

# RACE TO THE TOP

## Georgia Report

Year 2: School Year 2011–2012

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U.S. Department of Education  
Washington, DC 20202

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February 1, 2013

# 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 Race to the Top Phase 3, Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge, and Race to the Top – District. In 2011, the Department awarded Phase 3 grants to seven additional States, which were finalists in the 2010 Race to the Top Phase 1 and Phase 2 competitions. Also in 2011, the Department made seven awards under the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge to improve quality and expand access to early learning programs, and close the achievement gap for children with high needs. In 2012, four more States received Early Learning Challenge grants. Most recently, in 2012, the Department made awards to 16 applicants through the Race to the Top – District competition to support local educational agencies (LEAs) implementing locally developed plans to personalize and deepen student learning, directly improve student achievement and educator effectiveness, close achievement gaps, and prepare every student to succeed in college and career.

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, LEAs, and States will not be achieved through piecemeal change. Race to the Top requires that States and LEAs participating in the State's Race to the Top plan (participating LEAs)<sup>2</sup> take into account their local context to design and implement the most effective and innovative approaches that meet the needs of their educators, students, and families.

## 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.

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>3</sup>

<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> Participating 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 ARRA.

<sup>3</sup> More information about the ISU's program review process, State APR data, and State Scopes of Work can be found at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/index.html>.

# Executive Summary

## 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.<sup>4</sup> The State-specific summary report serves as an assessment of a State's annual Race to the Top implementation. The Year 2 report for Phase 1 and 2 grantees highlights successes and accomplishments, identifies challenges, and provides lessons learned from implementation from approximately September 2011 through September 2012.

## State's education reform agenda

Georgia's education reform agenda, supported with its \$399,952,650 Race to the Top grant, establishes five objectives:

1. Set high standards and rigorous assessments for all students—leading to college and career readiness;
2. Prepare students for college, transition, and success;
3. Provide great teachers and leaders;
4. Provide effective support for all schools, including the lowest-achieving schools; and
5. Lead the way in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields.

## State Year 1 summary

During Year 1, Georgia had several accomplishments, but also experienced some initial implementation delays due to transitions in State and LEA leadership, insufficient project management-level staffing, and changes to its original implementation schedule proposed in its application. Despite these delays, Georgia initiated the first round of the Innovation Fund, a competitive grant initiative to encourage the formation of partnerships between LEAs, colleges and universities, non-profit organizations, or businesses to identify new ways to increase applied learning opportunities, improve teacher and leader effectiveness, expand the pipeline of effective teachers, and promote STEM charter schools. The State also entered several partnerships with organizations and institutions, including Teach for America (TFA), The New Teacher Project (TNTP), UTeach Institute, and the Georgia Institute of Technology's Center for Education Integrating Science, Mathematics, and Computing (CEISMC), in order to increase the quantity and quality of teachers entering low-achieving schools and to enhance professional development

opportunities, especially in the STEM areas. Additionally, to help increase its project management capacity across the Race to the Top education reform areas, the State began the design of a project management system via SharePoint to coordinate schedules, identify project tasks and due dates, and share information between the State and participating LEAs.

## State Year 2 summary

### Accomplishments

During Year 2, Georgia had a range of accomplishments across Race to the Top education reform areas. For example, Georgia completed two additional rounds of the Innovation Fund competitive grant program, awarding a total of 24 grants in Years 1 and 2. The State remains optimistic about the initiative and views the Innovation Fund as a way to stimulate new thinking about competitive grant funds for innovative education in Georgia.

The Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) also provided all LEAs with a variety of resources (*e.g.*, webinars, newsletters, and curriculum frameworks), professional development, and face-to-face support from English language arts (ELA) and mathematics specialists that will help them implement the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), referred to as the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS) in Georgia, in school year (SY) 2012-2013. Additionally, in moving forward with new and high-quality assessments, the State is developing a formative assessment toolkit. To ensure reliability, Georgia has field tested 800 assessment items using a representative sample of schools.

Moreover, Georgia remained on schedule with the development of its P-20 longitudinal data system (LDS). The State has worked with an external vendor to develop the core functionality of the P-20 system and to ensure the data entered into this system are of high-quality. GaDOE also engaged LEAs and provided training and support to participating LEAs on the development and use of the Instructional Improvement System (IIS) and Instructional Improvement Reports (IIRs). GaDOE ensured that all LEAs had access to the State IIS, even if they had an existing LDS or IIS, and used feedback from participating LEAs to develop the first generation of IIRs.

Finally, the State requested and received Department approval on February 9, 2012, for its Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) flexibility<sup>5</sup> request. The Department approved an amendment in September 2012 to align Georgia's Race to the Top student outcome measures with the approved ESEA flexibility targets.

<sup>4</sup>Additional State-specific data on progress against annual performance measures and goals reported in the Year 2 APRs can be found on the Race to the Top Data Display at [www.rtt-apr.us](http://www.rtt-apr.us).

<sup>5</sup>On September 23, 2011, the Department offered each interested State educational agency (SEA) the opportunity to request flexibility ("ESEA flexibility") on behalf of itself, its LEAs, and its schools, regarding specific requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), in exchange for rigorous and comprehensive State-developed plans designed to improve educational outcomes for all students, close achievement gaps, increase equity, and improve the quality of instruction. For more information on ESEA Flexibility, see [www.ed.gov/eSEA/flexibility](http://www.ed.gov/eSEA/flexibility).

# Executive Summary

## Challenges

Georgia experienced significant challenges related to implementation of its educator evaluation system in Year 2 of its Race to the Top grant. The Department is concerned about the overall strategic planning, evaluation, and project management for that system, which include decisions regarding the quality of the tools and measures used during the educator evaluation pilot and the scalability of the supports the State offered to participating LEAs. For example, during Year 2, the State piloted the educator evaluation system in a portion of schools in its participating LEAs, but did not complete the statistical analyses to determine the degree of correlation between the key components of the system—*i.e.*, student growth percentiles, student surveys, observation protocols—in time to inform the design and roll-out of the evaluation system in subsequent years as originally planned. As a result of these concerns, the Department placed the educator evaluation projects in the Great Teachers and Leaders section of Georgia's Race to the Top plan on high-risk status.<sup>6</sup>

Across its Race to the Top plan, Georgia has faced difficulty developing and implementing a comprehensive communications plan that illustrates how all of its Race to the Top projects are complementary and cohesive. In addition, strategic planning across Race to the Top projects was a challenge for the State and affected participating LEAs' ability to implement key components of the State's plan, including CCGPS and the educator evaluation system. Further, Georgia must revise its processes for monitoring and assessing the quality of implementation of Race to the Top projects at both the State and LEA levels. The State must amend its Race to the Top Scope of Work to reflect these challenges and their implications.

Georgia also experienced delays in implementation among its Race to the Top projects. For example, Georgia released its benchmark assessment request for proposals (RFP) roughly nine months later than planned because it was determining how best to approach the project without duplicating the work of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). As a result, Georgia was several months behind in securing a contract to complete the work for the benchmark assessments. The State was also delayed in the implementation of several STEM activities by over one year.

## Looking ahead to Year 3

During Year 3, Georgia plans to develop rigorous routines and processes to better manage its Race to the Top projects and to more effectively monitor and assess participating LEAs' progress and quality of implementation. The State will also work with a consulting firm to enhance its communications plan to better articulate the various components of its Race to the Top initiative and how these components align.

Additionally, the State will continue to work on projects that were initiated or delayed during Year 2. It will pilot the second phase of the formative assessment toolkit and proceed with benchmark assessments. Georgia will also continue to transition to the CCGPS and provide support to prepare LEAs to fully implement the enhanced standards in SY 2012-2013. Furthermore, the State will continue to build upon its LDS and school intervention initiatives.

Most significantly, Georgia will focus a great deal of attention on its educator evaluation system and finalize several key tasks started the previous year. Specifically, the State will revise its work plan to include management and oversight procedures to oversee project implementation; rigorous systematic and ongoing feedback to inform the educator evaluation system; communication and engagement systems with educators; key analyses concerning student growth, observations, and student surveys; implementation of the evaluation electronic platform; and execution of its new organizational structure.

<sup>6</sup>For more information, see Georgia's July 2, 2012 amendment letter at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/amendments/georgia-6.pdf>.

# State Success Factors

## Building capacity to support LEAs

### Performance management

At the State level, Georgia integrated the Race to the Top reform efforts within GaDOE's existing organizational structure. In April 2012, the State reorganized the GaDOE Race to the Top Implementation Office to align roles and responsibilities to help ensure proper oversight of the grant under the Deputy Superintendent for Race to the Top Implementation. The new organizational structure creates an Associate Superintendent for Teacher and Leader Effectiveness who reports directly to the Deputy Superintendent for School Improvement and will place a greater emphasis on high-quality implementation of the educator evaluation system. Georgia will fund eight additional staff positions in Year 3 as part of an organizational change within the School Improvement Department at GaDOE. Additionally, in order to ensure a focus on LEA support and technical assistance, the State created two additional positions within the Race to the Top Implementation Office in summer 2012.

Georgia continues to use SharePoint to serve as the central clearinghouse for all Race to the Top work. The site includes documentation, such as monitoring and fiscal reports, and provides access to items such as the teacher evaluation handbook, training materials, and curriculum resources. It also provides a platform to make announcements and includes a calendar to ensure that LEAs and other State agency partners receive notices of planned trainings and other events.

### The Innovation Fund

Georgia completed three rounds of the Innovation Fund competition. In Year 1, the State made five awards. The State provided detailed feedback to all applicants to inform their proposals for subsequent rounds. In the second round, released in September 2011, the State received 63 proposals and made 11 awards in January 2012. The State launched round 3 in spring 2012. Unlike previous rounds, the third round of the Innovation Fund was invitational. Interested parties were required to submit an intent to apply that included a summary of their proposed projects. The State reviewed those requests and invited 50 applicants to apply in the third round of the competition. In September 2012, the State made nine awards.

### Innovations for improving early learning outcomes

The Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) and its contractors provided four professional development modules to over 1,000 pre-kindergarten teachers in SY 2011-2012. The first module, which supported 50 teachers across nine counties, was

a coaching program aimed at boosting pre-kindergarten teachers' interaction with students in order to improve student achievement. The second module helped 49 teachers learn how to identify and analyze effective teacher-child interactions. The third and fourth modules both focused on the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) Framework and were traditional, two-day professional development overviews of the CLASS tool.<sup>7</sup>

## Support and accountability for LEAs

In April 2012, GaDOE revised its participating LEA monitoring plan to reflect an increased emphasis on quality of implementation. The plan required LEAs to submit quarterly expenditure reports to ensure their spending aligned with their approved Race to the Top budgets, as well as quarterly progress reports that provided updates on the successes, challenges, and progress of Race to the Top implementation. During spring 2012, GaDOE conducted onsite monitoring reviews for select LEAs and issued a monitoring report and letter to LEAs where they identified findings and areas for improvement. When necessary, the State worked with LEAs to develop corrective action plans.

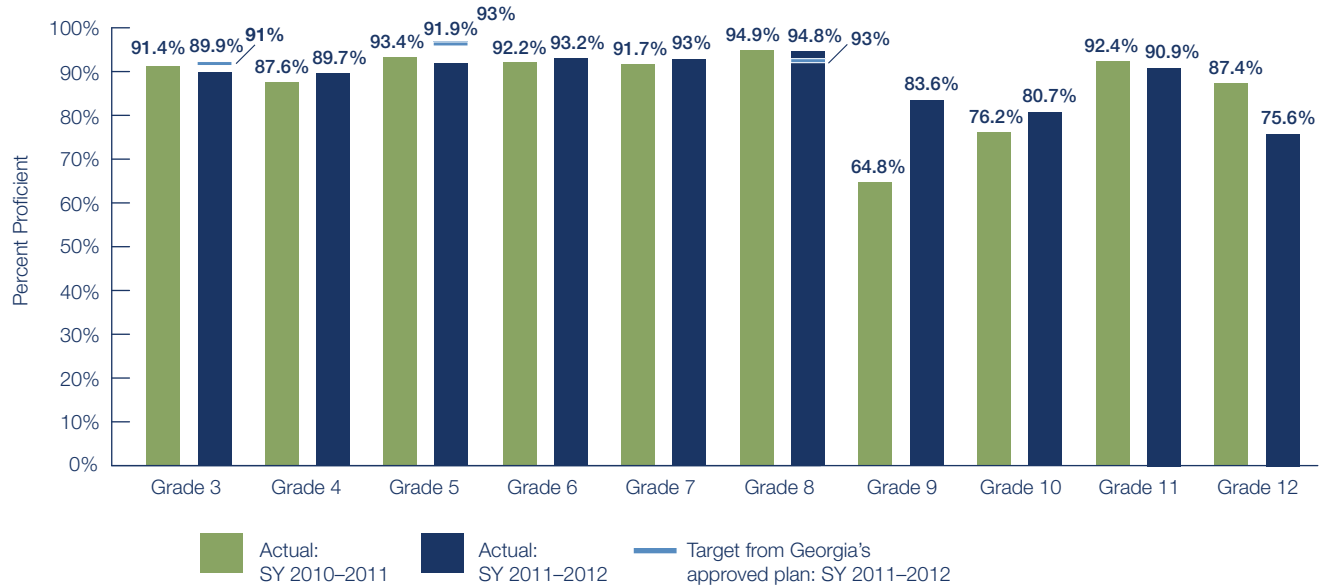
Despite these efforts, Georgia is still revising its performance management processes for LEAs. Although the State has developed LEA Scopes of Work, budgets, and amendment approval processes, it has not yet established consistent and rigorous procedures to collect consistent data on progress, connect LEA progress to goals and deliverables, and assess the quality of implementation.

Throughout the year, GaDOE worked in various ways to provide implementation support to LEAs across the education reform areas. For example, to prepare LEAs for the rollout of the CCGPS and to support CCGPS implementation overall, GaDOE provided monthly curriculum webinars and newsletters to all LEA curriculum administrators (see *Standards and Assessments*). To facilitate LEA use and implementation of the IIS, GaDOE assigned an instructional technology specialist to all LEAs to provide ongoing support and training (see *Data Systems to Support Instruction*). Additionally, to support LEAs in developing and implementing Student Learning Objectives (SLOs), which will capture student growth for teachers of non-tested grades and subjects within Georgia's educator evaluation system, the State provided extensive training and technical assistance to participating LEAs and has identified an SLO program manager and three specialists to work with LEAs throughout the process (see *Great Teachers and Leaders*).

<sup>7</sup>The fourth module was an online session.

# State Success Factors

## Student Proficiency on Georgia's ELA Assessment

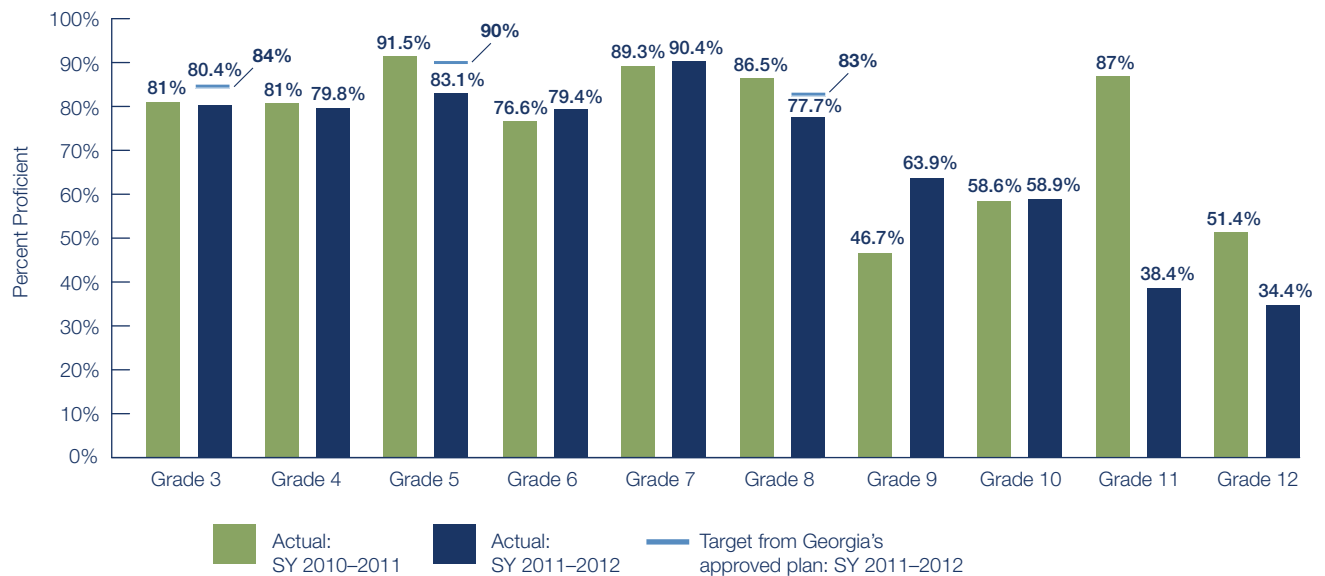


Preliminary SY 2011-2012 data reported as of: September 17, 2012

NOTE: Over the last two 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).

## Student Proficiency on Georgia's Mathematics Assessment



Preliminary SY 2011-2012 data reported as of: September 17, 2012

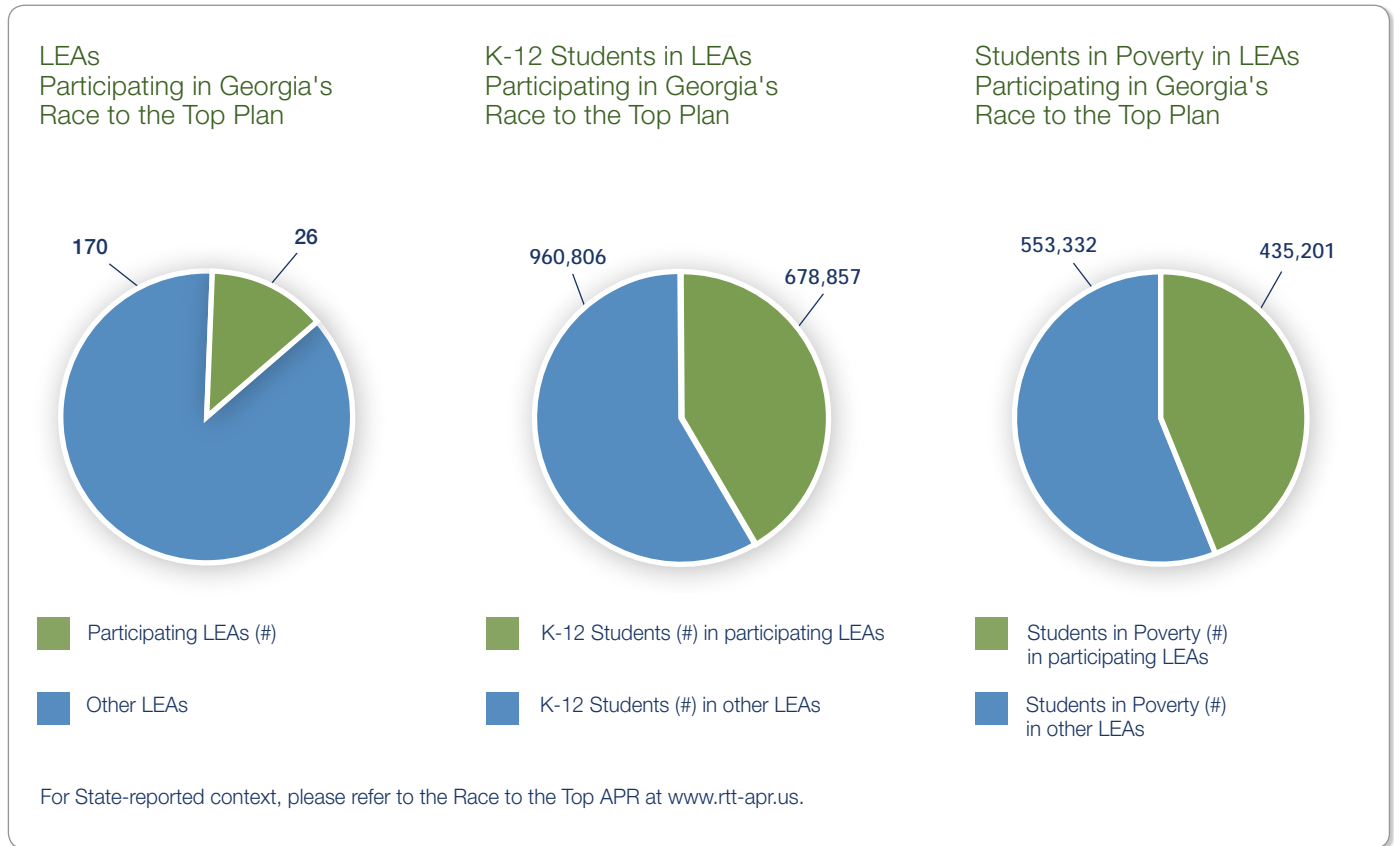
NOTE: Over the last two years, a number of States adopted new assessments and/or cut scores.

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

## LEA participation

As of June 30, 2012, 26 LEAs were participating in Georgia's Race to the Top initiative. The participating LEAs enroll 40 percent of Georgia's kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12) students and 44 percent of the State's K-12 students who live in poverty.



## Stakeholder engagement

Georgia uses the SharePoint project management tool as a primary source to share information on and monitor the implementation of LEAs' Race to the Top initiatives. All participating LEA staff and principals in participating schools have SharePoint accounts. The State also remains in contact with LEAs and other key stakeholders (e.g., institutions of higher education (IHE) partners and education associations) via its Race to the Top website that went live in December 2011, regular conference calls, and various meetings, conferences, and other events that give Georgia opportunities to share information on Race to the Top. Despite these efforts, the State has found it difficult to implement a comprehensive communications plan and engage in strategic planning with LEAs. The State plans to continue to use stakeholder feedback to refine its communication and project management processes. In order to develop a communications plan, the State has contracted with a vendor for assistance throughout SY 2012-2013.

The State receives stakeholder feedback on its design and implementation activities via surveys, site visits, interviews, and focus groups in order to make adjustments to ensure that high-quality resources and materials are available to stakeholders and to inform and improve its structures, systems, and implementation procedures. As an example, GaDOE received feedback through surveys and a site visit in each participating LEA on the roll-out of the CCGPS and the educator evaluation process.

## Continuous improvement

Georgia uses the SharePoint project management system to track progress on projects across its Race to the Top plan. The implementation team uses the system to identify risks and to address them accordingly. Nonetheless, the State is still revising its State-level project management processes to ensure an emphasis on the quality of implementation and dependencies between deliverables.

# State Success Factors

During summer 2012, the State also began using Indistar as a project management tool to inform, coach, sustain, track, and report school improvement activities. This system allows the State to collect data on its lowest-achieving schools and to monitor the support provided by school improvement specialists and the fidelity of implementation of reform models. GaDOE provided regional training on Indistar with additional training sessions held during summer 2012.

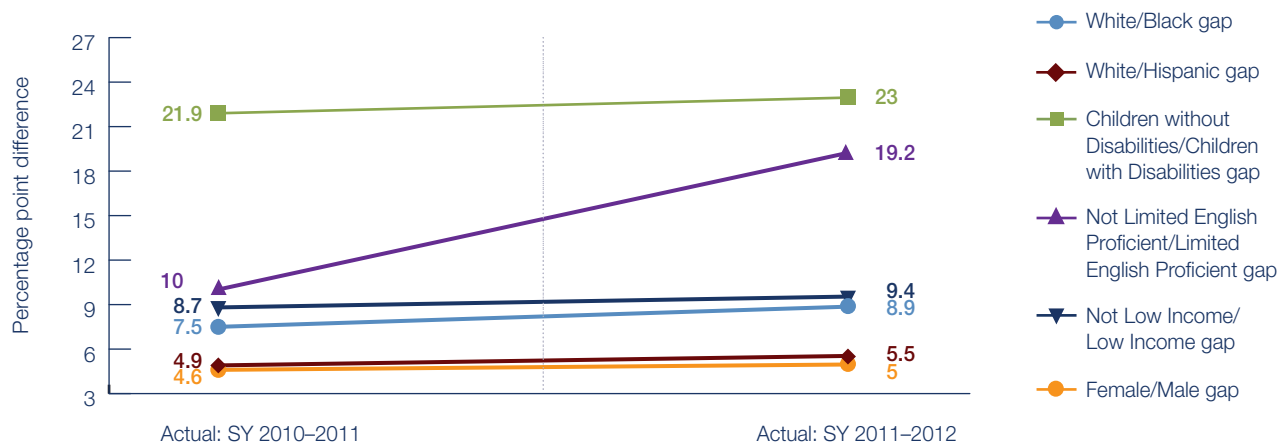
## Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

During Year 2, Georgia completed two rounds of its Innovation Fund competition. The State is optimistic about the Innovation Fund and believes that the grant has stimulated new thinking about competitive grants for innovation in education in Georgia. DECAL also provided professional development to more than 1,000 pre-kindergarten teachers on improving teacher-student interactions and how to use the CLASS tool.

Georgia continued throughout Year 2 to use SharePoint to monitor program compliance, to communicate and share information and resources with stakeholders, and to track progress on projects across its Race to the Top plan. Still, despite its efforts on the SharePoint site, communication, strategic planning, and assessing program implementation at both the State and LEA levels have been difficult for Georgia. Strategic planning across Race to the Top projects and adherence to proposed schedules have also been a challenge for the State.

Georgia has had difficulty over the past two years developing and implementing a comprehensive communications plan that illustrates how all of the components of its Race to the Top project connect. To address this issue, the State contracted with a consulting firm to develop a communications plan that focuses on the alignment of the educator evaluation system, the CCGPS, the College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI),<sup>8</sup> and other Race to the Top reforms.

Achievement Gap on Georgia's ELA Assessment



Preliminary SY 2011-2012 data reported as of: September 17, 2012

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

Numbers in the graph represent the gap in a school year between two subgroups on the State's ELA assessment. Achievement gaps were calculated by subtracting the percent of students scoring proficient in the lower-performing subgroup from the percent of students scoring proficient in the higher-performing subgroup to get the percentage point difference between the proficiency of the two subgroups. If the achievement gap narrowed between two subgroups, the line will slope downward. If the achievement gap increased between two subgroups, the line will slope upward.

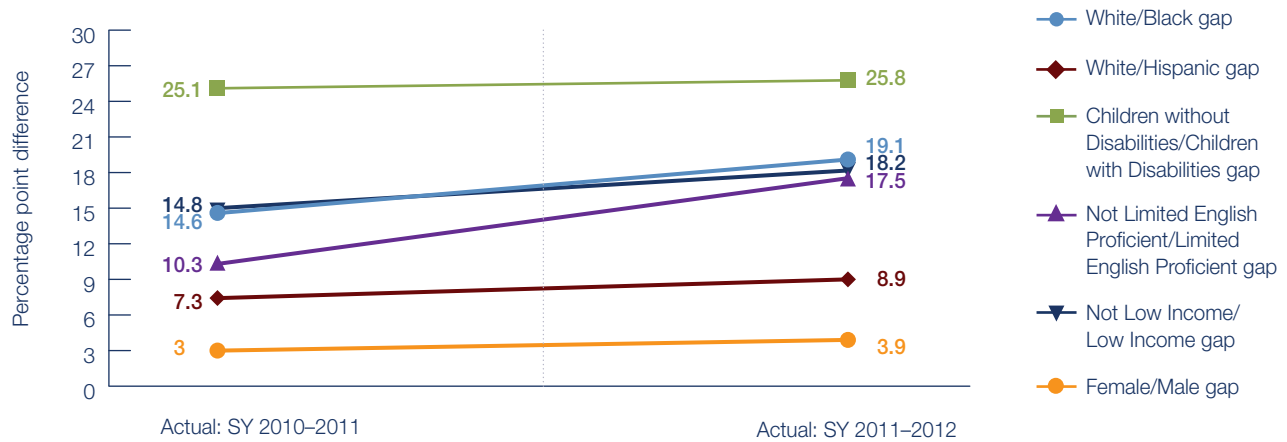
For State-reported context, please refer to the Race to the Top APR at [www.rtt-apr.us](http://www.rtt-apr.us).

<sup>8</sup>The CCRPI will serve as Georgia's new accountability system and was approved by the Department under Georgia's approved ESEA flexibility request.



# State Success Factors

## Achievement Gap on Georgia's Mathematics Assessment



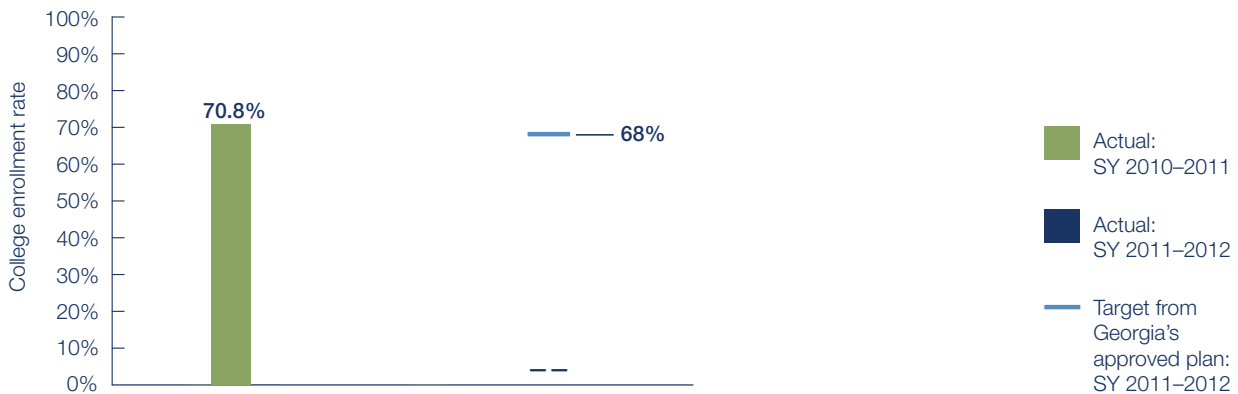
Preliminary SY 2011-2012 data reported as of: September 17, 2012

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

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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 Rates



Preliminary SY 2011-2012 data reported as of: October 19, 2012

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

# 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 Georgia Board of Education adopted the CCSS in ELA and mathematics for grades K-12 and began transitioning to the CCGPS during Year 2. Georgia is a governing member of the PARCC assessment consortium and will implement PARCC assessments in SY 2014-2015.

During spring of 2012, Georgia awarded a contract to a vendor to develop a formative assessment toolkit. During April and May 2012, GaDOE initiated the first phase of the assessment pilot, which included a field test of 800 CCGPS-aligned formative assessment items at a representative sample of schools. In August 2012, the State analyzed data from the pilot and aims to make approved items available to educators during fall 2012 for use in their classrooms.

Although GaDOE made progress on its formative assessment project, it experienced delays in the benchmark assessments project because it delayed the release of the RFP to conduct this work. The State reported it delayed the process because it wanted to determine how best to approach the benchmark assessment project without duplicating the work of PARCC. Georgia secured a contract for this project in June 2012 and work for the project has begun. The Department has not yet received the State's amendment request to update its approved Scope of Work to reflect this delay.

During Year 2, Georgia also planned to create online professional learning units (PLUs) specific to the CCGPS through the Georgia Virtual School. The State also experienced a delay in releasing an RFP for the Assessment Literacy PLU to provide training to LEA administrators, school administrators, and teachers on the use of formative assessments. As a result, this training was not available to LEAs in Year 2.

In January 2012, as part of the RSN, a team of SEA, LEA, and other State-level staff from Georgia collaborated with 11 other Race to the Top States in Washington, D.C., to develop and enhance strategies to align and support the implementation of teacher and leader effectiveness initiatives within the context of newly implemented college- and career-ready standards. In April 2012, a team from Georgia participated in an RSN convening of Race to the Top States in Boston, Massachusetts, and shared strategies and effective practices to engage and provide professional development to educators within the context of newly implemented college- and career-ready standards and teacher and leader effectiveness initiatives.

One participating LEA held Saturday academies during SY 2011-2012 for teachers and students. In each academy, teachers prepared lessons aligned to the CCGPS and delivered those lessons to students who needed additional academic support. After the student sessions, teachers worked in teams to provide formative feedback to one another on the lessons and make adjustments to future lesson plans. This opportunity allowed teachers to write lessons and modules that are aligned to CCGPS, practice delivering the more rigorous instructional models, and receive feedback on how to improve their practice. In addition, students were provided an introduction to the CCGPS in preparation for implementation next school year.

## Dissemination of resources and professional development

As an introduction to the CCGPS, GaDOE provided monthly curriculum webinars and newsletters to all LEA curriculum administrators. GaDOE has offered 42 webinars to support CCGPS implementation. These webinars and newsletters were a precursor to the professional learning sessions provided by Georgia Public Broadcasting (GPB) in partnership with GaDOE, which focused on ELA and mathematics for K-12 teachers. During Year 2, GPB developed 36 webinars on CCGPS ELA and mathematics standards and offered additional sessions on literacy in science, social studies, and technical subjects. The State reported that more than 900 educators participated in the live broadcasts of the webinars. The State also archived the webinars so that they are available to educators at any time. In addition to the webinars, GaDOE offered eight mathematics and 11 ELA CCGPS workshops, which were face-to-face professional learning opportunities on the CCGPS for teachers and instructional leaders. A total of 2,379 individual educators participated in these sessions.

The State also worked with each of the 16 Georgia Regional Educational Service Agencies to provide support to teachers and principals across the State. Race to the Top funds supported the hiring of one full-time and 18 half-time ELA specialists who provided over 4,000 face-to-face professional learning sessions in Year 2. State-funded mathematics specialists also provided face-to-face CCGPS professional learning sessions.

# Standards and Assessments

The State reports that it posted over 100 ELA curriculum frameworks and mathematics curriculum frameworks for grades K-12 for use by LEAs on the CCGPS website. Also, by June 2012, the State created and made available to LEAs instructional units for both ELA and mathematics and subsequently added webinars to provide in-depth training for next school year. The State plans to continue to develop additional instructional units.

## Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

Although Georgia is developing a formative assessment toolkit and has field tested 800 assessment items in a representative sample of schools, Georgia is several months behind schedule with the

benchmark assessments project because the State opted to delay this work until it determined how best to approach the benchmark assessments without duplicating the PARCC work.

Georgia demonstrated a commitment to the successful transition to the CCGPS by providing educators with a variety of resources, professional development, and individual support to help implement the CCGPS. Most LEAs also used the State resources to create their own materials and systems to support implementation. Throughout the CCGPS roll-out process in Year 2, Georgia gathered feedback from LEAs about their experiences and needs, using this feedback to inform its implementation plan and adjust its resources for the CCGPS. For example, based on LEA feedback, the State revised its ELA materials for several grades. Still, despite the State's progress, it also experienced a few staffing challenges in Year 2 that resulted in existing personnel taking on additional responsibilities.

## Data Systems to Support Instruction

Statewide longitudinal data systems (SLDS) and 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.

### Fully implementing a SLDS

Georgia reported that it had a robust K-12 data system prior to the Race to the Top grant. In Year 2, Georgia's IIS Advisory Committee recognized that many LEAs had already invested in LDS or IIS systems. Thus, the State decided to use a SLDS "tunnel" to provide all LEAs with single sign-in access to the State IIS and to allow LEAs with existing LDS and IIS systems to continue using their systems while also using the additional State resources. The State also identified specifications for applications that GaDOE will provide at no cost to all Georgia LEAs.

data entered into the P-20 LDS are complete, accurate, and of high quality. All agencies involved in the system have data stewards who are responsible for reviewing the data and correcting any data discrepancies.

### Accessing and using State data

In January 2012, the Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA) contracted with a vendor to build its P-20 LDS, referred to as Georgia's Academic and Workforce Analysis and Research Data System (GA-AWARDS). This system will include a data hub that allows for the collection of data across State agencies, including educational agencies, non-educational agencies (*e.g.*, Department of Labor), and non-State agencies (*e.g.*, National Student Clearinghouse). Since the start of the contract, GOSA and the vendor have worked to develop the core functionality of the system and have implemented rigorous review routines to ensure that the

### Using data to improve instruction

Georgia continued work on its IIS for LEAs, schools, and teachers in Year 2. Phase One of the IIS roll-out is ongoing. GaDOE has provided large and small group presentations to review IIS components with its lowest-achieving schools. Each participating LEA has been assigned a GaDOE instructional technology specialist to provide support and training for that LEA on an ongoing basis, including onsite training for teachers in the use of the IIS tools through the SLDS tunnel. As of May 2012, instructional technology specialists had trained 18 of the 26 participating LEAs on the use of the IIS tool. Phase Two of the IIS roll-out includes additional professional development on how to use data generated in the IIS. Despite the State's efforts, however, usage data reveal that some LEAs are not accessing the State IIS. To address this problem, the State has committed to providing additional resources and professional development to encourage better data-driven decision making.

# Data Systems to Support Instruction

GaDOE worked closely with superintendents, LEA administrators, principals, and teachers to determine their needs for the new IIRs. Based on the feedback and LEA requirements, GaDOE developed the first generation IIRs and provided training and assistance on accessing and using the IIRs. GaDOE also produced training materials and user guides to distribute to LEAs.

In addition, the State contracted with a vendor to build the electronic platform for the educator evaluation system. Georgia initially planned to build the platform in-house, but due to capacity constraints, determined that contracting with a vendor was a more timely solution. The electronic platform was launched in summer 2012 and will house all of the data from the educator evaluation system, including teacher and leader effectiveness ratings.

## Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

Overall, Georgia made progress in the work for this core education reform area. The State continued work on its SLDS, and regularly engaged stakeholders to oversee the development of the various components of the GA-AWARDS system.

In Year 2, the State provided support to participating LEAs and frequently engaged LEAs when developing the IIS and IIRs. GaDOE utilized a tunnel system to accommodate LEAs that already had LDS and IIS systems in place. GaDOE also used feedback from participating LEAs to develop the first generation of IIRs. Data revealed low usage of the IIS, however, particularly by some of the larger LEAs.

## Great Teachers and Leaders

Race to the Top States are developing comprehensive systems of educator effectiveness by adopting clear approaches to measuring student growth; 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. In addition, Race to the Top States are providing 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.

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

In Year 1, Georgia entered into State-level partnerships with TFA and TNTP to provide alternative certification and recruiting services to increase the number of effective teachers in the lowest-performing schools. In Year 2, TFA placed 263 candidates in four LEAs in the metro Atlanta area, and TNTP placed 51 candidates in six LEAs that span three geographic areas across the State. TFA and TNTP will continue to place teachers in schools in SY 2012-2013. Due to budget shortfalls at the LEA-level, however, TFA and TNTP were not able to place as many candidates as originally anticipated.

### Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance

#### Educator evaluation system

After careful review of Georgia's implementation of its teacher and leader evaluation system, the Department placed this section of Georgia's Race to the Top grant on high-risk status in July 2012.

Georgia is struggling with the overall strategic planning, evaluation, and project management for that system, including decisions regarding the quality of the tools and measures used during the educator evaluation pilot and the scalability of the supports the State offered to participating LEAs.

Between January and May 2012, Georgia piloted its educator evaluation system in a portion of schools in its 26 participating LEAs. In its approved Race to the Top application, Georgia's educator evaluation system includes four components for teachers and leaders: student growth, observations (or qualitative measures), surveys, and reduction of the student achievement gap.

Georgia chose to use a student growth percentile model based on State assessments to measure student growth for teachers of tested grades and subjects. To capture student growth for teachers of non-tested grades and subjects, the State will use LEA-developed SLOs. The State planned to build the student growth percentile model in-house by October 2011 and to roll out the model as a part of the overall evaluation system by March 2012. As of September 2012, however, the State was still in the process of making adjustments to the model and had not released data to LEAs.

# Great Teachers and Leaders

The observation protocols, Teacher Assessment on Performance Standards (TAPS) and Leader Assessment on Performance Standards (LAPS), are based on the State's previous observation protocol, the CLASS Keys system. TAPS and LAPS are composed of five domains and 10 performance standards and provide evaluators with a qualitative, rubric-based evaluation method by which they can measure teacher and leader performance related to quality performance standards. TAPS and LAPS include observations and documentation of practice, and use performance rubrics to guide multiple formative assessments and one summative assessment during a full implementation year.

During the pilot of the survey component of the evaluation in Year 2, the State identified a number of technical issues, including the need for further refinement and prioritization of standards and questions in its student and peer surveys, and therefore must revise and validate the survey prior to using it again in SY 2012-2013. In July 2012, the Department conditionally approved Georgia's request to move the survey component of the evaluation system for third through twelfth grades (3-12) as a separate measure and instead use it as evidence within the observation protocol.

In January 2012, the Department conditionally approved an amendment that allowed the State to delay the pilot of the student achievement gap reduction component in the teacher evaluation system. Georgia's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) reviewed the student achievement gap data by subgroup at the classroom-level and was concerned about the reliability of subgroup status scores. The reduction of the student achievement gap component will remain in the leader evaluation system, as originally planned.

To support LEAs during the pilot, Georgia created teacher orientation and training materials, including a handbook and a Frequently Asked Questions document, and identified resources to support training and implementation over the course of the year as part of its pilot. The State provided training sessions from October 2011 through April 2012. The State used multiple methods to train participants, including on-line professional learning, and hired 20 evaluation field staff to provide training and individualized technical assistance to participating LEAs throughout the pilot year. The field staff also worked closely with LEA-level evaluation specialists to identify strengths and weaknesses, provide appropriate interventions, and develop inter-rater reliability between evaluators. Further, the State provided extensive training to LEAs to support the development of SLOs.

Georgia planned to evaluate the pilot of the system between May and June 2012, but experienced challenges collecting data from pilot LEAs. The State will conduct statistical analyses to determine the degree of correlation between the student survey, student growth percentiles, and the observation protocols. As of September 2012, Georgia had not yet completed these analyses that are necessary to help inform the design and roll-out of the educator evaluation

system. Teachers and principals who participated in the pilot in SY 2011-2012 did not receive any data from the new evaluation system during Year 2.

To gather process feedback on the evaluation system, GaDOE conducted site visits to participating LEAs in spring 2012. The GaDOE leadership team visited every participating LEA and engaged LEA leaders, principals, and teachers in discussions and feedback sessions on the evaluation system. In addition, the State hosted three conferences (two calls and one face-to-face session) with participating LEA superintendents and leadership to gather additional feedback.

During the summer of 2012, the State held training sessions on the components of the evaluation system for the 26 participating LEAs, as well as 21 additional LEAs who volunteered to participate in the second year of the pilot. In addition to training on the components of the teacher effectiveness measure, the sessions included an introduction to the new electronic platform that will be used to collect and analyze teacher, principal, and evaluator data. The State revised training materials based on process feedback from the participating LEAs, focus groups, and mid-year and end-of-year surveys. Additional on-line professional learning materials were made available to teachers for SY 2012-2013.

## Performance-based pay

During Year 2, Georgia and the Professional Standards Commission (PSC) convened a Career Ladder Task Force to draft guidance for implementing a career ladder at the LEA level. Specifically, the guidance will help support LEAs in recognizing and using master teachers and teacher leaders and moving them into administrative roles. Additionally, the guidance will be used to inform statewide policy. Once the draft guidance passed the final review process in June 2012, the State posted it for public comment. The State finalized and published the guidance in August 2012.

## Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals

On January 20, 2012, GaDOE released the Relocation Bonus Grant, an initiative designed to promote the equitable distribution of teachers and school leaders. LEAs are allowed to use grant funds to provide incentives to teachers and school leaders to serve rural, high-need schools by relocating to the LEA and meeting academic targets. To be eligible to apply for the grant, LEAs had to be located in a county with a population of less than 35,000, legislatively designated as "rural," or eligible to receive Federal grant funds under the Rural and Low-income School Program or Small Rural Achievement Program. Only four LEAs applied for the grant, and GaDOE awarded one two-year grant to Thomas County Schools. The State has since chosen to discontinue this program.

# Great Teachers and Leaders

## Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs

Georgia convened the Preparation Program Effectiveness Measure (PPEM) task force, made up of representatives from the Governor's office, GaDOE, LEAs, and IHEs, to propose measures to include in the new preparation program report card. The task force carefully reviewed all proposed measures and then made recommendations for the teacher and school leader PPEM in July 2012. The recommendations were available for public comment for 90 days. The task force will submit final recommendations to the TAC during its October 2012 meeting.

Georgia IHEs are working collaboratively, along with the Governor and GaDOE, to identify the knowledge necessary for educators to meet the new teaching and learning skills and competencies. In addition, the State is exploring ways to make connections between new skills and competencies, clinical experiences, and the use of assessments to colleges of education.

## Providing effective support to teachers and principals

GaDOE and PSC introduced draft principal and teacher induction guidelines on September 20, 2011, to all Race to the Top participating LEAs. Copies of the draft guidelines were provided to each participant at the October 2011 Race to the Top Summit in Athens, Georgia, and were made available online for public comment from October through December, 2011. During the comment period, the GaDOE induction specialist visited all 26 participating LEAs for an initial conversation regarding the status of induction programs. In response to the fall 2011 onsite visits, five regional collaboration sessions were facilitated by the State induction specialist. A revised draft of the induction guidelines was released in February 2012 and reviewed by the GaDOE policy and legal departments in March 2012. The purpose of the final Principal and Teacher Induction Guidance is to provide direction for Georgia LEAs and schools to create, implement, and sustain quality teacher and principal induction programs and to inform State policy and development in the areas of teacher and principal induction. The State also made awards under the Innovation Fund program to encourage collaboration between IHEs and LEAs to provide teacher induction support programs.

## Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

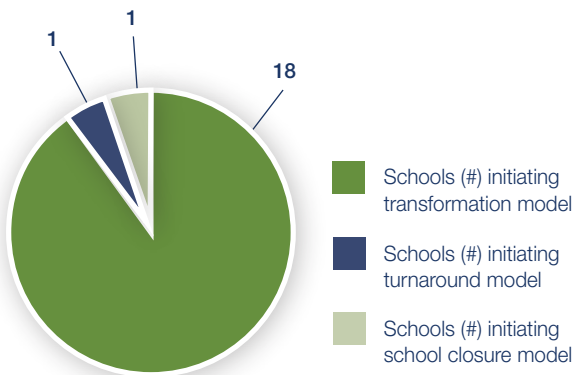
In Year 2, the State did not demonstrate that it was developing and approaching implementation of the teacher and leader evaluation systems in a comprehensive and deliberate manner that includes consideration of dependent deliverables, a structured process for evaluating and incorporating formative feedback, and a communications strategy including all relevant stakeholders. As a result, the Department placed this portion of Georgia's Race to the Top grant on high-risk status. As a condition of high-risk status, the State submitted a revised work plan that includes management and oversight procedures; rigorous and transparent processes for reviewing components used in its educator evaluation system; educator engagement and communication systems; mechanisms to gather rigorous systematic and ongoing formative feedback; and critical decision points where feedback from educators and data will be used to inform potential changes to the educator evaluation system before full implementation in SY 2013-2014.

Georgia made strides in other aspects of this core education reform area. The State's partnership with TFA and TNTP not only provided alternative pathways for teacher certification, but also helped the State recruit teachers into some of the neediest schools across the State. In addition, the PPEM task force convened throughout the year and provided recommendations for both the teacher and leader PPEM for review by the TAC in fall 2012. Moreover, GaDOE and PSC created the Principal and Teacher Induction Guidance that provides guidelines to LEAs on how to create and sustain teacher and principal induction programs.

# 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.<sup>9</sup>

School Intervention Models Initiated in Georgia in SY 2011–2012



This data represents schools that initiated (that is, school(s) in the first year of implementation of) one of the four intervention models in SY 2011-2012.

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

## Support for the lowest-achieving schools

All participating LEAs with lowest-achieving schools signed memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with the State in October 2011. These MOUs contained commitments from LEAs to implement one of the four reform models and the State's non-negotiable programmatic initiatives, including 60 minutes of common planning time for teachers per week, optimization of the use of existing time for all students, increased learning time for those students or student sub-groups that need additional time, and a commitment to hiring at least one full-time mathematics coach for each lowest-achieving school. In partnership with LEAs, the State examined the effectiveness of many lowest-achieving school leaders and jointly decided to replace 15 school leaders for SY 2012-2013. In addition, three schools were removed from the list of lowest-achieving schools in Year 2 because of significant improvement in student academic achievement.

Throughout Year 2, Georgia demonstrated a commitment to turning around its lowest-achieving schools and collaborated with other Race to the Top States to improve school intervention work. In February 2012, representatives from GaDOE participated in an all-day RSN convening of school turnaround leads, where they shared successes and challenges in implementing school intervention efforts and led a discussion on the State's approach for assessing the causes of poor performance in these lowest-achieving schools. Additionally, between February and May 2012, representatives from GaDOE actively served on the RSN Developing Turnaround Principal Academies/Pipelines working group, where the State had opportunities to lead discussions on the shared understanding of turnaround principal characteristics, actions and measures of effectiveness, and the use of quantitative and qualitative measures of effectiveness for turnaround principals. GaDOE also shared lessons learned with other States in the RSN School Turnaround Community of Practice.

GaDOE assigned a school improvement specialist to each low-achieving school and lead school improvement specialists to monitor the school improvement specialists' work. The school improvement specialists not only monitored the implementation of school intervention initiatives, but also worked with school-based instructional coaches and classroom-based teachers to provide onsite support. In Year 2, the State expressed some concern about the effectiveness of some of these specialists and their ability to consistently monitor the implementation of the reform models. The State is committed to monitoring the school improvement specialists and making any changes when necessary.

As another means of support to LEAs, Georgia performed a Georgia Assessment of Performance on School Standards analysis of all the lowest-achieving schools, and in response, each school developed a School Improvement Plan and prioritized professional development to address the analysis findings. The State also contracted with a vendor to conduct resource allocation analyses for five LEAs—Fulton County Schools, Hall County Schools, Marietta City Public Schools, Treutlen County Schools, and Vidalia City Schools. Although the State experienced delays in signing the contract, which ultimately delayed the completion of the analyses, the vendor completed the initial financial analysis for four of the five LEAs in June 2012 and met with each to provide recommendations. The vendor continued its analyses over the summer and provided additional information to LEAs by fall 2012.

<sup>9</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 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.

# Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

In SY 2011-2012, the State opened two Performance Learning Centers for dropout prevention in Floyd County and Richmond County to support students and reported that both centers have been successful in graduating students. The two centers graduated a total of 40 students during the school year. The State opened a third center in Carrollton City in August 2012.

Also during Year 2, the State continued the Summer Leadership Academies that provide support and professional development for teachers and principals working in the State's lowest-achieving schools. The 2012 Summer Leadership Academy agenda focused on moving from compliance to improvement. Topics included building the foundation for continuous improvement, developing a school improvement plan, putting the plan into action, and monitoring implementation of the plan. During collaborative planning time, the State asked school teams, including principals, assistant principals, teachers, and coaches, to review and revise their school improvement plans for SY 2012-2013. Teams from all priority schools, as identified under the State's approved ESEA flexibility request, were required to attend the 2012 Summer Leadership Academy.

## Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

During Year 2, Georgia collaborated with other States through the RSN to discuss and share their experiences in implementing school intervention initiatives. The State also worked closely with participating LEAs to ensure they implemented the school intervention structural and programmatic initiatives required in the State's Race to the Top plan, including common planning time, coaches, and increasing instructional time for those students that require additional support. Despite the close working relationship, however, the State identified communication obstacles between GaDOE and the LEAs regarding the school intervention policies and procedures. The State also noted concerns about the timeliness of information passed down from GaDOE to the LEAs.

Notably, during Year 2 the State removed three schools from its list of lowest-achieving schools because of significant gains in student academic achievement. Specifically, the schools that were removed were noted as: (a) not being identified as a Priority or Focus school under the new ESEA flexibility designations, (b) demonstrating substantial gains in standardized test scores in mathematics and ELA, and (c) receiving consistent monitoring reports from both the Lead School Improvement Specialist and the School Improvement Specialist throughout the year that indicated the turnaround models were implemented with fidelity.

The State continues to use lessons learned from onsite visits, trainings with school improvement specialists, surveys, and other forms of feedback from school-level staff and LEAs to inform its implementation of projects across this core education reform area.

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

### State's STEM initiatives

#### CEISMC STEM activities

GaDOE partnered with the Georgia Institute of Technology's CEISMC to provide professional development for teachers in grades 3-12 in STEM content and content delivery skills. The State has six CEISMC STEM projects that: (1) provide online professional development to STEM teachers in STEM best practices; (2) develop instructional toolkits for administrators and teachers to support the effective use of technology in a standards-based classroom; (3) expand the Georgia Intern-Fellowships for Teachers (GIFT) program; (4) provide a new operations research-based mathematics course as a Math 4 option; (5) use robotics/engineering design to create an integrated STEM course; and (6) offer advanced courses in college-level calculus II and III through video conferencing.

During SY 2011-2012, CEISMC formed content teams to develop the self-paced online course content for teachers and advanced courses for students. By April 2012, CEISMC had developed, piloted, and offered the first prototype STEM online course for teachers. CEISMC also worked with GaDOE and the Georgia Virtual School to design and test the first module of the Instructional Technology Toolkit. In summer 2012, 102 teachers participated in the Georgia Intern Fellowships for Teachers (GIFT) program, in which they produced lesson plans for classroom implementation that were shared with GaDOE for distribution and placement on the GaDOE website. CEISMC also developed an eighth grade, nine-week robotics and engineering course.

Despite the progress made in Year 2, the State is more than one year behind in four of its six CEISMC projects; as a result, teachers and students did not have access to many of these resources in



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

Year 2. The State planned for the Instructional Technology Toolkit to be available to teachers in Year 2, but GaDOE reported that the first courses will not be available until the start of SY 2012-2013. The State is also behind in implementing the thematic Robotics and Engineering block unit and online Math 4 courses. The State had planned to implement the nine-week Robotics and Engineering course in the first three schools during Year 2; however, CEISMC did not identify schools for the first cohort until spring 2012, and implementation will not begin until SY 2012-2013. Similarly, the online STEM courses Math 4-Operations Research and Introduction to Engineering were supposed to be available to students during Year 2, but the State reported that it expects these courses to be online in January 2013.

## UTeach Institute

The State entered into an agreement with the UTeach Institute to recruit and train undergraduate mathematics and science majors as teachers.

The State awarded grants to three geographically diverse universities—University of West Georgia, Southern Polytechnic University, and Valdosta University—to implement the UTeach programs. During Year 2, implementation of these programs was underway.

## Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

Georgia has integrated STEM initiatives across education reform areas. The State has entered various partnerships to support its STEM initiatives and has made some progress in completing some key STEM tasks, such as expansion of the GIFT program, the development of the eighth-grade robotics and engineering course, and the UTeach Institute. Overall, however, the State is more than one year behind in four of its six CEISMC projects.

## Looking Ahead to Year 3

During Year 3, the State must make significant strides with its educator evaluation system in order to implement the system with fidelity in Year 3 and beyond. To comply with the conditions of high-risk status, the State submitted a revised SY 2012-2013 work plan for its teacher and leader evaluation system.

Georgia must assess the 2012 evaluation system pilot and complete the statistical analyses to determine the correlation between the student growth percentiles, the observation protocols, and the student survey. Also, the State has to complete adjustments to its student growth percentile model and finalize percentiles for Year 2 pilot participants. In addition, Georgia will need to revisit the student survey and address some of the technical issues it identified in Year 2 before use in SY 2012-2013 and conclude the roster verification process that was scheduled for completion in Year 2. Furthermore, during Year 3, an external vendor will build on the first phase of an electronic platform that was put into operation for use by LEAs in SY 2012-2013 to help the State collect educator evaluation data, expanding the functionality and components of the platform throughout Year 3. Finally, the State must submit a report no later than July 2013 summarizing the analysis and findings related to validation of all components of its educator evaluation system. This report should include information regarding trainings and support provided to pilot districts, communication materials, evaluation activities, and a proposal for any revisions to the educator evaluation system in SY 2013-2014.

Georgia recognizes an overarching need to develop and implement rigorous routines and processes to manage its project and project components that fall under the various education reform areas, as well as the need to assess the quality of implementation at both the State and LEA levels. The State will re-visit its LEA oversight procedures to

ensure that it is able to collect consistent data on LEA progress and to assess LEA quality of implementation. Accordingly, Georgia will need to revise the progress report template it implemented during Year 2 to more effectively monitor participating LEAs. Georgia will implement more formal processes for monitoring and assessing the quality of implementation of activities across the Race to the Top project at the State level. In addition, Georgia will continue to work with a consulting firm to develop a comprehensive communications plan and strategy that will align the educator evaluation system, CCGPS, CCRPI, and other reforms, which will allow the State to better articulate how these components fit together.

Further, during Year 3, Georgia will continue the transition and roll-out the CCGPS. CCGPS staff is currently working with the technology team at GaDOE to create a Teacher Resource Link (TRL) that will serve as a delivery mechanism for teachers to access CCGPS resources. GaDOE piloted the TRL in spring 2012, and the State reported the system would be ready for full roll-out in fall 2012. In order to continue the roll-out, the State will attempt to address its CCGPS staffing challenges, in addition to those found across other education reform areas and at the State management level. GaDOE will also run the second phase of the formative assessment toolkit pilot with additional assessment items. It also anticipates starting work on the benchmark assessments. The State expects these assessments to be available to LEAs in fall 2013.

Additionally, during Year 3, Georgia will continue to build upon and refine its existing systems related to its data systems and school intervention initiatives.

# Budget

For the State's expenditures through June 30, 2012, please see the APR at [www.rtt-apr.us](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, please see <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/performance.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): (a) can be provided by various types of qualified providers, including both institutions of higher education and other providers operating independently from institutions of higher education; (b) are selective in accepting candidates; (c) provide supervised, school-based experiences and ongoing support such as effective mentoring and coaching; (d) significantly limit the amount of coursework required or have options to test out of courses; and (e) 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 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 final 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 States, governors, chief State school officers, content experts, teachers, school administrators, and parents. The standards establish clear and consistent goals for learning that will prepare America's children for success in college and careers. As of December 2011, the CCSS were adopted by 45 States and the District of Columbia.

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 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.

**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.

**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, (i) 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 (ii) 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 (i) 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 (ii) 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>.)

**Qualifying evaluation systems:** Educator evaluation systems that meet the following criteria: rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation

systems for teachers and principals that: (a) differentiate effectiveness using multiple rating categories that take into account data on student growth as a significant factor, and (b) are designed and developed with teacher and principal involvement.

**Reform Support Network (RSN):** In partnership with the 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 project 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 (a) for tested grades and subjects is (1) a student's score on the State's assessments under the ESEA; and, as appropriate, (2) other measures of student learning, such as those described in paragraph (b) of this definition, provided they are rigorous and comparable across classrooms; and (b) 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."