RACE TO THE TOP

Georgia Report

Year 4: School Year 2013–2014

U.S. Department of Education
Washington, DC 20202

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.[1] 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,[2] and Race to the Top – District[3] 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)[4] in the design and implementation of the most effective and innovative approaches that meet the needs of their educators, students, and families.

[1] 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.

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

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

[4] 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.[5] 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).[6]

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

[6] 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.

Executive Summary

State-specific summary report

The Department uses the information gathered during the review process (*e.g.*, through monthly calls, onsite reviews, and Annual Performance Reports (APRs)) to draft State-specific summary reports. 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).

State's education reform agenda

Georgia's vision in its Race to the Top grant is to prepare all Georgia students to "graduate from high school, be successful in college and/or careers, and be competitive with their peers throughout the United States and the world." Specifically, Georgia's education reform agenda, supported with a $399,952,650 Race to the Top grant, establishes five objectives:

1. Set high standards and rigorous assessments for all students—leading to college and career readiness;

2. Prepare students for college, transition, and success;

3. Provide great teachers and leaders;

4. Provide effective support for all schools, including the lowest-achieving schools; and

5. Lead the way in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields.

To accomplish these objectives and meet its vision, the State adopted and implemented the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS), expanded its kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12) longitudinal data system (LDS) to support classroom instruction, and developed new teacher and leader evaluation systems.

State Years 1 through 3 summary

During the State's first three years of its Race to the Top grant, Georgia made significant progress across the education reform areas. To build capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain its Race to the Top plan, the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) revised its State- and LEA-level monitoring and oversight procedures to focus on the quality of implementation and overall performance towards Race to the Top goals, in addition to progress against the State's approved plan. The State hired four individuals to serve as LEA liaisons and provide oversight and targeted technical assistance to participating LEAs on Race to the Top implementation. To increase focus on data analysis, dependent activities, and the quality of implementation at the State level, Georgia began holding meetings with The Internal Committee for Technical Oversight and Communication (TIC TOC) that includes leadership from GaDOE and the Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA) to review progress on the teacher and leader evaluation systems.

In its Race to the Top application, Georgia set out to develop and provide access to high-quality instructional materials and resources for educators to use in the transition to new standards. In school year (SY) 2012-2013, GaDOE also provided all LEAs with a variety of resources (*e.g.*, webinars, newsletters, and curriculum frameworks) to support implementation of the CCGPS. These resources included professional development and face-to-face support from regional content specialists in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. In addition, the State piloted and rolled out an Assessment Literacy professional learning course, "Georgia Formative Instructional Practices: The Keys to Student Success." The course is designed to prepare teachers to use formative assessment to improve instruction and is aligned to the 10 standards in the State's new observation protocol that is part of the teacher and leader evaluation systems.

In Years 1-3, Georgia enhanced its LDS from a data collection tool at the LEA level to a system that can deliver personalized learning tools to teachers, students, parents, and administrators. GaDOE provided training and support to participating LEAs on the development and use of the LDS and Instructional Improvement Reports. The State received positive feedback from LEAs on the LDS and reported that approximately 40,000 educators representing over 30 percent of educators statewide, accessed the system each month throughout SY 2012-2013. In Year 3, GaDOE released the High School Transition Reports, which allows schools to track student performance on end-of-course tests and the Georgia High School Graduation Test to help ensure that students have met requirements for graduation and are on track for enrollment in Georgia institutions of higher education (IHEs). In addition, Georgia launched the Teacher Resource Link to allow teachers to quickly find and access CCGPS resources.

The State held three rounds of the Innovation Fund competitive grant program, which was designed to encourage the formation of partnerships between LEAs and colleges and universities, non-profit organizations, or businesses to identify new ways to increase applied learning opportunities, improve teacher and leader effectiveness, expand the pipeline of effective teachers, and promote STEM charter schools. The State awarded a total of 23 grants in Years 1 and 2. In Year 3, Georgia launched the Innovation in Teaching Competition, a new initiative under its Innovation Fund, to support educators who use innovative and effective strategies in teaching the CCGPS ELA and mathematics. The State made awards to 12 teachers by the start of SY 2013-2014.

To continue to emphasize the importance of STEM education in Georgia, the State provided all LEAs with a variety of new STEM resources, including Fast Forward, a new original series of video shorts from Georgia Public Broadcasting. The Fast Forward project consists of 16 video segments that explain specific STEM concepts

and demonstrate how employees in businesses and organizations across Georgia are applying the STEM subjects in their jobs.

All participating LEAs with lowest-achieving schools signed Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with the State in October 2011, which contained commitments from LEAs to implement one of the four reform models and the State's non-negotiable programmatic initiatives, including 60 minutes of common planning time for teachers per week and increased learning time for those students or student sub-groups that need additional time. In SY 2012-2013, Georgia implemented Indistar as a project management tool for its school improvement specialists and educators in the lowest-achieving schools. Indistar allows school-based educators to set quality indicators, assess progress and assign tasks, as well as capture coaching comments and match them to indicators. The State opened two Performance Learning Centers in Floyd and Richmond counties in SY 2011-2012 and a third Performance Learning Centers in Carrollton City in SY 2012-2013 to help students recover credits and graduate high school. In SY 2012-2013, these programs graduated a total of 64 students.

Despite these accomplishments, Georgia experienced significant challenges related to implementation of its educator evaluation system in Year 2 of its Race to the Top grant. The Department was concerned about the overall strategic planning, evaluation, and project management for that system, which included decisions regarding the quality of the tools and measures used during the educator evaluation pilot and the scalability of the supports the State offered to participating LEAs. As a result of these concerns, the Department placed the educator evaluation projects in the *Great Teachers and Leaders* section of Georgia's Race to the Top plan on high-risk status in July 2012.[7] During Year 3, the State requested and received approval from the Department to delay full implementation of its educator evaluation system for teachers of non-tested grades and subjects in Race to the Top participating LEAs by one year, to SY 2014-2015, due to ongoing implementation and capacity challenges in Georgia, particularly in the implementation of Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) in non-tested grades and subjects. Georgia also struggled to provide sufficient support to LEAs across the State as school districts implemented the new educator evaluation system. Specifically, the State analyzed user-reported issues with the educator evaluation system electronic platform and concluded that most were related to insufficient training. Moreover, the State found that many of the issues with implementation of SLOs were the result of insufficient support for LEAs. The State used this feedback to update the electronic platform and address areas that require additional training and support during SY 2012-2013. GaDOE also established an SLO Advisory Committee, which includes key State and LEA representatives, to review successes and challenges with SLO implementation and to provide guidance on next steps and the most effective supports for LEAs.

In Year 3, Georgia indicated that it no longer plans to implement the performance-based compensation system described in its approved application within the grant period. This change in scope to the State's plan significantly decreases or eliminates reform in one of the education reform areas and results in the grantee's failure to comply substantially with the terms related to this portion of its Race to the Top award. Therefore in July 2013, the Department withheld approximately $10 million Race to the Top funds associated with implementation of performance-based compensation.[8]

State Year 4 summary

Accomplishments

To support implementation of the CCGPS, the State made over 18,000 CCGPS-aligned resources in ELA, mathematics, science, and social studies available through the State's LDS, specifically the Teacher Resource Link. To support usage of the LDS, Georgia provided training to over 95,000 of the State's 110,000 teachers. Usage of the LDS continued to increase; in SY 2013-2014, the total page visits increased to over 500,000 and the total page views increased to 1.6 million.

In SY 2013-2014, the State continued to support implementation of its Assessment Literacy professional learning course, "Georgia Formative Instructional Practices: The Keys to Student Success," designed to support teachers to use formative assessment to improve instruction. Throughout SY 2013-2014, nearly 60,000 educators in 133 LEAs (which represent approximately 53 percent of teachers statewide) were engaged with the Formative Instructional Practices modules.

In SY 2013-2014, the State implemented its educator evaluation system for leaders and teachers of tested grades and subjects in its Race to the Top participating LEAs. In May 2014, the State finalized its Teacher Effectiveness Measure (TEM) and Leader Effectiveness Measure (LEM) rubrics and provided all educators with their final SY 2013-2014 ratings in June 2014, which include student growth on State assessments if applicable. Per the State's amended timeline, in SY 2014-2015 teachers of non-tested grades and subjects in Race to the Top participating LEAs will receive their first rating that includes student growth on SLOs. To support local SLO development, GaDOE compiled nearly 3,000 assessment items for 74 courses developed with educators during SY 2012-2013 for statewide use in developing SLOs. In response to demand from the field, GaDOE staff held 10 regional Content Week Sessions across the State to develop SLO pre- and post-assessments and items in high-need subjects; SLO assessments developed during these content weeks were made available for use in SY 2014-2015. As a result of substantial progress in Years 3 and 4, the Department removed Georgia from high-risk status for activities related to implementation of its educator evaluation system in January 2015.

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

[8] For more information, see Georgia's July 30, 2013 amendment letter at http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/amendments/georgia-10.pdf.

In April 2014, the Georgia Professional Standards Commission passed two noteworthy rules. First, the State established a Preparation Program Effectiveness Measure (PPEM) to assess the quality of educator preparation programs and hold preparation programs accountable for the success of their graduates in the classroom. The new rule indicates that 50 percent of a preparation program performance rating be based on TEM and LEM. Second, the Georgia Professional Standards Commission established a new tiered certification model. The tiered certification regulations move Georgia from a single tier certification system to a multi-tier system that recognizes and rewards teachers and offers opportunities for professional growth for teachers who remain in the classroom.

Challenges

Due to previous delays, educators did not have access to benchmark assessments and professional learning courses on the CCGPS during SY 2013-2014. The State reports that it is on track to release the full complement of CCGPS-aligned benchmark assessments by September 2014. Although the State made formative assessment items available to educators in SY 2012-2013 and SY 2013-2014, it was not able to track usage of those items. Therefore, the State was unable to determine if the formative assessment items are meeting the needs of educators.

The Department continues to withhold nearly $10 million of the State's Race to the Top funds associated with performance-based compensation. In order to gain access to these funds, the State must provide a plan and evidence, including sufficient legal authority, if necessary, to implement the full scope of the performance-based compensation system described in its approved application and Scope of Work. The Department continues to hold conversations with the State regarding these funds.

Looking ahead

The State will continue to support LEAs as they transition to new assessments in SY 2014-2015 utilizing the resources that were created through Race to the Top. GaDOE will also continue to expand its LDS, adding new features to personalize instruction for students and provide opportunities for teachers to interact and share resources with one another.

During the no-cost extension period in SY 2014-2015, or Year 5, the State will continue to support implementation of its teacher and leader evaluation system in all LEAs across the State through additional training and support to effectively prepare and build capacity in all LEAs to successfully implement the system. The State will also continue work to implement the PPEM because it is dependent on data from statewide implementation of the teacher and leader evaluation system. Similarly, the State will continue work related to implementation of tiered certification through SY 2014-2015.

In Year 5, GOSA will use Race to the Top funds to continue working on an evaluation of the State's lowest-achieving schools. GOSA will continue to gather data on lowest-achieving schools' indicators to inform a quantitative and qualitative analysis of best practices in these schools. Using focus groups and interviews, GOSA seeks to identify promising practices that impact school status. Additionally, GOSA, in partnership with a vendor, will conduct a social return on investment analysis on the Innovation Fund and lowest-achieving schools.

Finally, the State will continue to support participating LEAs and implementation of its Race to the Top grant. Participating LEAs in Georgia have budgeted approximately $43,000,000 in Race to the Top funds to support ongoing work in Year 5, representing approximately 22 percent of the LEA portion of Race to the Top funds. All 26 of Georgia's participating LEAs have no-cost extensions to offer one-time merit-based bonuses based on the teacher and leader evaluation system in spring 2015; LEAs were required to set aside a portion of their LEA funds to support these bonuses at the beginning of the grant period. This represents only one component of the performance-based compensation system outlined in Georgia's approved Race to the Top application. Of its 26 participating LEAs, 19 LEAs have no-cost extensions to support other work, in addition to the merit bonuses.

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

With a grant of $399,952,650 and over 25 Race to the Top projects, Georgia recognized that it needed a strong performance management system. At the State-level, GaDOE developed dashboards to display the progress of each project and each dashboard includes a four-point rating scale of on-track, somewhat on-track, somewhat off-track, and off-track for progress, quality of implementation, and performance. The State reports that this process has improved communication among GaDOE offices and helped to ensure that risks and challenges

are shared, identified, and elevated as appropriate. The State also continued to hold TIC TOC meetings to discuss projects related to its educator evaluation system and focus on data analysis, dependent activities, and the quality of implementation at the State level, which has improved coordination among the applicable projects. Georgia continues to use SharePoint to serve as the central clearinghouse for all Race to the Top work; the site includes documentation, such as monitoring and fiscal reports, and provides LEAs access to items such as the teacher evaluation handbook, training materials, and curriculum resources.

GaDOE participated in the Reform Support Network Sustainability Work Group, designed to support SEAs in sustaining their highest-priority reforms for improving student achievement beyond the life of the Race to the Top grant. Participating SEAs worked to assess the current sustainability of their priority reforms against comprehensive criteria; took action to ensure those priority reforms can be sustained; empowered staff to manage progress on sustainability strategies using performance management systems and processes; and contributed lessons learned throughout the RSN and other States.

The Innovation Fund

In Years 1-3, Georgia awarded 23 grants under its Innovation Fund to support partnerships among LEAs, colleges and universities, nonprofit organizations, and businesses to identify new ways to increase applied learning opportunities, improve teacher and leader effectiveness, expand the pipeline of effective teachers, and promote STEM charter schools. All 23 Innovation Fund grantees continued to implement their grant programs.[9] Of the 23 grant awards, 12 focused on expanding applied learning opportunities, 5 on teacher and leader induction, 3 on expanding the teacher and leader pipeline, and 3 on developing or expanding STEM-focused charter schools. During Year 4, GOSA continued to monitor the performance of three rounds of Innovation Fund grantees through mid- and end-of-year reports. To assess the quality of the applied learning grantees, the State partnered with a vendor to develop the Applied Learning Student Questionnaire which was administered twice in SY 2013-2014. The spring 2014 results indicated that nearly 80 percent of the students surveyed rated their programs as good or excellent and students showed statistically significant increases in intrinsic motivation and self-management. Moreover, most applied learning grantees showed gains on State assessments. For example, students at Drew Charter School, Rockdale STEM Academy, Tift County Mechatronics, and Barrow County Direct to Discovery exceed the State averages for all reported State tests. Overall, the Innovation Fund teacher and leader induction and pipeline programs also experienced positive results; out of the six programs, four had retentions rates above 90 percent.

Through its Innovation in Teaching Competition, Georgia has made awards to 20 highly effective teachers to recognize and reward them for their work to innovatively teach the CCGPS and make their

[9] The complete list of Innovation Fund grantees is available at http://www.gadoe.org/Race-to-the-Top/Pages/Innovation-Fund.aspx.

instruction available to all Georgia educators. The State released videos and supporting resources from the winning teachers in summer 2014.

Innovations for improving early learning outcomes

The Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) and its contractors continued to provide professional development to pre-kindergarten teachers through *My Teaching Partner* and the Understanding Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) frameworks. The goal of the professional development was to improve teacher-child interactions and strengthen the quality of Georgia's pre-kindergarten program. During SY 2013-2014, 41 new teachers completed *My Teaching Partner*, resulting in a 94 percent completion rate over three years, and 54 new teachers participated in *Making the Most of CLASSroom Interactions* or the online *Understanding the CLASS Framework*, resulting in a 95 percent completion rate over three years. In December 2013, Georgia was awarded a $51,737,456 Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant. The findings from DECAL's work will be incorporated into the Early Learning Challenge Scope of Work, which will actualize the State's multi-year approach to professional development.

Support and accountability for LEAs

In Year 3, GaDOE created five new Education Research and Evaluation Specialist (ERES) positions in order to ensure that it had the capacity to implement rigorous routines and processes for collecting data on the progress of participating LEAs and the quality of their implementation. In Year 4, the Implementation Office worked closely with the five ERESs to gather data about participating LEA implementation, and use that information to prepare dashboards that included three levels of ratings on progress and quality of implementation overall and for each project area. In addition to ratings on progress and quality, each dashboard includes a rating on the progress of an LEA's spending based on the amount of funds that it should have spent at the time of the dashboard update. Each ERES populates the dashboard based upon implementation data collected during two onsite visits per month. The State reports that the cycle of ERES data collection, dashboard creation and dashboard sharing has improved the State's ability to identify challenges and trends in LEA implementation. For example, the ERES dashboards corroborated the need for greater supports on SLOs and awareness and training to increase use of the LDS. The State provides technical assistance to LEAs based on the issues raised in the ERES dashboards in the form of calls or onsite visits to LEA leadership.
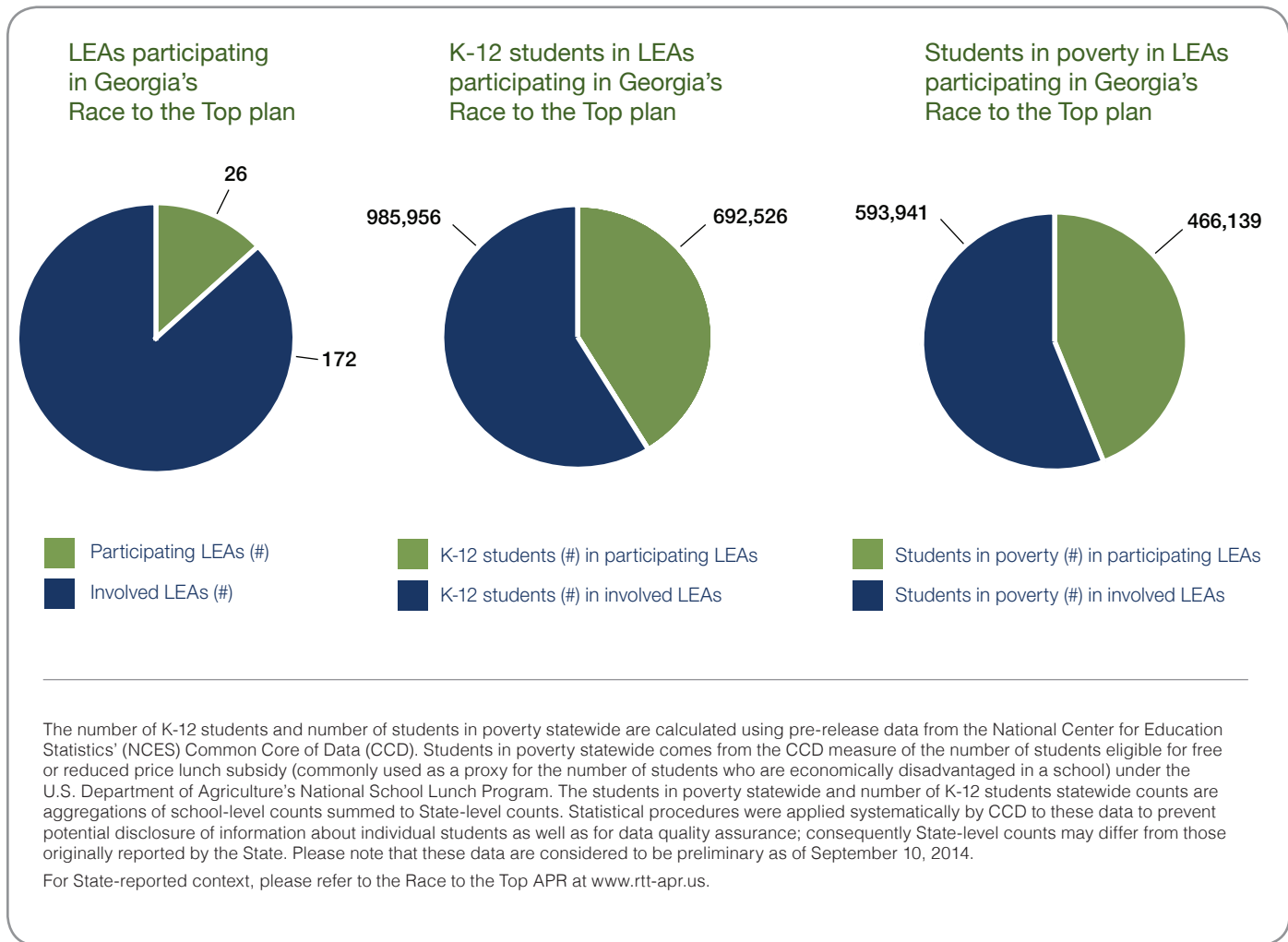
Using feedback from the SY 2012-2013 review cycle, the State revised monitoring protocols and indicators, interview questions and acceptable documentation for cross-functional monitoring visits to participating LEAs to streamline the process. Cross-functional monitoring visits include a review of Race to the Top and Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 Title programs' fiscal and programmatic reviews.

LEA participation

As of September 30, 2014, 26 LEAs were participating in Georgia's Race to the Top initiative. The participating LEAs enroll approximately 42 percent of Georgia's K-12 students and 44 percent of the State's K-12 students who live in poverty.

LEAs participating in Georgia's Race to the Top plan

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

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

26

172

985,956

692,526

593,941

466,139

- ■ Participating LEAs (#)
- ■ Involved LEAs (#)

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

- ■ Students in poverty (#) in participating LEAs
- ■ Students in poverty (#) in involved 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 10, 2014.

For State-reported context, please refer to the Race to the Top APR at www.rtt-apr.us.

Stakeholder engagement

In Year 3, Georgia launched the "Georgia Future Now" campaign that explains the alignment between the educator evaluation system, the CCGPS, College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI), and other Race to the Top reforms.[10] GaDOE staff and stakeholders continued to use the communication training and resources developed under that initiative in Year 4. In addition, GaDOE continued to

implement the engagement strategy it developed for its teacher and leader evaluation work in Year 3.

In July 2014, the State hosted a Race to the Top summit for leaders in both participating and non-participating LEAs in conjunction with the Georgia Association of Educational Leaders annual conference. There were 184 participants who represented 69 school districts and seven Race to the Top education partner organizations. The general session topics included updates on the educator evaluation system, Georgia's new assessment system, LDS, and sustainability. The 10 breakout sessions highlighted the success of State and LEA partners related to the core education reform areas.

In summer 2014, GaDOE developed a resource packet that provides easy access to all GaDOE resources created with Race to the Top funds including professional development webinars on the CCGPS

[10] The College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI) will serve as Georgia's new accountability system and was approved under Georgia's approved Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) flexibility request. On September 23, 2011, the Department offered each interested State educational agency (SEA) the opportunity to request flexibility ("ESEA flexibility") on behalf of itself, its LEAs, and its schools, regarding specific requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), in exchange for rigorous and comprehensive State-developed plans designed to improve educational outcomes for all students, close achievement gaps, increase equity, and improve the quality of instruction. For more information on ESEA flexibility, see www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility.

and the teacher and leader evaluation system handbooks.[11] The packets were distributed at the Race to the Top summit, as well as the State's Title Programs Conference in June 2014. The State reports that the response to this work, including feedback from educators, has been overwhelmingly positive.

The State continued to receive stakeholder feedback on its design and implementation activities via surveys, site visits, interviews, focus groups, and advisory committees. The State also worked closely with a Technical Advisory Committee on the development of its educator evaluation system, and with the Georgia Professional Standards Commission, University System of Georgia, and Technical College System of Georgia on the development of its pre-kindergarten through postsecondary (P-20) State LDS, known as Georgia's Academic and Workforce Analysis and Research Data System (GA-AWARDS), tiered certification, and educator PPEM.

Georgia was also featured in the Reform Support Network's *Social Media Tip Sheets* for its innovative work involving stakeholders. For example, the State has at least eight accounts on Twitter that feature topics such as special education, the CCGPS, and migrant education. Staff from specific offices within GaDOE are responsible for posting content that is relevant to their stakeholders.[12]

Continuous improvement

In addition to the performance management processes described above, GOSA is responsible for conducting evaluations of some Race to the Top projects. During summer 2013, GOSA and GaDOE staff reviewed findings from GOSA's evaluation of the State's CCGPS training effort. The report analyzed survey responses submitted by approximately 1,000 educators with a focus on mathematics and ELA teachers. Overall, survey respondents generally maintained the same positive perception of the CCGPS implementation that they had in fall 2013. The recommendations included enhancing mathematics supports specifically for suburban teachers, reviewing access to websites, improving the quality of professional development and instructional resources, and using teacher effectiveness data to substantiate the evaluation's findings. The evaluation also found that teachers had engaged with professional development on the new standards and found it relevant, but that they "rarely" or "sometimes" used CCGPS-aligned resources in their classrooms. The State reports that the SY 2012-2013 evaluation data directly impacted its approach to the 2014 summer academies, such as removing a plenary session and increasing opportunities for team-based training.

GaDOE contracted with a vendor to conduct the validation study of each component of the educator evaluation systems and the Teacher Leader Evaluation Platform (TLE platform) during SY 2013-2014. These external organizations conducted surveys, focus groups, and regional feedback meetings in December 2013 and spring 2014. The State reports that feedback indicated continued need for training and support on SLOs and the electronic platform.

Successes and challenges

Georgia continued to implement rigorous monitoring and oversight procedures at both the State- and LEA-levels to ensure a focus on data analysis and the quality of implementation, in addition to progress. The State reports that the LEA dashboards have provided valuable information that informs intervention and technical assistance activities for its participating LEAs, as well as general information to support State-level implementation. The State's routines for tracking progress and quality of implementation were implemented with fidelity throughout Year 4 and have improved coordination within GaDOE and between GaDOE and participating LEAs.

Based on the work that was done over the course of the grant, two models of professional development for early learning were piloted during summer 2014 and preliminary results indicate that the professional development had a positive impact on teacher-child interactions. As part of Georgia's sustainability plan, DECAL will implement professional learning communities for pre-kindergarten teachers during SY 2014-2015 as part of its Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant.

The State's Innovation Fund has successfully seeded local programs in applied learning and teacher pipeline programs and built a foundation from which the State can continue to support public-private partnerships. The State plans to continue the competition in SY 2014-2015 using $5 million in State funds. Based on lessons learned from multiple rounds of the competition through Race to the Top, the State will offer several small planning grants to build initial capacity and will ask very specific questions in the application addressing the grantee's capacity to plan and implement their intended program to ensure success.

During Year 4 the State developed a sustainability plan for Race to the Top projects ending in September 2014 by outlining grant-funded positions and activities that would need continued funding. The governor's budget included requests to increase GaDOE's budget in 2015 and the Georgia legislature approved approximately $18,000,000 of the governor's nearly $20,000,000 request.

[11] The resource packet is available on Georgia's Race to the Top homepage, http://www.gadoe.org/race-to-the-top/Pages/default.aspx.

[12] For more information, see http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/implementation-support-unit/tech-assist/resources.html.

Student outcomes data

In SY 2013-2014, the State performed consistently on the ELA State assessment across grades 3-8 and 11-12 with previous years of the Race to the Top grant. Notably, the State saw a nearly 15 percentage point increase in grade 9 proficiency and a nearly seven percentage point gain in grade 10 from SY 2012-2013 to SY 2013-2014. The State met or exceeded its performance targets in grades three, five, and eight, as outlined in its approved plan. In grades three through eight, the State generally performed consistently on the mathematics State assessment. However, the State saw significant decreases in mathematics proficiency for high school students since SY 2010-2011.

Student proficiency on Georgia's ELA assessment
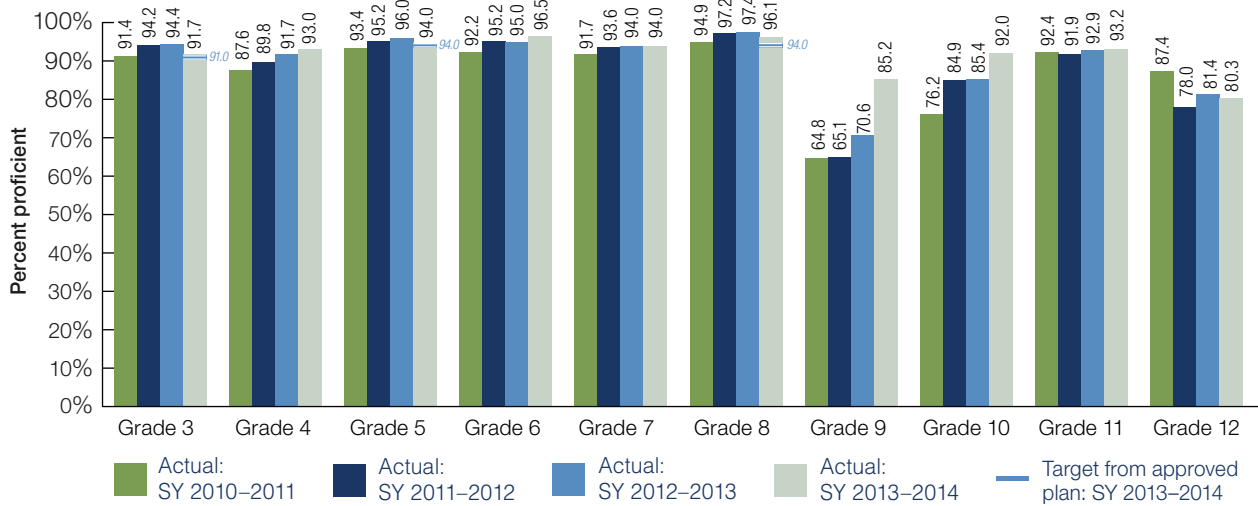
Student proficiency on Georgia's mathematics assessment
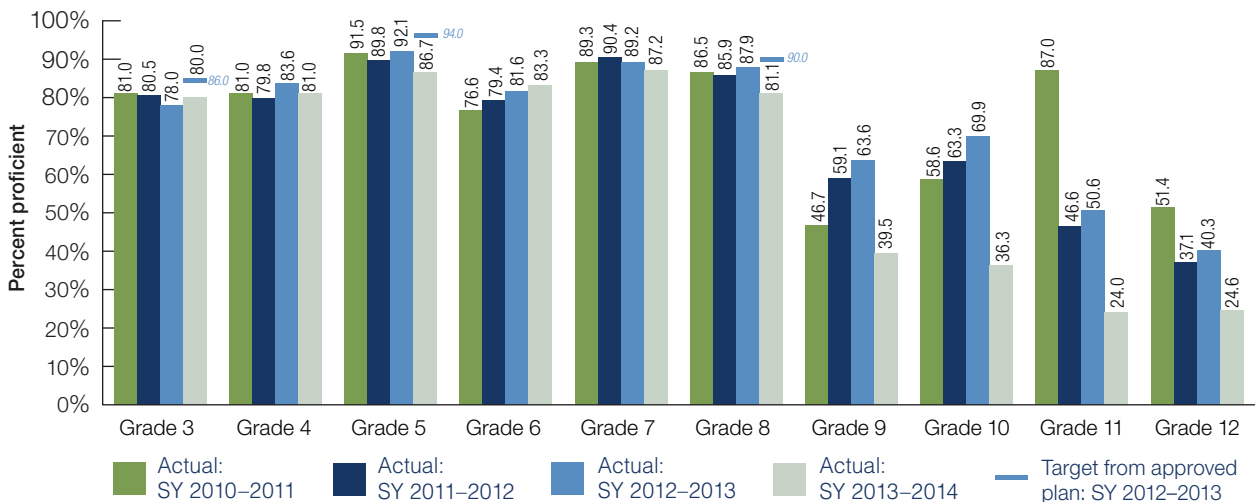
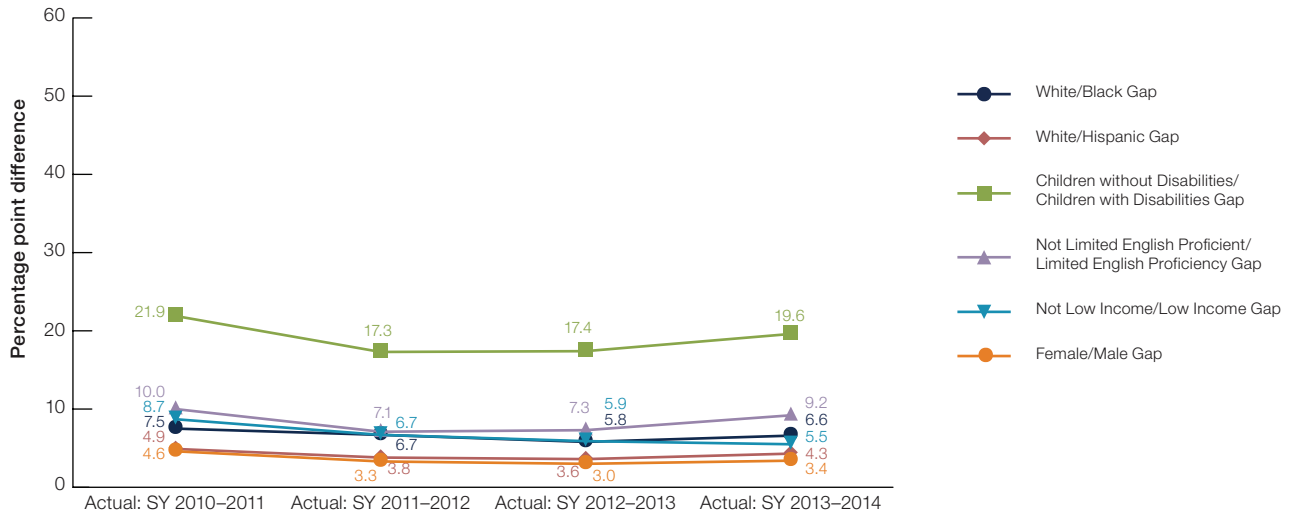Preliminary SY 2013-2014 data reported as of: November 10, 2014.

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.

State Success Factors

The State continued to see a slight decrease in the achievement gap between low-income and not low-income students on the SY 2013-2014 ELA and mathematics assessments as compared to SY 2012-2013. Since SY 2010-2011, achievement gaps between all sub-groups on the ELA assessments have decreased slightly. In mathematics, the State saw a large decrease in the achievement gap between limited English proficient and not limited English proficient students; however, since SY 2010-2011, the achievement gap between white and black students has widened. However, since SY 2010-2011, the achievement gap between white and black students has widened. All other sub-group gaps in ELA and mathematics remained consistent or increased slightly from SY 2012-2013.

Achievement gap on Georgia's ELA assessment

Achievement gap on Georgia's mathematics assessment
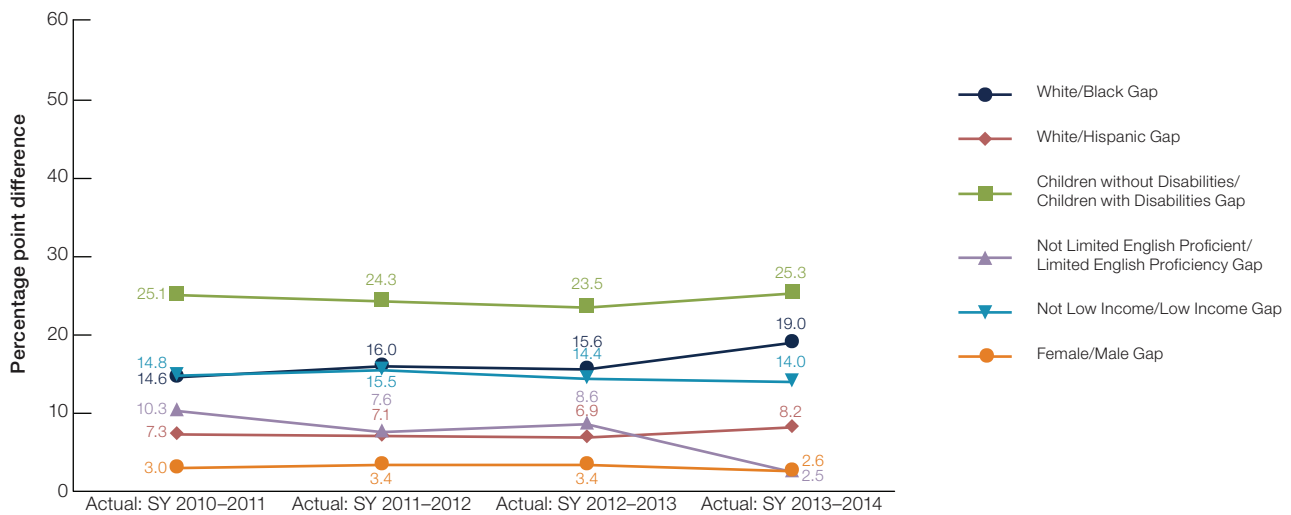
Preliminary SY 2013-2014 data reported as of: November 10, 2014.

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.

State Success Factors

Georgia's high school graduation rates increased slightly from SY 2011-2012 to SY 2012-2013, narrowly missing its target. Since SY 2010-2011, the State has seen an increase in its graduation rate of over four percentage points.

High school graduation rate
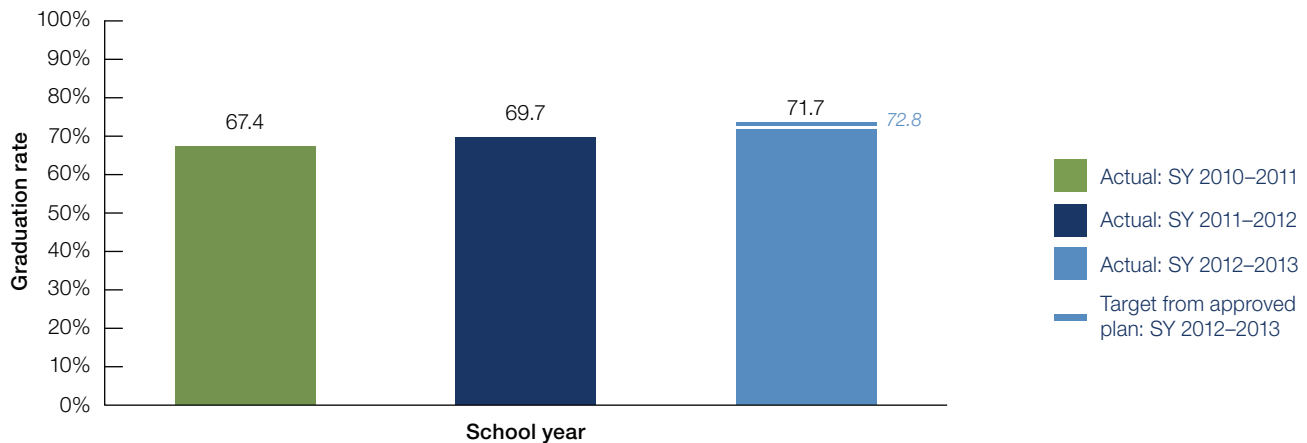
Preliminary SY 2012-2013 data reported as of: September 15, 2014.
For State-reported context, please refer to the Race to the Top APR at www.rtt-apr.us.

Standards and Assessments

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

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

In July 2010, the Georgia Board of Education adopted the CCSS in ELA and mathematics for grades K-12; the State reports that full implementation of the CCGPS began in SY 2012-2013.

In May 2013, the State made the "Georgia Formative Instructional Practices: The Keys to Student Success," professional learning course available to teachers statewide. The course is designed to provide teachers with instruction on how to use formative assessment to improve instruction and is aligned to the 10 standards in the State's new observation protocol that is part of the teacher and leader evaluation systems. Several teachers reported that the modules have been a high-quality source of professional development to inform teacher practice, principal observation of instructional practice,

and coaching supports. Throughout SY 2013-2014, nearly 60,000 educators in 133 LEAs, which represents approximately 53 percent of teachers statewide, were engaged with the formative instructional practice modules.

The State released approximately 1,700 additional formative assessment items to educators in the Georgia Online Assessment System in October 2013. These ELA and mathematics items include short constructed responses from students, which GaDOE reports is one of the biggest assessment changes since the State has only had multiple choice assessments since 2001. In coordination with GaDOE's technology office, all formative assessment items were migrated to the LDS in August 2014 for easier access and usability. In addition, the State can now track usage of these items through the LDS. Despite previous delays, the State released 12 CCGPS-aligned benchmark assessments in the Online Assessment System in February 2014. These include assessments for grades 1-8 and 10 in ELA and mathematics; Coordinate Algebra, Analytic Algebra, Geometry,

and U.S. History. LEAs may use the benchmark items at their discretion, and are responsible for scoring and reporting the results. The remaining 12 benchmark assessments were made available in September 2014. GaDOE is unable to track usage of the benchmark assessment items in the Online Assessment System to determine their use and value in LEAs. However, the State reports that anecdotal feedback from LEAs indicates that the benchmark assessments are useful.

In October 2013, approximately 98,800 high school sophomores took the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT), supported by Race to the Top funds. This represents approximately 85 percent of Georgia's high school sophomores. The test provides students with a practice opportunity for the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), allowing them to demonstrate their abilities in critical reading, mathematical problem solving, and composition.

On July 22, 2013, Georgia announced that it was withdrawing from the Partnership for Assessment Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) consortium. Previously, Georgia was a governing member of PARCC and planned to implement PARCC assessments in SY 2014-2015. The State submitted a plan as part of an amendment to its approved request for Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) flexibility to implement the Georgia Milestones Assessment System, a new comprehensive State summative assessment aligned to its new standards.[13] The State secured a contract with a vendor in SY 2013-2014, and reports that it is on track to administer the Georgia Milestones Assessment System to students in SY 2014-2015.

Dissemination of resources and professional development

As it began the transition to the CCGPS in SY 2011-2012, Georgia focused on introducing teachers, principals, and LEA staff to the CCGPS and its relationship to the previous standards, Georgia Performance Standards. As teachers began implementing the CCGPS in SY 2012-2013, the State shifted its professional learning content and delivery methods to better meet teachers' specific needs. With many resources already available in SYs 2011-2012 and 2012-2013, the State revised and added new resources for SY 2013-2014, including 18 STEM integrated frameworks, 20 mathematics formative assessment lessons for grades 6-11, and an ELA grade band-specific professional learning course called *Getting it Write.* Pre-existing resources were reviewed and revised for use in SY 2013-2014 based on feedback about their use in previous years from educators. GaDOE worked with 60 master educators to revise unit frameworks and identify supplementary tools to support teacher use in the classroom. The State conducted similar revisions during summer 2014 based on feedback from implementation in SY 2013-2014.

In SY 2013-2014 GaDOE made several shifts in supporting the CCGPS roll-out in the State based on implementation and evaluation data from SY 2012-2013. GOSA's survey results indicated that, while educators were engaged with the State's professional learning opportunities, they reported that the professional learning did not increase their ability to implement the standards with fidelity. GaDOE used this finding and other feedback from training surveys to shift its support towards content knowledge for mathematics teachers and inclusion of Universal Design for Learning and response to intervention strategies in ELA professional development materials. GaDOE reports that this is responsive to teachers' need for training on implementing the CCGPS with specific populations, such as English language learners and students with disabilities. In addition, the State has shifted its professional learning resources away from theory towards practice, which was the focus of the 2014 Summer Academy professional development offerings.

The State's 16 Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs) continued to provide LEAs with CCGPS training and targeted supports throughout SY 2013-2014. RESAs are intended to provide services and support to improve the effectiveness of the schools and LEAs across the State. RESAs meet quarterly with GaDOE staff to ensure messaging and training focuses are aligned. RESAs will continue to be engaged with sustaining the State's work on CCGPS training after the Race to the Top grant period.

All resources remain accessible through the State's LDS, specifically the Teacher Resource Link. The Teacher Resource Link provides teachers with access to over 18,000 CCGPS-aligned resources in ELA, mathematics, science, and social studies. Each resource is tagged according to standard, and educators can rate resources using a five-star system. Additionally, the State reformatted the resources to follow a progression throughout the school year based on the scope and sequence documents developed by the State in SY 2012-2013. GeorgiaStandards.org, the State's homepage for all CCGPS resources, has received nearly 10,000,000 total page views throughout the grant period. The State continued to offer educators support through grade-band wikis where educators can connect with the CCGPS team and other educators. The number of page views on the ELA and mathematics wiki pages increased substantially between fall 2013 and early 2014, with nearly 1,000,000 views of the ELA and the mathematics pages.

Successes and challenges

Georgia demonstrated a commitment to supporting LEAs during the transition to the CCGPS and providing educators with a variety of resources, professional development, and individual support to help implement the new standards. The State used information from the SY 2012-2013 educator surveys to inform and adjust trainings and materials in SY 2013-2014, such as enhancing them for teaching English language learners and students with disabilities. In addition, the State responded to teachers' desire for more face-to-face training by offering more opportunities in summer 2014. Based on its

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[13] Georgia's request for flexibility from some ESEA provisions was approved on February 9, 2012. An extension to Georgia's request for ESEA flexibility was approved on July 31, 2014.

experience implementing multiple modes of professional learning throughout the Race to the Top grant period, the State learned that virtual training should include more classroom teacher exemplars, where applicable, and should be broken into shorter segments so teachers can access parts of the training as needed.

Through the Teacher Resource Link, the State provided educators with a wealth of resources to use in SY 2013-2014 and selected teachers indicated that the Teacher Resource Link was useful. Usage data indicates that over 15,000 folders were created to house saved resources for future access. In addition, approximately 63 percent of resources within the system have been rated by teachers.

The State's formative assessment modules have been very well-received across the State. Throughout SY 2013-2014, nearly 60,000 educators in 133 LEAs were engaged with the formative instructional practice modules, which represents approximately 53 percent of teachers statewide. As a result, the State plans to expand the number of professional development modules in SY 2014-2015.

Both the formative and benchmark assessments items were available to educators by summer 2014 after previous delays. However, the State was unable to track usage data of the items as they became available. As a result, the State does not have information about the utility of the assessment items from educators.

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.

Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system

Georgia reported that it had a robust K-12 data system prior to the Race to the Top grant. In Year 2, Georgia's IIS Advisory Committee recognized that many LEAs had already invested in local LDS or IIS systems. Thus, the State decided to use an SLDS "tunnel" to provide all LEAs with single sign-in access to the State IIS to allow LEAs with existing LDS and IIS systems to continue using their systems while also providing access to State resources.

Accessing and using State data

In December 2012, Georgia finished developing its P-20 SLDS, referred to as Georgia's Academic and Workforce Analysis and Research Data System (GA-AWARDS), at the center of which is a data hub that allows for collection of data across State agencies, including educational agencies, non-educational agencies (*e.g.*, Georgia Department of Labor), and non-State agencies (*e.g.*, National Student Clearinghouse). With the basic technology infrastructure in place, GaDOE worked to gather and clean seven years of data from each of the partner agencies and IHEs throughout Year 4. The

matching algorithm developed by the Data Management Committee has been a model for each of the IHEs involved in the data sharing, and has been reliable enough to spur some of the agencies to use GA-AWARDS as their data system (*e.g.*, DECAL and University System of Georgia). The State also secured a data sharing agreement with the Georgia Independent Colleges Association and will include one year of data from the system by the end of 2014.

The Data Management Committee continues to provide oversight and guidance on all aspects of GA-AWARDS, including data quality, data use policies, security, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act protections, and strategic planning, including sustainability. The Data Management Committee developed a Data Use Policy to outline responsibilities of partners, definitions and guidelines for access, sensitive information, third-party users, data misuse, data requests, and internal and external research and reporting.

GOSA oversaw the migration of GA-AWARDS data, in the form of Georgia Report Cards, to a new website containing data through SY 2012-2013. Intended for public use, the Report Cards include historic data, down to the school level, including Georgia assessment data, national assessment data, data by indicator, student and school demographic data, personnel and fiscal data, and comparisons among each data point.

Data Systems to Support Instruction

Using data to improve instruction

Performance Measure	Race to the Top plan subcriterion	Actual: SY 2012-2013	Actual: SY 2013-2014	Target from Georgia's approved plan: SY 2013-2014
Percent of principals accessing new IIR through administrator portal	(C)(3)	72%	67.3%	50%
Percent of science teachers accessing new IIR through teacher portal	(C)(3)	39%	71.3%	50%
Percent of math teachers accessing new IIR through teacher portal	(C)(3)	39%	72.4%	50%

For State-reported context, please refer to the Race to the Top APR at www.rtt-apr.us.

During SY 2013-2014 the State's LDS, instructional improvement reports and Teacher Resource Link continued to be available to all districts and educators in the State as an effective and user-friendly source of data and resources to improve instruction. The State's LDS continues to serve as the foundation for all other dashboards and resources, including student-, school- and district-level data; Instructional Improvement Reports, which allow educators to develop ad hoc queries; and the Teacher Resource Link, which provides educators access to K-12 instructional resources in many subjects (see *Standards and Assessments)*. In SY 2012-2013, there were 156,096 page visits and 597,535 page views. In SY 2013-2014, the total page visits increased to 529,999 and the total page views increased to 1.6 million representing a substantial increase in the number of users of the system. In the SY 2013-2014 APR, the State reported that over 65 percent of all teachers in participating LEAs accessed the instructional improvement reports through the State's IIS. Moreover, approximately 70 percent of mathematics teachers in high-poverty, high-minority schools and science teachers in participating LEAs accessed the instructional improvement reports through the State's, LDS surpassing its target of 50 percent for each subject area.

Georgia provided LDS training to over 95,000 of the State's 110,000 teachers. As LEAs have access to new functionality and dashboards, GaDOE conducts new training virtually and in-person. Training is differentiated by role for teachers, principals and coaches, and district staff. The technology team learns of challenges or needs with the LDS during training sessions and through regional summits and incorporates them into training, as appropriate.

The IIS is one component of Georgia's planned "Path to Personalized Learning," which will continue to be developed over the next few years and has been in pilot phase since June 2013. Ultimately, the IIS will include CCGPS-aligned instructional resources, professional development, a learning object repository, Learning Management System, and tools such as learning progression maps and data analysis tools. The sixteen districts in the pilot have access to data dashboards and customized queries through their local student information systems. During SY 2013-2014, districts engaged with the assessment, student growth model, and CCRPI query functions and provided feedback to GaDOE. GaDOE is learning about unique ways in which districts are using the data dashboards and making adjustments prior to statewide release in SY 2014-2015.

SY 2013-2014 marked the second full year that Georgia used the TLE Platform to support implementation of its teacher and leader evaluation systems. All LEAs, which includes the 26 participating LEAs and 122 volunteer LEAs, fully implemented the evaluation system in SY 2013-2014 using the TLE Platform to support implementation. During summer 2013 the State used feedback gathered from users during spring 2013 to make changes to the TLE platform including consistency in the look of pages, cross-platform compatibility, reducing the number of clicks, and new architecture to support speed at scale. The State reports that these changes significantly improved user experiences throughout SY 2013-2014. In addition, GaDOE adjusted its training approach based on user feedback during SY 2012-2013. Each training on the educator evaluation system was integrated with TLE Platform training such that when the training covered a new evaluation system component of the system, such as the observation protocol, the training included content on navigating that component in the platform. All training materials continue to be available in the TLE platform.

Successes and challenges

Overall, Georgia continued to demonstrate high-quality implementation against its plans in this reform area. In each aspect of the State's data systems work, GaDOE has developed and released systems, taken feedback from the field and made changes to improve users' experience. LDS and Teacher Resource Link usage is steadily increasing and GaDOE is continuously making enhancements so educators can find resources easily, follow curriculum progressions, and rate resources. All of these enhancements are driven by educator demand and are responsive to their needs.

The State has also been responsive to previous concerns with the TLE Platform and made the necessary changes during summer 2013 for

SY 2013-2014 implementation. GaDOE has also started using the platform to understand local implementation of the evaluation systems by completion of key milestones, such as the number of observation walkthroughs completed and the number of pre-evaluation conferences held.

Throughout Year 4, the Data Management Committee continued to demonstrate its commitment to manage the data sharing, cleaning, and dissemination through established oversight routines and data quality processes. After the grant period, GOSA will continue to manage GA-AWARDS and the Report Cards; IHEs, GaDOE and GOSA were funded in the State's FY 2014 budget to continue this work. The State reports that actualizing the research agenda should make clear the benefits of GA-AWARDS and provide evidence for continued funding.

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.

Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals

In Year 1, Georgia entered into State-level partnerships with Teach For America (TFA) and TNTP to provide alternative certification and recruiting services to increase the number of effective teachers in the lowest-performing schools. During SY 2013-2014, TNTP was able to place 124 candidates in Atlanta Public Schools, Gwinnett County Schools, DeKalb County Schools, Fulton County Schools, Muscogee County Schools, Meriwether County Schools, and Richmond County Schools. Beginning in SY 2014-2015, TNTP will focus on placing mathematics teachers based on needs in southwest Georgia and the Augusta, Georgia area. TFA aimed to place 180 candidates; however, due to budget reductions, the cohort size in SY 2013-2014 was 127 candidates in six LEAs.

In June 2013, the Georgia Professional Standards Commission developed a new alternative preparation pathway for school leaders, called the Alternative Preparation for Educational Leadership Program. Providers can approach the Professional Standards Commission to obtain approval under the preparation pathway; at the end of Year 4,

no providers had approached the Professional Standards Commission to create and operate such a program.

Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance

Teacher and leader evaluation system

In SY 2013-2014, Georgia implemented its educator evaluation system with all schools in its participating LEAs, as well as other LEAs that volunteered to implement the educator evaluation system prior to the State's legislative requirement of SY 2014-2015.[14]

The State finalized its TEM and LEM rubrics in spring 2014 and provided all teachers of tested grades and subjects and principals with their final SY 2013-2014 rating, including student growth percentiles, in June 2014. Per the State's amended timeline, teachers of non-tested grades and subjects in Race to the Top participating LEAs will receive their first rating that includes student growth, measured by SLOs, in SY 2014-2015.

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[14] Georgia House Bill (HB) 244 was passed by the Georgia State legislature on May 13, 2013, and revises the evaluation system for teachers, assistant principals, and principals across the State, effective July 1, 2014. The legislation is available at http://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/en-US/display/20132014/HB/244.

Great Teachers and Leaders

The teacher observation protocol, Teacher Assessment on Performance Standards (TAPS), is composed of five domains and 10 performance standards. The leader observation protocol, Leader Assessment on Performance Standards (LAPS) is composed of four domains and eight performance standards. These protocols provide evaluators with a qualitative, rubric-based evaluation method by which they can measure teacher and leader performance. TAPS and LAPS include observations and documentation of practice, and use performance rubrics to guide multiple formative assessments and one summative assessment during a school year. The survey component of the evaluation system that includes both student surveys on teacher performance and educator surveys on leader performance is embedded in TAPS and LAPS.

Georgia chose to use a student growth percentile model based on State assessments to measure student growth for teachers of tested grades and subjects. GaDOE completed vetting of business rules for the teacher of record and incorporated them into the TEM business rules. Student growth percentiles were calculated based on student achievement data from SY 2012-2013; this student growth percentile will be a part of the TEM and LEM calculations in SY 2013-2014 for participating LEAs.[15] The State released student growth percentile information to participating LEAs and teachers in fall 2013 through the State's LDS. For the first time, GaDOE provided paper copies of individual student growth data to parents in winter 2013. Throughout SY 2013-2014, GaDOE focused on training stakeholders, in particular parents and families, on interpreting and using the student growth data. The State developed tutorials, available through the TLE Platform, to train educators on the growth model and the reports. The State's work on student growth percentile data is statewide. GaDOE finalized achievement gap data for incorporation into final LEM ratings. The State will use the same methodology it uses for the CCRPI achievement gap measure, which building leaders already know. The State reports that it has built in business rules to mitigate disproportionate impacts on leaders with larger achievement gaps or less growth.

To capture student growth for teachers of non-tested grades and subjects, the State will use LEA-developed Student Learning Objectives (SLOs). During SY 2013-2014, participating LEAs submitted all SLO information, including growth targets, table of specifications, and scoring process documentation, to GaDOE through the TLE platform. RESA staff coordinated between GaDOE SLO specialists and platform specialists to provide LEAs with technical assistance in navigating this process. LEAs remain responsible for setting growth targets and guiding assessment development, which GaDOE then reviews and approves. In August 2013, GaDOE and LEAs used data from SY 2012-2013 implementation to make revisions to SLO target setting; GaDOE reports that 65 percent of LEA assessments and 87 percent of LEA targets changed from SY 2012-2013 to SY 2013-2014 as a result of that data analysis. In Year 4, the State audited every LEA's SLOs;

however, once the system is implemented statewide, it will audit a targeted selection of SLOs.

To support local SLO development in participating LEAs, GaDOE made three SLO quick guides available, reached 67 participants in training on using data to inform growth targets, and reached 810 participants through SLO overview sessions. During summer 2013, GaDOE compiled 2,696 assessment items for 74 courses for statewide use in developing SLOs that were developed during Content Week Sessions with educators throughout SY 2012-2013. In response to demand from the field, GaDOE staff held 10 Content Week Sessions at RESAs across the State to develop SLO pre- and post-assessments and items in high-need subjects; SLO assessments developed during these content weeks were made available for use in SY 2014-2015.

During summer 2013 GaDOE revised all training materials and guidebooks related to the evaluation system for clarity. The State's 2013 handbook was framed around four chapters—Teacher Keys Effectiveness System Handbook, Fact Sheets, Research Synthesis, and Endnotes. ºBased on feedback for a more accessible document, GaDOE reports it is streamlining the handbook so it is more targeted to LEA needs and usage; these revisions appeared in the 2014 handbook for SY 2014-2015 implementation. In addition, the State continued to provide access to professional learning through the electronic platform designed to support educators improve their performance based on their evaluation system results.

GaDOE used SY 2012-2013 implementation data, survey results and feedback from the evaluation report to guide changes to the training and supports for the TAPS and LAPS observation rubrics. In Year 3, TAPS ratings distributions were highly positively skewed with 96.9 percent of teachers scoring proficient or exemplary in participating LEAs. In addition, teacher perception data indicated that building leaders were not consistent in their assessment of teachers such that multiple evaluators evaluated the same teacher differently. In response, GaDOE required participating LEAs to complete additional inter-rater reliability trainings and observations during SY 2013-2014. Evaluation System Specialists (ESS) oversee and track this work at participating LEAs in person and through the TLE platform. GaDOE reports that the goal of this work was to bring greater differentiation to the TAPS and LAPS ratings. The SY 2012-2013 evaluation report also indicated that the surveys of instructional practice were positively skewed. At the end of SY 2013-2014, TAPS ratings, though still positively skewed, showed greater variation.

GaDOE contracted with a vendor to conduct the validation study of each component of the evaluation systems and the TLE platform during SY 2013-2014. In addition, the vendor conducted surveys, focus groups, and regional feedback meetings in December 2013 and spring 2014. Over 16,000 teachers, school administrators, and LEA personnel responded to the online survey; of the respondents, only 20 percent were from Race to the Top participating LEAs while nearly 50 percent were from LEAs that were implementing the evaluation systems for the first time in SY 2013-2014. Survey results indicated that although teachers generally understand and agree that the system

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[15] Georgia's evaluation system model includes lagging student growth percentile data and Student Learning Objectives (SLO) data.

has value in assessing the attributes and expectations of great teachers and leaders, additional support and communication is still needed. In particular, the feedback indicated the need for additional training on SLOs and the electronic platform, similar to feedback received in previous years.

To ensure an emphasis on data analysis and the quality of implementation, Georgia continued to hold TIC TOC meetings that include GaDOE, the Governor's Office, and GOSA leadership to focus on implementation of the teacher and leader evaluation system. The State reports that the meetings are useful in directing results and making timely mid-course corrections.

Performance-based pay

The State indicated that it will no longer implement the performance-based compensation system included in its Race to the Top application during the grant period. In its application, Georgia described a plan to implement several changes in SY 2013-2014: (1) tie step increases for teachers to teachers' performance on the rubrics-based evaluation tool; (2) tie annual salary increases for principals to each principal's LEM; (3) develop career ladder opportunities for all teachers that allow teachers to take on additional responsibilities for additional pay, while remaining in the classroom; (4) award individual performance bonuses to all teachers on the basis of the TEM and to school leaders on the basis of LEM; and (5) make additional individual bonuses available to core teachers in high-need schools if they reduce the achievement gap, defined as the difference in achievement between any student sub-group in a teacher's classroom and the highest performing sub-group in the State. Instead of implementing the performance-based compensation system described in its application, Georgia stated it intends to provide one-time bonuses to teachers and leaders for reducing the achievement gap and based on their performance ratings. This change in scope to the State's plan significantly decreases or eliminates reform in one of the reform areas and results in the grantee's failure to comply substantially with the terms related to this portion of its Race to the Top award. Therefore, the Department is withholding $9,904,629, which is the amount of the State's Race to the Top funds associated with performance-based compensation. In order to gain access to these funds, the State must provide a plan and evidence, including sufficient legal authority, if necessary, to implement the full scope of the performance-based compensation system described in its approved application and Scope of Work.[16] The Department continues to hold conversations with the State regarding these funds.

Ensuring equitable access to effective teachers and principals

In April 2012, the State awarded one Relocation Bonus Grant to Thomas County for $360,000 over two years. The Relocation Bonus Grant is an initiative designed to promote the equitable distribution of teachers and school leaders. With the grant, Thomas County was able to attract 11 teachers and a new principal using signing bonuses. The LEA is implementing the teacher and leader evaluation system to track the effectiveness of teachers hired with a signing bonus. Due to low LEA interest, the State chose to discontinue this program in Year 3.[17]

Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs

In April 2014, the Georgia Professional Standards Commission passed the final rule establishing the PPEM to evaluate educator preparation programs. The teacher PPEM data weights and elements are 50 percent TEM, 10 percent success at Induction, 30 percent content knowledge, and 10 percent annual program performance data. The leader PPEM data weights and elements are 50 percent LEM, 20 percent content knowledge, and 30 percent annual program performance data. The metric will classify educator preparation programs in one of four performance levels: Exemplary, Effective, At Risk of Low Performing, and Low Performing. To develop the measure, Georgia convened the PPEM task force, made up of representatives from the Governor's office, GaDOE, LEAs, and IHEs, to propose measures to include in the new preparation program report card. The goals of the PPEM include improving the effectiveness of teacher and leader preparation programs, providing transparency about preparation program quality, and improving teaching and learning in schools across the State.

Previous delays in the implementation of the educator evaluation system have had implications on the State's ability to implement other aspects of its Race to the Top plan, including improving effectiveness of teacher and leader preparation programs and implementation of career ladder and tiered certification guidelines, because they include statewide TEM and LEM data.

Providing effective support to teachers and principals

The State induction specialist supported participating LEAs in their second year of full implementation of teacher and principal induction programs. The induction specialist provided technical assistance, organized opportunities for collaboration with other LEAs and IHEs, and facilitated program evaluation and revision based on guidance that was created by the Induction Task Force. During Year 4, the Induction Task Force also developed a process for non-participating

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[16] For more information, see Georgia's July 30, 2013 amendment letter at http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/amendments/georgia-10.pdf.

[17] For more information, see Georgia's August 21, 2012 amendment letter at: http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/amendments/georgia-7.pdf.

LEAs to develop and implement induction programs aligned to the guidance if they so choose. As part of the Induction Task Force's plan for sustainability, all induction tools and resources as well as mentor training resources, are available to all LEAs. The induction specialist also collaborates with the State's 16 RESAs to provide training and support on induction programs to non-participating LEAs.

Teacher Induction at Gainesville City Schools

To support new teachers, Gainesville City Schools prioritized implementing a high-quality teacher induction program focused on increasing student learning and teacher effectiveness. Every school created an induction team consisting of mentors, building-level administrators, academic coaches, instructional technology specialists, media specialists, and data specialists. Induction phase teachers are supported by a mentor for one year. The mentors and other members of the induction teams are carefully selected by administrators and are well prepared by LEA staff. Engaged building-level administrators provide supportive environments that include job-alike mentors who are in close proximity to their assigned induction phase teachers. The induction team regularly received professional support on mentoring, instructional practices, and TAPS. Induction phase teachers and mentors are surveyed during the fall and spring of each school year. Results from school year (SY) 2013-2014 showed that 96 percent of mentors indicated that they were prepared in their roles, and 98 percent attributed that success to the induction program. Ninety-eight percent felt satisfied in their role as a mentor. Ninety-one percent of induction teachers felt prepared to teach in the district and 82 percent attributed that preparedness to the mentor support that they received. Finally, 97 percent indicated that they were satisfied in their current position.

In April 2014, the Georgia Professional Standards Commission also passed a rule establishing a new tiered certification model that recognizes and rewards teachers and offers increased opportunities for professional growth for teachers who remain in the classroom. The tiered certification regulations move Georgia from a single tier certification system to a multi-tier system with four levels of certification: Pre-Service; Induction; Professional; and Advanced/Lead Professional.

The State is also using the Innovation Fund program to encourage partnerships between IHEs and LEAs to provide teacher induction support programs. The support programs focus on school environment, teacher effectiveness levels, and leader needs. Overall, the Innovation Fund teacher and leader induction and pipeline programs experienced high program retention rates. Out of six programs, four had retention rates above 90 percent. Teacher and leader induction grantees also reported satisfaction; over 90 percent of over 170 participants from seven programs who were surveyed indicated the program promoted their professional growth and would recommend the program to others.

Additionally, legislation requires that IHEs align instruction with the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System and the Leader Keys Effectiveness System.

Successes and challenges

In Year 4, Georgia continued to improve its planning and management of educator evaluation systems and made progress towards full implementation of its evaluation system for teachers of tested grades and subjects in SY 2013-2014 and for teachers of non-tested grades and subjects in SY 2014-2015 in participating LEAs.

GaDOE continued to build capacity across the State in preparation for statewide implementation of its educator evaluation system in SY 2014-2015. To support statewide implementation, GaDOE partnered with the RESAs and hired additional personnel to work directly with LEAs and schools to ensure the same level of support that participating LEAs received in Years 2 and 3.

In January 2015, the Department removed Georgia from high-risk status for those activities related to implementation of its education evaluation system.[18] The Department recognized and commended Georgia's efforts to strategically plan and implement its teacher and leader evaluation system with fidelity, provide support to its Race to the Top participating LEAs, as well as other LEAs across the State, and continuously improve implementation of its teacher and leader evaluation system using data and formative feedback from educators and other relevant stakeholders. Although Georgia has made substantial progress, challenges in the development phase delayed the State's ability to use effectiveness data for decision-making within the four-year grant period. The State is still navigating changes to the initial evaluation system model, in particular the SLO component of the evaluation system, but has maintained its commitment to developing supports and guidance to LEAs that promote a fair system that provides teachers with feedback. As reported in the regional feedback sessions, there remain opportunities to improve the SLO development process with a focus on reliability of assessments and comparability of growth targets across districts. The Department will also continue to work with the State regarding the commitment in its approved application regarding implementation of a performance-based compensation system.

Georgia continued to meet critical milestones in other aspects of this education reform area, including passage of two new Georgia Professional Standards Commission rules related to educator preparation programs and a system of tiered certification for teachers. However, Georgia will not begin implementing the report cards, including all components of the PPEM, and the full scope of the tiered certification system until after the Race to the Top grant period. The State's induction specialist has also continued to provide support to participating LEAs as they implement new teacher and principal induction programs in SY 2013-2014, resulting in stronger partnerships between LEAs and IHEs.

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[18] For more information, see Georgia's January 12, 2015 status update letter at http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/amendments/georgia-ltr.pdf.

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.[19]

Support for the lowest-achieving schools

All participating LEAs with persistently lowest-achieving schools signed an MOU with the State in October 2011, which contained commitments from LEAs to implement one of the four reform models and the State's non-negotiable programmatic initiatives. The programmatic initiatives include 60 minutes of common planning time for teachers per week, optimizing the use of existing time for all students, increased learning time for those students or student sub-groups who need additional time, and a commitment to hire at least one full-time mathematics coach for each lowest-achieving school. Six lowest-achieving schools demonstrated significant gains in student learning and were removed from the State's list of Priority schools as defined by the State's approved ESEA flexibility request based on SY 2012-2013 performance; in total, 9 of the 40 lowest-achieving schools have demonstrated significant gains in student achievement over a three-year period.

During summer 2013, GaDOE merged its Office of School Turnaround with the Office of School Improvement to maximize resources and provide consistent support to Priority schools, School Improvement Grant schools, and Race to the Top lowest-achieving schools. As a result, GaDOE implemented a new delivery model to LEAs based on regional support through the RESA school improvement specialists and targeted intervention. Each region conducted a thorough review of student achievement data of each lowest-achieving school and developed a profile of areas of need. The School Improvement Team, including RESA and State-level Lead school improvement specialists, worked with individual lowest-achieving school staff to identify priorities, secure interventions, and monitor implementation. The State believes that this is a more sustainable approach that helps ensure that schools receive the necessary support within their LEA.

GaDOE also required all lowest-achieving schools, and Priority and Focus schools to implement specific sections of the formative instructional practice modules for teachers, leaders, and coaches (see *Standards and Assessments*). GaDOE provided a full-day Instructional Coach Academy in fall 2013 for teachers, teacher leaders, instructional coaches, and graduation coaches. The Instructional Coach Academy provided professional learning on utilizing the CCRPI and LDS to access data for improvement of teaching and learning. A second Instructional Coach Academy was held in March 2014 and focused on writing effective coaching comments.

SY 2013-2014 was the second year of implementation of Indistar, a project management tool for school improvement specialists and educators in the lowest-achieving schools. In SY 2013-2014, GaDOE expanded Indistar to all Priority and Focus schools served by the Office of School Improvement and the RESA school improvement specialist. Indistar allows school-based educators to set quality indicators, assess progress and assign tasks, as well as capture coaching comments and match them to indicators. Schools can create short-term action plans aligned with the school improvement plan to implement indicators and monitor the implementation of the plan. When schools report that something is complete, they must upload documentation, such as meeting minutes, agendas, or assessment data, to demonstrate meeting the indicator. School improvement specialists review data provided through Indistar weekly and provide support to schools as needed.

During summer 2014, the State continued the Summer Leadership Academies that provide support and professional development for teachers and principals working in the State's lowest-achieving schools.

The theme of the 2014 Summit was "Critical Connections for Leaders." Participants focused on collaboration to sustain reform efforts through district planning. The State provided sessions on connecting formative assessment, data collection and analysis, and determining interventions. The Summer Leadership Academies included over 400 participants from 42 LEAs and 151 schools.

The State opened two Performance Learning Centers in Floyd and Richmond counties in SY 2011-2012 and a third Performance Learning Center in Carrollton City in SY 2012-2013 to help students

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[19] Race to the Top States' plans include supporting their LEAs in turning around the lowest-achieving schools by implementing one of the four school intervention models:

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

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

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

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

recover credits and graduate high school. In SY 2013-2014, the three Performance Learning Centers graduated a total of 67 students.[20]

GaDOE concluded its work with a vendor to conduct resource allocation analyses for the State and five LEAs—Fulton County Schools, Hall County Schools, Marietta City Public Schools, Treutlen County Schools, and Vidalia City Schools—in May 2014. In fall 2013, each LEA presented its resource strategy and shared how they are changing practices as a result of this analysis. For example, Treutlen County increased instructional minutes in elementary mathematics and Vidalia City focused on professional development investments. The contract also included specific work with Fulton County and Marietta City, two charter systems with increased flexibility in regards to resource allocation, on compensation redesign. Both LEAs created frameworks for new compensation systems that will be piloted over several years. At the State-level, the vendor provided an executive summary, policy audit, and a compilation slide deck of all previous presentations. GaDOE continues to work with other State agencies and legislators to share the recommendations and create strategies for implementation.

Successes and challenges

During Year 3, six lowest-achieving schools demonstrated significant gains in student learning and were removed from the State's list of Priority schools based on SY 2012-2013 performance. Georgia continued to provide support and professional development to its lowest-achieving schools through the Summer Leadership Academies and the implementation of Indistar. In Year 4, all lowest-achieving schools continued to have access to the State's LDS. School improvement specialists supported schools in accessing and using the data and resources. In preparation for expanding Indistar to all Priority and Focus schools, the State reorganized the Office of School Improvement and implemented a new delivery model based on regional support and targeted interventions. Further, the State's

Twilight High School Program (THSP)

Savannah-Chatham County Public Schools created the THSP to extend learning time by providing a means for both credit recovery and credit advancement for high school students, as well as to provide an educational alternative to students who had dropped out of or who are at risk of dropping out of high school. The THSP leveraged the power of the internet for classroom learning, promoting engagement, and fostering student-centered accountability for performance. Due to the selected online platform's flexibility, students are able to stay connected to the classroom. The THSP has expanded the ways in which knowledge is imparted from teacher to student and student to teacher, while also providing a cost effective method of credit recovery and credit advancement. As of September 2014, 1,400 students earned over 6,000 units of high school credit since the THSP's inception. The LEA reports that the THSP has directly contributed to an increase in its cohort graduation rate by more than 15 percentage points in just two years.

efforts to institutionalize a process for regional- and State-level school improvement specialists to support school and LEA leaders in implementation of their school improvement plans will ensure continued support after the Race to the Top grant period.

The State completed its work with a vendor to conduct a review of existing resources in five LEAs as well as an analysis of State resources. The vendor reviewed human capital policies, as well as the allocation of resources to various local and State reform priorities. The State previously reported that all five LEAs would be able to incorporate their recommendations in SY 2013-2014; however, only three LEAs incorporated recommendations from this analysis in Year 3. The remaining two LEAs plan to incorporate their recommendations in their strategic plans and budgets for SY 2014-2015. GaDOE continues to work with other State offices to determine how to incorporate the State-level recommendations.

[20] Georgia's Performance Learning Centers were featured in a *PROGRESS* blog post, available at http://www.ed.gov/edblogs/progress/2014/04/georgias-performance-learning-centers-help-students-get-back-on-track/.

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

State's STEM initiatives

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

During SY 2013-2014, CEISMC completed development of all twelve self-paced online courses on STEM best practice for teachers and made them available through the State's LDS. As of March 2014, the State reported that 292 teachers enrolled in fall 2013 and 603 in winter 2014 in the online courses and that participating teachers expressed a high degree of satisfaction. Additionally, post-test results indicate that on average teachers' content knowledge increased by 17.7 percent after completing an online course. The State also offers facilitated online courses through Georgia Tech's Professional Education Division. Two courses, Problem-Based Inquiry Learning (PBIL) 1 and Robotics 1, were offered in fall 2013 with 30 teachers enrolled across the courses. Georgia Tech will facilitate PBIL 1 and Robotics 1 and 2 in spring 2014. However, recruitment and enrollment of participants and encouraging completion of the course by those who do enroll continues to be a challenge; the completion rate for online and facilitated courses is less than 50 percent for most courses. In response to the low-course completion rates, CEISMC is working with the Georgia Youth Science and Technology Centers to implement a blended course model in several rural LEAs in winter 2014. Preliminary data indicate that in-person meetings increase completion of the online modules as well as help connect course content to teachers' classroom and LEA goals.

As part of its Technology Toolkit, the State completed six courses for teachers to support the effective use of technology in a standards-based classroom. Based on pre- and post-test data from implementation of the three courses available in summer 2013, participants perceived a change in their technology skills upon completing the course. Of the eight total course offerings, six are for teachers about integrating technology in the classroom and two are for administrators about using and leading technology use in schools.

In summer 2013, 82 teachers participated in the Georgia Intern-Fellowships for Teachers program, including 32 teachers from participating LEAs. This surpassed the State's target of 30 teacher placements from participating LEAs in Year 4. Of those placed, 8 interned in a STEM industry, 4 in science museums, and 20 interned in university settings. All participants created instructional units that include action plans and lessons that will be reviewed by GaDOE and posted either on the Teacher Resource Link or in the standards framework for wider distribution.

Three advanced courses for students, Engineering Calculus (formerly Introduction to Engineering), Materials Chemistry, and Environmental Physics were approved by the State Board of Education in April 2013; however, the courses will not be available to students through the Georgia Virtual School until fall 2014. The Engineering Calculus course was originally slated for completion in fall 2012 and the Post-Advanced Placement (Post-AP) Chemistry and Physics courses were to be completed and made available in fall 2013, reflecting a two-year delay for Engineering Calculus and a one-year delay for the Post-AP Chemistry and Physics courses.

In SY 2013-2014, facilitated online courses in Calculus II and III were available for students and offered through the Georgia Virtual School. The State reports that 323 students were admitted to the Distance Calculus II course in fall 2013.

Throughout Year 4, twelve Innovation Fund grantees continued to implement programs focused on offering STEM applied learning opportunities for students. Innovation Fund grantees partnered with a variety of industry, museum, higher education, and community organizations to provide applied learning opportunities for students, including five IHE, four museums, and two industry partners. In addition, these Innovation Fund grantees served an average of 43 percent female and 58 percent minority students during SY 2013-14. Several programs, including Drew Charter School, the Gwinnett County STEP Academy, the Rockdale County 21st Century Academy of Environmental Studies, and Morehouse College Student Applied Learning Program, served over 90 percent minority students. The Rockdale County 21st Century Academy of Environmental Studies was featured in a *PROGRESS* blog post.[21]

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[21] The *PROGRESS* blog post is available at http://www.ed.gov/edblogs/progress/2014/11/georgia-innovation-fund-projects-open-students-minds-to-what-is-possible/.

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

UTeach Institute

In 2012, the State awarded grants to three geographically diverse universities – University of West Georgia, Southern Polytechnic State University, and Columbus State University – to implement the UTeach program. Now in its second year of implementation, nearly 400 students are enrolled across all three universities. The State received $100,000 in donations from AT&T to support the UTeach program and one other program at Columbus State University.

Successes and challenges

Georgia has focused its STEM projects on programs that provide support for teachers and principals across the State. However, as a result of previous delays, teachers did not have access to the complete Technology Toolkit until January 2014 and students will not be able to enroll in online advanced STEM courses through the Georgia Virtual School until fall 2014, thus limiting professional learning opportunities for educators and advanced learning opportunities

for students during the grant period. In addition, though all courses are now available, CEISMC reported that completion rates for the self-paced online courses are low and continue to require additional attention. To address this issue, CEISMC is working with the Georgia Youth Science and Technology Centers to implement a blended course model with online and face-to-face components in several rural LEAs in winter 2014.

Given the positive feedback from participants, Georgia intends to continue the Georgia Intern-Fellowships for Teachers program beyond the Race to the Top grant period with support from other funds and participation from industry and IHEs.

Through the Innovation Fund, Georgia is offering applied leaning opportunities for students and partnering with IHES, museums, and industry partners to offer rigorous STEM courses of study. In Year 4, over 50 percent of program participants were female and over 60 percent were minority students, successfully increasing access to STEM courses and programs for these students as the State intended.

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.

Georgia will continue to carry out many of the reforms and projects that it launched through Race to the Top in SY 2014-2015, using both Race to the Top funds and other resources. Though several projects faced early delays, the State successfully created resources through Race to the Top including virtual courses, curriculum materials, formative and benchmark assessment items, and the Teacher Resource Link that will continue to serve as a resource to educators as they implement the CCGPS. After the Race to the Top grant period, the State will continue to support LEAs as they transition to new assessments in SY 2014-2015. Georgia will utilize State funds to continue to provide professional learning, create additional instructional resources, and focus on differentiating instruction for struggling students based on State and local assessment results. GaDOE also intends to work with Georgia Public Broadcasting to record and archive short video segments of effective instruction in ELA and mathematics. GaDOE will also continue to expand its LDS, adding new features to personalize instruction for students and provide opportunities for teachers to interact and share resources with one another.

During SY 2014-2015, the State will continue to support implementation of its teacher and leader evaluation system in all LEAs across the State. Specifically, the State will use Race to the Top funds in SY 2014-2015 for activities related to:

- developing and utilizing the student growth percentile measure, SLOs, student and climate surveys, and teacher and leader professional practice measures;
- training and support for LEAs on implementation; expanding implementation to additional LEAs;
- combining and utilizing the evaluation system component measures into a final rating;
- communicating with and engaging stakeholders; and
- supporting educators to improve their practice.

Georgia reports that this work is necessary to allow for adequate training and support for LEAs to implement a new performance evaluation system and that expanded training, resources, and support to all LEAs will ensure there are sufficient resources to effectively prepare and build capacity in all LEAs to successfully implement the system. Additionally, the State will expand its internal GaDOE *Great Teachers and Leaders* staff to support these activities.

The State will also use $5 million in State funds to continue the Innovation Fund. The State will award new grants focused on planning, implementing, or scaling innovation education programs. Of the Race to the Top Innovation Fund grantees, 14 have plans to sustain their initiatives using local funds, other grant funds, or the

capacity they developed through Race to the Top. The remaining grantees are exploring additional funding options to sustain their work.

The State will continue work to implement the PPEM due to its dependencies on full implementation of the teacher and leader evaluation system. Georgia reports that the additional implementation year will ensure that it will have sufficient data and time to calculate PPEM; develop business rules, calculation methodologies, policies, guidance, and rules; develop data systems necessary to conduct and sustain the collection, reporting, and use of data in the teacher and leader PPEMs; and to build State and LEA capacity to ensure sustainability of the reforms. The State reports that it will conduct a comprehensive pilot including all available data in SY 2014-2015. However, Georgia will not begin implementing the report cards until after the Race to the Top grant period. Similarly, the State will continue work related to implementation of tiered certification through SY 2014-2015. The State reports that it will begin phasing in implementation of the new certification levels in SY 2014-2015, with full implementation of tiered certification in SY 2016-2017.

As part of its no-cost extension year, GOSA will continue working on an evaluation of the State's lowest-achieving schools. GOSA will continue to gather data on lowest-achieving schools indicators to inform a quantitative and qualitative analysis of best practices in these schools. Using focus groups and interviews, GOSA seeks to identify promising practices that impact school status. GaDOE and GOSA identified a desire to use this work to track performance in a group of middle schools, in particular, to understand trends in the elementary and high school feeder patterns. Additionally, GOSA, in partnership with a vendor, will conduct a social return on investment analysis on the Innovation Fund and lowest-achieving schools.

GaDOE will also support recruitment, sustainability planning, replication and capacity building, training and student tuition for the UTeach in Year 5. The State reports that the participating IHEs have pledged $680,000 in matching funds in Years 4 and 5 and will continue to support the program beyond the grant period.

In Year 5, the State will provide continuation funding for 14 Innovation Fund grantees to support their work. Additionally, the GOSA will make awards to individual teachers, focusing on secondary and special education teachers, through the Innovation in Teaching competition through Year 5.

Finally, participating LEAs in Georgia have budgeted approximately $43,000,000 in Race to the Top funds to support ongoing work in Year 5, representing approximately 22 percent of the LEA portion of Race to the Top funds. All 26 of Georgia's participating LEAs have no-cost extensions to offer one-time merit-based bonuses based on the teacher and leader evaluation system in spring 2015; LEAs were required to set aside a portion of their LEA funds to support these bonuses at the beginning of the grant period. Of its 26 participating LEAs, 19 LEAs have no-cost extensions to support other work, in addition to the merit bonuses, including Atlanta Public Schools and Gwinnett County Schools, 2 of Georgia's largest LEAs.

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.

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.

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

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

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

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

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

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-extenstion-submission-process.pdf).

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

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

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

the "all students" group. (For additional information, please see http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/index.html.)

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.)

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."