

# RACE TO THE TOP

## Massachusetts 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.<sup>1</sup> In 2010, the U.S. Department of Education (Department) awarded Race to the Top Phase 1 and Phase 2 grants to 11 States and the District of Columbia. The Race to the Top program is a competitive four-year grant program designed to encourage and reward States that are creating the conditions for education innovation and reform; achieving significant improvement in student outcomes, including making substantial gains in student achievement, closing achievement gaps, and improving high school graduation rates; and ensuring students are prepared for success in college and careers. Since the Race to the Top Phase 1 and 2 competitions, the Department has made additional grants under the Race to the Top Phase 3, Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge,<sup>2</sup> and Race to the Top – District<sup>3</sup> competitions.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Race to the Top program review

As part of the Department's commitment to supporting States as they implement ambitious reform agendas, the Department established the Implementation and Support Unit (ISU) in the Office of the Deputy Secretary to administer, among others, the Race to the Top program. The goal of the ISU was to provide assistance to States as they implement unprecedented and comprehensive reforms to improve student outcomes. Consistent with this goal, the Department has developed a Race to the Top program review process that not only addresses the Department's responsibilities for fiscal and programmatic oversight, but is also designed to identify areas in which Race to the Top grantees need assistance and support to meet their goals. Specifically, the ISU worked with Race to the Top grantees to differentiate support based on individual State needs, and helped States work with each other and with experts to achieve and sustain educational reforms that improve student outcomes. In partnership with the ISU, the Reform Support Network (RSN) offers collective and individualized technical assistance and resources to Race to the Top grantees. The RSN's purpose is to support Race to the Top grantees as they implement reforms in education policy and practice, learn from each other, and build their capacity to sustain these reforms.<sup>5</sup> At the end of Year 4, the Department created the Office of State Support to continue to provide support to States across programs as they implement comprehensive reforms. The Office of State Support will administer programs previously administered by the ISU.

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

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

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

# 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

Since the passage of the 1993 Education Reform Act, Massachusetts has focused on accelerating student achievement across the State. In 2011, Massachusetts' fourth and eighth graders led the Nation in reading and mathematics performance on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Despite having high overall levels of student achievement, Massachusetts recognizes that achievement gaps persist and not every student in the State receives a world-class education. Through Race to the Top, Massachusetts implemented a comprehensive reform plan to provide students with the tools, supports, and technology to help ensure that every student is prepared for success in college and career in the twenty-first century.

Massachusetts' Race to the Top grant of \$250,000,000 supports the State's commitment to transform teaching and learning in classrooms across the State, improve student performance, and close achievement gaps. In keeping with the terms of the Race to the Top grant, Massachusetts is using half of its grant funds to drive State-level work, and distributing the other half of its award to support work in participating LEAs that is aligned with the State's goals.

The State's Race to the Top grant is focused around four primary objectives:

- (1) attract, develop, and retain an effective, academically capable, diverse, and culturally proficient educator workforce to ensure that every student is taught by a great teacher, and every school and district is led by a great leader;
- (2) provide curricular and instructional resources to give every educator the tools necessary to promote and support student achievement;
- (3) concentrate great instruction and additional supports for educators, students, and families in the lowest-performing schools and their districts to create the conditions needed for improved student achievement; and
- (4) increase dramatically the number of students who graduate from high school ready for college and career.

## State Years 1 through 3 summary

In the first two years of the grant period, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) established systems to oversee and manage Race to the Top reforms and projects. The Delivery Team within the Office of Planning and Research (OPR) fully implemented the Delivery approach, which emphasizes the use of real-time data, focused analysis and reports, and strong leadership involvement to drive implementation. Also, early in the grant period the State collaborated with key stakeholders in developing each component of the State's Race to the Top plan, which increased buy-in among educators.

After a two-year transition period, Massachusetts educators began implementing the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics, which incorporate the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), in school year (SY) 2012-2013. To support local implementation in Years 2 and 3, ESE provided a variety of resources through its website and the Edwin Teaching and Learning system including teacher-developed model curriculum units, State-led regional trainings, and instructional resources like curriculum maps. After a small pilot in Year 2, the State released the Edwin Teaching and Learning system in Year 3, which makes these resources available electronically to all educators. In addition, the State made progress in other college- and career-readiness initiatives, including opening six science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) Early College High Schools and supporting 47 Innovation Schools.

The State's progress with data systems was varied during Years 1 through 3. After procurement delays in Year 2, the State procured, piloted, and released the Edwin Teaching and Learning system in Year 3. This aspect of the Edwin platform includes many resources to support the standards transition and assessment practices. However, educator access was limited in Year 3 because of challenges with implementing the Schools Interoperability Framework, which is a technology solution for local systems to communicate with State systems so data displays reflect real-time changes. Finally, the State rolled out Edwin Analytics (formerly the Educator Data Warehouse), which provides longitudinal student data to all educators, and in Year 3 the State added the Early Warning Indicator System and Postsecondary Enrollment and Outcomes reports.

The State also made progress in supporting Race to the Top participating LEAs as they implemented new educator evaluation systems in Years 2 and 3. In Year 2, the State released a model evaluation system and guidance for LEAs developing their own systems. Following a 21-school pilot of new evaluation systems in nine Level 4 districts in SY 2011-2012, most other Race to the Top participating LEAs implemented the professional practices component in Year 3, or SY 2012-2013.<sup>7</sup> Based on feedback from LEA

<sup>7</sup> Level 3 and Level 4 districts are defined as follows: Level 3 are districts with one or more schools among the lowest-performing 20 percent based on quantitative indicators; Level 4 are districts identified by quantitative and qualitative indicators through a district review.

# Executive Summary

stakeholders, ESE determined that the State was not fully prepared to implement student growth measures and that this component would not be part of evaluation system implementation in Year 3.

Over Years 1 through 3 of the grant period, Massachusetts executed its plans to build capacity and raise student achievement in its lowest-performing schools and districts. Forty-four schools planned and began implementing intervention models during SYs 2011-2012 and 2012-2013.<sup>8</sup> ESE led efforts to support schools and LEAs identified as low-performing under the State's accountability system, called Level 3, 4, or 5 schools and districts (for detail, see *Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools*). In Year 2, the State vetted and selected 24 Priority Partners with track records of success in school improvement and supported LEA efforts to engage with these partners in implementing local school improvement plans. In addition, during Years 2 and 3, the State began and expanded programs targeted for educators and students in low-performing schools with 110 teachers in Turnaround Teacher Teams, 10 leaders in Turnaround Leader Teams, and seven LEAs implementing school-based Wraparound Zone plans to address out-of-school needs of at-risk students.

## State Year 4 summary

### Accomplishments

In Year 4, Massachusetts continued to refine its use of the Delivery process to track project implementation within ESE, gather data on progress, and share updates with senior leadership. This approach was effective in identifying projects that were off track and generating solutions as well as better integrating related initiatives, such as the standards transition with evaluation system implementation. The State used external evaluation findings and feedback from the field to inform State-level implementation, for example, by providing additional supports to LEAs for measuring student learning using district-determined measures as part of new evaluation systems.

The State's college- and career-readiness initiatives included multiple strategies for supporting educators in meeting the demands of new standards and raising standards for students. In SY 2013-2014, the State developed and made available a variety of instructional resources,

<sup>8</sup> Race to the Top States' plans include supporting their LEAs in turning around the lowest-achieving schools by implementing one of the four school intervention models:

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

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

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

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

standards-aligned assessments, and curriculum documents to support educators in the transition to new standards. State-developed model curricula cover 95 percent of grades and core academic subjects, which exceeds the State's goal. Many educators can access these resources through the Edwin Teaching and Learning platform. In addition, after delays, teachers accessed pre-Advanced Placement course training in Year 4 to offer middle school students rigorous coursework that prepares them for Advanced Placement courses in high school. The State reported that it would not pursue MassCore as the statewide graduation standard since most districts adopt their own graduation requirements.<sup>9</sup> The State reported that over the last five years the number of districts adopting graduation requirements similar to MassCore is increasing. Forty-seven Innovation schools and six STEM Early College High School (ECHS) programs continued to serve students in school settings with greater flexibility and STEM-focused themes, respectively.

In the area of *Great Teachers and Leaders*, Massachusetts LEAs made progress in implementing the professional practices component of new evaluation systems. The State provided guidance documents and technical assistance to LEAs to support local implementation. Teachers in all Race to the Top participating LEAs and half of teachers in non-participating LEAs received Summative Performance Ratings at the end of SY 2013-2014. These ratings were based on a cycle of classroom observations and feedback meetings rooted in four performance standards: curriculum, planning and assessment; teaching all students; family and community engagement; and professional culture. In addition, all LEAs developed and executed plans to pilot measures of student learning with educators. Finally, the State continued to support initiatives for specific education professionals, including a superintendent induction program, a performance assessment for leaders, and planning for a teacher licensure performance assessment. In addition, the State made progress in preparing to implement new educator preparation program approval standards.

ESE continued to support schools identified as low performing through site visits and data analysis. These schools worked with ESE-vetted preferred providers, project implementation managers, and District Plan Managers from the State to strengthen human resource management. Seven schools continued to provide wraparound services for students, such as health services and social workers. As of fall 2013, Level 4 schools demonstrated progress that resulted in 14 of 34 schools exiting Level 4 status. In addition, the State's one Level 5 district showed significant gains in student achievement. (For more information on how Massachusetts classifies low-performing schools and districts, see *Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools*).

### Challenges

In Year 4, the State continued to face challenges in meeting goals related to some of its data systems work. While the State rolled out

<sup>9</sup> MassCore requires four years each of English and mathematics; three years each of lab-based science and history/social studies; two years of the same foreign language; one year of the arts; five additional "core" courses; physical education; and additional opportunities, such as Advanced Placement courses, dual enrollment, or a senior project.

# Executive Summary

the Edwin Teaching and Learning platform statewide, LEA access was limited by their ability to comply with the Schools Interoperability Framework, which allows for real-time data exchange and display. Delays in implementing the interoperability framework have limited the period of time in which LEAs can use the system to support local instruction and student assessment. In addition, the State was unable to make progress on projects intended to support educator use of data to inform instruction due to delays and vendor challenges. The State's adjusted approach will extend into SY 2014-2015, reducing the time in which educators can engage with the training with grant supports. This work is integral to the State's plans as it complements educator work in the standards transition and potential professional development needs.

While the State made progress in implementing the professional practice component of the new evaluation system, the State is delayed in fully implementing the student growth component. In response to feedback from the field, the State determined in Year 4 that it would not fully implement the Student Impact Rating portion of the evaluation system in SY 2014-2015. ESE continues to make student growth percentile data available to educators through Edwin Analytics.

## Looking ahead

Massachusetts will continue multiple critical work streams during the no-cost extension period of its Race to the Top grant in SY 2014-2015, or Year 5. Approximately 20 percent of LEAs that accessed grant funds will continue into Year 5 supporting local efforts in curriculum work, technology investments, and teacher trainings, among other things. The State plans to maintain grant supports for participating LEAs and within ESE through SY 2014-2015. Across project areas and consistent with previous years, the State's work in Year 5 is intended to provide tools and resources that are available to LEAs well beyond the grant period.

In Year 5, the State will maintain the myriad resources for educators transitioning to new standards and assessments. ESE intends to continue expanding its video library of Massachusetts educators

demonstrating classroom best practice in teaching the new standards. The State also plans to enhance content currently in the Edwin Teaching and Learning system, continue tagging items in the interim and formative assessment bank, vet additional locally developed items, and provide guidance on how best to use assessment items. Due to delays in Year 4, the State will continue to provide pre-Advanced Placement training for teachers in Year 5.

In SY 2014-2015, ESE plans for every participating LEA to become compliant with the interoperability framework, which will enable many more educators to use the Edwin Teaching & Learning system's assessment and instructional resources. To meet this critical milestone the State will continue to provide technical assistance to LEAs implementing the interoperability framework and will begin to gather statewide data elements from LEAs that are able to transmit data in real-time. Given challenges during the grant period to provide educators with professional development on using data to inform instruction, the State will develop modules for educators to use when accessing data currently available in the Edwin platform. In addition, the State will provide professional development for school teams in some Level 3 schools that did not previously receive targeted supports.

Participating LEAs will be in their third year of educator evaluation system implementation in SY 2014-2015 and all other LEAs will be in their second year. As LEAs continue to phase in implementation, ESE plans to continue its supports including guidance, trainings, and data collection and analysis. In Year 5, ESE will pilot and implement new teacher and leader performance assessments. In addition, the State will continue to provide a range of professional development and curriculum resources for teachers with English learner students and support staff working with these teachers.

In Year 5, schools and districts identified as low performing will continue to work with vetted partners to provide services related to intervention implementation. Teacher and leader turnaround teams will also continue to convene. In addition, the State will host seminars to build upon local successes in implementing Wraparound Zones and share best practices throughout the State.

## 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

ESE's OPR continued to oversee and track the State's progress in implementing Race to the Top projects through the Delivery Unit. For the State's highest priority projects the Delivery process focuses on progress against timelines and quality of implementation. Project managers meet once a month and project sponsors meet every three weeks to track progress. In addition, the Commissioner continued to conduct monthly stocktakes with project teams to review progress against metrics. In Year 4, the Delivery Unit combined routines for the educator effectiveness and curriculum and instruction work streams, which has increased collaboration between staff working on these initiatives. For example, staff collaborated on the Professional Practice Innovation Grants project and held a joint statewide conference.

The State participated in the RSN Sustainability Workgroup throughout Year 4 to assess options for sustaining priority reforms beyond the grant period. Massachusetts' approach was featured in two

briefs, "Performance Management: Setting Outcomes and Strategies to Improve Student Achievement," and "Performance Management: Ensuring Accountability for Results."<sup>10</sup>

### Support and accountability for LEAs

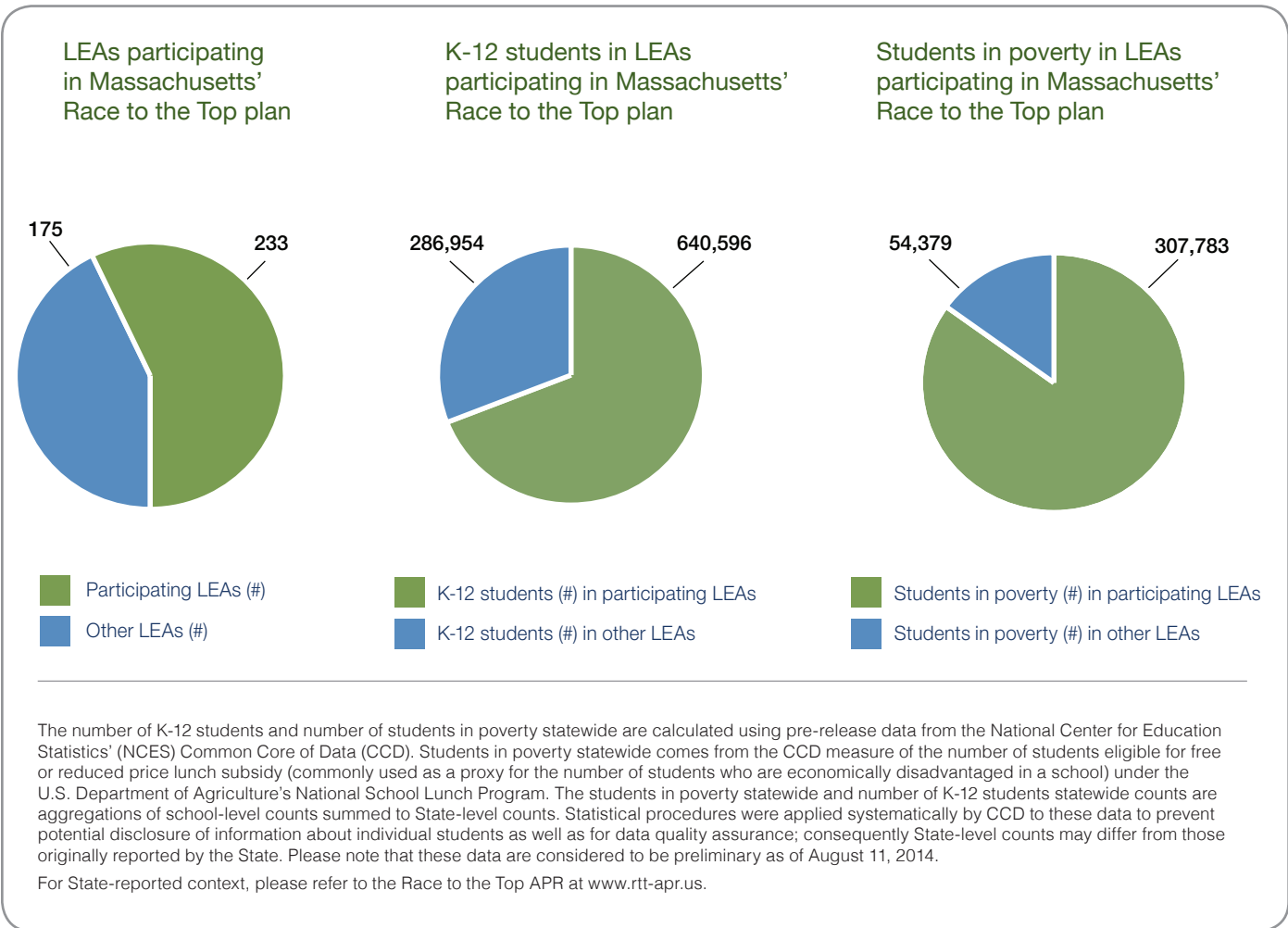
In Year 4, ESE continued its data collection and analysis and oversight routines for LEAs implementing Race to the Top work. LEAs reported their progress on their performance measures and expenditures at the end of SY 2012-2013, which informed ESE supports for SY 2013-2014. District and School Assistance Center (DSAC) staff or program-specific ESE staff followed up with 24 LEAs for targeted assistance. In addition, the State provided differentiated supports to some LEAs. For example, large, urban LEAs have ESE liaisons as their main points of contact, and Level 3 and 4 districts receive technical assistance from DSACs and Readiness Centers.

<sup>10</sup> Publications are available at <https://rtt.grads360.org/?p=RTT#communities/sea-capacity-building>.

# State Success Factors

## LEA participation

As depicted in the graphs below, as of August 11, 2014, Massachusetts reported 233 participating LEAs. This represents approximately 69 percent of the State's kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12) students and approximately 85 percent of its students in poverty.



## Stakeholder engagement

Throughout Year 4, Massachusetts continued to communicate with educators in the field and with key education stakeholders to seek feedback and promote awareness of the State's Race to the Top work. As in previous grant years, the State created a Year 3 report detailing Race to the Top implementation and shared it with a variety of stakeholder groups, including local superintendents, union representatives, the State legislature, and the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE).

The State continued to provide teachers and leaders with opportunities to interact with their colleagues and share best practices. The 2014 Educator Evaluation Spring Convening reached over 1,000 educators from over 270 districts and provided an

opportunity for educators to share best practices and plan for SY 2014-2015 implementation. In addition, the State leveraged the Educator Leader Cadre to provide more than 50 presentations to over 3,000 participants throughout the school year. These presentations reached a variety of stakeholders at professional association meetings, schools, districts, and college campuses. To address questions about implementation of CCSS and Partnership for the Assessment of College and Career (PARCC) assessments, ESE held communication sessions across the State throughout the school year and in spring 2014 held 11 regional community meetings. The State also made available a variety of resources (e.g., updates, guidance documents, frequently asked questions, communications tools) to help stakeholders understand PARCC and the field test and to provide LEAs and schools with tools to help them communicate with parents, students, and other audiences.

# State Success Factors

## Continuous improvement

Throughout Year 4, Massachusetts continued to use its existing routines to manage projects, engage stakeholders, and track LEA implementation. In addition, the Delivery process and stocktake meetings supported the agency's ability to monitor progress and quality of implementation and use implementation data to update leadership, elevate issues, and execute responses. ESE used performance measure reporting and amendment processes to determine whether LEAs are on track and to inform differentiated supports. State project staff also kept ESE up to date on local implementation challenges and successes. These routines are also informing which investments and supports to continue beyond the grant period.

Massachusetts' collaboration with external evaluators has allowed it to establish feedback loops to assess its work and identify promising practices. In Year 4, these external evaluations informed and validated ESE's work. For example, the implementation study of the educator evaluation framework was released in January 2014 to provide research findings on early implementation. ESE responded to the recommendations by developing plans for additional resources and support to LEAs and educators to meet needs in challenge areas, such as developing measures of student learning. Feedback from the State's external evaluators indicated that ESE's variety of standards-aligned curriculum and instructional resources were useful and of high quality. Likewise, evaluation findings related to DSAC data specialist support of data routines in Level 4 districts informed the State's decision to continue this investment into SY 2014-2015. Additional evaluation reports are expected during fall 2014.

## Successes and challenges

Through Year 4 of the grant period, Massachusetts effectively used the Delivery process to track projects and identify projects that are off track. Bringing implementation updates to leadership has increased communication and integration of Race to the Top and other ESE priority work streams, which the State reported improved the quality of its LEA supports and guidance across project areas. In addition, the State demonstrated that it was using findings and recommendations from external evaluation reports to drive adjustments in implementation and to inform long-term strategic planning.

While the State continuously improved its project-level management and used LEA-level implementation information to inform its approach across project areas, it was unclear to what extent that information was being used to inform ESE's differentiated supports to LEAs. The State developed tiered levels of intervention support for schools and districts identified as low-performing, but higher-performing schools and districts may also need supports given the scale of reform.

Entering the no-cost extension period, or Year 5, the State must overcome delays and vendor quality issues experienced throughout the first four years, particularly in the area of data systems and data use professional development. While the State has plans to complete this work, these challenges have limited the period of time in which the State can develop and LEAs can benefit from the resources and systems planned under the grant.

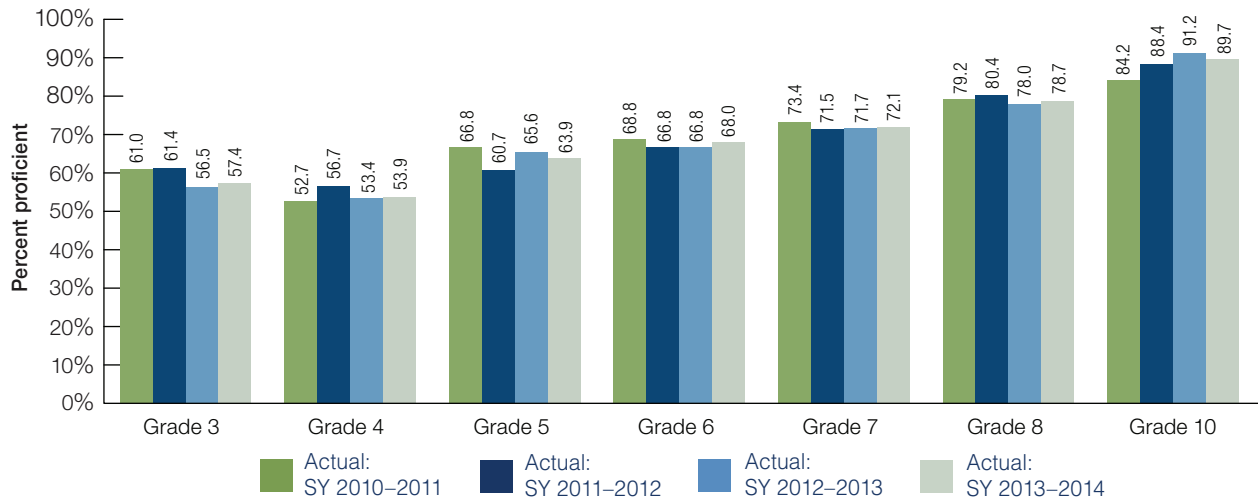


# State Success Factors

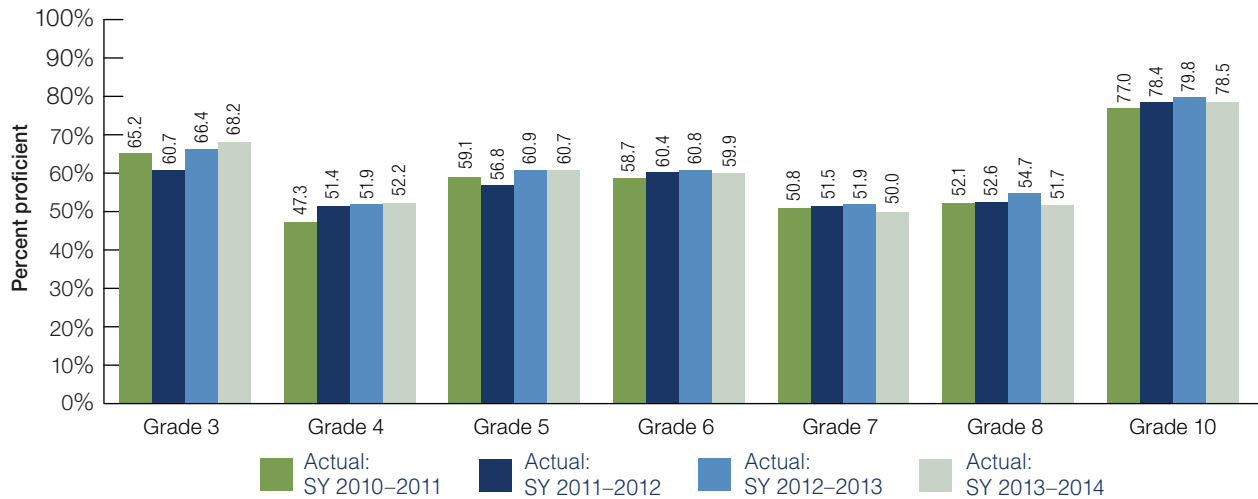
## Student outcomes data

Proficiency rates on Massachusetts' ELA assessments were mixed from SY 2010-2011 through SY 2013-2014; however, proficiency rates in tenth grade increased notably during this time period. Proficiency rates on Massachusetts' mathematics assessments remained about the same from SY 2010-2011 through SY 2013-2014.

Student proficiency on Massachusetts' ELA assessment



Student proficiency on Massachusetts' mathematics assessment



Preliminary SY 2013-2014 data reported as of: November 10, 2014.

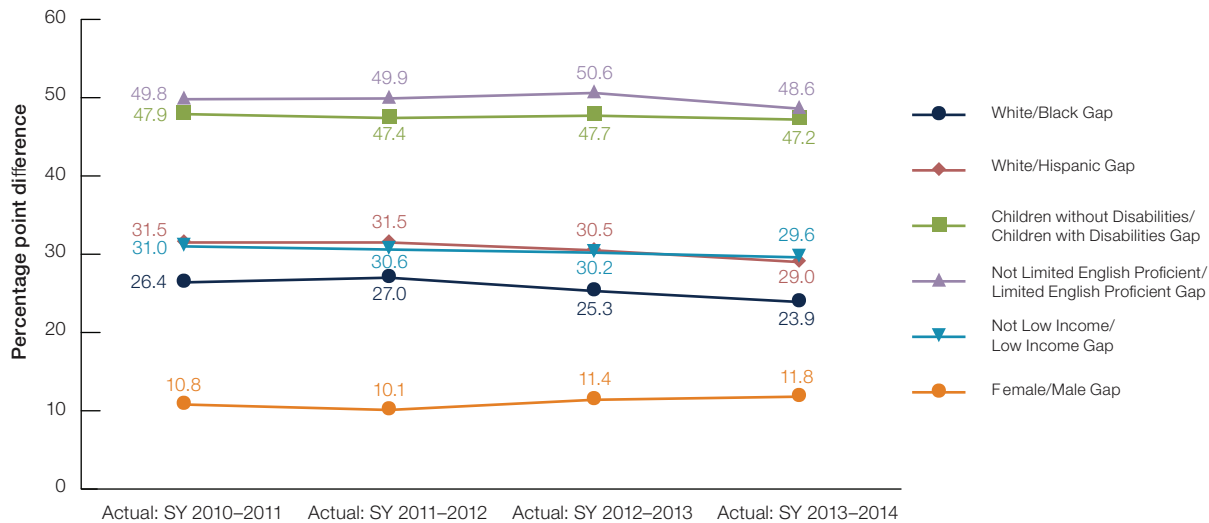
NOTE: Over the last four years, a number of States adopted new assessments and/or cut scores.

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

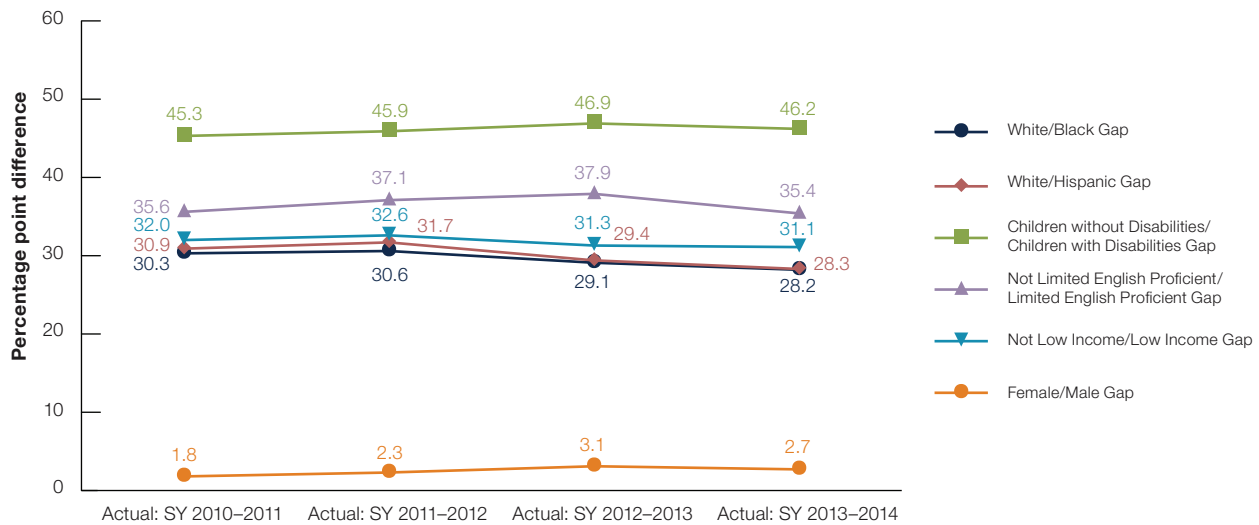
# State Success Factors

Achievement gaps on ELA assessments in multiple sub-groups decreased slightly from SY 2010-2011 through SY 2013-2014, including the White/Black gap. Achievement gaps on mathematics assessments remained about the same from SY 2010-2011 to SY 2013-2014 for most sub-groups. However, the achievement gaps on mathematics assessments for the White/Black and White/Hispanic sub-groups decreased notably during this time period.

Achievement gap on Massachusetts' ELA assessment



Achievement gap on Massachusetts' mathematics assessment



Preliminary SY 2013-2014 data reported as of: November 10, 2014.

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

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

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

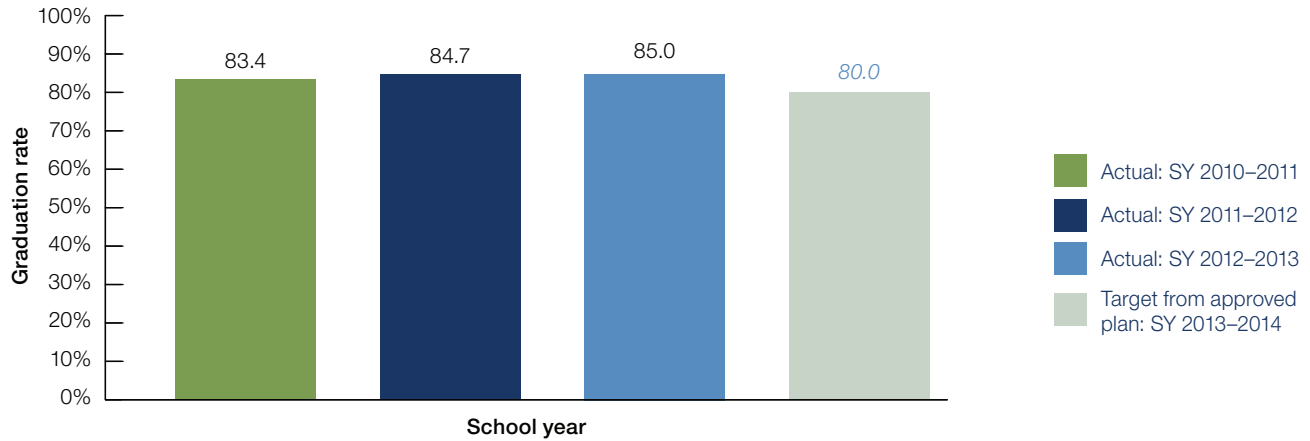
NOTE: Over the last four years, a number of States adopted new assessments and/or cut scores.

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

# State Success Factors

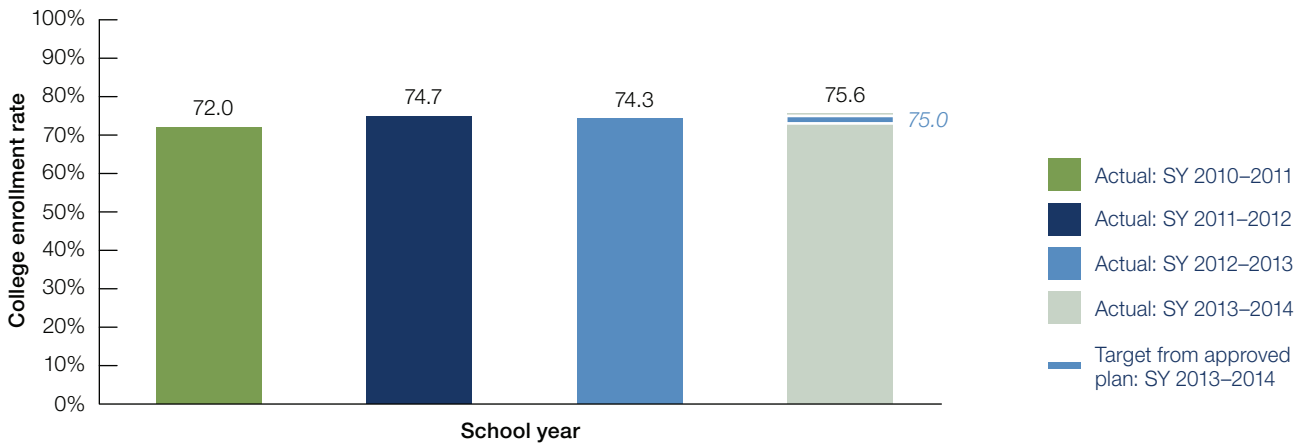
The high school graduation rate in Massachusetts increased slightly each year from SY 2010-2011 to SY 2012-2013. Massachusetts' college enrollment rate increased from 72.0 in SY 2010-2011 to 75.6 percent in SY 2013-2014, exceeding the State's target of 75 percent.

## High school graduation rate



Preliminary SY 2012-2013 data reported as of: September 15, 2014.  
For State-reported context, please refer to the Race to the Top APR at [www.rtt-apr.us](http://www.rtt-apr.us).

## College enrollment rate



Preliminary SY 2013-2014 data reported as of: September 10, 2014.  
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).  
For State-reported context, please refer to the Race to the Top APR at [www.rtt-apr.us](http://www.rtt-apr.us).

# Standards and Assessments

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

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

### Adopting standards and developing assessments

The BESE unanimously voted to adopt the CCSS in ELA and mathematics in July 2010. In SY 2012-2013, the State fully implemented the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts and the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for Mathematics, which include the CCSS and some State-specific standards.<sup>11</sup>

During Year 4, Massachusetts continued its participation in the PARCC consortium to develop assessments. ESE staff participated in working groups and project management teams for item development and assessment administration contracts. Having piloted the Technology Readiness Tool in Year 3, the State continued to familiarize LEAs and educators with the PARCC assessments in Year 4. Throughout Year 4, the State continued to leverage the Educator Leader Cadre to speak with a variety of stakeholders about the new standards and assessments. These stakeholders included professional associations, schools, districts, and college campuses. In addition, the State made available multiple communication resources to support local efforts to help parents, students, and other audiences to understand the standards and assessments.<sup>12</sup> In spring 2014, approximately 81,000 students across over 1,000 schools and over 340 LEAs participated in pilots of the PARCC performance-based assessment and end-of-year assessments.

The SY 2013-2014 State assessment tested students on the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for the second year. In November 2013, the BESE endorsed a two-year transition plan to the PARCC assessments. Rather than implement PARCC statewide in spring 2015, Massachusetts LEAs can choose to administer either PARCC or the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) in SY 2014-2015. Administering two assessments is a violation of section 1111(b)(3)(C)(i) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which requires States to administer the same assessments to all students to ensure that the learning progress of all students is being measured against the same expectations. Massachusetts will provide the Department with a detailed plan and timeline on how the State plans to administer one assessment to all students by SY 2015-2016. The State reported that the two-year transition plan will allow educators to refund standards implementation and become familiar with online test administration procedures before statewide implementation. The BESE determined it

<sup>11</sup> States that adopt the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are permitted to augment the CCSS with up to 15 percent of additional content.

<sup>12</sup> See <http://www.doe.mass.edu/parcc/> for more information.

would revisit the plan in fall 2015 to determine whether to implement PARCC statewide in spring 2016. Massachusetts intends to remain a member of the PARCC consortium during the transition period.

Throughout Year 4 ESE staff participated in the RSN's Transitions Workgroup, which was designed to support States in navigating the transition to college- and career-ready standards-aligned classroom instruction using new college- and career-ready standards, assessments, and evaluations.

### Supporting college- and career-readiness

Throughout Year 4 Massachusetts continued to support initiatives that promote college- and career-readiness for groups of educators and students. Though the State's pre-Advanced Placement training did not occur during SY 2013-2014, as planned, due to a vendor issue, the State reached 445 middle- and early-high school teachers in summer 2014. The pre-Advanced Placement trainings for teachers continued to be rated highly by participants and increased student access to Advanced Placement coursework beginning in middle school grades. In addition, the State and LEAs held students to high expectations by promoting MassCore as the recommended high school course of study. In its application, the State committed to make MassCore the required high school course of study for all high school graduates statewide. However, historically, graduation requirements have been determined locally and the State believes that this autonomy helps LEAs set requirements that meet the unique needs of each LEA. As a result, the State adjusted this commitment to instead encourage LEA adoption of MassCore through technical assistance and professional development.<sup>13</sup> The State reported that the percentage of high school graduates that complete the MassCore course of study increased from 50 percent in SY 2009-2010 to nearly 70 percent in SY 2012-2013. The analysis indicated that 81 percent of graduates in Level 1 schools complete MassCore, 77.8 percent of graduates among Level 2 schools completed MassCore, and 41.2 percent of graduates among Level 3 and 4 schools completed MassCore.<sup>14</sup> In addition, from 2010 to 2015 MassCore requirements across all high schools increased from 11.4 percent to 25.1 percent. The State plans to incorporate these findings in its work with LEA leaders during regional college- and career-readiness sessions where district leaders will develop plans to support and track student course-taking behaviors.

In Year 4 Massachusetts continued to support the State's 46 Innovation Schools implementing innovative school models. Serving 17,000 students in the State, these in-district, charter-like schools operate with greater autonomy around curriculum, staffing, budget, schedule and calendar, professional development,

<sup>13</sup> See amendment letter dated June 26, 2014, at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/amendments/massachusetts-20.pdf>.

<sup>14</sup> Massachusetts' system of accountability places schools and districts on a five level scale, ranking the highest performing in Level 1 and the lowest performing in Level 5. See <http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/general/>.

# Standards and Assessments

and policies. Also in Year 4, 37 LEAs continued participation in the Massachusetts Model for Comprehensive School Counseling project. The model provided a range of planning, professional development, and convening opportunities to counselors in participating LEAs during SY 2013-2014.

## Assessments

In Year 4 the State made available online formative and interim assessment items to support educators in implementing the standards transition in their classrooms. Through Edwin Teaching and Learning educators can access the item bank to develop their own formative and interim assessments. In addition, educators can opt to have their formative assessments reviewed for inclusion in the statewide bank. The State also continued to tag and include assessment items in the statewide bank. As of spring 2014, the State reported that the system included 7,000 ELA, mathematics, and science items tagged by standard. In collaboration with other States, Massachusetts is working to obtain a perpetual license for up to 8,000 items to be included in Edwin Teaching and Learning. For more information on the Edwin Teaching and Learning system, please see *Data Systems to Support Instruction*.

Building off work begun in Year 3, the State continued to create Massachusetts Performance Assessments of Knowledge and Skills (performance assessments), which are large-scale curriculum-embedded assessments. During SY 2013-2014 ESE established a council composed of educators who reviewed and provided feedback on State-developed performance assessments. In spring 2014 the State selected performance assessments to pilot in fall 2014 in the following grades and subjects: grade two ELA, grade two mathematics, grade four history/social studies, and grade seven history/social studies.

## Dissemination of resources and professional development

In Year 4 the State greatly expanded the number and type of resources available to educators for implementing new standards and assessments. Approximately 100 educators collaborated in fall 2013 to continue the model curriculum unit development, which resulted in 90 model units that are either in development, being finalized, or being piloted in classrooms. These model curricula cover 95 percent of grades and core academic subjects, exceeding the State's goal. Educators used a rubric to ensure alignment and quality of each curriculum unit. All units include lesson plans, digital resources, and curriculum-embedded performance assessments. Ten units are available to educators through Edwin Teaching and Learning, and the State reported it will also make them available on the ESE website.

The State also completed and released drafts of 13 of 21 planned curriculum maps, which outline how the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks can be taught over the course of an academic year. The State reported that it completed all 21 curriculum maps by September 2014. In addition, the State is developing resources to support LEAs in developing their own curriculum maps. Mapping functionality is available in the Edwin Teaching and Learning system.

In addition to the resources described above, the State worked to build a digital library within Edwin Teaching and Learning to provide educators with high-quality standards-aligned instructional resources, including lesson plans, essays, video, audio, and images. As of October 2014, the digital library included thousands of instructional resources in mathematics, ELA, science, social studies, arts, health and physical education, and world languages for pre-K through postsecondary. In addition, the State continued to work with WGBH, the State's public television station, to identify, revise, or create resources, tag content, and identify appropriate resources to pair with the above-described curriculum units. The WGBH videos capture educators engaged in and reflecting on model curriculum development.

## Successes and challenges

During Year 4 Massachusetts made progress in developing a range of resources to support educators in the standards and assessments transition. Educators have access to 90 model curriculum units, curriculum embedded performance assessments, thousands of tagged digital resources, and thousands of interim and formative assessment items. Students also have opportunities to meet college- and career-ready expectations with increasingly rigorous high school courses of study and flexible models in Innovation Schools.

State evaluation findings indicated that standards implementation was mixed in SY 2013-2014. In winter 2014, LEAs reported being in various stages of creating implementation plans for the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. In addition, elementary and middle school teachers were more likely than high school teachers to report having aligned instructional practice to the new standards. While the State has made a number of resources available, it was unclear whether they were being widely used as intended at the local level. Challenges with accessing the Edwin Teaching and Learning system may have impacted educators' ability to use State-developed resources during the transition period. As a result, it will be important for the State to respond to issues raised in the standards implementation survey. In addition, given the investment in the Edwin Teaching and Learning system and its potential to support educator practice it will be important for the State to assess implementation to ensure the system is used to inform instruction.

# Data Systems to Support Instruction

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

## Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system

Massachusetts' Year 4 data system work centered on the Edwin system, composed of Edwin Analytics and Edwin Teaching and Learning, and the Schools Interoperability Framework, the technology infrastructure to exchange data in real-time. In Year 4 the State made progress in adding reports to Edwin Analytics, including resources in Edwin Teaching and Learning, and supporting LEAs in implementing the Schools Interoperability Framework.

The Schools Interoperability Framework allows local student information systems to share data with State systems in real time and enables educator access to the Edwin Teaching and Learning platform. Educators in a district cannot access the benefits of Edwin Teaching and Learning until their LEA's data systems comply with the interoperability framework. Once implemented, the Schools Interoperability Framework reduces reporting burden on LEAs by connecting local student information systems to State-level systems making updates in real-time (e.g., daily) through automated data pushes. State systems can then securely draw relevant data into multiple other systems, for example to report student outcomes and attendance or to link teachers to data within Edwin Analytics. Without the interoperability framework, LEAs must format data from their student information systems and send files to ESE during defined periods of time.

After significant vendor challenges in Years 2 and 3, the State determined a sustainable solution for Year 4 implementation and further supported Race to the Top participating LEAs to complete the interoperability framework. In SY 2013-2014, the State made progress onboarding more LEAs and these LEAs were able to transmit data via the Schools Interoperability Framework. However, the project continued to be delayed due to local student information system vendor certification delays, vendor delays in connecting to the interoperability framework, and LEA capacity challenges. The State reported that 60 percent of Race to the Top participating LEAs were enabled and could transmit data by the end of Year 4, and 108, or about 46 percent, certified their data via the Schools Interoperability Framework. This fell short of the State's Year 3 goal of having all participating LEAs transmit data through the interoperable framework by Year 4. The State reported that State-level technology issues have been resolved and that it completed certification protocols with all

student information system vendors in the State. Going forward, increasing the scale of compliance will depend on ESE coordinating and communicating with LEAs and LEAs working with their student information system vendors. The Department approved the State's request to support statewide Schools Interoperability Framework implementation, including LEAs not participating in Race to the Top, during SY 2014-2015.

Throughout Year 4, Massachusetts developed and released new functionality to the Edwin Analytics system to expand educator access to multiple kinds of data.<sup>15</sup> Edwin Analytics remains the State's main tool for reporting and analyzing historic longitudinal student data from pre-kindergarten through postsecondary education programs. In Year 4 the State reported that the Early Warning Indicator System (EWIS) was the most frequently used report. EWIS reports identify student in grades 1-12 who may be at risk of missing critical educational targets (e.g., graduating from high school). As of June 2014, the State added reports on district finance data that provide information on local-level expenditures on program and budget items to support local capacity to evaluate investments and budgets. In addition, the State added functionality to release data to educator preparation programs to inform their Preparation Program Profiles (see *Great Teachers and Leaders* for more detail).

The State reported that investments in Edwin Analytics' system performance have reduced the occurrence of errors and increased usage. In May 2014, Massachusetts reported a 90 percent increase in the number of reports run without performance issues. As of April 2014, 62,000 more reports had been generated in the first few months of 2014 than had been generated in all of 2013. Finally, the average number of users during SY 2013-2014 was higher than in SY 2012-2013.

During Year 4, Massachusetts also made progress in releasing and expanding use of the Edwin Teaching and Learning system, including many of the curriculum materials, instructional resources, and formative assessment items described in *Standards and Assessments*. However, widespread use was limited due to delays with implementing the Schools Interoperability Framework (see above). Educators are able to add items if they access resources through Edwin Teaching and Learning. In addition, educators can create, score, and report interim assessment results, which provide shorter cycle information about student progress in meeting standards.

<sup>15</sup> Edwin Analytics was formerly known as the Educator Data Warehouse.

# Data Systems to Support Instruction

## Accessing and using State data

As described above, the State makes resources related to the standards and assessments transition available through the Edwin Teaching and Learning system. Having jointly procured the system with Ohio in December 2012 and piloted it with 34 LEAs in spring 2013, the State released Edwin Teaching and Learning to all participating LEAs in SY 2013-2014. Though the State planned to release full system functionality at the start of the school year, the State reported that only 80 percent of the system's functionality was available. However, all planned functionality was available to LEAs by the start of SY 2014-2015. Use of the system in SY 2013-2014 was slower than expected because of vendor delays and LEA-level capacity challenges with implementing the interoperability framework, which is required prior to educator access. At the start of SY 2013-2014, 166 Race to the Top participating LEAs committed to use the system, but just 82 LEAs were compliant with the interoperability framework and able to fully utilize the system as of June 2014. Some LEAs are phasing in implementation of the components of the Edwin platform with teachers over multiple school years.

To expand awareness of the resources available in Edwin Teaching and Learning, the State held "roadshow" events during fall 2013. At these events, ESE staff introduced features of the system and educators engaged with the system through hands-on demonstrations. Over 1,000 educators participated in the sessions. In addition, curriculum mapping training included demonstrations of how to use mapping tools in Edwin Teaching and Learning. The State also posted three Edwin Analytics videos to support teachers in creating reports and dashboards of student-, classroom-, and school-level data that can inform instructional decision-making.

## Using data to improve instruction

In Year 4, DSAC data specialists served 56 Level 3 and 4 LEAs across the State with training and support on effective data practices. For example, DSAC data specialists supported LEAs in developing district- or school-level structures, like data teams, to analyze and share data; using data to identify areas for school and district improvement planning; improving classroom instruction based on data; and, using data as part of a continuous cycle of improvement.

The State worked with a vendor to develop online professional development courses to support educator use of data to inform instruction, but encountered challenges and ongoing delays. In Year 3, the State identified a vendor to develop four courses, totaling 65 hours, for educators and school and district administrators. The

State and vendor developed two courses, Foundations in Data Literacy and Assessment Literacy, but only piloted one course. During Year 4, the State reported challenges with the quality of the vendor's "Data in Action" deliverables and concerns about whether educators would engage with the courses. As a result, during summer 2014, the State developed a different approach to supporting educator use of data through SY 2014-2015. The State plans to procure a vendor to develop online modules within existing State data systems to assist educators in using reports and dashboards to inform instruction. In addition, the State plans to provide professional development on effective data use for a group of schools that do not have DSAC supports.

## Successes and challenges

In Year 4, Massachusetts' data system work made progress but challenges remain. The State resolved some of the Schools Interoperability Framework implementation barriers and expanded the functionality in Edwin Analytics. Usage of Edwin Analytics appears to be increasing and providing LEA and school leaders with important historic student data. A variety of curriculum, instructional, and assessment materials are available to educators through the Edwin Teaching and Learning system, but use of this system depends on whether the LEA is compliant with the interoperability framework. With 108 LEAs, or 45 percent, of participating LEAs able to transmit data via the interoperability framework by the end of Year 4, the State will have to increase supports in fall 2014 to ensure educators can use the resources and access real-time data in Edwin Teaching and Learning and Edwin Analytics.

DSAC data specialists continued to provide valuable supports to Level 3 and 4 LEAs in the State. Preliminary evaluation findings indicated that DSAC supports helped educators to analyze data, establish goals, and use assessment data to adjust instructional practice to better meet student needs. Since Year 2, 9,700 educators have participated in DSAC training and another 2,000 have been trained on using the EWIS. District and school leaders also indicated that they saw more evidence of teachers using data to inform curriculum and instructional practices, for example, by observing differentiated instruction, re-teaching, or identifying interventions. The State's efforts to provide additional professional development on effective data use through the "Data in Action" initiative remained delayed in Year 4 and the State began to plan an alternative approach for SY 2014-2015. While the State successfully released foundational data systems and provided training through DSACs and on the EWIS, more training on effective use of that data is still needed.

# 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

### Educator evaluation

In Year 4, Massachusetts built upon its work in Years 1 through 3 to introduce each component of the new evaluation systems being implemented in all LEAs. About 25 percent of Massachusetts LEAs adopted the Massachusetts Model System for Educator Evaluation and the rest adapted the State model to meet local needs while still complying with State regulations. Every evaluation system will ultimately result in a Summative Performance rating based on classroom observations and a Student Impact Rating based on MCAS student growth percentiles and/or district-determined measures.<sup>16</sup> There are four possible Summative Performance Ratings: exemplary, proficient, needs improvement, or unsatisfactory; there are three possible Student Impact Ratings: high, moderate, or low. Although Massachusetts initially expected all Race to the Top participating LEAs to fully implement all components of their educator evaluation systems in Year 3, ESE deferred implementation of the Student Impact Rating based on stakeholder feedback.

During SY 2013-2014, Race to the Top participating LEAs implemented local evaluation systems with all educators and the remaining LEAs implemented their locally adopted evaluation system with at least 50 percent of educators. Educators implemented district-determined measures and received MCAS student growth percentile data, but did not receive the formal Student Impact Rating described above. The State reported that nearly a third of LEAs planned to pilot more than the required five district-determined measures of student

learning, indicating their commitment to practice and refine this component of the evaluation system.<sup>17</sup>

The State released additional guidance documents and trainings to support statewide implementation of evaluation systems in SY 2013-2014. Many of these supports were developed in response to feedback from preliminary findings of the State's independent evaluator, conducted in fall 2012. In particular, ESE tailored new supports to meet a need for evaluation systems to integrate with other reform initiatives and a need for more training and guidance on goal-setting and evidence collection. The State released new or updated "Quick Reference Guide" documents for educators on educator evaluation and its intersection with professional development and with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. In addition, in fall 2013, ESE released guidance on how to use current assessments in district-determined measures to measure student growth that included using model curriculum units with curriculum-embedded performance assessments. In fall 2013, the State awarded Professional Practice Innovation grants to six LEAs to support local efforts to integrate evaluation implementation. For example, one group of LEAs worked together to develop Common Course Objectives and accompanying assessments using science, physical education, art, and music curriculum frameworks. These Common Course Objectives will be used for district-determined measures. In another LEA, educators created a series of videos of effective practices, including creation and refinement of standards-based lessons, high-quality instruction of those lessons, and educator observation and feedback. The State also released a SMART goal development tool to support educator development of goal statements.<sup>18</sup> Other training modules and guidance documents released by the State in previous grant years continue to be available on ESE's website.

In addition to the supports described above, ESE provided other opportunities for LEAs to improve their practice in implementing new evaluation systems. The State made educator evaluation implementation surveys available to LEAs for teachers and principals/administrators. Administering these surveys is optional for LEAs and ESE does not collect survey data. In addition, ESE supported three

<sup>16</sup> A Rating of Impact on Student Learning is based on trends and patterns in student learning, growth, and achievement. In order for a Rating of Impact on Student Learning to be given, educators must have two years of data from at least two State or district-wide growth measures. State regulations require that Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) student growth percentiles be used as one measure where available (*i.e.*, for teachers of tested grades and subjects). For those educators for whom MCAS student growth percentiles are not available, LEAs must develop district-determined measures to serve as measures of growth. According to the State, district-determined measures are measures of student learning, growth, and achievement related to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, Massachusetts Vocational Technical Education Frameworks, or other relevant frameworks, that are comparable across grade or subject levels district-wide. These measures may include, but shall not be limited to: portfolios, approved commercial assessments and district-developed pre- and post-unit and course assessments, and capstone projects. On the basis of these data, educators receive a low, moderate, or high Rating of Impact on Student Learning.

<sup>17</sup> The State reported that 96 percent of LEAs submitted these plans to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE); 32 percent of submitted plans exceeded the State's minimum requirement for school year (SY) 2013-2014 implementation.

<sup>18</sup> SMART goals are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely goals.



# Great Teachers and Leaders

LEAs through educator evaluation technology innovation grants to explore ways of enhancing evaluation implementation through the use of technology applications. Lastly, the 2014 Educator Evaluation Spring Convening reached over 1,000 educators from over 270 districts and provided an opportunity for educators to share best practices and plan for SY 2014-2015 implementation.

The State, in collaboration with the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, continued its support of the New Superintendent Induction Program in Year 4. The three-year program is designed to increase superintendent effectiveness and improve leadership abilities. As of May 2014, 11 new superintendents participated in the program in addition to the 68 already participating. In a July 2014 evaluation report, participating superintendents reported that the program had changed their thinking about their role and that they spent most of their time focused on instructional improvement activities. Due to the success of the program, the State and the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents recruited a fifth cohort to begin the program in SY 2014-2015.

Throughout Year 4, Massachusetts participated in RSN convenings and webinars with colleagues in other Race to the Top States related to evaluation system implementation. In particular, Massachusetts participated in a convening on improving the accuracy and efficacy of evaluation systems in which States worked to identify patterns, outliers, and concerns from available effectiveness data and then develop an action plan to address issues. In addition, the RSN supported Massachusetts in identifying best practices from other States engaged in work similar to the State's district-determined measures work.

## Human capital management

In Year 4, Massachusetts made progress in developing performance assessments that align to new educator preparation and licensure standards passed in December 2011, in addition to other human resources efforts. During SY 2013-2014, 120 principal candidates piloted the Massachusetts Performance Assessment for Leaders (MA-PAL), which is intended to assess candidates for principal licensure based on leadership knowledge and skills. MA-PAL is composed of four performance assessment tasks designed to authentically reflect work of school leaders. Candidates in the pilot provided feedback on their experience with two performance tasks and trained scorers provided feedback on their experience using rubrics to evaluate the tasks. An analysis of task outcomes, feedback, and content informed task revisions and the field test planned for SY 2014-2015. All principal candidates will participate in the field test and the State will analyze outcomes to ensure the assessment meets its purpose.

Following delays earlier in the grant period, Massachusetts also made progress developing a teacher leader performance assessment in Year 4. Throughout SY 2013-2014, Massachusetts worked with

## Massachusetts Performance Assessment for Leaders (MA-PAL)

During SY 2013-2014 Massachusetts field tested a new leader licensure assessment rooted in the following four performance tasks:

Task 1 – Leadership through a vision for high student achievement

Task 2 – Instructional leadership for a professional learning culture

Task 3 – Leadership in observing, assessing, and supporting individual teacher effectiveness

Task 4 – Leadership for family engagement and community involvement

Candidates demonstrate their success in these tasks by developing a data-driven school vision and improvement plan, working with small groups of teachers, completing a teacher observation cycle, and developing a family engagement proposal. For more information, visit <http://ma-pal.com/>.

other States through a Council of Chief State School Officers grant to conduct research and develop recommendations around whether to adopt, adapt, or build a teacher performance assessment.<sup>19</sup> The group met six times throughout the year and developed five areas of recommendations for a fall 2015 pilot: development of a comprehensive assessment system, observation protocol, student feedback surveys, portfolios, and simulations. Based on the recommendations and the Commissioner's decision, the State intends to revise its teacher licensure policies and implement a teacher licensure performance assessment in fall 2015. In addition, Massachusetts began to execute against a revised approach related to teacher career ladder endorsements. The State worked with two LEAs (Springfield and Lawrence) to document and analyze their locally developed career ladder differentiation initiatives. A policy brief currently in development will be distributed to LEAs to share lessons learned from these initiatives. The State plans to provide technical assistance to LEAs interested in developing local career ladder initiatives for teachers.

Following the human resources pilot program in Years 2 and 3 of the grant period, the State developed a toolkit with promising practices and exemplars from 30 LEAs. The toolkit includes materials used to implement the practices and self-reported descriptions of the practice from LEA leaders. The State is working with its technical assistance partner to evaluate the experience of the three urban LEAs that participated in the pilot program. It is unclear whether the State will provide additional supports to LEAs to improve their human resources practices, as was planned.

<sup>19</sup> The purpose of this grant is to allow for States to work together to influence the development of innovative licensure performance assessments that are aligned to the revised licensure standards and include multiple measures of educators' ability to perform, including the potential to impact student achievement and growth.

# Great Teachers and Leaders

## Ensuring equitable access to effective teachers and principals

The State's work to increase equitable access to effective educators drew upon various strategies to meet educator training and development needs once in the classroom. These strategies included a survey of teacher feedback on educational issues, a recruitment portal, mentorship programs, and certification programs.

In Year 4, the State drew upon various data sources related to educator performance and perceptions to inform State and district planning of human capital practices. Following SY 2013-2014, 91 percent of participating LEAs submitted educator ratings on the Summative Performance Rating component. This data will inform ESE's monitoring of the distribution of effective educators. In addition, the State administered the Teaching, Empowering, Leading, and Learning in Massachusetts (TELL Mass) survey for the second year and reached approximately 48 percent of educators statewide. The survey provided educator feedback on educational issues such as school facilities and resources, community engagement and support, and instructional resources. The State reported that LEAs used this data to inform professional development planning and set school goals. In comparing 2012 results with 2014 results, Massachusetts educators reported the greatest increase in positive perception on items related to community support and involvement.

In Year 4 the State worked to publicize the aMAzing Teachers website and increase its usage following its summer 2013 release.<sup>20</sup> The website provides information about teacher and leader licensure requirements, teaching opportunities in low-performing schools, educator preparation programs, and job opportunities. Job candidates can search and apply for jobs, and recruiters can post positions, search among candidates, and determine if they hold valid licenses. The State reported that the website has experienced a steady increase in usage in areas such as the number of job postings.

The State continued to expand the supply of highly-effective teachers and leaders through mentoring, leadership, and training programs. By the end of SY 2013-2014, 206 mentors from the first two cohorts of Project SUCCESS completed their training and another 206 mentors were participating in the third cohort. Project SUCCESS helps high-need school districts retain new teachers by improving teacher performance through training on best practices. Participants engage in a nine-month mentoring program with leadership sessions and online course modules and go on to become mentor-leaders to provide training to future cohorts. Massachusetts plans to make all resources available on its website for LEAs to use for their own programs. The State also continued to provide a subsidy to educators in high-need schools to obtain National Board certification, with 76 educators achieving certification in Year 4. The subsidy more than doubled the number of educators pursuing certification, with just 42 candidates applying in SY 2013-2014 and about 30 teachers expected to become certified. Massachusetts is unlikely to reach its target of

200 educators in high-need schools obtaining certification by the end of the grant period. The State also continued its partnership with the National Institute for School Leaders with over 730 participants completing the district leadership program during the grant period. The training in this program focuses on research-based principles of learning, teaching, and curriculum and building capacity to turn learning theory into practice.

A major component of the State's approach to equity has been supporting teachers with Sheltered English Immersion training to ensure the academic success of English learner students, the fastest growing group of students in the State. ESE operates a waiver program that allowed educators to complete licensure requirements for teaching English learners while working in a K-12 school. However, new regulations adopted in 2012 require all core academic teachers to obtain a Sheltered English Immersion license, resulting in fewer teachers applying for waivers in 2013. To better support core academic teachers with English learner students in light of the new requirements, the State changed its approach. During Year 4 the State determined that online professional learning networks were not an effective strategy for providing Sheltered English Immersion collaboration opportunities. Rather than use professional learning networks, the State is developing videos and other virtual simulations to train up to 9,000 teachers, including those who do not currently have English learners in their classrooms but may in the future. The State will also invest in developing a technology platform to disseminate the courses more widely; this platform will eventually house a variety of professional development courses. These courses are in addition to ongoing efforts to develop curriculum to support teachers teaching English learners, courses for literacy and mathematics coaches on instructional strategies, and training for teachers that support core academic teachers using Sheltered English Immersion strategies. The State's work to develop supports for these teachers will continue into the no-cost extension period.

The State also continued to track LEAs with teachers seeking licensure to teach students with disabilities and reported that LEAs met their targets to varying degrees. As of spring 2014, 46 teachers were enrolled in courses that will lead to licensure.

## Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs

The BESE approved revised program approval regulations in June 2012 following a development and revisions process in which stakeholders provided feedback and input. In Year 4, Massachusetts made some progress in implementing new educator preparation program approval standards but remains delayed in this area. Having completed the information technology infrastructure work in Year 3, the State collected data from preparation programs for the first time in summer 2013. The State released Preparation Program Profiles, which include publicly available data about candidate enrollment, program completion, and licensure exam pass rates. In December 2013, the

<sup>20</sup> For more information, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/amazingeducators>.

# Great Teachers and Leaders

State added employment and retention data to the Profiles. The State updated the data elements for each program profile with additional candidate cohort data in summer 2014 and will continue to build connections between data sets to add data elements to the profiles in Year 5. The State did not include measures of student growth in the Profiles, as planned, and decided not to do so until those data elements are better understood by stakeholders.

Massachusetts continued to provide technical assistance and outreach to preparation programs regarding the revised regulations through individual meetings, conferences, and a quarterly newsletter. The State published revised “Guidelines for Program Approval” in July 2013 and made progress in Year 4 to develop new aspects of the educator preparation program approval process. The guidelines are based on revised regulations, passed in June 2012, that shifted the program approval process to be outcome- and evidence-based, expanded data to report to the State, and included the publication of an annual report with data from each program. The State piloted some elements of the regulations with programs during the SY 2013-2014 review cycle, but found more time is needed to implement and review new approaches. ESE will continue this work into Year 5 with plans to complete 17 program reviews by June 2015.

Massachusetts continued to support two teacher preparation program awardees that graduated 39 candidates in SY 2013-2014. In addition, after not receiving principal preparation program applications that met the State’s requirements for funding, in Year 4 the State identified three principal programs for funding. These programs will begin implementation in Year 5.

## Providing effective support to teachers and principals

The State’s work in this area centered on developing standards for high-quality professional development to ensure that Massachusetts educators have professional learning experiences that improve teacher practice and student outcomes. Having finalized the Massachusetts Standards for Professional Development in 2012, the State worked in Year 4 to create resources and materials to support local implementation of the standards.<sup>21</sup> The Professional Development Evaluation Toolkit and District and School Professional Development Planning Guide serve as the two main resources and will be released in Year 5 after a taskforce of educators contributes revisions. The State plans to provide training on using the Evaluation Toolkit and Planning Guide throughout SY 2014-2015, nearly two years later than planned. Also in Year 4, a cross-unit team in ESE developed recommendations for revising current professional development policies and guidelines and began revising the preferred provider application. The State is delayed in publishing a provider list, which was planned for SY 2012-2013, but plans to begin approving providers in fall 2014.

<sup>21</sup> For more detail, visit <http://www.doe.mass.edu/pd/standards.html>.

In March 2014, ESE reviewed its professional development offerings using an assessment tool that analyzes alignment to the Massachusetts Standards for Professional Development and the State educator evaluation framework. Initial reports from the review indicated that about half of ESE offerings align to all of the standards for professional development and that additional awareness among developers was needed about expectations for using the standards.

During SY 2013-2014, a second cohort of over 400 participants from 20 districts participated in professional learning communities (PLCs) intended to drive instructional improvement and increase student learning and achievement. The State held two-day Summer Institutes in 2013, followed by three days of training during the school year. DSAC staff members also participated in the trainings to support LEAs and schools to establish and maintain strong PLCs. In order to support this work going forward, the State is developing a PLC website which will include resources such as case studies, modules, and other guidance documents.

## Successes and challenges

Massachusetts made progress across its *Great Teachers and Leaders* plans in Year 4. In particular, all Massachusetts LEAs implemented aspects of the evaluation system that resulted in Summative Performance Ratings and piloted district-determined measures to varying degrees. The State successfully provided a wealth of resources to support local implementation at each stage of the evaluation cycle. In addition, the State integrated evaluation system guidance with other reform efforts, such as the standards transition. The State has not yet provided Student Impact Ratings to educators, but districts made progress in piloting district-determined measures of student learning for all educators. Although the State has supported local implementation, it was unclear how the State would gather lessons and challenges from SY 2013-2014 implementation to inform differentiated supports in the future. This is critical to inform additional educator supports to implement the evaluation system consistently and rigorously.

Many of the State’s projects related to equitable access to teachers continued to be on track in SY 2013-2014, though the State missed their program completion targets by the end of the four-year grant period. The TELL survey provided valuable information about school climate, the aMAzing website increased local access to a diversity of teacher candidates, and Sheltered English Immersion training supported teachers with English Learner students. However, it is unclear whether, taken together, these strategies have met the goal of ensuring that students in high-minority, high-poverty schools have access to effective teachers and leaders.

The State’s Preparation Program Profiles continue to reflect new data elements and more cohorts, bringing transparency to the public on educator preparation program performance. The State learned of the importance of stakeholder awareness and involvement as it considered other data elements. In Year 4, the State also made progress towards implementing new program approval processes that focus on

# Great Teachers and Leaders

outcomes and evidence and in supporting new teacher and principal preparation programs.

Lastly, the State successfully finalized toolkits and planning guides to support local implementation of new professional development standards. Given local efforts to implement reform initiatives like new

evaluation systems and standards, this guidance may be particularly timely in supporting local efforts to be thoughtful about professional development investments and plans. However, because of delays it will be critical that ESE support local use of these resources.

## 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.

### Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools

#### Implementing intervention models

In SY 2013-2014, Massachusetts continued identifying the lowest-performing schools, working with them to implement intervention models, and assessing their progress.<sup>22</sup> Many schools demonstrated student achievement progress resulting in moving from lower-performing statuses to higher-performing statuses. Across SYs 2011-2012, 2012-2013, and 2013-2014, Massachusetts identified 54 Level 4 schools. As of fall 2013, the 35 schools identified in 2010 had been implementing intervention models for three school years. Of these schools, 40 percent exited status, 43 percent remained in status, 11 percent were designated as Level 5 schools, and 6 percent closed. The State reported that all 14 schools that exited status met 80 percent or more of their annual benchmarks and had conditions in place for school effectiveness that led ESE to believe the schools no longer needed intensive support and interventions. However, because these schools are in Level 4 districts they will continue to receive support and monitoring.<sup>23</sup> For newly identified Level 5 schools, SY 2013-2014 served primarily as a planning year as the State worked to assign receivers, develop school improvement plans, and communicate with stakeholder groups.

<sup>22</sup> ESE identifies persistently lowest-achieving (PLA) schools based on the State's accountability rating system. ESE selects Level 4 schools from among the lowest-performing 20 percent of schools in the State based on student achievement and growth in English language arts (ELA), mathematics, and science, as well as graduation and dropout rates for high schools. Schools that demonstrate the least improvement receive the Level 4 designation. In turn, Level 4 schools that fail to reach improvement benchmarks after three or more years receive Level 5 status, which triggers State governance and requires the Commissioner to convene a local stakeholder group, create a turnaround plan that will rapidly improve student achievement, direct the superintendent or an appointed receiver to implement the plan, and evaluate the school at least annually. Level 4 schools that successfully apply for School Improvement Grant funding must implement one of the four school intervention models. All schools designated as Level 4 must implement a turnaround plan, which needs to be aligned with the turnaround principles presented in the State's approved Elementary and Secondary Education Act flexibility request.

<sup>23</sup> Massachusetts districts are classified at the level of their lowest-performing school. Districts are independently eligible for Level 5 designation based on a variety of factors. For more detail, visit <http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/sss/turnaround/level5/districts/>.

In Year 4, Massachusetts continued to track the progress of Level 4 and 5 schools through site visits to identify strengths and weaknesses and provide formative feedback for leaders to identify action steps. Based on these interactions, Massachusetts focused their district supports on strengthening human resource management, project implementation, and governance practices. In these three areas the State subsidized partnerships with proven vendors to support local implementation of educator evaluation systems and share best practices. In addition, the State continued to support District Plan Managers for the six Level 4 districts that required significant support to implement their improvement plans.

The State's only Level 5 district, Lawrence, demonstrated significant progress based on SY 2012-2013 MCAS results. Since naming a receiver in January 2012, the district implemented multiple strategies to achieve positive outcomes for students. Namely, the district's mathematics scores were the highest ever recorded, a three-year decline in ELA proficiency was reversed, the number of Level 1 schools in the district doubled, and the number of schools in which student rates of growth outperformed the State average nearly tripled.

Massachusetts expanded the District Governance Support Program to 25 additional districts in Year 4. Begun in Year 2 and led by the Massachusetts Association of School Committees, the program is designed to help school committees focus on student achievement in collaboration with superintendents. Twenty-five Level 3 and 4 districts engaged with the District Governance Support Program curriculum, which includes guidance documents for superintendent and school committee roles and responsibilities, trainings on superintendent evaluations, and school committee coaching. The State reported that the Massachusetts Association of School Committees intends to continue supporting the program after the grant period.

### Promoting student achievement in low-performing schools

During Year 4, seven LEAs continued to implement their Wraparound Zone initiatives, which are intended to build school and district capacity to systematically address barriers to student learning. Started in Year 2, Wraparound Zone schools create proactive systems for

# Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

## District-led Wraparound Zones

The opportunity to implement local approaches to wraparound services over three school years revealed important successes and lessons learned in addressing students' non-academic needs. Schools implementing the initiative made progress in the areas of climate and culture with greater educator awareness, decreased discipline referrals, and improved family engagement. Implementing schools also described the importance of maintaining district-level support of school programs to ensure buy-in and sustainability. Two-thirds of the Level 4 schools that began the initiative exited Level 4 status after SY 2013-2014. Future evaluation efforts will focus on the connection between the wraparound zone initiative and academic outcomes. While implementation varied among schools and progress takes time, the wraparound zone initiative successfully provided a model for Massachusetts to consider continuing in the future at the district or State level.

identifying academic and non-academic needs, offer customized and multi-faceted interventions to at-risk students, and connect community services and organizations with students and families (e.g., health services, social workers). The State reported that LEAs have had the flexibility to implement plans tailored to their needs and that they make adjustments based on experience and lessons learned. Throughout the school year there were multiple opportunities for stakeholders to share best practices: district wraparound coordinators met three times; LEA and school leaders convened to share best practices and hear from experts; and ESE hosted content sessions on community partnership, effective family engagement, and creating a positive climate for students and staff. Each Wraparound Zone focused on sustainability in SY 2013-2014, and the State reported that each LEA has plans to maintain the personnel needed to support the Zone after the grant period.

Having previously identified and vetted 23 Priority Partners to support Level 3, 4, and 5 schools, in Year 4 the State assessed the status of partners. Priority Partners are organizations that support district and school turnaround interventions and have a proven track record of results and have demonstrated effectiveness in improving student achievement. The State annually assesses Priority Partners through progress reports that demonstrate their effectiveness in accelerating school and LEA improvement efforts as well as conversations with schools and LEAs to determine their satisfaction with services. The State reported that all Level 4 districts are working with one or more Priority Partners and have expressed high levels of satisfaction. The Network of Priority Partners, launched in December 2011, continued to convene throughout SY 2013-2014 as a venue for collaborating, coordinating, and aligning services across partners. In particular, Priority Partners worked to identify critical attributes of

partnership and created guidance for partners working with districts and schools. Finally, the State continued to track the progress of seven Investment Fund grants awarded to Priority Partners to implement initiatives in Level 3, 4, and 5 schools and LEAs. In addition to vetting Priority Partners, the State identified and pre-approved eight turnaround providers to manage low-performing schools or implement intervention models to meet the needs of students in low-performing schools.

Massachusetts continued in Year 4 to work with teacher and leader pipeline programs to recruit, train, and deploy teacher and leader teams into Level 3 and 4 schools. The State reported that the work of these teams has resulted in positive culture shifts and improved student outcomes. During Years 3 and 4 of the grant period, six candidates completed the Turnaround Leaders program for experienced leaders, were placed in Level 4 schools, and received onsite coaching supports. In the same timeframe, 10 aspiring leaders completed the Turnaround Leaders program and six were hired for leadership positions in low-performing schools beginning in SY 2014-2015. With 16 new leaders at low-performing schools, the State is short of its goal of 65 new leaders by the end of the grant period. Through the aspiring Turnaround Teacher Team initiative 56 teachers were placed in two LEAs in SY 2013-2014, and an additional 35 are planned for SY 2014-2015. The Turnaround Teacher Team initiative provided supports to teams of 6 to 15 teacher leaders in six schools in two LEAs. In one LEA the teams focused on using data to identify professional practice and team goals, and in the other LEA the teams focused on the needs of a Level 4 elementary school.

## Successes and challenges

Massachusetts' work to support the lowest-achieving schools continued to be strong in Year 4. The State's approach to identifying and planning interventions for schools and LEAs continues to center on the core conditions for teachers, leaders, and students that impact success. The student outcomes data in Level 4 schools described above indicates the success of interventions and approaches to teaching and leading. Since the start of the grant period, 18 of 34 schools identified as Level 4 schools have exited Level 4 status. Evaluations planned for Year 5 may provide additional detail on the success of the State's efforts.

Though the State fell short of its goals for the number of Turnaround Leaders, it plans to continue and expand the program in SY 2014-2015. In addition, the State has sustainability plans in place for some turnaround supports, including the Wraparound Zones and District Governance Support Program. However, given that some Level 4 schools are persisting in this status, it will be critical for the State to consider ways to continue school- and LEA-specific supports.

# 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

In SY 2013-2014 the State continued to provide technical assistance to six LEAs for planning and implementing STEM ECHS programs. Select middle and high schools partnered with local institutes of higher education to deliver a STEM-focused course of study for a group of students. Though each program varies in structure, they are all designed to target low-income, minority, and first-generation college-goers for postsecondary education and motivate them to explore STEM careers by providing flexibility to earn college credits while still in high school. School leaders engaged in networking meetings to share ideas and lessons learned, and in December 2013 they participated in a joint convening with representatives from other early college and dual enrollment programs in the State.

In SY 2013-2014, the State reported that 70 new candidates enrolled in the UTeach program at UMass-Lowell, bringing total participation

in the program to 212 candidates. Though participation is increasing, the State is not on track to meet its goal of producing 250 STEM teachers through the UTeach program by the end of the grant period. Going forward, the State reported that UMass-Lowell has plans to sustain the program through fundraising after the grant period.

## Successes and challenges

Together with other college- and career-ready initiatives for students and teachers, such as MassCore and pre-Advanced Placement training, the ECHS and UTeach programs demonstrate the State's commitment to the STEM subject areas. The State continuously improved technical assistance for ECHS sites based on early lessons learned, and provided opportunities for practitioners to share best practices. However, while the UTeach program has increased participation, few candidates have completed the course. As such, the State fell short of its goal of 250 STEM teachers by the end of the grant period.

## 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.

Massachusetts will continue multiple critical work streams into SY 2014-2015, the no-cost extension year after the initial four-year grant period. ESE will continue to support 46 of 233 Race to the Top participating LEAs that chose to develop Year 5 plans. These LEAs will leverage grant funds to support local efforts in areas such as curriculum work, technology investments, teacher trainings, and development of district-determined measures. The State plans to maintain personnel to manage the grant within ESE through SY 2014-2015. Across project areas and consistent with previous years, the State's work in Year 5 is intended to continue to provide tools and resources that are available to LEAs well beyond the grant period.

In Year 5, the State plans to continue supporting the standards transition with ongoing curriculum unit development and refinement and training on use of curriculum units and maps. In addition, ESE

intends to continue expanding its video library of Massachusetts educators demonstrating classroom best practice in teaching the new standards. The State also plans to enhance content currently in the Edwin Teaching and Learning system, including tagging items for inclusion in the interim and formative assessment bank, vetting additional locally-developed items, and providing guidance on how best to use assessment items. Going forward, the State reported that UMass-Lowell has plans to sustain the program through fundraising after the grant period.

In SY 2014-2015, ESE intends for every participating LEA to comply with the interoperability framework, which will enable educators to use the Edwin Teaching and Learning system's assessment and instructional resources. This milestone will be particularly critical given the challenges during the grant period. The State will continue

## Looking Ahead

to provide onsite technical assistance to LEAs implementing the interoperability framework and plans to be able to collect student discipline data through the interoperability framework from all LEAs. Edwin Teaching and Learning will be available to LEAs at cost after SY 2014-2015. The State plans to implement a new approach to providing educators with data-driven instruction professional development. ESE intends to work with vendors to develop system-embedded modules for educators using data available in existing State data systems, like Edwin Analytics and Edwin Teaching and Learning. In addition, the State is developing plans to support Level 3 schools in Level 4 districts in spring 2015 with job-embedded coaching and professional development on using data to support instruction. As educator access to data increases in SY 2014-2015, these supports will be critical to making that data actionable in classrooms.

Participating LEAs will be in their third year of educator evaluation system implementation in SY 2014-2015 and all other LEAs will be in their second year. ESE plans to continue providing supports to LEAs through guidance, trainings, and data collection and analysis. In addition, ESE staff intends to continue analyzing feedback from the field and evaluation data to make adjustments to implementation and plan for future supports. In Year 5, Massachusetts will pilot

and implement a principal performance assessment and a teacher leader performance assessment, making progress on its goals related to improving the State's licensure system. Also in Year 5, the State plans to provide extensive Sheltered English Immersion professional development to educators with English learner students and will continue the UTeach program at UMass-Lowell.

Schools and districts identified as low-performing will continue to work with vetted turnaround partners, provide in-person professional development programs, and draw upon teacher and leader turnaround teams during Year 5. The State will build upon successes in Wraparound Zones by hosting cross-district seminars on approaches to wraparound services and other interventions. Further, the State will refine its protocols and management tools to identify and support Level 5 schools.

The State and State partners have determined sustainability plans for some projects across the plan to ensure they continue after the four-year grant period. For example, LEAs with STEM ECHS programs are developing sustainability plans for SY 2014-2015 and UMass-Lowell has a fundraising plan to sustain their UTeach program. In addition, the State integrated sustainability into its approach to the range of supports implemented in turnaround schools and districts.

## Budget

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

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

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

# Glossary

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



# Glossary

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

**High-poverty school:** Consistent with section 1111(h)(1)(C)(viii) of the ESEA, a school in the highest quartile of schools in the State with respect to poverty level, using a measure of poverty determined by the State.

**Highly effective teacher:** A teacher whose students achieve high rates (*e.g.*, one and one-half grade levels in an academic year) of student growth (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements). States, LEAs, or schools must include multiple measures, provided that teacher effectiveness is evaluated, in significant part, by student growth (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements). Supplemental measures may include, for example, multiple observation-based assessments of teacher performance or evidence of leadership roles (which may include mentoring or leading professional learning communities) that increase the effectiveness of other teachers in the school or LEA.

**Instructional improvement systems (IIS):** Technology-based tools and other strategies that provide teachers, principals, and administrators with meaningful support and actionable data to systemically manage continuous instructional improvement, including such activities as instructional planning; gathering information (*e.g.*, through formative assessments (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements), interim assessments (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements), summative assessments, and looking at student work and other student data); analyzing information with the support of rapid-time (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements) reporting; using this information to inform decisions on appropriate next instructional steps; and evaluating the effectiveness of the actions taken. Such systems promote collaborative problem-solving and action planning; they may also integrate instructional data with student-level data such as attendance, discipline, grades, credit accumulation, and student survey results to provide early warning indicators of a student's risk of educational failure.

**Invitational priorities:** Areas of focus that the Department invited States to address in their Race to the Top applications. Applicants did not earn extra points for addressing these focus areas, but many grantees chose to create and fund activities to advance reforms in these areas.

**Involved LEAs:** LEAs that choose to work with the State to implement those specific portions of the State's plan that necessitate full or nearly-full statewide implementation, such as transitioning to a common set of K-12 standards (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements). Involved LEAs do not receive a share of the 50 percent of a State's grant award that it must subgrant to LEAs in accordance with section 14006(c) of the ARRA, but States may provide other funding to involved LEAs under the State's Race to the Top grant in a manner that is consistent with the State's application.

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

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

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

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

# Glossary

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

**Qualifying evaluation systems:** Educator evaluation systems that meet the following criteria: rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation systems for teachers and principals that: (1) differentiate effectiveness using multiple rating categories that take into account data on student growth as a significant factor, and (2) are designed and developed with teacher and principal involvement.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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