuals who were on,
19 you know, the standards and assess in
20 Assurance 1, who were also involved, you
21 know, in the data discussion. So we had
22 people crossing the all different borders to
23 make sure that we get people seeing all the
24 various attributes that we needed to go
25 towards.

1 We also had, you know, a, Dr.
2 Lowery had assigned an assistant secretary or
3 a director level individual as the owner of
4 each of those assurances. Those owners,
5 those subject matter experts and myself and
6 Dr. Lowery and Dan Cruce, we met to make sure
7 that we were talking and getting all of our
8 ducks lined up to make sure that everything
9 matched going across assurances, by
10 assurances.

11 Dan kind of alluded to, you
12 know, it's quite obvious, you know, what you
13 do with your standards and assessment is
14 really going to feed into what you do
15 with your data systems, is really going to
16 feed into what you're going to be doing with
17 your teacher effectiveness, you know,
18 leadership measurements.

19 So we had to make sure that we
20 kept a dialogue going across all those
21 different areas.

22 MS. WEISS: So, how many people
23 were on each of those teams and how
24 frequently did they meet? And how did you
25 just structure yourselves?

1 MR. PALMER: We had, uh, two of
2 the teams, Assurance 1 and 2, were the
3 smaller of the two. There were 15 people on
4 those teams.

5 MS. WEISS: Still a lot.

6 MR. PALMER: It's still a lot.
7 But, there were a lot of constituencies that
8 we needed to make sure were there represented
9 at the tables here. The Assurance 3 and 4,
10 there were at least 20. And you know, the
11 turnaround schools for the Assurance 4, we
12 probably had a couple of meetings at upwards
13 of 25 people in the room.

14 But, we met, we set up a
15 schedule, you know, literally the entire
16 month of July. Every Monday in the month of
17 July going into the first week of August, for
18 five weeks in a row, our Assurance 1 team, we
19 met every Monday morning for three and a half
20 hours. Okay?

21 So, we had the same faces
22 continue to dialogue, push it forward, get to
23 know each other, get the comfort level so
24 that people really were comfortable talking,
25 sharing their ideas.

1 The same thing, each of those
2 teams was a Monday was Assurance 1, Tuesday
3 was the Assurance 2 for the data folks. And
4 we did it over a five-week period of time to
5 make sure we got everybody really comfortable
6 and kept a dialogue going.

7 DR. LOWERY: If I may give some
8 background information. That was a
9 culminating exercise that was led by the
10 Department of Education. But, in Delaware,
11 we have a concern called Vision 2015.

12 And that collaborative has been
13 doing -- and it was funded by the business
14 community, but again included very eclectic
15 stakeholders. They had been for over the
16 last four years, they put about 30 million
17 dollars into public ed over the last four,
18 developing a blueprint for public education,
19 too, that included early childhood and
20 effectiveness of teacher leaders.

21 And then, once Governor Markell
22 was elected, he put together a transition
23 team around every agency. And the agency for
24 the Department of Education and Public Ed
25 also had given him feedback and he had

1 actually developed a blueprint for education
2 going forward.

3 So, the work that Jim led
4 during the summer was more facile and
5 manageable because we had those two backdrops
6 that had preceded even the election of the
7 governor.

8 MS. WHALEN: So, can I ask,
9 what did it mean to own a team? You said
10 that there was an individual who was
11 responsible for that team and then you met
12 then as a leadership team. What did it mean
13 to own that program and then what did you
14 discuss at the leadership meetings?

15 MR. PALMER: Well, as I said
16 earlier also, we did not set up these
17 individual teams to try to drive to a single
18 consensus that everybody had to buy into,
19 which means we certainly weren't going to go
20 with lowest common denominator.

21 There was going to be a
22 threshold. We knew where we needed to get
23 to. Some of the people in the room in our
24 meetings were there already. There were
25 others who needed coaching, convincing,

1 collaboration, let them get their ideas and
2 drive it forward.

3 But the owner, you know, of
4 that particular team, his or her
5 responsibility and partnership with me was
6 let's pull together all that we've heard in
7 these meetings. Let's get the flip charts
8 that we've been collecting for all of these
9 meetings. Let's sit down and the owner and
10 myself literally wrote the plan down.

11 DR. LOWERY: I think the
12 question, too, was the owner was the DOE
13 specialist.

14 MR. PALMER: Yeah, the DOE
15 specialist. Yeah.

16 MS. WEISS: The person who knew
17 that content --

18 MR. PALMER: -- the person who
19 was the subject matter expert, the assistant
20 secretary or, in our data world, our director
21 for the data systems for DOE. You know, he
22 and a partner were the owners for the
23 Assurance 2.

24 But that core subject matter
25 expert who owns that capability in the DOE in

1 the State environment, you know, kind of
2 owned it. So it was their job, with me as a
3 facilitator, let's pull all the information
4 together, then let's start boiling it down
5 and getting it so that we can get this into
6 the bullet points, into a real life
7 document.

8 And when we finished at the end
9 of August, we had a 25-page document that Dr.
10 Lowery then presented to the governor.
11 Okay? And then we went to the next round
12 after that, that she can talk about later,
13 where we brought in, you know, outside
14 experts to help us turn that 25-page
15 strategic plan into the full application and
16 appendices with all the facts and figures and
17 data that you guys were looking for.

18 MS. WEISS: So, you didn't
19 really organize these conversations
20 necessarily around the application. You
21 organized them around strategy and then took
22 that and turned it into the answers.

23 MS. LOWERY: We transformed our
24 strategic plan into our actual application
25 for our Race to the Top.

1 MR. PALMER: Yes. Yes.

2 MS. LOWERY: And I think that's
3 a lot of the reason that we got buy-in
4 because people felt that the crux, the major
5 content of the plan evolved from within the
6 State and just aligned very well with the
7 Race for the Top prescription.

8 MS. WEISS: Tim, I see you
9 nodding there.

10 DR. WEBB: Yeah. We did
11 basically the same thing. We had done so
12 much work around the project and standards
13 and assessments already. We had this robust
14 data system.

15 So, we actually just tried to
16 actually organize around our success factors
17 to date in the places that we needed to take
18 those to the next level. We had a ten or 12
19 person team, basically.

20 But most of those team members
21 were brought in off of the other things that
22 we had been working on, those being the
23 standards and the assessment and the
24 assessment advisory council that the governor
25 had already appointed.

1 So, but there were, there was
2 tremendous -- and I'm not supposed to use the
3 work stakeholder in conversation with
4 anything to do with our governor. But,
5 because he doesn't like the term anymore.
6 But, constituents, I guess is the better
7 word. Yeah. The constituent buy-in was
8 phenomenal.

9 And so we actually, we did some
10 of same things, though. We actually, the
11 people who we delegated parts and pieces of,
12 you know, the great teachers and leaders to
13 specific people to get ideas and bring out
14 ideas back to the overall committee. But we
15 had a much smaller working group. But it was
16 representative of the entire State.

17 MS. WEISS: So, you had like
18 ten to 12 people on your working group? And
19 how did you organize yourselves?

20 DR. WEBB: Around assurances.
21 But the assurances were aligned to the stuff
22 that we'd already been doing. So, you know,
23 we tried to tie everything to the work that
24 was in progress already. So, the buy-in was
25 not that difficult for us either.

1 You know, the big thing was
2 they were around teachers and leaders and
3 using the data, obviously, and evaluations
4 and that sort of thing. So, that was where
5 we had to do most of the buy-in work. We
6 really didn't have -- everybody was at the
7 table already for the most part. Is that a
8 fair assessment? Yeah.

9 MS. WHALEN: So, how did you
10 take discrete pieces of work and pull it
11 together into a more comprehensive narrative
12 or a more reformed agenda for your State?
13 You talk about building on your successes,
14 but those were pretty discrete programs.

15 DR. WEBB: Yeah, they were.
16 But at the center of everything that, that, I
17 mean, because Governor Rosen has maintained
18 with the strategy throughout all of his
19 administration has been that you can take all
20 the technologies out of the classroom and you
21 can take all the wonderful gee-whiz stuff out
22 of the classroom and, if you have great
23 teachers in a classroom, students are going
24 to learn at a very high level.

25 And so, our entire application

1 and our entire process and mindset was around
2 highly effective teachers and great leaders
3 being the core of our education. So, we kind
4 of tried to weaver everything back to that
5 center and that one fabric. You know, that
6 was his marching order to us, but also it was
7 just the theme of the entire administration.

8 MS. WEISS: Yes. That's
9 interesting. Because when you have a
10 thematic center like that, that leaps across
11 everything, and it does prevent silos just
12 naturally.

13 DR. WEBB: And it gives you a
14 place to focus and bring back to the middle.

15 DR. LOWERY: And with us, I
16 think the crux of our integration was that we
17 need to have college and career standards and
18 have a robust assessment that can chart
19 growth as aligned to those college and career
20 standards.

21 And if one would read our plan,
22 they would see, once we focus on standards
23 and assessment, that then informed how we
24 were going to take our longitudinal data
25 system to the next level so that we could

1 integrate those data and use them robustly in
2 teaching and learning.

3 It informed how we're going to
4 integrate our new teacher leader evaluation
5 system. Because, without those measures, I
6 really don't believe that either our teachers
7 or leaders would have bought into the new
8 evaluation system if we had not had an
9 assessment that would allow us to chart the
10 growth within a year and get immediate
11 results so we'd get feedback.

12 And in the persistently lower
13 achieving schools, actually, naturally folded
14 into that because, with these data, with an
15 accountability system that's going to tie
16 teacher leader effectiveness to the student
17 achievement, we were able to integrate all of
18 those things very robustly. It just
19 integrated naturally.

20 MS. WEISS: So, folks, I want
21 to remind you, feel free, raise your hand and
22 get into this and ask questions. We really,
23 I mean, this is interesting and I'm delighted
24 to sit up here and just ask interesting questions
25 that I think are good.

1 But, really, we want to make
2 sure that it's meeting your needs. And the
3 same for the folks on the webinar. Don't
4 forget you can just put your questions in
5 through the chat window and ask them that way
6 and we'll make sure we ask them here. All
7 right.

8 MR. MITCHELL: Brad Mitchell
9 from Ohio. To echo off an old notion of it's
10 easier to draft a constitution than to run
11 one, I'm much more interested in the
12 implementing aspect of it now, rather than
13 the writing of it.

14 What could you tell us about
15 Bambi in the headlights and, now that you've
16 got it, what you're doing to implement it
17 because I think that backward mapping would
18 help us because we're going to have to catch
19 up to speed a little faster than perhaps the
20 first round. What have you learned about
21 implementation once you've got it?

22 DR. LOWERY: Part of our
23 application process was to develop -- we knew
24 capacity is a huge concern in getting this
25 work done and getting it done within a timely

1 manner. So, part of our application includes
2 three offices or units.

3 One is project management,
4 which will be Jim and he can talk more
5 definitely about that. The other, the
6 teacher leader effectiveness unit that will
7 be where we will house our alternative routes
8 in certification, our data coaches that will
9 be working with teachers, and our development
10 coaches that will be working our evaluation
11 system.

12 And the third is a turnaround
13 office where, we will be bringing people in
14 who will facilitate any introduction of
15 charter management organizations or any
16 models, any of those four models. They will
17 do that work.

18 And that's one of the things
19 that we heard loudly and clearly from our
20 superintendents and school leaders is what we
21 need for you to be, if we're going to do this
22 work and do it well, is a resource.

23 We don't need, nor do we have
24 time, to go out and find these things. We
25 expect the partner to do that. Jim can talk

1 a little more robustly about what we're going
2 to do with the project management office.

3 MR. PALMER: Yes. I mean, it's
4 really going to get into core project
5 management and programs management
6 processes. It's one thing to say here's a
7 whole set of metrics, whether it's high school
8 graduation, scores, we're here today, we want
9 to be here tomorrow (indicating).

10 But, it's getting into the
11 weeds and saying, specifically, what actual
12 projects are you in the LEA and us in the DOE
13 literally going to put in place? How are we
14 going to measure what you're going to do?
15 What the results are going to be from each
16 individual project.

17 What are the metrics we're going
18 to see? End result metrics? Interim metrics?
19 Milestones going through. Having that kind
20 of a detailed dialogue so that the program
21 management office, you know, with myself and
22 the other folks that will be there, that's
23 our job is to make sure, as Lillian likes to
24 say, our job is to make sure that the trains
25 all run on time.

1 So, it's going to be a lot of
2 into the weeds, a lot of setting up program
3 plans, project plans, holding people
4 accountable for it and then making sure that
5 we've got all the right metrics. All the
6 metrics...

7 Everybody's got to buy into
8 it. It's got to be achievable. Everyone's
9 got to accept that this is a good thing to
10 measure. If I'm hitting these metrics, my
11 project is proceeding as planned, these folks
12 are going to be happy at the end of the day
13 when we meet with them on a periodic basis.
14 But, it's all really about detailed project
15 management.

16 DR. LOWERY: One more thing and
17 then I'll stop. What we're doing is
18 reactivating the Innovation Action Team,
19 because that was the umbrella steering
20 committee that took us through the strategic
21 planning process, through the R and D, to the
22 Race to the Top application.

23 So they're going to be the
24 umbrella organization that advises us also
25 and kind of make sure that push at good

1 tension to make sure we're on track.

2 MR. PALMER: And one of the key
3 people that we're going to have in this, at
4 least one if not more, we're going to bring
5 in data analysts. Some people who are going
6 to know all our data systems, where are we
7 going to be able to pull this information as
8 it goes.

9 Because the last we want to be
10 doing during the entire course of these
11 distinct programs and all these projects is
12 having people putting together measures from
13 an Excel spreadsheet.

14 We've got to get as much out of
15 our automated data systems as we possibly can
16 to make sure that it flows smoothly and data
17 collection doesn't become a really painful
18 process. Because if it is, it will just
19 die.

20 We have got to maintain a
21 manual data collection process, it's really
22 going to be difficult to get to where we want
23 to go. So we have got to be able to leverage
24 what we've got in our data systems today.

25 DR. WEBB: We have a very

1 similar approach in that we are a, we have
2 had a project management oversight process in
3 Tennessee for a while. As a matter of fact,
4 that's how we actually carried out our LDS
5 grant, one of the original IES grants that we
6 got for longitudinal data system stuff.

7 That whole process is being
8 revitalized and reinstitutionalized. We also
9 have established that First to the Top
10 oversight office.

11 Actually, that works hand...you
12 know, right next to the governor's office as
13 an advisor to oversee all of the pieces that
14 are outside of the Tennessee Department of
15 Education, the Tennessee Higher Education
16 Commission and our public and private
17 partners.

18 And then we also have
19 established an education delivery unit,
20 working hand in hand with Sir Michael Barber
21 and those folks around, around how we do
22 these things that are department centric.

23 We also have a teacher
24 evaluation advisory committee, a 15-member
25 team, that was set up in statute to do all

1 the work around the annual evaluations and
2 defining a lot of these things and data
3 questions. So that committee is well
4 underway right now and doing that heavy
5 lift.

6 And then we're in the process,
7 even today, in the field, rolling out the
8 scopes of work, the local scopes of work
9 process, and putting that information out in
10 the field working in partnership with Senator
11 Frist's organization SCORE, as well as others.

12 But, our whole process and our
13 whole concept was around building capacities
14 for sustainability. And we did not,
15 intentionally did not, as Delaware said
16 earlier, we intentionally assured our
17 legislature that we would not set up
18 recurring obligations of debt after the
19 school years.

20 So, everything in our
21 application is aimed at building capacity,
22 building human capital for sustainability.
23 So, a large portion of our work will be
24 around partnering with entities to come in
25 and help build that capacity over the next

1 four years. So that, when they leave, they
2 don't create a vacuum as well.

3 So, that's where we are today.

4 The evaluation advisory committee, the scopes
5 of work and then setting in place these
6 oversight governance issues. But, the
7 project management oversight process is going
8 to be instrumental to us pulling off
9 everything that we say.

10 MR. UNKNOWN: The first the 90
11 days with LEAs, what are you doing?

12 DR. WEBB: Right now?

13 MR. UNKNOWN: Yeah.

14 DR. WEBB: We are actually in
15 the field with them right now. We have set
16 up all sorts of support mechanisms for them
17 to help them think more globally and more
18 boldly than they traditionally have thought.
19 But we have been very specific about the kind
20 of things that we will and will not approve
21 in that scope of work from them.

22 But, we put support structure
23 in place behind them to have folks that can
24 help them think around the process and think
25 about what needs to go in that application.

1 And so, what we're doing, we
2 have field service centers. They're not
3 leases, they're not intermittent delivery
4 units or anything like that. But, they're
5 microcosms of the department and we have nine
6 of those. They're the hub of our
7 implementation and the hub of our work in the
8 field.

9 So they will actually be one on
10 one with these school districts; we have
11 136. None of these field service centers
12 have more than 20 school districts that they
13 serve. So they'll be working with those
14 school districts individually to build out
15 the scopes and then we'll be in
16 communication.

17 The process then is they will
18 bring those scopes to us and our leadership
19 team, our oversight team will then approve or
20 disapprove them and send them back and
21 continue their conversations. Our goal is to
22 have ours done by May 27th. That's our goal.

23 DR. LOWERY: We had internal
24 consultants to come in and work with us on
25 pulling together the grant.

1 And that same consultant is now
2 coming back to us, because they know Delaware
3 as well as we know Delaware, and they're
4 going to actually come up -- our districts
5 have really asked for forms, some kind of
6 road map of consistency across the board so
7 they can share, too.

8 They're going to come back in,
9 they've back in the end of this week, Dan.
10 They are going to be back in at the end of
11 the week and working closely with Jim to give
12 that information, so that we can pull that
13 out. And we're going to meet by county.

14 We're going to go in by
15 county. We're real small; we can do that.
16 And meet with their leadership teams. And
17 what we're planning to do is, once we give
18 them the general overview of the scope of
19 work and the expectations, have breakout
20 sessions at that time so we can kind of give
21 that initial technical assistance and get
22 them up and running.

23 MR. PALMER: Just one quick
24 point on that. Dr. Lowery had put in place,
25 you know, a year ago, liaisons to each

1 individual school district. People who were
2 in the DOE organization, that their job was
3 going to be reaching out on a continual
4 basis, on a district by district basis, to
5 keep lines of communication going on all
6 issues, not just Race to the Top.

7 But just everything going on
8 from the LEA level up to the DOE level. That
9 process was aggregated also at the county
10 level. So we're kind of leveraging that
11 previous communication coordination process
12 at the county level to bring in this
13 communication.

14 And the meetings that we've
15 got, our 90-day plan is all set up, you know,
16 starting probably next week going out there
17 meeting with every one of the superintendents
18 at the county level. Dan's going to be
19 meeting with charter schools, as well, to
20 drive this dialogue. And get us to June
21 28th.

22 MS. WEISS: Greg, I know there
23 is a question back there, but also raise your
24 hand if you have questions so that the mic
25 folks can find you.

1 MR. VITTI: Hi, Nikolai Vitti
2 from the Florida Department of Education.
3 One aspect that I've been interested in is
4 how States are defining successful turnaround
5 with schools in the lowest five percent or
6 the persistently lowest achieving schools.

7 So, as a State, how did you
8 define that in your application as far as the
9 goals, that those schools that are
10 implementing one of the intervention models
11 must meet? Is that in one year? Is that at
12 the end of the four-year SIG process, Race to
13 the Top process, etcetera?

14 MS. WEISS: Would you mind if I
15 ask that we hold that until after lunch
16 because I think that's when we want to get
17 into some of the more detailed content part?

18 MR. VITTI: Okay.

19 MS. WEISS: But we'll start
20 with you right after lunch. We'll get back
21 to your question then. Yes.

22 MR. MARIANI: Carlos Mariani,
23 Minnesota House of Representatives. I get
24 the logic of -- so, my question has to do
25 with ultimately the logic of any system, you

1 know, there's only going to be as good as
2 people actually want to do it. And it sounds
3 like you understand that.

4 Well, and I get the logic, the
5 logical engagement process that you've went
6 through here and it sounds terrific. But,
7 I'm wondering if I can push you a little bit
8 more on the kind of a little bit of the
9 nitty-gritty and, in particular, in terms of
10 teacher buy-in.

11 You have a 50 percent student
12 growth goal. Some might say, you know, it's
13 a pretty aggressive, you know, benchmark that
14 you're setting. And others would also say
15 that that could raise a ton of concerns
16 among, you know, professionals and in our
17 classrooms, particularly in terms of the
18 consequences relative to their professional
19 life.

20 And so, maybe if you can share
21 a little bit more about the nitty-gritty
22 stuff in terms of what it took to get
23 teachers in your State to be at the place
24 where they're at currently with this
25 proposal.

1 MS. WEISS: Go ahead.

2 DR. WEBB: The process was
3 messy. Honestly. And it's not over. We're
4 continuing that process as we speak. But, it
5 took hours and hours and hours of meetings
6 with the union representatives. But, at the
7 end of the day, there had been a tremendous
8 amount of goodwill between our administration
9 and the teachers in the past. Even in very
10 difficult budget times.

11 So, there was that goodwill
12 between the governor's office and the
13 teachers' union already, so that helped
14 tremendously, obviously. But, you know, we
15 still had some eight LEA unions that didn't
16 sign on to the process.

17 The biggest thing was an
18 assurance, outside of the normal negotiation
19 and give and take that took place across that
20 table in those long meetings, late night
21 meetings. The biggest thing was an assurance
22 of multiple measures. Inside that data.

23 And inside that entire
24 evaluation process. And also coming up with
25 an assurance that they would be a part of the

1 process. We have a 15-member advisory
2 committee that's working on the development
3 of the evaluation and the process itself.

4 Nine of those members are educators.

5 So, they're at the table.

6 Either in school leadership roles or
7 teachers. And so, as a result of that, they
8 still feel, they feel, and we thought it was
9 very important, and the governor thought it
10 was important, for them to have ownership of
11 the process, not just to have something done
12 to them.

13 I don't think we would ever
14 have gotten to where we are if they had not
15 had that ownership. But, it's a constant
16 piece of work for us. And it will be
17 throughout the entire development and
18 implementation of this annual evaluation
19 system.

20 Because, we had -- our system
21 in Tennessee said you're annually evaluated
22 if you're not tenured and then you're
23 evaluated twice over the next ten years. So,
24 it's a huge step to go to an annual
25 evaluation with 50 percent data for

1 everybody, you know.

2 And so, the biggest thing was
3 goodwill, communication and making sure that
4 they're at the table. You know. But it's
5 very messy.

6 DR. LOWERY: And I won't be
7 redundant because I would say the exact same
8 thing that Commissioner Webb has said. I
9 will add that the governor, and Tennessee
10 mentioned this earlier on, our governor was
11 personally involved.

12 He sat down with our union
13 leadership, with our superintendents. He
14 went to superintendents meetings and with our
15 local boards of education associations. So,
16 he knew that there was that sense of urgency
17 that he needed to bring to the table.

18 And as we were changing these
19 regulations with the State board, the
20 governor's policy staff, DOE's policy staff
21 and DSEA's attorney sat down through every
22 piece of it, so that there wouldn't be any
23 surprises for anyone.

24 I think the most salient thing
25 that Dr. Webb said is the biggest piece of

1 keeping engaged was the assurance that they
2 were at the table and they would stay at the
3 table every step of the way.

4 DR. WEBB: Can I add one more
5 thing?

6 MS. WEISS: Sure.

7 DR. WEBB: Will Pinkston is
8 here with SCORE. It's a Senator Frist
9 organization in Tennessee. It's a State
10 collaborative on reforming education that
11 started before Race to the Top.

12 And they had put together an
13 exhaustive work group. And then put together
14 a strategic plan, if you will, for Tennessee
15 long before. And part of that whole piece
16 was around great teachers and leaders. So
17 will you speak to the process there that
18 helped?

19 MR. PINKSTON: Yeah. Yeah.
20 Tennessee was really fortunate to have some
21 stars and moon alignment that supported a lot
22 of this. I would say on the teacher
23 evaluation aspect.

24 I think one reason, or one
25 thing that made that conversation a little

1 easier to have, it's not an easy
2 conversation, but it was a little easier, was
3 the fact that we are already going in that
4 direction in our largest school district,
5 Memphis, which is about 100,000 kids, which
6 is about ten percent of our student body in
7 the State.

8 They were already doing that
9 deep dive work with Gates. And so the fact
10 that the seal had been broken on the
11 conversation in the largest district was,
12 frankly, helpful. And then there were, as
13 Commissioner Webb mentioned, there was a lot
14 of work that had been done that began before
15 Race to the Top that set on paper, you know,
16 a reform blueprint, that was done as part of
17 a statewide conversation.

18 And so part of that was the
19 evaluation, you know, tuning up the
20 evaluation model and the unions were part of
21 that work. And then I will, just as a side
22 note, say again the governor's reservoir of
23 goodwill that he had built up with the unions
24 was extremely important.

25 You know, one of the things

1 that they will acknowledge is they have been
2 able to go, our teachers union has been able
3 to go around the country and say, you know,
4 you know, even though, over a period of years
5 when a lot of States have been cutting
6 education, education has been held whole by
7 our governor at the expense, frankly, of
8 other agencies in other parts of government.

9 And he views it as an Article
10 of Faith to fully fund our basic education
11 program every year. That bought a lot of
12 credibility for him going into that
13 discussion.

14 And the last part, you know, is
15 he was a mayor before he was governor, so he
16 kind of, you know, had dealt with them at the
17 local level, as well as the State level, and
18 had a very long, very good relationship with
19 them.

20 And the hour before he was
21 going to go into the general assembly and
22 deliver his address calling the special
23 session, he called in the union chief and
24 said, "You know, we've been friends a long
25 time. I've just gotta know before I go in to

1 the legislature, are we getting a divorce
2 now?"

3 You know? And you know,
4 that's, having somebody who has the ability
5 to have that kind of conversation is
6 important. So, relationships matter.

7 MS. BONOFF: Hello, I'm Terry
8 Bonoff, State Senator from Minnesota. I have
9 two questions. One is what is the tool, the
10 assessment tool that you're using to measure
11 growth?

12 And then the other is how
13 important was early childhood in your
14 application? I know one of the States spoke
15 about it. I wondered how strong you put
16 early childhood in there and if both States
17 did.

18 DR. WEBB: The measurement of
19 growth that we use in Tennessee by statute,
20 senator, is the value-added model. The
21 Sanders Model, if you will. And so that's
22 our measure of growth.

23 Now, as part of our heavy lift
24 for our evaluation committee is trying to
25 define what growth, how growth is defined for

1 those subjects and teachers that are not, or
2 subjects that are not assessed, I guess, and
3 grades that are not assessed. So, we're
4 working through that process right now.

5 But the lion's share of our
6 growth is around value-added and around the
7 Sander's Model. As far as pre-K goes, we had
8 already counted, we did not really address
9 the issue of pre-K or early childhood in our
10 application, other than the fact that it's
11 part of the overall enterprise.

12 I mean, we have moved from
13 having a 137 pre-K folks in Tennessee to, you
14 know, almost a thousand since 2003. And
15 we'll continue to grow that out as we can.

16 But it was not a significant portion of our
17 application.

18 DR. LOWERY: And Delaware
19 currently has a growth model, because we have
20 a scale for our one-time assessment. And so
21 we allow either the natural score that a
22 student makes or we can use the growth model
23 score, which is how far do they move within
24 that scale.

25 But, we are in a wonderful

1 opportunity because that assessment goes away
2 at the end of this year and we are moving to
3 the web-based, computer-adapted assessment.
4 So, we can grow, we can make our growth model
5 be whatever and how dynamic we need for it to
6 be. So, we're in a good place there and we
7 are doing research around what that means.

8 As Diane Donohue said earlier
9 on, that is a conversation. The evaluation
10 for teachers won't start until 2011 and what
11 we're doing this year for the first time, and
12 next year in 10-11, is actually giving
13 the new assessment and making sure that we
14 have calibrated as we needed so everyone's
15 comfortable with it.

16 And we are looking at growth
17 models from all over the place. We are
18 working with our American Institute of
19 Research. They brought some people in from
20 Florida that have been working with the Bush
21 Foundation around growth models and
22 value-added. We're looking at what Colorado
23 is doing.

24 So, we have built into our plan
25 some time to get it right. So we are doing

1 research and bringing in national experts
2 from your States, including some of the work
3 that you are doing in your departments of
4 education.

5 Our early childhood programs
6 are still disaggregated. In Delaware we call, we
7 call it Department of Health and Social
8 Resources. I think at the federal level it's
9 Health and Human Services.

10 But, the lion's share of our
11 early childhood dollars are in health and
12 social services of the State and the kids
13 department, Delaware's Department of
14 Education really deals with early childhood
15 around those students who have disabilities
16 through Child Find.

17 So, what we have done for the
18 first time is, in the Department of
19 Education, we have disaggregated early child
20 development away from student services and
21 developed its own work branch. We have a new
22 director.

23 Actually, we're having someone
24 from USF come in next week to meet with us
25 around our Pac 4. We have a huge, vibrant

1 policy matters collaborative. We're working
2 with Lynn Kagan, from Columbia University.

3 And what we're trying to do is
4 have a State conversation about how do we
5 combine these resources so we can be most
6 beneficial for our children. We visited the
7 State of Maryland, where they did that work
8 over the years and they have all their early
9 child development in one place.

10 And Ohio. We have looked at
11 the work that they're doing in Ohio around
12 aggregating that in Pennsylvania. So we're
13 doing our homework. It's a work in progress
14 and we knew that we couldn't wake up next day
15 and magically everything was in place, so we
16 built in the planning time.

17 MR. GRIMSEY: Bob Grimesey
18 from Virginia. And our compliments to both
19 of you all for, not only for what you have in
20 place, but for how you've gone about doing
21 it. It's an outstanding presentation. We're
22 grateful.

23 A two-part question, for
24 Tennessee in particular. Diploma Project,
25 First to the Top Initiative, new standards

1 and assessment program, longitudinal data
2 management system, value-added assessment
3 model already implemented, either in process
4 or all on the table, meaning that the
5 legislative discussion about these had to be
6 done on the assumption what if we don't get
7 Race to the Top money, which means that the
8 commitments had to be made not knowing you're
9 going to get the federal dollars.

10 Would be interested in knowing
11 how the discussion played out, not about
12 emotional buy-in, but actual where was the
13 money going to come from to pay for this if
14 we didn't get the federal dollars? Or, in
15 some cases, these were approved already and
16 dollars were committed. So, either
17 sacrifices were made or revenues were
18 enhanced somehow. That's Part 1.

19 Part 2, as you were answering
20 the question from the gentleman from Ohio
21 about the next 90 days and going forward,
22 there were references to building human
23 capital and making sure that that can be
24 sustained. There was descriptions of field
25 service units, administrative units.

1 In our State, that speaks of
2 administrative and support costs. And I'm
3 thinking that, when you think about
4 sustainability, you have got more
5 administrators and support people than you
6 had before. Maybe that's a
7 misunderstanding.

8 But, A, talk about the pig's
9 contribution to breakfast, if you will, as
10 opposed to the chicken, that you needed to
11 put forth to have that legislative
12 conversation.

13 And B, could you clarify are
14 you going to end up with more State
15 bureaucrats, as it would be perceived by
16 folks in our part of the country. And talk a
17 little bit about the perceptions of more
18 bureaucracy and more administrative
19 capacity. Thank you.

20 MS. WEISS: I think the pig and
21 chicken thing is just sort of making it's way
22 thoroughly around the room and people are
23 chuckling. But, yes, go ahead

24 REPORTER'S NOTE:

25 [General

1 laughter].

2 MR. PINKSTON: I'll take part
3 one and I'm sure Webb will take the other.
4 You know, we were real careful, in terms of
5 everything that was said publicly and in the
6 legislature, about managing people's
7 expectations.

8 And the message, almost the
9 first, third and last point that was made
10 every time anybody talked about this was, you
11 know, Race to the Top is a catalyst and it's
12 a moment that can help focus some of this,
13 some of this work that's already underway,
14 but frankly it's stuff we needed to do
15 anyway.

16 As a State, this just gives us
17 the opportunity to push it. If we're not
18 successful in Round 1, we'll be back in Round
19 2. If we're not successful in Round 2, we'll
20 be back again. And if we don't win, we're
21 going to do it anyway.

22 I think one of the things that
23 was a subject of a lot of discussion which
24 was, you know, what if we don't, what if we
25 don't, you know, get any money at all. And

1 the Governor's response was, basically, if we
2 don't, we're not going to be able to move as
3 quickly, you know, down some of these paths,
4 but we're still going to go down this path.

5 The good thing about data in
6 terms of, in terms of expenditures is we
7 already have 18 years' worth. And so, what
8 was required there was not so much an
9 investment to build something. We already
10 had it. So that was a key message.

11 And just unlocking it to be
12 used in that evaluation framework. So, there
13 were, frankly, large numbers of people in the
14 legislature who didn't like the federal funds
15 aspect of this. So, we had to really talk
16 about this as a, as a, this was something we
17 needed to do anyway. And this is help
18 tremendously, but we're going down that
19 path.

20 DR. WEBB: Yeah. I think the
21 commitment was made that, as we're doing with
22 the LEAs and their scopes of work, we talked
23 to them about the fact that we would not sign
24 off on any recurring obligation of debt at
25 the local level, unless their funding bodies

1 had also signed off.

2 Understanding that anything
3 that they're going to try to do under this
4 scope of work creates a long-term obligation
5 and will have to be sourced somewhere else
6 after four years.

7 The thing that, that is
8 probably the most difficult in the human
9 capital piece is the fact that we made a
10 commitment that the Department of Education
11 will not look tomorrow like it looks today.

12 We are, are, our intention is not to hire a
13 bunch of bureaucrats. Because that's the way
14 it's perceived in Tennessee, too.

15 But, that we will retool and
16 reengineer the existing enterprise, using the
17 folks that are there or inviting them to go
18 be successful doing something they enjoy
19 doing more than their new role in life.

20 And so, we are reengineering
21 the entire Department of Education, from top
22 to bottom, to the field service units all the
23 way back into the agency, to organize around
24 the tenets of Race to the Top and the four
25 assurances of Race to the Top.

1 At the same time understanding
2 we still have a compliance mission to
3 accomplish and we'll take care of that. But,
4 the lion's share of the department will not
5 look tomorrow like it looks today in order to
6 pull this off. And so, that's where we are.
7 And we're in the process of redesigning that
8 now.

9 MS. WEISS: And with these
10 regional organizations that you have across
11 the state are things that are already in
12 existence and you're just appointing them
13 differently now?

14 DR. WEBB: Yes. We're going
15 to, we're actually going to convert them from
16 a pure compliance model, where they are
17 today, to technical assistance models,
18 maintaining some degree of that compliance.
19 But most of their roles will change and their
20 lots in life will change tremendously over
21 the next six or eight months.

22 MS. ATKINSON: I'm June
23 Atkinson from North Carolina. Either for
24 Tennessee or for Delaware, would you please
25 talk a little bit more about measuring

1 student growth for areas for which you do not
2 have integrated or end-of-course tests or
3 plan to have those.

4 DR. LOWERY: We are already
5 working on that. As I shared with someone
6 earlier, all subject areas have national
7 standards of some sort. So, one of the
8 consortia that have been established is
9 called, "Smarter balance."

10 And it is the computer adaptive
11 piece with that generated quantitative,
12 strictly quantitative assessment. But, a
13 part of that is also authentic assessment.

14 So, our folks in the fine and
15 performing arts and in our vocational courses
16 are looking at developing rubrics and
17 matrixes and identifying standards to align
18 grade level expectations, course level
19 expectations and come up with some kind of
20 quantitative measure.

21 As Diane Donohue shared early
22 on, we're going to be working hand in glove
23 with the teachers unions to actually come up
24 with these indicators of success. They, too,
25 are doing national research around the

1 country to find out where those opportunities
2 exist.

3 So, we are -- our performance
4 appraisal system has five components anyway
5 and so, well, based on Charlotte Danielson's
6 work. So there are some kind of qualitative
7 pieces already there.

8 The bottom line, as Diane said,
9 if we do not see growth, teachers cannot be
10 deemed effective or highly effective. And
11 so, those measures are going to be quanti --
12 they have to be quantitative so we can be
13 consistently fair.

14 DR. WEBB: We actually have,
15 June, we have math, reading, language arts,
16 science and social studies are the four areas
17 that are assessed in Tennessee, primarily.
18 We also, though, have school-wide value add,
19 so we can actually use that as an indicator.

20 If that's chosen, we can
21 actually use that in those schools that are
22 configured to have school-wide value add
23 information evaluate. So we can use that.
24 But one of the -- we task-organized our
25 evaluation advisory committee that's building

1 this whole thing up.

2 They're task-organized around
3 just that issue. In early childhood, there's
4 a subcommittee that's working on trying to
5 identify what can we use growth in those
6 subjects because we don't assess in pre-K
7 through 2 in Tennessee, at all. So, and we
8 have schools that are configured that way.
9 So, it's a real challenge for us.

10 But, they're all about the
11 business of having that defined and working
12 with technical assistance groups from all
13 over the country in trying to define those
14 issues. We'll have them done. We just don't
15 know, at this point in time, what it looks
16 like.

17 MS. WEISS: Is there anybody
18 else in the audience who's been working on
19 this issue and has anything that you want to
20 share in answer to that question?

21 PARTICIPANTS: (No response).

22 MS. WEISS: Okay. Then here's
23 a question back there?

24 MR. BALLARD: Good afternoon.
25 I'm Jim Ballard, the Executive Director of

1 the Michigan Secondary Principals
2 Association. I'd like to go to the thing
3 about performance and evaluation. And all I
4 have heard you speak, all of you speak about
5 multiple measuring and in growth.

6 We've been polling our
7 membership on a recent law in Michigan on
8 these changes and the one thing that
9 consistently comes up from the building
10 principals' perspective is time. I'm
11 wondering, during your work, did you talk
12 about the process that that building leader
13 has to go through to comply?

14 DR. LOWERY: That's one of the
15 reasons that we included development coaches
16 in our plan for it. Because we heard it from
17 the teachers, we heard there from the leaders
18 that, if we're going to engage in this kind
19 of robust evaluation, we need to have time.

20 And so, because we can't put
21 anymore hours in a day, we're going to be
22 bringing in something called SAMS. You may
23 be familiar with that. We already have that
24 in the State.

25 That will work with all of our

1 principals around managing their time and how
2 to actually free up those administrators who
3 are going to be primarily responsible for
4 evaluation and then push some of those
5 operational responsibilities down to support
6 staff and/or teacher leaders to let them do
7 some of the work. That's Number 1.

8 Number 2, we are also going to
9 have development coaches working with the
10 district offices, as well as the school-based
11 leaders. Because sometimes, and I was in one
12 for many years, the district office comes up
13 with these grand plans and we roll it down to
14 the schools not realizing that's what we're
15 doing is eating up more of their time.

16 So, those kinds of safeguards
17 are being put in place so it can inform all
18 of us, shadow all of us and let us know how
19 we are using our time, how we can best use
20 it, and making sure that the instructional
21 leaders in those schools and/or those
22 development folks have time to actually go
23 into the classrooms.

24 Because, if we're going to have
25 this evaluation system that's really going to

1 ensure that we have high quality teachers, we
2 have to be able to give them feedback. Not
3 just go in and observe them and document what
4 we see. We've got to sit down with them,
5 give them feedback and help them come up with
6 improvement plans if needed.

7 DR. WEBB: In Tennessee, that's
8 a major part of the conversation. The
9 document and the tools and the process that
10 we use today is not, and we acknowledge this
11 right up front, it is not possible to
12 accomplish annual evaluations in Tennessee
13 using what we have.

14 So, as much a part of the
15 process in the evaluation committee as
16 defining all these data elements is defining
17 what the process has to look like in order
18 for it to be put into action. So, we're
19 working on what the instrument looks like, as
20 well as trying to reengineer what evaluation
21 really means.

22 And the whole process really
23 means. To make it something that
24 principals -- quite honestly, there are no
25 resources to add more people. So, bottom

1 line is what we put in place has to be
2 something that can be put into action or
3 we're all wasting our time.

4 So, that's a huge parallel path
5 that we're running as we build out the data,
6 define the data on it. It's also the
7 process.

8 MS. WEISS: Lillian, it sounds
9 like, from what you were saying, that you're
10 plan, and probably both for Tennessee and
11 Delaware's plans, the evaluations are very
12 connected to instructional improvement. So,
13 it's not like I have to do this evaluation
14 task as part of...

15 So, can you talk more about
16 what that looks like? Because that takes
17 time -- that talks about time in a different
18 way. I'm investigating time, not just to
19 check a box to give an evaluation annually,
20 but for a different purpose. Can you talk
21 more about that?

22 DR. LOWERY: So, to
23 Commissioner Webb's point, we first have to
24 examine how we are using our time,
25 instructional and evaluative time. And we

1 have added in certain elements that we can
2 sustain easily after Race to the Top funds go
3 away.

4 One is a teacher leader
5 concept, where teachers will still teach half
6 day and they will act as coaches and mentors
7 for half day. And that really resonated with
8 our teachers because they will have someone
9 in their classrooms who are walking in their
10 shoes every day.

11 When we first started to
12 configure that, I was concerned about time
13 for them and was that too much to ask them to
14 teach half day and then do this peer work.
15 And everybody agreed it just gives them so
16 much credibility.

17 So that will help with the
18 instructional piece. These folks can go in
19 and observe teachers in a nonevaluative way,
20 give them feedback. These are people who can
21 go in and model lessons for them so that
22 these teachers who need help can see that
23 with their instructional teaching and
24 learning.

25 The data coaches will do, to

1 Jim's point earlier, take away the
2 responsibility from the teacher to have to
3 sit late at night or during clearing periods
4 mining data to try to figure these things
5 out.

6 The data coaches will know the
7 data, we'll have the data and we'll meet with
8 them at least three or four hours per month
9 in these cohorts to go over trend data with
10 them, to come to them with differentiated
11 ways of instructing students based on what
12 grades levels they are.

13 And then, finally, the
14 development coach will be working with those
15 principals to use their time wisely and to
16 also ground them in the data and where their
17 areas of strengths and weaknesses are. All
18 of this is tied to teaching and learning.

19 Every aspect of it overlaps,
20 giving people the data that we already have
21 on board to make good instructional
22 decisions, but then also giving them the
23 support they need from those administrators.

24 So, in other words, we won't be
25 adding work. We won't be adding people.

1 We're changing a culture of how people work
2 so that they will work differently and use
3 their time more wisely.

4 MS. WEISS: Are there questions
5 out here on hold? I can't tell.

6 PARTICIPANTS: (No response).

7 MS. WEISS: Okay. Let me ask
8 one that I have heard from some folks, which
9 is maybe even especially for Tennessee,
10 because I know you guys wrestled with this a
11 lot.

12 But when you were working with
13 all of your rural LEAs, how did you think
14 about, not only reaching them, but meeting
15 the specific needs that they had and helping
16 them to see the value in this plan for them?

17 DR. WEBB: Probably the best
18 news, for me, was I was one of them, because
19 I was a rural superintendent before I came to
20 this office, so I have a relationship with
21 them, so that helped us some. Just to be
22 quite honest.

23 But, you know, that was, that
24 was the... it was more around a communication
25 strategy and making sure they were at the

1 table. And so we have tried to break that
2 urban versus rural things going on, that has
3 historically gone on in Tennessee.

4 I don't really have a good
5 answer for your question, other than the fact
6 that it was about communication and making
7 sure that they were always at the table and
8 that we always made sure that we didn't just
9 talk about the issues of urban education,
10 that we actually talked about rural.

11 And we're very clear that we
12 didn't have the answers for rural education.
13 You know, we don't know what we're going to
14 do when we have to take over or close a rural
15 high school. It's a whole different
16 conversation that what you have in downtown
17 Nashville or downtown Memphis.

18 You know, when you start going
19 into the place where the -- and we
20 acknowledged that with them. We acknowledged
21 the fact that, if we don't intervene and we
22 don't find the strategies that work to keep
23 you from getting to that point.

24 That it's a different
25 conversation when you start talking about

1 going into Lewis County, Tennessee, where the
2 school system is the single largest employer,
3 the largest economic engine in the
4 community. It's the largest employer in the
5 community. And there's nowhere else for
6 those kids to go.

7 So, you know, we acknowledged
8 that right up front. And then I think that
9 brought them to the table, the fact that they
10 know somebody understands their dilemma is a
11 little different than... although it's an
12 academic issue, but it's a different
13 situation in the culture there. And so that
14 helped us a bunch, I think.

15 MS. O'HARA: If I could add,
16 Dr. Webb, a couple of things. We also in our
17 strategy, as far as the money that we're
18 spending and how we're looking to do that, we
19 made sure that part of that is about
20 competition.

21 So, some of the things that we
22 have are, you know, competitive grant type
23 programs, so that there is -- so that it's
24 not just all going in large chunks to the
25 urban districts. Also, we very intentionally

1 looked at teacher prep and alternative
2 licensure broadly.

3 We have a strategy where we
4 will be working with some of the more
5 prominent or alternative licensure type
6 programs, Teach for America, New Teacher
7 Project, those types. But, those groups
8 frankly aren't as good at doing things in
9 rural environments, and they haven't done it.

10 So, we wanted to look at how we
11 retool our teacher prep programs, knowing
12 that teacher prep programs are where the
13 majority of teachers for State institutions
14 are aware the majority of the teachers come
15 from that are teaching in our system.

16 So, looking at how we can
17 change the culture within those institutions
18 and how data can help change that culture
19 around. I was talking earlier about the
20 institutions being able to have the data and
21 look at how their students are doing once
22 they're teachers.

23 And then, also, we have a
24 program called Teach Tennessee, which is for
25 professionals who want to come back and

1 teach. It's a second career type thing.
2 We're doing an expansion of that. And
3 another program called Distinguished
4 Professionals, which I think is actually not
5 from the State of Tennessee. I'm not sure.
6 I don't know enough about it.

7 But, essentially, what it is is
8 letting people have time off to go teach.
9 And those things are all things that would
10 work more in a rural environment, so it's
11 important.

12 And the last thing I would say
13 is that we included at the end and as part of
14 a recommendation from small school districts
15 and rural school districts that they weren't
16 going to have very much money to do some of
17 this stuff because it's just, it's small
18 amounts of money in those places, so we
19 including a supplemental fund for the
20 smallest 20 percent of districts. So, that's
21 a little bit about the budget and
22 programmatic side of things.

23 MR. PINKSTON: I would just
24 add, you know, one thing. I think our rural
25 strategy even goes into our STEM efforts. I

1 mean, one of the biggest single line items
2 that we'll have in the STEM component of our
3 project will be professional development.

4 And one of the single biggest
5 hubs for professional development for
6 teachers in that space is going to be in a
7 university that's in the Upper Cumberland
8 Region of our State, which is a very
9 mountainous, kind of rural region, you know,
10 kind of between middle and east Tennessee.

11 And so, I think, you know, and
12 it covers a huge amount of territory in the
13 work that they do up there at that
14 university. So, you know, but Dr. Webb was a
15 little modest. But, I'll say he was our
16 secret weapon, or our best asset, perhaps, in
17 dealing with that rural conversation because
18 he's got -- he's credentialed. And that's
19 where he came from.

20 DR. WEBB: Well, it also
21 helped, too, Joanne, in just the political
22 landscape, when the governor came into office
23 we had been sued by the rural, small school
24 districts and he settled that lawsuit. So
25 that helped that relationship piece again.

1 You know, there was, that already existing.
2 I like being a secret weapon, though. Pretty
3 cool.

4 MS. WHALEN: So, can I ask,
5 just to kind of take a step back, how did you
6 guys begin the conversations around the MOU
7 development with your LEAs and think about
8 getting people on board with the different
9 elements of the project, especially when you
10 met resistance?

11 DR. WEBB: We, basically, had
12 a, got them in a room. There were 200 people
13 that were in the room, all 136 school systems
14 were there, so superintendents were there.
15 And we brought them in a room and we actually
16 put a Power Point together.

17 It was a really high level
18 Power Point that just talked about the four
19 assurances and what we had done and what we
20 were going to do. And then we, basically,
21 said this is not, we're not going to have,
22 you know, demonstration projects across
23 State. This is statewide.

24 All this stuff is going to be
25 about everybody in this room and we want you

1 to be on board. We want you to be a part of
2 it. We want you to participate. We're not
3 going to have involved or participating.
4 You're either to be participating or you're
5 not.

6 You know, you're either, and we
7 can make the comment that you're either part
8 of the process or you're an object to the
9 process. And we want you on board, though.
10 And so, and we'll do everything we can to
11 meet you in the middle. And so, they all
12 did.

13 MS. WHALEN: Nobody balked?

14 DR. WEBB: Nobody -- we had one
15 school -- well, let me rephrase. We had one
16 school system that didn't sign the MOU and it
17 happened to be the speaker of the house's
18 district. And when we said, "There's only
19 one, Mr. Speaker", and we told him who it
20 was. The next day, they signed up. So,
21 total transparency here, we had that one.

22 DR. LOWERY: The answer's the
23 same, ditto, ditto, ditto. We used our
24 community folks to talk to our local boards
25 of education and our superintendents, as

1 well, to help them see that this was in the
2 best interest of the students in the
3 schools.

4 And I think Diane early on
5 explained the process of how we were just out
6 there. If they needed us, she called us or
7 we called her and we were there. It was just
8 feet on the ground. Right there whenever
9 they needed us, changing schedules, clearing
10 our calendars, whatever we needed to do to be
11 out there.

12 MS. WHALEN: Okay. What did
13 actually that look like? How many touches
14 did it take with your LEAs to be on the
15 ground with them and walk them through the
16 different elements?

17 MS. WEISS: And can I ask one
18 sort of piggyback question on that? It
19 sounds like this is more about communication
20 than negotiation and can you talk to that a
21 little bit, too?

22 DR. LOWERY: You're not going
23 to believe this, but, actually, we had the
24 word negotiation on something in our
25 literature. And it was the SEA who came to us

1 and said, "Take the word 'negotiation' out.
2 Let's make this 'discussion'," because we
3 wanted to clearly understand that this is a
4 discussion about what's in the best interest
5 of our students, our schools and our State.

6 This is not a negotiation.
7 There are going to be points in time at the
8 local level where the negotiation process
9 will work as a word, but not around this.
10 This is bigger than that. So, it really was
11 more communication.

12 And I'm talking about, and I'm
13 being redundant, from the governor to the
14 lieutenant governor, who's just recently put
15 into process a bill for parental engagement.
16 I mean, from our State legislators.

17 Our two chairs, our house
18 education chair and our senate education
19 chair are just phenomenal, absolutely
20 phenomenal. And they had us before the
21 education committee. So, I cannot count the
22 touches.

23 I just don't think we slept. I
24 think we started in like around April/May and
25 we didn't stop until March 29th. And then we

1 were pleased for about 15 minutes and it
2 started again. So we could start working on
3 implementation.

4 So, it was communication. And
5 the reason we were thinking that's so
6 important at this point in time is because we
7 don't want to say, "Okay. They were there
8 when they needed us to participate. Now
9 where are they?" So, our schedules really
10 haven't changed.

11 In order to keep this coalition
12 together and moving, we know that we have got
13 to continue to do exactly what brought us to
14 the table. And we're all prepared to do
15 that.

16 DR. WEBB: It continues today
17 and it's even...I think it's probably more
18 now that it was. Just continue to hold hands
19 and talk to them and answer questions. We've
20 got people in the field, e-mail, telephone.
21 It's just constant.

22 And we're constantly having
23 communication around it. We made it pretty
24 much the center of our universe in Tennessee
25 since the announcement and building our

1 strategic plans around the assurances and
2 everything.

3 MS. MARTIN: This is Rayne
4 Martin again with Louisiana. I hear a lot
5 about the communication and collaboration and
6 that's extremely helpful advice. I want to
7 see if maybe we could dig in a little bit
8 deeper and be real specific.

9 If you were to say there are
10 three main messages that were somatic, that
11 really resonated with folks that you think
12 made the difference, especially probably in
13 Tennessee when you were going through the
14 legislative process, what do you think those
15 were, looking at the speaking directly to
16 teachers and leaders?

17 MR. PINKSTON: I think that
18 there were some people who tried to paint the
19 process as, you know, being, you know, really
20 potentially devastating on some levels. But,
21 what, what we were able to say, with actually
22 a lot of authority, was, look, we've been
23 moving in this direction.

24 You know, when you just talk
25 about those four assurances of standards,

1 data, teachers and turnaround, we have done
2 the work on standards already. Check. The
3 data, we have built and now we just want to
4 use it. Check.

5 The teacher work is incredibly
6 difficult work and needs to be done closely
7 with them. But, we have already got big
8 districts that are moving in that direction,
9 so this is not -- this is a bottom up deal.
10 This is not top down.

11 And then, on turnaround, that
12 was a situation where we were actually going
13 into legislature really to clarify the
14 commissioner's authority as much as anything
15 else. We kind of already had that, but we
16 wanted to make sure that it was abundantly
17 clear in the law.

18 So, you know, the key message
19 was that this is an opportunity for us to
20 focus. But this is a direction we've been
21 moving in already. This will help us get
22 there faster. And it's, we're going to do it
23 regardless. So, that was sort of the basic
24 premise.

25 DR. LOWERY: I would say our

1 key three points. Number 1 is we
2 acknowledged the successes, as Tennessee did,
3 over the years because we have had some
4 visionary governors and secretaries over the
5 years who built a foundation for us to be
6 able to do this work.

7 But, at the same time, we put
8 the data out there. One-third, 30 percent of
9 our students are in schools that are
10 persistently low-achieving and that is
11 unacceptable. So, that was the first part.

12 Acknowledge the good, but use
13 the data that was sitting there staring us in
14 the face to make a case for a call to
15 action. Then, as Tennessee did, we're going
16 to do this and we have a visionary State
17 board of education and a governor who is
18 committed to improving every child's life
19 circumstance.

20 So, with or without federal
21 funds, to the point made earlier, we were
22 going to do this. We just would not have
23 been able to do it to scale. We would not
24 have been able to do it as robustly.

25 And so, the second piece is

1 we're going to change. We have to. It is
2 unacceptable for a third of our students to
3 be in persistently lower achieving schools.

4 And then, the third part was we
5 had gone through all of that statewide
6 collaboration around the governor's
7 transition team, around Vision 2015 that had
8 been doing it for years. And when Race to
9 the Top language came out, the point that we
10 made is look at what you as Delawareans
11 brought to us and said it was a priority.

12 Now look at what the Federal
13 Government is research based, just like we
14 were saying are the priorities, they match
15 hand in hand. So we have an opportunity to
16 bring resources into our States to help us
17 continue the good work that's been done and
18 bring it to scale more quickly.

19 MR. PALMER: I'll just add only
20 one other point that I heard in many of the
21 meetings when we did our planning process
22 last summer. There were a variety of
23 individuals who basically said, "You're just
24 doing this for the money."

25 Okay? And so, to the letter,

1 to all of them, we just, not just myself, but
2 many of the people in the room just said, and
3 just kind of adding to what Dr. Lowery's been
4 saying before, "We're going to do this
5 anyway. You guys, the State of Delaware has
6 been driving this direction, from a
7 perspective, from a teacher perspective. It
8 isn't about the money. It's about the
9 kids."

10 And when enough people in those
11 meetings came back with that same answer and
12 said, "We're not doing it just for the
13 money. The money is going to help get us
14 there quicker," some of that resistance kind
15 of melted away when those little nuggets of
16 people saying you're just doing it for the
17 money finally heard everybody else explaining
18 to them what they were getting.

19 MS. WHITE: Kerri White from
20 Oklahoma. And being from Oklahoma, I'm
21 really interested in the rural school
22 implementation. I'd like to follow up with a
23 couple of the comments that were made
24 earlier.

25 In particular, in Delaware, you

1 talked about having the data coaches and the
2 teacher leaders that are half time in the
3 classroom and then the development coaches.

4 Is that in every school system?

5 And if so, when we're talking
6 about a school that there is only one math
7 teacher in the school, how do you free up
8 half their time without adding additional
9 staff?

10 DR. LOWERY: The data coaches
11 and development coaches are going to be hired
12 by the Department of Education as resources.
13 One thing that we promised to our
14 superintendents and principals, we are not
15 going to raid your schools of your best and
16 brightest teachers. We are not going to do
17 that.

18 We are going to be working with
19 the New Teacher Project, the New York Academy
20 of School Leadership. We're going to be
21 working with a lot of national concerns to
22 find these people to come in to do this
23 work.

24 And what we did because, when
25 the 50 percent goes out, some districts by

1 Title I are going to want to give far more
2 money than others. So, with the 50 percent
3 that we keep at the State level, those who
4 are getting large sums of money, we'll
5 subsidize their data coaches and development
6 coaches.

7 For those small districts that
8 will not get as much money or for those
9 districts that may be wealthy but still have
10 pockets of poverty, we will use the 50
11 percent of our money at the state level to
12 insure that those resources are in there.

13 MS. WHALEN: So, can I ask,
14 were there any major obstacles or barriers,
15 as you were pulling together your plans or
16 applications or trying to communicate your
17 ideas, that you guys encountered?

18 You make it sound pretty, not
19 easy, but, you know, you didn't sleep very
20 much and it was a lot of hard work, but it
21 didn't, I didn't hear of anything that just
22 got you stuck. Was there anything in the
23 last year that just was really, really
24 difficult that you guys had to either work
25 around or work through? Or anything similar

1 to that?

2 DR. LOWERY: We're still
3 working through. Okay. This is everybody in
4 the State; right? So, we have the business
5 community, who has firm ideas of how we
6 should be moving forward and they have
7 invested a lot of money in it.

8 We have the teachers unions,
9 who have a firm idea of how we should be
10 moving forward and they are engaged. We
11 have, you know, people always talk about
12 union, superintendents are a pretty
13 formidable group and superintendents actually
14 have lots of influence over their boards,
15 which are their local governance bodies.

16 So, at the state level, trying
17 to keep everybody at the table and reconcile
18 all the competing agendas, because some of
19 them are like let's be real bold and just
20 blow this up now and start all over again.

21 And we're trying to say, if
22 we're going to keep everybody at the table,
23 if we blow it up to, you know, and some of
24 our rural district, too, because, I mean,
25 Delaware has that, too, where will we get the

1 people?

2 We're going to move and we have
3 an expectation with a time line, but we have
4 to keep everybody at the table talking. Now
5 that we have gotten the money, that hasn't
6 gone away. That has been energized on every
7 level.

8 So, in the middle of that dance
9 that everyone's doing there at the State, you
10 know, the department of education, the
11 governor's office, saying we're going to do
12 this work. We're committed to doing it with
13 a sense of urgency.

14 But, to Diane's point that she
15 always makes, collaboration means everyone is
16 not going to get exactly what they want the
17 exact way that they want it. So, that's the
18 hard part is trying to reconcile all that
19 constantly. That's tough.

20 DR. WEBB: I'm sitting here
21 beating or racking my brain. I don't think
22 that we actually had any just absolute
23 obstacle that we had to work around. I mean,
24 obviously, it was messy and it was a lot of
25 work. But I don't think that we had that.

1 Will, and any other people from Tennessee?

2 MR. PINKSTON: Yeah. I mean, I
3 think that it was, you know, incredibly long
4 hours in the fall. And then, when you layer
5 on top of that a legislative session and all
6 of the kinds of maneuvering that has to
7 happen to make that work, I mean, it was
8 just, you know, I don't remember the
9 holidays. I don't remember January.

10 But, you know, the biggest hump
11 that we had to get over was the conversation
12 with our union. And when we did, a lot of
13 things, you know, went much more smoothly and
14 they have been absolutely phenomenal.
15 They've been terrific and they've been great
16 partners.

17 I would say the hardest work
18 has not been done yet. I think that
19 Commissioner Webb alluded to this in the
20 earlier discussion, but this is, this week,
21 actually, is the first round of statewide
22 testing that reflect our higher standards and
23 we have more rigorous tests.

24 And there's going to be a steep
25 drop off in proficiency that we're going to

1 have to address over the summer when the
2 scores go to the homes. And there is going
3 to be some significant awareness efforts that
4 we're going to have to get moving on.

5 The political sustainability
6 question is going to be an incredibly
7 important one. We believe everything is
8 lined up properly, but we're not going to
9 take anything for granted.

10 That's why my old boss, the
11 Governor, and my new boss, Senator Frisk,
12 Democrat and a Republican, are talking
13 frequently about how to make sure that
14 there's a firewall built around all these
15 things politically. And so, I mean, the hard
16 work, you know, there's still a lot to do.

17 MS. WEISS: Well, let me thank
18 you on that note and let everybody go grab a
19 bite to eat before we reconvene. They do --
20 I mean, that sort of last comment really
21 resonates with me.

22 I think we talk a lot in the
23 Department about how everybody thinks that
24 the goal of this program is to get four
25 billion dollars out the door and, actually,

1 that's going to turn out to be the easy
2 part. And actually making these plans come
3 to fruition and increasing student
4 achievement is going to be where all the work is.

5 And one of the things that we
6 hope to be doing, in this conversation and
7 the next one, is just starting to model new
8 ways of collaborating and working together to
9 address these problems and get good ideas,
10 figure out how to get through paths -- figure
11 out how to forge pathways to get there from
12 here.

13 So, I thank all of you for
14 engaging in the conversation with us and we
15 will reconvene here at 1:45 and so we will
16 see you then. Thank you.

17 REPORTER'S NOTE: Whereupon,
18 a short recess is taken.

19 MS. WEISS: All right. We're
20 really glad you all came back from lunch.
21 Hopeful that it was slow service at the
22 restaurant and not that you had all abandoned
23 ship on us.

24 So, we're going to get started
25 this afternoon on questions related to these

1 conflict areas, the reform plans and the
2 assurances. And wanted to just, basically,
3 structure this very similarly to how we did
4 it this morning.

5 Just making it a conversation
6 where you're getting as many of your
7 questions answered as we can. And with
8 that, should we start with the turnaround
9 question from Florida? Hey, Julie? You've
10 got a mic?

11 MS. EDENFIELD: Hi, Holly
12 Edenfield from Florida. You may have heard
13 Nikolai explain this better earlier, but,
14 basically, how did the winning States define
15 what a successful turnaround would be? Is it
16 based on the meeting AYP or meeting a certain
17 state-defined criteria. How was that set
18 out?

19 MR. CRUCE: I'll try here... I can't
20 remember but, I'll be happy to take the first
21 shot at that. How we are looking at what a
22 successful turnaround will present in our
23 State?

24 If I take it a step back, I
25 think it will be worthwhile for me to take a

1 minute to talk about the intent about our
2 process to determine schools that would move
3 into our partnership zone. And then I think
4 that kind of frames how we're looking and
5 what success will be or won't be and how we
6 can help those schools that aren't
7 successful.

8 The process or the authority
9 through which we can actually implement a
10 partnership zone activities is a regulatory
11 authority. And how that process works is,
12 from the Delaware perspective, we're not
13 leading, so to speak, with the hammer.

14 We are asking those schools
15 that are the designated among the
16 persistently lowest achieving list, the
17 secretary looks at those schools, and then
18 can look at different determining factors of
19 readiness or capacity to actually select the
20 final schools that will move into that
21 partnership zone.

22 And then once they're in the
23 zone, again, the process that we will be
24 using is that the secretary and the
25 superintendent for that school, from that

1 district that has that school, will sit down
2 and will determine the actual model.

3 So, again, we're not forcing
4 that model on the school. However, there is
5 a reserve authority within a secretary that,
6 if those few folks at the initial outset
7 can't come to agreement, then there is the
8 secretarial authority to change that
9 decision.

10 The next step that we move
11 through in our regulatory authority is where
12 the superintendent and the local collective
13 bargaining agreement, the local union
14 president, will sit down together and develop
15 an MOU as to how that model will be
16 implemented in that school.

17 And again, we're keeping an
18 onus on the adults first. We're not leading
19 with a hammer, we're not leading with a
20 forced-fed solution to a problem, but rather,
21 we're giving them the opportunity, wrapped
22 around a timeframe, it's not a perpetual
23 opportunity, to sit down and craft a plan
24 that they know will work and that is unique
25 to their school, as it fits within whichever

1 of the four models that they selected.

2 And then, again, if that MOU
3 doesn't come to fruition is when the piece of
4 the regulatory authority, to which Secretary
5 Lowery spoke before, the last best offer
6 comes into play.

7 And then, in addition to that,
8 there's also the opportunity for the
9 secretarial authority to step back in one
10 more time and send both of those last best
11 offers back if they don't fit the needs as
12 shown by the data in those schools.

13 So, step by step what we're
14 trying to do is keep the ability for the
15 decision making to occur with the adults in
16 that building, with the caveat that if the
17 right decision or the decision that is best
18 shown by the data doesn't fit the need, then
19 it kicks back to the secretarial authority.
20 So, that's how we're going to judge our
21 success through that.

22 MS. EDENFIELD: Is it over a
23 one-year period, until the end of grant.

24 MR. CRUCE: So, the regulation
25 is in effect. It's a State regulation, State

1 board of education, so it's in effect in
2 perpetuity, regardless of the grant. The
3 time frame that this process that I've
4 described occurs, it's over the course of
5 approximately 120 days, depending on if
6 there's a glitch and the secretary does have
7 to send something back, there's then a time
8 frame wrapped around that.

9 But assuming everything moves
10 through and there is agreement, then it can
11 be done as quickly as 120 days.

12 MS. EDENFIELD: And it would it
13 repeat, if the data doesn't show significant
14 improvement after the end of that school
15 year, would the 120 days repeat? For the
16 next school year?

17 MR. CRUCE: They have two years
18 to have an legitimate attempt to implement
19 that model. As many people know, it's very
20 difficult to judge success or lack thereof
21 for a program that's implemented and only has
22 a short time frame to demonstrate a change in
23 data.

24 Which is very different than
25 how many of these programs have run now,

1 where they have been in place for year after
2 year after year, showing no improvement. So,
3 we do have a two-year window wrapped around
4 that.

5 MS. WATSON: In Tennessee, we
6 took an approach that sort of revamps our
7 accountability systems. We have categories
8 of schools starting with good-standing
9 schools, of course, target school improvement
10 ones, and so forth.

11 Initially, our intense work
12 probably entered the system at school
13 improvement 1, increasing as schools went
14 through corrective action and above. We
15 flipped our accountability system and put
16 more intensive work at the bottom, to try to
17 stem the tide, with our focus on school
18 improvement schools.

19 We then categorized a second
20 set of schools to call them renewal schools
21 and these were schools with, schools in
22 corrective action and above. And those
23 schools are required to have a model.

24 But we are not choosing that
25 model for them. We're working to support

1 them in the choice of that model. The State
2 will actually look at models, put them on the
3 list and -- of approved models that these
4 schools will use.

5 We also have a leadership
6 position with that model that will help
7 schools identify which model best fits their
8 needs and provides support for them as a set
9 of schools.

10 And then, of course, we have
11 another set of schools which require more
12 intensive support. And the State will be
13 providing that support to that group of
14 schools in a very intense and direct way.

15 And Erin's going to talk about the timeframe
16 for this turnaround.

17 Also, I want to say that, as we
18 are entering this school year, and this was
19 prior to Race to the Top, Tennessee had new
20 standards, therefore, we will have new
21 assessments. We recognize that some of this
22 information about their success will not be
23 known right away.

24 There will have to be a
25 revisitation of the standards, to the

1 proficiency, as this year ends, because this
2 is our first year with this new assessment.
3 So, we are aware of that and they understand
4 that we will be working in conjunction with
5 them.

6 MS. O'HARA: So the bottom set
7 of schools, the achievement school district,
8 actually sounds a lot, in a lot of ways, like
9 the, what's the term? Partnership zone? And
10 the way that that is designed is that the
11 Commissioner of Education has discretion to
12 take schools that are in restructuring to,
13 essentially, those that have been failing for
14 about five years, into the achievement school
15 district.

16 When that happens, they enter
17 the achievement school district for a period
18 of five years. After three years, there's a
19 time in which they get looked at again,
20 whether progress has been made, and a
21 transition plan, if they're moving along and
22 the school is improving and the student
23 achievement is improving, then there's a time
24 line for developing a transition plan back to
25 the LEA.

1 As the, as the locus of control
2 for the school. So, that's essentially...
3 again, with the recognition, much like the
4 onset, with the recognition that it takes
5 more than a year or two years to actually see
6 this stuff work.

7 MS. WHALEN: Can I ask both of
8 you, how does your teacher and leader work
9 complement what you are trying to do as part
10 of your turnaround looks?

11 MS. O'HARA: Okay. So, the
12 achievement school district, as I'm talking
13 about that piece in particular, we actually
14 are going to be partnering with a number of
15 national nonprofits around, creating new
16 pipelines for teachers and leaders.

17 So, the new Teacher Project,
18 Teach for America and New Leaders for New
19 Schools, in particular. And so, that's one
20 of the ways in which the teacher and leader
21 work will come from it.

22 The other thing is that within
23 the renewal schools, as Dan was describing,
24 so sort of that middle group, what we're
25 doing is to, and you might want to talk a bit

1 more about it, but the, essentially, the
2 model is to allow schools to purchase the
3 services they need.

4 So, if that is a professional
5 development, they would be encouraged to do
6 that. It's all based on their school
7 improvement plans, it's based on the data
8 that exists.

9 And as Gwen said, there will be
10 a person within the department that will be
11 tasked with making sure that that's, that
12 they're choosing things that make sense for
13 them. A little bit about the RFI?

14 MS. WATSON: Yeah. I think
15 part of the support that the State will be
16 providing for these particular schools is
17 that we have an RFI process, whereby we
18 collect from vendors that are interested in
19 working with schools in terms of whole school
20 reform or high quality professional
21 development support.

22 And from that RFI, we will
23 build an application which will allow school
24 districts to have a list of vendors that
25 provide services that meet their needs based

1 on data.

2 The critical piece for
3 selecting the right model will be that the
4 leader of this renewal school initiative will
5 work with these individual schools and their
6 leadership teams on an individual basis to
7 ensure that the alignment and the match
8 between the needs and the data is there.

9 And to focus on the required
10 professional development embedded that will
11 be ongoing. So, teachers will be constantly
12 engaged in learning how to better instruct
13 the students based on the data, the data from
14 the systems that they will have access to.

15 I think another part of this
16 is, while they will be working with this
17 particular leadership in terms of renewal,
18 they will also continue to be provided
19 support from the SEA as a whole, so that it's
20 a, not a fragmented approach.

21 It is embedding our current
22 standards in the work that they are doing and
23 make sure that there is alignment between
24 what the models bring in and what we require
25 in our federal programs, as well as in our

1 standards, all going toward meeting the
2 proficiency benchmarks.

3 MS. O'HARA: One other thing I
4 would just add. I think that the hope, as
5 well, is that, as I'm sure in all of your
6 States, is that mean teacher evaluation and
7 moving to annual evaluation is something that
8 actually is really a turnaround strategy, as
9 well.

10 And so, within that, one of the
11 things that the evaluation advisory committee
12 is dealing with and trying to figure out is
13 how, how do you take the data and the
14 knowledge that we'll get out of the
15 evaluation itself and turn that into
16 job-embedded professional development?

17 It's obviously a difficult
18 thing to do. But, eventually, that's where
19 we need to be and so we're designing a system
20 with that goal in mind.

21 MS. FALCON: In Delaware, we're
22 also going to be looking at our data systems
23 in much the same way that Tennessee just
24 described, to provide professional
25 development that drives instruction in the

1 classroom.

2 In addition to that, one of the
3 things that we're going to do for our highly
4 effective teachers to move them to our high
5 needs schools and our high need subject
6 areas, we're going to be offering retention
7 bonuses and transfer bonuses.

8 Our transfer bonuses will be
9 \$10,000 for principals, highly effective
10 principals who want to move into our high
11 needs schools, and I believe it's \$8500 for
12 our teachers, our highly effective teachers,
13 who want to move into our high needs
14 schools.

15 There will be retention bonuses
16 of \$5,000 for teachers in those high needs
17 schools currently as long as they are highly
18 effective. And so we're hoping that moving
19 our best and brightest teachers to our most
20 needed areas will help our performance zone
21 schools.

22 MR. CRUCE: And one more piece
23 to that, too, is that addresses part of the
24 issue around equitable distribution. We're
25 also trying to take on the task of pipeline,

1 teacher pipeline, leader pipeline issues, as
2 well, for these schools.

3 And so we have, in our Race to
4 the Top plan, seed money in some specific
5 parameters around trying to bring, to create
6 a Delaware version of some national groups
7 that we are familiar with that specialize in
8 recruiting nontraditional teachers that are
9 specifically trained to move into these very
10 high needs schools, whether it be New Teacher
11 Project -- New Teacher Project, or similar
12 groups of that nature.

13 And we also recognize the need
14 for new leaders and for more specific
15 training for leaders who are in those high
16 needs schools. And so we have a specific,
17 another specific line in programmatic
18 offering in our plan that is to create a
19 program in Delaware similar to the New York
20 City Leadership Academy.

21 So, we are trying to hit the
22 equitable distribution of what we have and
23 attract new folks to these schools of highest
24 needs.

25 MS. WEISS: Great. Another

1 question over here (indicating).

2 MR. PRUITT: Steven Pruitt from
3 Georgia. A couple of quick questions about
4 SIG versus Race to the Top. One is to kind
5 of clarify that the intent of the Department
6 was not to, I guess, double down where you
7 have to put all your money on your lower
8 achieving schools from SIG and from Race to
9 the Top, but that actually you could leverage
10 that somewhat.

11 So, if I could, it would be
12 nice to hear a little bit of a discussion
13 about how you could leverage both the work
14 that goes on with SIG and with Race to the
15 Top, both with funding and the actual work.

16 And since SIG has a little bit
17 more, schools have a little bit more
18 discretion about choosing their turnaround
19 model, where you may want to actually have a
20 more dictated model with Race to the Top.
21 Does that makes sense for the question? How
22 are you going to leverage SIG versus Race to
23 the Top monies and work?

24 MS. WATSON: One of the things
25 that we are aware of is, Number 1, the tight

1 time line for SIG and the SIG grants being
2 approved, which is right around the corner.
3 So we're having those kind of conversations,
4 actually, as we speak with LEAs in terms of
5 how to leverage both those pots of funds and
6 how to monitor and report on them, as well.

7 For our renewal schools, if
8 they are using Race to the Top or SIG funds,
9 we are requiring them to use the funds
10 that... we are requiring them to use one of
11 the models that we are suggesting.

12 What we are also suggesting to
13 them is that, as they are working, that they
14 are thinking long-term about beyond the Race
15 to the Top. Beyond a SIG, what then? And
16 how do you put the kinds of things in place
17 now that you can sustain past the length of
18 the money.

19 And so by having those kinds of
20 conversations, the backwards design kind of
21 conversations and technical assistance
22 workshops for them, we are providing them
23 with the support to think beyond just the
24 current status of, "I have X number of
25 dollars and this is what I'm going to do with

1 it."

2 MS. WEISS: And Gwen, can I
3 just ask? So the commissioner talked about
4 the fact that you're revamping the whole
5 organizational chart within the SEA.

6 So presumably the part of the
7 SEA that's going to be dealing with
8 turnaround doesn't care whether it's SIG or
9 Race to the Top or whatever, it's just
10 dealing with turnaround and it'll sort of
11 align the sources of funding and make sure
12 that no one's double-dipping, but everyone is
13 getting the money.

14 But, you're looking at it just
15 regardless of what program funded it, you're
16 looking at it as a certain coherent way about
17 school turnaround?

18 MS. WATSON: Yes. One of the
19 things we started in Tennessee before the
20 Race to the Top was the comprehensive
21 planning process. And Commissioner can chime
22 in here.

23 But, that was one of our
24 initial reasons for starting to work on that
25 strategic planning process is to look within

1 the department, federal programs, CTE,
2 special education, curriculum and learning
3 and to look at how we could leverage our
4 funds without duplicating services or
5 duplicating spending.

6 So when we...naturally, we are
7 not all looking at everybody's pot of funds.
8 But, we are looking at how do we have a
9 single focus or goal and you leverage
10 different funds to achieve it.

11 For example, if we're
12 addressing graduation rate, we may be
13 addressing it through federal program
14 dollars. We may be addressing it through
15 Race to the Top dollars. But, we can also
16 address it through CTE dollars.

17 MS. WEISS: Right.

18 MS. WATSON: So, how then can
19 we plan such that we can have a single focus,
20 but have a collaborative funding issue.

21 MR. CRUCE: And from Delaware,
22 what we're really looking to do is to try to,
23 at this point in time, be a more clear
24 resource to our LEAs, with the with the very
25 specific synergy between SIG and Race to the

1 Top, our case Partnership Zone.

2 Because they do have so many
3 very unique similarities. At the same time,
4 we need to be clear with them that, at this
5 time, for SIG, that's a voluntarily process.

6 And when a decision is made for certain
7 schools to move into our Partnership Zone
8 category, that is not a voluntary process.

9 And so, the strategic and data
10 driven opportunity is to look at SIG before
11 Race to the Top. And when they find
12 themselves in the same category, probably can
13 maximum those opportunities, not just with,
14 when you talk about reforming the structure
15 within our SEA, we're also not just looking
16 at our SIG office and our turnaround school
17 office, but also our transformation office,
18 as well.

19 Given, try to make a more
20 robust and well rounded resource center
21 there, given the option for restarting that,
22 at least I think in our State folks haven't
23 taken quite the keen eye on that option.
24 Things seem to kind of focus out on
25 turnaround and transformation.

1 MS. O'HARA: Could I add one
2 thing? What Race to the Top allows us to do,
3 and with the school improvement grants, as
4 well, is to take, as Gwen described, it's a
5 triangle in the way we have looked at it. It
6 just allows us to get further up and serve
7 more schools, but it's essentially the same
8 strategy.

9 MS. WEISS: Does that answer
10 your question?

11 MS. WATSON: I think so.

12 MS. WEISS: So, let me just
13 change the topic a little bit and talk about
14 transitioning to new standards. It's stuff
15 that both of your States are going to be
16 deeply involved in and it's a statewide,
17 presumably, a statewide issue.

18 Talk to us a little bit about
19 the plans and ways you're thinking about
20 supporting that process, from the SEA level
21 to how teachers and principals make this
22 transition smoothly over the new few years.

23 And the communications that are
24 going to go on because I did hear...I mean I
25 think that's really -- I think this problem

1 of a dip in scores is something that
2 everyone's going to be feeling over the next
3 few years and getting out ahead of the
4 communication on that, as well as the
5 instructional aspect of it would be
6 interesting to hear about, as well.

7 MS. WATSON: I think we heard a
8 little bit this morning about Tennessee's
9 effort to address its standards prior to Race
10 to the Top with the Tennessee Diploma
11 Project.

12 Once those standards were
13 adopted two years ago, Tennessee began a
14 statewide list, if you would, to train
15 teachers. And we put teacher training teams
16 together from across the State and spent the
17 summer training in the new standards, the
18 ones that we're currently operating from,
19 that will require some tweaking, possibly,
20 but not a lot.

21 So, in transitioning, we
22 provide lots of support to the LEAs for two
23 summers and falls. We just had continuous
24 training and moving from our old standards to
25 our new standards.

1 So, as we continue that
2 training, we have also built up an electronic
3 learning center which provides all of this
4 training to be archived and can be used as
5 new teachers come on board, to be used for
6 continuous training, pod casts, just all
7 kinds of electronic media that supports this
8 training.

9 So, one of the things that we
10 have taken a great deal of pride in is that
11 we are building the electronic version as we
12 continue to grow out, go out and train
13 teachers. So, we will have a professional
14 library, so to speak, for the standards and
15 the assessments, best practices.

16 We have the videos of teachers
17 actually in the classrooms doing the
18 training. So, it's like building up a
19 standards training university, so to speak.
20 And we'll continue that with our new
21 training.

22 We have plans for this summer,
23 as we are sitting here now, we have plans
24 ready to go for June for continuous
25 training. So I think continuous training

1 with practitioners that are actually doing
2 the work is part of the key to keeping
3 teachers abreast of and learning how to
4 continue to go deeper with standards
5 training.

6 MS. O'HARA: Two things I would
7 add. One, we're also moving standards
8 training into pre-service programs, as well.
9 So, developing a module around what the
10 standards look like so the people are
11 learning about them while they are in
12 school.

13 Yes, not all of the people who
14 are in teaching programs in Tennessee stay in
15 Tennessee. But, this will be actually
16 beneficial to everyone when we adopt the
17 common core and the training is around common
18 core, then they have the training around
19 common core so they can go anywhere with.

20 But, you know, in the shorter
21 term, I guess, we'll have the common core.
22 That will be starting in the fall. We'll
23 start with common core training.

24 One other thing about...we're
25 also doing the same thing with our

1 value-added systems, so we're going to do
2 training, additional training very intensive
3 in schools, in classrooms training for
4 teachers on the value-added system and in a
5 way that we haven't done it before.

6 But, we're also going to do the
7 same thing again in pre-service, as well, so
8 that the students are getting that
9 information while they are in school and
10 before they become teachers.

11 To the question on standards
12 and the higher standards and the messaging
13 around it, SCORE, Will, who was up here
14 earlier, SCORE will be really taking the lead
15 for the State on that, essentially doing a
16 college and career ready messaging campaign.

17 And also talking about the new
18 standards and that campaign. And then
19 another, we have one other nonprofit groups
20 that's likely to do the same thing but
21 specifically with parents.

22 MR. CRUCE: So, in Delaware, as
23 it relates to the common core standards,
24 we've done some pretty aggressive work
25 crosswalking our current standards to what

1 the common core will look like.

2 And I think where we've been
3 successful with that is that it hasn't simply
4 been a Department of Education effort, an SEA
5 effort, that our curriculum and professional
6 development work group has been out with our
7 curriculum cadres doing, again, it seems like
8 every effort is a very intense effort, but
9 this one, in particular, has really kept us
10 on track to be able to adopt when things are
11 ready to go.

12 So the adoption is not so much
13 of our direct concern in Delaware. We're
14 more focused on and believe we have a
15 resource in our Race to the Top plan as to
16 how we, outside of the professional
17 development, how do we go in and help
18 teachers when it's actually not translating.

19 So we have adopted and we've
20 done professional development. However, when
21 they are classroom observations, the
22 adjustments still haven't been made to the
23 either the individual lesson plans or what
24 teachers are delivering in the classroom.

25 And so we have anticipated how

1 we can be of assistance the teachers in the
2 schools, within our plan, through the use of
3 some additional human capital opportunities
4 through either our teacher leader career
5 ladder positions that we will have at the
6 local level where we have.

7 We talked, we spoke to this a
8 little bit earlier, teachers a foot in the
9 classroom and a foot out of the classroom to
10 help either model lessons, as to how the new
11 standards should be delivered in the
12 classroom, lesson plans being changed so that
13 they align with the new common core.

14 And in addition to that also
15 work with our data coaches in this building.
16 So, we're trying to focus, because we feel
17 comfortable with our work so far that we've
18 built to adoption, we are really focused on
19 what's going to -- how that will translate in
20 the classroom and how we can help teachers
21 when either they don't feel or we see that
22 they're not adjusting lesson plans or
23 delivery to align as we think it should
24 happen.

25 MS. WHALEN: And excuse me, you

1 mentioned a couple times the involvement of
2 IHEs as part of your plan and how they are
3 actively engaged. I wonder if you could talk
4 a little bit about how they got to the table,
5 their actual role in helping develop the
6 plan.

7 And then, in addition you
8 talked a little about pre-service and they're
9 working STEM, but kind of how they're
10 stepping up and how you're going to keep them
11 at the table to make sure they're aligned
12 with the ongoing work.

13 MS. O'HARA: So, this will
14 probably predate me in some ways. But, I've
15 been in Tennessee for the last five years and
16 the whole time I've been there there's been a
17 conversation between -- I was at the higher
18 education commission previously.

19 Been a conversation between
20 higher education and K-12. And really, when
21 the work started around developing new
22 standards, it was a partnership between the
23 two. So, it's hard in some ways to answer
24 the question because it's just the way we do
25 things.

1 I think it took a long time to
2 get there and to build that level of trust.
3 It's helpful that the same people have been
4 in the leadership of both places for that
5 period of time. I think that's been
6 important.

7 But really, you know, when you
8 start talking about preparing kids for
9 college, you can't do it without higher
10 education saying, "Here's what we're seeing.
11 Here's not we're not seeing. And here are
12 the things that it would be helpful to do."

13 And they've been, higher ed is
14 consistently a great partner in developing --
15 they're working on the assessment work, as
16 well. I'm not giving a great answer, again,
17 because it's just the way we do things now.
18 It took a little while to get there, but it's
19 incredibly beneficial to be in that place.

20 We have a State P-16 Council.
21 Frankly, it doesn't do that much because
22 people are consistently at the same
23 meetings. Every meeting we have has somebody
24 from K-12, somebody from higher ed. We had a
25 higher ed person from the higher education

1 commissioner on our leadership team, our
2 planning team, essentially.

3 We will also have someone on
4 our advisory council going forward. We will
5 also have staff that will be loaned from
6 higher education involved.

7 MS. WATSON: And if I may add
8 from years ago, a couple of years ago, it was
9 recognized that if we are going to be
10 successful with No Child Left Behind, which
11 is what our focus was that time, then we have
12 to recognize the role that higher ed plays in
13 that.

14 And the State Board of
15 Education and the State Department of
16 Education were directed to create a report
17 card for higher ed. And in that report card,
18 it addressed what the role was for higher ed
19 and the impact of the graduates of the
20 universities were having on student
21 achievement. So, the impetus for higher ed
22 being a partner that had something at stake
23 was already there, as well.

24 MS. WEISS: Idaho has a
25 question?

1 MR. MITCHELL: Yeah, we have --
2 Brad Mitchell from Idaho. We apologize we
3 came in late. So if you covered this, we
4 apologize. But we were having Idaho rainbow
5 trout. It was really great.

6 All this, in many ways, adds up
7 to closing the achievement gap. And one of
8 the issues we faced in our proposal and just
9 our reality is that's a huge issue and I
10 think every State in this room is wrestling.
11 So, if you covered it, could you cover it
12 again? How does all this add up to how
13 you're dealing with closing the achievement
14 gap?

15 MS. WATSON: Well, I think when
16 you think about it in terms of closing the
17 achievement gap, one of the critical pieces
18 is that every child has access to a highly
19 effective teacher.

20 In 2006, Tennessee conducted a
21 teacher equity study and determined that many
22 of our high minority, high poverty schools
23 did not have access to highly effective
24 teachers. When you think about what we are
25 doing with our reform efforts around

1 improving teacher quality, that will impact
2 the achievement gap.

3 Using data to the extent that
4 we can drill down to the student level and
5 know the issues that are impacting the
6 student achievement, know where to put the
7 resources that impacts the achievement gap.

8 So, I don't think there is
9 anything in the Race to the Top grant that
10 does not impact the achievement gap. I think
11 the focus on schools, the renewal schools,
12 the focus on the achievement district schools
13 allows for us to further address the
14 achievement gap. So, I think the whole
15 application enhances our opportunity to
16 impact the achievement gap.

17 MS. FALCON: In Delaware, as
18 well, everything in our
19 plan, we put the child at the center of our
20 plan. What is it that we can do for our
21 educators to ensure that they are doing what
22 they need to do to improvement student
23 achievement.

24 And so everything in our plan,
25 from our data systems to our professional

1 development to our training of our teacher to
2 our incentivizing our teachers, everything is
3 related to student achievement. And what is
4 our goal? That is our goal. So, again, it
5 will get to closing the achievement gap.
6 That is our hope and everything ties to that.

7 MR. CRUCE: And I think a
8 unique to this, opportunity, for us for our
9 application, which is now the plan, which is
10 great, is that we have been given the
11 opportunity to take this goal for closing the
12 achievement gap and put some human capital
13 resources behind it.

14 I spoke earlier about how
15 Assurance 1 and 2 were laying the foundation,
16 but we are able to do in this instance is to,
17 again, try to drive our most highly effective
18 teachers to our areas of highest need.

19 It's not all about the money,
20 but that is something we were unable to do
21 before. And then, once they're there, to
22 really create a professionally rewarding
23 environment for them while they are there, as
24 well.

25 I think studies have shown that

1 that's equally, if not more important, when a
2 teacher arrives in a school of high need.
3 And then also to provide the type of human
4 capital resources around data coaches and
5 development coaches to give that assistance
6 to those teachers, instead of continually
7 saying more data driven instruction, more
8 data drive decisions.

9 We say it, and we say it, and
10 we say it. And now we have the opportunity
11 to say and here is a person and this is her
12 expertise to try to help you actually do
13 that. So that's a twist from before.

14 MS. WATSON: I might add also
15 that making sure that all students have
16 access to the high standards, the rigorous
17 standards, opportunities and access to
18 challenging classes, AP courses, etcetera, is
19 a part of ensuring that the achievement gap
20 gets closed.

21 MR. MITCHELL: And again, this
22 is an issue we all face.

23 MS. WATSON: Yes.

24 MR. MITCHELL: You talk a lot
25 about inputs. Every State talks a lot about

1 inputs, so we get this frame right. What are
2 you are methods over the four years around
3 closing the achievement gap and how will you
4 use those metrics to make midstream
5 corrections?

6 Because all States can be
7 saying, particularly in the last ten years,
8 we've all been trying closing achievement
9 gaps and a lot of these ideas we've been
10 trying in a very [inaudible] way. What
11 are you guys doing or thinking about in terms
12 of metrics along the way that can really
13 amplify and accelerate movement on that?

14 MR. CRUCE: Sure. I think even
15 more important than the metric is the method,
16 which it has been different before. We all
17 have had metrics and goals that we want to
18 hit.

19 How we're looking at this from
20 our plan in a little bit of a different way
21 than we have before is that, in our project
22 management office at the Department of
23 Education, we have a specific unit that will
24 be our performance management unit.

25 And by that, I mean where we're

1 going in to help calibrate where each LEA is
2 on accomplishing each of the goals, whether
3 it's closing the achievement gap, whether
4 it's raising our NAEP scores, whatever these
5 measures, whether goals may be that we have
6 all had before, we now have an opportunity
7 and a focus, again, human capital to bring in
8 those folks that help us help LEAs.

9 Again, it's not a gotcha down
10 to the LEAs. It's how do we help identify
11 it, not after a year has gone by where they
12 have been off target to reach the goal, but a
13 month or six weeks, when we're able to go
14 back in and either have another human capital
15 opportunity with either the data coaches or
16 just the knowledge that you're not trending
17 towards goals so we can move in and help you
18 with that. Whereas, in the past, our methods
19 of being able to measure those have been
20 yearly at best.

21 MS. WATSON: And I would add
22 that one of the steps that we've taken and
23 will continue to focus on, that we know makes
24 the difference, is that, Number 1, we have
25 the same standards for all students.

1 And when we develop our college
2 and career ready work, we develop that around
3 the fact that all students will would have
4 the same metrics. Each child, each subgroup
5 would have different progress measures to
6 make each year, but they're all going toward
7 the same goal.

8 And I think critical also, is
9 the method that we are using to get there and
10 that is to have our schools and our school
11 systems pay close attention, not just to the
12 fact that you have subgroups that are not
13 meeting a need, but identifying the bases
14 that are behind those subgroup numbers and
15 identifying what the issues are that are
16 impacting those students as individuals and
17 working to overcome those issues so that
18 students are successful.

19 So, it's using that data to
20 take a very refined look at the child that is
21 not making the progress, as we continue to
22 take a look at the subgroup, as we continue
23 to take a look at all students.

24 MS. FALCON: And something else
25 that Delaware is doing in their plan, they

1 are implementing, besides the data coaches to
2 help our educators analyze data and drive
3 instruction, districts will have to allow for
4 90 minutes of professional learning community
5 time, which will then give them another
6 opportunity to sit down with their peers,
7 with a data coach, learn about the data, how
8 to use it, how to change our assessments, how
9 to change our instruction in the classroom,
10 because the ultimate goal is student
11 achievement.

12 So there is many aspects to
13 Delaware's plan that educators have been,
14 honestly, screaming for a very long time.
15 You know, for years we hear, you know, you
16 have to look at your data, you have to do
17 this. Well, we didn't have time to look at
18 our data.

19 So now Delaware's plan is
20 offering that time, they have to supply that
21 90 minutes of professional learning community
22 time. They have to offer professional
23 development that's linked to the work that
24 they do in their classroom, instead of some
25 just arbitrary professional development just

1 to meet a need.

2 So, there's lots of things in
3 the plan in Delaware that we're excited about
4 and looking forward to.

5 MS. WEISS: You also had a
6 pretty innovative way of looking at whether
7 the professional development was actually
8 effective in making a difference. You've got
9 a whole feedback loop and data around the
10 professional development itself built in.

11 MR. CRUCE: We do. And in
12 addition to that, what we're requiring, which
13 makes common sense to the outside folk but we
14 haven't done this within our State, is that
15 we're certifying the professional development
16 now, as well.

17 And so it can be, the
18 professional development can be selected from
19 a, let's say a State-approved list. However,
20 if you have something that's working and you
21 believe it's working well in your district
22 during your charter, you can bring that to us
23 and we'll certify it for you.

24 So without trying to be overly
25 prescriptive and say each and every LEA will

1 follow this model of professional
2 development, again, we're trying to be more
3 resource oriented and say we can be a
4 resource and you can adopt this method.

5 Or, if you have one, we will
6 have a vehicle through which we can evaluate
7 whether that's hitting the data and the
8 targets that you need in your districts. So
9 we can be much more confident that we're
10 aligning it as Diane described.

11 MS. WATSON: I think it's also
12 important that in our plan we have a data
13 dashboard and with that very intensive
14 training for every teacher in the State
15 around the use of the data dashboard and
16 informed instruction.

17 So I think that it also will
18 allow teachers to be able to have real time
19 data at their fingertips that they can use to
20 make decisions that are critical to adjusting
21 instruction for all students.

22 MS. WHALEN: So can you just
23 State what's on the data dashboards? Like
24 what kind of data you're talking about?

25 MS. WATSON: We're talking

1 about State-level data. We're talking about
2 data that will allow us to see where students
3 are falling relative to percentiles, who is in
4 the high, low, down to the student names, to
5 be able to identify what issues they are
6 having.

7 And we're talking about
8 nonacademic data, such as truancy data,
9 absentee data, graduation data. Just a
10 plethora of data that informs a teacher in
11 terms of what this particular student needs.

12 And will allow them to be able to garner the
13 services that child needs educationally and
14 non-educationally.

15 MS. PODA: Can you tell me what
16 your definition is of effective teachers and
17 leaders?

18 MS. WEISS: Can you just tell
19 us what State you're from?

20 MS. PODA: South Carolina.

21 MS. FALCON: In Delaware, we
22 currently have, as I said earlier, an
23 evaluation system based on Charlotte
24 Danielson's work and it has five components.
25 And one of those components is student

1 improvement.

2 Under Senate Bill 260, many
3 years ago, seven years ago, we had to, in
4 Delaware, develop an evaluation system that
5 had a component solely dedicated to student
6 improvement. So we've been working with this
7 evaluation system for quite a while.

8 Our current regulations that
9 we've made changes to, which will go into
10 effect in 2011, define an effective teacher
11 as someone who has her students, his or her
12 students, meeting sufficient student growth.

13 And a highly effective teacher
14 is one who has his or her students meeting
15 more than a year's growth. Now we, as a
16 State, have to define what is sufficient
17 student growth. What does that mean?
18 Sufficient student growth for our special ed
19 population may look very different than
20 sufficient student growth for our art teacher
21 or our gym teacher or our third grade
22 teacher.

23 Those discussions will take
24 place over the next year with a stakeholder
25 group that will determine and define

1 sufficient student growth. Also, what will
2 be defined is the multiple measures that are
3 rigorous and comparable that will be used to
4 determine those things.

5 So, that's the definition in
6 Delaware now. You're either effective
7 because you have shown growth or you're
8 highly effective because you've shown more
9 than a year's growth with your students.

10 MS. O'HARA: But, essentially,
11 the answer is ditto. I mean, I could have
12 given that exact same answer. The one
13 exception is probably for what we will use
14 for assessed subjects and assessed teachers
15 to determine whether or not they have met a
16 year's worth of growth is the value-added
17 system that we've had in place for a number
18 of years now.

19 So, we do have the ability to
20 do that right away and we actually do that
21 now anyhow. But, that would be the one
22 thing. So, over the next year we need to
23 talk about how we're doing that for
24 nonassessed teachers more significantly.

25 And how do you define a year's

1 worth of growth for those teachers who teach
2 in subjects that are nonassessed or maybe
3 teach multiple subjects and that sort of
4 thing. That's going to be a difficult
5 conversation.

6 MS. WEISS: Other questions?

7 PARTICIPANTS: (No response).

8 MS. WEISS: Okay. Can you talk
9 at little bit, I mean, Tennessee, in
10 particular I think, had some pretty
11 innovative things that you are doing with
12 your higher ed community, Tennessee Creds, I
13 don't know how you... Is that how you say
14 it?

15 MS. O'HARA: I think that's
16 how, yeah.

17 MS. WEISS: But just talk a
18 little bit about the way that you have
19 engaged your higher ed community in this
20 whole question of evaluating what's working
21 and what's effective and what's not.

22 MS. O'HARA: One thing I... The
23 question earlier of higher ed, that I didn't
24 mention, was we did, two years ago, a teacher
25 supply and demand study with the Center for

1 Business and Economic Research at the
2 University of Tennessee, to look at work
3 force data and teaching data and determine
4 where our shortages were.

5 When we did that, we found out
6 that we were, in fact, graduating an
7 incredibly small number of specifically
8 science teachers. That really got higher ed
9 more engaged. And the fact that now data
10 also be tied in some way to how those schools
11 are being reviewed.

12 We, we have a partnership
13 between Vanderbilt University and the
14 University of Tennessee Center for Business
15 and Economic Research, again, to do
16 evaluation work for all of the different
17 portions of the Race to the Top program.

18 That group will also engage
19 leaders from other higher ed institutions
20 around the State, specifically those who are
21 dealing with teacher prep, and will determine
22 what things exactly within the plan to take a
23 look at.

24 But one of the things we know
25 we'll study on how we're doing on

1 professional development, the different,
2 either what different professional
3 development work is working well and is not.
4 And that that will allow us to do, hopefully,
5 a lot mid course corrections as we need to do
6 them. That's one way of engaging higher ed.

7 The other things I would say is
8 we have encouraged all of our higher
9 education institutions, through the Higher
10 Education Commission, to apply to be service
11 providers. So for those things where they
12 provide a strong service, they could be an
13 approved vendor, essentially, in that way.

14 And also, a lot of our STEM
15 work, the locus of a lot of our STEM work is
16 within higher ed, as well. And that's really
17 work that they have been doing for a number
18 of years.

19 And then, yeah, the fallout on
20 the teacher supply and demand is that we're
21 going to do a teacher supply and demand study
22 the same way -- I think, just having to have
23 higher ed to think about those things, as
24 well.

25 The other thing I would say

1 that was very important was that, when we did
2 the legislation, when we had our special
3 session, it was not just the K-12
4 legislation. We also are making pretty
5 significant changes to our higher education
6 system, specifically around the funding
7 model.

8 So, now we're moving to a place
9 where, instead of funding on enrollment,
10 we're funding based on performance and,
11 essentially, that performance is defined as
12 completion. That was a big change and is a
13 pretty significant conversation within higher
14 ed.

15 And as well, we're doing some
16 work where we're reworking the way in which
17 our community colleges that will now all be
18 grouped together. And we did away with
19 remedial and developmental instruction at the
20 university level. And that will only happen
21 at the community college level, as well. So
22 that's a bit about the higher ed reform.

23 MS. WHALEN: So, I actually
24 wanted to switch the topic a little bit. I
25 think...I'm hearing a lot about State systems

1 of support and about projects and programs at
2 a State level. How do you guys balance
3 that?

4 Or how are you guys thinking of
5 balancing that, either people on the panel or
6 people out of the audience, with local
7 control issues?

8 So a lot of -- especially when
9 it comes around instructional programs or
10 coaches or approaches, how are you walking,
11 kind of, that fine line between what comes
12 from the State versus what should be thought
13 of as the local decision making and
14 intervention?

15 MR. CRUCE: So, what we have
16 done in our plan is local control is always a
17 hot topic. And what we've tried to do with
18 the initiatives in our plan is, wherever
19 possible, create a framework for locals to
20 make their decision.

21 So, the idea of local control
22 and the reality of local control is still
23 there. It's just not unfettered local
24 control. And so an example that we often use
25 is if we think that every district, every

1 student in the district should have a coat,
2 we are not being prescriptive to say it has
3 to be a blue coat and three buttons and it
4 has to be LL Bean.

5 But we're saying it has to be a
6 warm coat and we trust that you know the
7 color and the quantity and the number because
8 our goal is that you keep kids warm. So,
9 whenever possible, we have been, we have
10 been, we have tried to not be prescriptive to
11 that level.

12 In addition to that, what we
13 have tried to do is when we do need to be
14 very prescriptive and there is no room for
15 flexibility, let's say in Assurance 1, around
16 professional development for common core
17 standards, where that is something that needs
18 to occur in every LEA and there just isn't
19 room for flexibility around that.

20 We have made decisions that the
21 cost for something of that nature will come
22 from the State's 50 percent share. So,
23 again, we're able to share with our public
24 and with our LEAs that, not only are we
25 trying to give them flexibility within a

1 framework, but when we're unable to do that,
2 we're actually not putting that inflexible
3 burden on their share of this Race to the Top
4 money, that we're owning that piece for the
5 very reason that we try to be as least
6 prescriptive as possible with their money.

7 However, the beautiful thing
8 about the Race to the Top application and the
9 plan is that they have to follow the
10 framework, so it's not a rule that we came up
11 with, and in fact it's one we agree with,
12 however, it helps us better drive the actual
13 example of that it has to fit within the
14 framework. It's not a pot of money at the
15 local level to do what you think would be
16 best.

17 MS. WATSON: I think we could
18 also say ditto to some degree on that in that
19 we do offer the locals the opportunities to
20 make the decisions around the specifics of
21 how they will do what is required in the plan
22 with the portion that goes to them.

23 But also, with the portion that
24 remains with the State, there is the
25 opportunity for competitive funding of

1 certain items. And then, on top of that, is
2 the resources that are being provided with
3 the 50 percent at the State is supportive of
4 all districts.

5 But, I think we also try to say
6 here are the parameters and wherever there
7 are those non-negotiables, like with the
8 renewal schools, there is still some
9 flexibility in that, in that we simply
10 provide a list for you to choose from. As
11 long as that list matches your need, that's
12 kind of their quotation mark around that,
13 then we're okay with it.

14 MS. O'HARA: But then where --
15 I mean, as Dan said, but then where
16 specifically with the achievement school
17 districts, where we know that the control
18 needs to be we need, now, at this point, from
19 the State, it will be at the State. So,
20 ditto is really...

21 MR. CRUCE: And one more small
22 point to add to that. I think what we're
23 trying to do is not simply drive these
24 specific initiatives or provide them with
25 framework at the local level.

1 We're trying to provide the
2 impetus for LEAs to think differently and
3 make decisions differently on their own at
4 some point, without a framework, outside of
5 the Race to the Top grant period.

6 And what this gives us the
7 chance to now is to have a framework around
8 the money, but to really give them the
9 incentive to start making different decisions
10 based on different pieces of data, whether it
11 will be a different teacher evaluation
12 system.

13 Or a different call to arms, so
14 that, not only after the grant period ends,
15 do we have higher student achievement and
16 teachers who feel that they're in a more
17 professionally rewarding environment, we've
18 also got leaders in place that have learned
19 through this period to think differently and
20 make decisions differently.

21 MS. O'HARA: One other thing
22 I'd like to mention is that we, we, Dr. Webb
23 touched on this a little bit earlier, SCORE
24 is helping us to Identify...This is not in
25 our Race to the Top plan, it's just we sort

1 of now know a little bit more about needing
2 to do, helping us to identify in each field
3 service area people outside of the
4 department, outside of...

5 People like local foundation
6 leaders who have been really engaged on
7 education issues, but are thinking about it
8 in a different way than maybe LEAs might be
9 thinking about it.

10 So, trying to identify people
11 that they know well who are in their
12 communities, in their area, to serve as
13 consultants that will hopefully help push
14 along the reforms. Again, because this is
15 not...I mean, it's a big amount of money, but
16 it's also a small amount of money.

17 And it's a small amount of
18 money for a lot of school districts. And so,
19 having people to really think you know in a
20 wholesale reform mind is difficult with this
21 kind of thing. So one of the things we need
22 to offer is resources outside of the
23 department, outside of the sort of, you know,
24 the standard way of thinking.

25 MS. WEISS: So, let me just say

1 know this. In particular, this local control
2 issue is one that, I think, Colorado brought
3 up. I think they're on the webinar, in case
4 they've got any questions on things they want
5 to ask.

6 And I know a bunch of the
7 western States were particularly concerned
8 about how do you, in a situation where
9 there's such lack of centralized power at the
10 SEA, what are the different tools you can use
11 to enlist LEAs in a consistent, coherent
12 reform plan.

13 So, let me just make sure that
14 there aren't any additional sort of lingering
15 thoughts or questions out there that you guys
16 want to ask about this before we move on to
17 STEM. Or if anybody's willing to volunteer
18 an alternative approach.

19 MS. HYDE: Hi, Sheila Hyde from
20 New Mexico. Could you talk a little bit
21 about anything you are doing with school
22 boards? You have talked about
23 superintendents and other constituencies
24 slash stakeholders. But, specifically,
25 particularly in the western States, working

1 with school boards?

2 MS. O'HARA: Yeah. One of the
3 things that the governor has asked us to do
4 is to bring in school board members from
5 around the State and give them, essentially,
6 a day's worth on training in part on Race to
7 the Top, but also heavily about value-added
8 data and what it means and how it will be
9 used.

10 And then, you know, sort of
11 where we think we're going with the new
12 evaluation system. So, that's one way in
13 which we're going to engage school board
14 members, really to try and do more
15 education.

16 Also, that really, you know, in
17 part, the State will do some of that. But,
18 in large part, we're doing that in
19 partnership with organizations like the SCORE
20 who, you know...and the school board
21 association, as well. So, just a small
22 answer.

23 The other thing is that we
24 actually, for the meetings, the regional
25 meetings that we're going around scopes of

1 work, we have some meetings that are going on
2 right now, just with superintendents
3 essentially, and then we'll do more extensive
4 meetings where we'll ask that the school
5 board -- that there be a representative from
6 the school board, a representative from the
7 union, and, as well as the people from the
8 school districts.

9 MS. WATSON: And as a State,
10 it's always been our goal that, if invited by
11 our school board to come, make a
12 presentation, discuss issues, that we have
13 accommodated those kinds of requests.

14 MR. CRUCE: And in Delaware, we
15 accommodated many of those requests.
16 (Laughter). Through the process, I'll say,
17 some of our work with the school boards
18 around obtaining signatures on the Race to
19 the Top applications, those were some of the
20 most lively, and I'm choosing my words
21 carefully because it's probably being
22 recorded, but very lively conversations.

23 The format that we've used,
24 that Secretary Lowery referred to earlier,
25 with the Innovation Action Team? We started

1 that group over the summer. It's driven our
2 work. It's being turned back on again as we
3 now talk about implementing this plan.

4 They're a key, a key and one of
5 the most highflying members of that group.
6 The Delaware School Boards Association has an
7 executive director who is very active and
8 very dialed in to legislative Paul as well.
9 And she has plugged in representatives on all
10 of the committees that we've worked on over
11 the summer with the IAT.

12 So, we treat our School Boards
13 Association as certainly a very important
14 stakeholder and one that's around the table
15 and as equal access as all of our
16 constituencies do and we now turn to
17 implement this work.

18 MS. WEISS: Great. Thanks.
19 So, let's just spend a couple of minutes
20 talking about STEM.

21 You guys definitely touched on
22 this this morning when you did your
23 presentations, but just maybe a little bit
24 about the industry and higher ed partnerships
25 that you've put together, how you expect

1 those to work and how you thought about
2 putting those throughout your entire
3 application. How you just have thought about
4 where STEM touches all the different part of
5 your plan.

6 MS. O'HARA: So, anytime that
7 you talk to the governor of the State of
8 Tennessee, you will hear that he is, was a
9 physics major in college and this is just a
10 very important thing to him.

11 This was actually a great
12 opportunity -- this was a great opportunity
13 for us to come up with a more focused STEM
14 strategy around the State than we currently
15 had. Immediately went to Patell as an
16 obvious leader. I think Will talked about
17 this this morning, but Patell runs Oak Ridge
18 National Lab.

19 Oak Ridge National Lab is
20 really our top ten asset in the State. There
21 are a number of other great STEM assets, but
22 that's really an important one.

23 One of the things we did, and
24 again related to the legislation around
25 higher ed, was to make a more obvious and

1 bright light connection between the
2 University of Tennessee and the Oak Ridge
3 National Lab, so that there will be training
4 happening at both places.

5 So, actually, students...
6 People who work at the lab can now be
7 professors and that sort of thing. Anyway,
8 that's sort of afield.

9 But, so the STEM network, we
10 went with a lot of what Ohio had done and,
11 basically, pulled in a lot of the different
12 ideas that Ohio has done with Patell on STEM
13 learning. And then we wanted to make sure
14 that we were doing things that would address
15 STEM, both in rural and urban areas.

16 And so one important thing is
17 that we'll develop more fully a virtual STEM
18 kind of high school. We have a couple of
19 STEM platform schools that are designed in a
20 large part around the metro school in
21 Columbus, Ohio.

22 And then, additional STEM
23 training, our higher education organizations
24 have -- a number of them have STEM centers.
25 And so we essentially blew that out to be a

1 different kind of concept, which is instead
2 of just the center at the institution, a hub
3 that sort of works with all of the schools in
4 the region as well, around developing more
5 capability for teachers on science,
6 technology, engineering and math.

7 So we really, we tried to think
8 about it in a broad network sense. We're
9 going to create a network that will live,
10 essentially, at the Department of Education.

11 We will engage -- we're doing
12 an executive order that will engage a
13 network, a council that involves at least six
14 business partners. We had a business partner
15 in STEM that really helped us to develop that
16 plan, as well.

17 MS. WATSON: I think, with our
18 new standards, math and science standards,
19 STEM is embedded throughout those standards
20 and the training that we do with teachers, we
21 don't have a conversation about those math
22 and science standards without talking about
23 STEM.

24 MS. O'HARA: And the point that
25 you made, Joanne, one, as well, is that we

1 made sure as we were talking throughout our
2 application that we didn't just want STEM to
3 be an add-on thing at the end.

4 So, throughout the application,
5 anywhere that we mentioned STEM, we noted
6 that we were mentioning it and had a little
7 superscript that said STEM so that it was
8 clear that it was part of everything.

9 It was a part of everything
10 within the application, in addition to being
11 its own priority and section, so every chance
12 we had to mention something that was related
13 to STEM, we did.

14 MS. WEISS: Why don't we just
15 give you guys a quick opportunity, as we wrap
16 up, to just tell us if there is any other,
17 from a content perspective, anything else
18 that you think was critical, that we didn't a
19 chance to touch on or any of the big "ah-ha's"
20 that you had as you were putting these plans
21 together that you just want to share with
22 folks.

23 MS. FALCON: Well, I think this
24 has been shared, but I think it's important
25 to share again. One of the key things for

1 me, as the president of the teacher's union
2 in Delaware, is that it's important for all
3 the States to work collaboratively and
4 include the very people who have to do the
5 implementation.

6 Without the very people that
7 have to do that work, it's going to be very
8 hard to do any reform effort. So, I
9 encourage all of the States to go back and
10 try to have those conversations with your
11 unions and get those people on board, because
12 they want to be there. They want to be part
13 of the conversations.

14 MR. CRUCE: I think, from a
15 logistical perspective, and I think you all
16 are here today to hear kind of the conceptual
17 piece of where our plans came from, but if I
18 were in your chairs, I think the practical
19 take-away, too.

20 And one of the things that we
21 try to do with our application is have the
22 readers in mind and what we would want to
23 receive, meaning not a 2,000-page document,
24 but rather a document that got to the point
25 and that was not full of initiative on every

1 page, but rather told the story of Delaware.

2 And showed the interconnection
3 between, not only each assurance, but each
4 initiative within that assurance. Because
5 what we were trying to show to US DOE is that
6 it's either all or nothing with our plan, in
7 that everything is so intertwined and so
8 interdependent that to not award or agree
9 with a part of what we were looking to do in
10 one assurance could be a fatal flaw for the
11 other assurance.

12 In acknowledging that, we tried
13 to keep our verbiage, we tried to keep our
14 actual initiatives very succinct because,
15 number one, it's easier for us to understand
16 what we're trying to do and we thought,
17 therefore, the readers, and if we were
18 fortunate enough to be in this position, when
19 we have to talk about this to the public,
20 that we can do it in a very articulate way
21 because this is a plan for our State.

22 It's not just plan for our DOE
23 and our teachers and our paraprofessionals
24 and our secretaries in the buildings, it's a
25 plan for our State.

1 So we need to be able to,
2 whether it's the Governor or the Secretary,
3 we need to be able to articulate this to
4 persons who have children in school, don't
5 have children in school or have no children
6 at all, so that we have the buy-in to move it
7 all forward.

8 MS. WEISS: Okay. Two
9 seconds. We're running short on time.

10 MS. WATSON: I think making
11 sure that the whole plan worked around
12 systemic structures that outlive people.

13 MS. O'HARA: I would say borrow
14 and build. So, borrow those things, like the
15 Ohio STEM learning network that they do a
16 great job on, I mean, and as people have
17 ideas, please call me and let me know if you
18 have better ideas than what we have
19 presented, as well.

20 And then build on what you
21 have. That's, you know, the same thing. We
22 built on what we had and what we knew
23 worked.

24 MS. WEISS: So, as I, as I
25 thank all of you for joining us today, I also

1 want to just say that one of the things that
2 I had sort of as a key take-away from just
3 sitting up here and listening is how many of
4 the different issues, now that we have sort
5 of an agenda that's shared across so many
6 States, as well as standards that are shared
7 across so many States, we're in a such a
8 different position than we've ever been in
9 education.

10 Where even we, you know, even
11 as you guys are working hard in your SEAs to
12 put together networks across your States for
13 how your LEAs are going to collaborate and
14 learn from each other, I think the onus is
15 going to be on the departments in a big way
16 over the next four years to do the same kind
17 of outreach across States.

18 There's so much that everyone's
19 going to have in common going forward here,
20 just listening to the issues around
21 transitioning to the new standards. How do
22 you evaluate non-assessed subjects and
23 grades?

24 How are we going to deal with
25 this question of turnaround and what really

1 works and how do you do it and how do you
2 implement it well? How do you use data
3 effectively? So many issues that I think
4 everybody has in common.

5 And we, for our part, will do
6 our best, as well, to try to build a model of
7 the right kinds of learning opportunities for
8 both grantees and non-grantees, because all of
9 us are going to be in this boat going forward
10 so that we can really accelerate our learning
11 by building.

12 Wait. What are we doing?

13 Building and borrowing?

14 Yep. So, thank you very much to
15 Delaware and Tennessee for sharing stuff.
16 And thanks to all of you for participating in
17 this conversation. We're going to take a
18 15-minute break and be back here at 3:15 for
19 some wrap-up stuff. Thank you.

20 REPORTER'S NOTE: Whereupon,
21 a short recess is taken.

22 MS. CLARK: We want to wrap
23 things up this afternoon because I know a lot
24 of people are either headed out or need to
25 get on the road. So, the next couple

1 sections that we're going to be covering
2 are...

3 We really put a lot of thought
4 into what information we thought was
5 important to provide to you. And both of
6 these next two sections are really based on
7 lessons we've learned and that we want to
8 share with you.

9 So, this first one is about
10 developing budgets. And this is largely
11 based on the Department's review of budgets
12 in applications submitted in Phase 1. We
13 looked at a number of the budgets, not just
14 Delaware and Tennessee, but we did a careful
15 review of all -- of a number of budgets that
16 we received during Phase 1.

17 The second section that we're
18 going to cover is a largely structured around
19 feedback that we got from the peer
20 reviewers. We asked them for feedback and we
21 put that to use and wanted to impart that for
22 you. And a lot of it, actually, echoes some
23 of the information that you have heard
24 throughout the day.

25 So, let's go ahead and jump

1 right in. The budget section, as you know,
2 there are two parts. One is the budget
3 summary and one -- and the other is the
4 project level budget. So, the budget summary
5 is really important.

6 Why we wanted to focus on this
7 today is because Phase 2 will be so different
8 than Phase 1. Obviously, the timing will be
9 very tight. This money has to go out the
10 door by September 30th.

11 So, we wanted to share this
12 information with you so that, as you're
13 developing your applications, you could get
14 those budgets as tight and as clean and give
15 us the information that we need as quickly as
16 possibly so we can, in turn, get the money
17 out to you.

18 The Department has a number of
19 responsibilities. And since these are such
20 large grants, we're being extra cautious to
21 make sure that we really understand what's in
22 those budgets. The more information you
23 provide, the easier it will be for us to get
24 the money to you.

25 So, the first part, as you

1 know, is the budget summary table. I won't
2 spend too much time on this. You all are
3 very familiar. One thing that I want to
4 point out to you, that didn't always
5 necessarily happen, is that the, in the
6 lower, let's see... Right-hand box on the --
7 is the budget total.

8 And in some cases, that total
9 didn't necessarily reflect what was written
10 in the narrative or it didn't reflect what
11 was reflected elsewhere in the application.

12 And it's very important. This
13 is the official record of what you are asking
14 for and it's where we'll be looking to make
15 sure that your asking amount is within those
16 budget caps that we're using for Phase 2.
17 So, just a note to double-check that.

18 And then, throughout this
19 budget table, this is really where you'll be
20 summarizing all of your project level
21 budgets. The next piece is the budget
22 summary narrative. And this is really
23 important. Peer reviewers we heard from spent
24 a lot of time looking at this narrative.

25 It helps them to understand

1 what resources you need in order to implement
2 your plan, which really helped to feed into
3 the bigger picture of what was happening. It
4 described your overall structure and
5 rationale and then sort of gave an overview
6 of your what your project level budget would
7 be.

8 And I think both of these were
9 really important. What we found is that the
10 reviewers looked very carefully at the
11 project level budgets. They wanted to find
12 alignment between the project level budget
13 and what was in the application.

14 And they also looked at this
15 budget summary narrative to be sure that this
16 provided an overview of what your plan
17 entailed, and the reason for the way that you
18 structure all of your projects. If there's
19 anything unusual that you want to draw their
20 attention to, this is an important place to
21 do it. Again, reviewers looked very closely
22 at this.

23 The other thing is to provide
24 sufficient detail. While this is an overview
25 and it's sort of the big picture of your

1 entire budget and ties into your plan, there
2 are a lot of details that you can put in
3 there that reviewers were looking for.

4 Again, like I said, they were
5 looking to draw connections between your
6 overall plan and it's really important to
7 show consistency between the narrative and
8 the budget table.

9 So, in some cases, I'm sure you
10 develop that narrative, then you tweak your
11 budget and you're working on it and you're
12 finalizing it, make sure before you submit
13 your application that there is alignment
14 because that raises a red flag in reviewers'
15 minds. And again, trips us up when we come
16 back to you afterwards and try to finalize
17 these budget figures.

18 And then include a plan for
19 leveraging other funds. We know that there's
20 a number of other grants that your States are
21 working towards and this is a great place to
22 give an explanation of how you plan to
23 leverage those and how those are tied into
24 your overall plan.

25 We're hoping that the State

1 longitudinal data system grants will be
2 announced in early May, because I know that
3 there are a lot of questions about that.

4 Don't assume grants that you
5 haven't yet received. Note in your budget
6 the funds that can be deducted if you win
7 elsewhere. The next section is the project
8 level budget and I'm going to turn this over
9 to Meredith to walk you through that.

10 MS. FARACE: Thank you.

11 Jessica and I are helping out on this part
12 because we have been immersed in Delaware's
13 and Tennessee's budgets and going back and
14 forth with them on it.

15 So, we've learned some good
16 lessons looking at all of the budgets, but
17 also very specifically at these two budges
18 and learning a lot about what we need from
19 you and hoping that we can impart some of
20 that to you now so that you can get it right
21 early on.

22 Project level budgets. So, as
23 Jessica said, detail is important. And
24 really the number of projects are going to
25 vary from State to State. This is where you

1 provide reviewers with concrete information
2 about how you're going to accomplish the plan
3 that you propose.

4 So, think through how to
5 provide this information in a way that is
6 accessible to reviewers. You may want to, at
7 the beginning, talk through your plan for how
8 all your budget... All your project budgets
9 connect to the criteria.

10 For instance, you might have
11 some that focus on standards and assessments,
12 some that focus on data, for instance, and
13 you can walk through how that's going to work
14 with all your project budgets. It should be
15 detailed enough to include information that
16 the reviewer can understand how you will
17 accomplish your plan.

18 So, don't assume that the
19 reviewer will have to go back into your
20 actual plan narrative to find out what
21 happens in a budget. Do give some context
22 within your budget narrative for each project
23 so that they know the purpose.

24 They're going to be looking...
25 Let's go to the next page [slide] here. Is there a

1 trick? Oh, thanks. Go back to this chart.

2 Okay. So, consider how these expenses are
3 categorized. You're going to have various
4 budget categories here that you need to fill
5 out.

6 And it may be the case that you
7 have project level budgets that don't have
8 every single one of these budget categories.
9 That's probably going to be common. For
10 instance, you may have some that just have
11 contractual costs and not personal costs for
12 travel, that sort of thing.

13 So, you can go ahead and leave
14 those blank, but fill in, obviously, the
15 categories that apply. So, don't simply lump
16 together all the costs under one heading if
17 there are additional expenses that need to be
18 considered in other categories.

19 And make sure that in your
20 narrative it's clear to the reader how you
21 got to those numbers. And that's one thing
22 that I have been learning the last few
23 weeks. I really need to be able to connect
24 the dots between what's in your narrative and
25 what's in that table, so I know what went

1 into that number that's in your table.

2 When in doubt, do the math for
3 the reader. Because there are going to be
4 people out there that are going to be
5 scrutinizing these budgets and wanting to
6 understand what goes behind those numbers.
7 So, I'm going to go through each one of these
8 budget categories just to give you a little
9 bit better sense of what we expect for them.

10 Under "Personnel", this is all
11 in the guidance in the application. But you
12 need to have the title of each position. Not
13 necessarily the person's name, but you know
14 thinking through who is going to be in that
15 personnel category, salary, time on the
16 project and any additional basis for cost
17 estimates or computations.

18 "Fringe benefits", go ahead
19 and explain. You might want to do an
20 up-front assumption for all of your projects,
21 if you have certain percentages for
22 personnel, that you're going to use the basis
23 for the cost estimate.

24 For instance, if you're
25 factoring in inflation over the four years,

1 explain what that is and what that percentage
2 is so that people can understand why those
3 numbers are changing over the four years, for
4 instance.

5 Under "Travel", provide an
6 estimate of the number of trips, an estimate
7 of transportation cost for each trip,
8 additional basis for costs. So, basically,
9 what you're going to do is explain the
10 purpose for the travel and how it relates to
11 the goals, how it's going to contribute to
12 the project's success.

13 Under "Equipment", we're
14 looking for the type of equipment to be
15 purchased, estimated unit cost for each item,
16 definition of equipment, any additional
17 basis... I'm running through these. I know
18 that you can read them, but I really want to
19 emphasize that we are looking for detail
20 here.

21 And if it's not provided when
22 you give us these budgets, we'll be asking
23 you to go back and provide that. We're going
24 to need a justification for each one of these
25 things, obviously.

1 "Supplies", we need an estimate
2 of the materials and supplies needed for the
3 project and the nature of the expense and,
4 again, always the basis of the cost.

5 I want to spend a minute on,
6 "Contractual", because this is one of the
7 big ones where you are going to be providing
8 some large numbers potentially and what we
9 really need to understand is what other
10 products or the professional services that
11 are going to be provided. And those should
12 be tied to your plan.

13 What are the estimated costs
14 per expected procurement. If you're doing
15 professional services, what are the amounts
16 of time to be devoted to the project and
17 what's the basis for the cost estimate.

18 So, if you have a contract and
19 you have \$500,000 per year and you give a
20 couple of activities that tie to your plan,
21 that's good, but how did you come up with the
22 \$500,000. What's the basis for that? Is
23 that based on a certain number of people? Is
24 that based on the activities?

25 Do you have existing partners

1 that do something similar that that's where
2 you came up with that number. So, really
3 provide where did that number come from.

4 One note, though, on this one.
5 Because grantees must use appropriate
6 procurement procedures to select contractors,
7 you shouldn't include information in your
8 grant applications about specific contractors
9 that may be used to provide services or goods
10 for the proposed project if the grant is
11 awarded.

12 There's some guidance in our
13 Frequently Asked Questions about that if you
14 have more, more questions about -- looks like
15 we have a question.

16 MS. EDENFIELD: Edenfield from
17 Florida. I just want to thank you for that
18 note of guidance. Florida couldn't do that
19 anyway because of State procurement laws.

20 And we will be more explicit in
21 our narrative that that's why we were vague.
22 We had some reviewer feedback on that. But,
23 is that something you could address in your
24 reviewer training?

25 MS. FARACE: Definitely. Yes.

1 We did in the past and definitely will again,
2 and we do need you to stick by your
3 procurement laws. There is a balance, and
4 maybe someone else can speak to this, as
5 well, that, while that's the case and while
6 we don't want you to say who your contractor
7 is, there are some basis that you can give
8 without violating the procurement laws.

9 If you can do that, please do
10 that. Because, otherwise, it does look very
11 broad and very much like a black box and so
12 it's hard for the reviewers, it's hard for us
13 when we're doing the negotiations.

14 So, I think there's a balance
15 that can be struck there. But we will
16 definitely go through that again with our
17 peer reviewers and make sure they
18 understand. They did ask for guidance on the
19 budget and how to look at them, what to look
20 for and so we're going to be spending some
21 more time on that.

22 MS. CLARK: One thing that we
23 heard quite a bit from reviewers is that,
24 even if they didn't...certainly wouldn't ask
25 for you to put who the contractor may be, but

1 they wanted some sort of explanation of what
2 costs might be involved in that contract.

3 Because in some cases we had a
4 million dollar contracts, \$500,000 contracts,
5 and all there was was a number. So, to the
6 extent possible and within reason, they were
7 looking for some narrative that said here's
8 what we anticipate will be covered in that.

9 Here's the type of services
10 that we hope will be provided, with the
11 understanding that that's all tentative and
12 not final. But they really looked at those
13 numbers, and they -- even if they thought
14 they were reasonable, they were looking for
15 more information about what your thought is
16 about what will fall into that.

17 MS. FARACE: And we're doing
18 the same thing. We have to judge whether
19 costs are reasonable and allowable. And in
20 order to do that, we need to have some sense
21 of what's behind those numbers without going
22 into your procurement laws.

23 So, that's something that, when
24 we get to our budget review, we will work
25 with the States individually and figure out

1 the best way to do that without any harm.

2 MS. WHITE: Kerri White,
3 Oklahoma. I just want to thank Florida for
4 making the comment. Our area, we were
5 criticized, not in the budget area, but in
6 our application narrative for not naming who
7 our contractors would be. So, that they were
8 asking us, "Well, who's going to do this?"
9 We can't say, even in the application
10 narrative.

11 MS. CLARK: And we did cover
12 that in training, but we will cover it again,
13 because that's something that we, we
14 understand that that's an important thing to
15 consider.

16 MS. FARACE: Yeah. We can make
17 sure that FAQ that we've got out there is
18 widely known to the peers, but thank you for
19 bringing that up.

20 "Training stipends", quite a
21 few States out there are looking at this.
22 This is -- pertains to costs associated with
23 long-term training programs in college and
24 university coursework, not necessarily
25 workshops or short-term training supported by

1 the programs.

2 "Salary stipends", that are
3 paid to teachers and other personnel
4 participating in short-term professional
5 development should be reported
6 in "Personnel." You should provide
7 descriptions of the training stipend to be
8 provided and explain the purpose of the
9 training.

10 And then under, "Other",
11 provide other items by major type or
12 category. So you might say it's
13 communications, printing, equipment rental,
14 things like that, and then the basis for
15 those costs, the purpose of those
16 expenditures, that the sort of thing we're
17 looking for.

18 Okay; "10, indirect costs", if
19 States have negotiated indirect cost rates
20 with the Department of Ed, they should be
21 using that in identifying and applying that
22 indirect cost rate. And then, for "involved
23 LEAs", this is the 50 percent -- I'm sorry,
24 this is not the 50 percent for the
25 participating LEAs, this is involved LEAs.

1 So these are the LEAs that are
2 not participating but that you might, for
3 some reason, want to give some additional
4 costs for to help them maybe, for instance,
5 to do something that's a Statewide project.

6 So, looking into something
7 regarding your standards and assessments, you
8 might want to be Statewide, but you don't
9 have every single district participating and
10 so you might allocate some money for involved
11 LEAs. In this category, you provide specific
12 activities to be done by the involved LEA,
13 the estimated cost of the activity, the
14 approximate number of LEAs involved in each
15 activity.

16 The total cost of each
17 activity, and any additional basis for the
18 cost estimate or computations. So, again,
19 explain your reasoning, explain the purpose
20 of the activity.

21 "Supplemental funding", this
22 is for each of the specific activities to be
23 done by selected participating LEAs and for
24 which the State is compensating the LEAs
25 beyond their Title 1 shares under Section 14006(c).

1 So, an example of this, I know this is
2 very, very detailed.

3 An example of this is when
4 Tennessee was speaking earlier today about
5 how they wanted to give, or maybe it was
6 Delaware, give additional funds for the very,
7 very small districts that really needed a
8 little bit more in order to do anything with
9 because their amount was so small.

10 They gave some supplemental
11 funding for those participating LEAs. Or for
12 instance, we have seen some States want to
13 give additional money for the turnaround
14 activities and, depending on the situation
15 there, they thought more money would be
16 needed in order to turn around those
17 schools. They might supplement the LEA's
18 funding.

19 So, we wanted to give you some
20 examples of what we're looking for in
21 personnel and this is just one here about a
22 particular project director and the kind of
23 information that you might put in and you
24 would do this for each of the different
25 personnel that you would expect to be working

1 on a particular project.

2 We gave another example of
3 travel just so you can get a sense of how you
4 might show how you're calculating that cost.
5 The number of trips, the dollar per trip, the
6 total and then give some explanation as to
7 where you expect that travel that they're
8 going for.

9 One final note on budgets for
10 participating LEAs. States are not required
11 to provide budgets to describing how
12 participating LEAs will use their funds. So
13 that's a little bit different. All these
14 projects are very, very specific about how
15 the State's using their funds.

16 But, participating LEAs, you
17 provide the amount, but you don't have to
18 describe how each participating LEA is using
19 their money.

20 However, the Department expects
21 the States to know the participating LEA's
22 budgets and what's behind them; that you
23 should monitor and track the expenditures to
24 insure that the participating LEAs spend
25 their funds in accordance with the State's

1 plan.

2 So, really you need to make
3 sure that districts aren't just taking this
4 money and backfilling, that they're using the
5 money for the plan that they agreed to in
6 their MOU. And it will be your
7 responsibility to be monitoring and tracking
8 that.

9 So, like I said, while we don't
10 ask for that in this application, we do
11 expect that all that information lives with
12 you and that you will be working with your
13 districts to make sure that they properly
14 implement it.

15 They've got -- districts have
16 up to 90 days to complete their final scopes
17 of work, their work plans and their budgets.
18 And at the conclusion of that period, States
19 notify LEAs of their final subgrants. So,
20 that's the point where the districts would
21 get their part of the funding. Oh, question
22 over here?

23 MS. VIATOR: Hi, Katherine
24 Viator for Massachusetts. Just a quick
25 follow up to the point you made about the

1 monitoring, the expectations that States are
2 supposed to monitor.

3 Is the methodology for that
4 tracking and monitoring to be detailed in any
5 way in the proposal? Or is that just left to
6 the States to do and it's the understanding
7 that it shall be done?

8 MS. FARACE: We haven't
9 specified that.

10 MS. HESS: I think that's up to
11 you. If you have that kind of detail and
12 want to include it, you may.

13 MS. VIATOR: But there's no
14 requirement to include that detail that
15 methodology? Okay. Thank you.

16 MS. FARACE: Any other
17 questions for my section? I guess my big
18 take-away as I have been immersed in looking
19 at a budget over the last few weeks is there
20 has to be some kind of balance.

21 You know, we recognize that
22 these are some big picture projects and that,
23 at this point, you're making some estimations
24 based on work you're doing with partners and
25 within your State and you may not have every

1 single detail worked out.

2 However, we need to figure out
3 whether these costs are reasonable. We need
4 to have some basis to make that
5 determination. And so, you know, please do
6 provide as much detail as you can so that we
7 can determine whether or not it's
8 reasonable.

9 What we don't want to happen
10 is, because we're heading towards September
11 30th and we still don't have enough detail to
12 make a determination, we may have to say this
13 does not appear to be reasonable because we
14 don't have appropriate justification.

15 So, please give us those
16 justifications in your initial budget, so
17 both the peer reviewers and the Department,
18 as we do these budget reviews, can really
19 determine whether you can go ahead and have
20 those funds. What we don't want to happen is
21 for us to not allow to you that budget purely
22 because we don't have the detail.

23 So, I'm stressing that, again,
24 as we're going back and forth with the States
25 right now, we're going to have an even

1 tighter time line come this fall. Okay.

2 Jessica?

3 MS. CLARK: So, in that vein,
4 we wanted to go ahead and give you an idea
5 of what the Department's review looks like.
6 This is our -- oh. So, these are, these seem
7 obvious, but they're so important.

8 These came up in all the budget
9 reviews that we did and we wanted to
10 reemphasize them to you again. The numbers
11 in the budget should add up correctly, as
12 Meredith said.

13 If we have to, if the
14 Department has to err on one side, it's going to
15 be, if we don't have the information and the
16 numbers don't add up, then it will be the
17 lower of the two numbers if we cannot find
18 the justification for it.

19 So, be very sure that when
20 you're going through and finalizing those
21 budgets, you have tracked it all correctly
22 and your summary table is correct in terms of
23 the totals all the projects.

24 The amounts, as I said earlier,
25 the amounts in the narrative should match the

1 amounts included in the budget tables. Be
2 very cautious about that. Budgets should be
3 sufficiently specific to judge whether costs
4 are necessary, reasonable, allowable and
5 allocable. And I'll cover that in just a
6 minute.

7 And then, as we said, even
8 those contractual costs, provide whatever
9 justification you can to give an idea of
10 what's covered in this chunk. And these
11 large proposals, sometimes it's easy to
12 overlook those numbers because they are a
13 small piece of the pie.

14 But when we got, when we have
15 been doing our budget reviews, even the
16 smaller of these contracts and things, we've
17 gone back and asked for additional detail.
18 So, we want as much as we can get from you.

19 And then, pre-award costs are
20 not allowable under this competition, but we
21 have been allowing costs after the award
22 announcements have been made, those could be
23 billed to the project in the future. Just a
24 heads up as you're starting to consider what
25 will happen down the road.

1 So, the Department's review,
2 like I said, we wanted to give you a heads up
3 about what we do internally so that you can
4 think about these things as you're crafting
5 your budget, as well. This is our standard
6 process.

7 When we look at all
8 expenditures under grants at the Department,
9 this is sort of the process that we walk
10 through. As a potential grantee, you would
11 be required to undergo this budget discussion
12 with us and then, ultimately, we do have some
13 discussion in determining the final amount.

14 Although, typically, it's part
15 of a conversation with the State in order for
16 us to get a full understanding of what your
17 request is.

18 And then, again, we're going to
19 keep saying this to you, think about the fact
20 that we will have a short turnaround time and
21 we want to make sure that we can get all of
22 the information that we need right up front
23 and get that money out.

24 So the first question that we
25 look at is are the costs allowable. A lot of

1 this is on you, of course, in your process.
2 I know you have all looked very carefully at
3 this. Are they not prohibited by statute,
4 regulations or governing cost principals.

5 The next one is, is the, is
6 the -- are the costs allocable to the
7 project. So, this is if the goods or
8 services involved are chargeable or
9 assignable to the project. So, if it
10 specifically benefits the project and is in
11 alignment with your goals and objectives, that's
12 something that we would look at, as well.

13 Necessary and reasonable is
14 really looking at the costs. Do they make
15 sense? Are they something that a reasonable
16 person would have paid? That's really where
17 the information on those contractual pieces
18 comes in.

19 That's something that we can't
20 make that judgment if we don't have a little
21 bit of a basis for what's included that
22 cost. And then the consistent treatment,
23 that comes into play in things like your
24 travel.

25 Did you look -- or were you

1 consistent throughout your application in
2 terms of what the amounts were that you set
3 in there and that like costs would be treated
4 the same for similar purposes throughout your
5 proposal.

6 Are there any questions about
7 that budget section before we move on? And
8 please don't hesitate, as you are working
9 through these, to send us questions.

10 You've used the Race to the Top
11 e-mail box up to this point and we're taking
12 questions in that box and we'll put anything
13 that's relevant in an FAQ that we can share
14 information on.

15 So, we really do want to
16 emphasize this is an important piece,
17 although not flashy, it really is a critical
18 element and something that we hope looks
19 different in Phase 2 in terms of the level of
20 detail that we got.

21 So, the next section is on the
22 application review and submission.

1 [Inaudible]

2 [Inaudible]

3 3 A lot of the information that
4 I'm going to walk through is available,
5 actually all of it, you can find on our
6 website. But, I wanted to quickly walk you
7 through it because, in part, we want you to
8 understand what the review process looks
9 like.

10 You have asked some questions
11 even today that I think it will be beneficial
12 to hear what this is so, I'll run through
13 that very quickly. And then, as I said,
14 reviewer recommendations, we asked our
15 reviewers for recommendations in several
16 areas.

17 And one of those areas was what
18 would you tell States applying in Phase 2?
19 And they responded in force. We got so much
20 information that we had to spend the past few
21 weeks going through to try to tease out the
22 things that would be helpful for you and the
23 things that are helpful to us, as well.

24 So, as this process is so
25 important to the Department and we've spent a

1 lot of time, A, considering all the of the
2 recommendations that they gave us and then
3 turning some of this information into what we
4 want to share back to you.

5 And as you'll see, some of
6 these formatting points are things that we
7 heard over and over and over again from our
8 reviewers. And Delaware, I know, mentioned
9 this in the panel earlier, that being concise
10 and clear and that type of thing was really
11 helpful to reviewers as they started to read
12 these.

13 So, let me start by talking you
14 through the application review process.
15 There were some questions earlier about the
16 peer reviewers and I just wanted to point out
17 to you all, and I'll mention this later, that
18 the biographies of the peer reviewers are
19 posted on our website.

20 In order to protect the
21 integrity of the process, we didn't share who
22 read each application. But they did provide
23 us with a biography and we feel really, we
24 were really impressed with the caliber of
25 reviewers that we received. And I can tell

1 you that they took this process very, very
2 seriously.

3 Throughout training and
4 throughout the process, they asked great
5 questions and were very detail-oriented in
6 terms of getting into those applications. A
7 number of other documents we've posted, as
8 well. So, again, you can probably find a lot
9 of this information on line.

10 So, just to walk you through
11 our review process, there were several
12 parts. The first was assigning applications
13 to reviewers. We'll talk about how that
14 went, what that process looked like training
15 reviewers.

16 The preliminary application
17 review panel review and application scoring,
18 that was all what we call Tier 1. And then
19 those last three listed there, preparing for
20 presentations and the presentations
21 themselves, was Tier 2, which I know that
22 many of you took part in.

23 So, the Department had over
24 1500, a pool of 1500 interested reviewers
25 that applied to serve or were nominated to

1 serve as reviewers. Out of those, we pulled
2 out about 60, who actually ended up coming
3 and serving as alternates or reviewers.

4 So, it was a very high
5 caliber. We did a number of reviews in order
6 to select them, as well as doing a conflict
7 of interest check on all of them.

8 Each application was assigned
9 five reviewers. And as part of our effort to
10 discuss ways that we could make this process,
11 we could improve reliabilities throughout the
12 process, we determined that we would be
13 randomly assigning a different group of
14 reviewers to every single State, so that no
15 State, no group of States had the same five
16 reviewers throughout.

17 Which was more work for us and
18 more work for the reviewers, but in the end,
19 I think we felt very confident. And this was
20 all part of our review afterwards to analyze
21 the process and see how things worked out.
22 And this was something that I think we felt
23 was effective.

24 Each application was assigned
25 to five reviewers. Reviewers were assigned

1 up to five applications each. But, as Joanne
2 mentioned, some read as few as two, but most
3 read four or five. Reviewers were not
4 assigned to States where they had potential
5 conflicts or where they lived.

6 And we emphasized over and over
7 to reviewers to bring to our attention any
8 words that they found in the application that
9 could be perceived as a conflict or that they
10 just felt uncomfortable reviewing and we
11 immediately made those changes at the
12 reviewer's request.

13 So, they were very up front
14 with us. We spent a lot of time going back
15 and forth with them to ensure that there
16 weren't any conflicts in the applications
17 that they read.

18 So, training reviewers. Our
19 first step in training reviewers was a
20 day-long session, where they came out to
21 Washington DC and we walked them through the
22 application itself.

23 And we worked very hard to
24 mirror this to the technical assistance
25 workshops that we did earlier in the year,

1 including trying to incorporate some of the
2 questions that we got from States and
3 addressing those through our training.

4 We also trained them on how to
5 write comments in order to be sufficient.
6 This was, as you know, part of our goal was
7 to provide you with comments that you could
8 use going forward, that would be helpful for
9 you in Phase 2.

10 And we, to that end, we worked
11 to really insure that they were clear, that
12 they provided a very high level of detail and
13 that they were something that you could put
14 to use. So, we hope that's the case.

15 And then we also developed a
16 scoring software that the reviewers used and
17 we trained them on that. Reviewers then went
18 home and they had two and a half weeks to
19 review, score and read applications
20 independently.

21 And I want to emphasize that
22 this was an important part of our process,
23 that they went home, they did not know what
24 other individuals were reading their
25 applications. They did this all

1 independently. And they worked closely with
2 the Department, who was reviewing and helping
3 to keep them on track and ensure that things
4 got done in a timely fashion.

5 And then we also did provide
6 feedback on their comments to the extent that
7 we discussed, not on the content or their own
8 personal review of the application, but in
9 areas where we felt like they needed more
10 detail, they needed to be sure that their
11 comments were tied back to the criteria.

12 So that the information that
13 they used to evaluate your applications was
14 the same information you had in crafting
15 those. One thing I wanted to mention, as
16 well, is that for Phase 2 different reviewers
17 will be reading every application.

18 So, if you do have reviewers
19 who read in Phase 2 who also reviewed in
20 Phase 1, they will not be the same
21 individuals who read for you in Phase 2 -- I
22 mean in Phase 1. Reviewers told us they
23 spent 20 to 30 hours per application just in
24 that at-home time.

25 So then they came back on site

1 and spent additional time working to clarify
2 and working together to discuss those
3 applications, but we heard it was a very
4 extensive process.

5 Tier 1 was the panel review and
6 application scoring. All of the reviewers
7 came back on site. We started with an
8 orientation for them and then they
9 immediately went in and were given a
10 four-hour block in which they discussed each
11 application.

12 And again, to work on this
13 inter-rater reliability issue that we discussed,
14 we really wanted to provide them as much
15 information as to how to aid that
16 conversation as possible.

17 So, we created these charts,
18 based on their initial scores, that showed
19 them where they differed most significantly
20 so that they could structure their
21 conversation around those topics.

22 So reviewers in that time
23 period came into it, they were, we asked them
24 to discuss anything that they wanted. They
25 were, the discussions were facilitated, but

1 not at all structured by Department staff.

2 But reviewers had that
3 information and a lot of them found it very
4 helpful to start their conversations on the
5 areas where they had differed in scoring.
6 So, at least to speak a little bit to some of
7 those areas in which you saw differing
8 scores, I can tell you that, almost without
9 exception, those areas were discussed by
10 reviewers and they talked through those
11 difference.

12 Sometimes they had very heated
13 discussions, from what we heard, about how
14 they had judged certain criteria and what
15 they felt about the content.

16 And we asked that the
17 discussion focus really on understanding why
18 they disagreed and insuring that any scoring
19 differences were not based on a
20 misunderstanding of the criteria, which we
21 immediately wanted to flag and address, but
22 really on a differing judgment on the
23 application.

24 And then the big emphasis that
25 we made to peer reviewers was that we didn't

1 want, our intent was not necessarily for them
2 to come to consensus. We thought it was
3 important that they have those differing
4 views and that they talk through them, but
5 that they had scored in a consistent manner
6 based on a consistent understanding of the
7 criteria.

8 So, after those four-hour
9 discussions, reviewers went back to their
10 scores and comments and made changes as they
11 felt appropriate.

12 And throughout this process,
13 the Department was involved in reviewing
14 those to ensure that -- and partly just to
15 ensure that they were, you know, that they
16 were written in a format that would be
17 helpful to you to ensure that there was no
18 spelling errors, errors in grammar, which I
19 know in some cases we didn't catch
20 everything, but we did our best.

21 And then, there was a second
22 level review at the Department, where we read
23 those scores and comments again and signed
24 off on them. But, again, the reviewers were,
25 it was very much in their control and we just

1 provided oversight.

2 At the end reviewer scores were
3 averaged and then STEM priority points were
4 added to the total. And then these scores
5 were totaled and we developed a slate and we
6 invited, as you know, 16 States back to
7 present in Tier 2 and those States were
8 invited in their rank order based on that
9 slate.

10 Tier 2, for those of you who
11 took part in it, this will be familiar. We
12 hosted a conference call to share with States
13 the process for Tier 2 and the types of
14 information we felt would be... Would come up
15 in that, in that tier. We held an
16 orientation session for reviewers.

17 And right before Tier 2 began,
18 before the State presentations occurred, peer
19 viewers spent 75 minutes with their panel, or
20 more if they needed it, discussing their high
21 priority questions and talking about what
22 they wanted to ask the States.

23 So, they had reins to sort of
24 structure those conversations as they wanted

25 to. And for those of you who participated or

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1 who watched those, those presentations, they
2 varied greatly and they were very focused on
3 individuals State applications.

4 So, then the State finalist
5 presentations. It was a total of a 90-minute
6 block, which included a presentation from the
7 State on their application and then the
8 remainder of the time was used for reviewer Q
9 and A.

10 As you know, those are all on
11 our website. So if you are interested in
12 seeing the presentation from other States or
13 from the winning States or from sort of a
14 variety, I encourage you to go take a look at
15 those.

16 And the purpose of this was
17 really to allow the reviewers to validate and
18 clarify questions that they had after their
19 initial review of the applications.

20 And reviewers, on the whole I
21 think, were thinking of their questions far
22 in advance of actually coming back for Tier
23 2, so they had quite a few that they were
24 excited to ask. Presentations were closed
25 and they were attended only by required

1 Department staff and the AV folks and career
2 staff involved in the competition.

3 So, again, this process looked
4 very similar to Tier 1. The peer reviewers
5 went back, they met to discuss the State
6 presentations and then, again, discuss any
7 areas in which they felt like their scores
8 had changed after that presentation.

9 And they also had the
10 opportunity to go back, make changes, provide
11 additional comments, which we hope were
12 helpful, and then the Department did a final
13 review of the finalists to ensure, again,
14 consistency to the extent we could.

15 And then the reviewers' scores
16 were averaged and the secretary used that
17 slate to rank order and to determine
18 winners. We've talked a lot about this
19 throughout this process and we will continue
20 to make efforts in this transparency
21 initiative.

22 We have put the applications on-
23 line, the scores and comments. The Tier 2
24 presentation videos are there. And then all
25 of this peer reviewer information that I

1 mentioned, the bios are there. There is a more
2 in-depth explanation of the process I just
3 walked you through there.

4 All of the training materials
5 that we used are available, as well as a
6 number of other documents. There's documents
7 on the conflict of interest check that we
8 did. So, if you're interested in seeing any
9 of this, please don't hesitate to go and pull
10 that information in the website because it's
11 there.

12 As I have said, we have taken
13 every bit of feedback that we've gotten very
14 seriously. We've considered all the feedback
15 from the reviewers and continue to discuss
16 ways that we could improve and build upon the
17 process that we used for Phase 1.

18 Our reviewer training is
19 something we are really seriously considering
20 right now, going forward, and so any
21 information you provide is helpful to us in
22 terms of making sure that we give them the
23 right information and that they are able to
24 put that to use and do this in the most
25 effective, efficient manner possible.

1 Our scoring system technology,
2 we got some feedback from the reviewers on
3 that, so we're making changes to that end.
4 And then there is a number of other
5 considerations that we are making just in
6 terms of the technical aspects of the
7 competition, including potentially decreasing
8 the number of applications that reviewers are
9 reading. So that is all underway for Phase
10 2.

11 "Reviewer recommendations",
12 this is, again, those areas that we got
13 feedback on that we wanted to let you know
14 what they told us, to the extent that it can
15 help you in formatting your plans. There
16 still were some comments on developing your
17 plan.

18 There are some on communicating
19 your plan in your application. And then,
20 finally, format and organization. And we are
21 going to make some pretty specific requests
22 on the format and organization and this is
23 all based on what we heard from peer
24 reviewers and we've learned after Phase 1.

25 So, in developing your plan, we

1 really heard that A 1, Romanette i, was a
2 great place to articulate your State's broad
3 area of change. And we really, in some cases
4 we saw that this was like an executive
5 summary. It provided sort of a, it framed
6 your entire application.

7 And we heard from reviewers
8 that that was very helpful, that seeing that
9 up front gave them a really good road map for
10 what they were going to see throughout the
11 plan. Reviewers mentioned that it was
12 helpful to... It was helpful to read an
13 application in which there was a common
14 narrative and it was clear to how they moved
15 from piece to piece.

16 And this is all getting back to
17 the coherent plan effort and there were some
18 focus on this from Delaware and Tennessee in
19 terms of how you actually make that happen,
20 since we realize these plans cover a lot of
21 different areas.

22 But the reviewers picked up on
23 that and they commented that it was helpful
24 when it was, it was really clear that this
25 was a comprehensive approach. Reviewers

1 recommended that in places that they saw that
2 the State had engaged relevant experts, that
3 was beneficial, as well.

4 And they looked for those in
5 content, expertise, leveraging and existing
6 State strategies, and including perspectives
7 that represent both top down and bottom up.

8 And I think we heard some good examples of
9 that earlier in the day.

10 These are some comments that
11 reviewers shared in terms of their overall
12 perspective on plans. And you know, we have
13 spoken a little bit this throughout the day,
14 but we heard a lot about credibility in terms
15 of the applications and we realize that's
16 sort of a difficult thing to -- it's
17 difficult to frame how exactly you do that.

18 So, what we have tried to do
19 here is give you a little bit of their
20 feedback. Reviewers were really looking for
21 an honest and straightforward approach. And
22 they really wanted you to acknowledge --
23 wanted States to acknowledge the problems and
24 areas of weakness head-on and show where the
25 roadblocks existed and how the State is

1 working to overcome those.

2 "Clarity and specificity
3 matter", reviewers really wanted to -- there
4 are areas where reviewers -- we got the
5 impression that reviewers couldn't get at the
6 heart of what the issue was.

7 And they had a hard time
8 explaining how to score and value an
9 application because they couldn't quite get
10 at what was the cause of the issue or what
11 the issue was or how the State had approached
12 it, so they were looking for real clear
13 information on those.

14 And then they also looked for
15 realistic benchmarks and goals. But, again,
16 every State is different and they understood
17 that. And what they told us is that, in
18 reading these applications, they wanted to
19 take each State in its own context.

20 And to that end, what they
21 wanted to see was realistic benchmarks and
22 goals for each State. So, communicating your
23 plan in your applications. Again, they were
24 really looking for a consistent message
25 throughout your application that it all tied

1 together.

2 And again, each reviewer is
3 reading all sections, so I think this comment
4 from the reviewers was reflecting the fact
5 that, if you did Section A with one team and
6 Section B with one team and Section C with
7 one team, that if they felt that there was
8 this disjointed nature between the sections,
9 that was a challenge to them in getting an
10 idea of the comprehensive plan.

11 And this was a quote directly
12 from peer reviewers, "Connect the dots
13 between vision, mission, goals, objectives,
14 strategy, tactics and anticipated outcomes."
15 And again, I think, they, they, as they were
16 reviewing, they constantly were working on
17 the styles being right in the weeds and then
18 stepping back and seeing your big picture.

19 Reviewers talked a lot about
20 the structure of your application. We got
21 questions up front about if they were to
22 consider information that wasn't in the
23 section where it was supposed to be and we
24 told them absolutely; anywhere in your
25 application that you have addressed this

1 criteria, they should consider it.

2 But I think this comment speaks
3 to the fact that they were really looking for
4 it to be in a logical order and that, in
5 terms of their review and scoring, it is
6 easier if you provided or referenced the
7 information in the section where it was
8 requested.

9 And I think this is very
10 tangible but helpful, consider using headers
11 that match criteria to help your readers.
12 Again, they were going through their review,
13 they were sitting -- next to them was sitting
14 a blank application and the rubric that you
15 all have.

16 And I think as they went
17 through in that logical order, it was easiest
18 if they could really, if something was
19 flagged for them in terms of what you were
20 trying to address and they could easily see
21 where it was.

22 And then, again, this was a
23 comment that we heard over and over, that
24 they needed you to address the entire
25 criteria, not just pieces of it. And it was

1 a real challenge for them in scoring if there
2 was something missing, so it would be
3 something that you can address every part of
4 the criteria. I would emphasize the need to
5 do that.

6 So, again, reviewers wanted you
7 to ensure that your evidence is clearly
8 communicated and supports the narrative.
9 Occasionally, we heard that there was
10 something tacked on to the end and it wasn't
11 embedded in the application and that became
12 very difficult for them to score and use in a
13 way that was effective for the State.

14 And then this comment, we've
15 discussed this earlier, "If data is not
16 available, go ahead and indicate that."
17 Reviewers really were looking for that
18 honest, up-front approach and commented that
19 they just wanted to see how the State tackled
20 that or what the cause was.

21 And this was another quote from
22 a reviewer that, "Relying on partial
23 information damages whatever trust you have
24 built up in the application." And again,
25 it's that honesty and it was that real

1 up-front nature that reviewers were looking
2 for in the applications.

3 So, "Format and organization",
4 again, these seem obvious, but we heard them
5 over and over and over again, that format and
6 organization helped the reviewer to read
7 through your application. Again, A(1)(i) is
8 a great place to provide an executive summary
9 that helps explain your application.

10 Reviewers constantly asked for
11 a table of contents. This helped them best
12 use their time efficiently when they were in
13 their discussions with other reviewers, so
14 that was extremely helpful in places where it
15 existed.

16 They asked over and over for
17 places for you to refer in the application to
18 relevant case numbers and appendices and to
19 provide information in the appropriate
20 sections, like I mentioned.

21 So, all of this information, I
22 think is helpful, if there's ways to do this,
23 I think it makes the reviewer's job easier
24 and makes them able to use their time most
25 effectively and see your application in the

1 way that you, in the way that you want to
2 frame it.

3 Reviewers ask for you to be
4 clear and succinct, avoid buzzwords and
5 acronyms. Like I said, again, structure
6 according to the selection criteria and
7 provide information at the romanette level
8 when possible.

9 And again, you have that rubric
10 that they used. They used -- you have all
11 the information that reviewers used to read,
12 review and score. So, they will be going
13 through that piece by piece, including each
14 of the romanette levels.

15 And in places where they need
16 to score, they will be looking for every bit
17 of information in order to develop, to build
18 your score. Pagination was something we
19 heard over and over. Reviewers really wanted
20 to be able to find information and jump
21 quickly through your application.

22 I know we frequently -- we know
23 that they were jumping from the appendices
24 and back up to your narrative and they were
25 trying to find all of this information. So,

1 as much as you can make that a clear road map
2 for them, I think will benefit you and will
3 help the reviewers do their job.

4 Pagination is very, very
5 helpful. And it allows us to ensure that
6 everything that you included in your
7 application is there. You can do this in
8 whichever way it makes most sense and we'll
9 get into specifics about what we're looking
10 for or what would be helpful when you send
11 this to us on the next slide.

12 So, the Department -- keep in
13 mind, when you submit your application, it
14 goes through the Department and then it is,
15 we have a contractor pull those documents off
16 and then they are sent to a printer so that
17 the reviewers can read them.

18 So, to the extent possible,
19 it's very helpful if you can put this in a
20 coherent fashion so that we can ensure that
21 what you sent to us is exactly what's printed
22 and exactly what the reviewers receive.

23 So, when we discussed this with
24 reviewers, what they said specifically, or
25 what we have come up with as a suggestion

1 within the Department, is that we do give you
2 the option of sending us a Word document, an
3 Excel document, or PDFs.

4 PDFs are extremely valuable to
5 us in printing these off because it means
6 that you can take a look at it and you can
7 paginate and what you send us is exactly what
8 we print off. In some cases we got Excel
9 documents with multiple worksheets and we can
10 not ensure that this looks like what you want
11 to present.

12 So, to the extent possible, I
13 would recommend you take your narrative, you
14 take an entire application, you turn that
15 into one PDF, and then you make a second one
16 that's your appendices and you make that into
17 one complete PDF, so that we get two PDF
18 files from you.

19 And then we can ensure that you
20 have seen it, that you've taken a look at it
21 and it looks just like what you what you want
22 to print. Please proofread that final
23 document and, again, ensure that there's page
24 numbers and that will satisfy a lot of these
25 questions and requests we got from peer

1 reviewers.

2 And then before you submit it,
3 again, make sure that the page numbers are
4 correct and the table of contents and that
5 you have included all of your sections.

6 There was a couple cases where
7 attachments and things were a little bit
8 difficult to read, so that's something that's
9 helpful to take a look at, too. In most
10 cases I think it was letters of support that
11 were fuzzy because of the PDF files. So if
12 you can prevent that from happening I think
13 it will be helpful, too.

14 MS. WEISS: I think there was
15 also a case where a graphic that somebody,
16 where graphics that somebody had, clobbered a
17 piece of text underneath when they PDF'd it.
18 It went right into their Word document, they
19 sent us a PDF.

20 So, again, like print out these
21 documents and just do a quick look at them
22 before you send them in to make sure that
23 what when we print the PDF it looks like you
24 mean it to look, not like you thought it
25 probably would look. Because these are not

1 perfect programs either. So, all of that
2 will be helpful to you.

3 MS. CLARK: And it came so into
4 play in terms of the order of the information
5 that you presented. If we had a number of
6 files, our printer is not an expert in the
7 application, nor do they know what order a
8 section should be.

9 So, we want to provide that to
10 peer reviewers in a way they can easily page
11 through and find everything that you have
12 provided. So, you can help us out of lot by
13 doing this in that way. So, (coughing)
14 excuse me.

15 So, application submission.
16 This is very similar to what actually is in
17 here. And is what we asked you to do in
18 Phase 1. Again, submitting your application
19 in two PDFs is strongly encouraged. You can
20 submit on a CD or DVD, just as you did.
21 Which I think is great.

22 I think almost every State did
23 that without providing us a hard copy. You
24 are welcome to provide us with a hard copy,
25 but we will use the CD and DVD as the way to

1 make a copy. So, ensure that what's on there
2 is what you mean for us to provide to peer
3 reviewers.

4 Files must be in one of these
5 formats. But, again, PDF would be
6 preferred. Submit a signed original of
7 Sections 3 and 4 in the application.
8 Indicate the CFDA number and it's right
9 there. Send your application via overnight
10 mail or hand delivery.

11 And then, on the following
12 page, I'm going to give you the addresses,
13 but you have these in the application, as
14 well. We received these at both addresses.
15 But, if you have any questions with this at
16 all, don't hesitate to let us know. We're
17 happy to answer questions about it.

18 Applications must be received
19 not postmarked by 4:30 p.m., on June 1st. We
20 cannot accept late applications and we can
21 not accept additional information if
22 something was missing and wasn't submitted in
23 the application. Oh, yes. I'm sorry. Go
24 ahead.

25 MR. UNKNOWN: A question and

1 comment. The comment is could you guys not
2 pick a date that's a day after a holiday next
3 time? That's twice.

4 MS. CLARK: We know. And we
5 feel your pain because we also work over it,
6 so we met in preparation for that. So, this
7 date is set, it won't be changing, but we
8 hear you.

9 MR. UNKNOWN: My question or my
10 comment, my other comment is this has to do
11 with reviewer training.

12 We had a situation where one of
13 our reviewers continuously made remarks about
14 a term that was not actually the terms that's
15 in the guidance and in the criteria and I
16 think it probably caused us to lose a couple
17 of points and it was in the teacher
18 evaluations section.

19 The guidance refers to annual
20 evaluations. And this reviewer kept
21 referring to, in our particular case,
22 summative evaluations being handled every
23 year. And said, "Your application does not
24 reflect summative evaluations annually." The
25 guidance does not say 'summative

1 evaluations', it says 'annual evaluations'.

2 And that's just something I
3 wanted to share that I was a little
4 concerned. And I don't know if anybody else
5 had those kind of situations, but making sure
6 that the reviewers recognize, and they may be
7 subtle things, but that they're, that they
8 know what the words that are exactly in the
9 guidance say.

10 MS. CLARK: Great. Thank you.
11 And as I said, we really are working to shape
12 the -- we haven't finalized it. We're still
13 working on how we can improve and enhance the
14 reviewer training. So, all of these things
15 we certainly will consider and take into
16 account.

17 MS. WEISS: Did you want to
18 remind them that they need to send to one or
19 the other of those addresses, not one copy to
20 each address?

21 MS. CLARK: Right. Either one
22 of those will work and we do not need two
23 copies. And we get into an area where we
24 want to make sure that they're the same,
25 because we -- well, anyways, either one of

1 those addresses is exactly -- is just fine.

2 You don't need to use both.

3 MS. FARACE: There's one thing

4 in here that's not in the NIA. It's the

5 application submission slide.

6 MS. CLARK: Yes.

7 MS. FARACE: When you do hand

8 delivery, we have a c/o Joyce Mays, and we

9 neglected to put that in the NIA. I

10 apologize, especially to Virginia for that

11 because we discovered that when Virginia

12 showed up at the application submission

13 center and didn't have a person to give this

14 to.

15 They call a person and then

16 they come to the desk and hand it over. So,

17 please, do put her name in there and that

18 way, when you get there, you'll know who to

19 call and how your courier can handle it

20 right. So, I know that's a small thing, but

21 it is important.

22 MS. CLARK: And take the number

23 for the Race to the Top, the Race to the Top

24 general number we've provided. I think, if

25 you have that with you, call us if you have

1 any trouble that day, and we will jump in to
2 assistance immediately.

3 MS. WEISS: Can I just add one
4 other thing? We have published a new
5 application for Phase 2. That's because we
6 are required by law to do that. You don't
7 have to reup your application in the new
8 format.

9 There's nothing new about the
10 format except for we've just got the due
11 dates for these two deadlines in there and so
12 on. So, it's there if you need it. On Page
13 99 of that application, you will find the
14 guidelines for how to submit.

15 If you're doing a submission
16 for August 2nd, you'll find those guidelines
17 in the application for Phase 2. But,
18 otherwise, it's up there for your
19 information, but it's the same as the you one
20 you used, and you don't need to do anything
21 with your first application to put it into a
22 different format.

23 MS. UNKNOWN: Will one of the
24 program offices be scheduling your meeting in
25 DC format for June first? Like you did for

1 Title 1?

2 MS. WEISS: We will see if we

3 can arrange for that.

4 PARTICIPANTS: (Laughing).

5 MS. CLARK: We feel that you

6 might be tired, so we don't know if you'll

7 need to come in.

8 MS. WEISS: It was helpful,

9 huh?

10 MS. CLARK: Oh. We have a

11 question from the webinar. Thank you.

12 MS. McKINNEY: James Foran from

13 Maryland was asking how much program

14 evaluation is expected and what the balance

15 will be between the Department and the

16 States. He says they want to do it right,

17 but they don't want to duplicate effort.

18 MS. WEISS: So, the answer that

19 we've given everybody on evaluation -- and I

20 think what he's talking about is how much

21 evaluation should be built into their

22 application versus what's the Department

23 going to do?

24 So, James, if that's not what

25 you mean, chat away. But, what we have said

1 is that the Department, in fact through IES,
2 will be doing program evaluations of all of
3 the programs, in particular with a focus on
4 Race to the Top.

5 So, the things that you do
6 within your applications should be done to
7 further the application and ideas that you've
8 got and the different plans that you've put
9 forward in your application.

10 And so, anything that you need
11 to do for continuous improvement, for
12 feedback, for evaluation of what's working
13 and what's not working within your State
14 context, you're welcome to put in the plan
15 and that's certainly an allowable use of
16 funds.

17 You'll notice that there's no
18 specific criteria allowing evaluations
19 separately, per se, it's built into all of
20 the questions about continuous improvement
21 and feedback loops.

22 So, in that way, you're welcome
23 to put it into your applications, but a
24 formal evaluation program will happen outside
25 the funding that you need to commit within

1 your State.

2 MS. MARTIN: This is Rayne with
3 Louisiana again. One of the questions that I
4 have is maybe if you can guys can talk a
5 little bit about the competitive, the
6 absolute priorities?

7 We noticed that actually we had
8 a couple comments around, where we didn't get
9 it, because of the number of kids. And I
10 don't know how to interpret that
11 necessarily. It's something we obviously
12 want to make sure we look at hard in the next
13 round.

14 MS. WEISS: So... So, there I
15 would say go back and look at the application
16 and just read the absolute priority. You
17 guys don't write to it. The whole
18 application addresses it.

19 But the way the process works
20 is that, at the end of the whole scoring
21 process, we ask the reviewers to go back and
22 reread the absolute priority and then think
23 through the whole application, look through
24 the whole application, and just make a
25 general assessment, yes or no did this

1 application meet the absolute priority?

2 Which is about do you have a
3 coherent, comprehensive education reform that
4 touches all of these different four
5 assurances and that will move the needle
6 statewide in your State.

7 So, it's a big-picture, general
8 question that we ask the reviewers to just go
9 back and do one last gut check at the end and
10 they just literally click yes or no and
11 that's what you see on your review form.

12 That you received back. So, read that
13 absolute priority. That's the question that
14 they're asking themselves at the end.

15 MS. MARTIN: Okay. I mean, I'm
16 still a little concerned again, just because
17 in the comment, it was clear that, at least
18 two of our reviewers did not give us that
19 because, specifically, of the number of
20 kids.

21 So, I just still want to throw
22 that out there to say, you know, either, A,
23 should we be looking at that as it relates to
24 our application and be taking serious note of
25 that? Or is that something that maybe when

1 the reviewers go back for training again
2 there will be some other discussion around
3 that?

4 MS. WEISS: So, and we, I mean
5 we did not give them any guidance on specific
6 numbers, percent, any of that stuff. That
7 was stuff that was in the context of each
8 State, yet the reviewers discussed this in
9 their review sessions and they did have
10 discussions about those.

11 And in those cases where a
12 particular reviewer had concerns, we told
13 them they had to explain it and note it and I
14 don't know that we have, A, additional
15 information for you about what they meant.

16 But, also it's a place where
17 we're happy to give more guidance to the
18 reviewers. But, in the end, they do get to
19 make their own independent judgments on these
20 things. And that will be true in Phase 2,
21 also.

22 MS. BURNS: Jean Burns from
23 Louisiana. I have a question about Tier 2
24 and with the individuals representing the
25 State for the interviews to respond to the

1 questions of the reviewers.

2 Did they give you feedback
3 pertaining to the best combination of
4 individuals to be present to respond to their
5 questions?

6 MS. CLARK: I don't believe
7 they gave any specific feedback on that,
8 either on the positive or the negative.

9 MS. WEISS: No. I mean, I
10 think that, in general, they felt like the
11 State teams really knew the material very
12 deeply and gave -- and understood their
13 applications and were able to answer
14 questions and engage in credible
15 conversations and discussions with them.

16 So, I think, in general,
17 whatever the balance that people generally
18 picked in their finalist panels, it seemed to
19 work. We probably would have heard if it
20 didn't.

21 MS. ATKINSON: June Atkinson
22 from North Carolina. I know that you can not
23 give us specific guidance about Race to the
24 Top evaluation from each State's
25 perspective.

1 But, in general, given that we
2 will have a nationwide evaluation of this
3 work and given other major grants that will
4 have a combination of a national review plus
5 a State, what are some guiding principles you
6 can give to us as far as the percentage of
7 total grant that would be devoted, or could
8 be devoted, or should be devoted to the State
9 evaluation?

10 MS. WEISS: I mean, again, I
11 just don't think we have any magic numbers.
12 It's what's going to be supportive of the
13 plans that you're putting forward in your
14 State. There's not a criterion specifically
15 around this.

16 There is no magic numbers we
17 have for you. It's really about what's the
18 right thing to do to implement the plans that
19 you're putting forward in your State
20 applications.

21 MS. ATKINSON: And so that will
22 mean -- and so that would mean that we, in
23 the narrative and in the budget, we would
24 need to tie specific evaluation to each of
25 the initiatives that we have where we would

1 need evaluation.

2 MS. WEISS: But that, and that
3 would be up to you. I mean, if you think
4 that's a necessary part of how you would
5 strengthen a particular initiative by
6 wrapping some kind of evaluation around it,
7 you're welcome to do that.

8 You're sort of putting together
9 a comprehensive picture of how you're going
10 to build a continuous instructional
11 improvement system in your State and if
12 that's an important part of it, then,
13 absolutely, put it in and tie it back in the
14 narrative and you can put it in the budget.
15 Yes.

16 MS. CLEGHORN: Hi, Jennifer
17 Cleghorn from Pennsylvania. I have a kind of
18 three-part question based upon the
19 conditional criteria within the MOU as I'm
20 digesting what you talked about, actually at
21 the beginning of this meeting.

22 The first is I just want to get
23 a better sense of all this, so that you can
24 talk about stakeholders and as to the intent
25 of that change. I know within our MOU we

1 have something similar to both of the
2 examples that you gave.

3 And our intent was that the
4 process of collective bargaining the detailed
5 stakeholder holder engagement would have them
6 be within the time that the districts will be
7 working on their SOWs, their scope of work,
8 rather they would be agreeing to all of the
9 components.

10 And we had a very detailed MOU
11 and required the districts to sign on to all
12 of the elements within that. So, I guess,
13 the three-part question is to get a better
14 sense of your intent with that.

15 The second is that, if we do
16 decide to go ahead and keep that statement
17 and leave it conditional, the next table that
18 you showed, shows if we do have it as
19 conditional, then we would have to State that
20 they would not be participating in that.

21 And for us, with our current
22 situation, we'd have to evaluate what's, you
23 know, how to change this. We'd have to say
24 no for all, which would then end up leaving
25 us in a very precarious situation as far as

1 reviewers would be concerned.

2 And then the third is if you
3 can give us examples of your expectations
4 with that. I assume that your expectation is
5 not that all of our 500 districts go into
6 collective bargaining prior to submission.

7 MS. WEISS: So, let me just
8 first say that this isn't new guidance. This
9 is guidance we gave in Phase 1 and people
10 didn't understand that it implemented the way
11 we had intended and that created a lot of
12 problems with the peer review, for the peer
13 reviewers, because they weren't very sure
14 what they were looking at.

15 And they had to dig very, very
16 deep and read all kinds of stuff to try to
17 take it apart and figure it out. So, I think
18 what we're asking is that we have, by doing
19 this training, that we have more consistent
20 application of the guidance that we gave you
21 in the original guidance.

22 The only difference is, in the
23 original guidance, we said you have to say
24 no. And here we said, clearly, that's making
25 everybody uncomfortable and 'no' and

1 'conditional' are not the same thing. So
2 let's say you can say no if it's really no
3 and you can say yes if it's really yes.

4 And if it's anything that's
5 conditional, put it in the middle category.
6 So we did invent this new middle category
7 just as a way for you guys to distinguished
8 between nos and conditional yeses.

9 So, but otherwise, it is the
10 same guidance that we provided originally, so
11 I don't think we have a different intent or a
12 different thought in mind. This is always
13 how we had wanted the information to come
14 in.

15 And when it didn't come in this
16 way on the applications, it just was very
17 hard for peer reviewers to look at this
18 information because, you know, for some
19 States, the number of LEAs is huge and they
20 have these massive charts and they were
21 trying to make sense of them and couldn't.

22 So we're just trying to give
23 them a little finer grain of information to
24 make sense of it with. And, you know, on one
25 hand, I guess that it makes you uncomfortable

1 to have on that last chart zero percent or
2 whatever.

3 But know that the reviewers get
4 this whole -- I mean, they get the collective
5 bargaining issues and they get the
6 conditional nature of this. And it's going
7 to be up to you in your narrative to explain
8 persuasively why and how in your particular
9 State this is going to work.

10 If you're doing it during the
11 90-day period before the State will support
12 the funds, but just explain your process. If
13 you put a C in there, all that's going to do
14 is make sure the reviewer really pays
15 attention to what you have to say.

16 It's a flag that says to the
17 reviewer, "Read deeply here." And so, give
18 them the information they need and that, I
19 think, will help them enormously to make
20 sense of all this.

21 MS. CLEGHORN: Just in the
22 preparation of the reviewers then, are you
23 going to be discussing the point values and
24 how they would be associated or give a sense
25 of, you know -- if we go ahead and describe

1 that in significant detail within the
2 narrative that they, you know, are then able
3 to give maximum points.

4 MS. WEISS: We're going to give
5 them the same guidance that we just gave you
6 just now where we said, "Here's examples."
7 The 45 points, I mean, I know this is
8 uncomfortable for everybody, but that 45
9 points that's attached to this part of the
10 competition doesn't get disaggregated by us.

11 It's 45 points and it's based
12 on the reviewer's judgment of looking at the
13 strengths, the participation, you know, are
14 they participating in all or significant
15 portions and how many of the stakeholders
16 have signed on to actually implement at the
17 State -- at the district level?

18 So, those three, that balance
19 of those three things is what the peer
20 reviewers are looking at and they have to,
21 within the context of the State, look at
22 these three things and do a judgment call
23 themselves about whether this is a high,
24 medium or low response overall to the
25 criterion.

1 Because -- and it's really
2 because you guys know and we know there's no
3 magic formula. You can't make up a formula
4 that's right for this. It's very context
5 specific.

6 And we just felt it was a place
7 we needed to rely on the peer reviewer's
8 judgment of what you wrote in order to come
9 up with -- you know, that was the best answer
10 we could get in this very messy, complex area
11 of "will people do it?"

12 MS. CLEGHORN: Yeah. You're
13 probably aware for, you know, States that are
14 considered strong union States, and I've
15 talked to a few here today, all had similar
16 statements, because we needed to make a
17 statement, very clear to our unions.

18 MS. WEISS: Right.

19 MS. CLARK: Other questions
20 before we wrap up?

21 PARTICIPANTS: (No response).

22 MS. WEISS: Well, thank you so
23 much for coming. I know everybody is
24 probably anxious to get going and head back
25 to the airport for your flights.

1 I just wanted to close by
2 reiterating our thanks for all the work that
3 you have done so far and to let you know
4 that, as we read your applications at the
5 Department, and I don't want to sound corny
6 here, but very sincerely, we were so inspired
7 by so many of the ideas in your
8 applications.

9 Listening to those finalists'
10 presentations was an amazing experience, and I
11 do urge you to listen to each other's
12 presentations that are up on the web because
13 they are really quite amazing to listen to.

14 The depth of the conversations
15 about education that you have sparked in each
16 of your States is something I just think has
17 been sorely lacking in this country for so
18 long. And it is so incredible how far you
19 have come, how quickly you have gotten there,
20 how broadly you have engaged people in these
21 conversations.

22 And we are so deeply
23 appreciative of all of the efforts that
24 you've put toward to get to this point.

25 So, I wanted to just end by

1 saying that I know everybody's tired and it's
2 easy at this point in the competition to feel
3 discouraged. And what I wanted to just urge
4 everyone to remember is that you're the ones
5 who really are mapping the future of
6 education reform in your States and in the
7 nation right now.

8 The work you're doing is so
9 important. There's going to be a whole lot
10 of you in this room who come out the end of
11 Phase 2 as winners and together, with all the
12 rest of the States in the country, you're
13 going to really be blazing the trail for the
14 next several decades of education reform in
15 this country.

16 So, thank you for all you're
17 doing. When you get tired, just remember it
18 really does matter. There's a lot of kids at
19 the other end of this who are going to be
20 tremendous beneficiaries of the work that all
21 of you are doing.

22 And we will be sitting at the
23 other end of our e-mail and telephone,
24 waiting to support you over the next few
25 weeks in whatever you need and answer

1 whatever questions you have so that...
2 So that we're making it, from
3 our end, as painless as we can so that when
4 you're out there doing the hard work, that's
5 what matters and that's where your attention
6 goes. So, thank you so much for joining us
7 today and we look forward to reading your
8 applications in a few weeks. Thank you.

9 (Whereupon, the proceedings
10 ended at 4:25 p.m.)

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1 STATE OF MINNESOTA)

2) ss.

3 COUNTY OF CASS)

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5 I, Nathan D. Engen do hereby certify
6 that the foregoing transcript, in the matter
7 of Race to the Top State Competition, Phase 2
8 Technical Assistance Workshop, U.S.
9 Department of Education, April 21, 2010,
10 Minneapolis, Minnesota is true, correct and
11 accurate:

12 That said transcript was prepared under
13 my direction and control from my stenographic
14 shorthand notes taken on the 21st day of
15 April, 2010:

16 That I am not related to any of the
17 parties in this matter, nor am I interested
18 in the outcome of this action.

19

20

21 Witness my hand and seal this 6th day of May,
22 2010.

23

24

25

Nathan D. Engen