

# RACE TO THE TOP

## Rhode Island Report

Year 3: School Year 2012–2013

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U.S. Department of Education  
Washington, DC 20202

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March 19, 2014

# Executive Summary

## Race to the Top overview

On February 17, 2009, President Obama signed into law the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), historic legislation designed to stimulate the economy, support job creation, and invest in critical sectors, including education. ARRA provided \$4.35 billion for the Race to the Top fund, of which approximately \$4 billion was used to fund comprehensive statewide reform grants under the Race to the Top program.<sup>1</sup> In 2010, the U.S. Department of Education (Department) awarded Race to the Top Phase 1 and Phase 2 grants to 11 States and the District of Columbia. The Race to the Top program is a competitive four-year grant program designed to encourage and reward States that are creating the conditions for education innovation and reform; achieving significant improvement in student outcomes, including making substantial gains in student achievement, closing achievement gaps, and improving high school graduation rates; and ensuring students are prepared for success in college and careers. Since the Race to the Top Phase 1 and 2 competitions, the Department has made additional grants under the Race to the Top Phase 3, Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge,<sup>2</sup> and Race to the Top – District<sup>3</sup> competitions.

The Race to the Top program is built on the framework of comprehensive reform in four education reform areas:

- Adopting rigorous standards and assessments that prepare students for success in college and the workplace;
- Building data systems that measure student success and inform teachers and principals how they can improve their practices;
- Recruiting, developing, retaining, and rewarding effective teachers and principals; and
- Turning around the lowest-performing schools.

Since education is a complex system, sustained and lasting instructional improvement in classrooms, schools, local educational agencies (LEAs), and States will not be achieved through piecemeal change. Race to the Top builds on the local contexts of States and LEAs participating in the State's Race to the Top plan (participating LEAs)<sup>4</sup> in the design and implementation of the most effective and innovative approaches that meet the needs of their educators, students, and families.

<sup>1</sup> The remaining funds were awarded under the Race to the Top Assessment program. More information about the Race to the Top Assessment program is available at [www.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-assessment](http://www.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-assessment).

<sup>2</sup> More information on the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge can be found at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-earlylearningchallenge/index.html>.

<sup>3</sup> More information on Race to the Top – District can be found at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-district/index.html>.

<sup>4</sup> Participating local educational agencies (LEAs) are those LEAs that choose to work with the State to implement all or significant portions of the State's Race to the Top plan, as specified in each LEA's Memorandum of Understanding with the State. Each participating LEA that receives funding under Title I, Part A will receive a share of the 50 percent of a State's grant award that the State must subgrant to LEAs, based on the LEA's relative share of Title I, Part A allocations in the most recent year, in accordance with section 14006(c) of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

## Race to the Top program review

As part of the Department's commitment to supporting States as they implement ambitious reform agendas, the Department established the Implementation and Support Unit (ISU) in the Office of the Deputy Secretary to administer, among others, the Race to the Top program. The goal of the ISU is to provide assistance to States as they implement unprecedented and comprehensive reforms to improve student outcomes. Consistent with this goal, the Department has developed a Race to the Top program review process that not only addresses the Department's responsibilities for fiscal and programmatic oversight, but is also designed to identify areas in which Race to the Top grantees need assistance and support to meet their goals. Specifically, the ISU works with Race to the Top grantees to differentiate support based on individual State needs, and helps States work with each other and with experts to achieve and sustain educational reforms that improve student outcomes. In partnership with the ISU, the Reform Support Network (RSN) offers collective and individualized technical assistance and resources to Race to the Top grantees. The RSN's purpose is to support Race to the Top grantees as they implement reforms in education policy and practice, learn from each other, and build their capacity to sustain these reforms.<sup>5</sup>

Grantees are accountable for the implementation of their approved Race to the Top plans, and the information and data gathered throughout the program review help to inform the Department's management and support of the Race to the Top grantees, as well as provide appropriate and timely updates to the public on their progress. In the event that adjustments are required to an approved plan, the grantee must submit a formal amendment request to the Department for consideration. States may submit for Department approval amendment requests to a plan and budget, provided such changes do not significantly affect the scope or objectives of the approved plans. In the event that the Department determines that a grantee is not meeting its goals, activities, timelines, budget, or annual targets, or is not fulfilling other applicable requirements, the Department will take appropriate enforcement action(s), consistent with 34 CFR section 80.43 in the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR).<sup>6</sup>

## State-specific summary report

The Department uses the information gathered during the review process (e.g., through monthly calls, onsite reviews, and Annual Performance Reports (APRs)) to draft State-specific summary reports. The State-specific summary report serves as an assessment of a State's annual Race to the Top implementation. The Year 3 report for Phase 1 and 2 grantees highlights successes and accomplishments, identifies challenges, and provides lessons learned from implementation from approximately September 2012 through September 2013; the Year 2 report for Phase 3 grantees provides similar information from approximately December 2012 through December 2013.

<sup>5</sup> More information can be found at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/implementation-support-unit/tech-assist/index.html>.

<sup>6</sup> More information about the Implementation and Support Unit's (ISU's) program review process, State Annual Performance Report (APR) data, and State Scopes of Work can be found at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/index.html>.

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## State's education reform agenda

In January 2010, the Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education (Board of Regents)<sup>7</sup> approved the *Transforming Education in Rhode Island* strategic plan, which established five priorities to guide broad-based education reforms in the State: (1) ensure educator excellence, (2) accelerate all schools toward greatness, (3) establish world-class standards and assessments, (4) develop user-friendly data systems, and (5) invest resources wisely. The new strategic plan has statewide stakeholder support and forms the basis for the State's Race to the Top initiatives. In September 2010, Rhode Island received a \$75 million Race to the Top grant. Under the terms of the Race to the Top grant, the State distributed at least half of the award amount to participating LEAs.

## State Years 1 and 2 summary

Throughout Year 1, Rhode Island increased its capacity to implement Race to the Top programs by strategically aligning the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) offices to the components of the State Scope of Work and by implementing performance management processes such as EdStat (see *State Success Factors*). As part of EdStat, the State tracks project implementation and identifies areas for improvement on an ongoing basis. In addition, in Year 2 the State became more engaged with LEA-level implementation through Collaborative Learning for Outcomes (CLO) meetings that bring together leadership teams from all 50 participating LEAs to discuss implementation and share progress with RIDE.

The State prepared educators to transition to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) through professional development opportunities called Study of the Standards sessions that had reached more than 5,800 educators by the end of Year 2. To further support educators in transitioning to new standards, RIDE released CCSS-aligned fixed-form interim assessments for every grade band in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. In addition, the State developed four modules to train educators in formative assessment practices and piloted these modules in six schools in school year (SY) 2011-2012. Educators continued to deeply engage with the standards by developing CCSS-aligned curriculum guides with groups of educators from multiple LEAs.

In Year 2, RIDE made progress in its initiatives to support its educators (see *Great Teachers and Leaders*). All participating LEAs gradually implemented elements of educator evaluation models and two pilot LEAs implemented all components of the system. Every Rhode Island teacher and building administrator was evaluated and identified as performing on one of four levels based on professional practice and professional responsibilities: ineffective, developing, effective, or highly effective. Based on feedback from LEA experiences, RIDE made revisions to the Rhode Island model in preparation for all LEAs to implement the Rhode Island model or another State-approved evaluation system in Year 3. In Year 2, the State also held trainings on educator evaluation, including 102 sessions for educators evaluating teachers and/or building administrators.

The State engaged in several other activities to support great teaching and leading. The Board of Regents approved new educator evaluation standards that required the use of student performance as a measure of educator effectiveness, and RIDE launched an induction program for new teachers at the beginning of SY 2011-2012, which included at least 75 minutes per week with induction coaches and regular professional development. In Year 2 the State placed 44 educators in urban traditional or charter schools using alternative routes for certification.

During Years 1 and 2, RIDE designed and developed, with vendors, several cross-cutting data systems including the Instructional Management System (IMS) and the Educator Performance Support System (EPSS). The EPSS is designed to collect and store LEA educator effectiveness data and support implementation of the educator evaluation system with fidelity. The IMS is designed to provide educators with a variety of instructional resources and student data. RIDE also developed a new Early Warning System (EWS) to identify students at risk of academic failure or dropping out, and the Rhode Island Certification System (eCert) to link certification and certification renewal to educator evaluation data. Educators played a key role in the development of each system.

Five Rhode Island persistently lowest-achieving (PLA) schools implemented one of the four school intervention models in Year 2, and the State selected eight additional schools to begin interventions in Year 3.<sup>8</sup> Through the Academy for Transformative Leadership, leadership teams from PLA schools participated in professional

<sup>7</sup> As of January 1, 2013, the Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education was dissolved because of a change in State law. As of that date, all powers and authority of the former Board of Regents became vested in the Rhode Island Board of Education.

<sup>8</sup> Race to the Top States' plans include supporting their LEAs in turning around the lowest-achieving schools by implementing one of the four school intervention models:

- **Turnaround model:** Replace the principal and hire no more than 50 percent of the staff and grant the principal sufficient operational flexibility (including in staffing, calendars/time and budgeting) to fully implement a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student outcomes.
- **Restart model:** Convert a school or close and reopen it under a charter school operator, a charter management organization, or an education management organization that has been selected through a rigorous review process.
- **School closure:** Close a school and enroll the students who attended that school in other schools in the district that are higher achieving.
- **Transformation model:** Implement each of the following strategies: (1) replace the principal and take steps to increase teacher and school leader effectiveness, (2) institute comprehensive instructional reforms, (3) increase learning time and create community-oriented schools, and (4) provide operational flexibility and sustained support.

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development institutes in spring and summer 2012. Rhode Island formed its first partnership with an outside charter management organization in Year 2, and after securing approval opened two Achievement First elementary schools. Further, Rhode Island awarded its first charter school expansion grant.

Although RIDE exceeded its CCSS training goals, it was unclear whether all LEAs were on track to transition to CCSS, particularly those LEAs that did not participate in the State's curricular development work. For the educator evaluation system, RIDE made revisions to increase the weight of the Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) component, a change that required RIDE to provide additional support to ensure that educators and LEAs implement SLOs rigorously and consistently. Additionally, RIDE experienced significant delays in its projects to intervene in its lowest-achieving schools, including hiring State-level staff and providing professional development for school leaders, which led to concerns about both State and LEA capacity to meet milestones in the State's Scope of Work (see *Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools*). To address these concerns RIDE filled personnel vacancies in the Office of Transformation, amended implementation timelines, and used budget savings from Year 1 to get back on track toward the end of Year 2.

In Year 2, the State worked with LEAs to gauge preparedness for statewide initiatives slated for implementation in Year 3. The State identified varying levels of technological readiness to implement data systems, as well as educator readiness to use data-informed instructional practices. To support local efforts to expand the use of technology, RIDE requested and was approved for a \$20 million technology bond from the General Assembly and the Governor. Though the State successfully designed and developed multiple statewide data systems, there was insufficient time in Year 2 to properly test the systems with users.

## State Year 3 summary

### Accomplishments

In Year 3, many initiatives that were in the development stage at the State-level transitioned to the implementation phase in LEAs, including the educator and building administrator evaluation systems, data systems, and supports and programs for the State's lowest-performing schools. The State continued to rely upon performance management and LEA support structures developed in Year 2, including the EdStat process and CLO quarterly meetings. The State continued to support groups of teachers from multiple LEAs in developing model kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12) curriculum guides and units of study. The State released the IMS statewide at the start of SY 2012-2013.

The State made progress on projects related to supporting teachers and leaders. In Year 3, all Rhode Island LEAs implemented their educator evaluation systems. Every educator developed multiple

SLOs and building leaders conducted observations and conferences throughout the school year. The State was successful in supporting statewide implementation of educator and building administrator evaluation systems by providing significant training and technical assistance focused on quality of implementation. In addition, the State continued to support two alternative teacher certification programs that brought 57 teachers to urban traditional and charter public schools in fall 2012. In addition, the State completed its first year of the Turnaround Leaders Program, graduating four candidates into leadership positions in schools that were identified for improvement under the State's approved Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) flexibility request.<sup>9</sup> Finally, the State supported two pilot programs to create a teacher-leader pathway and a criterion-based principal compensation system.

In SY 2012-2013, the State provided the full array of planned Race to the Top supports and training to teachers and leaders in its lowest-performing schools. These supports included principal coaching, evaluation system support, and a summer institute focused on planning and implementing School Reform Plans. In the area of charter schools, the State awarded two \$250,000 expansion grants and one \$250,000 development grant. The Board of Regents also approved two additional charter schools to begin operations in fall 2013. Finally, the State made mathematics modules available to LEAs to increase proficiency among high school students at risk of failing.

### Challenges

Though the State thoughtfully planned for implementation at the LEA level in SY 2012-2013, the State encountered several challenges. The IMS roll-out was rocky as LEAs faced technology, data and technical barriers to fully leveraging interim assessments and formative assessment professional development housed in the IMS. Ultimately, many LEAs scaled back implementation of CCSS-aligned interim assessments and formative assessment professional development due to these challenges. The State experienced an additional setback when the vendor notified the State that it would no longer support the instructional component of the system, forcing the State to consider alternative options.

It was the Department's understanding that in SY 2012-2013 Rhode Island's implementation of evaluation systems would include all components of the planned system. Consistent with its plan and approved changes, all educators received a rating that included measures of student learning based on SLOs and a sub-component rating based on professional practice and professional foundations rubrics. However, the State provided additional information indicating that, while student growth was calculated, final ratings in Year 3 did not include growth on State summative assessments for teachers of tested grades and subjects. The Department anticipates an amendment regarding the State's approach and timing for inclusion of this component of the evaluation system.

<sup>9</sup> Rhode Island's request for flexibility from some Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) provisions was approved on May 29, 2012.

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## Looking ahead to Year 4

In its Race to the Top Scope of Work, Rhode Island planned to spend Year 4 refining and improving implementation of the initiatives that first rolled out in Year 3. However, based on challenges in Year 3, the State will refine projects in Year 4 so LEAs can eventually take full advantage of the data systems, professional development and interim assessment options that the State developed through Race to the Top. LEAs will take critical steps toward implementing the CCSS by using and continuing to develop CCSS-aligned units of study for use in classrooms across all grade levels in ELA and mathematics.

The IMS, the State's central Race to the Top data system, will demand the State's ongoing attention throughout Year 4 as it considers ways to make sustainable and user-friendly systems available to LEAs. Based on significant vendor challenges during Year 3 the State will continue to make the system and its contents available to LEAs in Year 4 while also exploring options for alternative platforms to support the resources, tools and professional development currently housed on the IMS.

Educator evaluation systems will be implemented statewide for the second full year. The State will continue to provide Intermediate Service Provider (ISP) and training supports in Year 4 as LEAs take greater ownership of implementing the systems locally. Consistent with its practice in Year 3, the State will continue to gather feedback from the field about implementation and make adjustments as necessary. As the State gathers more effectiveness data it will deepen its understanding of equitable distribution of teachers across the State and support LEAs' incorporation of the data in human capital policies and decision-making. Finally, the State will work with partners in higher education to develop and discuss a draft version of an educator preparation report.

In Year 4, the State will continue to support cohorts of teachers and leaders in alternative certification programs and consider options for sustainability. RIDE's Office of Transformation will continue to make professional development and coaching available to teachers and leaders in the State's lowest-performing schools, in addition to implementing a new monitoring and technical assistance system for these schools.

## State Success Factors

### Building capacity to support LEAs

In Year 3, Rhode Island maintained its use of the EdStat performance management system to manage and track the State's Race to the Top progress. The Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner/General Counsel, Chief of Staff, Chief of Educator Quality and Instructional Effectiveness, Race to the Top Coordinator and other key leaders attend every session as the EdStat panel. The panel reviews data reports compiled by RIDE's Performance Management Executive that include information about project timelines, challenges, risks, and LEA implementation. Based on this data, the EdStat panel asks the project team questions about implementation progress and quality and makes mid-course corrections, as necessary. RIDE reports that the data collection and reporting in combination with the panel sessions have created a way to bridge State-level project management with LEA-level implementation. The State conducted 12 EdStat sessions covering Race to the Top projects in four strategic priorities: World-Class Standards and Assessments, Educator Excellence, Accelerating All Schools Towards Greatness, and User-Friendly Data Systems.

In Year 3, the EdStat memo was changed to reflect the fact that most of Rhode Island's Race to the Top projects are being implemented at the LEA level. As a result, the memo includes an assessment of LEA implementation such as participation data, progress updates, and risks and challenges. Having used EdStat for two full school years, the State reports that EdStat has made data-driven decision-making a part

of the culture at RIDE. Data from the CLO process greatly informs RIDE staff about LEA-level implementation.

In Year 3, RIDE maintained the Project Management Office Coordination (PMOC) structure, which includes a sponsor, business lead and technical lead, to manage the development and deployment of data systems. Vendors took a greater role in managing the projects as the systems became operational for LEAs in SY 2012-2013, but RIDE continued to coordinate with vendors and identify solutions to statewide problems. Indeed, because there have been significant problems with LEAs' experience with some of the systems, the State has played a central role in managing vendor issues on behalf of many LEAs.

For the State's standards transition work and educator evaluation system work, the respective offices within RIDE monitor LEA implementation. In Year 3, as most projects shifted completely to the LEA implementation stage, RIDE offices transitioned into an oversight and technical assistance role. RIDE's offices continued to solicit extensive feedback from the field on the standards transition effort and the evaluation system to inform additional supports and changes to statewide systems.

Across projects, the Internal Oversight Team tracks the Race to the Top Scope of Work and budget to ensure vendors and program staff are meeting milestones and timelines. As issues arise, the Internal Oversight Team elevates issues to the Adaptive Leadership Team, which makes decisions about next steps. Composed of

## State Success Factors

senior leadership, the Adaptive Leadership Team provides broader accountability across divisions and coordinates the State's Race to the Top work with existing work streams, particularly with an eye towards sustainability. RIDE has enjoyed relative stability in leadership and staff through Year 3 of the grant period, with the exception of the Office of Transformation.

### Support and accountability for LEAs

Throughout Year 3, RIDE continued to manage LEA performance through the CLO process. Using quarterly reports, data reports and CLO sessions with 4 to 12 LEAs in a cohort, RIDE obtained LEA feedback and provided opportunities for LEAs to share best practices with each other. In Year 3, many of the State's Race to the Top projects shifted from State design and development to LEA adoption and implementation, which made the best practice format particularly useful.

During summer 2012 and early fall 2012, RIDE conducted individual "stocktake" meetings with each participating LEA. During these stocktake meetings RIDE staff provided LEA leadership with a document outlining the LEA's participation in various trainings, implementation timelines for each Race to the Top initiative, and grant expenditures to date. The meetings were a critical opportunity for RIDE and each LEA to have an honest dialogue about progress and to chart out activities for SY 2012-2013 and SY 2013-2014.

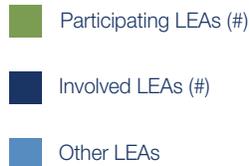
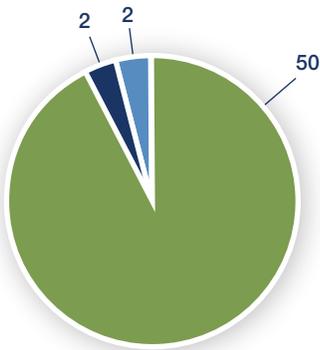
RIDE noted an increase in LEA use of Race to the Top funds throughout SY 2012-2013. The State anticipates that LEAs will use all of their Race to the Top funds by the end of the grant period and is working with LEAs, and in particular LEAs with larger grant amounts, to ensure they have aligned plans to use funds during SY 2013-2014.

# State Success Factors

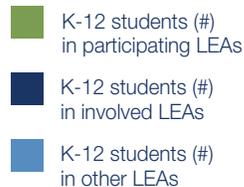
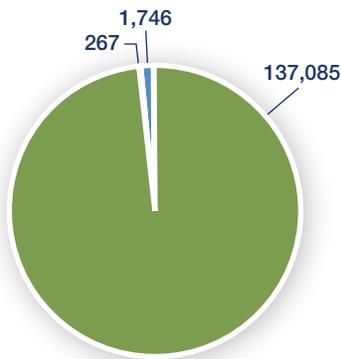
## LEA participation

Rhode Island reported 50 participating LEAs as of June 30, 2013. At the time of its Race to the Top application in June 2010, 48 LEAs were participating in the State's plan; two additional participating LEAs joined the grant during Year 1; in Year 2, two charter schools joined as involved LEAs. As depicted in the graphs below, LEAs participating in the State's plan serve nearly 100 percent of the State's K-12 students and 98.4 percent of its students living in poverty.

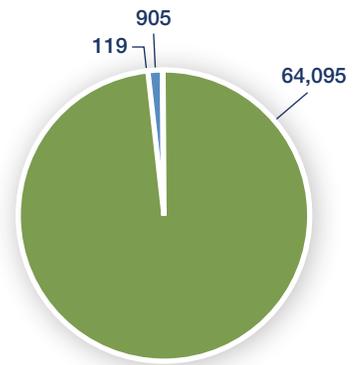
LEAs participating in Rhode Island's Race to the Top plan



K-12 students in LEAs participating in Rhode Island's Race to the Top plan



Students in poverty in LEAs participating in Rhode Island's Race to the Top plan



The number of K-12 students and number of students in poverty statewide are calculated using pre-release data from the National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) Common Core of Data (CCD). Students in poverty statewide comes from the CCD measure of the number of students eligible for free or reduced price lunch subsidy (commonly used as a proxy for the number of students who are economically disadvantaged in a school) under the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National School Lunch Program. The students in poverty statewide count is an aggregation of school-level counts summed to one State-level count. Statistical procedures were applied systematically by CCD to these data to prevent potential disclosure of information about individual students as well as for data quality assurance; consequently State-level counts may differ from those originally reported by the State. Please note that these data are considered to be preliminary as of November 1, 2013.

For State-reported context, please refer to the Race to the Top APR at [www.rtt-apr.us](http://www.rtt-apr.us).

# State Success Factors

## Stakeholder engagement

Rhode Island's Race to the Top Steering Committee<sup>10</sup> launched the "I Pledge" campaign in fall 2012 to build support for the State's ambitious education reform work. The Governor, Commissioner, union leaders and teachers and leaders participated in the campaign, which included television and radio ads in addition to an online pledge. As of September 2013, 9,533 Rhode Islanders have signed onto the pledge. The Steering Committee continued to meet on a quarterly basis. In Year 3, they received updates on the State's virtual learning efforts, beginning teacher induction and data systems.

In Year 3, the State continued to emphasize obtaining feedback from educators and leaders in the field. Through regional superintendent meetings, educator focus groups and Commissioner's visits, RIDE gained a better understanding of how various Race to the Top initiatives have been implemented and what the challenges have been. Particularly with educator evaluation systems, the State has learned of critical needs around supports for principals to implement the system fully and with fidelity and supports for teachers with deficiencies as identified in the evaluation process.

The State participated in research for the Stakeholder Communications and Engagement Community of Practice publication, titled, "Measurable Success, Growing Adoption, Vast Potential: Social Media Use Among State and Local Educational Agencies."<sup>11</sup> The publication highlights findings from a "social media use" inquiry and includes data from 23 State Education Agencies (SEAs) and 11 LEAs. Findings are presented in four areas: usage; tools and audiences; planning and measuring; and, challenges and opportunities.

## Continuous improvement

The combination of EdStat-related data collection and reporting, CLO quarterly progress updates and internal RIDE management structures continued to provide project-level staff with information to improve implementation efforts. Particularly in Year 3, with many projects becoming operational at the LEA level, RIDE's focus shifted to monitoring the LEA experience and making adjustments as necessary, based on feedback from the field. For all projects, the State maintained communication with LEAs through various methods, including surveys, focus groups, Commissioner's newsletters and the RIDE website. In addition, metrics and data collection for EdStat and through the CLO Quarterly progress updates shifted to gain more

information about how the field was implementing each initiative. The State's Race to the Top projects are managed by RIDE's program offices, with high-level concerns and challenges rising to the EdStat panel and Adaptive Leadership Team. For example, the State's IMS was released to LEAs at the start of SY 2012-2013 but LEAs ultimately scaled back implementation plans due to infrastructure, capacity and technical challenges. The State used lessons learned from the IMS roll-out to adjust implementation timelines and training strategies for other data systems initiatives. In addition, after learning that the IMS vendor would no longer provide services beyond the grant period, the State began considering other options for a sustainable and user-friendly system. Though RIDE has developed and executed systems and processes to learn about and support LEA implementation, the State continued to wrestle with how to balance being responsive to the field and being able to maintain momentum for key initiatives to be fully implemented.

## Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

Year 3 marked the first year that many of the State's Race to the Top projects reached LEAs, which challenged RIDE's capacity and management. The State maintained important oversight structures that demonstrate best practice in performance management, including the Internal Oversight Team, Adaptive Leadership Team, and the EdStat and CLO processes. The State successfully released the IMS and EPSS and supported LEA access and use throughout SY 2012-2013, elevating issues as necessary. The State also supported statewide implementation of educator evaluation systems and deliberately solicited feedback to inform continuous improvements. As the State refines implementation of projects at the LEA level, it will be important to use the oversight structures developed through Race to the Top to measure progress towards the State's reform goals.

<sup>10</sup> The Race to the Top Steering Committee is composed of leaders from the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE), the Governor's office and the non-profit and business community. The Steering Committee serves in an advisory capacity and acts to engage education stakeholders and connect RIDE to previously unengaged constituencies, such as business and community leaders.

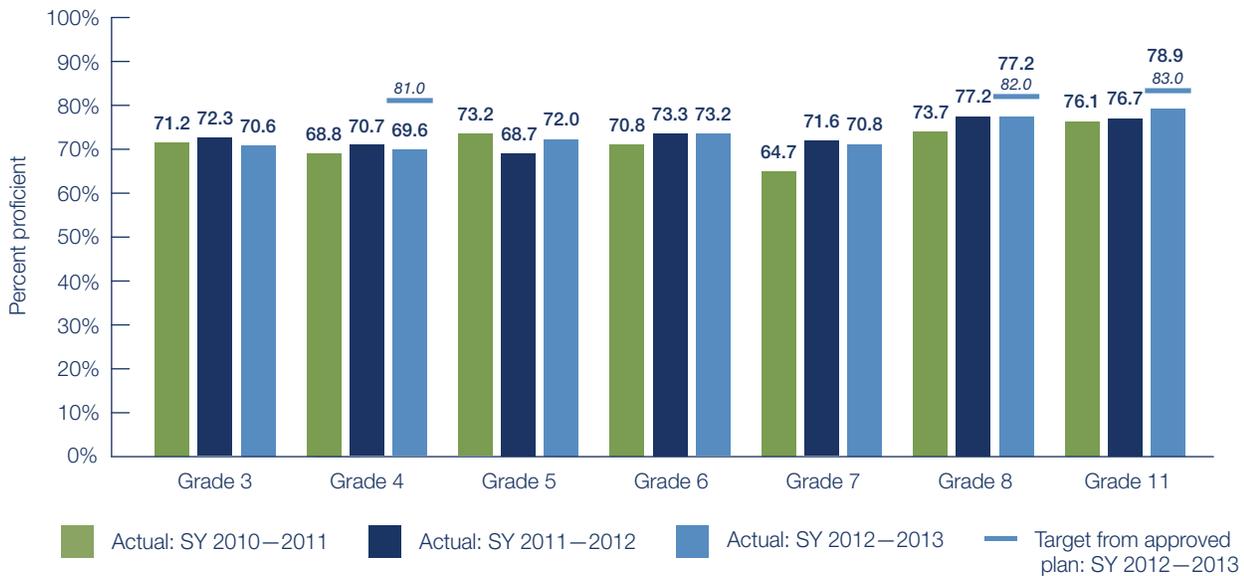
<sup>11</sup> This Reform Support Network (RSN) publication is available at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/implementation-support-unit/tech-assist/social-media-use.pdf>.

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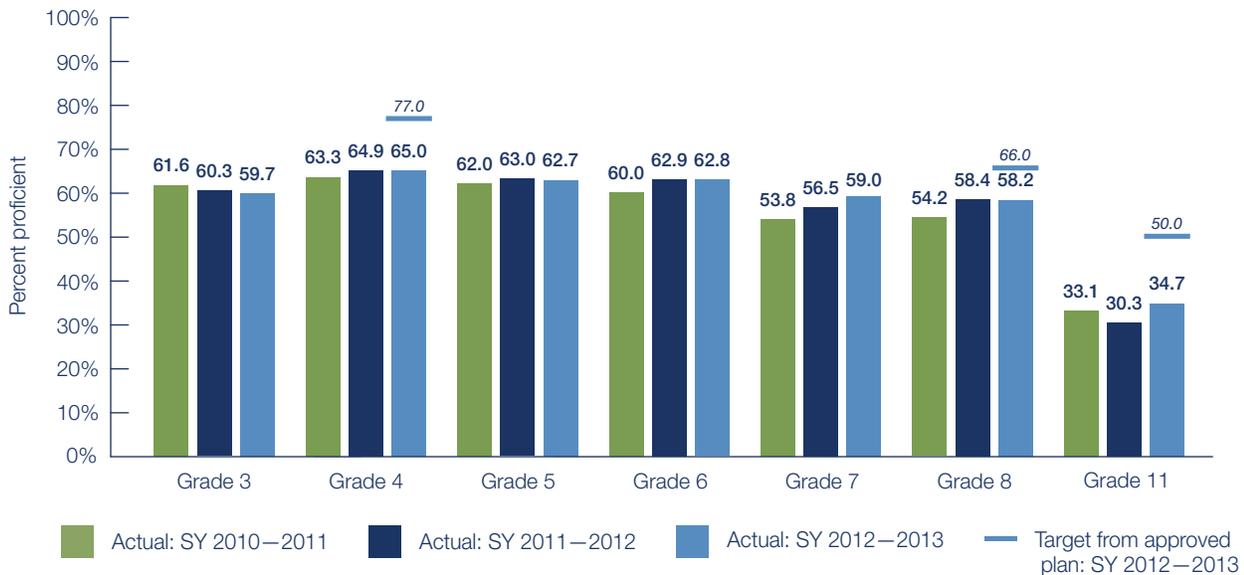
## Student outcomes data

Proficiency rates on the State's ELA assessment remained about the same in SY 2012-2013 when compared to SY 2011-2012. The State's grade 11 and grade 7 mathematics proficiency rates increased whereas other grades were about the same when compared to SY 2011-2012.

Student proficiency on Rhode Island's ELA assessment



Student proficiency on Rhode Island's mathematics assessment



Preliminary SY 2012-2013 data reported as of: October 24, 2013.

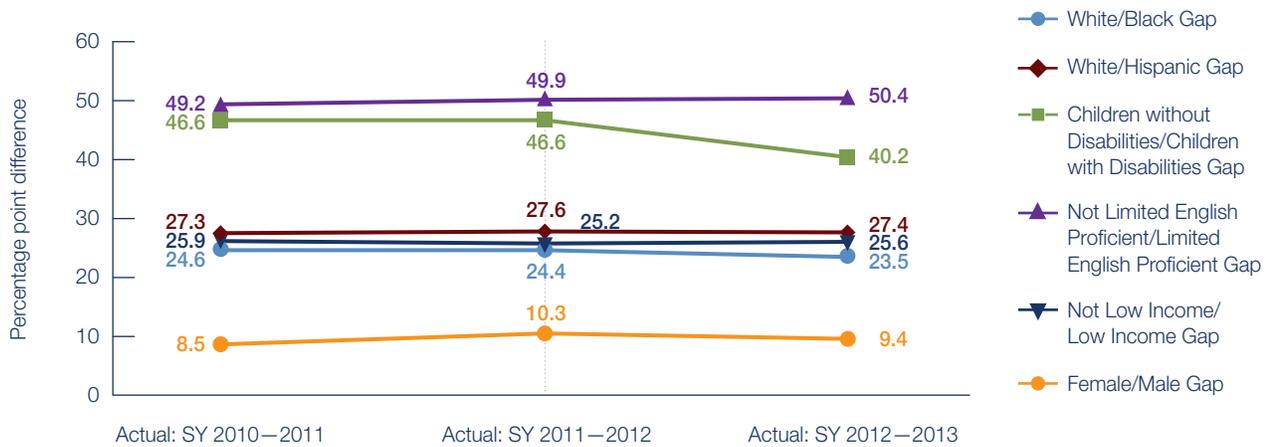
NOTE: Over the last three years, a number of States adopted new assessments and/or cut scores.

For State-reported context, please refer to the Race to the Top APR at [www.rtt-apr.us](http://www.rtt-apr.us).

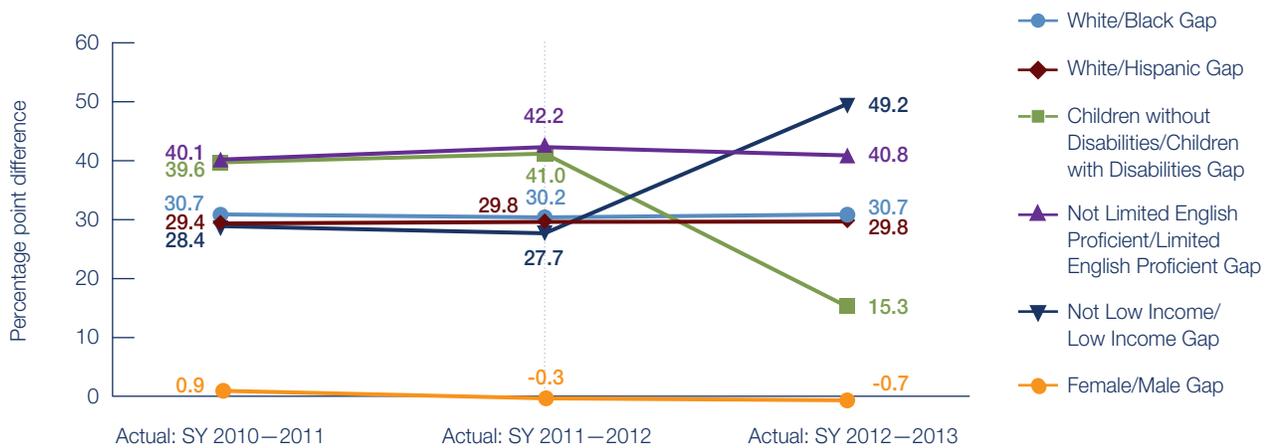
# State Success Factors

On the State's ELA and mathematics assessments the achievement gap between children with disabilities and children without disabilities decreased from SY 2011-2012 to SY 2012-2013. The achievement gap on the State's mathematics assessment between low income and not low income student increased in this time period. For other sub-groups, the achievement gap remained about the same.

Achievement gap on Rhode Island's ELA assessment



Achievement gap on Rhode Island's mathematics assessment



Preliminary SY 2012-2013 data reported as of: October 24, 2013.

Numbers in the graph represent the gap over three school years between two sub-groups on the State's ELA and mathematics assessments.

Achievement gaps were calculated by subtracting the percent of students scoring proficient in the lower-performing sub-group from the percent of students scoring proficient in the higher-performing sub-group to get the percentage point difference between the proficiency of the two sub-groups.

If the achievement gap narrowed between two sub-groups, the line will slope downward. If the achievement gap increased between two sub-groups, the line will slope upward.

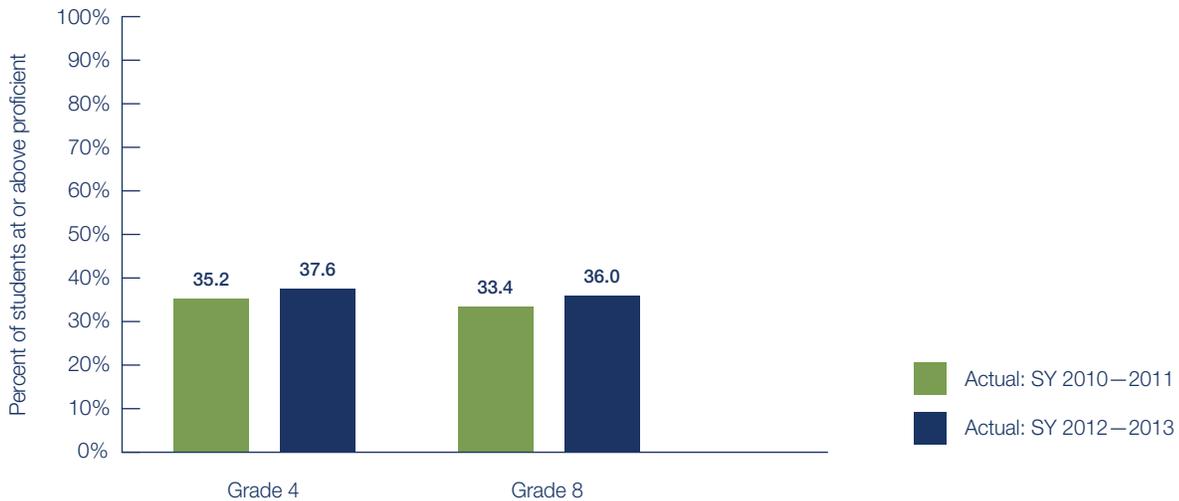
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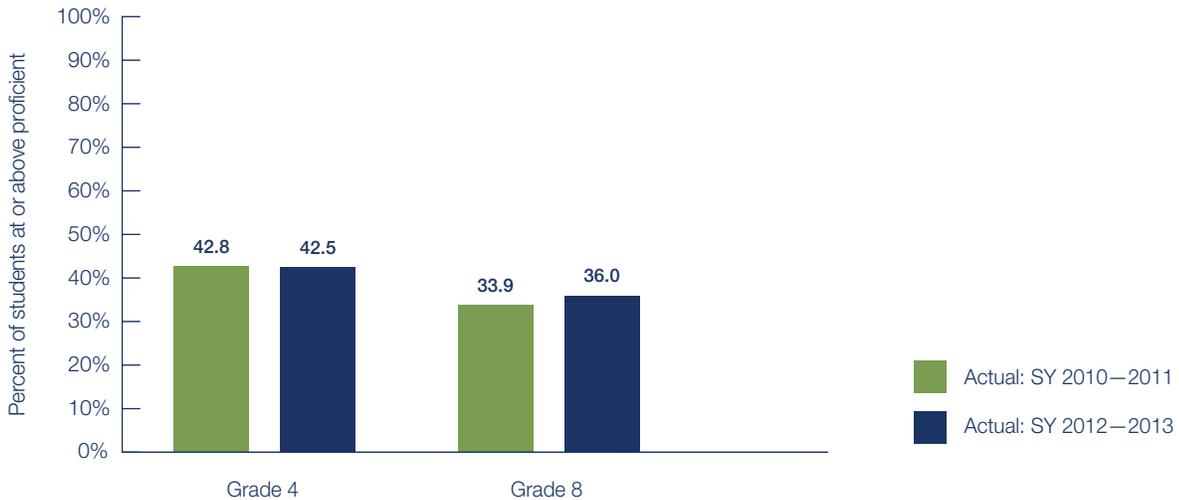
# State Success Factors

The percentage of Rhode Island's grade four students who were at or above proficient in reading and mathematics in 2013 was not significantly different than in 2011. The percentage of grade eight students who were at or above proficient in reading and mathematics in 2013 was not significantly different than in 2011.

## Student proficiency, NAEP reading



## Student proficiency, NAEP mathematics



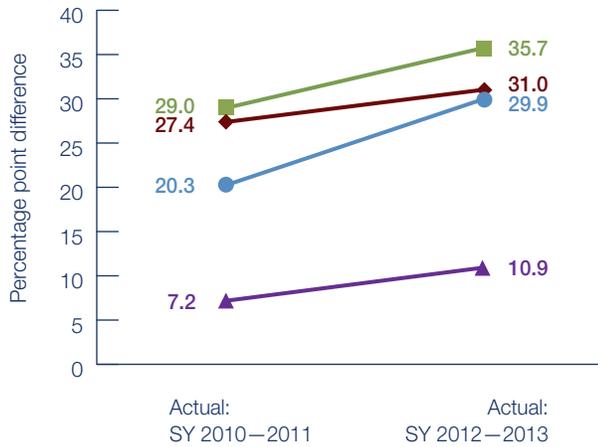
NAEP is administered once every two years. The two most recent years are SY 2010-2011 and SY 2012-2013. NAEP reading and mathematics results are provided by the Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences. To learn more about the NAEP data, please visit <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>.

Rhode Island's approved Race to the Top plan included targets for NAEP results based on percentages, not based on students' average scale scores.

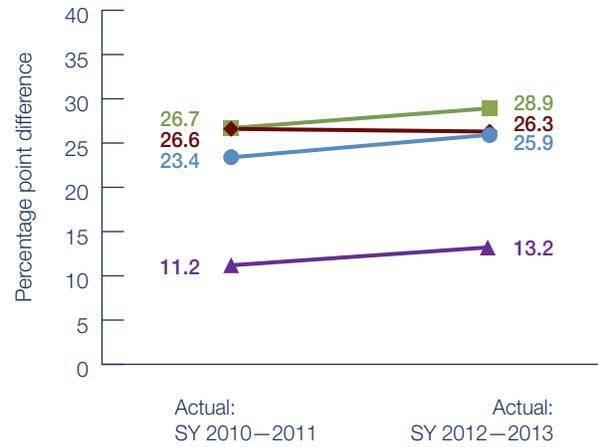
# State Success Factors

For grade four, the achievement gap between white and Hispanic students decreased slightly on the NAEP mathematics assessment from SY 2011-2012 to SY 2012-2013. All achievement gaps increased for grade four students on the NAEP reading assessment. For grade 8, the achievement gap between children that were not eligible for the national school lunch program and students that were eligible for the national school lunch program on NAEP mathematics increased slightly between SY 2011-2012 and SY 2012-2013. Other achievement gaps among grade eight students on both NAEP assessments remained about the same.

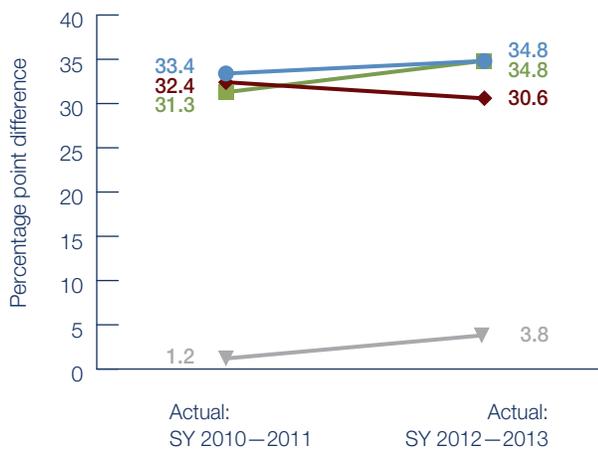
Grade 4 achievement gap on NAEP reading



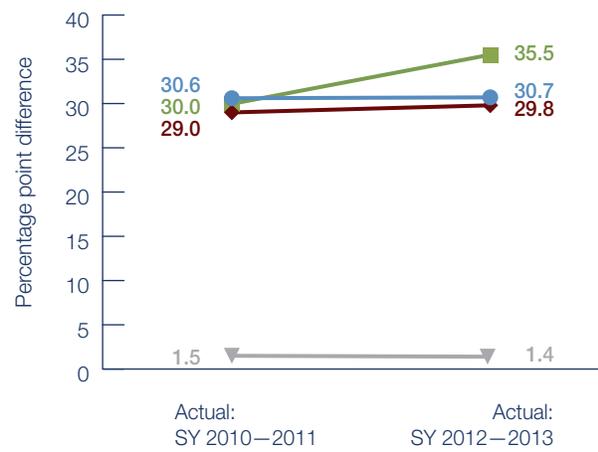
Grade 8 achievement gap on NAEP reading



Grade 4 achievement gap on NAEP mathematics



Grade 8 achievement gap on NAEP mathematics



- White/Black Gap
- ▲ Female/Male Gap
- Not National School Lunch Program Eligible/National School Lunch Program Eligible
- ◆ White/Hispanic Gap
- ▼ Male/Female Gap

NAEP is administered once every two years. The two most recent years are SY 2010-2011 and SY 2012-2013. Rhode Island's NAEP reading and mathematics results are provided by the Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences. To learn more about the NAEP data, please visit <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>.

Numbers in the graph represent the gap in a school year between two sub-groups on the NAEP reading and NAEP mathematics.

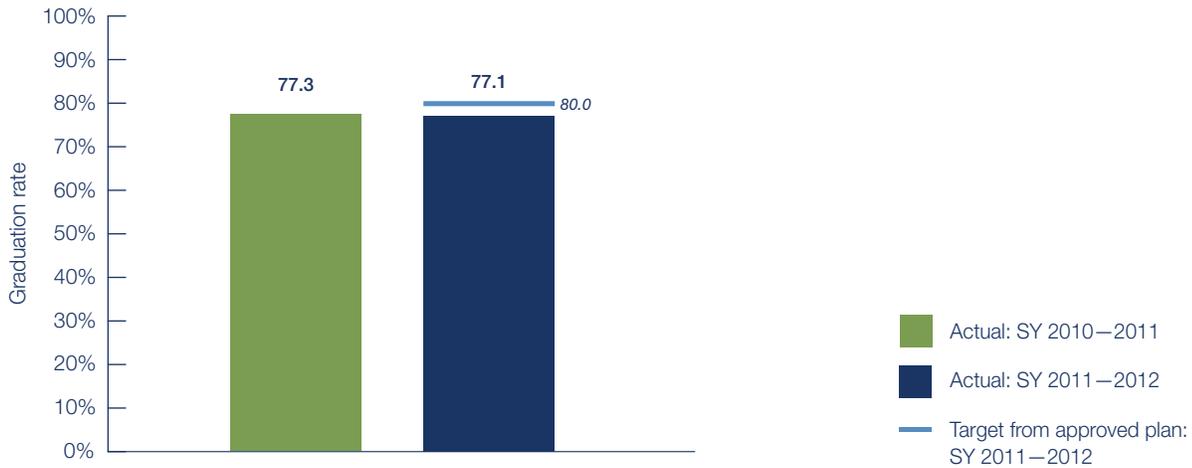
Achievement gaps were calculated by subtracting the percent of students scoring proficient in the lower-performing sub-group from the percent of students scoring proficient in the higher-performing sub-group to get the percentage point difference between the proficiency of the two sub-groups.

If the achievement gap narrowed between two sub-groups, the line will slope downward. If the achievement gap increased between two sub-groups, the line will slope upward.

# State Success Factors

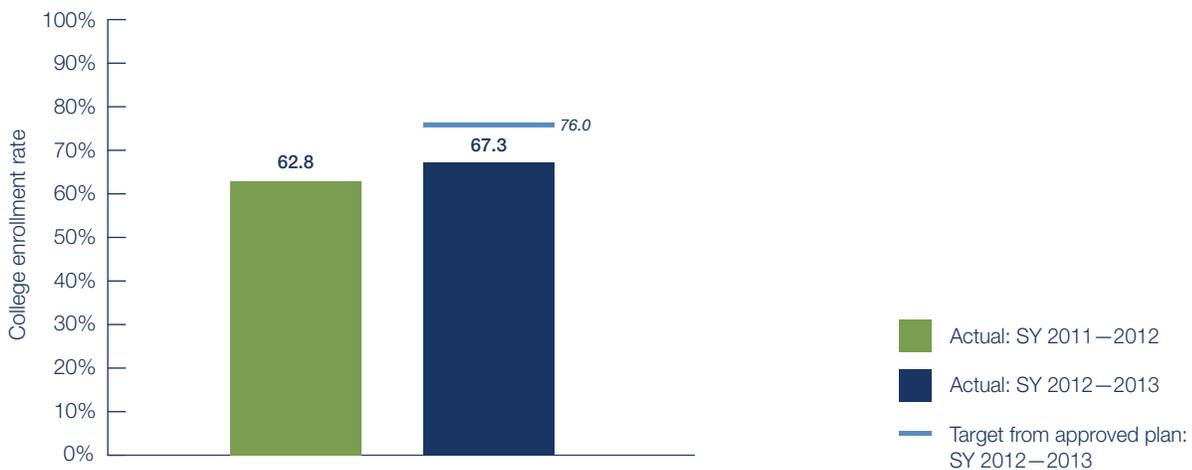
In SY 2012-2013 the college enrollment rate increased. The State's high school graduation rate remained about the same as compared to SY 2011-2012.

## High school graduation rate



Preliminary SY 2011-2012 data reported as of: August 13, 2013.  
For State-reported context, please refer to the Race to the Top APR at [www.rtt-apr.us](http://www.rtt-apr.us).

## College enrollment rate



Preliminary SY 2012-2013 data reported as of: November 12, 2013.  
For State-reported context, please refer to the Race to the Top APR at [www.rtt-apr.us](http://www.rtt-apr.us).  
The Department provided guidance to States regarding the reporting period for college enrollment. For SY 2012-2013 data, States report on the students who graduated from high school in SY 2010-2011 and enrolled in an institution of higher education (IHE).

# Standards and Assessments

Implementing rigorous college- and career-ready standards and assessments that prepare students for success in college and career is an integral aspect of education reform in all Race to the Top States.

## Supporting the transition to college- and career-ready standards and high-quality assessments

In July 2010, the Rhode Island Board of Regents adopted the CCSS, and committed to fully implementing the CCSS statewide in SY 2013-2014. Rhode Island joined the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) as a governing member in 2010 and will adopt PARCC's assessments in SY 2014-2015.

### Standards

In Year 3, RIDE continued to assist LEAs with the standards transition through vendor-guided LEA development of model curricula and CCSS-aligned materials such as units and lesson plans. With the vendor, LEA teams met regularly to complete ELA, mathematics and science model curricula. Each curriculum was vetted by a team of teachers and the expert vendor before being posted to the State's IMS to be shared with all other teachers in the districts that created it. As of September 2013, approximately 500 teachers representing 27 LEAs have been involved in the State's CCSS curriculum development and two ELA and five mathematics K-12 curricula have been posted to the IMS. The State reports that LEAs have greatly benefitted from doing the intensive curriculum alignment work collaboratively with educators in other LEAs in their region because it is, in many cases, resulting in the LEA's first reliable, viable curriculum.

The leadership component of the State's transition support, which includes training for building leaders to evaluate standards-aligned lesson plans and conduct classroom walkthroughs, was not widely accessed during Year 3 because principals did not want teachers to confuse standards transition-related classroom visits with observations for evaluation purposes. The State also offered a vendor-guided process to develop high-quality lessons and create communities of practice around collaborative lesson planning. However, the State reports that these sessions focus on process and do not produce the lesson plans or professional learning communities that LEAs seek.

### Assessments

In Year 3, the State successfully released three CCSS-aligned fixed-form interim assessments for each K-12 grade in both ELA and mathematics. When the vendor's initial set of items did not meet RIDE's standards for alignment to CCSS and for quality, RIDE worked closely with the vendor to revise items to ensure LEAs had access to a high-quality assessment. During SY 2012-2013, students

from 17 LEAs and over 60 schools took over 30,000 fixed-form interim assessments over the course of the three testing windows. Through winter 2012 the State developed and vetted items for the test-construction tool, another source for CCSS-aligned interim assessment items for educators to generate tests. The test-construction tool was planned for statewide release in January 2013, however, the State delayed release to November 2013 due to technical challenges with the ad hoc scoring and reporting tools, which is the only way to provide reporting and results to educators and students. In effect, this component of the assessment options was not available in SY 2012-2013. The State also released virtual formative assessment course modules aimed at increasing educators' knowledge of formative assessment best practices and providing an opportunity for collaborative time with a trained facilitator. During SY 2012-2013 about 1,000 educators from 16 LEAs participated in the course.

Though some LEAs indicated in their CLO stocktaking meetings prior to the start of SY 2012-2013 that they would implement one of the interim assessment options, the formative assessment professional development modules, or both most decided to limit or delay implementation until the system was more stable. In particular, most LEAs struggled to correctly upload the required teacher-student-course connection data that serves as the basic data infrastructure for using the fixed-form interim assessments and formative assessment professional development modules (see below in *Data Systems to Support Instruction*). Even LEAs that successfully completed the teacher-student-course connection data upload experienced technical difficulties with the systems due to vendor challenges with fixing system issues. As a result, many LEAs did not implement these tools or resources, or scaled plans back to a grade- or subject-level pilot rather than LEA-wide implementation. For example, while 33 LEAs indicated a plan for teachers to engage with the formative assessment modules in SY 2012-2013, just 16 LEAs accessed the course. To facilitate a better user experience, RIDE shifted the formative assessment modules to a more stable platform during summer 2013 in anticipation of 29 LEAs accessing the course in SY 2013-2014.

The State continued to keep LEA and school-level leadership informed of developments, timelines and progress updates through weekly field memos, updates on the RIDE website, and quarterly Comprehensive Assessment System newsletters. RIDE's Division of Educator Excellence and Instructional Effectiveness uses quarterly meetings with LEA-level curriculum directors to provide more in-depth technical assistance on the various Race to the Top initiatives. As assessment and module content goes live within data platforms, RIDE tracks Help Desk tickets to identify problems and generate solutions with vendors.

# Standards and Assessments

## Supporting educators in implementing common standards

In Year 3, RIDE focused its supports on professional development and continued work on curriculum development. Race to the Top funding has supported the standards transition in Rhode Island by releasing teachers to develop curriculum and units of study during designated time with experts. To support localized efforts, RIDE awarded mini-grants to consortia of LEAs to support curriculum development. In addition, the State awarded nine grants for professional learning communities during SY 2012-2013 and SY 2013-2014 to plan and implement the standards transition in those LEAs. During Year 3, the State offered supplemental trainings to prompt further LEA-level professional development for CCSS implementation. These State-provided trainings covered topics such as academic vocabulary, text complexity, writing argument, and text dependent questions. The State acknowledges that successful transition requires ongoing and continuous planning and training at the LEA level. During SY 2012-2013, educators reported that they grappled with challenges such as designating time for teacher collaboration, and finding appropriate instructional materials and assessments.

## Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

During Year 3, the State met most of its Race to the Top commitments related to standards and assessments and shifted implementation

responsibility to LEAs. The State's educator-led and vendor-guided curriculum development work produced 10 model curricula in ELA, mathematics and science that are now available statewide. Professional development sessions and locally-led professional learning communities funded by mini-grants prompted deeper understanding of how to apply the standards in the classroom. The State also successfully deployed fixed-form interim assessments for educator use and formative assessment professional development modules to enhance educators' classroom practice. However, though fixed-form interim assessments and formative assessment modules are ready for LEA use, system difficulties have limited the scope of use among LEAs. In addition, the State was delayed in releasing the test construction tool due to vendor challenges.

In SY 2012-2013, LEAs experienced technical problems with data systems to access interim assessments and the curriculum and assessment tools in the Instructional Management System. Educators were not able to take full advantage of the assessment options, and LEAs continued to face challenges related to instructional resources and purposeful collaborative time. While the State has learned a great deal about LEA capacity to implement, challenges remain with implementing the standards, such as access to and time for training to make the pedagogical shifts and access to aligned instructional materials. The new standards represent a significant shift in teaching and learning expectations in Rhode Island and will require continued State support to ensure readiness prior to the first administration of the PARCC assessment.

# Data Systems to Support Instruction

Statewide longitudinal data systems (SLDS) and instructional improvement systems (IIS) enhance the ability of States to effectively manage, use, and analyze education data to support instruction. Race to the Top States are working to ensure that their data systems are accessible to key stakeholders and that the data support educators and decision-makers in their efforts to improve instruction and increase student achievement.

## Accessing and using State data

Rhode Island deployed the IMS to LEAs at the start of SY 2012-2013. The IMS acts as a single platform for educators to access student data, CCSS curriculum guides and units of study, interim assessments, and formative assessment professional development modules, and the Exceed response to intervention (Exceed RtI) system. During SY 2012-2013, the State reported that 62 percent of educators accessed and used the IMS. The State also launched the Educator Performance and Support System (EPSS) as the technology base for the educator evaluation system, and it released parts of eCert!, the State's web-based

educator certification system. RIDE uses a comprehensive data systems "Help Desk" as a centralized location for LEA technology assistance requests and issue management. According to the State, each data system complies with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Releasing multiple data systems for LEA use posed significant challenges for RIDE and participating LEAs throughout Year 3. Initially, the State and LEAs underestimated the time and technical expertise required to submit accurate teacher-course-student connection data. This data serves as the foundation for all of the

# Data Systems to Support Instruction

IMS' functionalities. As a result, for example, teachers could not access the formative assessment modules unless their LEA had correctly uploaded the data into the IMS. However, even educators who could properly access the IMS were challenged by limited IMS functionality and what LEAs reported as a non-user-friendly interface. LEAs and the State were further challenged by the vendor's failure to regularly upload and maintain LEA data. The State reports that this issue was remedied by August 2013. As a result of these challenges, most LEAs scaled back their implementation plans during SY 2012-2013. As described above, in summer 2013 the State migrated the formative assessment modules to a more stable system to support access in SY 2013-2014.

In May 2013, the State's IMS vendor notified the State that it would no longer carry the instructional application of the IMS, which affects access to LEA-developed curriculum materials and both the fixed-form and test-construction tool interim assessment options and the formative assessment professional development modules (see *Standards and Assessments* for detail). The loss of future product support for this component from the vendor puts some of the State's Race to the Top supports for teachers and students at risk. The State received individualized technical assistance from the RSN to identify alternative strategies that are cost effective and can be implemented in the next two years. The State may consider submitting a no-cost extension amendment request to allow for this time. Both forms of interim assessment will continue to be available through the IMS in SY 2013-2014.

Delays in the State's effort to develop an early warning indicator tool, an EWS, conduct training and deploy a technology system to track interventions led to a modified approach in Year 3 that included a pilot to inform the State's implementation of this project. Rather than train educators during summer 2012 and deploy the system in fall 2012 through the IMS, the State elected to delay the release to allow time for full user testing prior to LEA use. During fall 2012, RIDE continued to refine the metrics and algorithms for the EWS screener, which LEA- and building-level leadership can use to identify students at risk of failure or dropping out of school. The EWS indicators were deployed through the Exceed RtI portion of the IMS in March 2013, which allowed a group of pilot LEAs to track interventions and effectiveness of interventions. During summer 2013, the State moved the screener from the IMS platform to a RIDE-managed system, RIDEmap, due to functionality challenges. Beginning in August 2013, the State articulated a plan to support LEA access to the indicators in two ways in SY 2013-2014: (1) by making the early warning indicators available for integration into existing LEA student information systems; and (2) by providing a RIDE-developed tool with a static dashboard accessible through RIDEmap.

The State released the EPSS in September 2012 for LEA use during SY 2012-2013. The EPSS supports implementation of the educator and building administrator evaluation systems and has the capability to store and display data for all components of each evaluation system in use in the State; schedule observations; store evaluators' notes and ratings; and keep a record of SLO development and finalization.

While the State released the EPSS in time for SY 2012-2013, it was unable to test the system and school-level users encountered technical problems that hampered full use of the system. As a result, LEAs varied significantly in their use of the system during the school year; however, all LEAs used the EPSS to report evaluation rating data to RIDE.

RIDE continued to redesign its certification data systems to reflect the certification regulation changes that the Board of Regents passed in November 2011. RIDE worked to shift the certification process to a completely web-based system and in January 2013, the educator certification application and processing system became operational. The personnel data collection (PDC) function opened for LEAs to submit staffing data and another function allows educator preparation programs to upload data about program completers. In summer 2013, RIDE launched the educator portal within eCert!, called "My eCert," which allows educators to access their certificates online.

Within RIDE, the Data Governance Board oversees data collection activities for Race to the Top and other data systems. The Data Governance Board is composed of program office representatives and technical staff. With many of the State's planned data systems live for LEAs, the State primarily managed problems through a statewide Help Desk. LEAs faced barriers to accessing the new technology systems for various reasons including software updates, aging computers and internet bandwidth.

## Using data to improve instruction

During SY 2012-2013, the State, with vendor support, completed a 10-day professional development series on data-use with 31 LEAs and 134 schools. In its first year of implementation the State reported reaching 60 percent of schools with this training, exceeding their SY 2012-2013 target of 50 percent. The year-long training cycle pairs a State-selected data coach with a school and engages each school's school data leadership team (SDLT) through a combination of professional development modules, onsite coaching and action planning. The goal is for each SDLT to have the capacity and skill-set to collaboratively analyze student data and use that data to inform educational decisions to improve outcomes. Data coaches provide three days of tailored onsite coaching, depending on the school's needs and action plans. RIDE worked closely with the vendor to ensure that other State initiatives, like SLOs and other growth data, were incorporated into the trainings.

Before and after each day of the training cycle, RIDE solicited feedback from participating schools and members of SDLTs through surveys to determine changes to upcoming modules or coaching sessions. RIDE developed a rubric to assist data coaches in assessing each school's progress in using data ranging from Basic to Independent. The State has experienced some turnover among the data coaches but is able to ensure each school has a coach at all times throughout the training cycle. Based on the success of the project in SY 2012-2013, the State started the data-use professional development cycle with 156 schools in July 2013.

# Data Systems to Support Instruction

## Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

In Year 3, the State successfully completed a 10-day training cycle with 134 schools in data use. LEAs reported high rates of satisfaction with the program's content and ability to meet professional learning needs, and credited the course with building a common data-related vocabulary among LEA leadership. In addition, the State's cadre of data coaches provided valuable information about the status of data use in the State. The State thoughtfully solicited feedback on ways to improve the program in advance of more schools engaging with it in SY 2013-2014.

Though the State released many key data systems for LEA use in Year 3, LEAs experienced difficulties in fully leveraging the capabilities of the systems. The technical challenges decreased LEA buy-in statewide and resulted in scaled back implementation of assessment work and some professional development. Due to vendor issues, the State was unable to mitigate the risks or create interim solutions for the interim assessments and curriculum and assessment platform. In response, the State shifted the formative assessment professional development modules and EWS to alternate platforms. The State learned that training for new systems is most effective when done with the active system and that pre-launch testing is critical to success, lessons the State is applying when making mid-course corrections in these projects.

## Great Teachers and Leaders

Race to the Top States are developing comprehensive systems of educator effectiveness by supporting high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals, ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals, improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs, and providing effective supports to all educators. As part of these efforts, Race to the Top States are designing and implementing rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation systems for teachers and principals; conducting annual evaluations that include timely and constructive feedback; and using evaluation information to inform professional development, compensation, promotion, retention, and tenure decisions.

## Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals

In Year 3, Rhode Island continued to support two alternative certification programs, the Rhode Island Teaching Fellows (operated by The New Teacher Project) and Teach for America. During SY 2012-2013, 18 Rhode Island Teaching Fellows, and 27 Teach for America corps members, were placed in traditional and charter LEAs across all core subject areas, as well as special education. These placement figures were slightly less than the State's goal of 30 new teachers from each program. The State continues to face challenges in placing teachers with alternative certifications because of low attrition and local economic challenges. In addition, recruitment and placement timelines differ significantly between the providers and LEAs. LEAs often seek teachers from alternative certification providers after the school year has started while the providers seek to place teachers in advance of the school year.

Feedback from principals and LEA administrators indicate satisfaction with the quality of alternative certification candidates. In the State's urban districts, teachers with alternative certification are critical in

filling needs in mathematics, science and special education. The State continues to work with both providers and LEA administrators to understand staffing needs. However, it is unclear whether the State and LEAs can support these programs beyond the grant period. The State reports that funding limitations may result in support for just one alternative certification provider once the Race to the Top grant period ends.

The State's alternative certification program for principals developed through Race to the Top, called the Turnaround Leaders Program, received conditional State approval in April 2013 under the Rhode Island Program Approval standards, making it an official alternative certification route for building-level leaders. SY 2012-2013 marked the first full year of the program's implementation, with four candidates. All SY 2012-2013 candidates were placed in building-level leadership positions for SY 2013-2014 in Focus and Priority Schools, per the State's approved ESEA flexibility request. The State successfully recruited a cohort of eight candidates to enter the program in SY 2013-2014. (See *Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools*, below, for more information).

# Great Teachers and Leaders

Finally, educator evaluation ratings from SY 2012-2013 serve as the first rating to be used to inform certification status under new regulations passed in November 2011. Under the new regulations, license renewal is dependent on performance under an approved local evaluation system. Educators with multiple ineffective ratings over a defined period will be unable to renew their licenses. Most educators in the State do not have access to locally developed teacher leadership pathways, but one LEA began the planning process in SY 2012-2013 for a SY 2013-2014 teacher-leader pathway pilot program (see Performance-based compensation, below, for more information).

## Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance

In Year 3 of the State's Race to the Top grant, all Rhode Island LEAs implemented educator and building administrator evaluation systems. There are four evaluation systems in use in the State that meet the Rhode Island Educator Evaluation System Standards: 35 LEAs and 15 public charter schools use the Rhode Island model evaluation system (RI model); six LEAs use the Innovation model; one LEA uses the Coventry model; and, one charter LEA uses the Learning Community Teacher Evaluation System. While some components vary among the systems, all LEAs use a growth measure based on SLOs. For teachers of tested grades and subjects, SLOs and summative assessment growth will eventually make up the growth component; for teachers of non-tested grades and subjects, SLOs are the growth component. It was the Department's understanding that final effectiveness ratings for SY 2012-2013 would combine all components of the system, including sub-component ratings from professional practice and professional foundations, and SLOs and/or summative assessment growth. During Year 3, the State shared additional information that final SY 2012-2013 effectiveness ratings for teachers of tested grades and subjects did not include student growth on summative assessments; for teachers of non-tested grades and subjects the final rating included all planned components. The State plans to submit an amendment to the Department regarding the State's approach to full implementation.

## Statewide implementation

SY 2012-2013 marked the first full school year in which all LEAs in the State implemented all components of educator evaluation systems. All principals conducted observations according to the State's professional practice rubric; educators submitted artifacts to support evaluation under the State's professional foundations rubric; and all educators developed two to four SLOs. Teachers and leaders held beginning of the year, mid-year and end-of-year conferences to discuss progress, adjusted SLOs if necessary and provided feedback. The State provided superintendents and principals with State assessment student outcome growth data linked to teachers in fall 2013 to inform SLO development as part of evaluation system implementation in SY 2013-2014. The State believes this will encourage a conversation at

the building level about the connection between student performance and instructional practice, and that it will provide an opportunity for leaders to adjust professional development and other supports.

During SY 2012-2013, the State took a similar approach to training and supports for the first full school year of the building administrator evaluation system. Administered by superintendents with the building administrators in their respective LEAs, the evaluation system includes professional practice, professional foundations and student learning components resulting in effectiveness ratings of Highly Effective, Effective, Developing or Ineffective. The process follows a cycle similar to the educator evaluation system with beginning-, mid- and end-of-year conferences.

The State obtained feedback on implementation throughout SY 2012-2013 in a variety of ways. Between February and August 2013, the State conducted two statewide surveys focused on educator evaluation systems. Survey findings indicated an increased comfort among building administrators in providing actionable feedback to educators, as well as a belief that they were more calibrated and accurate in their assignment of ratings. The survey results also showed a desire among educators for increased professional development on the use of data and assessment literacy. RIDE shared survey findings with superintendents in regional meetings in fall 2012. These meetings provided the State with feedback on potential revisions to the system and areas of emphasis for training and continuous improvement, which informed changes to LEA support in SY 2013-2014. At the level of local implementation, the State gained important feedback from their 19 evaluation ISPs, who are assigned to two to four LEAs to support implementation efforts. Evaluation ISPs report to RIDE on common trends in successes and challenges and inform RIDE's differentiated supports to LEAs. Finally, as the system is implemented statewide, the State relies on its Technical Advisory Committee to provide guidance and input on the system at critical junctures. In addition, in response to feedback that the systems do not currently capture the unique challenges of special educators, the State convened a special educator working group in January 2013 to frame recommendations for changes.

RIDE approved several important changes to the RI model in anticipation of the second year of statewide implementation. First, the Differentiated Evaluation Process for Teachers allows for flexibility at the local level to adjust the number of classroom observations and evaluations for some teachers. Second, the State decided to further streamline the SLO process in the EPSS for ease of use and finalization. These changes were informed by surveys, focus groups, RIDE staff shadowing principals, and superintendent regional meetings.

In September 2013, RIDE publicly released a report reflecting on statewide implementation of its educator evaluation systems in SY 2012-2013.<sup>12</sup> Statewide, 0.5 percent of teachers received Ineffective ratings; 3.7 percent received Developing ratings;

<sup>12</sup> RIDE's September 2013 evaluation systems report is available at [http://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Teachers-and-Administrators-Excellent-Educators/Educator-Evaluation/Education-Eval-Main-Page/2013\\_Evaluation\\_Data\\_External\\_Report.pdf](http://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Teachers-and-Administrators-Excellent-Educators/Educator-Evaluation/Education-Eval-Main-Page/2013_Evaluation_Data_External_Report.pdf).

# Great Teachers and Leaders

47.6 percent received Effective ratings, and, 47.2 percent of educators were Highly Effective.<sup>13</sup> Using this and survey data, RIDE was able to identify key areas for improvement. Most importantly, RIDE identified a disconnect between building administrator and educator perceptions about whether the evaluation system provided useful feedback. Survey data indicated that 84 percent of building administrators believed that they provided teachers with more specific feedback during the process, but just 51.8 percent of teachers felt the same way. RIDE identified another disconnect between SLO performance and growth on the State's assessment indicating a need for additional attention and supports on professional development, assessment literacy, and instructional supports.

During SY 2012-2013, the State also embarked on the process of developing an evaluation system for support professionals with non-classroom based roles, such as counselors, nurses, and speech pathologists, among other positions. The State convened a working group throughout the school year to develop Student Outcome Objectives (SOO). For support professionals the SOO is a long-term goal that is focused on increasing students' *access* to learning as opposed to student learning as measured by an assessment. The State conducted a 25-person pilot in spring 2013 and plans to gradually implement a support professional evaluation system in SY 2013-2014 with full implementation in SY 2014-2015. While not specifically outlined in the State's current Scope of Work, the system represents an important outgrowth of the State's Race to the Top evaluation systems work.

In April 2013, the State participated in a convening of Race to the Top States to discuss efforts to promote evaluation rating accuracy. The State analyzed evaluation rating results from SY 2011-2012, reviewed options for improving rating accuracy, discussed communication strategies to engage teachers and developed action plans based on feedback from colleagues in other Race to the Top States.

## Evaluation supports for LEAs

During SY 2012-2013, RIDE continued to support LEA-level implementation of evaluation systems by matching evaluation ISPs with each RI model LEA. LEAs implementing the Innovation model and the Coventry model did not receive support from evaluation ISPs but supported implementation with local funds based on local needs. Evaluation ISPs were critical in creating processes and feedback loops to ensure that principals conducted all required observations and educator meetings on time.

Especially in SY 2012-2013, locally directed District Evaluation Committees (DECs) served an important role in overseeing and ensuring appropriate implementation of educator evaluation systems. DECs are critical in forming local policies to drive the integrity of implementation; for example, they provided guidance on setting SLO mastery targets. DECs are intended to ensure that issues that arise locally can be handled locally.

## State training and dissemination of resources

RIDE leveraged extensive training in summer 2012 and early fall 2012 to promote fidelity of implementation during SY 2012-2013. In preparation for the school year, the State conducted 31 summer academies reaching over 600 personnel responsible for evaluating educators. Evaluation ISPs facilitated the sessions based upon a five-day training they received from the State. Each four-day summer academy covered each aspect of the RI model: professional practice, professional foundations, support and development, the EPSS, formative coaching, SLOs and calculating final effectiveness ratings. LEAs using other evaluation systems attended one-day trainings on SLOs, which is a common component and process across the state. RIDE adjusted the summer academy training based on pre- and post-session survey data and included more time on SLOs. Finally, all persons conducting the building administrator evaluations completed two additional days of training.

Throughout SY 2012-2013, building leaders had access to guidance documents and additional training. The RI Model Teacher Evaluation System Edition II Guidebook and an addendum together set the expectations, requirements and timelines of the RI model. SLO guidance documents, evaluation system rubrics and forms, and in-person and online training content are available on the RIDE website for all LEAs. To augment the summer trainings, each evaluator had to complete Framework for Teaching Proficiency System (FFTPS) training and a final assessment by June 2013. RIDE also provided training opportunities for all educators, called the Framework for Teaching Effectiveness System (FFTES) training, which increases understanding of the evaluation system's components and encourages self-reflection on instruction. While many teachers did not take advantage of this offering on an individual basis, many principals incorporated it into their locally provided professional development.

## Compensation reform

The State made awards to two LEAs to pursue plans for compensation reform during SY 2012-2013 in preparation for pilot programs during SY 2013-2014. One grantee, Providence Public Schools, chose to focus its pilot on principal compensation. LEA-level leaders developed a School Assignment Index to generate a base salary for each type of principal assignment and created a process for additional compensation based on evaluation ratings and leadership within the LEA. In June 2013, the Providence School Board approved the process and will implement it beginning in August 2013. The second grantee, Barrington Public Schools spent SY 2012-2013 preparing a teacher-leader pathway pilot, called the Lead, Educate, And Promote the Profession (LEAPP) Program, designed to reward exemplary teaching. In August 2013, the LEA team reviewed applications from 25 teachers to select the first cohort of Barrington Teacher Leaders to transition into teacher-leader roles beginning in September 2013.

<sup>13</sup> In SY 2012-2013 this rating distribution reflected ratings that did not include student growth on the State assessment (for teachers of tested grades and subjects).

# Great Teachers and Leaders

## LEA pilots for principal and teacher compensation reform

The Providence Public Schools' principal compensation pilot represents a significant shift away from the LEA's prior system that did not reward principals even for length of service. The School Assignment Index is based on size of the student body, academic challenge, and student population characteristics. Once determined, the Index acts as a multiplier to determine the principal's compensation. In addition, principals can receive additional compensation based on their evaluation or other leadership activities.

Barrington Public Schools' teacher-leader pathway pilot, the Lead, Educate, And Promote the Profession (LEAPP) Program, aimed to create a selection process for exemplary teachers to develop their skills and knowledge to eventually serve in leadership positions at the building level. LEA administrators are working with a contractor to develop the training content. In SY 2013-2014, 21 teacher candidates and 13 teachers in existing leadership positions will complete the program.

## Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs

In Year 3, the State built upon previous data systems work to move towards the development of educator preparation reports, but on a delayed timeline. In February 2013, the State procured vendor support to develop the reports and to advise on revisions to the State's preparation program approval standards. The State is delayed in this work due to challenges in identifying an appropriate vendor. Under the State's new timeline, the Educator Preparation Partnership will develop a preliminary report during SY 2013-2014 and release the first report in September 2014. Data quality concerns have shifted the State's approach. They will develop a preliminary report using SY 2012-2013 effectiveness data and use it for discussion within the Educator Preparation Partnership. The State held a retreat in July 2013 and another meeting in August 2013 to review draft program approval standards. The new standards were approved in November 2013. RIDE reports the following goals for revising the standards: (1) preserve flexibility to cover all types of the full diversity of Rhode Island's educator preparation programs; (2) reduce redundancy and increase the focus on outcomes; (3) align educator preparation to other key aspects in a system of educator quality; and (4) support continuous improvement of preparation programs.

## Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals

During Year 3, the State's equity work focused on expanding educator recruitment. With vendor support, the State released a statewide recruitment platform that was widely used by LEAs in SY 2012-2013 to post and recruit candidates for SY 2013-2014 positions. The vendor's marketing campaign broadened recruitment beyond Rhode Island to New York, Boston, Baltimore and Washington D.C.

Using the State's effectiveness data from SY 2011-2012 gradual implementation, RIDE conducted analyses to learn more about the distribution of effectiveness ratings among LEAs that serve high-minority and high-poverty populations as compared to LEAs serving low-minority and low-poverty populations. During Year 3, the State shared draft policy guidance with superintendents as a foundation for making effectiveness data actionable for building administrators and LEA administrators. LEAs can tailor the draft guidance to local circumstances and policies. Following evaluation system implementation in SY 2012-2013, the State collected and analyzed rating distribution across the State. Statewide, 92.5 percent of teachers in schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both were evaluated as Effective or Highly Effective; 96.2 percent of teachers in schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both were evaluated as Effective or Highly Effective.<sup>14</sup>

## Providing effective support to teachers and principals

In its second full year of implementation, the State's induction program enjoyed broad support from principals, beginning teachers and union leaders for its focus on formative coaching and job-embedded supports. The State matched 27 induction coaches with 412 first year teachers and 41 second year teachers for weekly support. Both beginning teachers and their coaches attended instruction- and coaching-specific professional development throughout the year. End-of-year feedback indicated that beginning teachers felt the program had the most impact on classroom management, differentiating instruction, developing teaching strategies, analyzing student work and lesson planning. Throughout the school year, RIDE provided opportunities, such as biweekly forums and quarterly academies, for coaches to increase their skills and share best practices with other coaches. RIDE continued to use the Collaborative Assessment Log to track coach-teacher interactions and ensure all beginning teachers were getting the appropriate amount of support. The State has begun conversations with higher education partners and LEA leaders to determine the best way to maintain the rigor of supports and training and fund induction coaches locally.

SY 2012-2013 marked the first full operational year for RIDE's Academy of Transformative Leadership. With vendor support, the State developed virtual and in-person professional development modules geared towards use in low-performing schools. The State and vendor adjusted implementation so as not to repeat training content

<sup>14</sup> In SY 2012-2013 this rating data reflected evaluation ratings that did not include student growth on the State assessment (for teachers of tested grades and subjects).

## Great Teachers and Leaders

from other Race to the Top activities, and to ensure that LEA and school needs were being met. This resulted in a delay of services from August 2012 to February 2013. All virtual professional development modules were released by May 2013 and are available for use statewide.

Also, in the Academy for Transformative Leadership, four candidates completed the State's first year of the Turnaround Leaders Program. The State worked closely with the vendor to develop a program that combined job-embedded coaching, mentorship, professional development and multi-site residency opportunities. Using feedback from the first year of implementation, the State made adjustments to the recruitment and program in anticipation of the second cohort of leaders. The State will support eight candidates in the second cohort during SY 2013-2014.

### Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

The State's alternative certification programs continued to place teachers in traditional and charter schools and successfully recruited and placed larger cohorts for SY 2013-2014. The new Turnaround Leadership Program completed its first year and successfully recruited eight new candidates; the program also obtained status as an alternative provider for school leaders. In considering plans for sustainability the State will have to carefully consider local support and possible partnerships.

In Year 3, Rhode Island implemented all major components of its evaluation system statewide. The State provided LEAs with a variety of training opportunities, supports, resources and technology platforms to assist with implementation at the start and during the school year, effectively ensuring a consistent message and set of expectations. ISPs continued to provide support and LEAs pursued locally-developed oversight systems to ensure consistent implementation. Support for the system appears widespread, though challenges in the field remain. Survey feedback at the end of the year indicated that educators believed in the SLO process and that it will improve in future years. The State also has feedback from the field to inform efforts to support implementation in SY 2013-2014, including supports on data analysis and assessment development, and ensuring teachers receive feedback from principals during the process. The State now has one year of implementation data to inform human capital policies. As RIDE moves forward with including student growth, both SLOs and growth on the State assessment, the Department anticipates an amendment from the State to amend its approach.

The State made progress in developing and passing new program approval standards and in shoring up the technology requirements to connect preparation programs to the State's evaluation system. The new standards help frame a foundation for educator preparation reports that will publicly share effectiveness data of program completers, which in part rely on the integrity and quality of data coming from the evaluation systems.

## Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

Race to the Top States are supporting LEAs' implementation of far-reaching reforms to turn around lowest-achieving schools by implementing one of four school intervention models.

### Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools

During SY 2012-2013, seven schools implemented the second year of their intervention models and five schools began implementation. Of the seven schools in their second year of implementation, three are implementing the restart model and four are implementing the transformation model. Schools that began implementing in SY 2012-2013 all chose the transformation model. The State and LEAs with schools implementing intervention models continued to meet in biweekly tactical and strategic meetings. The State revised its existing monitoring process for identified schools, but delayed roll-out of the process and related reporting until the end of spring 2013. The revised monitoring process includes a student achievement dashboard with formative indicators of progress and a set of questions to obtain feedback on State supports. This process is being used with all of the State's Focus, Warning and Priority Schools under Rhode Island's approved ESEA flexibility request. Many of the supports described

below are available to schools identified as Focus, Warning and Priority Schools.

### Supporting leadership

In SY 2012-2013 the State was able to provide the full array of supports planned through Race to the Top, based on approved amended timelines. School teams that participated in the 2012 summer institute received training and coaching services onsite during SY 2012-2013. The State worked with the vendor to revise the SY 2012-2013 year-round professional development content based on feedback from the 2012 summer institute. In response to local desires, the vendor also provided leadership coaching for principals at the seven participating schools. The State supported a 2013 summer institute, which engaged 29 individuals from 7 schools that did not attend the 2012 institute. As in the 2012 summer institute, school

## Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

teams attending the 2013 institute planned for implementation of their school reform plans. In addition, the State continued to provide coaching supports for 2013 summer institute participants.

Consistent with the State's amended timelines, the State supported two types of positions at schools implementing intervention models in SY 2012-2013. The State provided sample job descriptions to facilitate the timely filling of positions. Educator Evaluation Implementation Specialists assisted school-level staff in various ways to ensure quality implementation of the educator evaluation system. The School Achievement Specialist position provided flexible, as-needed supports as these schools implemented their school reform plans.

In January 2013, Rhode Island presented a webinar for colleagues in other Race to the Top States titled, "Leading Indicators of Turnaround Success: School-Level Indicators," where it reviewed research on principles for selecting leading indicators and potential actions leaders can take in the first year that can enhance the likelihood of success. The State and representatives from Tennessee's Achievement School

District shared current practices for developing and using leading indicators with districts and schools.

### Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

During Year 3, the State successfully deployed supports and training for leadership teams in the State's lowest-achieving schools after significant delays in Years 1 and 2. There was some evidence, however, that the targeted schools experienced some "initiative fatigue" and may not have been able, or wanted, to fully leverage the array of opportunities. The State also delayed implementation of revised performance and progress monitoring processes in an effort to combine them with monitoring efforts for schools identified under the ESEA waiver. It is unclear what impact the biweekly tactical and strategy meetings have had on practice. Given the investment in coaching and training for leaders in schools implementing intervention models, it is particularly critical that the State consider the success of those efforts.

## Emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)

Race to the Top States are committed to providing a high-quality plan with a rigorous course of study in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). In doing so, each State must cooperate with STEM-capable community partners in order to prepare and assist teachers in integrating STEM content across grades and disciplines, in promoting effective and relevant instruction, and in offering applied learning opportunities for students. A focus on STEM furthers the goal of preparing more students for an advanced study in sciences, technology, engineering, and mathematics, including among underrepresented groups such as female students.

### State's STEM initiatives

After delays in Year 2, the State successfully rolled out a small-scale project-based learning (PBL) initiative in two Providence high schools. With vendor support, teachers in two subjects received planning and onsite coaching to implement PBL in the classroom. Based on mixed implementation in SY 2012-2013, the LEA decided to set aside common planning time for professional development and for teachers to develop PBL units in SY 2013-2014.

In May 2013, Rhode Island became the first State to adopt the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). A Strategic Leadership Team composed of 36 Rhode Island educators provided input on five drafts of the NGSS and facilitated statewide review of the two public drafts. Going forward, the Strategic Leadership Team will support curriculum development aligned to the NGSS. In conjunction with other

curriculum development work (see *Standards and Assessments* above), LEA teams developed complete K-12 mathematics and science model curricula and lesson plans and units. The science documents will be reframed to align with NGSS.

### Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

The State was able to overcome initial delays by rolling out the PBL initiative in two high schools. However, the low level of buy-in among classroom teachers and limited scope of implementation may impact the State's ability to use this effort as a proof point for others in the State interested in engaging with PBL. The State is poised to leverage other standards transition work to support implementation of the NGSS beginning in SY 2013-2014.

# Charter Schools and Other Initiatives

## Expanding charter schools

In November 2012, the Board of Education pre-approved the Village Green charter school to begin operations in fall 2013. Village Green is operated by a local charter school leader with a track record in the State and will be Rhode Island's first virtual, blended learning model high school. The State also provided support to new charter schools through a \$250,000 development grant to Achievement First, which opened its doors in August 2013 with two schools, each with a kindergarten class. The development grant will support part-time operational and instructional personnel during the school's first year. The State also awarded International Charter School a \$250,000 expansion grant for the system to expand from a K-5 program to a K-8 program in fall 2013. RIDE monitors all charter school sub-grantees through desk audits and onsite visits. In SY 2012-2013, the Paul Cuffee Charter School enrolled its first class of eleventh graders. The school allocated their expansion grant to computer, library, mathematics, science and arts materials, in addition to professional development and facilitation trainings for each new teacher.

## Multiple pathways innovations

With vendor support, the State made modifications to the Virtual Learning Math Modules (VLMM) based on feedback from the spring 2012 pilot. The VLMM are designed as an intervention strategy for high school students at-risk of failing or who are in need of

mathematics remediation. The State trained 31 educators in VLMM use in October 2012, with program modifications complete in November 2013. The modules can also be used for advanced middle school students, adult education programs and high school students in earlier grades. The State worked closely with the vendor to resolve technical issues and improve support to LEAs, but actual engagement with the modules remained low as of September 2013. The vendor offers tutoring and online support, but these resources have not been used. The State continues to work with LEAs to make VLMM available to students with a progress plan based on performance on the State's mathematics assessment. Some LEAs report that making time for the modules is challenging.

## Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

Rhode Island's Race to the Top efforts have successfully brought two new charter schools to the State and supported the expansion of existing charter schools. The addition and expansion of these schools marks a new period in Rhode Island charter schools but recruitment of national charter school organizations is limited. The State's VLMM work has proceeded on time but did not appear to have the intended impact in SY 2012-2013. Based on student achievement on the State's mathematics assessment and recent changes to graduation requirements, there is a clear opportunity for more students to be actively engaged with the modules.

## Looking Ahead to Year 4

In Year 4, the State will continue to work on projects that did not meet their intended levels of success in Year 3. While Year 3 marked the first year of largely LEA-level implementation, LEAs encountered barriers to success that may be fully or partially addressed in Year 4. However, the State has the leadership routines and project-level continuous improvement processes in place to ensure implementation occurs with quality, even given delays and challenges. In Year 4, participating LEAs will continue to engage in the CLO process to share progress and best practices with peers. Many LEA teams that attend CLO meetings have expressed a desire for a similar routine beyond the Race to the Top grant period. In Year 4 the State will begin to transition its Race to the Top work based on its sustainability plan to ensure the work becomes part of how the State supports LEAs in the future.

With the transition to PARCC assessment slated for spring 2015, the State's model curriculum and interim assessment work will be particularly important in Year 4. Though the State has surpassed its training goals, there will likely be ongoing training and planning needs among LEAs to ensure the practices, policies and materials are in place to prepare for the transition. It is unclear to what extent teachers will be able to leverage other resources in the IMS given the challenges with the system.

Rhode Island plans for many of the data systems created or enhanced through the Race to the Top plan to be improved and used more widely in Year 4. The State will continue thinking through alternative options for the IMS as it still has the potential to increase access to a viable curriculum and augment assessment options in the State. The State's eCert! system will be fully operational throughout SY 2013-2014 with an online certification process; an online personnel data collection portal; a portal for the public to access certification information; and, a data collection site for educator preparation providers to share data. The EWS will be available for teachers and school-level staff statewide to use to identify students at risk of academic failure and to track the success of interventions. Because the EWS is nearly a year delayed, it will be important for the State to track whether it was successful in applying lessons learned from the IMS roll-out. Finally, another cohort of schools will engage with the using-data professional development opportunity to increase meaningful use of data.

SY 2013-2014 will be the second year of implementation of educator evaluation systems. LEAs will continue to refine local implementation and support educators in developing and approving SLOs. School and LEA leaders will continue to use the EPSS to organize this work and

## Looking Ahead to Year 4

report component and final ratings. RIDE may shift its supports to LEAs by focusing on fidelity of implementation and appropriate use of evaluation data, such as professional development considerations, and teacher placement and hiring.

In addition, the State will continue to support alternative certification programs to prepare teachers and leaders to serve in high-poverty and high-need LEAs. The State plans to place more alternative certification teachers throughout the State, but recognizes that in the long-term these cohort sizes are not sustainable. The Turnaround Leaders Program will support its second cohort, composed of eight candidates, for ultimate placement as leaders in the State's

low-performing schools. Finally, the State will refine and deploy professional development modules and coaching for school teams in the State's lowest-performing schools. Based on implementation in SY 2012-2013, it will be critical that these offerings meet teams' needs to have the intended impact.

Four of the State's charter schools will implement their charter school expansion and development grants in accordance with their plans. Two of these schools will complete their first year as charter schools in the State. The State's work with virtual mathematics modules will attempt to reach more students in SY 2013-2014 to help them reach proficiency levels needed for graduation.

## Budget

For the State's expenditures through June 30, 2013, please see the APR Data Display at <http://www.rtt-apr.us>.

For State budget information see <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/state-scope-of-work/index.html>.

For the State's fiscal accountability and oversight report see <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/performance-fiscal-accountability.html>.

# Glossary

**Alternative routes to certification:** Pathways to certification that are authorized under the State's laws or regulations that allow the establishment and operation of teacher and administrator preparation programs in the State, and that have the following characteristics (in addition to standard features such as demonstration of subject-matter mastery, and high-quality instruction in pedagogy and in addressing the needs of all students in the classroom including English learners and students with disabilities): (1) can be provided by various types of qualified providers, including both institutions of higher education (IHEs) and other providers operating independently from institutions of higher education; (2) are selective in accepting candidates; (3) provide supervised, school-based experiences and ongoing support such as effective mentoring and coaching; (4) significantly limit the amount of coursework required or have options to test out of courses; and (5) upon completion, award the same level of certification that traditional preparation programs award upon completion.

**Amendment requests:** In the event that adjustments are needed to a State's approved Race to the Top plan, the grantee must submit an amendment request to the Department for consideration. Such requests may be prompted by an updated assessment of needs in that area, revised cost estimates, lessons learned from prior implementation efforts, or other circumstances. Grantees may propose revisions to goals, activities, timelines, budget, or annual targets, provided that the following conditions are met: the revisions do not result in the grantee's failure to comply with the terms and conditions of this award and the program's statutory and regulatory provisions; the revisions do not change the overall scope and objectives of the approved proposal; and the Department and the grantee mutually agree in writing to the revisions. The Department has sole discretion to determine whether to approve the revisions or modifications. If approved by the Department, a letter with a description of the amendment and any relevant conditions will be sent notifying the grantee of approval. (For additional information please see <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/amendments/index.html>.)

**America COMPETES Act elements:** The twelve indicators specified in section 6401(e)(2)(D) of the America COMPETES Act are: (1) a unique statewide student identifier that does not permit a student to be individually identified by users of the system; (2) student-level enrollment, demographic, and program participation information; (3) student-level information about the points at which students exit, transfer in, transfer out, drop out, or complete P-16 education programs; (4) the capacity to communicate with higher education data systems; (5) a State data audit system assessing data quality, validity, and reliability; (6) yearly test records of individual students with respect to assessments under section 1111(b) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)); (7) information on students not tested by grade and subject; (8) a teacher identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students; (9) student-level transcript information, including information on courses completed and grades earned; (10) student-level college-readiness test scores; (11) information regarding the extent to which students transition successfully from secondary

school to postsecondary education, including whether students enroll in remedial coursework; and (12) other information determined necessary to address alignment and adequate preparation for success in postsecondary education.

**American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA):** On February 17, 2009, President Obama signed into law the ARRA, historic legislation designed to stimulate the economy, support job creation, and invest in critical sectors, including education. The Department of Education received a \$97.4 billion appropriation.

**Annual Performance Report (APR):** Report submitted by each grantee with outcomes to date, performance against the measures established in its application, and other relevant data. The Department uses data included in the APRs to provide Congress and the public with detailed information regarding each State's progress on meeting the goals outlined in its application. The annual State APRs are found at [www.rtt-apr.us](http://www.rtt-apr.us).

**College- and career-ready standards:** State-developed standards that build toward college and career readiness by the time students graduate from high school.

**Common Core State Standards (CCSS):** Kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12) English language arts and mathematics standards developed in collaboration with a variety of stakeholders including governors, chief State school officers, content experts, teachers, school administrators, and parents. (For additional information, please see <http://www.corestandards.org/>).

The **education reform areas** for Race to the Top: (1) Standards and Assessments: Adopting rigorous college- and career-ready standards and assessments that prepare students for success in college and career; (2) Data Systems to Support Instruction: Building data systems that measure student success and support educators and decision-makers in their efforts to improve instruction and increase student achievement; (3) Great Teachers and Great Leaders: Recruiting, developing, retaining, and rewarding effective teachers and principals; and (4) Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools: Supporting local educational agencies' (LEAs') implementation of far-reaching reforms to turn around lowest-achieving schools by implementing school intervention models.

**Effective teacher:** A teacher whose students achieve acceptable rates (*e.g.*, at least one grade level in an academic year) of student growth (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements). States, LEAs, or schools must include multiple measures, provided that teacher effectiveness is evaluated, in significant part, by student growth (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements). Supplemental measures may include, for example, multiple observation-based assessments of teacher performance.

**High-minority school:** A school designation defined by the State in a manner consistent with its Teacher Equity Plan. The State should provide, in its Race to the Top application, the definition used.

# Glossary

**High-poverty school:** Consistent with section 1111(h)(1)(C)(viii) of the ESEA, a school in the highest quartile of schools in the State with respect to poverty level, using a measure of poverty determined by the State.

**Highly effective teacher:** A teacher whose students achieve high rates (*e.g.*, one and one-half grade levels in an academic year) of student growth (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements). States, LEAs, or schools must include multiple measures, provided that teacher effectiveness is evaluated, in significant part, by student growth (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements). Supplemental measures may include, for example, multiple observation-based assessments of teacher performance or evidence of leadership roles (which may include mentoring or leading professional learning communities) that increase the effectiveness of other teachers in the school or LEA.

**Instructional improvement systems (IIS):** Technology-based tools and other strategies that provide teachers, principals, and administrators with meaningful support and actionable data to systemically manage continuous instructional improvement, including such activities as instructional planning; gathering information (*e.g.*, through formative assessments (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements), interim assessments (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements), summative assessments, and looking at student work and other student data); analyzing information with the support of rapid-time (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements) reporting; using this information to inform decisions on appropriate next instructional steps; and evaluating the effectiveness of the actions taken. Such systems promote collaborative problem-solving and action planning; they may also integrate instructional data with student-level data such as attendance, discipline, grades, credit accumulation, and student survey results to provide early warning indicators of a student's risk of educational failure.

**Invitational priorities:** Areas of focus that the Department invited States to address in their Race to the Top applications. Applicants did not earn extra points for addressing these focus areas, but many grantees chose to create and fund activities to advance reforms in these areas.

**Involved LEAs:** LEAs that choose to work with the State to implement those specific portions of the State's plan that necessitate full or nearly-full statewide implementation, such as transitioning to a common set of K-12 standards (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements). Involved LEAs do not receive a share of the 50 percent of a State's grant award that it must subgrant to LEAs in accordance with section 14006(c) of the ARRA, but States may provide other funding to involved LEAs under the State's Race to the Top grant in a manner that is consistent with the State's application.

**No-Cost Extension Amendment Request:** A no-cost extension amendment request provides grantees with additional time to spend their grants (until September 2015) to accomplish the reform goals, deliverables and commitments in its Race to the Top application and approved Scope of Work. A grantee may make a no-cost extension amendment request to extend work beyond the final project year, consistent with the Amendment Principles (<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/grant-amendment-submission-process-oct-4-2011.pdf>) as well as the additional elements outlined in the Department Review section of the Amendment Requests with No Cost Extension Guidance and Principles document (<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/no-cost-extension-submission-process.pdf>).

**Participating LEAs:** LEAs that choose to work with the State to implement all or significant portions of the State's Race to the Top plan, as specified in each LEA's agreement with the State. Each participating LEA that receives funding under Title I, Part A will receive a share of the 50 percent of a State's grant award that the State must subgrant to LEAs, based on the LEA's relative share of Title I, Part A allocations in the most recent year at the time of the award, in accordance with section 14006(c) of the ARRA. Any participating LEA that does not receive funding under Title I, Part A (as well as one that does) may receive funding from the State's other 50 percent of the grant award, in accordance with the State's plan.

The **Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC):** One of two consortia of States awarded grants under the Race to the Top Assessment program to develop next-generation assessment systems that are aligned to common K-12 English language and mathematics standards and that will accurately measure student progress toward college and career readiness. (For additional information please see <http://www.parcconline.org/>.)

**Persistently lowest-achieving schools:** As determined by the State, (1) any Title I school in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring that (a) is among the lowest-achieving five percent of Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring or the lowest-achieving five Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring in the State, whichever number of schools is greater; or (b) is a high school that has had a graduation rate as defined in 34 CFR 200.19(b) that is less than 60 percent over a number of years; and (2) any secondary school that is eligible for, but does not receive, Title I funds that (a) is among the lowest-achieving five percent of secondary schools or the lowest-achieving five secondary schools in the State that are eligible for, but do not receive, Title I funds, whichever number of schools is greater; or (b) is a high school that has had a graduation rate as defined in 34 CFR 200.19(b) that is less than 60 percent over a number of years. To identify the lowest-achieving schools, a State must take into account both (1) the academic achievement of the "all students" group in a school in terms of proficiency on the State's assessments under section 1111(b)(3) of the ESEA in reading/language arts and mathematics combined; and (2) the school's lack of progress on those assessments over a number of years in the "all students" group. (For additional information please see <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/index.html>.)

# Glossary

**Qualifying evaluation systems:** Educator evaluation systems that meet the following criteria: rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation systems for teachers and principals that: (1) differentiate effectiveness using multiple rating categories that take into account data on student growth as a significant factor, and (2) are designed and developed with teacher and principal involvement.

**Reform Support Network (RSN):** In partnership with the Implementation and Support Unit (ISU), the RSN offers collective and individualized technical assistance and resources to grantees of the Race to the Top education reform initiative. The RSN's purpose is to support the Race to the Top grantees as they implement reforms in education policy and practice, learn from each other and build their capacity to sustain these reforms.

The **School Improvement Grants (SIG)** program is authorized under section 1003(g) of Title I of the ESEA. Funds are awarded to States to help them turn around persistently lowest-achieving schools. (For additional information please see <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/index.html>.)

**School intervention models:** A State's Race to the Top plan describes how it will support its LEAs in turning around the lowest-achieving schools by implementing one of the four school intervention models:

- **Turnaround model:** Replace the principal and rehire no more than 50 percent of the staff and grant the principal sufficient operational flexibility (including in staffing, calendars/time and budgeting) to fully implement a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student outcomes.
- **Restart model:** Convert a school or close and reopen it under a charter school operator, a charter management organization, or an education management organization that has been selected through a rigorous review process.
- **School closure:** Close a school and enroll the students who attended that school in other schools in the district that are higher achieving.
- **Transformation model:** Implement each of the following strategies: (1) replace the principal and take steps to increase teacher and school leader effectiveness, (2) institute comprehensive instructional reforms, (3) increase learning time and create community-oriented schools, and (4) provide operational flexibility and sustained support.

**Single sign-on:** A user authentication process that permits a user to enter one name and password in order to access multiple applications.

The **SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (Smarter Balanced):** One of two consortia of States awarded grants under the Race to the Top Assessment program to develop next-generation assessment systems that are aligned to common K-12 English language and mathematics standards and that will accurately measure student progress toward college and career readiness. (For additional information please see <http://www.k12.wa.us/SMARTER/default.aspx>.)

The **State Scope of Work:** A detailed document for the State's projects that reflects the grantee's approved Race to the Top application. The State Scope of Work includes items such as the State's specific goals, activities, timelines, budgets, key personnel, and annual targets for key performance measures. (For additional information please see <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/state-scope-of-work/index.html>.) Additionally, all participating LEAs are required to submit Scope of Work documents, consistent with State requirements, to the State for its review and approval.

**Statewide longitudinal data systems (SLDS):** Data systems that enhance the ability of States to efficiently and accurately manage, analyze, and use education data, including individual student records. The SLDS help States, districts, schools, educators, and other stakeholders to make data-informed decisions to improve student learning and outcomes, as well as to facilitate research to increase student achievement and close achievement gaps. (For additional information please see [http://nces.ed.gov/Programs/SLDS/about\\_SLDS.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/Programs/SLDS/about_SLDS.asp).)

**Student achievement:** For the purposes of this report, student achievement (1) for tested grades and subjects is (a) a student's score on the State's assessments under the ESEA; and, as appropriate, (b) other measures of student learning, such as those described in number (2) of this definition, provided they are rigorous and comparable across classrooms; and (2) for non-tested grades and subjects, alternative measures of student learning and performance such as student scores on pre-tests and end-of-course tests; student performance on English language proficiency assessments; and other measures of student achievement that are rigorous and comparable across classrooms.

**Student growth:** The change in student achievement (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements) for an individual student between two or more points in time. A State may also include other measures that are rigorous and comparable across classrooms.

**Value-added models (VAMs):** A specific type of growth model based on changes in test scores over time. VAMs are complex statistical models that generally attempt to take into account student or school background characteristics in order to isolate the amount of learning attributable to a specific teacher or school. Teachers or schools that produce more than typical or expected growth are said to "add value."