

# RACE TO THE TOP

## District of Columbia Report

Year 4: School Year 2013–2014

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U.S. Department of Education  
Washington, DC 20202

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April 2015

# Executive Summary

## Race to the Top overview

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Race to the Top program review

As part of the Department's commitment to supporting States as they implement ambitious reform agendas, the Department established the Implementation and Support Unit (ISU) in the Office of the Deputy Secretary to administer, among others, the Race to the Top program. The goal of the ISU was 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 worked with Race to the Top grantees to differentiate support based on individual State needs, and helped States work with each other and with experts to achieve and sustain educational reforms that improve student outcomes. In partnership with the ISU, the Reform Support Network (RSN) offers collective and individualized technical assistance and resources to Race to the Top grantees. The RSN's purpose is to support Race to the Top grantees as they implement reforms in education policy and practice, learn from each other, and build their capacity to sustain these reforms.<sup>5</sup> At the end of Year 4, the Department created the Office of State Support to continue to provide support to States across programs as they implement comprehensive reforms. The Office of State Support will administer programs previously administered by the ISU.

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

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

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

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## State-specific summary report

The Department uses the information gathered during the review process (e.g., through monthly calls, onsite reviews, and Annual Performance Reports (APRs)) to draft State-specific summary reports. The State-specific summary report serves as an assessment of a State's annual Race to the Top implementation. The Year 4 report for Phase 2 grantees highlights successes and accomplishments, identifies challenges, and provides lessons learned from implementation from approximately September 2013 through September 2014. Given that Delaware and Tennessee's initial four-year grant periods ended in June and July 2014, respectively, for Phase 1 grantees, the Year 4 report includes the beginning of the no-cost extension year (Year 5).

## The State's education reform agenda

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) is the State educational agency for the District of Columbia (the District). OSSE sets statewide policies, provides resources and support, and exercises accountability for all public education in the District. The District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) is the largest LEA in the District. In addition, there are over 50 public charter LEAs that operate independently and collectively educate 44 percent of the District's students. OSSE, DCPS, and 29 participating public charter LEAs have come together to implement the reform efforts that the District outlined in its Race to the Top grant. The District received a total of \$74,998,962 in Race to the Top funds.

OSSE's broad goals under Race to the Top include building capacity to support LEAs; supporting the implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS); funding the development of LEA instructional improvement systems (IIS) to support data-driven instruction; building and supporting stronger pipelines for effective teachers and principals; and, creating conditions of support and attracting effective educators to the District's persistently lowest-achieving (PLA) schools. The District planned to complete many of its Race to the Top grant projects through LEA consortia and by leveraging Race to the Top taskforces. For instance, LEAs in the District joined together to form a consortium responsible for implementing the Professional Learning Communities for Effectiveness (PLaCEs) project, which resulted in improved educator knowledge of the CCSS and better access to high-quality instructional resources. Similarly, taskforces such as the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Educator Leader Cadre (ELC) brought together administrators and teachers on a monthly basis to discuss preparation for and transition to the PARCC assessment. The District distributed 85 percent of its entire Race to the Top grant to participating LEAs through formula funding or competitive subgrants. The remaining 15 percent of grant funds are for State capacity building and OSSE-level projects, such as the adoption of a new consolidated grants management system.

## State Years 1 through 3 summary

In Years 1 and 2 of the grant period, OSSE developed structures and provided LEAs with resources to implement Race to the Top work. In SY 2010-2011, OSSE established taskforces including representatives from DCPS and charter schools to plan and implement its reform work focused on the CCSS implementation, human capital, student growth measures, and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education. Additionally, over Years 1 and 2, OSSE awarded \$7.5 million in competitive subgrants to LEAs for work in such areas as developing an IIS, creating new assessments or growth measures to better evaluate teacher effectiveness, professional learning communities, and teacher residency programs.

The DC State Board of Education adopted the CCSS in 2010 and all participating LEAs developed a transition plan for implementing the new standards by the end of school year (SY) 2011-2012, or Year 2 of the Race to the Top grant period. OSSE also provided professional development to support the transition to the CCSS. In Year 2, OSSE reported that it completed the alignment of the DC Comprehensive Assessment System (DC CAS) for English language arts (ELA) with the CCSS.

In Year 1, OSSE experienced significant turnover among leadership and staff. As a result, there were delays in finalizing the District's education research agenda, developing and releasing CCSS resources; providing support for intervention efforts at PLA schools; and receiving, reviewing, and approving LEA plans for teacher and leader evaluations. In Year 2, OSSE completed hiring for its Innovation & Improvement team, including hiring a Race to the Top Director. The agency also completed a reorganization of management of the Race to the Top grant, the School Improvement Grants (SIG), and the approved Elementary and Secondary Education Act flexibility request (ESEA flexibility request) that involved designating effectiveness managers to serve as a single point of contact for a cohort of LEAs in the District.<sup>7</sup>

During Year 2, the agency launched a limited Statewide Longitudinal Data System and continued to make progress on establishing research priorities. By the end of Year 2, all participating LEAs hired either a data coach or lead to support data-driven instruction. To inform LEAs' teacher and principal evaluation systems, OSSE provided each LEA with individual teacher value-added growth measures (VAM) and a Median Growth Percentile (MGP) for the school-wide growth model and conducted correlational analyses on the distribution of effective teachers in LEAs with the largest populations of low-income students.

Additionally, in Year 2, OSSE experienced several procurement

<sup>7</sup> On September 23, 2011, the U.S. Department of Education (Department) offered each interested State educational agency (SEA) the opportunity to request flexibility (Elementary and Secondary Education Act (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. An extension to the Office of the State Superintendent's (OSSE's) request for flexibility from some ESEA provisions was approved on September 5, 2014. For more information on ESEA flexibility, see <http://www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility>.

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delays that directly affected Race to the Top initiatives, including the Enterprise Grants Management System (EGMS), the CCSS resource website, Expanded Growth Measures, and Educator Preparation Program Profile projects.<sup>8</sup> There continued to be setbacks and delays in implementing key initiatives, such as developing resources on student learning objectives (SLOs), providing support to PLA schools, and establishing a STEM Learning Network. During Year 2, OSSE approved all LEA plans for teacher and leader evaluations, but some approvals took place eight months after the initial submission.

In Year 3, OSSE successfully implemented several areas of its Race to the Top plan. OSSE continued to support LEAs implementing interim assessments, provided CCSS professional development opportunities for educators, and promoted its CCSS resource website, LearnDC.org. OSSE released the Standards Entry-Points for Differentiated Learning manual for mathematics instructors, a consortium-developed manual for special education teachers. In Year 3, DCPS launched the Educator Portal+ (Ed Portal+) and provided charter school educators access in June 2013.<sup>9</sup>

Also in Year 3, OSSE expanded three competitive grant programs, Charter School Teacher Residency (Pipelines), PLaCEs, and Expanded Growth Measures. The Pipelines program increased the number of highly-effective teachers identified and placed in hard-to-staff areas, such as early childhood, mathematics, and science, in 15 LEAs. Improvements to the PLaCEs program helped teachers create performance tasks and lesson and unit plans by distributing electronically over 375 mathematics, ELA, and social studies instructional videos. Finally, adjustments to the Expanded Growth Measures program resulted in two competitions that awarded funds to administer the Northwest Education Association Measure of Academic Progress interim assessments in five LEAs to approximately 4,500 students and to develop and pilot a 6-8 grade social studies assessment.

In Year 3, OSSE also experienced challenges related to staff turnover and IIS implementation. After nearly a year of stability, OSSE experienced additional staff turnover, vacancies of key positions, and another agency staff audit and restructuring. To lessen the impact of OSSE staff turnover on LEAs, OSSE implemented a new staff transition plan, which included a transition protocol that helps OSSE maintain clear lines of communication between LEAs and OSSE staff during periods of high staff turnover. While all 30 participating LEAs implemented an IIS, one IIS consortia did not have a “lead LEA” for the majority of Year 3. As a result, the LEAs in the impacted IIS consortia received less support than the other LEAs related to IIS utilization.

Throughout Year 3, OSSE continued to experience significant challenges and delays in its work to intervene in PLA schools. While OSSE reported that it supported eight PLA schools in planning prior to implementing SIG in SY 2013-2014, it lacked a comprehensive

strategy for intervening in its PLA schools. As a result, OSSE spent much of 2013 revising its plans to support PLA schools. In December 2013, the Department approved OSSE’s revised plan for supporting PLA schools. Additionally, out of concern over OSSE’s oversight of DCPS’ PLA school intervention activities and management of budgeted funds for supporting this work, this portion of the grant was placed on cost reimbursement basis until January 2015.

## State Year 4 summary

### Accomplishments

For a majority of Year 4, OSSE reported that the agency’s Race to the Top and content expert positions were fully staffed, including in areas such as data and research, SLOs, and STEM, enabling OSSE to provide effective oversight and support. OSSE continued to implement its taskforces and leadership groups to improve communication among District educators and highlight and share best practices with District stakeholders. In June 2014, OSSE launched its EGMS, an online system that will serve as a consolidated grants management and oversight system across numerous federal and local funding sources.

During Year 4, OSSE enhanced its resources on transitioning to college- and career-ready standards and assessments. The agency utilized its LearnDC.org website and the Ed Portal+, a website designed by DCPS with support from Race to the Top funds, to provide educators and the general public with information on the transition to the CCSS, professional development opportunities, and instructional resources. OSSE released and trained educators on using the Standards Entry-Points for Differentiated Learning manuals in ELA and mathematics to provide CCSS-aligned instructional resources for special education teachers. The agency also participated in the PARCC field test in spring 2014 and is using lessons learned from this experience to inform full implementation in spring 2015.

In the area of *Great Teachers and Leaders*, OSSE continued to provide participating LEAs with support to implement educator evaluation systems, OSSE released its SLO guidance in fall 2013 and provided intensive training on developing and implementing SLOs to LEAs in spring and summer 2014. In Year 4, DCPS also revised its teacher recruitment process to better align with the IMPACT educator evaluation system.<sup>10</sup> DCPS reported that the teachers entering its system are, on average, rated more effective than teachers exiting the system.

Lastly, the Pipelines and PLaCEs consortia and one of the Expanded Growth Measures competitive grantees continued to implement their plans with high quality. Although the Pipelines subgrants concluded at the end of SY 2012-2013, both LEAs opted to continue their respective Pipelines programs with alternate funding sources.

<sup>8</sup> The Educator Preparation Program Profiles were previously referred to as the “Teacher or Principal Preparation Program Profile” or “Scorecard.”

<sup>9</sup> The Educator Portal+ was previously referred to as the “Individualized PD Platform.”

<sup>10</sup> The shift was driven in part by findings from an external study of the IMPACT educator evaluation system, available online at: <http://www.nber.org/papers/w19529>. A District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) summary of the study is available online at: <http://dcps.dc.gov/DCPS/Teacher+Performance+Improved+Under+DC%27s+Teacher+Evaluation+System,+New+Study+Findings>.



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## Challenges

During Year 4, OSSE completed another agency staff audit and restructuring which produced new structures and processes for working across OSSE divisions. As a result, OSSE sometimes stalled in decision-making and experienced delays in carrying out certain activities. While OSSE implemented additional monitoring check points with participating LEAs, the agency did not have a systemic method for overseeing the quality of implementation of activities completed by competitive subgrant consortia members, such as non-lead LEAs partnering in the IIS consortia. Additionally, during Year 4, OSSE identified gaps in its internal capacity for supporting its LEAs in understanding and using data to inform instruction. As a result, the agency began providing opportunities for staff to participate in professional development and training on understanding and using data. OSSE expects that these internal capacity-building activities will continue into SY 2014-2015, or Year 5 through Department-approved no-cost extension projects.

In Year 4, OSSE continued to support the transition to more rigorous college- and career-ready standards and assessments, but experienced mixed results. OSSE conducted extensive outreach on the LearnDC.org website in an effort to increase traffic and use of the site's online resources by educators and external stakeholders. As a result, there was a significant increase in usage of the school- and LEA-specific report cards and the early learning resources. Usage data indicates, however, that usage of resources for other grades and subjects, such as parent roadmaps intended to help parents understand the CCSS, remained low. In addition, the subgrant to develop and implement a social studies assessment experienced delays. Instead of completing this work at the end of Year 4 as planned, OSSE now intends to complete the development of the assessment during Year 5 and fully implement the expanded growth measure in SY 2015-2016.

OSSE supported LEAs to fully implement educator evaluation systems, but experienced challenges after a contractor error affected the calculation of VAM and MGP data for SY 2012-2013. As a result, some LEAs had to revise educator evaluation ratings for a small percentage of educators in the middle of SY 2013-2014. Additionally, due to the delay in correcting the error, OSSE's contractor did not provide analyses of LEA evaluation systems' data comparison or equitable access to teachers and principals until May 2014 and July 2014, respectively. These delays meant that instead of reviewing and providing support to LEAs on these data annually, there was a one-year feedback gap. As a result, OSSE will provide support in SY 2014-2015 based on data and analyses of SYs 2012-2013 and 2013-2014.

After struggling to develop a comprehensive strategy for PLA school interventions in Years 1-3, OSSE amended its intervention strategy and budget for PLA schools in December 2013. While the agency reported that the eight schools included in this work made progress in completing the activities in their Scopes of Work and obligated all funds prior to the end of Year 4, OSSE did not demonstrate sufficient evidence of the quality of implementation or outcomes from these activities. OSSE has stated that the process of developing

and implementing a new plan for intervening in PLA schools has enabled the agency to strengthen its working relationship with DCPS. This process also informed OSSE's development of a Statewide System of Support (SSOS), the District's mechanism for providing accountability, support, and rewards to Priority, Focus, and Reward schools.<sup>11</sup> OSSE's development of an approvable plan for the SSOS was also significantly delayed as OSSE spent a year trying to better align the SSOS with its approved plans for SIG and ESEA flexibility; the Department approved this work to commence at the beginning of Year 5.<sup>12</sup>

During Year 4, OSSE made significant progress on implementing its activities in STEM, but it still remains delayed in meeting its commitments and performance measures in this area of work. The STEM specialist, hired in summer 2013, inherited a project that was already two years behind schedule. OSSE has rapidly accelerated its efforts to complete a STEM Strategic Plan and launch the STEM Learning Network in addition to providing training and support to educators and external stakeholders on the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), and the agency is optimistic that it will complete its STEM commitments before the end of Year 5.

## Looking ahead

During Year 5, OSSE plans to continue and enhance a number of its projects developed under Race to the Top and revise many of these activities to better align with OSSE's approved ESEA flexibility plan. OSSE will finalize the agency reorganization and will continue to implement processes to formalize stronger alignment across its cross-functional teams. The agency also plans to continue to convene the taskforces and leadership groups to provide guidance and feedback on implementation of CCSS-aligned assessments, Educator Preparation Program Profiles, and the STEM Strategic Plan and Learning Network. OSSE will also use the recently launched EGMS, a comprehensive online system, to centralize grant management throughout the agency and enhance transparency and communications to subgrantees. OSSE also expects to implement a SSOS that will build relationships and provide targeted support to the District's Priority, Focus, and SIG schools. Additionally, OSSE will maintain four full-time Race to the Top employees to oversee work during Year 5, including oversight of the one participating LEA, DCPS, approved to extend specific activities through June 30, 2015.

OSSE also plans to devote additional time and staff in Year 5 to improve upon existing Race to the Top resources and follow through on the remaining commitments from their Race to the Top plan. Specifically, OSSE expects to refine and add resources to LearnDC.org, its CCSS resource website, as well as provide training to OSSE staff to better support District educators in CCSS implementation.

<sup>11</sup> The definitions for Priority, Focus, and Reward schools can be found in the document titled ESEA Flexibility located online at: <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/approved-requests/flexrequest.doc>.

<sup>12</sup> The Department's approval letters for relevant amendments to OSSE's Race to the Top program activities and budget can be found online at: <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/amendments/index.html>.

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During Year 5, OSSE will continue to fund one IIS and one PLACEs subgrant consortium in order to complete the commitments in their approved Scopes of Work. OSSE also expects to provide additional training and professional development on developing, implementing, and interpreting SLOs. Additionally, OSSE plans to publish the

Educator Preparation Program Profiles and begin conversations about establishing performance measures for principal preparation programs. Finally, OSSE intends to broaden dissemination of the STEM Strategic Plan and begin implementing key initiatives according to the plan's timeline, such as officially launching the STEM Learning Network

## State Success Factors

Race to the Top States are developing a comprehensive and coherent approach to education reform. This involves creating plans to build strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain the reforms initiated by the Race to the Top grant program.

### Building capacity to support LEAs

#### Performance management

After the Mayor appointed a new State Superintendent of Education in September 2013, OSSE's sixth Superintendent since it was awarded a Race to the Top grant in 2010, the agency experienced another organizational restructuring to reintegrate and align the Race to the Top work with other OSSE functions. Specifically, the Race to the Top team now falls under the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education along with the Division of Specialized Education, SIG, and additional programs authorized under Titles I, II, and III of the ESEA.<sup>13</sup> Completed in summer 2014, OSSE states that this revised structure will allow for better cross-team coordination, planning and engagement with its LEAs.

As of the Department's program review in June 2014, OSSE's Race to the Top Team and Race to the Top-funded content expert positions were fully staffed. OSSE reported that during Year 4, it hired multiple individuals as part of the Race to the Top team including an SLO specialist, a new Data and Research Manager, and a Deputy Assistant Superintendent for Accountability, Performance, and Support to oversee implementation of the agency's Race to the Top plan, ESEA flexibility plan, and SIG work.

Similar to previous years, the Race to the Top effectiveness managers continued to prioritize individualized technical assistance and oversight over implementation of LEA Race to the Top Scopes of Work, while other directors within the agency led specific bodies of work, such as professional development on data access and use, the CCSS, and increasing teacher and leader effectiveness. Throughout Year 4, OSSE continued to convene its Race to the Top taskforces to: (1) facilitate communication among membership, (2) highlight and share best practices across LEAs and additional stakeholders, and (3) to advise OSSE on various aspects of its work on standards and assessment, data access and use, educator preparation, and STEM.

<sup>13</sup> The Race to the Top team was previously referred to as "Innovation & Improvement (InI)."

### Support and accountability for LEAs

OSSE continued to implement its participating LEA monitoring plan for both its Race to the Top formula and competitive subgrants. Recognizing a need for a more direct approach to supporting LEAs, in Year 4 the effectiveness managers implemented monthly calls or in-person meetings with each participating LEA to discuss progress, strengths and challenges; share programmatic and policy updates; and identify additional areas of support. OSSE also conducted formal monitoring visits during SY 2013-2014 to five participating LEAs identified as high priority by a risk analysis conducted in fall 2013. OSSE continues to use a tracking spreadsheet for Scope of Work deliverables to follow participating LEAs' progress against their respective Scopes of Work and budgets, as well as to provide targeted resources and support. During Year 4, OSSE also visited two of the eight PLA schools that received Race to the Top intervention funds in addition to SIG funds.

OSSE awarded the majority of Race to the Top competitive subgrants (IIS, PLACEs, and Pipelines) to consortia of LEAs with one LEA serving as the programmatic and fiscal lead LEA. Throughout Year 4, OSSE required each lead LEA to submit monthly progress reports to ensure that the programs were on track to achieve their respective goals and objectives. The agency relies on the monthly lead LEA reports to understand the progress of implementation of each consortium's partner LEAs and to provide additional support if necessary.

OSSE's EGMS launched in June 2014, nearly two years later than planned in OSSE's approved Scope of Work. The EGMS provides OSSE and its LEAs with a consolidated grants management system across a large number of federal and local funding sources. The system serves as a one-stop website for LEAs and community-based organizations to complete and manage grant applications and awards, monitor funds, and submit improvement plans and amendments. For OSSE, the EGMS functions as a single location to compile monitoring and oversight documentation and track

# State Success Factors

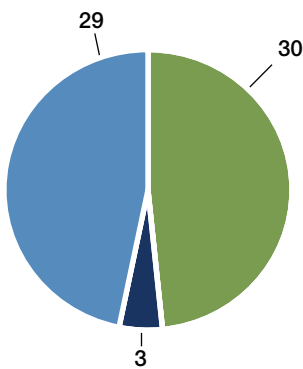
progress across multiple grants. During Year 4, OSSE completed development of the EGMS; conducted user acceptance training and testing in three phases; completed 11 demonstrations with OSSE program staff to inform development and refinement of the tool; developed resources with program specific guidance and procedures for administration of grants within EGMS, and developed and implemented a strategic communications plan for engaging LEAs, community-based organizations, and OSSE staff with the EGMS. OSSE hosted a conference for LEAs in May 2014 to introduce them to the EGMS and a similar conference in June 2014 for community-based organizations. OSSE also maintains an EGMS help desk as well

as provides technical assistance to all LEAs and community-based organizations; this includes creating videos and tutorials available online to all users.

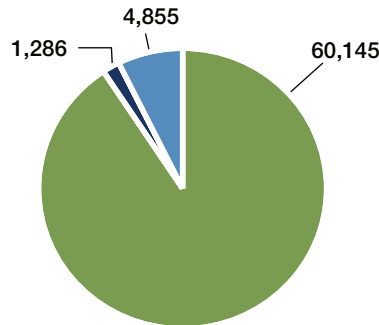
## LEA participation

OSSE reported 30 participating LEAs (DCPS and 29 charter LEAs). This represents 90.7 percent of the District's kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12) students and over 68.8 percent of its low-income students.

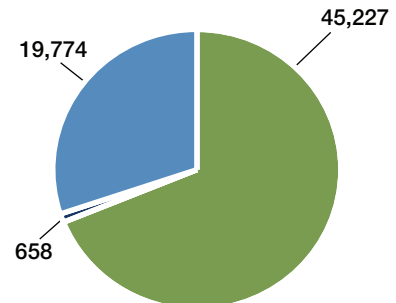
LEAs participating in District of Columbia's Race to the Top plan



K-12 students in LEAs participating in District of Columbia's Race to the Top plan



Students in poverty in LEAs participating in District of Columbia's Race to the Top plan



■ Participating LEAs (#)  
■ Involved LEAs (#)  
■ Other LEAs (#)

■ K-12 students (#) in participating LEAs  
■ K-12 students (#) in involved LEAs  
■ K-12 students (#) in other LEAs

■ Students in poverty (#) in participating LEAs  
■ Students in poverty (#) in involved LEAs  
■ Students in poverty (#) in other LEAs

The number of K-12 students and number of students in poverty statewide are calculated using pre-release data from the National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) Common Core of Data (CCD). Students in poverty statewide comes from the CCD measure of the number of students eligible for free or reduced price lunch subsidy (commonly used as a proxy for the number of students who are economically disadvantaged in a school) under the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National School Lunch Program. The students in poverty statewide and number of K-12 students statewide counts are aggregations of school-level counts summed to State-level counts. Statistical procedures were applied systematically by CCD to these data to prevent potential disclosure of information about individual students as well as for data quality assurance; consequently State-level counts may differ from those originally reported by the State. Please note that these data are considered to be preliminary as of September 25, 2014.

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

# State Success Factors

## Stakeholder engagement

### Key activities and stakeholders

OSSE continued to convene its Race to the Top taskforces; however, the agency altered the composition and focus of the groups to align with Year 4 needs. The taskforces that met in Year 4 included the PARCC ELC, the combined Student Growth Measures and Human Capital Taskforce, an Educator Preparation Program Leadership group, and a State Science Leadership Team.<sup>14</sup> Membership on these taskforces and leadership teams consisted of representatives from OSSE staff, participating and non-participating LEAs, the District of Columbia Public Charter School Board (PCSB), and additional external stakeholders. These advisory groups served multiple functions such as facilitating communication among members, allowing for input on OSSE's Race to the Top initiatives, and highlighting best practices across LEAs.

The PARCC ELC included administrators and teachers from 10 LEAs and 31 schools and OSSE plans to expand this group to include additional LEAs in the future. The ELC meets monthly to discuss preparation for and transition to the PARCC assessment. In Year 4, OSSE convened a combined Student Growth Measures and Human Capital Taskforce monthly to provide guidance and evaluate resources and training materials on SLOs. The Educator Preparation Program Leadership group met bimonthly from September 2013 through May 2014 to review the pilot process for completing the Educator Preparation Program Profiles and provide feedback on the draft documents. OSSE convened this group of stakeholders again in August 2014 to review the final draft profiles in preparation for the public launch in fall 2014.<sup>15</sup> The public profiles will provide parents, students, and community members with outcomes data on educator preparation programs in the District. (Also see *Great Teachers and Leaders* for more information on SLOs and Educator Preparation Program Profiles.) In Year 4, OSSE also launched a State Science Leadership Team comprised of a guiding coalition of community stakeholders, LEA administrators, teachers, representatives from local institutions of higher education (IHEs), and industry partners. This group provides feedback on the NGSS, supports community outreach

<sup>14</sup> The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers Educator Leader Cadre (PARCC ELC) was previously referred to as the "Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Taskforce." The CCSS Taskforce was a commitment in Year 1, from fall 2010 to summer 2011, in OSSE's approved application. After the taskforce completed its work, it transitioned into the PARCC ELC. The Educator Preparation Program Leadership Group was previously referred to as the "Educator Preparation Program Taskforce," consisting of representative leaders from educator preparation programs within the District of Columbia. The State Science Leadership Team is comprised of a guiding coalition of community stakeholders, LEA administrators and teacher representatives, representatives from local institutions of higher education (IHEs), and industry partners.

<sup>15</sup> As of this report, OSSE reported that the public launch of the Educator Preparation Program Profiles is further delayed due to a select number of participating LEAs refusing to share teacher-level evaluation data. A portion of the profiles is dependent on reporting aggregate evaluation data of a program's graduates and OSSE is unable to produce this calculation without teacher-level data from each LEA. OSSE noted that it is taking a variety of steps to hold these participating LEAs accountable to the data-sharing agreements within the Race to the Top Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

on STEM and the NGSS, and vets NGSS-aligned resources before posting them to LearnDC.org.

In addition to the taskforces, during Year 4 OSSE continued to distribute a biweekly *LEA Look Forward* newsletter and a monthly *OSSE Newsletter* via email to all LEAs. The PDF-formatted newsletters include programmatic and policy updates, notifications about available resources, as well as upcoming professional development opportunities.

## Successes and challenges

Students in the District of Columbia – both DCPS and public charter schools – continued to make gains on the annual DC CAS exam in both mathematics and reading. In both elementary and secondary levels, student proficiency on DC CAS reading increased for the second year in a row and proficiency on the mathematics exam increased for the third straight year.

In Year 4, OSSE implemented a number of new grant management processes in response to feedback from the LEAs, the Department, and a needs assessment of its LEAs conducted in summer 2013. OSSE reported the additional touch-points with LEAs seem to have led to improved relationships between OSSE and participating LEAs. In addition, the majority of participating LEAs completed grant activities and obligated the remainder of LEAs' Race to the Top funds. The launch of the EGMS further enhanced OSSE's capacity to support LEAs in managing grant funds by streamlining multiple funding sources into one online system.

OSSE continued to use its Race to the Top taskforces and leadership groups to drive reform. These convenings served as venues for LEAs to learn from one another and for OSSE to solicit feedback from education stakeholders throughout the District. According to OSSE, the taskforces and leadership groups have proven an effective method for including diverse groups of stakeholders as well as building both internal and external capacity. As a result, OSSE has identified opportunities for sustaining and expanding participation in the taskforces and leadership groups beyond Race to the Top.

Throughout Years 3 and 4, OSSE experienced challenges in its oversight and support of the competitive grant consortia. It is not clear that OSSE has a process in place for monitoring the progress and quality of implementation of the consortia partner LEAs, particularly the IIS consortia. OSSE's oversight process relies on monitoring and reporting provided by the lead LEAs of each consortium; OSSE does not have formal methods for reviewing evidence of implementation for the other LEAs within each consortium. However, based on documentation provided to the Department, the design and execution of the competitive subgrants could have been improved. OSSE noted that it was difficult for the lead LEA to ensure that the IIS met the needs of all partner LEAs, but that this challenge was not recognized until late in the grant period. As a result, some participating LEAs dropped out of the consortia and reverted back to an old IIS or selected a new system altogether.

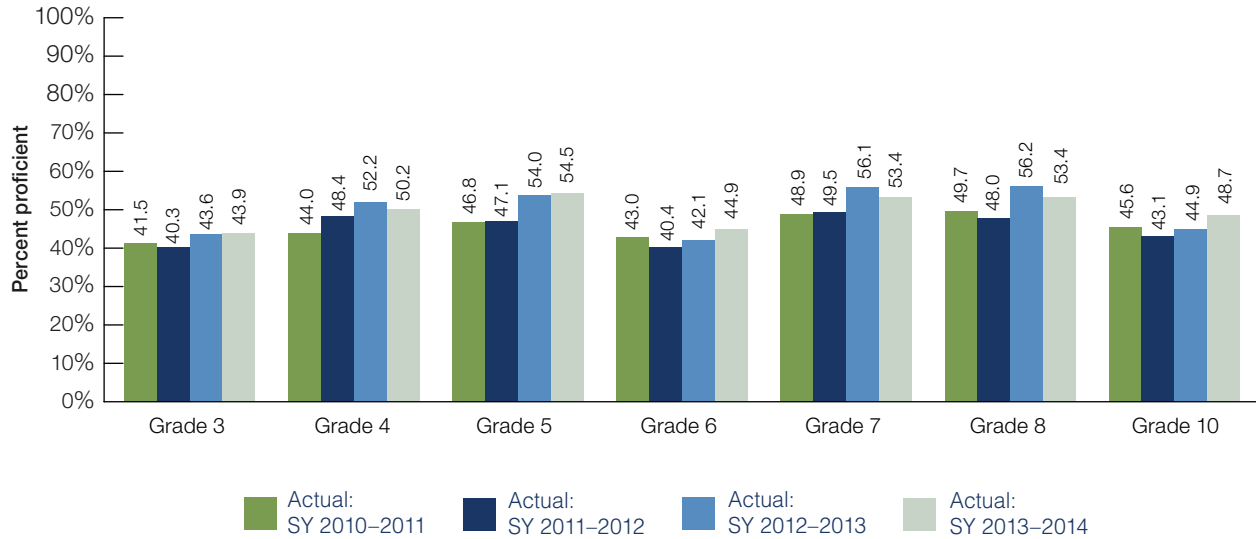


# State Success Factors

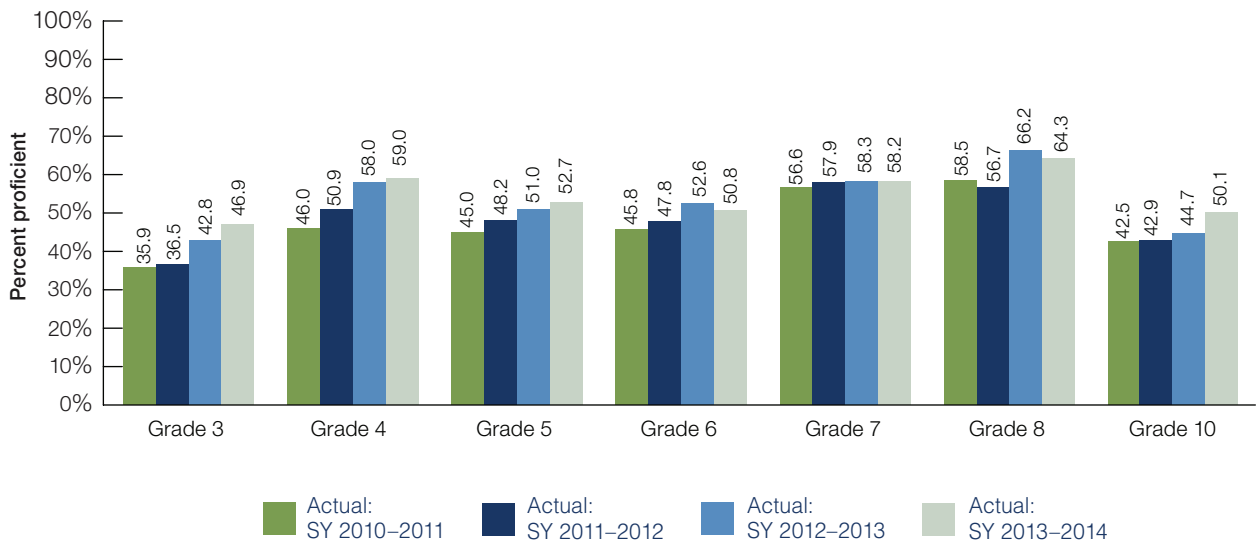
## Student outcomes data

ELA and mathematics scores increased for every grade level from SY 2010-2011 to SY 2013-2014. Both subjects also saw increases in aggregate elementary and secondary scores from SY 2010-2011 to SY 2013-2014. Since SY 2010-2011 the percentage of students proficient on ELA assessments increased by 2.9 percentage points and the percent of students proficient on mathematics assessments increased by 7.4 percentage points.

Student proficiency on District of Columbia's ELA assessment



Student proficiency on District of Columbia's mathematics assessment



Preliminary SY 2013-2014 data reported as of: October 7, 2014.

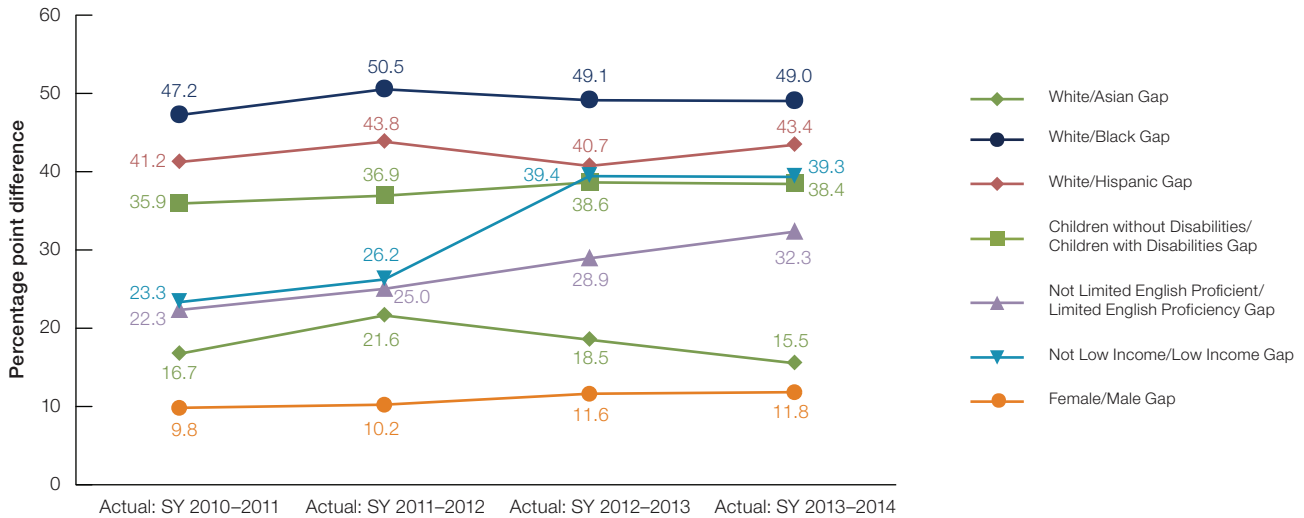
NOTE: Over the last four years, a number of States adopted new assessments and/or cut scores.

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

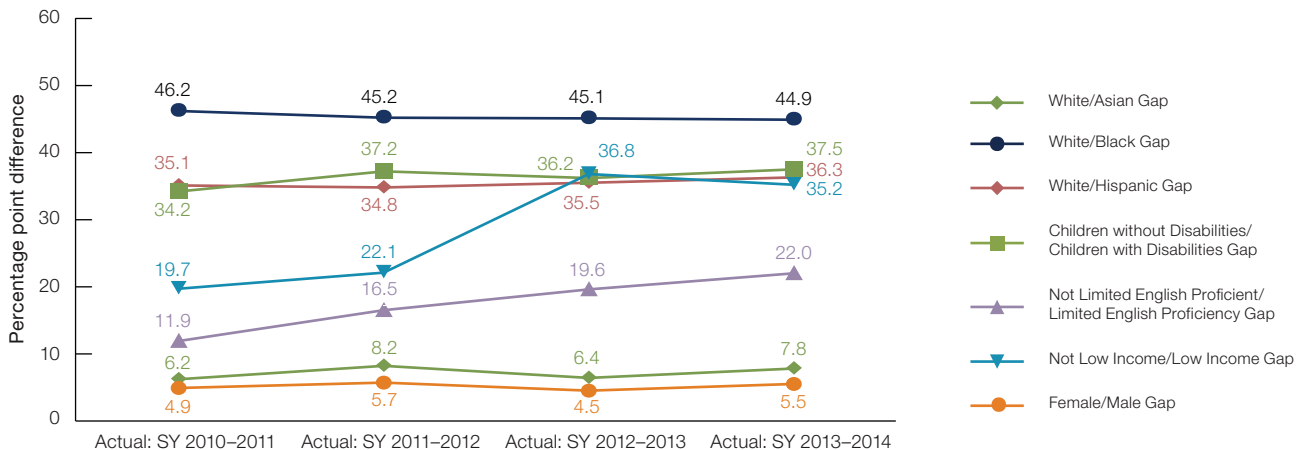
# State Success Factors

The District's ELA and mathematics assessment achievement gaps increased slightly from SY 2010-2011 to SY 2013-2014, except for a slight decrease in the mathematics achievement gap between White and African-American students.

### Achievement gap on District of Columbia's ELA assessment



### Achievement gap on District of Columbia's mathematics assessment



Preliminary SY 2013-2014 data reported as of: September 25, 2014.

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

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

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

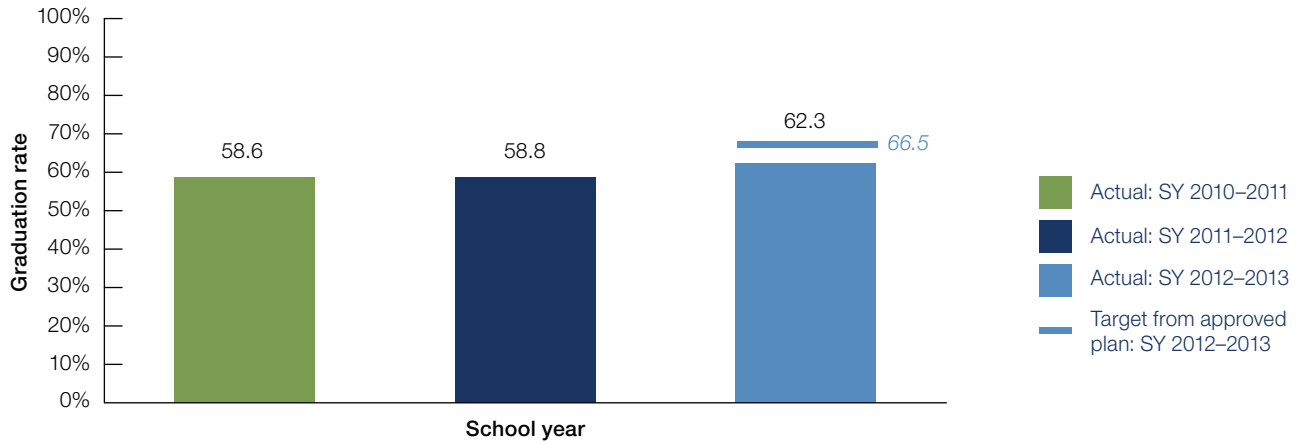
NOTE: Over the last four years, a number of States adopted new assessments and/or cut scores.

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

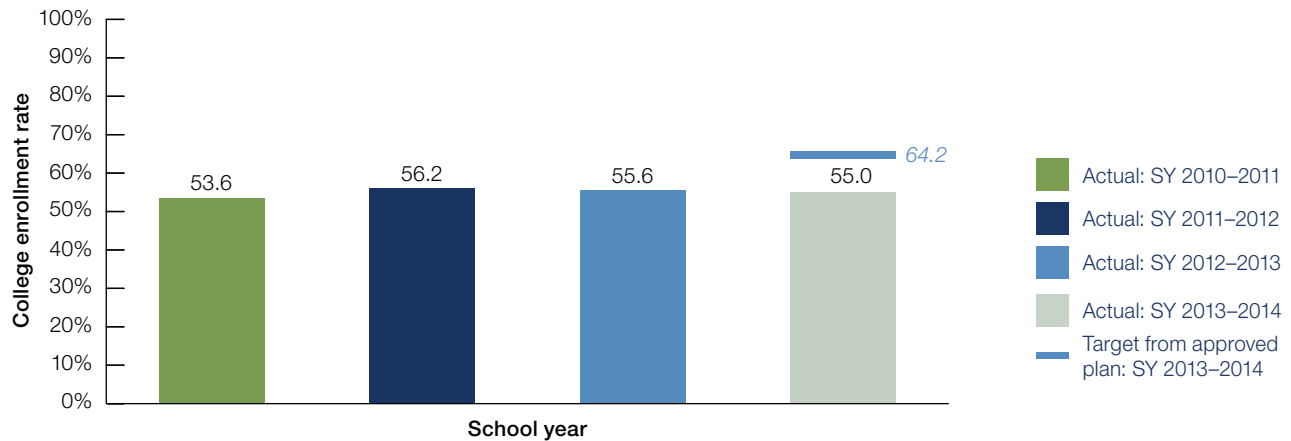
The District's high school graduation rate increased by 3.7 percentage points from SY 2010-2011 to SY 2012-2013. The District's college enrollment rate also increased slightly, rising from 53.6 percent in SY 2010-2011 to 55 percent in SY 2013-2014.

## High school graduation rate



Preliminary SY 2012-2013 data reported as of: October 16, 2014.  
 For State-reported context, please refer to the Race to the Top APR at [www.rtt-apr.us](http://www.rtt-apr.us).

## College enrollment rate



Preliminary SY 2013-2014 data reported as of: September 10, 2014.  
 For State-reported context, please refer to the Race to the Top APR at [www.rtt-apr.us](http://www.rtt-apr.us).  
 The Department provided guidance to States regarding the reporting period for college enrollment. For SY 2013-2014 data, States report on the students who graduated from high school in SY 2011-2012 and enrolled in an institution of higher education (IHE).

# Standards and Assessments

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

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

### Adopting standards and developing assessments

After adopting the CCSS in ELA and mathematics in 2010, the District continues to play an active role in the transition to high-quality, CCSS-aligned assessments as a governing board member of PARCC. Additionally, the State Board of Education adopted the NGSS in fall 2013. In Year 4, OSSE convened the PARCC ELC monthly to focus on preparation for the transition to PARCC assessments. The PARCC ELC currently consists of administrators and teachers from 10 LEAs and 31 schools and OSSE reported that it continues to actively recruit LEAs to join the ELC. In spring 2014, approximately 12 LEAs participated in the PARCC field test and the PARCC ELC focused much of its discussions around the best practices, challenges and lessons learned while implementing the field test. In particular, OSSE reported that the PARCC ELC highlighted challenges around technology capacity and communications and that the agency plans to focus on these challenges as LEAs transition to full implementation of PARCC in SY 2014-2015.

Before the start of Year 1, all participating LEAs selected interim assessments that an OSSE-approved vendor determined were aligned to the CCSS and implemented those interim assessments in Years 2, 3 and 4 as part of its approach to data-driven CCSS instruction. OSSE reviewed the status and quality of implementation during its onsite monitoring visits, desk monitoring, and the collection of annual deliverables, as well as school and LEA visits by OSSE leadership such as the superintendent. Additionally, in Year 4, OSSE completed an agency reorganization aimed at strengthening the internal collaboration between the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Division of Specialized Education to enable better cross-team communication and to provide more directed support to LEAs.

The District of Columbia Public Schools' instructional observation framework and rubric (IMPACT) was featured in a March 2014 Reform Support Network (RSN) brief, *Aligning College- and Career-Ready Standards with Instructional Frameworks and Rubrics*.<sup>16</sup> To help States meet the challenge of aligning new standards, including the CCSS, with new evaluation systems, the RSN convened a group of experts to review instructional observation frameworks against the CCSS. This paper outlines the group's discussions in the context of four guiding principles that emerged as they considered how to better align instructional observation frameworks and rubrics with the CCSS.

<sup>16</sup> Available online at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/implementation-support-unit/tech-assist/standards-instructional-frameworks-rubrics.pdf>.

### Supporting college readiness

In Year 4, Raise DC, the District's pre-kindergarten through postsecondary (P-20) consortium of community and government stakeholders led by the Community Foundation of the National Capital Region, continued to meet around specific areas such as K-12 data, early childhood data, and college credential completion. As a result of these conversations, Raise DC's Graduation Pathways Project analyzed high school graduation rates in the District and identified areas in which high school student supports can be improved.<sup>17</sup> Also in Year 4, with data provided by OSSE's Office of Data Management, the Deputy Mayor for Education proposed changes to the District's high school graduation requirements. As of this report, the State Board of Education is reviewing the existing and proposed graduation requirements.

## Dissemination of resources and professional development

In Year 4, OSSE continued to offer optional professional development opportunities through its Core Professional Development Calendar (OSSE's annual professional development offerings). Although not funded through Race to the Top, these efforts are critical to the long-term success of CCSS implementation. OSSE reported that 456 educators (6.2 percent of the total 7,338 teachers and principals in the District) received training through these offerings and that participants communicated a high-level of satisfaction in exit surveys. However, OSSE's data collection procedures do not allow the agency to connect student academic outcomes to educators who participate in OSSE's professional development sessions.

OSSE is a member of the National Center and State Collaborative that created Standards Entry-Points for Differentiated Learning manuals in ELA and mathematics including CCSS-aligned curricula, instructional support, professional development materials, and a summative assessment for teachers of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. OSSE intends for teachers to use the manuals to ensure differentiated learning opportunities during the transition to the CCSS and CCSS-aligned alternative assessments. After releasing the CCSS mathematics manual in early 2013, OSSE distributed the CCSS ELA Curriculum and Instructional Resource manual to teachers in summer 2013 and provided additional training on both manuals to special education teachers in August 2014. Also, in spring 2014, 14 LEAs participated in the National Center and State Collaborative field test to prepare to fully implement the CCSS online alternate assessment in SY 2014-2015.

<sup>17</sup> Available online at [http://static1.squarespace.com/static/543dae78e4b09e17b7b6c5fe/t/547e306ce4b07096b3bd3f67/1417556076915/DME\\_GradPathways\\_FinalReport\\_20140924\\_vF.pdf](http://static1.squarespace.com/static/543dae78e4b09e17b7b6c5fe/t/547e306ce4b07096b3bd3f67/1417556076915/DME_GradPathways_FinalReport_20140924_vF.pdf).



## Standards and Assessments

OSSE utilizes its LearnDC.org website to provide educators and the general public with information on the transition to the CCSS, professional development opportunities, and instructional resources. In Year 4, OSSE continued to add information on available trainings, resources, and materials to the website as well as expand LearnDC.org to include new pages on SLOs, Early Learning, and the NGSS. LearnDC.org now also serves as the public-facing site for all school and LEA report cards (also see “Accessing and using State data”). During Year 4, OSSE utilized different avenues to communicate about LearnDC.org by attending approximately 200 community meetings, leveraging listserv communications, publicizing the website at the annual Parent Summit, and reaching out directly to LEAs. User analytics from SY 2013-2014 demonstrate that OSSE increased public awareness of the school report cards with users totaling over 18,000 in Year 4. Additionally, access to the early childhood page increased significantly in July and August 2014 to nearly 10,000 hits in those months alone. Despite increasing awareness on early childhood information and school report cards, hits to other classroom resources, including instructional resources on the CCSS remained lower than OSSE anticipated. During the Year 4 program review, OSSE also noted challenges and future opportunities around linking meaningful

resources on student improvement and achievement to parent resources in order to support learning outside the classroom.

### Successes and challenges

In Year 4, OSSE reported considerable gains in public awareness of the CCSS, LEA and school report cards, and resources and information about early learning. The agency conducted numerous outreach efforts to external stakeholders and the increase in traffic to portions of the LearnDC.org website indicated that the agency’s outreach positively impacted public awareness. However, use of K-12 classroom resources by educators remained low, suggesting that OSSE could improve its outreach to educators across all LEAs, solicit more feedback from users about the quality and usefulness of the instructional tools and resources, and expand the website by continuing to upload new materials. In addition, while OSSE was deeply engaged in the PARCC ELC throughout Year 4, by officially announcing in summer 2014 that it would implement PARCC assessments in SY 2014-2015 the agency truncated the assessment transition period for LEAs. As a result, OSSE will need to provide a high-level of support to LEAs in SY 2014-2015, so they are fully prepared to implement the PARCC assessment and provide students the tools and resources necessary to be successful.

## Data Systems to Support Instruction

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

### Accessing and using State data

In Year 4, all District LEAs continued to report data to OSSE through the State Longitudinal Educational Database. The State Longitudinal Educational Database is the data reporting mechanism and repository for developing research-ready datasets as well as informing LEA- and school-specific report cards posted publically on LearnDC.org (also see *Standards and Assessments*). The portal contains aggregate data, including, but not limited to, assessment results and enrollment. It was originally launched in August 2012 and has received numerous updates over the past two years. OSSE planned to use the State Longitudinal Educational Database as its main mechanism for collecting and reporting Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) compliant data. However, after developing smaller portions of the site, early in Year 4 OSSE determined that it would develop LearnDC.org as the public-facing mechanism for reporting District

education data. As a result of this decision, OSSE published the SY 2012-2013 school report cards on LearnDC.org, which received over 18,000 views during Year 4 of the grant.

The agency continued to update its posted research agenda and revise the research request tool. It has over 70 signed data sharing agreements with various IHEs, researchers, and other partners, and hopes to expand the breadth and focus of this research to better align with OSSE’s priorities. OSSE reported that, through a contract with the Mid-Atlantic Regional Education Laboratory (REL Mid-Atlantic), it continues to explore methods for revising the research priorities to create a more focused set of research organized into tiers based on OSSE’s goals.

During Year 4, OSSE continued to engage stakeholders around the findings of a student mobility study conducted in Year 3 of the grant. OSSE reported that these conversations ultimately informed the

# Data Systems to Support Instruction

Deputy Mayor for Education's proposed revisions to DCPS' school boundaries. The mayor announced the final boundary revisions in August 2014. Additionally, in June 2014, OSSE published the 2012 Youth Risk Behavior Survey results as well as a report on school discipline. The agency plans to continue to focus stakeholder outreach on these issues and policy areas by framing conversations around the data in these reports.<sup>18</sup>

OSSE held numerous public outreach sessions on using data with participating LEAs as well as external stakeholder groups. For example, in September 2013, OSSE presented at the DC Parent Summit where representatives trained parents on accessing, understanding, and utilizing LEA and school report card data on LearnDC.org. During Year 4, the agency also conducted LearnDC.org awareness sessions for the philanthropic and foundation communities in an effort to use data to drive discussions on core education issues in the District and increase engagement of the P-20 consortium, Raise DC.

## Using data to improve instruction

OSSE reported that, in Year 4, all participating LEAs continued to implement a local IIS and an OSSE-approved job-embedded, data-driven instruction professional development plan. Participating LEAs also continued to utilize a data lead or coach to support educators in using the local IIS, facilitate data-focused professional development, and increase educators' capacity to use data to improve teaching and learning. In July 2011, OSSE awarded subgrants to four consortia of LEAs to develop and implement an IIS. During Year 4, three of the four subgrantees completed the Scope of Work for their subgrants, which included a plan for developing IIS modules and training users on utilizing the tools in their respective systems. The lead LEAs for these three consortia provided professional development to partner LEAs on using the IIS and data-driven instruction. One of the lead LEAs presented on its IIS tool and data-driven decision-making at OSSE's and Friends of Choice in Urban Schools (FOCUS)'s 2013 DC Data Summit (described below). After a year of delays, in July 2013, the fourth IIS consortium hired a new project director and began coordinating monthly convenings with its partner LEAs, vendors, and OSSE. OSSE reported that this consortium has made significant improvements in its work and is expected to complete its original commitments by the end of January 2015.

As with previous years, OSSE continued to offer professional development on data-driven instruction through its Core Professional Development Calendar. Over the course of Year 4, OSSE offered over 40 trainings with approximately 456 participants across a variety of aspects of the CCSS and NGSS. The agency also launched a series of OSSE-specific trainings intended to build the agency's internal capacity to support LEAs on using data. Staff from cross-functional teams including offices such as the Office of Data Management, Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, and the Division

of Specialized Education received professional development on root-cause analysis, assessment and literacy, and Excel functionalities.

During Year 4, OSSE's Director of Data met weekly with charter LEA leaders and biweekly with DCPS to inform the LEAs on data-focused decisions at OSSE as well as receive information about the successes and struggles at LEAs and schools. In addition to the local IIS consortia, OSSE's Professional Development Calendar, and outreach to LEAs, in summer 2014, OSSE cohosted a fourth annual DC Data Summit that provided professional development and technical assistance on collecting, analyzing, and using data to 147 participants representing all LEAs in the District. Sessions focused on topics such as: transitioning to next generation assessments, building better surveys, effective use of formative assessments, integrating and analyzing performance-based tasks, and using data for LEA performance management.<sup>19</sup>

## Successes and challenges

In Year 4, all participating LEAs implemented professional development on data-driven instruction as well as their local IIS. Additionally, all four IIS consortia made progress developing and implementing IIS professional development and training modules. OSSE provided targeted support and additional oversight to one struggling IIS consortium and reported that this consortium is now on track to complete its commitments during Year 5. The agency does not, however, have a systematic process to ensure that LEAs participating in the IIS consortia receive adequate support from the lead LEA and that the IIS developed through these subgrants meets the needs of all consortia member LEAs. In previous grant years, OSSE monitored the consortia's work through regular reporting and conversations with the lead LEAs, which, according to OSSE, did not fully assess implementation quality and satisfaction of the member LEAs. In Year 4, OSSE began asking about the IIS during its monthly check-in calls with every participating LEA. The Department learned during the Year 4 Race to the Top program review that some partner LEAs were, for a variety of reasons, dissatisfied with the consortium and the IIS.

Based on the OSSE's monitoring, it continues to be clear that the data leads and coaches play an integral role in facilitating data-driven instruction and professional development. In Year 5 OSSE will provide additional support to LEAs on data-driven instruction and professional development.

With the release of several studies in Years 3 and 4 as well as the LEA and school report cards, OSSE continues to make progress in using educational data to inform the District's policy priorities. As evidenced in the increased webpage traffic, the agency has made commendable efforts to increase the public's awareness of LearnDC.org. Additionally, OSSE has worked with the research community to identify new areas

<sup>18</sup> Available online at: [http://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/publication/attachments/2012%20DC%20YRBS\\_OSSE\\_0.pdf](http://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/publication/attachments/2012%20DC%20YRBS_OSSE_0.pdf) and <http://osse.dc.gov/publication/discipline-report>

<sup>19</sup> The 2014 DC Data Summit schedule and session resources are located online at: <http://www.dccdatasummit.org>.

# Data Systems to Support Instruction

for analysis and reporting and has continually updated its research agenda. Despite these improvements, during Year 4, OSSE recognized a need to increase internal staff capacity to understand and use data.

The agency plans to continue providing professional development to members of its cross-functional teams in order to better support its LEAs.

## Great Teachers and Leaders

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

### Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance

Similar to previous years of the grant, in Year 4, OSSE provided VAM and MGP data based on the DC CAS to participating LEAs. VAM and MGP data for SY 2012-2013 were initially released in August 2013. However, a contractor calculation error resulted in OSSE issuing revised SY 2012-2013 VAM results to DCPS schools in December 2013 and charter schools in January 2014, impacting approximately 1 percent of teachers in the District. OSSE provided SY 2013-2014 VAM and MGP data to LEAs in August 2014. LEAs continue to use two separate VAM translation tables to incorporate the results into LEA-specific evaluation ratings, resulting in challenges in comparing teacher and leader evaluation ratings across participating LEAs. In previous grant years, a contractor analyzed the VAM results comparing teachers and leaders across the District. However, in Year 4 the analysis of SY 2012-2013 VAM data was delayed due to the calculation error and was not provided to OSSE until summer 2014. OSSE also provided the MGP data, or school-wide growth model, for SY 2012-2013 to participating LEAs in fall 2013 and plans to distribute the SY 2013-2014 MGP data in fall 2014. The results from this model are used in the PCSB's Performance Management Framework and DCPS' School Report Card.

During Year 4, two participating LEAs continued activities to develop growth measures in non-tested grades and subjects, as detailed in their Expanded Growth Assessment subgrants. OSSE awarded one subgrant in October 2012 for \$500,000 to pilot a mathematics assessment as a predictor of performance on the ACT and a second subgrant for \$500,000 in July 2013 to develop a middle school social studies growth measure. Additionally, OSSE awarded another \$250,000 to the first subgrantee to add another LEA to its pilot. As a result, this consortium administered the assessment in fall, winter and spring of SY 2013-2014 to approximately 4,500 students and each LEA used

the results to inform differentiated instruction. The lead LEA of this consortium conducted an analysis of data in Year 4 that demonstrated a positive correlation between a student's score on the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade assessment and ACT scores in 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade. Work by the second subgrantee to develop a middle school social studies assessment was one year delayed. In summer 2013, the subgrantee released an RFP to build an assessment and develop and field test items during SY 2013-2014. However, due to procurement and hiring delays the LEA will now develop and field test items in SY 2014-2015 and will not fully implement the expanded growth social studies assessment until SY 2015-2016.

Additionally, in SY 2012-2013, each participating LEA piloted one assessment or process for measuring growth for at least one grade or subject on OSSE's list of priority grades and subject areas – ELA and mathematics for grade 2, and ELA for grades 9 and 10. LEAs were also given the option to use VAM for grades 3, 9, and 10. Twelve LEAs chose to pilot one or both of the DC CAS assessments. The remaining 18 LEAs chose to pilot other standardized assessments. Data from these pilot assessments were included in SY 2012-2013 evaluations. In Year 4, participating LEAs expanded assessment measures to additional grades and subjects and incorporated the data into SY 2013-2014 evaluations.

In Year 4, OSSE hired an SLO specialist to manage OSSE's expanding SLO work. With support from a vendor and the SLO specialist, OSSE published a SLO Guidebook, SLO training modules, and a SLO readiness checklist for participating LEAs. Based on LEA reporting and OSSE's monitoring, 20 out of the 54 total LEAs in the District plan to use SLOs in their teacher evaluation systems; six represent Race to the Top participating LEAs. During SY 2013-2014, OSSE launched a monthly professional development series entitled "Semester of SLOs," focusing on the SLO process for assessing and measuring student growth. Seventy-five educators participated in at least one of the six trainings during



# Great Teachers and Leaders

spring 2014. Additionally, in July 2014, OSSE conducted a summer intensive SLO workshop with 32 participants representing 18 LEAs to train teacher leaders to serve as “SLO Ambassadors” across the District. OSSE also created a SLO page on LearnDC.org to host all of the SLO training materials and resources.

During Year 4, OSSE participated in the RSN’s SLO Workgroup. This included attending a March 2014 convening focused on building skills and modeling practice related to the essential components of target setting for SLOs, such as improving the use of baseline data, developing and selecting high-quality assessments and setting rigorous targets. Additionally, OSSE was featured in two RSN briefs, *SLO Quality Control Toolkit 2.0* and *Measures of Learning: State Approaches for Gauging Student Growth in New Evaluation Systems*.<sup>20</sup> The updated version of the toolkit features over 100 State and LEA resources related to making SLO policy choices, providing SLO tools, selecting or creating assessments and setting targets, communicating with teachers and principals, training LEA staff and school administrators and ensuring continuous improvement. The *Measures of Learning* publication describes new ways that States redesigning their educator effectiveness systems are measuring growth in student achievement, including value-added models and SLOs. The publication concludes with a brief discussion on communicating the results of student growth measures, such as monitoring correlations between student outcomes and teacher evaluation ratings, and using data dashboards to track and share evaluation data.

## Ensuring equitable access to effective teachers and principals

OSSE used several strategies to support equitable access to effective teachers and principals in the highest-poverty schools and hard-to-staff subject areas. These strategies included awarding three subgrants for the Pipelines project, a teacher residency program that uses a comprehensive recruitment and selection process to identify and place highly-effective teachers in hard-to-staff areas in participating schools. Since Year 1, the three Pipelines cohorts placed 160 residents as lead teachers in 15 LEAs in hard-to-staff areas, such as early childhood, mathematics, and science (also see “Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs”).

As discussed in “Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance,” OSSE provided finalized SY 2013-2014 VAM to all participating LEAs in August 2014. VAM accounts for at least 30 percent of the evaluation measures used for teachers of ELA and mathematics in grades 4-8. In previous grant years, OSSE conducted an analysis of VAM data and access to effective teachers across schools in participating LEAs. Typically completed in the fall, OSSE used the results to inform technical assistance and support to LEAs. Additionally, OSSE uses this analysis to identify LEAs with large numbers of ineffective teachers in subject shortage areas.

<sup>20</sup> Documents are available online at <http://rtt.grads360.org/#communities/tle-sa/workgroups/slo/slo-toolkit> and <http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/implementation-support-unit/tech-assist/measures-of-learning.pdf>.

In Year 3, nine LEAs were required to implement OSSE-approved teacher improvement plans to increase teacher effectiveness based on data from SY 2011-2012. OSSE checked for implementation of the teacher improvement plans during its Year 3 and Year 4 monitoring of these participating LEAs and intended to repeat the correlational analysis using data from SY 2012-2013. However, due to the error in calculating Year 3 VAM data, OSSE did not complete the analysis until May 2014. Therefore, in Year 4, OSSE was unable to use this correlation analysis to determine the effectiveness of the teacher improvement plans or to inform technical assistance to participating LEAs. OSSE planned to publish a report on inequities in the distribution of effective teachers in the District using two years of data (SY 2012-2013 and SY 2013-2014) in fall 2014, but as of this report had been unable to complete this task.

DCPS and charter LEAs continue to engage in teacher and leader recruitment, selection, retention, and placement strategies (*i.e.*, smart targeting) designed to increase overall effectiveness of the teacher corps. OSSE reported that participating charter LEAs used data from their approved evaluation systems to inform teacher retention and placement decisions. In Year 4, DCPS conducted a process to align its IMPACT educator evaluation system and teacher competencies with a multi-step recruitment process. DCPS reported that the teachers entering its system are, on average, rated more effective than teachers exiting the system. This claim is primarily based on an external study of the IMPACT educator evaluation system, which found the system increased the percentage of low-performing teachers voluntarily exiting DCPS and showed DCPS has retained a high percentage of its most effective teachers since the introduction of the IMPACT educator evaluation system.<sup>21</sup> A separate study examining DCPS teacher retention trends also found high retention levels of highly-effective teachers since the introduction of the IMPACT system.<sup>22</sup> This study also found new DCPS teacher teachers were similarly effective in the classroom when compared to those exiting the system and that “the most recent cohorts of teachers hired to replace teachers who leave appear to have improved more quickly with experience.”

## Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs

Instead of continuing to convene the Teacher Preparation Program Taskforce, in Year 4 OSSE opted to engage an educator preparation program leadership group consisting of school leaders and administrators from educator preparation programs in the District. OSSE released the templates for Educator Preparation Program Profiles in January 2013 and conducted a one-year pilot of the profiles in SY 2013-2014. Throughout Year 4, the educator preparation program leadership group met monthly to review the pilot process and provide feedback to OSSE on draft documents. In OSSE’s original plan, it intended to publish the profiles in fall 2014 and establish

<sup>21</sup> Study available online at: <http://www.nber.org/papers/w19529>.

<sup>22</sup> Study available online at: [http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/~media/publications/pdfs/education/teachereffectiveness\\_dcps.pdf](http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/~media/publications/pdfs/education/teachereffectiveness_dcps.pdf).



# Great Teachers and Leaders

performance metrics for teacher and leader preparation programs by fall 2016. In August 2014, OSSE amended the focus of this project to continue to publish Teacher and Leader Preparation Program Profiles annually beginning in October 2014, but as of this report had yet to publicly share the profiles. OSSE also indicated it will now establish performance metrics only for leader preparation programs by fall 2016, due to the small number of teachers prepared in the District who teach in District LEAs and because charter school teachers in the District are not required to hold a teaching license.

Over the grant period, OSSE awarded competitive subgrants to three charter LEAs for its Pipelines project. Two were granted in spring 2011 – one to the Knowledge is Power Program-DC (KIPP-DC) the other to Cesar Chavez Public Charter Schools for Public Policy (Chavez). A third subgrant was awarded in spring 2012 to Capital City Public Charter Schools (Capital City). Each LEA was required to partner with an expert organization to provide professional development and mentor support to the teaching residents. The subgrants to KIPP-DC and Chavez concluded at the end of SY 2012-2013. However, both LEAs opted to continue their respective Pipelines programs with alternate funding sources. Over two years of the subgrant, these two programs trained and placed 126 teaching residents into full-time classroom teaching positions in charter and DCPS schools. During Year 4, OSSE engaged with a local university to review each program's performance measures and conduct interviews with residents, program staff, and mentor teachers, finding high levels of teacher retention and performance across all programs. In SY 2013-2014, Capital City prepared 21 residents to become full-time lead classroom teachers and placed 20 in DCPS or charter schools. Of the 35 residents (14 in SY 2012-2013 and 21 in SY 2013-2014) trained during this two-year subgrant, only one individual was not retained, reflecting a 97 percent retention rate. OSSE reported that mid-year effectiveness data of the SY 2013-2014 cohort demonstrated that there was strong satisfaction among the residents and mentors, online interim assessment data showed a positive trajectory, and interim evaluation data for the residents were higher than the average beginning teacher.

## Providing effective support to teachers and principals

To provide effective support to teachers and principals, OSSE planned to create a professional development platform, directly tie professional development to teacher evaluations for charter school educators, and launch the PLaCEs consortium. In August 2012, DCPS launched the Ed Portal+ as an online platform to provide DCPS educators with information, resources, and materials to support the transition to the CCSS.<sup>23</sup> The online portal contains a growing library of documents, presentations, lessons, units and courses that are aligned to the CCSS and DCPS' academic plan. It also allows for social networking, and it provides educators the ability to access professional development

<sup>23</sup> The Ed Portal + was featured in a September 2014 *PROGRESS* blog post, Educator Portal Plus is Go-To Source for District of Columbia Teachers, available online at <http://www.ed.gov/edblogs/progress/2014/09/educator-portal-plus-is-go-to-source-for-district-of-columbia-teachers>.

resources such as videos and articles that demonstrate effective teaching techniques. DCPS notes that the site receives, on average, 1,200 daily logins. In Year 4, OSSE reported that DCPS evaluators could directly link to specific professional development resources within the Ed Portal+ when completing a teacher's IMPACT evaluation. Also, in Year 4, DCPS provided access and training on the resources in the Ed Portal+ to all participating charter LEAs. After expanding access to the portal, OSSE reviewed charter LEA usage data and observed that charter usage was not meeting its intended targets. OSSE posited that this was because many of the resources were specific to DCPS' curriculum and frameworks and not always seen as relevant to charter schools. In fall 2013, OSSE conducted a survey of charter LEAs on the Ed Portal+ and utilized the feedback to conduct more targeted outreach and communications of the resource to charter LEAs. To-date, charter use of the Ed Portal+ remains low and OSSE continues to explore ways to improve its communications and outreach on this resource.

### Ed Portal+

The Ed Portal+ is an online portal that provides educators with means to connect with LEA officials and fellow teachers, access meaningful professional development materials, view high-quality lesson plans, and stay up-to-date on key professional learning opportunities. The site was designed by the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) with support from Race to the Top funds and is currently used by 90 percent of DCPS teachers. Many resources on the Ed Portal+, such as Common Core State Standards-aligned (CCSS-aligned) lessons and other professional learning resources, are also open to teachers at District charter schools.

Portal users have the ability to set up personal profiles and tailor professional development resources and opportunities to their needs and interests. Staff at DCPS track which resources are viewed, downloaded, and recommended by teachers through a thumbs-up mechanism. These staff then analyze the data to ensure that they are meeting teachers' needs and communicating important information to educators. This process allows DCPS to understand which resources to feature and those that need to be refined.

While DCPS developed and curated the Ed Portal+, it includes many relevant resources for the District's charter educators as well. Popular content includes: resources to help teachers provide students with high-quality close-reading instruction, ideas for planning a class field trip, and suggestions for classroom activities to promote literacy.

OSSE continued to support the two PLaCEs subgrantees in implementing approved professional development programs that focus on CCSS implementation and instruction across multiple subject areas. Collectively over the course of the grant, these programs have reached over 13,000 students through 191 participating educators across 35 charter and DCPS schools. Participating educators engaged

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in rigorous lesson study opportunities, and developed online resources that OSSE plans to make available on LearnDC.org.

One subgrantee, DC Common Core Collaborative, completed its work at the end of SY 2013-2014 and engaged with an external vendor to conduct an evaluation of the program. This evaluation found that the DC Common Core Collaborative increased teachers' and students' access to technology and high-quality CCSS-aligned resources, contributed to improvements in teachers' instructional practice, and found that a majority of teachers believed that the DC Common Core Collaborative had an impact on their understanding of the CCSS, instructional practices, and student achievement. The evaluation also reported that many of the participating teachers commented that one of the most valuable aspects of participation was the opportunity to collaborate and learn from other teachers through the lesson study teams.<sup>24</sup>

The second PLaCEs subgrantee, DC Core Task Project focused on the creation of inquiry groups to increase critical thinking and rigor of CCSS-aligned instructional practice.<sup>25</sup> An analysis of participants in SY 2013-2014 revealed that the program has led to an overall increase in participants' familiarity with the CCSS shifts, their ability to access high-quality resources, and their capacity to teach higher-level thinking skills.

## Successes and challenges

In Year 4, the District of Columbia's City Council responded to LEA reluctance to share teacher-level evaluation data with OSSE by enacting the Educator Evaluation Data Collection Emergency Amendment Act of 2014. The temporary legislation allowed OSSE to collect individual educator evaluation data from LEAs and adds a measure of protection from Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests. OSSE reported that permanent legislation will be codified at Title § 38-2602(b)(22) in the District of Columbia Code, pending Congressional approval. This short-term solution was a critical step in preparation for publishing the Educator Preparation Program Profiles because it enables the agency to include individual educator effectiveness data within the profiles as well as inform the taskforce while it determines performance measures for the Leader Preparation Program Profiles. After shortening the pilot by one year, OSSE was on track to publish the profiles in fall 2014 as originally planned. However OSSE reported a small number of participating LEAs elected not to share teacher-level evaluation data with the agency. These data would be used to report on the average evaluation ratings of each preparation program's graduates. As a result, as of this report OSSE is delayed in releasing the Educator Preparation Program Profiles, because it lacks the necessary data to complete the profiles.

<sup>24</sup> The DC Common Core Collaborative was featured in a February 2014 PROGRESS blog post, *Washington D.C. Charters, District Schools Collaborate Around College- and Career-Ready Standards*, available online at <http://www.ed.gov/edblogs/progress/2014/02/washington-d-c-charters-district-schools-collaborate-around-college-and-career-ready-standards>.

<sup>25</sup> The DC Core Task Project was previously referred to as "Teachers and Principals of Pupils of Promise (ToPPP)."

In Year 4, OSSE ramped up its development of SLOs. The release of the SLO Guidebook, SLO training modules, and the SLO readiness checklist for participating LEAs during SY 2013-2014 provided educators with much needed resources on how to set rigorous, but achievable learning objectives. During SY 2013-2014 implementation, OSSE learned that its LEAs were in need of additional support and training in order to implement SLOs in schools with high quality. As a result, it designed a multi-session training series to provide in-depth professional development as well as a summer institute in an effort to create a cadre of SLO experts across different LEAs. OSSE would benefit from learning how this outreach impacts the quality of implementation and rigor of SLOs during Year 5.

The errors in calculating SY 2012-2013 VAM had a cascading effect on the analysis of evaluation and achievement data for SY 2012-2013 and on OSSE's ability to support the nine LEAs that implemented teacher improvement plans during Year 3. Because of the delays caused by these data challenges, OSSE was unable to determine the impact of the Year 3 interventions until the completion of a revised report in May 2014. As a result, in SY 2013-2014 LEAs with large numbers of ineffective teachers in subject shortage areas experienced a one-year gap in support from OSSE. Now that the data and analysis is available, it will be critical for OSSE to closely monitor and support these LEAs' teacher improvement plans to ensure that teacher effectiveness improves and student achievement increases during SY 2014-2015.

OSSE reported that it is highly satisfied with the outcomes of two of the competitive subgrant projects, Pipelines and PLaCEs. All three Pipelines subgrantees maintained retention rates and teacher residents continued to be placed in teaching positions in high-need areas. One Pipelines subgrantee received a Race to the Top – District grant in December 2012 and the two other subgrantees have continued their Pipeline programs by relying on other funding sources. OSSE reported that the two PLaCEs subgrants have reached over 15,500 students through 191 participating educators across 35 schools in the District. An analysis conducted by an external vendor and OSSE demonstrates that the PLaCEs consortia have had a positive impact on educators' knowledge of the CCSS and improved access to high-quality instructional resources. OSSE intends to make the highest-quality resources developed through the consortia available to the public on LearnDC.org.

OSSE appears to have fostered a successful partnership with DCPS around the Ed Portal+. The portal offers all participating LEAs access to a robust library of instructional resources and professional development tools. Additionally, it enables DCPS teachers to tailor professional development to areas of strength and improvement identified in their annual performance evaluations. Improving charter LEAs' use of the portal remains a challenge for OSSE. However, it is encouraging that OSSE is working to understand the barriers to charter LEA use and rethinking its strategies for increasing awareness and use of the resources on the portal.

# 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>26</sup>

## Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools

During the first half of Year 4, OSSE continued to develop a plan to implement a revised strategy for intervening in the District's lowest-achieving schools. In its approved Race to the Top application, OSSE originally committed to provide additional funding support to nine PLA schools within DCPS and funded by SIG. OSSE used a rubric that included data such as DC CAS proficiency results, school climate, and teacher effectiveness to select DCPS schools for Race to the Top intervention and support. The agency planned to provide financial support to enable DCPS to carry out the PLA schools' intervention efforts (e.g., implementation of a turnaround, transformation, restart, or closure model). In Year 4, OSSE reported that of the original nine schools, five had closed based on school performance. In December 2013, the Department approved OSSE to modify its intervention strategy and use of funds to support PLA schools.

The revised plan reduced the number of Race to the Top-supported PLA schools from the originally proposed nine to eight. During spring 2014, four of those eight schools implemented a blended learning model and the other four schools implemented a twilight academy model.<sup>27</sup> As originally planned, DCPS continued to employ one central office staff member and two experienced principal partners to provide direct counsel and support to the blended learning and twilight academy schools. In its original application, OSSE intended to distribute the remaining funds in this budget on a per-student basis as supplemental funds to the Race to the Top PLA schools. In Year 4, OSSE altered its strategy for providing differential funding to Race to the Top PLA schools, but maintained the original intent of the project. Based on a Department-approved work plan and budget, each of the eight schools received funds to support implementation of either the blended learning or twilight academy model during SY 2013-2014.

During Year 4, OSSE reported that all schools were on track with implementing their approved plans. These plans included using blended learning instructional programs during literacy

and mathematics blocks, providing network upgrades to internet bandwidth, and using diagnostic assessments to create individualized academic plans and interventions for students. DCPS used lessons learned from Year 4 implementation to develop guidance documents for other DCPS schools seeking to implement blended learning and twilight academy models. OSSE also reported that all eight PLA schools are making appropriate progress and at least one blended learning school reported increased student engagement and achievement.<sup>28</sup>

OSSE and DCPS continued to use the online reporting tool, Indistar, to align different streams of work to school improvement plans and to track each PLA school's progress on OSSE's Seven Turnaround Principles. DCPS reviews each school's progress on its work plan as part of its official site visits and reported on these visits as well as the spending of Race to the Top turnaround funds during a monthly check-in meeting with OSSE. OSSE also conducted site visits to one blended learning and one twilight academy school in March 2014 and provided feedback to DCPS based on these visits.

In addition, OSSE spent Year 4 developing a plan to provide support and recognition to the District's Priority, Focus, and Reward schools by aligning its Race to the Top work plan for a SSOS with its SIG and approved ESEA flexibility plan. On September 25, 2014, the Department approved an amendment to create the SSOS which included a work plan, timeline, and budgets for SY 2014-2015. All of this work will occur during Year 5 (also see *Looking Ahead*).

## Successes and challenges

In the first half of Year 4, OSSE continued to experience challenges related to PLA school interventions. During this time, OSSE struggled to revise a work plan and budget that aligned with PLA schools' needs. As a result the Department did not approve OSSE's plan until December 2013, at which time OSSE and DCPS were able to immediately begin executing their school-based work plans. During the Year 4 program review, both OSSE and DCPS demonstrated a

<sup>26</sup> Race to the Top States' plans include supporting their LEAs in turning around the lowest-achieving schools by implementing one of the four school intervention models:

**Turnaround model:** Replace the principal and hire no more than 50 percent of the staff and grant the principal sufficient operational flexibility (including in staffing, calendars/time and budgeting) to fully implement a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student outcomes.

**Restart model:** Convert a school or close and reopen it under a charter school operator, a charter management organization, or an education management organization that has been selected through a rigorous review process.

**School closure:** Close a school and enroll the students who attended that school in other schools in the district that are higher achieving.

**Transformation model:** Implement each of the following strategies: (1) replace the principal and take steps to increase teacher and school leader effectiveness, (2) institute comprehensive instructional reforms, (3) increase learning time and create community-oriented schools, and (4) provide operational flexibility and sustained support.

<sup>27</sup> The blended learning model is a classroom-based program where a portion of the traditional face-to-face instruction is replaced by web-based online learning. The twilight academy model is a small learning community typically held after school hours to address the needs of over-aged and under-credited students who are two or more grade levels below.

<sup>28</sup> In contrast to the half-year implementation of blended learning and twilight academy models at the seven other schools, SY 2013-2014 was Kramer Middle School's second full year implementing the blended learning model.



## Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

collaborative relationship that both agencies acknowledged was a shift from their previous interactions. Both agencies provided compelling evidence that the eight PLA schools were implementing the initiatives articulated in the work plan. OSSE was not able to provide data on student outcomes or performance measures. Because seven of the Race to the Top PLA schools have implemented these initiatives for only one semester, OSSE stated that it was difficult to evaluate quality and determine the impact of these activities on student learning. Additionally, because of persistent implementation delays and multiple strategy shifts in OSSE's support of PLA schools, OSSE has not met the performance measures identified in its approved application.

In August 2013, the Department placed the budget for supporting this section of the grant on cost reimbursement basis. While on cost

reimbursement basis, the Department approved OSSE to draw down funds to support its PLA schools intervention work. The Department stipulated that it would reconsider this designation after OSSE submitted an approvable work plan, budget and amendment request for the SSOS that aligned to its Race to the Top work plan, SIG grant, and approved ESEA flexibility plan; to provide evidence of a successful track record of expenditures aligned to the activities in its approved plan. The Department approved the SSOS at the beginning of Year 5 and, in January 2015, OSSE provided compelling evidence of a track record of expenditures aligned to the implementation of activities within the work plan. As a result, the Department removed this section of the grant from cost reimbursement basis in February 2015.

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

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

### The District's STEM Initiatives

During Year 4, OSSE took several steps to accelerate its STEM work, in particular progress toward completing a STEM Strategic Plan and launching a STEM Learning Network. In its approved application, OSSE committed to launch the STEM Learning Network in December 2011. This network aimed to highlight the importance of STEM education and unite stakeholders in the STEM system to provide a forum for program guidance, development and best-practice sharing. In July 2013, the agency hired a STEM specialist. This individual took a lead role in convening several stakeholder groups including OSSE's cross-divisional STEM team, the State Science Leadership Team, the STEM Guiding Coalition – which represents 35 key stakeholders across STEM sectors in the District – and a student advisory group to provide feedback on the proposed STEM Strategic Plan and STEM Learning Network. In addition, OSSE selected a partner through a competitive process to serve as the lead organization for the STEM Learning Network. Although nearly three years late, the agency reported that it intends to formally announce the STEM Strategic Plan and STEM Learning Network in October 2014.

In fall 2013, the State Board of Education adopted the NGSS; all LEAs will transition to full implementation of the NGSS during SY 2014-2015. Throughout fall 2013 and spring 2014, OSSE conducted 30 parent outreach sessions to provide information and resources on NGSS and collect feedback from the public to better understand the level of STEM awareness. The agency used this feedback to inform resources provided on the science page on LearnDC.org. In summer 2014, OSSE held a three-week Summer Science Institute for Master science teachers – science teachers who received a highly-effective annual evaluation rating from DCPS or charter LEAs. At this training, the participants deconstructed the NGSS and developed curriculum frameworks and additional instructional items for classroom use that OSSE plans to make available on LearnDC.org. OSSE's Pipelines project continued to focus on the preparation of STEM teachers as well as teachers for other hard-to-staff areas.

### Successes and challenges

During Year 4, although delayed, OSSE made commendable progress on the STEM activities approved in its Scope of Work. In



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

its application, OSSE set out to create a cohesive STEM approach, predominantly through a STEM Strategic Plan and STEM Learning Network. The contract was awarded in August 2012 and, after a slow start in Years 2 and 3, OSSE recognized the need to hire a content expert to lead this work. The STEM specialist has played a key role in providing professional development, convening stakeholders, and drafting the District's STEM plan. While this work remains

significantly delayed, OSSE is optimistic that it will launch the STEM Learning Network during Year 5 and will accomplish its Race to the Top STEM goals before the end of the extended grant period. Originally planned to launch in December 2011 and now three years behind schedule, once operational, the STEM Strategic Plan and STEM Learning Network should provide tools educators and external stakeholders need to implement quality STEM learning experiences.

## Looking Ahead

Most Race to the Top States developed plans to continue their comprehensive reform efforts for an additional year (through the no-cost extension) and are developing plans to sustain many of their projects beyond the grant period.

During Year 5, OSSE plans to continue and enhance a number of its projects developed under Race to the Top and transition these activities to work aligned with OSSE's approved ESEA flexibility plan. OSSE will finalize the agency reorganization and will continue to implement processes to formalize stronger alignment across its cross-functional teams such as Race to the Top, Division of Specialized Education, SIG, ESEA flexibility, and Teaching and Learning. The agency intends to continue to convene the taskforces and leadership groups such as the PARCC ELC, Educator Preparation Program Leadership Group, State Science Leadership Team, and the STEM Guiding Coalition to continue to provide guidance and feedback on OSSE's implementation of CCSS-aligned assessments, Educator Preparation Program Profiles, and the STEM Strategic Plan and Learning Network. To streamline its monitoring and support of LEAs, OSSE will use the EGMS, a comprehensive online system to centralize grant management throughout the agency and enhance transparency and communications to subgrantees. The EGMS launched in June 2014; therefore, OSSE expects to continue to provide training on the new system to ensure that all features are being used effectively and at their fullest capacity. In May 2014, the Department approved OSSE to extend the timelines for participating LEAs to implement activities of the grant through a case-by-case review and approval process.<sup>29</sup> Through this process, OSSE approved one participating LEA, DCPS, to extend its Race to the Top activities and funds through June 30, 2015. Additionally, OSSE shifted funds to support four full-time employees to oversee this work during Year 5.

OSSE will continue to provide educators with opportunities for professional development on implementing the CCSS and preparing for CCSS-aligned assessments in SY 2014-2015. Using Race to the Top funds, OSSE plans to expand the number of resources available on LearnDC.org, its CCSS resource website, including adding resources on NGSS, CCSS-aligned support, teacher and

leader effectiveness strategies, and resources on non-tested grades and subjects and special populations. Additionally, OSSE plans to provide training to OSSE staff to better support District educators in implementing the CCSS. DCPS will continue to add resources to the Ed Portal+ while OSSE explores methods to increase charter LEA usage of this resource. OSSE also intends to continue to support the DC Core Task Project, a PLACEs consortium. Although the other PLACEs consortium, the DC Common Core Collaborative, officially concluded at the end of SY 2013-2014, its educators have been invited to continue participating in the core task project groups of DC Core Task Project during Year 5. OSSE hopes to develop a sustaining Community of Practice where DCPS and charter school educators share best practices, challenges, and improve the alignment of their instruction to the CCSS. OSSE also intends to share the resources developed by the DC Core Task Project consortium on LearnDC.org.

OSSE's Office of Data Management will continue to update its Statewide Longitudinal Data System with new functionalities and develop new research-ready datasets. In addition, OSSE will publish the school- and LEA-specific report cards for the second consecutive year on LearnDC.org. The agency will extend its partnership with the REL Mid-Atlantic to explore ways to increase the rigor in research methods and the complexity of datasets requested. OSSE also intends to release reports on attendance and disconnected youth in fall 2014 to continue to steer stakeholder outreach and policy discussions on OSSE's highest priorities. One IIS consortium will continue convening its members and complete activities in its Scope of Work by the end of January 2015. Throughout this extension, OSSE plans to assist the lead LEA in executing this work within its amended timeline to ensure that the IIS and any additional training is high-quality.

During Year 5, OSSE will continue to refine VAM and MGP calculations to ensure accuracy as well as provide multiple data points and calculation options for LEAs to incorporate into educator evaluation systems. The agency intends to review its contractor's

<sup>29</sup> OSSE's process for reviewing and approving participating LEA no-cost extension requests can be found online at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/amendments/district-of-columbia-10.pdf>.

## Looking Ahead

analysis of SYs 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 VAM and access to effective teachers across participating schools and will provide additional monitoring and support to the schools that have a high correlation between high-poverty status and low teacher effectiveness across the two years of data. OSSE will also extend its Race to the Top work on SLOs and the expanded growth social studies assessment through June 2015. During Year 5, OSSE plans to enhance its SLO resources and provide additional SLO training and professional development to District educators. It intends to follow up with the educators who attended the summer intensive SLO workshop and provide teacher leaders support throughout the year as they train other educators in its schools and LEAs on SLOs. OSSE also plans to continue working closely with DCPS as it develops and implements the social studies expanded growth measure in SY 2014-2015.

OSSE will continue to work on the Educator Preparation Program Profiles project. The agency did not publish completed profiles in fall 2014 as intended, although they report public release will occur in spring 2015. The Department approved OSSE to no longer develop performance measures for teacher preparation programs.<sup>30</sup> It will instead focus on developing performance measures and consequences for principal preparation programs by fall 2016.

In alignment with its approved ESEA flexibility plan, OSSE will expand on its current work to raise student achievement in the lowest-achieving schools by implementing a SSOS that enables the agency to build effective relationships with and provide targeted support to Priority and Focus schools. OSSE's SSOS includes a

four-pronged approach that will: (1) adopt a LEA support team model utilizing cross-agency staff at OSSE to strengthen implementation of outcomes-driven, progress-monitoring reviews to evaluate and support improvement activities of Priority, Focus, and SIG schools; (2) convene multiple annual LEA Support Institutes to provide training and support to all LEAs with required participation from SIG schools and highly encouraged participation from Priority and Focus schools; (3) contract with vendors to provide onsite, data-driven technical assistance to Priority schools, support LEAs and school leaders in the implementation of the CCSS and research-based interventions, and lend onsite coaching and coordination of job-alike collaboration; and (4) award competitive grants to LEAs or schools for dissemination of best practices. OSSE also plans to define metrics in fall 2014 to measure the effectiveness of this approach.

OSSE finalized its STEM Strategic Plan in October 2014 and began sharing the plan with the District's STEM stakeholders. During Year 5, OSSE anticipates that it will expand dissemination of the STEM Strategic Plan and begin implementing key initiatives according to the strategic plan's timeline. Additionally, OSSE will establish the STEM Learning Network, nearly three years later than the timeline in its approved Race to the Top plan. Once fully launched, the network will offer opportunities for collaborative planning and community engagement around STEM initiatives, provide resources and learning opportunities for the District's students to engage with STEM; thereby increasing STEM mastery and the number of students who major in STEM fields in college and enter STEM careers.

## Budget

For the State's expenditures through June 30, 2014, please see the APR Data Display at <http://www.rtt-apr.us>.

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

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

<sup>30</sup> See <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/amendments/district-of-columbia-11.pdf>.

# Glossary

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

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

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

(11) information regarding the extent to which students transition successfully from secondary school to postsecondary education, including whether students enroll in remedial coursework; and (12) other information determined necessary to address alignment and adequate preparation for success in postsecondary education.

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Glossary

**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.

**No-Cost Extension (Year 5):** A no-cost extension provides grantees with additional time to spend their grants (until September 2015) to accomplish the reform goals, deliverables and commitments in its Race to the Top application and approved Scope of Work. Grantees made no-cost extension amendment requests to extend work beyond the final project year, consistent with the Amendment Principles (<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/grant-amendment-submission-process-oct-4-2011.pdf>) as well as the additional elements outlined in the Department Review section of the Amendment Requests with No Cost Extension Guidance and Principles document (<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/no-cost-extension-submission-process.pdf>).

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

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

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



# Glossary

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: (1) differentiate effectiveness using multiple rating categories that take into account data on student growth as a significant factor, and (2) are designed and developed with teacher and principal involvement.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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