RACE TO THE TOP

Florida 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).

The State's education reform agenda

In its Race to the Top application Florida outlined its reform agenda, which identifies highly-effective teachers and leaders as the most important factors in improved student achievement. As a result, Florida's Race to the Top plan focused on investing in teachers and leaders. These investments were designed to work in concert with changes in policy and process and included the implementation of more rigorous, locally developed teacher and principal evaluation systems, adoption of new statewide standards, enhancements to local and statewide data systems, and interventions in persistently lowest-achieving (PLA) schools. In addition, the State enacted policies to encourage teachers to engage in peer collaboration, use student data to improve their instruction, and ensure they are provided high-quality professional development and effective instructional support.

Ambitious goals for students and educators were also a critical part of Florida's plan. Consistent with the 2010 Florida State Board of Education strategic plan, Florida's application charted a path toward its goal of world-class instruction for all Florida students. Connected to this goal were State expectations that the percentage of incoming high school freshmen who graduate from high school, go on to college, and achieve at least a year's worth of college credit would double; the achievement gap would be cut in half by 2015; and the percentage of students scoring at or above proficient on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) would increase to or beyond the performance levels of the highest-performing States by 2015.

In October 2011, after initiating the projects funded through its $700,000,000 Race to the Top grant, the Florida State Board of Education adopted a new strategic plan which kept the highly ambitious goals outlined in the State plan. The plan also more directly confronted persistent achievement gaps among student sub-groups by setting new sub-group targets. These targets called for accelerated progress by student sub-groups with the lowest percentage of students performing at grade level, with a long-term goal of all students scoring at or above grade level in the core subject areas by 2022.

State Years 1 through 3 summary

In Year 1 Florida launched projects to support LEAs in the development of Local Instructional Improvement Systems (local IIS), teacher and principal evaluation systems that incorporate multiple measures, such as instructional practices and student growth, and programs aiding in the transition to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The State also incorporated stakeholder feedback through eight implementation committees and initiated the development of more rigorous teacher certification examinations, with the State Board of Education approving new competencies and skills for mathematics in grades 6-12 and middle grades mathematics grades 5-9.

These Year 1 successes were counterbalanced by challenges that persisted through Year 3. The State grappled with contract delays, leadership turnover, legal challenges to the State educator evaluation system, uneven vendor quality, and difficulty hiring qualified individuals to manage State-led projects in a timely manner. Some of these deficiencies were rectified by the State in Year 2 when they started to better integrate new projects with existing Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) program area work. Such shifts helped to align LEA and State efforts and were complemented by upgraded project and contract management tools and the hiring of qualified project managers. The State also improved contract management in Year 3, as contractors adhered to timelines more regularly and the State executed some contracts under budget. Still, Florida continued to struggle with low-quality contractor deliverables identified across projects, resulting in further delays. Resetting deliverable timelines at the end of Year 1 meant contractual delays were less problematic in subsequent years, although initial delays had a ripple effect on related work and eventually led to a State request for a no-cost extension period for its Race to the Top grant in school year (SY) 2014-2015 for most of its projects.

In Years 1 through 3 the State supported educators transitioning to the CCSS by offering professional development and making resources and tools available electronically. In Year 2, the phased transition to the CCSS started with implementation in kindergarten. The State supported this transition by providing summer trainings and launching the electronic Collaborate, Plan, Align, Learn, Motivate, and Share (CPALMS) system and the Common Core Student Tutorial. CPALMS is an electronic system populated with educator resources accessible via the Internet. It serves as the centerpiece of the State's educator resource strategy, capable of delivering high-quality and official Florida Standards aligned resources, interactive tools, and course descriptions.

The State also started to redesign how Florida educators digitally access resources by developing a single sign-on portal, intended to serve as a centralized portal populated with resources like CCSS-aligned formative assessments in mathematics and English language arts

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(ELA). In Year 3, Florida formally implemented the CCSS in first grade and continued to support educators shifting to the CCSS by training approximately 13,000 educators during summer institutes, adding resources to CPALMS, and making 374 tasks and rubrics available for grades kindergarten through third grade (K-3) through the Mathematics Formative Assessment System. In Year 3 the State launched the single sign-on portal, allowing Florida educators to directly access content appropriate for their grade level and experience. Three of six planned applications were initially integrated with the single sign-on portal with a plan for full integration in Year 4. As part of the application integration process, the State identified LEA training needs using survey results and then tailored support programs to better serve LEAs struggling to integrate systems.

Through Year 3, the State supported LEAs striving to improve instructional, administrative, and supervisory quality in Florida schools with the implementation of new LEA teacher and principal evaluation systems. To meet State legal requirements LEAs established procedures for evaluating the performance of all educators, including a requirement that at least 50 percent of a teacher's evaluation is based on student growth results, with the remaining portion based on an assessment of instructional practices. In Year 2, the State approved all 65 participating LEA teacher and principal evaluations systems, while also facing their first teacher and principal evaluation system legal challenge. Implementation of new teacher and principal evaluation systems challenged LEA capacity in Years 2 and 3, highlighting the need for differentiated State technical assistance. Such support became paramount for participating LEAs because implementation of the new evaluation systems required significant shifts in professional practice for educators. For teachers, the roll-out of new evaluation systems meant adjusting to more frequent and methodologically-sound observational visits from evaluators. Equally challenging were the adjustments required of principals, who deemphasized their role as building managers to spend more time helping teachers improve their instructional capabilities.

The State's commitment to improving preparation and induction of new teachers was evidenced by partnerships with institutions of higher education (IHE) and State Board of Education actions. In Year 2, the State Board of Education approved new competencies and skills for the Pre-kindergarten/Primary PK-3 teacher certification examinations, as well as development of other subject area examination. Also in Year 2, IHE partnerships resulted in the launch of the Florida science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) Teacher Induction and Professional Support program, the UTeach program, and Project PRIDE, a minority teacher recruitment program. In addition, the State enhanced the electronic Institutional Program Evaluation Plan (eIPEP) system, which tracks graduate performance in the classroom by teacher education program. In Year 3 Florida started to develop outcome-based measures of teacher preparation programs and rule revisions related to the competencies and skills assessed in four teacher certification examinations: the Elementary Education K–6, English 6–12, Middle Grades English 5–9 examinations, and the General Knowledge Test.

In Years 1 through 3, the State targeted support to its lowest-achieving schools by launching programs for aspiring intervention principals, strategic planning in rural LEAs, and STEM focused career and technical pathways. The State also hired STEM and reading coordinators for its lowest-achieving schools and began funding approximately 800 new teachers through the Teach For America program in Miami-Dade and Duval counties. In addition, each summer approximately 1,500 principals, assistant principals, instructional coaches, department chairs, and lead teachers from the State's PLA schools and their feeder patterns attended the Differentiated Accountability Summer Academy. In Miami-Dade, Alachua, Pinellas, Orange, and Duval Counties differentiated State supports were provided for the recruitment and training of new turnaround leaders in the State's lowest-achieving schools.

Finally, in Years 1 through 3 specialty training programs, job-embedded teacher and principal preparation programs, the Commissioner's Leadership Academy, and the FloridaLearns STEM Scholars program graduated educators and students to enthusiastic reviews from participants and administrators.

State Year 4 summary

Accomplishments

In Year 4 Florida effectively communicated with educators to raise CPALMS awareness and made system updates to improve the user experience. As a result of these changes, which included a more intuitive layout and design, the State's external evaluator found a marked increase in user satisfaction. In addition, Florida's centralized portal for publicly accessible information and secure confidential applications came online in Year 4, with educator usage vastly exceeding State expectations.

In Year 4 the State continued to support LEAs attempting to improve instructional, administrative, and supervisory quality in Florida schools with the implementation of new LEA teacher and principal evaluation systems. As part of this effort, all participating LEAs now target professional development to teachers based on evaluation data. This has increased the likelihood that high-quality, effective, and customizable professional development is more readily available to teachers statewide. In Year 4 the State also reported the relationship between educator value-added model (VAM) scores and instructional practices scores increased from SY 2011-2012 to SY 2012-2013 and suggested the change is evidence of enhanced educator familiarity with LEA evaluation systems. Finally, based on external evaluation reports and feedback from selected LEA educators, FLDOE founded two programs that sought to increase participants' leadership skills and content knowledge, the Commissioner's Leadership Academy and Community of Practice series, were highly valued by participants.

As part of the State's targeted support to its PLA schools, in Year 4 the State continued operating the District Accountability Summer Academy, the Teach For America program in Miami-Dade and

Duval counties, and the new turnaround leaders recruiting and training programs Miami-Dade, Alachua, Pinellas, Orange, and Duval Counties. In addition, the State identified a philanthropic partner to support LEA and charter school collaboration and committed an additional $2,000,000 in State funds to support the charter school expansion project through the end of the grant period. Other noteworthy successes by the State included increased District Accountability Summer Academy participant satisfaction compared to Year 3 and a District Accountability Summer Academy participant registry that easily exceeded the four year goal of 4,500. In Year 4, the State also met its goal of placing 800 new teachers for schools in PLA feeder patterns in Miami-Dade and Duval Counties and trained 83 aspiring principals and assistant principals in the States PLA schools. Approximately half of the 83 aspiring principals and assistant principals were promoted to positions of increased responsibility at the start of SY 2013-2014 with 30 teachers becoming assistant principals and 10 assistant principals becoming principals.

Finally, as a result of Florida's integrated STEM focus the number of Florida students enrolled in rigorous STEM courses increased from 161,819 in SY 2009-2010 to 236,608 in SY 2013-2014. Over the course of the grant period the State met its goal of at least a three percent annual enrollment increase in accelerated STEM courses, STEM career and technical programs, and middle grades STEM courses. Additionally, although Florida did not set performance metrics for end-of-course (EOC) exams in its Race to the Top application, in SY 2013-2014 student performance on the Biology, Algebra I, and Geometry exams improved slightly from SY 2012-2013. In U.S. History, the percentage of students proficient increased by 10 percentage points. Florida's graduation rate gap between White and African-American students narrowed from 17.6 to 15.9 percent between SY 2010-2011 and SY 2012-2013. Over the same time period the graduation rate gap between White and Hispanic students fell from 7.6 to 5.6 percent.

Challenges

In order to allow for additional public input on the CCSS, Florida provided the English Language Arts and Mathematics Standards for a public review in fall 2013. Based on public input, FLDOE recommended and the Florida State Board of Education adopted Florida Standards as part of Florida's Next Generation Sunshine State Standards in February 2014. The adoption of the Florida Standards, which include calculus and cursive writing standards, required educators and State officials to adjust their implementation plans mid-course, as they quickly revised online tools, resources, and instructional guides to align with the Mathematics Florida Standards (MAFS) and Language Arts Florida Standards (LAFS).

Over the course of the grant period the State corrected a weakness first identified in Year 1 related to a lack of contractual personnel and safeguards to ensure on-time and high-quality work. Unfortunately, the comprehensiveness and interconnected nature of the grant meant early delays reverberated in subsequent years, leading to related project

delays in Year 4. Early missteps related to the State's goal of opening at least 30 new charter schools in PLA school feeder patterns also negatively impacted project outcomes, and a lack of Year 4 progress will make it unlikely that project goals will be met by the end of the Race to the Top grant period.

Looking ahead

In SY 2014-2015, Year 5, Florida will execute the last of its Race to the Top contracts, marking the culmination of a reform agenda formally articulated in Florida's 2010 Race to the Top application, and initiated by State leaders many years prior. Year 5 is also significant because it will be the first time Florida Standards and their aligned State assessments of student learning will be fully implemented. The State is asking much of Florida students and educators as these shifts become engrained in normal routines. In particular, the heavy investments made by Florida to build educator capacity since SY 2010-2011 will be tested, as educator capacity will play a significant role in determining if the reforms initiated in 2010 are sustained after the grant period.

In addition to facilitating these major shifts statewide, in SY 2014-2015 the State will continue to manage and oversee completion of 51 projects and their associated deliverables. To fund these projects the Department approved the State to shift unspent funds, totaling approximately 14 percent of the grant, to Year 5. Approximately $28 million will continue to be managed directly by LEAs, while the States plans to complete activities for the remaining $72 million by June 30, 2015. The extension of State projects include support of MAFS and reading formative assessments, hard-to-measure subject area assessments, and Student Tutorials, in addition to many others. These tools are intended to support the full implementation of the Florida Standards, although their utility for educators depends on the State continually improving their centralized portal so educators and students can easily gain access through LEA platforms.

In Year 5 the State plans to continue providing reading and STEM coordinators, data coaches, and career and technical education (CTE) experts in PLA schools, open new charter schools in neighborhoods with PLA schools, maintain the trajectory of STEM course expansion statewide, increase the rigor of teacher preparation programs, and support LEAs as they adopt recently refined teacher and principal evaluation systems.

Teacher and principal evaluation support will be especially important in SY 2014-2015 because increased expectations of principals as instructional leaders will require that they provide observation feedback that: (1) gives teachers a roadmap to improve instruction to benefit their students; and (2) differentiates teachers based on their classroom performance so that LEAs can better support poor performers and acknowledge excellent teachers. In addition, in SY 2014-2015 all courses and subjects not assessed using statewide assessments must have a locally developed or locally selected EOC assessment that measures course content mastery to serve as the measure of student learning growth portion of the

annual educator evaluation. As a result, in SY 2014-2015, many teachers will be assessed using a different measure than they were in SY 2013-2014. The State believes the new measures will produce more reliable and accurate assessments of teacher contributions to student learning in grades and subjects not assessed using statewide standardized assessments.

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

Throughout Florida's Race to the Top grant, the State integrated new projects with existing FLDOE program area work, a practice intended to provide service continuity to participating LEAs as the State upgraded project and contract management tools. In Year 4 the State continued assigning Race to the Top project leads based on their management of similar key initiatives within FLDOE, ensuring projects remained integrated with existing FLDOE program area work. To maintain the benefits created by this structure FLDOE is also examining whether to move staff responsible for Race to the Top program management so that they directly report to the Commissioner's Chief of Staff, a realignment of reporting structures the State anticipates could lead to more responsive service to LEAs after the end of the grant period. The State also continued to utilize the same project management software as in Year 3, although State project leads were less complimentary of the system as a tool to effectively monitor project status in Year 4 than in Year 3.

In addition to internal FLDOE organizational structure shifts, in Year 4 the State launched a new Contract Information System that allowed FLDOE to better track and manage external contracts. Features of the Contract Information System that were not previously available to FLDOE staff include real-time contact status and online approval from any web-enabled device. The State also launched the Florida Grants System (FLAGS), which consolidated three existing systems and allowed LEAs to submit grant applications, Scope of Work and budget amendments, and deliverables online. FLDOE is now able to provide more meaningful and timely feedback to LEAs through the system. In addition, the State is now able to monitor expenditures at the line item level, instead of the project level, further enhancing their long-standing risk-based monitoring process to ensure proper usage of funds by LEAs.

State Success Factors

LEA participation

Sixty-five participating LEAs in Florida continued in Year 4 to implement projects across Race to the Top's four education reform areas, collectively representing more than 90 percent of the State's K-12 students and more than 87 percent of its students in poverty.
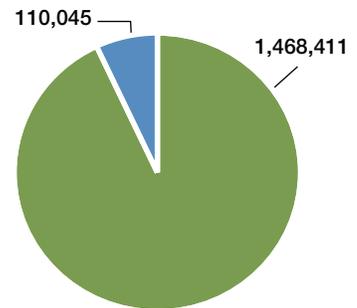
LEAs participating in Florida's Race to the Top plan

9

65

- 🟩 Participating LEAs (#)
- 🟦 Other LEAs (#)
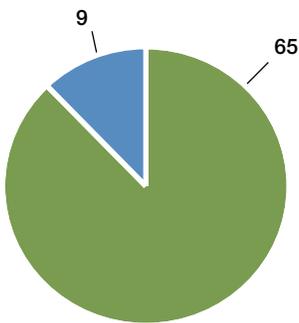
K-12 students in LEAs participating in Florida's Race to the Top plan

149,909

2,514,365

- 🟩 K-12 students (#) in participating LEAs
- 🟦 K-12 students (#) in other LEAs
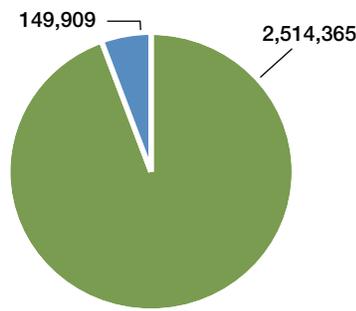
Students in poverty in LEAs participating in Florida's Race to the Top plan

110,045

1,468,411

- 🟩 Students in poverty (#) in participating LEAs
- 🟦 Students in poverty (#) in other LEAs

The number of K-12 students and number of students in poverty statewide are calculated using pre-release data from the National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) Common Core of Data (CCD). Students in poverty statewide comes from the CCD measure of the number of students eligible for free or reduced price lunch subsidy (commonly used as a proxy for the number of students who are economically disadvantaged in a school) under the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National School Lunch Program. The students in poverty statewide and number of K-12 students statewide counts are aggregations of school-level counts summed to State-level counts. Statistical procedures were applied systematically by CCD to these data to prevent potential disclosure of information about individual students as well as for data quality assurance; consequently State-level counts may differ from those originally reported by the State. Please note that these data are considered to be preliminary as of August 27, 2014.

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

State Success Factors

Stakeholder engagement

In Year 4, Florida continued to rely on eight stakeholder committees, the Race to the Top website, and a Race to the Top listserv to communicate with constituents.[7] Florida also solicited public comments in fall 2013 related to the CCSS, receiving over 19,000 responses. As a result of public input, FLDOE made 13 clarifications in ELA standards and added cursive writing in the fourth and fifth grades. FLDOE also made 24 clarifications in mathematics standards, added seven new standards, deleted two standards in kindergarten and first grade, and added 53 standards specifically for high school calculus.

Successes and challenges

State leaders argued in their Race to the Top application that the culture of the profession would change, "by ensuring that all teachers and school leaders are well selected, prepared, supported, respected, and accountable for their students' achievement." Based on the evidence provided by the State, it appears a cultural shift is underway in Florida's classrooms, but based on LEA and State reports the shift remains in its early stages.

Throughout the grant period Florida experienced frequent turnover in the Commissioner of Education position. Four commissioners have served in the role since 2010, resulting in project staff turnover and delays each time new leadership assessed and altered overall FLDOE strategy. In SY 2013-2014 the current Commissioner used her knowledge of Florida LEAs and previous experience in FLDOE leadership roles to provide continuity to the system, halting a pattern of instability. While top leadership shifts were a distraction in previous years, several senior FLDOE staff remained actively involved with

Race to the Top projects throughout the grant period, providing needed continuity as shifts occurred. Further, administrators from selected LEAs noted that long tenured FLDOE staff remained extremely responsive to their concerns and questions during times of leadership turnover.

Florida has relied on vendors to accomplish most of its Race to the Top grant activities. As a result, having the appropriate contractual personnel and safeguards in place is critical to ensure on-time and high-quality work. In most cases, significant project delays correlated with the lack of such a structure, especially in Year 1 of the grant. Based on the State's adherence to project deadlines since the first significant delays were encountered, it appears that the State internalized these lessons, and in the process became a more demanding customer of its vendors and aligned internal procedures so that more effective and timely feedback could be provided to vendors. When possible, the State has also utilized external feedback to make mid-course corrections, but in some cases the need for rigorous project evaluation will not be realized until the end of the grant period.

Finally, the frequent turnover of the Commissioner of Education position and the changes in State standards and assessments led to broad shifts in State education policies, programs, and practices over the course of the grant period. In addition, educators were required to fully align their instruction to new standards and assessments and were concurrently adjusting to new teacher and principal evaluation systems. The combination of these changes contributed to a high level of uncertainty for teachers surrounding the direction of education reform in the State in Year 4. It is possible such uncertainty is related to the lack of confidence Florida teachers expressed in Race to the Top initiatives as a mechanism to improve student achievement.[8]

[7] The committees include the Collaborate, Plan, Align, Learn, Motivate, and Share (CPALMS) Implementation Committee; the Formative and Interim Assessment Design Implementation Committee; the District-developed Student Assessments for Instructional Effectiveness Implementation Committee; the Portal, Dashboard, and Reports Implementation Committee; the Single Sign-on (SSO) Implementation Committee; the Local Systems Implementation Committee; the Student Growth Implementation Committee; and the Teacher and Leader Preparation Implementation Committee. The Race to the Top website is accessible at http://www.fldoe.org/finance/contracts-grants-procurement/american-recovery-reinvestment-act/k-12-strategies/race-to-the-top.stml.
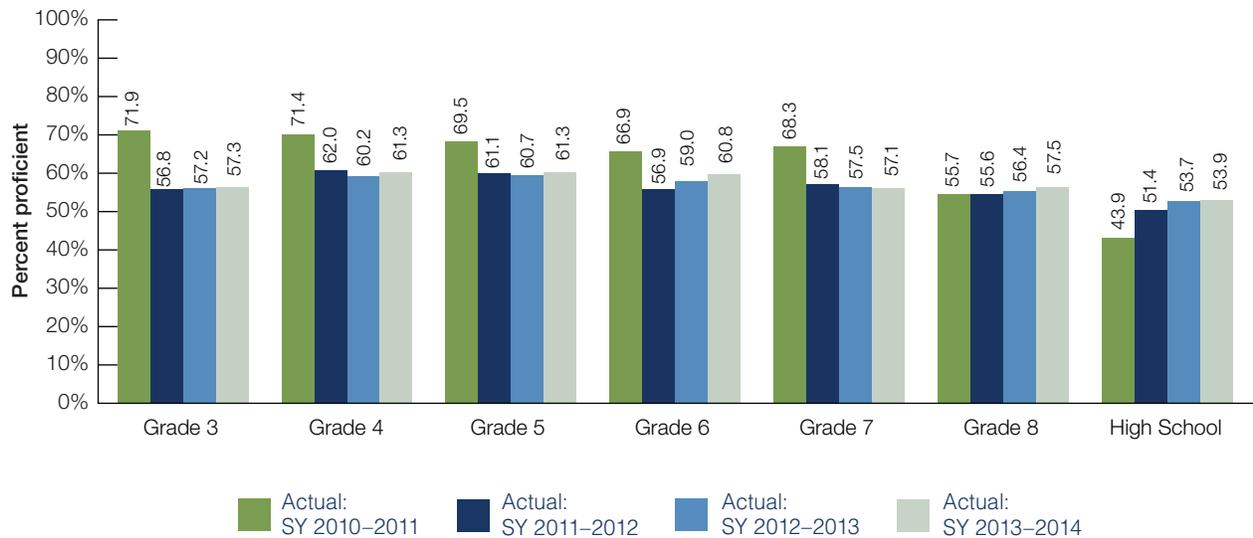
[8] In a Year 4 external evaluator survey, teachers were asked whether the implementation of Race to the Top initiatives will have an impact on student achievement. Only 16 percent of teachers surveyed by Florida's external evaluator in Year 4 strongly agreed or agreed "there is evidence which shows that implementation of Race to the Top initiatives will transfer/has transferred to student achievement."
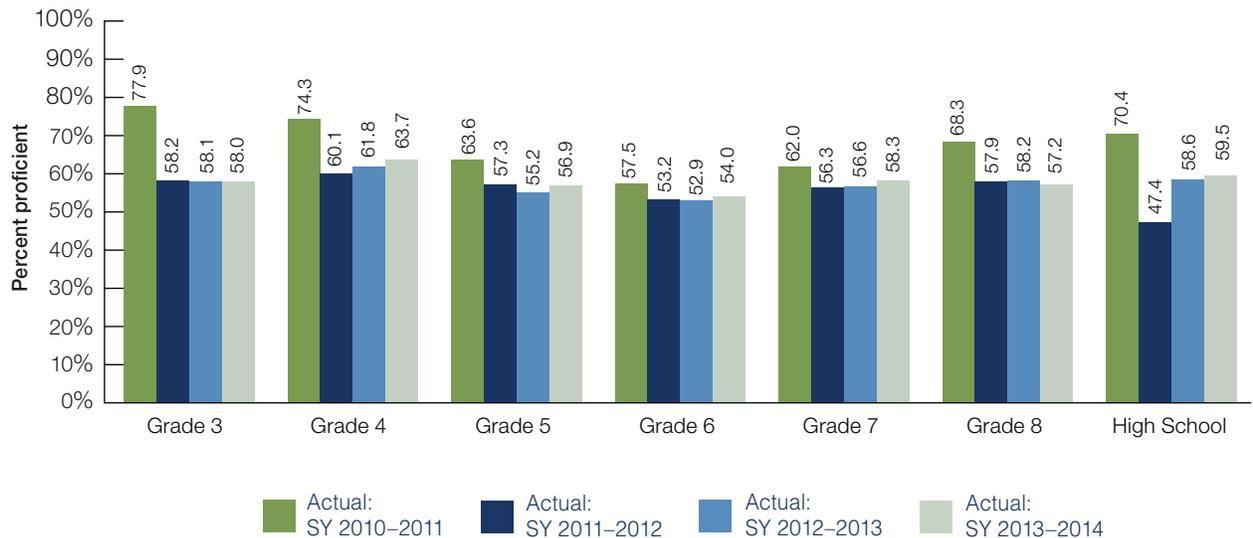
Student outcomes data

In SY 2013-2014 ELA and mathematics scores across grades remained approximately the same as the two previous school years.

Student proficiency on Florida's ELA assessment

Percent proficient

Grade	SY 2010–2011	SY 2011–2012	SY 2012–2013	SY 2013–2014
Grade 3	71.9	56.8	57.2	57.3
Grade 4	71.4	62.0	60.2	61.3
Grade 5	69.5	61.1	60.7	61.3
Grade 6	66.9	56.9	59.0	60.8
Grade 7	68.3	58.1	57.5	57.1
Grade 8	55.7	55.6	56.4	57.5
High School	43.9	51.4	53.7	53.9

Actual: SY 2010–2011 · Actual: SY 2011–2012 · Actual: SY 2012–2013 · Actual: SY 2013–2014

Student proficiency on Florida's mathematics assessment

Percent proficient

Grade	SY 2010–2011	SY 2011–2012	SY 2012–2013	SY 2013–2014
Grade 3	77.9	58.2	58.1	58.0
Grade 4	74.3	60.1	61.8	63.7
Grade 5	63.6	57.3	55.2	56.9
Grade 6	57.5	53.2	52.9	54.0
Grade 7	62.0	56.3	56.6	58.3
Grade 8	68.3	57.9	58.2	57.2
High School	70.4	47.4	58.6	59.5

Actual: SY 2010–2011 · Actual: SY 2011–2012 · Actual: SY 2012–2013 · Actual: SY 2013–2014

Preliminary SY 2013-2014 data reported as of: November 14, 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.
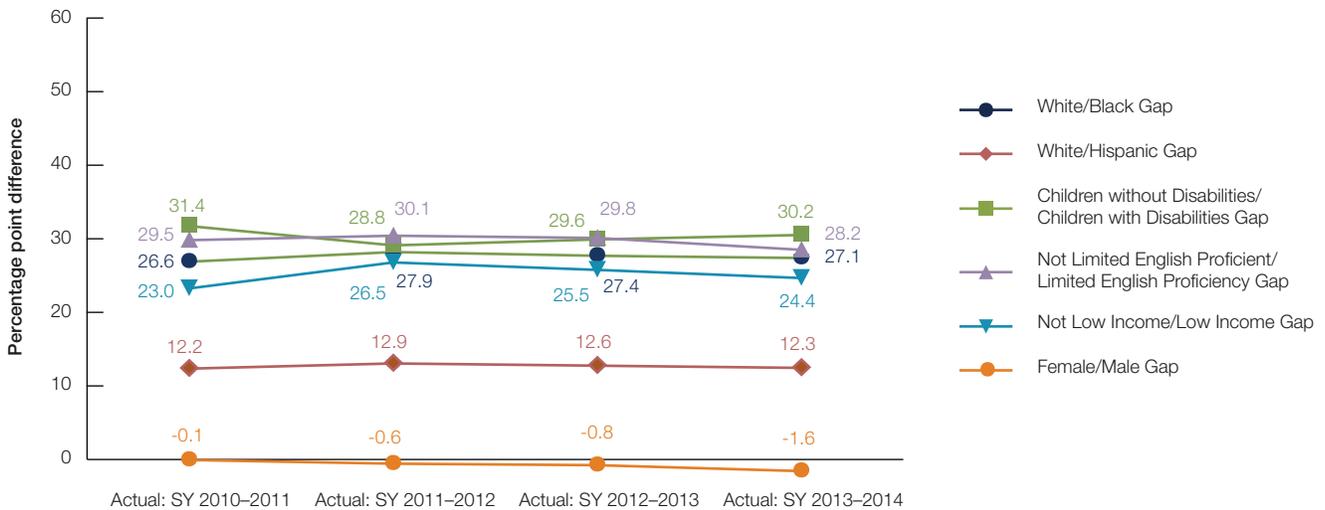
State Success Factors

Florida's Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) 2.0 ELA and mathematics achievement gaps are similar to achievement gaps in SY 2011-2012.[9]

Achievement gap on Florida's ELA assessment
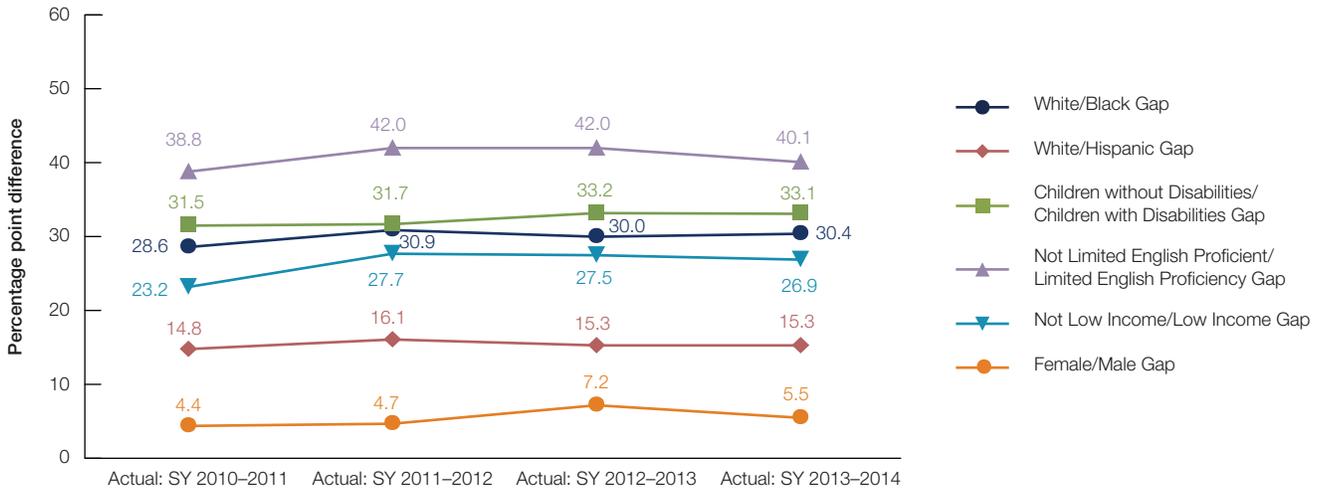
Achievement gap on Florida's mathematics assessment

Preliminary SY 2013-2014 data reported as of: November 14, 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.

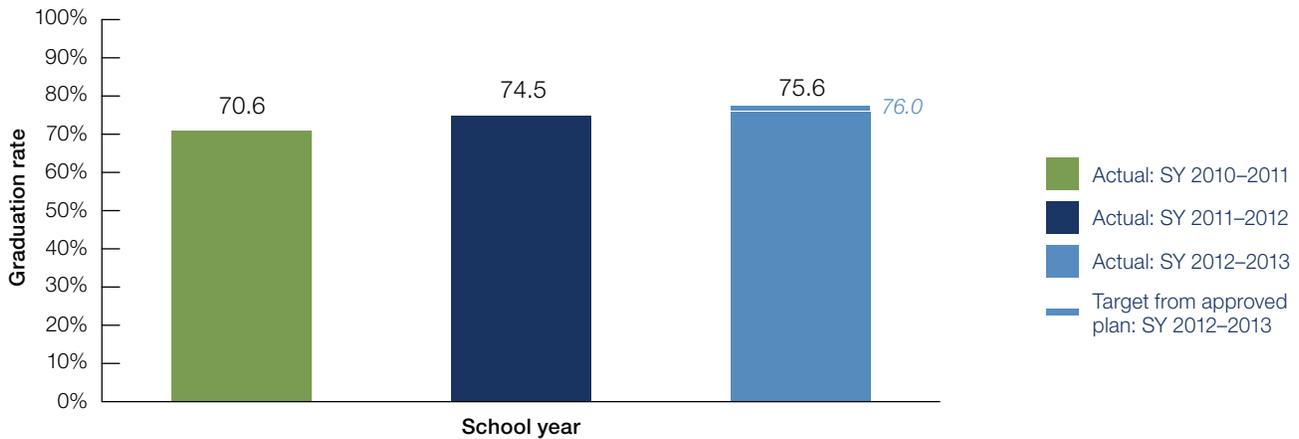NOTE: Over the last four years, a number of States adopted new assessments and/or cut scores.

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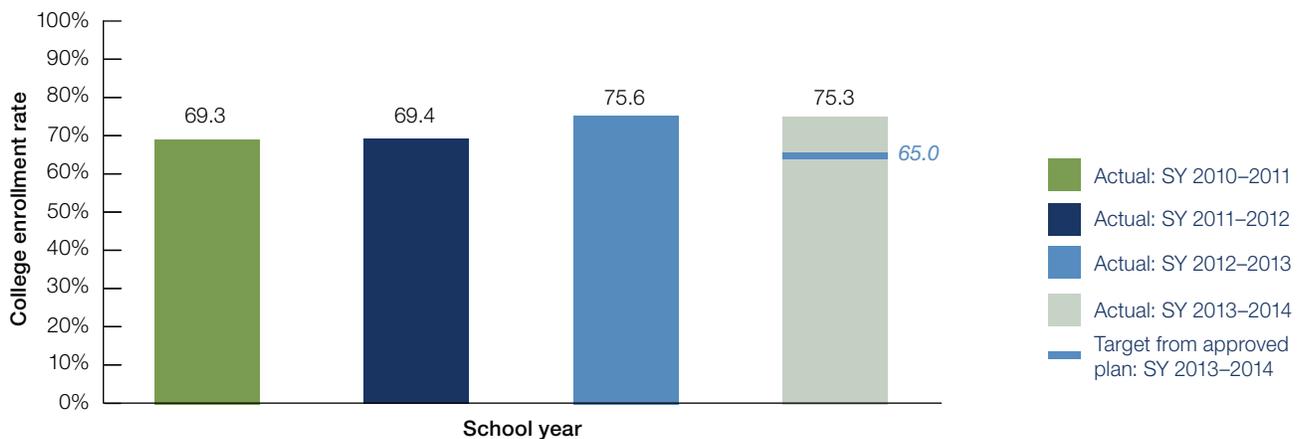
State Success Factors

The graduation rate in Florida has increased each year of the grant, rising from 70.6 percent in SY 2010-2011 to 75.6 percent in SY 2012-2013. The State's college enrollment rate showed a large increase from SY 2011-2012 to SY 2013-2014.

High school graduation rate

Graduation rate (y-axis, 0% to 100%) by School year (x-axis)

- 70.6 — Actual: SY 2010–2011
- 74.5 — Actual: SY 2011–2012
- 75.6 — Actual: SY 2012–2013
- 76.0 — Target from approved plan: SY 2012–2013

Preliminary SY 2012-2013 data as reported of: September 15, 2014.

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

College enrollment rate

College enrollment rate (y-axis, 0% to 100%) by School year (x-axis)

- 69.3 — Actual: SY 2010–2011
- 69.4 — Actual: SY 2011–2012
- 75.6 — Actual: SY 2012–2013
- 75.3 — Actual: SY 2013–2014
- 65.0 — Target from approved plan: SY 2013–2014

Preliminary SY 2013-2014 data reported as of: November 14, 2014.

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

The Department provided guidance to States regarding the reporting period for college enrollment. For SY 2013-2014 data, States report on the students who graduated from high school in SY 2011-2012 and enrolled in an institution of higher education (IHE).

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

Since the Florida State Board of Education voted to adopt the CCSS in all grades in July 2010, FLDOE has supported educators as they transitioned to new standards. As part of this process the State started a phased adoption of the CCSS by grade level in SY 2011-2012, expecting that all grades would implement by SY 2013-2014. To support the standards transition process, Florida hosted CCSS institutes at seven high schools throughout the State in summer 2013. Similar to the previous summer, the State provided training to 13,000 school team representatives, who learned how to integrate the CCSS into their classroom instruction and took part in CCSS instructional observations.

After receiving public feedback on the CCSS during fall 2013, in January 2014, FLDOE recommended changes to the CCSS, subsequently adopted as Florida Standards.[10] In February 2014 the Florida State Board of Education approved the MAFS and LAFS for implementation in SY 2014-2015. Following this shift, in March 2014 Florida announced it would no longer implement PARCC assessments in SY 2014-2015 and instead would develop a Florida Standards-aligned assessment for administration by spring 2015. In Year 4, Florida Senate Bill (S.B.) 188 also became law, which requires LEAs to annually notify parents and students of their education record rights. The law also requires that the State and LEAs analyze directory information disclosures to limit student exposure to marketing campaigns, limit information disclosures related to subpoena responses, require student provision of a social security number for enrollment purposes, and ban any collection of biometric, religious, or political data from students. At the time of a student's enrollment, LEAs are also required to issue a student identification number that is different from the student's social security number.

Together, the shifts in standards and assessments and student data privacy requirements challenged State and LEA capacity. For instance, in advance of implementation in SY 2014-2015, the State and LEAs spent part of Year 4 revising online tools, resources, and instructional guides to align with Florida Standards. In addition, just as LEAs finished fully implementing local IIS in Year 4, LEA and State officials started to investigate how to create clearer governance structures related to S.B. 188, so that LEAs are able to continue to collect and share data while also fully protecting student privacy.

As the State and LEAs addressed their challenges in Year 4, they also made progress on a number of projects. For instance, the State rectified issues related to vendor quality reviews in Year 3 and accomplished many key interim assessment item bank and test platform deliverables in Year 4. The platform will allow educators to select items to create their own assessments. The State piloted the test platform in 30 LEAs in spring 2014 and deployed the system with over 90,000 items at the start of SY 2014-2015.

The State also completed a second pilot test and then released the formative ELA assessments. In Year 4 the State made available through CPALMS 18 Mathematics Formative Assessment System lesson study resource kits for educators in grades K-3. At the same time, FLDOE released 400 tasks and rubrics for educators in grades K-3. The State deployed tasks and rubrics for grades 4-8, Algebra I, and Geometry, as well as lesson study resource kits for Algebra I and Geometry, in June 2014.[11]

The State also continued working with five LEAs (Miami-Dade, Hillsborough, Polk, Osceola, and Duval) to develop 25,000 items for K-8 Physical and Health Education; 9-12 Physical and Health Education; Performing Arts I; Performing Arts II; Visual Arts, World Languages; and CTE.[12] In Year 4 these LEAs developed approximately 8,000 items, adding to the 12,000 items developed the previous year. The State screened these items in fall 2013, field tested them in 34 LEAs in winter and spring 2014, and rolled them out statewide in July 2014. The remaining 5,000 items will be developed and tested by Osceola County educators in SY 2014-2015, with statewide rollout scheduled for July 2015.

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[11] The State reported that two randomized controlled trials (RCTs) of the Mathematics Formative Assessment System were conducted, finding significant student achievement gains for all students when the formative assessment system was fully implemented. The RCTs also found significant gains in teacher content knowledge compared to the control group.

[10] See "Stakeholder engagement" for additional information on the public feedback process.

[12] The items will be made available for LEAs to use for interim, formative, diagnostic, or summative end-of-course assessment purposes.

Dissemination of resources and professional development

In Year 4 Florida leaned heavily on CPALMS as a mechanism to quickly update and disseminate resources to educators grappling with the shifts in standards and assessment. In Year 4 trained reviewers vetted and approved resources using the Educators Evaluating the Quality of Instructional Products (EQuIP) review process, including lesson plans, formative assessment tasks, instructional tools, and student practice items. In SY 2014-2015, CPALMS will integrate literacy resources in science, social studies, and technical subjects, add a parent information feature, and update the Course Code Directory. CPALMS modules are also expected to be developed for LEA induction and IHE pre-service workshops.

Collaborate, Plan, Align, Learn, Motivate, and Share (CPALMS): Florida's online resource sharing solution

Through CPALMS educators can now access 9,400 resources, including 16 curriculum planning and professional development applications and tools created to help educators implement the Florida Standards. CPALMS also includes 300 science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) Lessons/Model Eliciting Activities, 1,100 lesson plans, and 150 standards-based short videos of experts, teachers, and professionals. In school year (SY) 2013-2014 Florida effectively communicated with educators to raise CPALMS awareness and made system updates to improve the user experience. Updates to the system were informed by feedback from CPALMS Champions and user feedback gathered at in-person training events.[13] As a part of future system upgrades the State plans to gather user feedback directly through CPALMS.

As a result of recent system updates, which included a more intuitive layout and design, the State's external evaluator found a marked increase in user satisfaction. An important aspect of these changes was the promotion and integration of iCPALMS as part of the general CPALMS site. iCPALMS, which allows educators to directly access content appropriate for their grade level and experience, is accessible by creating a user account or by logging in using through an LEA's single sign portal. While only a small percentage of the approximately 175,000 teachers statewide accessed CPALMS content through iCPALMS in SY 2013-2014, some leading LEAs (*e.g.*, Orange County) had over 70 percent of their teachers registered with iCPALMS and over 50 percent of all Florida teachers had created a user account by September 2014. The State envisions all Florida teachers will eventually have iCPALMS accounts, although the system is organized so that most of the content is accessible without a iCPALMS login.

iCPALMS User Accounts
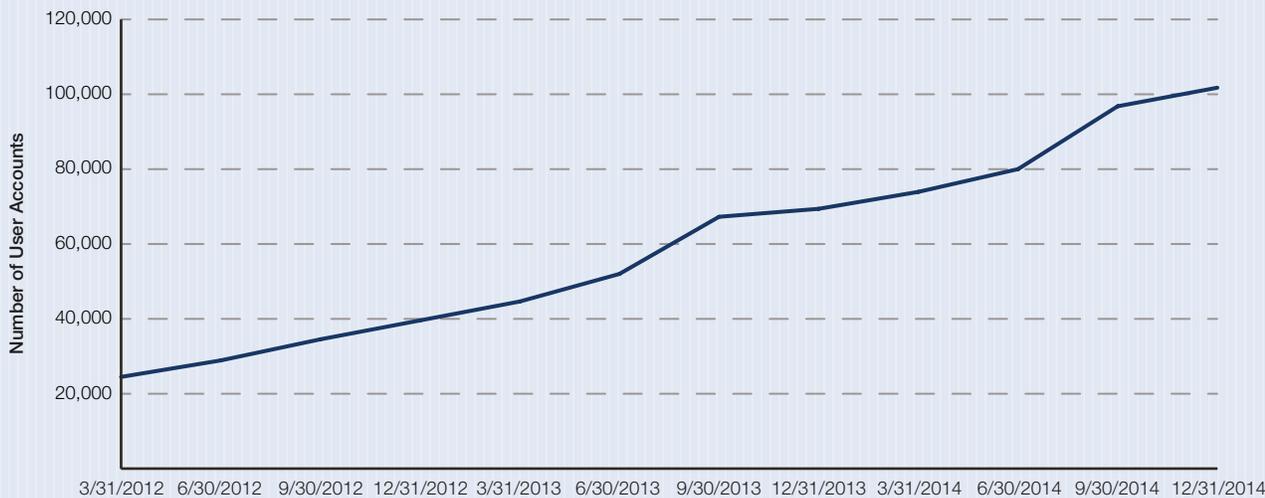
[13] For additional information on CPALMS Champions, see http://www.cpalms.org/cpalms/icpalms_champions_program.aspx.

Standards and Assessments

After delays in Year 3, the State made progress on the Student Tutorial project in Year 4. Following 18 months of inactivity, the State approved a new vendor in April 2014 to develop electronic tutorials for students in K-12 ELA, K-12 mathematics, grades 5-8 science and Biology I, and grade 6-8 civics. The current vendor has since initiated work, and has developed and reviewed over 180 student tutorials since late April 2014. The State expects to complete all expected deliverables in accordance with a revised timeline and plans to publicly share over 3,000 resources in spring 2015.

The State also encountered significant delays as it attempted to build professional development training materials and tutorials for teacher preparation programs and LEAs aligned to Florida Standards. In Year 3 an initial Request for Proposal (RFP) received no proposals from IHEs, while a second RFP generated one response, but the project was put on hold by a former Commissioner. The current Commissioner revived the project and a grant was negotiated, resulting in a consortium of IHEs, led by Indian River State College, being awarded the contract on April 7, 2014. As a result, FLDOE reviewed and piloted 19 face-to-face and online modules in fall 2014 and expects final delivery in spring 2015.

Lastly, Florida launched three projects in Year 4 focused on CTE. The first, CTE alignment setting and training on Florida Standards, started in April 2014 when 250 teachers reviewed and aligned 300 CTE high school courses in 17 career clusters to Florida Standards in mathematics, ELA, and science, resulting in the July 2014 release of 300 CTE course descriptions. In SY 2014-2015 the State hosted regional CTE course description workshops for the 8,000 CTE educators. The second project, development of CTE Hard-to-Measure Test Items, started in spring 2014 when the Central Florida Assessment Collaborative initiated development of items to be used in SY 2015-2016. The third project, CTE STEM Program Expansion in Florida's Rural LEAs, provides support to 17 rural LEAs expanding or creating CTE STEM programs aligned to rigorous industry certifications.

Participation in international assessments

A unique aspect of Florida's Race to the Top plan is the use of international assessments to benchmark student achievement against international competitors. In March 2014, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) released the 2012 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) results.

The 2012 PISA report detailed the performance of Florida 15-year old students, comparing their average scores to the average scores of students from other states and OECD countries.[14] Compared to the average of all students from other States in PISA, Florida students performed at the same level in reading and science, but were below average in mathematics. Compared to the average of all students from OECD countries, Florida students performed at the same level in reading, but below average in science and mathematics. In all three subjects Florida students performed at a lower level than students from Connecticut and Massachusetts, the only other States to fully participate in the 2012 PISA.

Successes and challenges

In Year 4, after adopting the Florida Standards and announcing it would no longer implement PARCC assessments in SY 2014-2015, FLDOE took steps to support LEAs and vendors as they reworked their training, technical, and human capital plans.

In Florida, the shift in education standards has brought about large-scale change in the classroom over the past few years for students, teachers, and administrators. Although State and LEA officials shared evidence of instructional practices changing as a result of this shift, they were unable to demonstrate how LEA teacher evaluation systems are able to accurately distinguish which teachers are implementing the Florida Standards using high-quality instructional practices. In addition, State and LEA officials could not provide evidence showing which specific elements of the instructional rubrics LEAs have designed for evaluation system purposes are most critical to increase student learning.

State leaders have indicated that for many years a fundamental unmet need of Florida teachers has been access to timely information on student progress, a gap the State attempted to fill with the development of high-quality interim and formative assessments. By combining such assessment information with improved digital and lesson study resources, and increased student and teacher access to technology, the State expected educators would be able to make timely adjustments to instruction to better serve students. Because of delays related to technology solutions and a shift in statewide assessment and standards adoption, the potential impact of these efforts has not yet been realized.

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[14] For more information, see http://www.fldoe.org/asp/naep/pdf/PISA.pdf.

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.

Interoperable LEA and State data systems

Florida's Race to the Top plan sought to create a centralized portal to allow educators to easily identify and access relevant resources and information without special training. Building on work the State initiated a decade earlier when it launched the Education Data Warehouse, in Year 4 Florida continued to support LEAs as they developed local IIS in advance of the legislatively mandated deadline of June 2014.[15] The State monitored progress toward implementation of the local IIS minimum standards using an annual LEA survey and supported 50 small and/or rural LEAs with need-based grants.[16] The survey results showed uneven progress initially, but by June 2014 every LEA had fully implemented a local IIS, ensuring their stakeholders have access to data to inform instruction in the classroom, complete school and LEA-level planning activities, and can conduct research.

Building on the successful adoption of local IIS, in fall 2014 all LEAs submitted digital learning plans as a condition for receipt of their share of $40 million the State legislature authorized in winter 2014 for LEAs to provide high-quality digital learning environments for their students. The combination of local IIS, LEA digital learning plans, the single sign-on portal, and the Education Data Warehouse has resulted in a data management system that currently allows 91 percent of all users to seamlessly access State resources through LEA-hosted access points. In Year 4, due to project delays, the State resources were integrated on a staggered schedule and the CPALMS, K-12 reading interim assessment system, interim assessment item bank and test platform, FloridaSchoolLeaders.org, eIPEP, and ELA formative assessment system, are now fully operational. As with each year of the grant, in Year 4 the State continued to refine its data system, working toward its vision of users easily identifying and accessing resources without special training.

Using data to improve instruction

As LEAs built data systems, the State and LEAs used online modules, LEA administrator-led trainings, and face-to-face instruction and multi-media professional development led by regional Data Coaches to train educators to become more proficient data analysts. Intended to increase participant's level of comfort with data systems and analysis, these instructional opportunities focused on data access, use, and action. In Year 4 the State met its primary goal related to these tasks by providing professional development to all schools in all LEAs on how to access and use data, but could not provide evidence showing educators are now more effectively using data to increase student achievement as a result of these supports.

Successes and challenges

A series of delays during Years 1 through 3 led the State to introduce the single sign-on portal for educator use later than anticipated. With system upgrades now in place and the State having met its revised application roll-out timelines, FLDOE is in a position to realize its intended goal of having a, "centralized portal to serve as the gateway to publicly accessible information, and to secure confidential applications." Not only is the system in place, but educator usage has well exceeded State expectations. In addition to providing 100 percent of its participating LEAs access, in Year 4 the State reported exceeding both portal visit and login performance measures.[17]

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[15] The Education Data Warehouse tracks students from when they enter the Florida school system through postsecondary institutions and the workforce.

[16] Minimum standards were developed by approximately 50 education stakeholders in Florida. As of the publication of this report, the data collection survey is available online at http://www.fldoe.org/arra/LIISMS.asp.

[17] *Portal Visits* Goal: 201,700, Actual: 1,985,039. *Logins* Goal: 134,525, Actual: 2,822,696. Total logins are based on visits to the authentication service; this number is higher than the total number of portal visits because users can also log in directly to applications outside of the portal.

Great Teachers and Leaders

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

Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance

Florida set the stage for implementation of Race to the Top teacher and principal evaluation plans with the passage of the Florida Student Success Act in March 2011. In line with Florida's reform agenda, which identifies highly-effective teachers and leaders as the most important factors in improved student achievement, the law intended to increase student learning growth by improving instructional, administrative, and supervisory quality in Florida schools. To accomplish this goal LEAs established procedures for evaluating the performance of all educators, including a requirement that at least 50 percent of a teacher's evaluation is based on student growth results, with the remaining portion based on an assessment of instructional practices.[18]

FLDOE staff reviewed all LEA evaluation system plans in Year 4 to ensure compliance with State law, provide technical support to LEAs, and connect LEA staff when they faced similar challenges. Based on a FLDOE staff review, most LEAs were asked to revise and resubmit their evaluation system plan to comply with State law. In addition to ongoing FLDOE staff support, FLDOE made regular presentations at statewide events, such as superintendent association meetings, to make educators aware of the State-provided resources available to them.

As required by Florida law, in Year 4 evaluation system results for teachers and principals from the previous school year were released publicly. The data showed that 98 percent of teachers were rated effective or highly effective in SY 2012-2013, compared to 97 percent in SY 2011-2012. The Year 4 data release also marked the first time charter school educator ratings were publicly reported. On average, charter school teachers were slightly less likely to be rated highly effective, as 21 percent of charter school teachers were rated highly effective compared to 33 percent of teachers at non-charter schools.[19]

In Year 4, the State reported the relationship between educator VAM scores and instructional practices scores increased from SY 2011-2012 to SY 2012-2013 and suggested the change is evidence of enhanced educator familiarity with LEA evaluation systems. Relatedly, Florida law requires that by SY 2014-2015 all courses and subjects not assessed using statewide assessments must have a locally developed or locally selected EOC assessment that measures course content mastery that will serve as the basis for the measurement of student learning growth portion of the annual educator evaluation. As a result, in SY 2014-2015, many teachers will be assessed using a different measure than they were in SY 2013-2014. The State believes the new measures will produce more reliable and accurate assessments of teacher contributions to student learning in grades and subjects not assessed using statewide standardized assessments.

An example of Florida's transition to more rigorous assessment of content mastery is the development and implementation of EOC assessments in core subjects. These assessments serve as the basis for the measurement of student learning growth and have been gradually phased in over the grant period. With the first statewide administration of the Civics EOC Assessment in Year 4, Florida continued their transition to a set of more rigorous EOC assessments, which since 2010 has included the addition of EOC assessments in Algebra I, Geometry, Biology 1, and U.S. History. Achievement levels for each EOC assessment, the measure from 1-5 established by the State Board of Education that describes mastery of the content assessed, were reported for Algebra I, Geometry, Biology 1, and U.S. History in Year 4. Using the baseline assessment data from Year 4, achievement levels for the Florida Civics EOC assessment will be reported for the first time in spring 2015. Throughout the grant period the Student Growth Implementation Committee (SGIC) has supported this transition by holding forums and offering recommendations to FLDOE and the State Board of Education. In Year 4 the SGIC held a webinar on Algebra I EOC model data and held in-person forums on FCAT model stability and EOC model options.

The State expected to develop student growth performance measures in high-incidence performing arts, visual arts, and physical education courses and/or grade levels in Year 4, but due to project delays is now scheduled to be finished by the end of SY 2014-2015. In Year 4, in support of the revised development timeline, the State selected a vendor to review other State methods of measuring student growth in hard-to-measure courses. The State was able to integrate student

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[18] Pursuant to Section 1012.34, Florida Statutes, LEAs were able to select or design a rubric aligned to the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices and approved by the State. Twenty-nine LEAs adopted the State model, 18 LEAs used the Danielson model, 14 used a private vendor model, and 11 self-designed their model. Principal evaluation systems are similarly constructed; at least 50 percent of the evaluation based on student growth results with the remaining portion based on an assessment of professional practices (using a rubric aligned to the Florida Principal Leadership Standards). In some cases this may be reduced to 40 percent if less than three years of data are available.

[19] Although a smaller percentage of charter school teachers were rated highly effective, a higher percentage of charter high schools were rated as "A" schools by the State. Of the 52 Florida charter high schools 65 percent received an "A" grade for school year (SY) 2012-2013, compared to 47 percent of the 455 non-charter high schools.

growth calculation into the Florida Education Data Warehouse, establishing protocols to cleanly transfer data between systems so that VAM data analysis can be conducted.

Ensuring equitable access to effective teachers and principals

Florida has implemented many projects to support equitable access to effective teachers and principals, including job-embedded teacher and principal preparation programs and minority teacher recruitment programs.

In Year 4 all participating LEAs submitted restructured staffing plans to attract highly-effective teachers and principals to work in high-poverty, high-minority, and PLA schools, as required by their Race to the Top Memoranda of Understanding. As part of this process the State utilized LEA Race to the Top work plans and annual Title II, Part A applications to encourage LEAs to craft human resource policies that support equitable access to effective principals and teachers.

The State also continued overseeing job-embedded teacher and principal preparation programs at the University of Central Florida (UCF), Florida Atlantic University (FAU), and the University of South Florida (USF).[20] In Year 4 FAU and USF each continued to operate principal preparation programs, which in combination prepared 191 new principals and assistant principals in LEAs partnering with FAU and USF, representing approximately 11 percent of all administrators in those LEAs. Florida's efforts to recruit minority teachers resulted in a partnership with Florida Polytechnic University (FPU) and Polk County School District. By the end of SY 2013-2014 the program graduated 42 students from three cohorts, falling just short of the goal of 45 students. Based on the success of the program, the Polk County School District began preparations in SY 2013-2014 to partner with Polk State College to develop an elementary education program modeled after the FPU partnership.

Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs

In Year 4, the State continued to upgrade the eIPEP, a system that allows teacher and principal preparation programs to track and monitor candidate and completer performance data. Following the system upgrades, the State fully migrated the eIPEP into the single sign-on portal, allowing for seamless access by IHEs and LEAs. Other Year 4 system enhancements include the addition of import and export functionalities for teacher retention and evaluation results, IHE's program evaluation plans and document submission, and Title II data submission. As a result of enhanced eIPEP functionality, sample IHE program performance reports were published in June 2013. The publication of the 2014 sample IHE program performance

reports was delayed due to the deliberations concerning the revised State Board Rule on performance targets. These reports provide the public access to teacher preparation program performance results on placement, retention, student performance utilizing VAM data, teacher evaluation data, student performance by sub-groups, and critical teacher shortage area production. In addition, reports were utilized during FLDOE program pilot site visit reviews in Year 4.

In Year 4, the State remained on track to complete all proposed deliverables related to developing more rigorous teacher certification exams by the end of the grant period. Overhauling each subject area exam requires four steps in Florida: (1) State Board of Education approval of new competencies and skills; (2) field testing and validating of exam items, (3) constructing and validating new test forms, and (4) State Board of Education approval of new passing scores. In January 2014, the State completed Step 4 for PK-3, Mathematics grades 6-12, and Middle Grades Mathematics grades 5-9. The State completed Step 4 in November 2014 for English grades 6-12, Middle Grades English grades 5-9, and in February 2014 for General Knowledge and Elementary Education grades K-6.

The State also made significant progress towards setting outcome-based performance standards for continued approval and denial of educator preparation programs. The State piloted the recommended standards during site visits at the University of North Florida in November 2013 and at Saint Leo University in April 2014, using feedback from the pilot site visits to frame revisions to the State Board rule that will set performance targets for the continued approval of teacher preparation programs. The State also worked towards setting performance targets for educator preparation programs by analyzing two years of results of instructional personnel evaluation ratings and the performance of program completers from State-approved programs employed in Florida public schools. This information framed the only meeting FLDOE convened with the Teacher and Leader Preparation Implementation Committee (TLPIC) in Year 4. At this meeting, held on April 21, 2014, the TLPIC provided input, feedback, and recommendations to FLDOE related to revision of performance metrics associated with evaluation results of program completers employed in Florida public schools. In January 2015 the State Board of Education approved Rule 6A-5.066, Florida Administrative Code, Approval of Teacher Preparation Programs, which revised performance levels for all six teacher preparation program performance metrics as well as additional initial and continued approval standards.

Providing effective support to teachers and principals

In Year 4 the Commissioner's Leadership Academy, a highly selective leadership development program for outstanding principals, graduated a second cohort of 25 educators. Cohort 2 participants met throughout the school year and the State reported that Cohort 1 set up and maintained an informal learning community without State assistance by relying on their network of professionals to discuss

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[20] See science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) Section for additional information on the UCF job-embedded teacher preparation program.

solutions to shared challenges. The success of the program prompted the Florida State Legislature to dedicate $500,000 to support the Commissioner's Leadership Academy in SY 2014-2015.

The community of practice series, a forum for State officials and educators to share implementation strategies and updates, also continued in Year 4, reaching 280 educators. In contrast to earlier years, when the State developed and presented most of the community of practice content, in Year 4 almost all presentations were led by LEAs, allowing educators to reflect on their experience with the item bank, teacher evaluation, and Florida Turnaround Leaders Project.

The State also continued to support improved professional development delivery by reviewing LEA professional development plans, providing feedback, and approving them for use in SY 2014-2015 based on compliance with State law. The State also presented the last four of eight planned training modules at training events located throughout Florida in Year 4. The modules, now available to all educators, focus on shifting professional development so it is customized to individual user needs.[21] Building on the release of the modules, the State hosted 12 "constructive conversations" from January to May 2014, during which national experts presented to Florida educators on topics ranging from school culture to instructional coaching. Although the State anticipated developing common hiring standards for instructional coaches in Year 4, this task is now expected to occur in SY 2014-2015, when LEAs will be required to meet new instructional coaching standards related to hiring and practice.

Successes and challenges

In order to significantly raise the achievement and the readiness of Florida students for postsecondary education and the workforce, the State committed in their Race to the Top plan to increase the effectiveness of teachers and school leaders, measuring their success based on improvements in student learning and shifts in instructional practice. The State reports educators have dramatically shifted practice over the past few years. For teachers, becoming comfortable with increased classroom visitations and observations has been a significant change, as was the adoption of evaluation rubrics that prescribed standards of teaching excellence that observers rely on to assess teaching competence. For principals, the shift from building manager to instructional leader has been a significant shift, requiring them not only to learn to be effective and accurate observers, but also to delegate authority within a school building so operations can continue uninterrupted while they focus on teacher instructional development.

As this process has been underway, Florida LEAs have worked to incorporate teacher and stakeholder voices in the development of new student growth and performance measures. Survey data from Florida's external evaluator demonstrates moderate success towards this goal, with 39 percent of Florida teachers strongly agreeing or agreeing that, "my district supports the active participation of teachers and other stakeholders in the development of new student growth and performance measures," in Year 4.

Overall, these shifts were not without their challenges. For instance, while the U.S. District Court sided with the State in *Cook v. Stewart*, a case against parts of the Florida educator evaluation systems, it questioned the system's method for evaluating teachers not teaching reading in grades 4-10 or mathematics in grades 4-8.[22] This points to the need for enhanced support to LEAs from the State as the teacher evaluation system is implemented and improved in future years. In addition, in Year 4 few LEAs demonstrated the capability of evaluating professional development based on changes in classroom practices and in student outcomes, although State approved professional development plans require such functionality be in place in SY 2014-2015.

Those concerns aside, the State made progress toward the development of LEA professional development systems that are more customizable and accessible. For instance, the State reported that all participating LEAs instituted policies to make decisions about professional development offerings based on evaluation data in Year 4. Further, compared to four years ago, more teachers believe that high-quality professional development in Florida is more readily available. For example, in Year 1 Florida's external evaluator found that only 24 percent of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that, "teacher professional development is provided in formats that are easily accessible and effectively tailored for teachers," but in Year 4 the percentage of teachers strongly agreeing or agreeing increased to 40 percent. Lastly, analyses from external evaluation reports indicate educators valued their Commissioner's Leadership Academy and community of practice experiences. In addition, the State reported that many LEAs started their own communities of practice using State-developed resources and protocols available at www.floridaschoolleaders.org.

[21] For additional information see www.floridaschoolleaders.org.

[22] In April 2013, seven teachers in Alachua, Escambia, and Hernando counties, the Florida Education Association (FEA), and the National Education Association (NEA) challenged parts of S.B. 736 in U.S. District Court, alleging that implementation of Florida's teacher evaluation system violated their due process and equal protection rights. In May 2014, the Court granted summary judgment to the State, allowing the system to continue as currently implemented. See *Cook v. Stewart*, No. 1:13-cv-72 (N.D. Fla. May 6, 2014) for more information.

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.[23]

Support for the lowest-achieving schools

Florida's assumption at the start of the grant period was that, "LEAs, not schools, fail." With this in mind, the State crafted many projects intended to build LEA capacity, "to lead, support, and monitor the school improvement process." After reexamining their strategy in Year 3, the State slightly adjusted the approach in Year 4 to highlight the importance of problem solving as a key aspect of LEA capacity building. Under the umbrella of LEA capacity building the State launched a number of initiatives focused on improving instructional capacity of educators and engaging local communities and parents. These included annual Differentiated Accountability Summer Academies, the provision of reading and STEM coordinators, and the launch of the Community Compact initiative.

The District Accountability Summer Academy series continued to improve in Year 4 as participant satisfaction with the programming increased and a record number of educators (1,800) attended. As a result, the State surpassed its four-year participation goal of 4,500 by over 1,600 attendees. Based on Florida's external evaluator survey data, each year principals, assistant principals, instructional coaches, department chairs, and lead teachers from the State's PLA schools and their feeder patterns have grown more satisfied with District Accountability Summer Academy series programming.

Like previous years, in Year 4 the State continued to provide 40 reading coordinators and 20 STEM coordinators in regional offices to serve the State's PLA schools and their feeder patterns. Working across LEAs the coordinators helped to organize training and support, assisted with lesson study adoption, and shared best practices with educators. Year 4 was also the last year four community-based organizations operating in Pinellas, Duval, Orange, and Miami-Dade Counties provided mentors to students in PLA high schools and operated family literacy programs, serving 1,530 students and over 5,000 parents over the Race to the Top grant period. Finally, the Model Community Compact launched in Year 4 in Duval,

Miami-Dade, and Orange Counties, providing mentoring services to approximately 3,700 students in the first year of implementation.

In Year 4, State leaders participated in the RSN's School Turnaround Performance Management Work Group. As part of this group the State worked with other States and RSN experts to build stronger performance management systems in SY 2013-2014. Based on priorities identified during these interactions, the State developed and started to implement a Scope of Work in Year 4. To support implementation of the Scope of Work, the State participated in workgroups focused on reflecting on progress, strategies, and lessons learned.[24]

Building teacher and leader capacity in the lowest-achieving schools

In Year 4 the State increased its commitment to Teach For America as a mechanism to improve teacher recruitment in PLA school feeder patterns by expanding to Orange County, in part due to successfully meeting recruitment and fundraising targets in Duval and Miami-Dade Counties. In Duval County and Miami-Dade County School Districts, 812 Teach For America corps members were trained and placed by the start of SY 2014-2015. Although the State met or exceeded attrition goals through Year 4, the expansion to Orange County did not proceed smoothly and Cohort I was cancelled due to a fundraising shortfall. As a result, Orange County now plans to place 50 corps members in SY 2015-2016, well short of the original expansion goal of 150 corps members.

In addition to developing alternative pathways for teachers, Florida sought to develop new school leaders through the Florida Turnaround Leaders Program (FTLP) to support principal and assistant principal training in PLA high schools and their feeder schools. After finishing a project-based curriculum in Year 3, the 83 FTLP participants were placed in full-time positions in a nearby PLA school for an internship during one semester of Year 4. Approximately half of the participants were promoted to positions of increased responsibility at the start of SY 2013-2014 with 30 teachers becoming assistant principals and 10 assistant principals becoming principals. Eighty-three of the 99 principals and assistant principals enrolled at the start of the program graduated in June 2014.

Successes and challenges

The State easily surpassed its goal of 4,500 District Accountability Summer Academy participants over the grant period, growing the program at the same time staff improved programming content. The State also helped place 800 teachers for schools in PLA feeder patterns

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[23] 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.

[24] Reform Support Network (RSN) publications can be found at http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/implementation-support-unit/tech-assist/index.html.

in Miami-Dade and Duval Counties, with commitments from those LEAs to continue funding the programs after the end of the grant period. In addition, the State helped place 83 principals and assistant principals in PLA feeder pattern schools.

Based on initial evidence, the LEA capacity building programs have not yet enabled the LEAs participating to, "significantly increase student achievement in their schools," as intended in the State's grant application. Using Florida's LEA Accountability Reports as a gauge of progress shows the 27 LEAs engaging in capacity building initiatives remained, on average, approximately half a letter grade below the other 40 LEAs, which is the same gap that existed in SY 2010-2011.[25]

In addition, only 28 percent of the 44 PLA high schools identified by the State in SY 2010-2011 achieved the State's goal of a graduation rate of at least 80 percent by the end of SY 2013-2014. Further, only 50 percent of the PLA high schools achieved a school grade of at least a "B," well below the goal of 100 percent and only slightly above the SY 2010-2011 figures. Finally, survey data provided by the State's external evaluator shows the Community Compact has weak support among principals and assistant principals where it is being implemented. Principals and assistant principals surveyed indicated there has been very limited improvement in student achievement, parental involvement, student attendance, and community/business partnerships as a result of the project.

Charter Schools and Other Initiatives

Florida pledged in its Scope of Work to: (1) open new charter schools in the feeder patterns of Florida's low-performing schools; and (2) support all charter school educators with training and support related to school intervention, educator evaluations, and CCSS and local IIS implementation.

In Year 4 the State continued to recruit potential charter school operators to open schools in the feeder patterns of Florida's low-performing schools, while also supporting the nine expansion schools operational in SY 2013-2014. As a result of a Charter School Summit held at the end of Year 3, the State identified a philanthropic partner to support LEA and charter school collaboration, focused recruitment efforts more on single school operators in Year 4, and committed an additional $2,000,000 in State funds to support the project.

The State reported it is unlikely to meet its revised goal of establishing 30 to 40 new charter schools by SY 2015-2016 in eligible feeder patterns of schools identified under Race to the Top and the School Improvement Grant program. Eligible school feeder patterns include schools identified as PLA, Priority schools identified as part of the State's approved Elementary and Secondary Education Act flexibility request (flexibility request), and schools that are designated as "F" schools based on FCAT results.[26] As a result of fiscal and recruitment

challenges, by the start of SY 2014-2015 just 17 new charter schools had opened and the State expects only 26 new charter schools will open by the start of SY 2015-2016.

Florida tailored training and support to the needs of charter school students and the educators and administrators who serve them by structuring the other half of their charter school work around an initial needs assessment, which found low charter school capacity in the areas of educator evaluation, standards implementation, and local IIS. As a result, the State implemented training and support projects with the goal of building skills among charter school educators and administrators in these areas.

Successes and challenges

Florida noted in its Race to the Top grant application the intent to, "dramatically increase the number of high-quality charter schools that successfully increase student achievement among high-need student populations." To that end, the State partnered with national charter school funding organizations to, "flood the zone," of the feeder patterns of PLA schools with high-quality charter schools.

Although the State served 57 percent of the 623 charter schools operating in Florida in Year 4 with face-to-face support through training and support projects in Year 4, it did not collect data on the program in a way that could determine if the services helped to ensure successful conditions for high-performing charter schools. The State showed general satisfaction with the quality and usefulness of face-to-face events, but cannot assess whether participants improved their skills and abilities as they relate to educator evaluations, standards, and local IIS capacity, in ways that will increase student achievement.

While the State is uncertain if their Race to the Top charter school projects have had their intended impact, over the course of the grant period charter schools have started to serve more students

[25] Florida grades LEAs using the assessment based measures for achievement in reading, mathematics, writing and science; learning gains for reading and mathematics; and learning gains for the lowest 25 percent of students in reading and mathematics.

[26] 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. An extension to Florida's request for flexibility from some Elementary and Secondary Education Act provisions was approved on August 14, 2014. For more information on ESEA flexibility, see www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility.

while also demonstrating improved student achievement among those students. Since SY 2009-2010 the number of Florida charter schools increased from 410 schools in SY 2009-2010 to 623 schools in SY 2013-2014. As a result, in SY 2013-2014 charter schools collectively served approximately six percent of Florida students. In addition, student outcomes for charter school students, as measured by the NAEP, significantly improved from 2011 to 2013 on the fourth and eighth grade mathematics assessment and the fourth grade reading assessment.

Florida's charter school projects may prove worthwhile by the end of the grant period, but the improved NAEP charter school student scores came at the same time expansion projects remained in a pre-development stage and prior to the implementation of the charter school training and support project launch. This suggests improved charter school student outcomes are the result of other undetermined factors at work in Florida, which the State has yet to identify.

Charter school and non-charter school students: Fourth grade National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) mathematics results in 2011 and 2013

In 2011 the average scale score for Florida charter school students eligible to receive free lunch through the National School Lunch Program in fourth grade mathematics was 231, compared to 231 for students not attending a charter school. In 2013, the average scale score for charter school students eligible to receive free lunch in fourth grade mathematics was 237, compared to 232 for students not attending a charter school. The average score for charter school students not eligible to receive free lunch also increased substantially in 2013 (252) when compared to 2011 (244), while the average scale score for similar students not attending a charter school slightly increased (253 to 255) between 2011 and 2013.
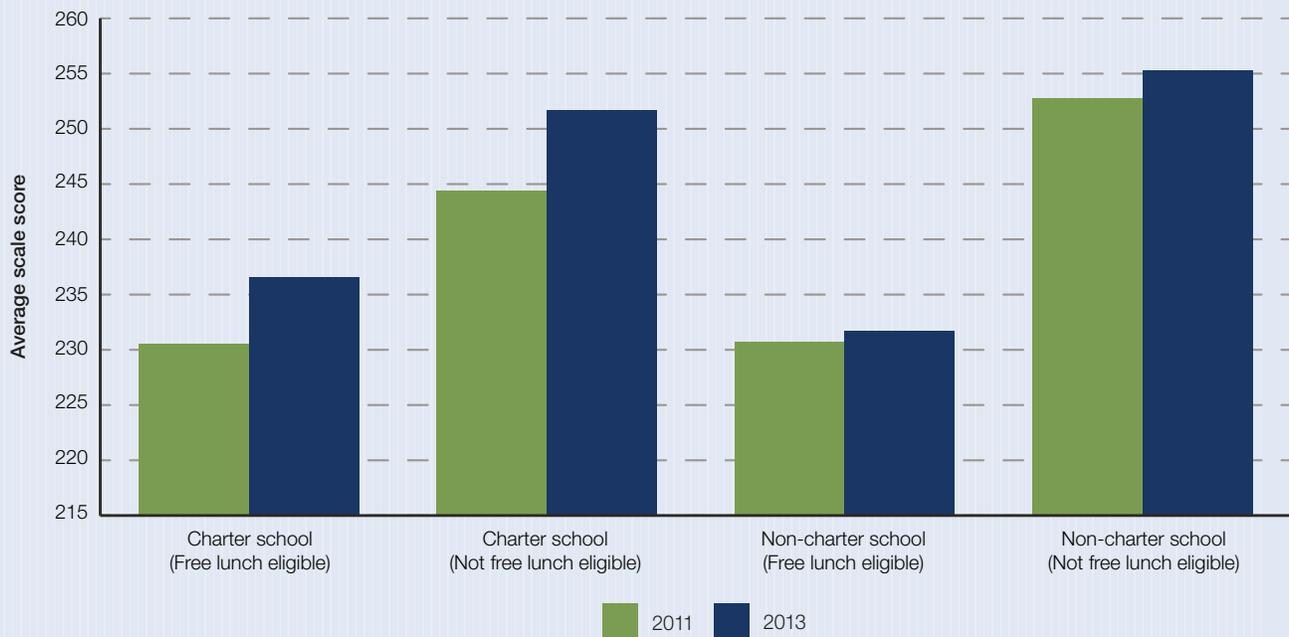
Source: NAEP Data Explorer, available at http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/naepdata/.

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

Florida integrated STEM-focused projects throughout their Race to the Top plan by launching initiatives intended to increase student access to more rigorous STEM content. To support educators in providing more rigorous STEM content to students, the State:

- Provided additional STEM resources electronically for educator use,

- Increased STEM teacher preparation standards,

- Created STEM focused teacher preparation programs,

- Built STEM support programs for PLA and rural schools, and

- Continued specialty STEM programs for talented and gifted rural students.

In Year 4, the State provided 300 STEM Lessons/Model Eliciting Activities through CPALMS and continued to operate the STEM Teacher Induction and Professional Support Center program. This program, managed by the University of Florida, works with teacher preparation and LEA induction program directors to integrate online STEM curriculum with established LEA induction programs for novice secondary STEM teachers and provide online STEM mentoring support. In Year 4 the program supported approximately 1,000 new and beginning teachers from three partner LEAs and one consortium. To increase teacher preparation standards the State put in place more rigorous operational test forms for teacher certification examinations in STEM and reading content areas and required that teacher preparation programs annually report completers in STEM areas.

To help prepare content experts in STEM, UCF's job-embedded preparation program and Florida Institute of Technology's (FIT) UTeach preparation program continued in Year 4. Although the UCF program anticipated recruiting 140 participants over the course of the grant period, the program graduated 101 STEM teachers in August 2014, all of which were rehired by their current LEA. In Year 4, the FIT UTeach program enrolled 166 students, a substantial increase over the previous year enrollment of 104 students. The majority of the UTeach students are in the first or second year of the four-year course of study, meaning SY 2015-2016 will be the first infusion of new STEM graduates into the workforce through UTeach.

To support their PLA schools FLDOE's Regional Teams continued to employ 20 STEM coordinators to serve PLA schools and their feeder pattern schools. Unlike previous years, coordinators provided more support to schools across content areas, instead of coaching content-specific groups of teachers. The State also continued supporting 87 Career and Professional Academies (CAPE) operating in 22 PLA high schools. The State anticipates all 22 PLA high schools will continue operating CAPE Academies after the end of the grant period, with support from CTE regional specialists, who advocate for the creation of STEM CTE middle school expansion plans and mentor STEM CTE teachers.

In Year 4 the State continued to support rural LEAs with distinctive STEM programs such as the Florida STEM Scholars program, which increased cumulative enrollment from 1,000 in SY 2012-2013 to 1,346 in SY 2013-2014. Run in partnership with three consortia that collectively represent 35 LEAs, the program offers the chance for gifted and talented students to take part in four immersion experiences, in addition to making distance learning opportunities available throughout the school year. Year 4 also marked the start of the one-year STEM Academy Grants to Rural LEAs program, which will provide 17 rural LEAs grants of $115,000 to partner with local entities (*e.g.*, county workforce development board) to create or convert CTE programs to CTE STEM programs aligned to industry certifications in SY 2014-2015.

Successes and challenges

Florida integrated a STEM focus throughout their Race to the Top plan, identifying areas of opportunity where highlighting STEM would help to best meet the needs of Florida students, communities, and educators. As a direct result of these efforts more Florida students now have access to rigorous STEM courses than at the start of the grant period, with 236,608 students enrolled in SY 2013-2014. These enrollment figures helped the State meet its goal of at least a three percent annual enrollment increase in accelerated STEM courses, STEM CTE programs, and middle grade STEM courses each year of the grant.

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.

Due to the many project delays Florida experienced during Years 1 through 3, Florida has much to look ahead to in SY 2014-2015. It will be the first time during the grant period that every Race to the Top contract is either completed or in progress. In addition, because 51 projects and 30 participating LEAs were approved for a no-cost extension, the majority of Florida's Race to the Top work will continue uninterrupted through June 2015. In some ways this is advantageous for the State because it allows State leaders extra time to rigorously and transparently assess the return on investment each Race to the Top project has brought to the Florida educational system. As the State conducts this important work, there are a number of other key issues the State will face with in Year 5.

Interim and formative assessment systems, hard-to-measure subject area assessment items, Student Tutorials, and curricular tools deployed through CPALMS hold great promise as a means to efficiently and effectively improve instructional practice statewide. The overall impact of these initiatives will depend greatly on activities planned for Year 5, when Florida Standards will be fully implemented, the single sign-on portal will integrate all six planned applications, and Florida's new statewide assessment will be rolled out for the first time. As a result, it will be critical that FLDOE avoid additional interim and formative assessment roll out delays while concurrently increasing educator use of CPALMS. If successful, the State will be closer to achieving its original goal of providing timely access to high-quality information on student progress in a format that is engaging and informative for educators.

For the fourth consecutive year LEAs will implement teacher and principal evaluation systems. LEAs will also be expected to use evaluation results to inform decisions related to professional development and retention. Specifically, in Year 5 LEAs will be expected to demonstrate the capability of evaluating professional development based on changes in classroom practices and in student outcomes. In addition, the State expects to continue to provide legal and logistical support related to evaluation system implementation, ideally in a manner that allows LEAs to better address the issues raised by the U.S. District Court's ruling in *Cook v. Stewart*.

Other key initiatives in Year 5 include the provision of reading and STEM coordinators in PLA schools and opening new charter schools in neighborhoods with PLA schools. The State also expects to maintain STEM course expansion statewide, increase the rigor of teacher preparation programs, and support LEAs as they grapple with the need for clear governance structures related to S.B. 188, so that LEAs are able to collect and share data while also fully protecting student privacy.

When the State embarked on its comprehensive reform path in 2010, State and LEA education leaders were likely unprepared for the systemic and logistical challenges they would confront when projects were launched. The State has addressed challenges as they emerged, and now that educators are becoming more comfortable in their altered environment, with better access to student data and an evaluation system aligned to more rigorous standards, the State hopes to be able to demonstrate improved progress against its Race to the Top student achievement goals in future years.[27]

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.

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[27] The possibility that Race to the Top projects implemented in Year 5 will lead to improved student achievement future gains is buoyed by LEA administrative confidence, as 75 percent of superintendents surveyed by Florida's external evaluator in Year 4 strongly agreed or agreed "there is evidence which shows that implementation of Race to the Top initiatives will transfer/has transferred to student achievement." In Year 3, only 50 percent of superintendents strongly agreed or agreed with the same statement. Although confidence is high among LEA administrators, in Year 5 State and local leaders will need to address the concerns of a skeptical teacher workforce, as only 16 percent strongly agreed or agreed with the same statement in Year 4.

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."