



# Four Years Later, Are Race to the Top States on Track?

By Tiffany D. Miller and Robert Hanna    March 24, 2014

Race to the Top is a first-of-its kind \$4.35 billion competitive grant program designed to spur state-level education innovation to boost student achievement, close achievement gaps, and prepare students for college and careers.<sup>1</sup> This program is significant not only because of the amount of funds made available for competitive grants to states but also because it pushes them to radically change the way they think about educational improvement. Race to the Top, or RTT, encourages states to rethink current standards and raise expectations for all students. It makes building longitudinal data systems a key component of the program, knowing that unless these systems are in place, there is no systematic way to target professional development for educators, ensure equitable distribution of teachers, or turn around low-performing schools.

Originally authorized in 2009 under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act,<sup>2</sup> RTT encourages states to develop and implement key reform strategies around four core components:

- Adopting rigorous college- and career-ready standards and assessments
- Recruiting, evaluating, and retaining highly effective teachers and principals
- Building data systems that measure student success and inform teaching and learning
- Turning around low-performing schools<sup>3</sup>

Interested states had to demonstrate collaborative efforts around the proposed reforms, as well as a commitment to emphasize science and mathematics and conditions for innovation, including high-performing charter schools and flexibility around school schedule, staffing, and budget.<sup>4</sup>

In total, 45 states and the District of Columbia applied for funding in three phases. The U.S. Department of Education announced the Phase 1 winners—Delaware and Tennessee—in March 2010. A few months later, the Phase 2 winners—District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, and Rhode Island—were announced. Arizona, Colorado, Illinois,

Kentucky, Louisiana, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania were awarded Phase 3 grants in December 2011.<sup>5</sup> All RTT states have four years from receiving their grants to use the new funds, but the U.S. Department of Education has granted some states “no-cost extensions” based on their progress with implementing their plans.<sup>6</sup>

RTT became a model for additional U.S. Department of Education competitive grant programs. The RTT Early Learning Challenge, for example, launched to improve early learning and development programs for low-income and disadvantaged infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.<sup>7</sup> The department also initiated a RTT-District competition, focused on personalizing education for all students, and a RTT Assessment Program to help states that decided to implement more rigorous standards and assessments.<sup>8</sup> Finally, President Barack Obama’s recently released budget included a new Race to the Top for Equity and Opportunity competition, which is organized around different core components but similarly focused on state-level planning and activities to promote school improvement.<sup>9</sup>

March 2014 marks four years since the first grants were announced, and in a little over a year, the RTT funding to these initial set of states will end. Though the department hired three well-respected research firms to conduct a comprehensive evaluation, the results will not be made publicly available for several years.<sup>10</sup> Until then, it is important to assess, to the extent possible, the progress that states are making along the way.

An examination of the U.S. Department of Education’s latest Annual Performance Report, or APR, data around the four core RTT components demonstrates the states’ progress.<sup>11</sup> When necessary, the APRs are supplemented with extant data from other sources, such as the Government Accountability Office. This preliminary analysis is not comprehensive and focuses on state APR reports to the U.S. Department of Education. Where possible, the analysis makes overarching statements about the RTT states in the aggregate and highlights interesting innovations that a state might be doing under the four core components. This brief does not benchmark states’ success against a set of key indicators, as CAP’s 2012 report did.<sup>12</sup>

Three overarching findings emerged in the review of the data:

- **Many of the lowest-performing schools in RTT states have achieved impressive results in a short period of time.** Over the past few years, states reported on the progress of implementing reform models in their lowest-performing schools. Many states described schools where educators and students had improved performance to such an extent that their schools could move out of the ranks of the “lowest-performing.” RTT states also showed their willingness to take action by intervening in low-performing schools that failed to improve.

- **Four RTT states are at or near full implementation of their educator evaluation systems, and all other states are in the process of implementing their systems.**<sup>13</sup> Implementing new, more rigorous educator evaluation systems is technical and arduous work. It is a time-consuming effort that requires significant collaboration from state and district leaders, school administrators, and teachers. It is noteworthy that six states have evaluation systems in full implementation at the four-year mark.
- **All RTT states have adopted college- and career-ready standards and are making progress toward implementation of assessments aligned with those standards.** States provided educators with professional development opportunities and training on new, more rigorous standards. Although states have made progress, a few are struggling with implementation of the new standards.

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## State progress under Race to the Top's four components

Race to the Top, one of President Obama's signature education initiatives, seeks to move the needle on student achievement. In his words, "It's time to stop talking about education reform and start actually doing it. It's time to make education America's national mission."<sup>14</sup> To win part of the \$4.35 billion grant, states had to create or accelerate the conditions for substantial education innovation and reform, such as closing achievement gaps, boosting overall student achievement, increasing graduation rates, and ensuring that students are prepared for college and careers.<sup>15</sup>

The U.S. Department of Education granted different levels of funding to states based on budgets given in their applications and set budget caps for Phase 2 state applications.<sup>16</sup> In the first phase, Delaware received around \$100 million dollars and Tennessee around \$500 million dollars, disbursed over several years of the grant.<sup>17</sup> Another 10 states were awarded grant money in the second phase, including New York and Florida—which were awarded \$700 million, budgeted over multiple years—and Rhode Island, which received \$75 million. The Department of Education vetted and hired peer reviewers with professional experience in education and evaluating state, district, and school reform to score the applications and provide comments.<sup>18</sup>

All states aligned their comprehensive reform plans around RTT's four core components, which are described in more detail in the following sections.

### College- and career-ready standards

The U.S. Department of Education expects RTT states to adopt college- and career-ready standards that are designed to prepare students for college without the need for remediation or provide them with the skills needed for employment after high school. Applicants

that demonstrated a commitment to work with other states to develop and adopt high-quality, internationally benchmarked college- and career-ready standards received points.

All RTT states decided to adopt the Common Core State Standards, or CCSS, which meet these requirements. Convened by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers, a group of educators and learning experts developed the CCSS as a set of higher quality student achievement standards. In general, 73 percent of teachers surveyed in states that adopted the Common Core are enthusiastic about its implementation in their classroom.<sup>19</sup>

In RTT applications and APRs, each state has to indicate how it supports statewide transition to the new standards. Across all CCSS states, 62 percent of teachers agree that implementation is going well.<sup>20</sup> RTT states reported providing educators with professional development opportunities and training on the new standards, though some states are further along with implementation than others. New York, for example, is facing implementation challenges with the rollout of the CCSS. In a recent survey of New York teachers, 77 percent said that implementing the standards is challenging. Still, the majority of teachers—67 percent—are enthusiastic about the implementation in their classroom, and 69 percent say that the new standards will have a positive impact on their students' ability to think critically and use reasoning skills.<sup>21</sup>

As with any large reform effort, midcourse corrections might be needed. New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo (D) saw this as an opportunity to improve, and formed a Common Core Implementation Panel—made up of local and national experts, educators, parents, and other stakeholders—to do a comprehensive review of the rollout.<sup>22</sup> Earlier this month, the panel delivered initial recommendations to improve implementation and ensure its success.<sup>23</sup> Similarly, the New York Board of Regents has made proposals to help with implementation.<sup>24</sup>

Not all states are experiencing the same level of difficulty with Common Core implementation. In Tennessee, for example, the state education department trained 42,000 teachers during the 2012-13 school year and the summer of 2013, which accounts for about two-thirds of the state's teacher workforce.<sup>25</sup> The trainings were led by the state's most effective teachers, who competed to be selected for these coveted leadership roles. The trainings were optional, but the turnout was large. In partnership with the Tennessee State Collaborative on Reforming Education, or SCORE, Tennessee also formed a Common Core Leadership Council to give districts a voice in the transition to the new standards. The council is tasked with advising the state department of education on assessment, creating professional development resources, shaping Common Core pilot programs, and becoming experts and leaders.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, the Delaware Department of Education created an initiative called Common Ground for the Common Core, which brings schools and district representatives from a variety of districts together to work on how to implement the standards in classrooms.<sup>27</sup>

The U.S. Department of Education expects states to begin implementing end-of-year tests aligned with these standards during the 2014-15 school year.<sup>28</sup> These tests would ask students to perform tasks described in the state's standards.

RTT states made great progress toward fully implementing college- and career-ready standards. As states continue to move forward with implementation, it is important to learn from the process and make midcourse corrections when needed to improve its overall success.

### Recruiting, evaluating, and retaining highly effective teachers and principals

The U.S. Department of Education asked states to focus on improving teacher and principal quality along the career continuum in grant applications.<sup>29</sup> In doing so, states described how to improve the ways in which their educators are prepared, supported, and evaluated.<sup>30</sup> Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance is a priority. The Department of Education expects evaluation systems to include multiple factors, with student growth data as a significant element. States, districts, and schools must use evaluation data to inform personnel decisions, including promotion, compensation, and retention of highly effective teachers and principals. Finally, evaluation data needs to ensure the equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals—another priority. Incomplete APR data or partially implemented evaluation systems made tracking progress on this indicator for every state a challenge.

Four states are at or near full implementation of educator evaluation systems.<sup>31</sup> In particular, Delaware, Florida, Tennessee, and the District of Columbia are using evaluation systems to inform most system components, including teacher and principal development, promotion, retention of effective teachers and principals, granting tenure or full certification, and removal of ineffective tenured or untenured teachers and principals.<sup>32</sup> All other states are partially implementing or piloting evaluation systems. Rhode Island, for example, had an evaluation system in place during the 2012-13 school year but did not include a student growth component, as required by the U.S. Department of Education.<sup>33</sup>

Implementation has not been without challenges. As documented in media outlets, many RTT states struggled to implement educator evaluation systems. Additionally, annual reports from state departments of education indicate that both Georgia and Maryland struggled with implementing their systems.<sup>34</sup> And at one point, New York and Hawaii faced union challenges around teacher evaluation.<sup>35</sup> A recent Government Accountability Office, or GAO, report found that officials in most RTT states experienced challenges with respect to developing and using evaluation measures, addressing teacher concerns, and building capacity and sustainability.<sup>36</sup> The report further noted that teachers in 11 states expressed concerns about the scale of the change,

especially attaching consequences to evaluations. Even states that are now fully implemented, such as Delaware, faced implementation delays.<sup>37</sup> As anyone who has embarked on ambitious education reforms knows, change is never easy and this is incredibly hard work. Yet, even with these challenges, states have moved forward with ambitious reforms to evaluation systems.

APR data suggest that Delaware and Tennessee are making progress on using evaluation systems to ensure the equitable distribution of effective teachers. Sixty-five percent of teachers were rated effective or better in Delaware's high-poverty schools with high concentrations of students of color in 2012-13.<sup>38</sup> In comparison, 58 percent of teachers received this rating in low-poverty schools with small concentrations of students of color.<sup>39</sup> Twenty-five percent were rated highly effective—the highest rating possible—exceeding the state's 20 percent goal.<sup>40</sup> In low-poverty schools serving low concentrations of students of color, 30 percent received this rating. In Tennessee, 72 percent of teachers in high-poverty schools with high concentrations of students of color were rated effective or better, and 48 percent were rated highly effective, surpassing the 30 percent target.<sup>41</sup> In low-poverty schools serving small concentrations of students of color, 83 percent were rated effective or better, and 64 percent were rated highly effective, also surpassing the 45 percent target.

It is also clear that in some states much more work needs to be done. Sixty-one percent of teachers working in high-poverty schools with high concentrations of students or color were rated effective or better in Washington, D.C., down from 71 percent in 2011-12.<sup>42</sup> The percentage of teachers rated effective or better in low-poverty schools with small concentrations of students of color also experienced a decrease—84 percent received this rating in 2012-13, down from 91 percent in 2011-12. Only 15 percent of the District's teachers in high-poverty schools serving large populations of students of color were rated highly effective, missing its 86 percent target.<sup>43</sup> Similarly, in low-poverty schools with small concentrations of students of color, 41 percent of teachers were rated highly effective in 2012-13, far short of its 93 percent target.

Although four RTT states made great progress toward implementing systems to evaluate, reward, and retain effective teachers and principals, more work needs to be done to ensure that great teachers and leaders are in classrooms with the students who need them the most.

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## Building data systems to ensure success

Virtually all RTT states developed robust data systems to track students from pre-school into postsecondary education, a requirement for RTT funding.<sup>44</sup> RTT requires state data systems to include 12 elements outlined in the America COMPETES Act.<sup>45</sup> State data systems must be able to follow students from pre-kindergarten through college, logging information about their course grades in K-12 and college, includ-

ing details about when they graduate or drop out.<sup>46</sup> States are also expected to match teachers with their students over time. All but one state follows students across grades through college. At the time of reporting, Ohio had not linked their school data systems with higher education data systems.<sup>47</sup>

States also created or developed data “dashboards” or “portals” for educators to analyze school data, including student performance data, and agency staff provided training for educators to help them use statewide data systems, especially for instructional improvement. For example, Massachusetts has school and district “Profiles” pages that include data on not only school and district academic performance, but also college enrollment rates for graduates of state high schools.<sup>48</sup> And last year, Delaware sent out 29 “data coaches” to work with small groups of teachers to better understand how to use data to improve teaching.<sup>49</sup>

The U.S. Department of Education’s Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems program supported much of this data reform work in RTT states. As part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, this competitive grant program funded states’ work on developing data systems that connect K-12 school data with preschool and postsecondary education and workforce data.<sup>50</sup>

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## Turning around the lowest-performing schools

Many of the lowest-performing schools in RTT states have achieved impressive results in a short period of time,<sup>51</sup> with states even describing schools where educators and students had improved performance so much that their schools could move out of the ranks of the “lowest-performing,” a RTT priority.

Massachusetts and North Carolina stand out in particular. Massachusetts focused on more than 40 schools for intensive intervention.<sup>52</sup> Fourteen of these schools, including Orchard Gardens in Boston and Homer Street in Springfield, showed such improvement over a few years that Massachusetts removed them from the state’s list of its lowest-performing schools.<sup>53</sup> Likewise, North Carolina worked closely with more than 100 of its lowest-performing schools. At least 20 of these schools, including Oak Hill Elementary in Guilford County and Petree Elementary in Forsyth County, improved students’ math proficiency by more than 10 percentage points over a few years—several points above average growth in the state.<sup>54</sup>

Many RTT states also showed their willingness to take action by intervening in low-performing schools that failed to improve. Over the past few years, states have reported on the progress of implementing reform models in their lowest-performing schools. In most schools targeted for intervention, the state and its districts placed new leaders in these settings and charged them with leading implementation of these



school improvement models. States could provide technical assistance on a case-by-case basis—and did so in many instances—but educators ultimately would enact these models in schools themselves. In their APR reports, states described that their low-performing schools were implementing their improvement models according to the U.S. Department of Education’s guidelines.

Under those guidelines, RTT required states to make bureaucratic changes in order to increase their powers to intervene in “persistently” low-performing schools.<sup>55</sup> In order to be awarded a grant, states had to demonstrate evidence of structural, legislative, and regulatory reforms that are conducive to direct intervention in low-performing schools and plans for future actions to change the “conditions” in which educators operate. It also required states to identify the lowest-performing schools and work with districts to select one of four intervention models to implement in these buildings.<sup>56</sup> Districts and schools most often selected the transformation model, which includes specific whole-school reforms such as replacing the principal and increasing learning time. The “school turnaround” approach is another commonly selected model that includes replacing the principal and rehiring no more than half the school staff. Districts and schools selected the closure and restart models much less frequently.<sup>57</sup>

RTT states differed in the number of schools they were responsible for turning around; this variation was mostly related to the size of their student populations. Florida, for example, targeted more than 70 schools for school improvement, while the District of Columbia targeted around 15.<sup>58</sup>

New York temporarily withheld federal school improvement funding from some schools until their districts submitted plans for new teacher evaluation systems in 2011-12.<sup>59</sup> The state described how these districts delayed some school-level reform activities until the next year.<sup>60</sup>

Georgia took a more active role in providing technical assistance to DeKalb County when Towers High School failed to show adequate progress.<sup>61</sup> The state created a new “District Effectiveness” team to do this work. Likewise, Tennessee moved six of its lowest-performing schools from their public school districts into direct governance by the state.<sup>62</sup> Within this new “Achievement School District,” Tennessee granted education leaders additional flexibilities in managing various resources in these schools—time, money, and people.<sup>63</sup>

Across all states, school improvement remains a work in progress, with new schools moving into the ranks of the lowest performing as other schools move up.



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## Conclusion

Based on our exploratory review of the most recent APR data, RTT states have made progress toward their goals, yet more work needs to be done, which is unsurprising given the amount of change promised. As reviewed in CAP's 2012 report,<sup>64</sup> states set ambitious goals in their original plans and it will take time to reach them. Substantial change in education policy is challenging. What is most important, however, is how states meet those challenges and move past them toward success. States should continue to make midcourse corrections when needed, and the U.S. Department of Education should continue to provide this flexibility, when appropriate.

Though RTT grants end for Phase 1 and 2 states in a little over a year, the work will likely continue given the current policy context.<sup>65</sup> Over the past two years, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan made agreements with most states, including all RTT states, which loosen certain onerous provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. In exchange, states committed to implement and continue reforms in domains that are similar to RTT, such as college- and career-ready standards, evaluating teachers, and promoting effective teaching.<sup>66</sup>

In short, the ultimate result of RTT will not be known for several years, as evaluation of the initiative continues. Indeed, many states faced challenges meeting their goals and will likely continue to do so. Although states have struggled through different aspects of the program, RTT sparked significant education reforms, specifically a widespread move to college- and career-ready standards, which is creating conditions for innovation, strengthening educator quality along the career spectrum, and pushing other states that did not receive RTT funds in the same direction. What's more, despite these challenges, RTT states reached important milestones and accomplished a great deal in a short amount of time.

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## Endnotes

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- 2 *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009*, Public Law 111-5, 100th Cong. (February 17, 2009), available at <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/recovery/statutory/stabilization-fund.pdf>.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Ibid.
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- 6 U.S. Department of Education, "Race to the Top Program Grantee Frequently Asked Questions No Cost Extension Addendum" (2013), available at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/faq-nocostextension-addendum.pdf>; U.S. Department of Education, "Race to the Top Grantee Frequently Asked Questions" (2011), available at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/faq-grantee.pdf>.
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- 9 For more information about Race to the Top-Equity and Opportunity: Support to Close Achievement and Opportunity Gaps, see the department's website at U.S. Department of Education, "Race to the Top-Equity and Opportunity: Support to Close Achievement and Opportunity Gaps," available at <http://www.ed.gov/racetothetop-equity-opportunity> (last accessed March 2014).
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- 13 We define full implementation as evaluation systems that reported using evaluation data to inform all personnel decisions, including the other elements. We considered systems near full implementation if almost all other components are in place, but it is not yet used for personnel decisions.
- 14 U.S. Department of Education, "Race to the Top Program Executive Summary."
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- 16 U.S. Department of Education, "Race to the Top Program Guidance and Frequently Asked Questions" (2010), available at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/faq.pdf>.
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- 28 This information was taken from the Race to the Top 2012-13 Annual Performance Reports, available at Race to the Top, "Annual Performance Report," available at <https://www.rtt-apr.us/> (last accessed March 2014).
- 29 It should be noted that the last several years have been a period of substantial reform, and Race to the Top was one of the U.S. Department of Education's policy activities aimed at improving academic outcomes for students. During this time period, the education secretary offered states the option to request flexibility from certain provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act. In exchange for these flexibilities, states had to commit to principles of reform, including adopting new teacher evaluation systems. To learn more, see U.S. Department of Education, "Elementary & Secondary Education: ESEA Flexibility," available at <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/esea-flexibility/index.html> (last accessed March 2014).
- 30 U.S. Department of Education "Race to the Top Program Executive Summary."
- 31 See endnote 13 for our definition of fully implemented.
- 32 Ibid.

- 33 For more information on Rhode Island's implementation results, see Rhode Island Department of Education, "Rhode Island Educator Evaluations: Improving Teaching and Learning" (2013), 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).
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- 45 U.S. Department of Education, "Race to the Top Program Executive Summary"; U.S. Department of Education, "Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems," available at <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/slds/factsheet.pdf> (last accessed March 2014).
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- 47 U.S. Department of Education, "Race to the Top Annual Performance Report: Ohio," available at <https://www.rtt-apr.us/state/ohio/2012-2013/intro> (last accessed March 2014).
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- 49 U.S. Department of Education, "Race to the Top Annual Performance Report, Delaware"; Delaware Department of Education, "Delaware Launches Data Coaching Initiative," Press release, February 25, 2011, available at <http://www.doe.k12.de.us/news/2011/0225.shtml>.
- 50 U.S. Department of Education, "Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems."
- 51 Authors' calculations based on public data on state assessments. The U.S. Department of Education has released school-level proficiency data on state assessments across four consecutive school years: 2008-09, 2009-10, 2010-11, and 2011-12. These datasets can be found at <http://www.data.gov/education/>. For more information on accessing these datasets, refer to the following press releases from the U.S. Department of Education: U.S. Department of Education, "U.S. Department of Education releases school-level assessment data in reading and math for all schools for 2008-2009 to 2010-11," Press release, January 31, 2013, available at <http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/us-department-education-releases-school-level-assessment-data-reading-and-math-a>; U.S. Department of Education, "U.S. Department of Education releases School Improvement Grant (SIG) data analysis," Press release, November 21, 2013, available at <https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/us-department-education-releases-school-improvement-grant-sig-data-analysis>. Researchers should use caution when analyzing these datasets. States might change their state assessments significantly between years or change definitions of "proficiency" on these assessments. For more information on how to use these datasets, refer to the U.S. Department of Education's guidance in the following documents: U.S. Department of Education, "Results for state assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics, school years 2008-09, 2009-10, and 2010-11 – Provisional EData – ED Facts Data Documentation" (2013), available at <https://explore.data.gov/api/assets/31D31F58-7D2D-45D9-8D70-3C4E37DF2372?download=true>; U.S. Department of Education, "Results for state assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics, school year 2011-2012 – Provisional Data – ED Facts Data Documentation" (2013), available at <https://explore.data.gov/api/assets/8FE14AB0-B11F-4C82-82F0-B7A45B4CFB94?download=true>.
- 52 U.S. Department of Education, "Race to the Top Annual Performance Report: Massachusetts," available at <https://www.rtt-apr.us/state/massachusetts/2012-2013/intro> (last accessed March 2014).
- 53 Ibid.
- 54 Authors' calculations based on public data on state assessment results. For schools that serve fewer than 300 students, the U.S. Department of Education does not report proficiency rates publicly. Instead, they present a range of proficiency rates to protect student confidentiality. Based on these ranges, we estimate that across North Carolina, school-level proficiency rates improved by around 3 to 6 percentage points on average between 2009 and 2012. The state reported proficiency data for more than 2,500 schools. See the two documents referenced above for more information about using these datasets: U.S. Department of Education, "Results for state assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics, school years 2008-09, 2009-10, and 2010-11 – Provisional EData – ED Facts Data Documentation"; U.S. Department of Education, "Results for state assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics, school year 2011-2012 – Provisional Data – ED Facts Data Documentation." Mathematics assessment data can be found at the following websites for schools in North Carolina and other states: Data.gov, "Achievement Results for State Assessments in Mathematics: School Year 2008-09," available at <https://explore.data.gov/Education/Achievement-Results-for-State-Assessments-in-Mathe/jje4-w22m> (last accessed March 2014); Data.gov, "Achievement Results for State Assessments in Mathematics: School Year 2009-10," available at <https://explore.data.gov/Education/Achievement-Results-for-State-Assessments-in-Mathe/hhtw-4eb7> (last accessed March 2014); Data.gov, "Achievement Results for State Assessments in Mathematics: School Year 2010-11," available at <https://explore.data.gov/Education/Achievement-Results-for-State-Assessments-in-Mathe/r3ix-z65i> (last accessed March 2014); Data.gov, "Achievement Results for State Assessments in Mathematics: School Year 2011-12," available at <https://explore.data.gov/Education/Achievement-Results-for-State-Assessments-in-Mathe/3yp3-2q8t> (last accessed March 2014).
- 55 U.S. Department of Education, "Race to the Top Program Executive Summary."
- 56 The Department of Education's School Improvement Grant program supported much of this work. All states received this grant money for this program through normal appropriations associated with No Child Left Behind, which were enhanced through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. States, in turn, distributed money competitively to districts with the lowest-performing schools. U.S. Department of Education, "Guidance on Fiscal Year 2010 School Improvement Grants: Under Section 1003(g) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965" (2011), available at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/sifguidance02232011.pdf>; When Race to the Top states reported about their progress with turning around schools, they primarily discussed their work with these so-called "SIG" schools.

- 57 Steven Hurlburt and others, "School Improvement Grants: Analyses of State Applications and Eligible and Awarded Schools" (2012), available at <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20124060/pdf/20124060.pdf>. According to Exhibit 11 in this report, across 48 states and the District of Columbia, more than 90 percent of schools in the first two cohorts of the SIG program selected the "transformation" or "turnaround" models (p. 23). In RTT states in Phases 1 and 2, schools also began to implement predominantly one of these two models. See the state APR reports for more information on model implementation in individual states. Also, see state APR pages.
- 58 Hurlburt and others, "School Improvement Grants"; See "Exhibit 9: Number of Cohort I and II SIG-Awarded Schools" (p. 21).
- 59 U.S. Department of Education, "Race to the Top Annual Performance Report: New York," available at <https://www.rtt-apr.us/state/new-york/2012-2013/intro> (last accessed March 2013).
- 60 Ibid.
- 61 U.S. Department of Education, "Annual Performance Report: Georgia," available at <https://www.rtt-apr.us/state/georgia/2012-2013/intro> (last accessed March 2014).
- 62 U.S. Department of Education, "Race to the Top Annual Performance Report: Tennessee."
- 63 Achievement School District, "Rethinking District: A Portfolio School District," available at <http://achievementschooldistrict.org/the-asd/rethinking-district/> (last accessed March 2014).
- 64 Boser, "Race to the Top: What Have We Learned from the States So Far?"
- 65 States in Rounds 1 and 2 have their grant periods ending in 2014, but they may extend their work beyond 2014 to meet grant objectives. Normally, states must commit their RTT funds by the end of their four-year period. States could apply for "no-cost extensions" where they were allowed to extend the period in which they would "obligate" funds to July 1, 2015, and any money that states do not "liquidate" by September 2015 must be given to the U.S. Department of Treasury. U.S. Department of Education, "Race to the Top Program Grantee Frequently Asked Questions No Cost Extension Addendum"; U.S. Department of Education, "Race to the Top Amendment Requests with No Cost Extension: Guidance and Principles" (2013), available at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/no-cost-extension-submission-process.pdf>.
- 66 U.S. Department of Education, "ESEA Flexibility" (2012), available at <http://www.ed.gov/eSEA/flexibility/documents/eSEA-flexibility-acc.doc>.