

U.S. Department of Education Race to the Top Program

Tier 2 Orientation
For Peer Reviewers

March 15, 2010



Overview of the Orientation

- Tier 2 Purpose and Structure
- State Presentations and Q&A
- Planning Your Q&A
- Panel Discussion, Scoring, and Commenting
- In Closing...

Tier 2 Purpose and Structure

Purpose of the Tier 2 Review

- To validate your evaluation of a State's application
- To ensure that the State has the understanding, knowledge, and capacity to implement its plan

Structure of Tier 2

- Later today, your panel will meet together to plan your questions.
- Prior to the session with States, you will reconvene as a panel to review your plan.
- Each session will be 90 minutes:
 - Up to 30 minutes for the State presentation
 - Remaining time for Q&A
- After each session, the panels will meet for 2 hours to discuss the application; then you will finalize your individual scores and comments.

Tier 2 Schedule Overview

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
9:00-10:00am Orientation	8:00am-12:00n Group A Panel Preparation State Presentations Panel Discussions	8:00am-12:00n Group D Panel Preparation State Presentations Panel Discussions	8:00-11:00 Reviewers check-out with Miko, return review materials, and depart when complete
10:00-11:15am Group A Meets			
11:30-12:45pm Groups B/C Meet			
12:45pm Lunch on your own	12:00n Lunch on your own	12:00n Lunch on your own	
2:00-3:15pm Group D Meets	1:00-5:00pm Groups B and C Panel Preparation State Presentations Panel Discussions	1:00-5:00pm Group E Panel Preparation State Presentations Panel Discussions	
3:30-4:45pm Group E Meets			
5:30-6:30pm Reception with the Secretary			

Session Schedule

	AM Sessions	PM Sessions
Panel Prep Meeting	8:00-8:30am	1:00-1:30pm
State Presentation*	8:30-9:00am	1:30-2:00pm
Q & A*	~9:00-10:00am	~2:00-3:00pm
Panel Discussion and Finalize Technical Review Forms (TRFs)	10:00am – 12:00pm	3:00pm – 5:00pm

* State Presentation times may vary, but may not exceed 30 minutes. The total time for the presentation and Q&A for a State may not exceed 90 minutes.

Panel Preparation Meeting

- Reviewers meet 30 minutes prior to the State presentation to review questions for the Q&A session.
 - The State Team will be setting up for their presentation in another room during this time.
- Your panel monitor will escort you to the State's presentation room 5 minutes prior to the start of the session.
- PLEASE BE ON TIME!

State Presentations and Q&A

State Presenters

- The State Team consists of 5 individuals with knowledge of the State's application and responsibility for executing the plan.
- You will have a list of the presenters, their titles, and roles.
- The State Team will be seated at a table at the front of the room facing the table where you will be seated.
- There will be name placards for the State Team members and for each of you. The State has been instructed to begin their presentations by introducing themselves.
- Only the State Team, your review panel, your Department panel monitors, and the contractors' AV staff will be in the room.

State Presentations

- States have flexibility in what they present.
 - Each State determines what to emphasize.
 - Presentations do not have to address each criterion or priority.
 - States may make a slide presentation, but may not include Web-based information, video presentations, or embedded video resources.
 - States may use poster boards.
- States will provide each of you with a copy of their presentations. If States do not get to all of their slides, you may consider only the slides they actually cover.

State Presentations (cont.)

- Panel monitors will be the timekeepers.
 - Panel monitors will signal when the State presentation may begin.
 - The presentation cannot exceed 30 minutes.
 - A countdown timer will display the time for the presenters and the reviewers. In addition, an indicator light will turn from green to yellow when 5 minutes remain. When time is up, the light will turn red.
 - Panel monitors will stop the presentation when the 30-minute mark is reached.
- Please do not interrupt the State's presentation.

State Presentations (cont.)

- States have been instructed not to present new information, including for example, new or changed:
 - Plans
 - Accomplishments
 - Laws, regulations, or policies
 - Data
 - Performance measures
- You may ask States to clarify or explain information that is in their applications.

Q & A

- After the State presentation, reviewers may use the remainder of the 90 minutes to ask questions of the State.
- The panel monitors will reset the timer and will signal you when the questioning can begin.
- Remember: all reviewers (and especially the facilitator) may stop State Team members who are giving overly long answers, signal to fellow reviewers that it is time to move on to a new topic, and ensure that each reviewer has had adequate opportunity to ask questions, to the extent feasible.
- Any changes to scores, as reflected in your comments, must be based on the presentation and Q&A. If you have concerns about particular aspects of an application, ask a question to clarify.
- The panel monitor will stop the session when time is up.

A Few Reminders

- States have not received their Tier 1 scores or comments. They do not know how you scored them or what your concerns and issues are.
- The session will be videoed; the camera will focus on the State Team at all times. If your name is spoken, it will be removed before the video is made public.
- Do not talk with State presenters outside of the formal presentation.
- You will need to justify your score changes, if any, based on what you heard during the session.

Planning Your Q&A

Monday – 75 minute Panel Meetings

- Meet with your fellow panel members to decide on the high-priority questions to ask the State presenters.
- Select the facilitator for the Q&A session. The facilitator will be responsible for:
 - Ensuring that each reviewer has an adequate opportunity to ask questions of the State's presenters, to the extent possible
 - Keeping the discussion moving along productively

Decide on the High-Priority Questions to Ask

Think about—

- Areas where you made assumptions – ask questions to test/verify those assumptions.
- Areas in which you were less confident about your scores – ask questions so that you can be more confident about your final scores.
- Areas critical to executing the State’s plan – ask questions to test/verify the State’s capacity.
- Questions that will elicit information on the State’s understanding of its plan and its capacity to implement it.

Plan for an Interactive Q&A Session

- Loosely plan the Q&A session.
- Ask the most important questions first.
- Ask the questions that were pre-planned by the panel, as well as others that arise as a result of the State's presentation.
- Allow follow-up questions that probe for clarity.
- Stop probing when it is clear that the State has nothing more to say.

Plan for an Interactive Q&A Session (cont.)

- Plan to listen more than speak.
- Ask questions in a way that is neutral and as brief as possible.
- Try not to ask questions in a way that implies a “right” answer.

Your Role During Q&A

- You direct the Q&A session and determine the questions to ask.
- While the facilitator should be particularly aware of how your time is being spent, all reviewers share this responsibility.
 - We have told States that you may ask them to stop their response and move on to the next question. We have instructed them to cooperate with these requests.
 - This is your opportunity to get the information you need.

Panel Discussion, Scoring, and Commenting

Panel Discussion

- Panels will meet immediately following the Q&A session to discuss the presentation and responses to questions.
- The purpose of the discussion is to gather information that will help you validate your scores – the purpose is not to come to a consensus.
- Your panel's Tier 1 scores will be available in the discussion room.
- Remember that no new information may be considered.
 - Panel monitors will not provide guidance or feedback as to whether or not information is new. You, as reviewers, will be responsible for monitoring the information that you consider.

Scoring

- You will score against the criteria and priorities, just as you did in the Tier 1 review.
- Based on your assessment of a State's presentation and its answers during the Q&A session, you may make no, small, or substantial changes to your scores.
- You do not need to “rebuild” your case for your Tier 1 score or justify keeping the same score.

Scoring (cont.)

- You do, however, have to justify any changes you make to your scores.
 - Start with your Tier 1 score and move up or down from there.
 - A State Team's response to a question may affect multiple criteria, particularly if the response affects a cross-cutting assumption you made. In such cases, provide comments to justify the change for each criterion.
 - You may maximize your comment-writing time by cross-referencing the comments you made for other criteria.
- Use information provided in the presentation, the Q&A, and the State's application when discussing, scoring, and commenting.

A Few Reminders

- A panel monitor or other Department of Education staff must be present during discussions.
- Do not discuss other State applications.
- Evaluate each State individually against the criteria; you should not compare States' applications.
- You may not consider any outside information.
- Two hours are scheduled for the panel discussion – use this time to discuss the application, presentation, and Q&A, and to complete your TRF.

In Closing...

Application Review System

Reviewer's Score

A. State Success Factors	Available	Phase I		
		Tier 1	Tier 2	Init
(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEA's participation in it				
(i) Articulating comprehensive, coherent reform agenda	5	4	4	
(ii) Securing LEA commitment	45	42	42	
(iii) Translating LEA participation into statewide impact	15	12	12	

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Reviewer comments from Tier 1 will appear in the box. These comments are not editable, but are here for reference by the reviewer as he is making his new comments in the editable box below.

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: (Tier 2)

Finalizing Scores and Comments

When you have finished scoring and justifying any changes to your scores:

1. Provide a copy of the Technical Review Form to your panel monitor for review and signature.
2. Press “Submit for ED Review” in the Application Review System.
3. Panel Monitors will submit your TRF for final review by the competition support team.

Reviewer Check-Out

- Miko will contact you when your TRFs have been reviewed and finalized.
- Return applications and all review materials – including your notes, copies of States’ presentations, and panel score sheets – to Miko Group.
- Please mail your reimbursement requests for this trip to Miko by next Friday, March 26.

Competition Integrity

- Please do not discuss a State's application or presentation with anyone other than the reviewers on that State's panel, your designated panel monitors, or a member of the Department's competition support team.
- We have asked State presenters to assist us in maintaining the integrity of the competition by refraining from talking to others, including presenters from other finalist States and the media, about the identities of their panel reviewers.
- A list of peer reviewers' names and the brief bios you provided to us will be posted after the awards are announced. Your names will not be associated with the specific applications you reviewed.
- Please be aware that we do expect members of the media to be present – though they are not allowed in any of the presentations.

Competition Integrity (cont.)

If you are asked about your participation in the Race to the Top review, please keep in mind:

- Reviewers are responsible, together with Department staff, for ensuring the continued integrity of the competition.
- For this reason, reviewers may not announce, confirm, or disclose their participation as a peer reviewer until the Department releases that information.
- Reviewers may not discuss the review process or disclose information pertaining to a State's application.

Contacts - Race to the Top Staff

Jessica Clark



Jim Butler



Panel Monitors and other members of the Competition Support Team will be available onsite throughout the week.

Thank you for your service!

Race to the Top
Tier 2

March 15-18, 2010

