APPENDIX B

STUDY INFO SHEET

The Issue: How RTT and SIG Programs Are Implemented and How They Affect Student Outcomes	The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) provided an unprecedented level of federal funds for education in an effort to lessen the effects of the nation's economic recession and make a lasting investment in schools. The federal government used this opportunity to fund a new wave of innovation and to support comprehensive efforts to turn around the lowest achieving schools. Race to the Top (RTT) grants fund a broad array of reforms that affect all levels of the education system. Title I School Improvement Grants (SIG) support the implementation of school turnaround models in the lowest achieving schools. Both programs look to spur systemic change with the ultimate goal of improving student outcomes. Determining whether these unprecedented investments achieve their intended goals is critical. The U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences (IES) has therefore launched an evaluation of RTT and SIG programs funded under ARRA. This evaluation will collect information from states, districts, and schools to examine how RTT and SIG programs are implemented and whether they are associated with improved student outcomes.

Research Questions and Objectives	The evaluation's primary research questions are:

- How are RTT and SIG implemented at the state, district, and school levels?

- Does receipt of RTT and/or SIG funding to implement a school turnaround model have an impact on outcomes for low-performing schools?

- Are RTT reforms related to improvement in student outcomes?

- Is the implementation of school turnaround models, and strategies within those models, related to improvement in student outcomes?

Evaluation Participants and Activities	The evaluation will involve collecting and analyzing data from all 50 states and the District of Columbia, approximately 240 school districts, and approximately 1,200 schools. Evaluation activities will include:

- ***Interviews with State and District Representatives.*** Interviews will be conducted by telephone and will focus on reforms being implemented with SIG funds and around RTT's four priority areas: standards and assessments, data systems, teacher and principal effectiveness, and turnaround efforts in low-performing schools.
- ***Survey of School Administrators.*** School staff knowledgeable about RTT and SIG activities will be asked to complete surveys via the web (or by telephone, if preferred) about learning conditions and improvement strategies in their schools.
- ***Administrative Records Data.*** Data on student outcomes (such as standardized test scores and high school graduation rates) will be gathered electronically from states and districts.

Evaluation Timeline	The evaluation's interviews and surveys will be conducted in spring 2012, 2013, and 2014. Administrative data will be collected as standardized test scores become available in summer/fall 2012, 2013, and 2014.

The Evaluation	IES selected Mathematica Policy Research and its partners, the American Institutes for Research (AIR) and Social Policy Research Associates (SPR), to conduct this national

evaluation of RTT and SIG. Mathematica**,** a nonpartisan policy research firm, conducts research and surveys for federal and state governments, foundations, and private sector clients. Mathematica's studies of education initiatives and other programs have been used to inform national policymakers for more than 35 years. AIR is a not-for-profit organization that conducts behavioral and social science research, and SPR is a research, evaluation, and technical assistance firm.

Team

To Find Out More

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Confidentiality

The evaluation team will not identify any individual respondents interviewed for the evaluation, and all interview data will be used for research purposes only. Any student-level data provided to the evaluation team will be kept strictly confidential, except as may be required by law, and will be used for research purposes only. Any student identifiers will be replaced with randomly generated numbers prior to analysis.