

## Race to the Top Program Review – Onsite Review LEA Overview

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (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 (RTT) grants to eleven states and the District of Columbia.

As part of the Department's commitment to supporting States as they implement ambitious reform agendas, 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 designed to identify areas in which Race to the Top grantees need assistance and support to meet their goals. Specifically, the Implementation and Support Unit (ISU) from the Office of the Deputy Secretary will work with Race to the Top grantees to differentiate support based on individual State needs, and help States work with each other and with experts to achieve and sustain educational reforms that improve student outcomes. The information and data gathered by the Department's program review will inform the Department's management and support of the Race to the Top states, as well as provide appropriate and timely updates to the public on their progress.

One component of this program review is an annual onsite visit for each State. The Department will consult with State leadership and teams during this review, as States are the prime recipients of funds under this program. In addition, however, the Department speaks with representatives of at least three participating LEAs each year to assess the impact of the State's Race to the Top reforms on instruction and student outcomes in schools and classrooms and discuss the State's management of the quality and progress of local implementation. These LEA interviews provide another perspective of the State's progress and help identify areas where the *Reform Support Network* might provide technical assistance to the State to support the effective implementation of its reform plans. The Department also meets with teachers and principals from schools within an LEA to discuss program implementation by the LEA and the effect of these reforms on classrooms and educators. (Teachers and principals participating in these discussions do not need to submit any information or documentation in preparation for the discussion.)

Prior to the visit, each LEA selected to be a part of the program review will complete the requested documentation - a completed LEA Protocol form, as well as documentation regarding fiscal accountability and oversight - and submit these to the State. The State will provide LEAs with a complete list of requested documentation (available online at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/resources.html>; see the LEA tabs of Attachment 1 and 2), collect all LEA documentation, and submit this documentation to the Department.

During the visit, the Department will conduct two meetings for each selected LEA: one with LEA-level staff (~1.5 hours) and the other with school-level staff (~1 hour; 5-10 participants). The Department will work with the State and selected LEAs to figure out what is feasible in terms of logistics (i.e., an on-site meeting, conference call, or combination of the two; school-level meetings to occur after school hours; separate teacher and principal meetings if needed). While the State may assist in the coordination of scheduling and logistics for these meetings, State personnel **will not** be present at the meetings.

If you have further questions about the program review process and/or the expectations and responsibilities of your LEA as a participant in this process, please contact your State's Race to the Top office.

We thank you in advance for your participation in this process.

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<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)

## **LEA Analysis of State Implementation and Oversight**

*Prior to the onsite review, LEAs must submit written responses to the following questions regarding the State's implementation and oversight of Race to the Top reforms to date.*

1. In what specific and/or general ways have the activities the State is implementing under its Race to the Top plan impacted the LEA? Please answer this question for all relevant sections listed below.
  - a. Overall State Capacity and Stakeholder Engagement (Application Criterion A)
  - b. Standards and Assessments (Application Criterion B)
  - c. Data Systems (Application Criterion C)
  - d. Great Teachers and Leaders (Application Criterion D)
  - e. Turning Around Lowest Achieving Schools (Application Criterion E)
  - f. STEM (Application Competitive Priority 2)
  - g. Other
2. What is your assessment of the State's quality of implementation?
3. How is the State assessing the quality of implementation for your Race to the Top activities?
4. What methods, tools, and/or processes is the State using to determine the extent of LEA progress toward meeting the goals and timelines described in your scope of work?
5. If you are not on track to meet the goals and timelines in your plan, or if the State has expressed concerns about the quality of implementation, how is the State assisting you?

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## **LEA Implementation of Race to the Top**

*Prior to the onsite review, LEAs must submit written responses regarding LEA implementation of the key Race to the Top reforms included in their approved LEA scope of work to date.*

- 1) *Please provide a summary the LEA's key successes and challenges related to implementation (i.e. timelines, goals, and performance measures) of the Race to the Top initiatives in the approved LEA scope of work related to application sub-criterion **insert application sub-criterion**.*

**Project/workstream 1** (see appendix A for relevant goals, activities, etc. taken from LEA SOW pg. xx)

- o Successes:
- o Challenges:

- 2) *Please provide a summary the LEA's key successes and challenges related to implementation (i.e. timelines, goals, and performance measures) of the Race to the Top initiatives in the approved LEA scope of work related to application sub-criterion **insert application sub-criterion**.*

**Project/workstream 2** (see appendix B for relevant goals, activities, etc. taken from LEA SOW pg. xx)

- o Successes:
- o Challenges:

- 3) *Please provide a summary the LEA's key successes and challenges related to implementation (i.e. timelines, goals, and performance measures) of the Race to the Top initiatives in the approved LEA scope of work related to application sub-criterion **insert application sub-criterion**.*

**Project/workstream 3** (see appendix C for relevant goals, activities, etc. taken from LEA SOW pg. xx)

- o Successes:
- o Challenges:

- 4) *We are always interested in hearing and sharing stories of reforms in action that showcase how your work through Race to the Top is helping improve education in your district. Please describe one or two examples of successful local- or school-level implementation that exemplify positive changes your district is making that you would like to highlight (e.g., a specific example of a program you have been able to offer to students or teachers with the support of Race to the Top or an example of innovation in the classroom that would not have been able to happen without Race to the Top).*

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