

# RACE TO THE TOP

## New York Report

Year 4: School Year 2013–2014

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U.S. Department of Education  
Washington, DC 20202

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# 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>.

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## 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

New York developed an ambitious Race to the Top reform agenda to further advance statewide goals, including those described in the New York State Board of Regents (Regents) reform agenda. The State aims to better prepare all students for college and career success, help teachers use high-quality data to inform instruction, evaluate educators and preparation programs based on performance, and put low-performing schools on the path to success. To these ends, the State adopted and supported implementation of the Common Core State Standards called the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) in New York, initiated improvements to its data systems, developed and implemented a new educator evaluation and support system, and put in place interventions to support low-achieving schools. In addition, the State offered competitive opportunities for LEAs to promote innovative approaches to aspects of its reform plan and professional development and other tools to support all of its initiatives. To advance this extensive agenda, the State aligned a variety of funding sources in addition to its \$696,000,000 Race to the Top grant, including School Improvement Grant funds, State funds, and funds from other federal grants and external sources.

## State Years 1 through 3 summary

To build local capacity for implementation of the Regents reform agenda, the State began offering Network Team Institutes in 2011. During Years 1 to 3, a total of 17 Network Team Institutes provided ongoing opportunities for local teams of curricular, data, and instructional experts to receive training and problem solve with peers. Network Team Institute participants then shared their knowledge on the CCLS, as well as data-driven instruction, and educator evaluation systems with other educators in their LEAs. Initial implementation illustrated variability in the impact of the training on LEAs and schools, and the State made adjustments in Year 3, including offering comprehensive resource kits online to support redelivery of training and engaging school leaders through role-specific training sessions. In addition to Network Team Institutes, the State also implemented multiple channels, including newsletters, phone calls, roadshows, field memos, and websites, to regularly communicate to Boards

of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), LEAs, educators, and other stakeholders. The State began using these routines and established additional continuous improvement practices to gather input on the impact of professional development efforts and the pressing needs of the field to inform ongoing support and for various aspects of its plan. Also central to the State's strategy to support its vision of a college- and career-ready education for all students was the development and launch of EngageNY.org. The State began releasing materials for teachers, parents, and other educators during Year 2 and continued throughout Year 3. As of August 2013, the site had 23 million unique views and more than two million unique visitors, one-third of whom were from outside of New York.

During the first half of the grant period, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) faced challenges building capacity to engage stakeholders and manage projects. The number of LEAs compounded the complexity of initial implementation and contributed to delays. New York addressed this issue, as well as challenges involving its State contracting process, by creating a Performance Management Office to oversee the implementation of Race to the Top at the State and LEA levels. The Performance Management Office worked with other offices in NYSED to develop and release requests for proposals (RFPs) and memoranda of understanding (MOUs) to identify partners to support various activities in its plan. During Year 3, the State further refined its oversight routines for sub-recipients and vendors and worked to gather information to assess project-specific short- and long-term deliverables and outcomes through its Monitoring and Vendor Performance System. In Year 3, New York made progress in projects throughout its plan, but adjustments to timelines and approaches to activities slowed the pace of implementation and spending.

School year (SY) 2012-2013 was New York's second year in a two-year transition to the CCLS. In SY 2011-2012, the State encouraged educators to implement at least one CCLS-aligned unit each semester and field-tested items aligned to the CCLS in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics to be used in new State assessments. In SY 2012-2013, the State continued outreach to educators, parents, and other stakeholders to support the transition to CCLS and new assessments. After initial delays to ensure quality and alignment of resources, during Year 3 the State released an extensive collection of grade- and subject-specific online modules, videos, and other resources on EngageNY.org. The State utilized Network Team Institutes and other outreach opportunities to share these resources and to gather input on additional tools needed to support the field in the ongoing transition to CCLS. In spring 2013, New York implemented new State assessments and worked to communicate the importance of providing students, teachers, parents, and the public with a more accurate measure of students' college- and career-readiness.

During Years 1 to 3, the State experienced delays developing and launching its pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade (PK-12) Education Data Portal, now referred to as the EngageNY.org Portal (Portal). The Portal is expected to provide support for data-driven instruction and implementation of the CCLS, including tools for monitoring academic progress, curricular and instructional resources,

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and data at the school and LEA levels. After New York's initially proposed single-source Portal contract was not approved by its State contracting offices, at the end of Year 2, the State selected several vendors to develop dashboard display options and provide project management support. In Year 3, vendors developed teacher, student, and parent dashboards, including early warning system indicators to identify students at risk of academic failure or dropping out of school, and shared options with LEAs to make data dashboard display selections locally. The State also coordinated development of the Portal and EngageNY.org to create an integrated environment that includes curricula, formative assessments, and reporting tools with shared data standards for use in New York and other States and LEAs. The State did not launch the Portal as targeted in Year 3, but planned to continue development and coordination across systems to ensure that data quality, privacy, and security standards were met.

The State made progress but did not complete several deliverables related to expansion of its pre-kindergarten through postsecondary (P-20) data system. NYSED established a higher education data warehouse that began collecting data in September 2012 from the State's public institutions of higher education (IHEs), the State University of New York (SUNY) and the City University of New York (CUNY). In Year 3, NYSED collected the postsecondary enrollment and outcomes information data necessary to create "Where are they now?" reports for personnel in LEAs to track students' progress post high school graduation. The State also worked to create a public data site to share aggregate educator evaluation data, as well as IHE enrollment data and teacher and building leader profiles. The State planned to launch its public site and release reports in Year 3, but decided to take more time to review content with stakeholders prior to dissemination.

During Year 1, the New York State United Teachers filed a lawsuit against the State pertaining to the teacher and principal evaluation system. The State noted that this lawsuit resulted in a lack of clarity in the field regarding implementation timelines, creating a communication challenge for the State. In Year 2, New York reached an agreement on educator evaluations with the New York State United Teachers. Until the lawsuit was resolved, LEAs were hindered in their ability to finalize collective bargaining agreements related to evaluation systems, since the lawsuit called into question how student growth was to be used in evaluations. In Year 2, the State released a teacher roster verification application to ensure accuracy in student growth calculations used in educator evaluations. Beginning at the end of Year 2, the State used a rigorous review process for LEAs' educator evaluation plans, called Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) plans, and nearly every LEA in the State had its plan approved to begin implementing during SY 2012-2013. New York City's APPR implementation encountered challenges and ultimately, per State regulations, the New York Commissioner of Education approved an APPR plan for New York City on June 1, 2013, to be fully implemented beginning in SY 2013-2014.

The State required approval of APPR plans as a prerequisite for LEAs to receive awards for several grant opportunities to promote connections across its overall Race to the Top plan. As the State made progress in APPR implementation in Year 3, it moved forward with approaches to improve the educator pipeline, including through the Clinically Rich Graduate Teacher Preparation Pilot and the Strengthening Teacher and Leader Effectiveness competitive grant opportunities for IHEs and LEAs. The State also worked to align expectations for its IHEs with the Regents reform agenda by field testing and piloting new performance-based certification exams for teacher and leader candidates.

After delays and revisions to its approach in Years 1 and 2, the State accelerated progress against a more coordinated approach to support low-performing schools and LEAs in Year 3. New York redesigned its federal School Improvement Grant program application process based on lessons learned and issued awards to schools to prepare for SY 2013-2014 implementation. In Year 2, NYSED also developed and began rolling out the Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness (DTSDE) to allow NYSED staff and members of LEA and school communities to establish a shared understanding around the optimal conditions for effective schools and LEAs. In SY 2012-2013, State and LEA teams led or oversaw a total of more than 400 DTSDE reviews at schools identified as Priority or Focus under the State's new accountability system.<sup>7</sup> NYSED worked to further efforts to build local capacity to improve its LEAs with low-achieving schools by awarding Systemic Supports for District and School Turnaround grants, which allowed LEAs to enter into partnerships for targeted assistance to promote school improvement. The State also launched the School Innovation Fund and Commissioner's Dissemination and Replication grants as additional opportunities to cultivate and share innovative, effective practices to improve student achievement.

The State also made progress in its plans for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); early learning; and charter schools during Years 1-3. In Year 2, the State began a professional development training program for secondary educators in high-poverty and low-performing schools to build their capacity to deliver STEM Advanced Placement courses. Further, in Year 3, the State launched the Virtual Advanced Placement grant to expand opportunities for educators to receive training and students to enroll in Advanced Placement courses.

To establish common expectations about early childhood programs, particularly those that feed into the State's lowest-performing schools, the State established the QUALITYstarsNY rating system. After

<sup>7</sup> On September 23, 2011, the Department offered each interested State educational agency (SEA) the opportunity to request flexibility ("Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) flexibility") on behalf of itself, its LEAs, and its schools, regarding specific requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), in exchange for rigorous and comprehensive State-developed plans designed to improve educational outcomes for all students, close achievement gaps, increase equity, and improve the quality of instruction. New York's initial request for flexibility from some ESEA provisions was approved on May 29, 2012, and an extension to New York's request was approved on July 31, 2014. For more information on ESEA flexibility, see <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/esea-flexibility/index.html>.



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delays in the initial memorandum of agreement execution and in the development and roll-out of the online QUALITYstarsNY system, in fall 2013 more than 300 early childhood programs received initial ratings with targeted professional development to make improvements. During Years 1 to 3 the State established the Charter School Performance Framework, as well as common application and reporting processes across authorizers in the State, as part of its effort to both expand the number of charter options and also provide transparency and accountability for student achievement.

## State Year 4 summary

### Accomplishments

In Year 4, New York continued to make progress in all areas of its Race to the Top plan, prioritizing ongoing communications with educators and other stakeholders to gather feedback and continuously refine supports for implementation. The Performance Management Office fully implemented a quarterly reporting system for vendors and LEAs that better enabled it to track implementation progress and assess impact, address gaps and areas for improvement, and begin planning for sustainability. As it fully implemented CCLS in SY 2013-2014, New York provided ongoing statewide face-to-face trainings through five Network Team Institutes and a State website containing curricular and professional development resources for BOCES, LEAs, educators, and parents. With an average of 26,000 weekly visits and 22,000 unique weekly visitors, EngageNY.org continued to be a comprehensive resource to support implementation of college- and career-ready standards for stakeholders within and beyond New York. The State also gathered information about EngageNY.org users' experiences to refine the modules, videos, and other training tools available. Following the administration of spring 2014 assessments, the State accelerated the timeline for providing results to LEAs and expanded resources to better enable LEAs and educators to make adjustments to instructional practices. In spring 2014, the State also launched a public data site including data from SY 2012-2013 educator evaluation system implementation and State assessment results.

In the area of *Great Teachers and Leaders*, New York made progress in Year 4 implementing its educator evaluation system statewide and working with LEAs and IHEs to prepare and provide ongoing support to educators. In SY 2013-2014, every LEA in New York implemented an approved APPR plan, including New York City. Through three rounds of the Strengthening Teacher and Leader Effectiveness grant program, approximately 25 percent of the LEAs in the State also worked to integrate implementation of educator evaluation systems as part of comprehensive talent management strategies designed to meet local needs. The State also launched a new grant opportunity for LEAs in Year 4 to build local capacity to develop high-quality assessment plans that support teaching and learning. After field tests and other efforts to gather input and refine assessments, the State began operational implementation of performance-based certification assessments for new teacher and leader candidates in spring 2014

while providing ongoing professional development opportunities for IHE faculty. By the end of Year 4, Clinically Rich Graduate Teacher Preparation Pilot programs at 13 universities graduated nearly 400 new candidates and reported placement rates of approximately 85 percent into the low-performing schools in the State targeted by the program.

New York continued its efforts to improve outcomes in its lowest-achieving schools through support to LEA and school teams, early childhood programs, and educators. In SY 2013-2014, the State and LEA teams continued implementation of DTSDE as well as several competitive grants designed to build LEA and school capacity and provide opportunities to share best practices for turning around low-performing schools. During Year 4, New York also expanded charter school options while implementing rigorous, transparent processes for authorization, renewal, and closure. QUALITYstarsNY continued implementation in SY 2013-2014, providing targeted professional development to more than 300 early childhood programs to make improvements based on quality improvement plans developed in fall 2013. During Year 4, the State also continued expanding access to high-quality STEM educators and advanced courses through Virtual Advanced Placement grants serving 8,000 students across 175 LEAs.

### Challenges

The State continued to enhance the services available to LEAs and educators to support data-driven instruction but experienced additional delays launching the Portal. During Year 4, the State implemented processes to mitigate development risks and to ensure data quality, privacy, and security standards are met. The State also worked to consider how to refine its plan to ensure that infrastructure developed during the grant period is adaptable to the current and future needs of the field. The State also refined business rules to ensure data quality in its P-20 data system. Delays in State and national decisions impacted New York's plans for developing modules for grades 6-8 science, social studies, and the arts. Following the Regents adoption of the New York State Social Studies Framework, at the end of Year 4 the State began moving forward to develop a K-12 resource toolkit and plan delivery of associated professional development. Delays finalizing the New York State Bilingual Common Core Progressions also impacted the pace of development and release of curricular modules, maps, and other resources planned to support English learners and students with disabilities. Prior to release of fully vetted materials, the State partnered with several LEAs to pilot and refine materials to ensure that the resources ultimately released met the needs of students and educators.

As the State continued implementation of DTSDE, providing timely actionable feedback and embedded, ongoing professional development were identified by the State and LEAs as key areas for continuous improvement. To ensure the process could build local capacity as intended, the State began to refine protocols and add professional development opportunities to ensure these challenges could be addressed moving forward. Retaining participants in Advanced Placement professional development through the full 70-hour

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program proved challenging in Year 4 due to multiple training priorities and coordination needed for staff release time, and the State worked to expand opportunities for participants to complete training online. Given the variety of learning management systems used by Virtual Advanced Placement grantees, the State also encountered challenges ensuring that courses developed through the grant program will be accessible to other LEAs and BOCES across the State.

New York has demonstrated its commitment to continue to support and enhance the services available to LEAs and educators but is also behind in the status of implementation and spending for several projects at this point in the grant period. The State will need to address potential risks by, for example, executing outstanding contractual agreements in several areas of its plan to ensure funds are spent and planned activities completed during the no-cost extension period in SY 2014-2015.

## Looking ahead

During Year 5, the State will continue implementation through approved no-cost extensions for most projects in its Race to the Top plan. This will provide additional time for the State to complete planned activities and enhance the services available to LEAs and educators, but will also require the State to accelerate efforts to enable it to obligate funds and meet commitments before fall 2015. The Performance Management Office will oversee and provide assistance to staff and contractors completing projects with no-cost extensions, as well as the 168 LEAs approved by NYSED to continue their local Scopes of Work using Race to the Top funds through June 30, 2015.

Partners helping the State assess impact and gather promising practices will continue their work in Year 5, including analyzing LEA resource patterns to inform local spending practices and developing case studies based on local implementation of the EngageNY.org modules and other CCLS resources. External evaluation of the State's approaches to turning around low-performing schools and providing STEM training will also extend into SY 2014-2015.

New York will continue developing and launching Portal information technology systems and services in Year 5. In addition to releasing dashboards that meet data privacy and security standards, the State will work to ensure system architecture can continually be improved and expanded upon to serve local needs in the future.

The State plans to support ongoing improvements to implementation by continuing training opportunities and expanding and enhancing tools on EngageNY.org. Statewide Network Team Institutes offered

during SY 2014-2015 will provide opportunities to learn from local implementation, share resources, and identify best practices. Based on feedback provided at Network Team Institutes to date and through continued engagement with educators, the State plans to refine existing modules on EngageNY.org and post additional scaffolds, translations, and other resources to meet the needs of all learners in ongoing CCLS implementation (see "Dissemination of resources and professional development").

The State plans to analyze data based on its first two years of implementation to identify areas of APPR implementation that require further training and provide differentiated support to LEAs. Through a new grant opportunity and expedited reviews for revisions to existing local educator evaluation plans, the State will continue to support LEAs to reduce unnecessary assessments and ensure assessments support teaching and learning. Strengthening Teacher and Leader Effectiveness grant implementation will also continue and expand in Year 5 to include an opportunity for LEAs to disseminate best practices for supporting and developing principals.

New York will also focus on expanding performance management routines in place to oversee and support School Improvement Grant recipients in coordination with continuing implementation of DTSDE and multiple competitive grants aimed at local capacity building to turn around low-performing schools.

Projects involving partnerships with IHEs are also planned to continue in Year 5, including implementation of new certification exams and additional content specialty tests. The State will continue to offer a tuition assistance program launched in Year 4 to support candidates with financial barriers to passing the new performance-based certification requirements, including the edTPA™. The State's P-20 data system is expected to expand and become more robust with additional State agency partners. The State also plans to continue to refine higher education data profiles and make data publicly available.

The State expects to release ratings for early childhood programs participating in QUALITYstarsNY during Year 5 that will illustrate progress made since fall 2013 provisional ratings were released. QUALITYstarsNY will also provide the public with additional information to make informed decisions about selecting high-quality early childhood programs.

Projects related to providing STEM courses and professional development will also continue in Year 5, extending support for educators and providing the State with additional time to analyze outcomes based on student and educator performance.

# State Success Factors

Race to the Top States are developing a comprehensive and coherent approach to education reform. This involves creating plans to build strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain the reforms initiated by the Race to the Top grant program.

## Building capacity to support LEAs

### Performance management

During SY 2013-2014, the Performance Management Office continued to support development and refinement of RFPs and MOUs with partners and monitor implementation across the State's Race to the Top Scope of Work. The Performance Management Office coordinated with NYSED program office staff overseeing projects in each of the four education reform areas and began planning for sustainability. After piloting and refining the Monitoring and Vendor Performance System in Year 3, the State surveyed nearly 200 LEA competitive grant sub-recipients and vendors quarterly during Year 4. The Performance Management Office and other program offices utilized responses and evidence submitted by vendors and LEAs to assess progress toward short- and long-term deliverables, identify and mitigate risks, provide feedback to inform continuous improvement, and prioritize NYSED decision-making.

In Year 4, New York staff participated in the RSN's Sustainability Workgroup designed to support State educational agencies to sustain their highest-priority reforms for improving student achievement beyond the Race to the Top grant period. Through a convening in winter 2014 and additional monthly sessions, Workgroup members built capacity to sustain reform through multiple strategies, including engaging stakeholders to assess progress and considering options for policy and budgeting. During Year 4, New York's Workgroup team members continued to focus on developing partnerships and training offerings to engage principals in reform efforts and began developing a strategy for its Network Team Institute model beyond the Race to the Top grant period.

## Support and accountability for LEAs

The Performance Management Office and NYSED staff overseeing Race to the Top projects in each of the four education reform areas collaborated in Year 4 to provide content-based oversight and technical assistance to the field. For example, the NYSED Office of Teacher and Leader Effectiveness provided ongoing guidance and released additional tools to support LEAs in the State implementing their APPR plans in SY 2013-2014, as well as resources and networking opportunities for Strengthening Teacher and Leader Effectiveness grantees (see "Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance"). Similarly, the State continued to build capacity for LEAs and schools around the conditions and behaviors of effective performance through ongoing training and implementation of the DTSDE and the Charter School Performance Framework (see "Supporting low-performing schools" and *Charter Schools*). New York's Year 4 Network Team Institutes continued to deliver statewide training opportunities to provide resources and professional development for all Race to the Top participating LEAs, particularly in the area of implementing new college- and career-ready standards (see "Stakeholder engagement").

Based on NYSED's risk assessment, the Office of Audit Services continued to review and monitor the alignment of expenditures to LEAs' Race to the Top Scopes of Work. The NYSED Administrative Services Group established a protocol and utilized a risk analysis to identify 30 LEAs for more in-depth review. As of June 2014, the State completed site visits for each of the identified LEAs.

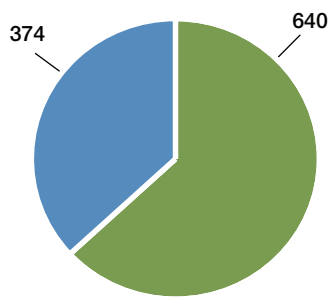
During Year 4, the State expanded its plan to include an analysis of LEA resource allocation patterns to learn more about how local budgets can focus instructional costs on areas that are shown to improve student results. The contracting process took longer than expected and data collection did not get underway as quickly as planned in Year 4. The State will continue analyzing spending patterns and conducting interviews with fiscal and human capital staff in a sample of LEAs, and ultimately disseminate findings across the State during Year 5.

# State Success Factors

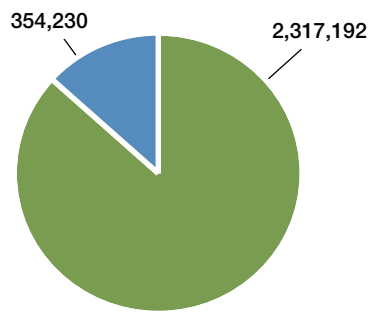
## LEA participation

As depicted in the graphs below, New York reported 640 participating LEAs as of June 30, 2014. This represents approximately 87 percent of the State's K-12 students and approximately 98 percent of its students in poverty.

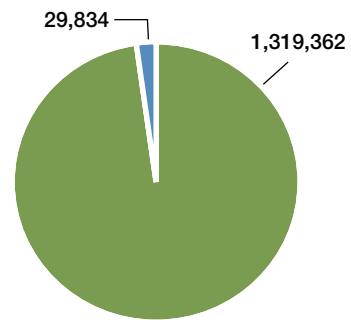
LEAs participating in New York's Race to the Top plan



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



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



■ Participating LEAs (#)  
■ Other LEAs (#)

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

■ Students in poverty (#) in participating LEAs  
■ Students in poverty (#) in other LEAs

The number of K-12 students and number of students in poverty statewide are calculated using pre-release data from the National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) Common Core of Data (CCD). Students in poverty statewide comes from the CCD measure of the number of students eligible for free or reduced price lunch subsidy (commonly used as a proxy for the number of students who are economically disadvantaged in a school) under the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National School Lunch Program. The students in poverty statewide and number of K-12 students statewide counts are aggregations of school-level counts summed to State-level counts. Statistical procedures were applied systematically by CCD to these data to prevent potential disclosure of information about individual students as well as for data quality assurance; consequently State-level counts may differ from those originally reported by the State. Please note that these data are considered to be preliminary as of November 21, 2014.

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

## Stakeholder engagement

NYSED continued to employ a variety of methods to directly communicate with and support LEA staff, including conferences, training sessions, site visits, webinars, email updates, field memos on key initiatives, a Race to the Top website, the Monitoring and Vendor Performance System, and the EngageNY.org website. Hosting multi-day Network Team Institute training sessions for Network Teams, Network Team Equivalents, and Network Team-selected Common Core Teacher Ambassadors provided opportunities for the State to build local teams' capacity around implementation of the Regents reform agenda.<sup>8</sup> A total of five Network Team Institutes in Year 4 (November 2013 and February, May, July, and August 2014) focused on supporting CCLS ELA and mathematics instruction across grade levels through the EngageNY.org curriculum modules. Based on feedback from participants and observations of implementation of CCLS in classrooms and schools, sessions this year emphasized strategies for pacing and prioritizing content, differentiating tools to meet the needs of all students, and integrating high-quality texts and assessments. In addition to the Ambassador program, the State also continued Network Team Institute offerings designed specifically for local leaders, expanding from sessions designed for principals in Year 3 to also include specific sessions for superintendents. These offerings focused on delivering concrete strategies for principals and superintendents to lead change management, including recognizing CCLS-aligned instruction and providing CCLS-aligned feedback as part of the educator evaluation process. To equip Network Team Institute participants to redeliver content locally, resources from Network Team Institutes, including presentations, videos, and handouts, the State compiled materials into "turnkey kits" available on EngageNY.org.

The State also continued to utilize social media to engage participants and share materials before, during, and after Network Team Institutes. New York's approach to utilizing online media to increase awareness about its reform efforts was profiled as part of a series on social media published by the RSN. The pieces feature approaches NYSED and New York City applied to innovatively engage stakeholders and measure success of communications efforts.<sup>9</sup>

During Year 4, the State also worked to highlight the progress of LEAs and BOCES, both through Network Team Institute presentations, as well as in instructional videos posted on EngageNY.org and a new section of the EngageNY.org website, EngagedVoices, that provides examples of bright spots in implementation from across the State and perspectives on the reforms underway from educators and local leaders.

<sup>8</sup> New York State Education Department (NYSED) required LEAs to participate in a Network Team and granted a number of LEAs permission to certify a Network Team Equivalent if they could provide evidence that they had existing local or regional infrastructure with the capacity for delivering the functions of the Network Teams.

<sup>9</sup> These publications, *Tip Sheet #1: Innovative Engagement*, *Tip Sheet #3: Driving Success through Smart Policies*, and *Tip Sheet #4: Measuring Success* are available at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/implementation-support-unit/tech-assist/resources.html#tle>.

## Successes and challenges

During Year 4, New York continued to utilize multiple strategies, including face-to-face sessions, online tools, and local networks to support diverse stakeholders in more than 700 LEAs across the State implementing the Regents reform agenda. NYSED continued to conduct the quarterly Monitoring and Vendor Performance System process with vendors and participating LEAs, surveys during and after Network Team Institutes, and calls with stakeholders to gather immediate feedback on implementation progress, identify gaps in understanding and the quality of implementation, and make adjustments aligned with participants' expressed needs. Ongoing communication and mechanisms established to assess redelivery from Network Team Institutes will continue to be important to meeting the State's goals of coherence and consistency in systemic change.

Based on input from educators, the State enhanced navigation on EngageNY.org and developed an expedited review process to reduce local assessments used in APPR (see "Supporting the transition to college- and career-ready standards and high-quality assessments" and "Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance"). The State also worked to reinforce connections across reform areas, for example, through the SY 2013-2014 version of a comprehensive workbook designed to guide Network Teams in meeting the major milestones and expectations for CCLS, data-driven instruction, and APPR implementation.<sup>10</sup>

As of September 2014, New York reported expenditures for approximately 65 percent of its total Race to the Top grant, which is lower than the plans set forth in the budget in its application. The State demonstrated its commitment to continue and enhance implementation over time, taking into account lessons learned and feedback from implementation to date to better meet the needs of all educators and students. The State has been approved by the Department for no-cost extensions to continue implementation of activities and corresponding spending throughout its plan through SY 2014-2015. While this provides an opportunity to better enable the State to reach its goals, prior implementation delays and contracts that were not yet finalized as of fall 2014 pose risks and will require the State to accelerate project implementation and corresponding spending to meet the commitments in its plan.

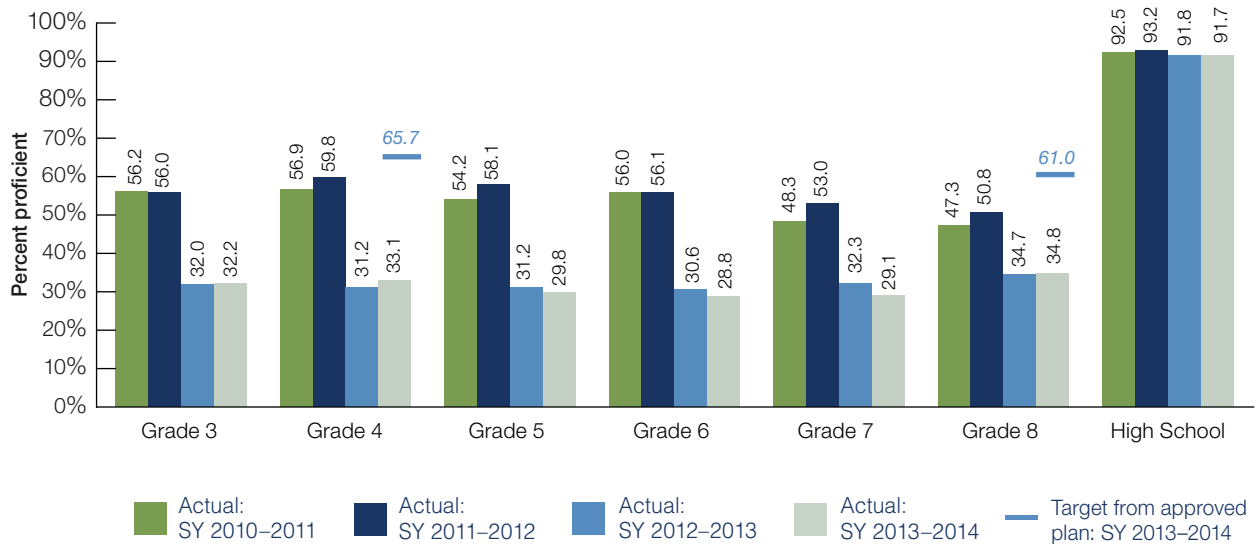
<sup>10</sup> See <http://www.engageny.org/resource/ccss-appr-and-ddi-workbook-for-network-teams-implementation>.

# State Success Factors

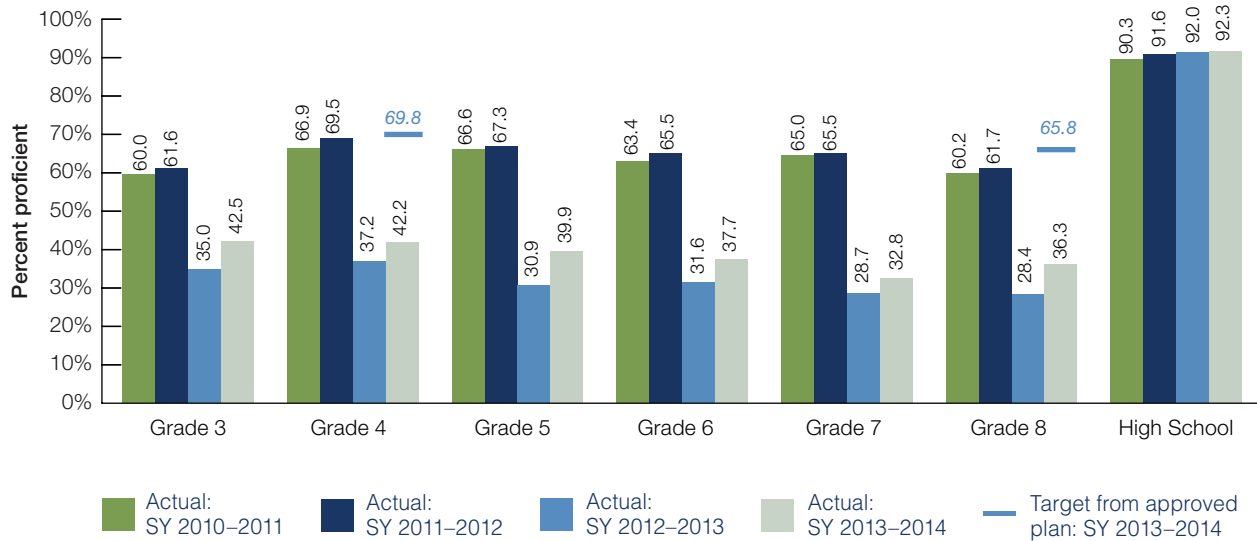
## Student Outcomes Data

New York maintained its commitment to increase the rigor of its standards and completed the second year of full implementation of new State assessments in grades three through eight in spring 2013. ELA proficiency results for SY 2013-2014 showed slight increases and decreases in each grade level, but generally remained about the same as compared to SY 2012-2013. New York's State assessment results from SY 2013-2014 show proficiency in grades three through eight and high school for mathematics improved as compared to SY 2012-2013.

Student proficiency on New York's ELA assessment



Student proficiency on New York's mathematics assessment



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

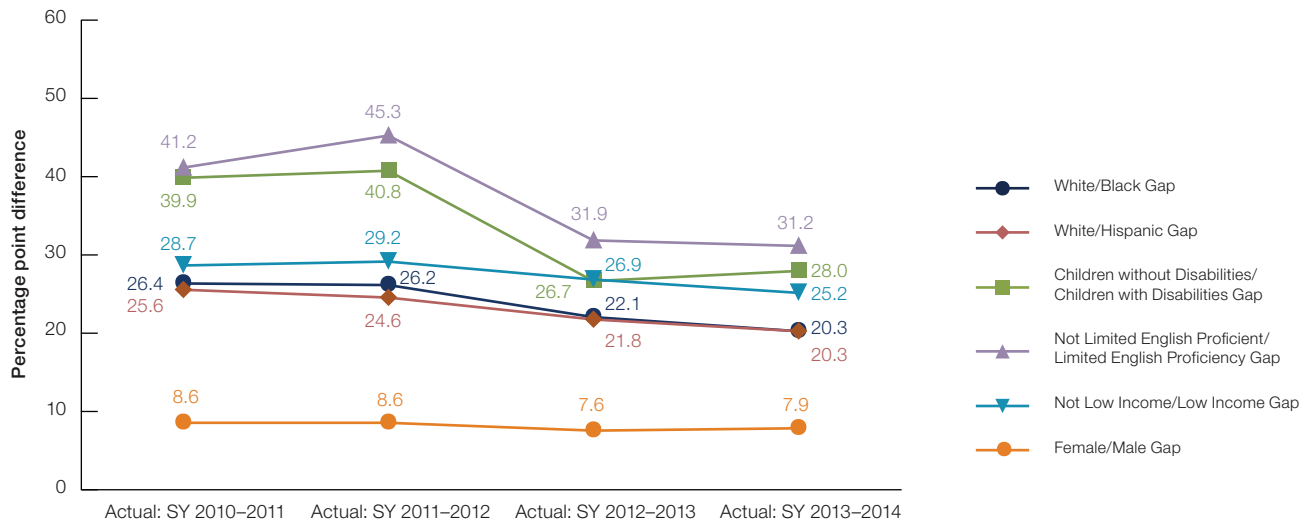
NOTE: Over the last four years, a number of States adopted new assessments and/or cut scores.

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

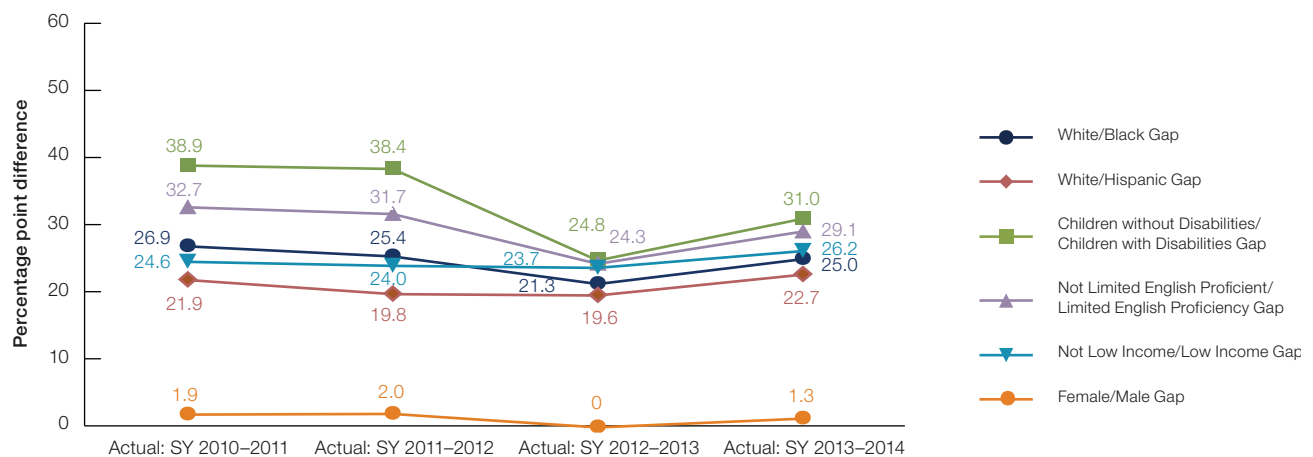
# State Success Factors

As part of its transition to new college- and career-ready standards and assessments, New York completed the second year of administration of new State assessments in grades three to eight in SY 2013-2014. Achievement gaps on New York's State assessment for ELA declined from SY 2012-2013 to SY 2013-2014 for most sub-groups; however, there was an increase in the achievement gap between children without disabilities and children with disabilities. Achievement gaps on New York's State assessment for mathematics increased for all sub-groups from SY 2012-2013 to SY 2013-2014.

### Achievement gap on New York's ELA assessment



### Achievement gap on New York's mathematics assessment



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

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

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

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

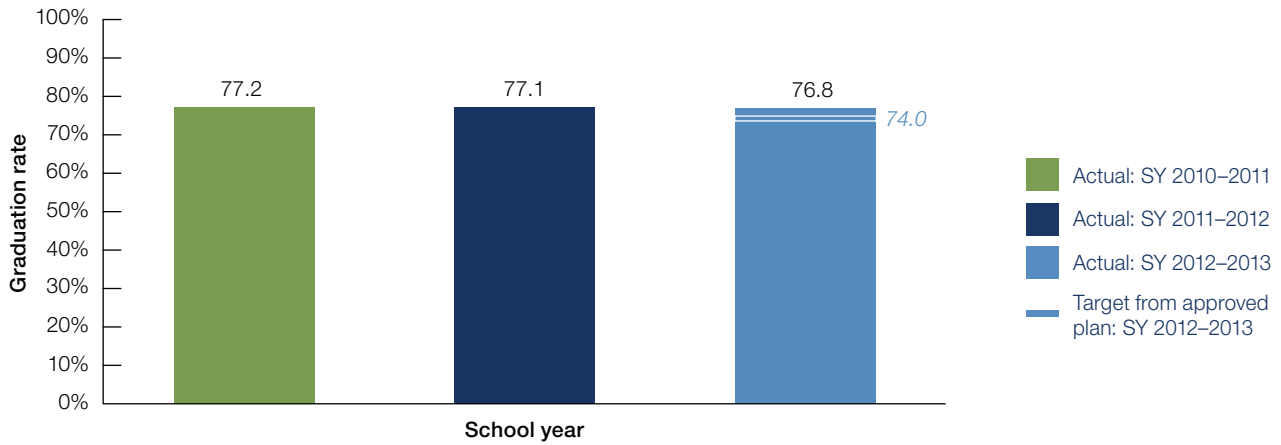
NOTE: Over the last four years, a number of States adopted new assessments and/or cut scores.

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

# State Success Factors

New York's high school graduation rates decreased slightly between SY 2010-2011 and SY 2012-2013. In its SY 2013-2014 APR, New York did not report college enrollment data.

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).



# Standards and Assessments

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

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

In Year 4, New York fully implemented CCLS in ELA and mathematics, including administering new high school Regents exams aligned to college- and career-ready standards. The State continued to partner with Network Teams, Network Team Equivalents, and Common Core Teacher Ambassadors to build LEAs' and educators' capacity to implement CCLS instruction. The five Network Team Institutes hosted in Year 4 provided opportunities for the State to share updates on the expanded number of curriculum modules and other resources available on EngageNY.org and to support local teams to redeliver training in their regions and districts.

Additionally, in Year 4, the State engaged its public and independent IHEs as a part of the transition to the CCLS. Through implementation of new certification exams and the Higher Education Faculty Development project, the State worked to align expectations and provide higher education faculty training and supports to better prepare teacher and principal candidates for CCLS implementation (see "Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals").

New York worked over the last several years to align its State assessments with its instructional content transition. SY 2013-2014 was the second year of administration of new State assessments for ELA and mathematics for grades three through eight. Advisory panels of approximately 80 educators, administrators, university staff, and curriculum and assessment experts continued to provide feedback to the State on the alignment and design of State assessments to measure college- and career-readiness during SY 2013-2014. Additionally, the high school Regents exams proceeded on pace with the State's plan for a phased transition. Administration of new ELA exams began in January 2014 and continued in June 2014 along with the introduction of CCLS-aligned Algebra I Regents exams.<sup>11</sup>

To build understanding around the expectations of CCLS and strategies for improving student learning, NYSED also worked to deliver information and tools to educators and the public on the new assessments. In July 2014, the State developed secure reports for each LEA listing the percentage of students who answered each question correctly as well as the topic and standards each question was intended to address. Alongside local results the State released approximately half of the items in the SY 2013-2014 assessment in August 2014 to

further support LEAs, principals, and teachers to reflect on progress and determine instructional priorities for SY 2014-2015. Items released were accompanied by an explanation of how each item measured the learning standard and why the right answer was correct and why wrong answers were incorrect. For constructed response questions, several examples of student work were provided alongside discussions of the score awarded to support educators to use results.<sup>12</sup>

New York remains a member of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), which is a consortium of States developing assessments in ELA and mathematics aligned to the Common Core State Standards. The State was actively engaged in the consortium's work and approximately 25,000 students in 225 schools across New York State participated in the PARCC spring 2014 field test. In fall 2014, the Regents voted to administer the New York State assessments in SY 2014-2015 and consider its plans for SY 2015-2016 State assessments in the future.

During Year 4, the State also refined its approach to several activities supporting its transition to new standards and assessments. New York was delayed in its plans to develop curriculum modules in grades six through eight science, social studies, and the arts based on the dependency on decisions still under review in the State and nationally around standards for these subjects. The Regents adopted the New York State Common Core K-12 Social Studies Framework in April 2014, but as of fall 2014 had not yet made decisions on the State's science or arts standards. Based on the status of current decisions and requests from the field for guides and exemplar units, the State refined its plan at the end of Year 4 to focus on developing a K-12 resource toolkit and delivering professional development aligned to the recently adopted New York State Social Studies Framework.

The State also initially planned to develop new assessments for grades six through eight social studies and grades six and seven science to be used for formative evaluation of student performance and as a data source for APPR implementation. In April 2014, based on feedback from its Network Teams and with decisions regarding the State's social studies and science standards still under review, the Department approved the State to implement a revised approach to meet these objectives through the Teaching is the Core grant competition. In August 2014, the State awarded \$9.2 million to support 31 Teaching is the Core grantees representing a total of more than 260 LEAs in the State to build internal capacity for developing high-quality assessments and reducing assessments that do not contribute to teaching and learning (see "Building capacity to ensure assessments support teaching and student learning").

<sup>11</sup> See <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/assessment/hsgen> and <https://www.engageny.org/resource/regents-exams> for more information.

<sup>12</sup> Resources are available at <https://www.engageny.org/resource/new-york-state-common-core-sample-questions%20%20>.

# Standards and Assessments

## Dissemination of resources and professional development

In Year 4, New York expanded the resources and professional development opportunities available to support educators' implementation of CCLS in their classrooms as well as to build other stakeholders' understanding of changes taking place in instruction and assessments to reflect college- and career-ready expectations.

New York continued partnerships with several vendors and content experts to develop ELA and mathematics modules for each grade level. To ensure resources posted on EngageNY.org were of high quality, the State maintained a multi-level review process prior to releasing content. As of September 2014, curriculum maps with units and modules for a full year of instruction were available for PK-9 ELA and mathematics. Initial modules were available for high school ELA and mathematics with continued content development and release expected in the first half of Year 5.<sup>13</sup> The State also began developing and piloting transition course modules to reinforce concepts for students that schools identify to be likely to graduate from high school with skill deficits requiring remediation.

To illustrate successful instructional practices of teachers implementing CCLS, the State continued to release effective practice videos during Year 4. More than 250 videos were posted as of fall 2014, including series organized by mathematical concept and illustrating concrete examples of implementation in classrooms across the State.<sup>14</sup>

### Districts look to teachers and students to engage parents around Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS)<sup>15</sup>

To supplement the collection of materials and resources that are available on the "Parent and Family Resource" landing page of EngageNY.org, several local educational agencies (LEAs) in the State offered face-to-face training opportunities to help parents and families understand the New York State education reform initiatives underway and how they are working toward ensuring students graduate from high school ready for college and careers.

For example, South Huntington School District provided educators with career advancement opportunities through roles including instructional coaches, teacher mentors, and parent liaisons, which also support the implementation of CCLS. During Year 4, several South Huntington teacher leaders held events to build understanding of the district's transition to CCLS and provide strategies to help families support their children's learning.

Additionally, some schools in Albany Central School District held Learning Fairs for parents led by students. According to educators in the district, this structure provided an opportunity to demonstrate that students understand and can be successful with the changes in their own curriculum.

<sup>13</sup> See <https://www.engageny.org/common-core-curriculum> for modules organized by subject and grade level.

<sup>14</sup> See <https://www.engageny.org/video-library> for more information.

<sup>15</sup> See the *PROGRESS* blog post, *New York Puts Spotlight on Teachers Engaging Parents*, available at <http://www.ed.gov/edblogs/progress/2014/07/new-york-puts-spotlight-on-teachers-engaging-parents> and <https://www.engageny.org/parent-and-family-resources> for more information.

The State held Network Team Institutes throughout SY 2013-2014 to highlight the expanded resources available on EngageNY.org and deliver professional development to build LEAs' capacity to redeliver training to support CCLS instruction in their regions (see "EngageNY.org helps educators and parents within and beyond New York to support students to be college and career ready"). Based on feedback from the field, the State worked to differentiate training opportunities by educator role and familiarity with utilizing EngageNY.org resources.

Feedback gathered through Year 4 surveys, training sessions, and regional tours hosted by NYSED leadership also emphasized the need for additional resources to support the diverse roles of educators and needs of all learners to maximize the value of the modules and other curricular materials on EngageNY.org. The State worked to meet this need in the short term by providing additional guidance during Network Team Institutes to empower educators to organize and pace content to meet their instructional needs and by enhancing navigation on the site to better enable users to locate existing resources. In September 2014, the State also announced a competitive grant opportunity for LEAs and BOCES to nominate educators to serve as Common Core Fellows during a portion of SY 2014-2015. These educators supported the State's efforts to continuously improve the curriculum modules by integrating their experience, feedback gathered from other educators' use to date, and associated resources in development for English learners and students with disabilities to enhance the content initially posted.

The State also continued development of resources for English learners. Earlier in the grant period, the State responded to needs identified in the field and expanded its plan to support development of PK-12 curriculum resources (*e.g.*, maps, modules, and mini-lessons) differentiated to meet the needs of English learners. Work to create these resources, including scaffolding content for English learners as well as translations of Native Language Arts curriculum resources and an accelerated curriculum for students with interrupted formal education, got underway in Year 4 but was not completed as targeted. Due to delays finalizing the New York Bilingual Common Core Progressions and MOUs with vendors supporting resource development, the State now plans to continue development prior to releasing materials on EngageNY.org in Year 5. During Year 4, the State also worked to build LEAs' capacity to support English learners through release of and professional development related to a "Blueprint for English Language Learner Success."<sup>16</sup>

During Year 4, New York participated in the RSN's Transitions Workgroup designed to support States in promoting college- and career-ready instruction at the classroom level as they navigate various transitions to new standards, assessments, and evaluations. Alongside Workgroup peer States, New York contributed to the design of the "Reform Integration Framework and Resource Guide" to support other States and LEAs to make connections across reform initiatives.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> See <http://www.nysed.gov/press/ELLBlueprint>.

<sup>17</sup> Available at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/implementation-support-unit/tech-assist/resources.html#tle>.

# Standards and Assessments

## Successes and challenges

As New York fully implemented CCLS in SY 2013-2014, the State continued to expand and improve resources available to support BOCES, LEAs, educators, parents, and students in the transition to new college- and career-ready standards and assessments.

In response to educator requests for more data and resources on the new State assessments, New York worked to expedite and expand the information released after the SY 2013-2014 test administration. In summer 2014, the State provided LEAs with secure instructional reports and released annotated items for approximately 50 percent of test items, nearly doubling the quantity made available after SY 2012-2013 implementation of new ELA and mathematics assessments for grades 3-8. The State also supported local efforts to eliminate assessments that do not contribute to teaching and learning and build capacity of parents and educators to understand, design, and implement high-quality local assessments, including through a new competitive grant opportunity, called Teaching is the Core. However, the condensed timeframe for implementation in Year 5 limits the period for BOCES and LEAs to carry their approaches and for the State to learn from Teaching is the Core grantees.

The State made substantial progress in developing an extensive library of resources on EngageNY.org, and by the end of Year 4, had initial modules complete for nearly every grade and subject. Further time is needed for the State to develop initial versions of some high school ELA and mathematics modules as well as enhanced versions of modules that reflect feedback from educators' use of the resources to date and integration of tools to serve the needs of diverse learners.

The State expects continued collaboration with vendors and educators, including through the Common Core Fellows project, will support its efforts to release enhanced materials prior to SY 2015-2016. To support teachers and principals to develop an integrated approach to implementation of the changes associated with CCLS, data-

driven instruction, and APPR, the State also continued to expand its video library illustrating CCLS instructional concepts and added a series to support integration of the videos into local professional development. While many videos were developed in Year 4, release of all 500 planned videos was delayed to provide additional time for coordination with districts and schools. The State's most popular instructional video has been viewed on EngageNY.org more than 10,000 times and release of the remaining videos is projected by 2015.

While delays finalizing the New York Bilingual Common Core Progressions impacted the timeline for releasing materials to support English learners, the State worked to engage educators to ensure the resources released add value to the field. During Year 4, the State collaborated with educators in eight LEAs to pilot development and integration of resources differentiated for English learners and mathematics tools translated into multiple languages to learn more about the process of enhancing resources to meet the needs of all students prior to formal approval and release on EngageNY.org.

Engaging educators through surveys, email boxes, and Network Team Institutes continued to provide opportunities for the State to gather feedback on the professional development and resources to support educators in the transition to CCLS. In addition to these mechanisms, the State's plan includes an in-depth evaluation of implementation of the modules by an external partner. The State experienced setbacks beginning the planned study and plans to continue data collection and analysis in Year 5. To learn more about which aspects of the transition to CCLS were most successfully implemented and under what conditions, the State expanded the scope of the study of CCLS implementation to include instructional resources and supplemental guidance, materials, and training as well as other local activities related to CCLS. During Year 5 the State plans to release case studies highlighting several LEAs' implementation approaches that will better enable it to assess quality and impact of its efforts at the LEA and school levels.

# 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 an SLDS

After instituting additional data quality practices for its SLDS in Year 3, the State launched new websites and reports including longitudinal information for use by high schools, LEAs, IHEs, and the public. In spring 2014, the State launched [Data.NYSED.gov](http://Data.NYSED.gov), which initially included school report card and student enrollment data previously publicly available in other locations. The new site continued to suppress personally identifiable information in these data and enhanced accessibility for users to view data at the State, county, BOCES, district, and school levels.<sup>18</sup> According to the State, the site now also includes Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)-compliant summaries of educator evaluation ratings for LEAs that had an approved plan in SY 2012-2013 and aggregate data on State-provided growth ratings used as a portion of overall educator evaluation ratings.<sup>19</sup> To improve the accuracy of the teacher-student linkage data that inform student growth calculations, the State continued to enable teachers and principals to review class rosters through a roster verification application.<sup>20</sup> To prepare for including IHE data on the public data site, during Year 4, the State established business rules. In summer 2014, the State began providing preparation program institutions with data to review on their teacher and building leader candidates' performance on the new certification exams.

In spring 2014 the State also provided the first "Where are they now?" reports to authorized personnel in schools and LEAs across the State. The initial reports include FERPA-compliant data based on linkages between two- and four-year institution enrollment information available through the National Student Clearinghouse and records reported by schools and LEAs through the State's student information system. The State expects these data will supplement data on postsecondary outcomes currently included in State school report cards on high school graduates plans' to enroll in postsecondary institutions.<sup>21</sup>

During Year 4, the State also continued meetings of the P-20 steering committee and made progress on the expansion of its PK-12 data system to include data from postsecondary institutions and other State agencies. NYSED established the technical ability for a higher education data warehouse with the SUNY and the CUNY in Year 3. During Year 4, the State worked to promote data quality through sharing a K-12 unique student identifier with its public IHEs. Additionally, the State worked to ensure data privacy and security standards based on new State regulations. As of the end of Year 4, data from SY 2012-2013 was loaded, but the warehouse had not contributed to public reports or transcripts as initially planned. During Year 4, the State also made progress toward its goal of having at least four agencies and/or non-educational data systems linked to the State's data system by SY 2013-2014. The State finalized an MOU with the New York State Office of Children and Family Services to share education service data. Additionally, NYSED reported updates to State regulations are expected to facilitate data sharing with the New York State Department of Labor.

## Using data to improve instruction

In Year 4, New York continued development of the Portal and enhancements to the content management of EngageNY.org in an effort to make data and instructional resources available to educators and students to support improved instruction and learning outcomes.

To improve users' experiences with the content already developed and available on EngageNY.org, the State released organizational and functional enhancements to the site. The State put in place enhanced hierarchies for user navigation and content organization as well as added tools to subscribe to and share content through social media to better connect educators to relevant resources. Development is also underway and will continue in Year 5 to create opportunities for educators to collaborate and participate in communities on the EngageNY.org site.

<sup>18</sup> See <http://data.nysed.gov>.

<sup>19</sup> New York regulations specify that 20 percent of educator evaluation results be based on State-provided growth data or other comparable measures. See <http://www.engageny.org/sites/default/files/resource/attachments/appr-field-guidance.pdf>.

<sup>20</sup> See <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/teacher> for more information.

<sup>21</sup> "Where are they now?" data on the 2008, 2007, and 2006 cohorts who enrolled in postsecondary institutions in school years (SYs) 2012-2013, 2011-2012, and 2010-2011, respectively, as well as State guidance on LEA and school use of these materials, was posted in November 2014. See <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/pressRelease/20141117/home.html> for more information.



# Data Systems to Support Instruction

## EngageNY.org helps educators and parents within and beyond New York to support students to be college- and career-ready<sup>22</sup>

New York worked in Years 1-4 to develop EngageNY.org to communicate with and support educators and parents in its more than 700 diverse LEAs to implement the Regents reform agenda. The statewide library of resources includes grade- and subject-specific modules, videos, and formative assessment questions aligned to the CCLS, as well as toolkits and videos of exemplary teacher practices to support local professional development.

Since launching in August 2011 through October 12, 2014, EngageNY.org had:

- Total visits: 15,772,855
- Total unique visitors: 6,692,597
- Total page views: 89,794,493
- Average weekly visits: 26,000
- Average weekly unique visitors: 22,000
- Average weekly page views: 142,000

Utilizing feedback gathered from emails, comments at Network Team Institutes, and other sources, the State has worked to make continuous updates to the organization and content on the site. For example, in Year 4, the State implemented navigational enhancements to ensure users are able to locate resources and provided training to emphasize the intent for tools to be applied at the sequence and pace that best supports educators' instruction to meet students' needs.

New York also continued development of the EngageNY.org data system, also known as the Portal, in Year 4. According to the State, the Portal will provide FERPA-compliant data and resources that are tailored to each stakeholder group's needs for supporting data-driven instruction and implementation of the CCLS, including tools for monitoring academic progress, curricular and instructional resources, and local school and LEA data.<sup>23</sup>

The State faced additional challenges launching the next phase of the Portal during Year 4. After LEAs selected early warning data system dashboards in Year 3, the State expected to make dashboards available and accessible to educators and parents through secure, personalized logins during Year 4. The State legislation passed in March 2014 ended relations with the vendor whose architecture the State planned

<sup>22</sup> See [www.EngageNY.org](http://www.EngageNY.org) and the *PROGRESS* blog post. High-quality and easy-to-use resources draw educators from around the nation to EngageNY, available at <http://www.ed.gov/edblogs/progress/2014/11/high-quality-and-easy-to-use-resources-draw-educators-from-around-the-nation-to-engageny>, for more information.

<sup>23</sup> See <https://www.engageny.org/portal> and <https://www.engageny.org/resource/engageny-portal-faq> for more information.

to use to integrate the data sets needed to populate the local data dashboards to identify students at risk of academic failure or dropping out of school. The State continued outreach in Year 4 through weekly calls and regional meetings with stakeholders, including each of the State's Regional Information Centers and data system liaisons from the Big Five city districts, to inform a revised strategy for some of its technology infrastructure needed to deliver the tools developed through this project.<sup>24</sup>

New York now plans to extend development of the Portal to Year 5, including establishing approaches to identity and access management and data flow to generate customized local dashboard reports. This further compresses the already limited timeframe for LEAs to experience the Portal during the grant period. Given the delay in launching and providing associated training for educators on the Portal, the State was unable to report against its SY 2013-2014 performance targets for this area of its plan.

## Successes and challenges

New York made progress in SY 2013-2014 toward building infrastructure and resources to support educators, policymakers, and other stakeholders access and use of data to support instruction, but also continued to encounter challenges and delays to completing its entire scope of planned activities.

In Year 4, the State continued development of a comprehensive P-20 data system, including tools and resources to promote stakeholders' ability to utilize data to improve instruction and student outcomes. The State also faced continuing challenges, both in terms of the technical complexity of developing a system that integrates information from various sources and in communicating the purpose and design of its data system.

After taking additional time to establish data system governance practices to improve data accuracy, in Year 4, the State expanded longitudinal data available to educators, the public, and other stakeholders through new websites and reports. The launch of Data.NYSED.gov provides researchers and other stakeholders with multiple navigation options to explore FERPA-compliant student and educator data sets and also includes definitions and links to additional resources to promote users' understanding of data.

To learn more about New York students' preparedness for college and careers, the State provided LEAs and schools with "Where are they now?" reports based on high school graduates' enrollment into two- and four-year institutions and worked to expand connections with the Department of Defense, SUNY, and CUNY to provide more robust reports in the future. The State also implemented quality review processes and continued to gather feedback in preparation for release of IHE data on Data.NYSED.gov and in other reports.

<sup>24</sup> The Big Five city school districts are Buffalo, New York City, Rochester, Syracuse, and Yonkers.

## Data Systems to Support Instruction

The State faced challenges developing and implementing the infrastructure needed to extend EngageNY.org to include the Portal as an integrated environment for educators and other stakeholders that includes curricula, assessments, and data tools. Addressing challenges to ensure data quality and adherence to revisions in privacy and security standards impacted the State's technical strategy for the Portal, and further delayed the State's plans to provide LEAs with views of State and local data through local data dashboards. As it continued to work on the technical architecture needed to launch the Portal, the State developed frequently asked questions, memos, and videos, and worked with Regional Information Centers and representatives from LEAs to answer questions and institute additional data quality review procedures. In Year 5, the State will continue development and implementation of the Portal, including collaborating with Regional Information Centers on pilot activities to integrate Portal information technology systems and services with local data, authentication, and applications.

The no-cost extension period will allow the State to continue development and implementation of Portal information technology systems and services. The State expects to launch tools and resources to support LEAs and educators in delivering data-driven instruction and best practices for data security during SY 2014-2015. Additionally, through collaboration with Regional Information Centers, BOCES, and LEAs, the State plans to pilot activities to build regional capacity to integrate Portal tools and services with locally sourced data and other applications currently in use by LEAs. The State has mechanisms in place to regularly monitor progress and quality of development and implementation through SY 2014-2015, including utilizing an independent verification and validation vendor to review and provide recommendations prior to acceptance of deliverables, weekly leadership meetings, and ongoing pilot testing. However, the fact that the Portal was not fully operational at the end of Year 4 limited LEA use of the system during the Race to the Top grant period and challenged the State to plan for sustainability prior to full implementation.

## Great Teachers and Leaders

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

### Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals

New York is redesigning its teacher and school leader preparation programs by instituting performance-based assessments, clinically grounded instruction, and innovative new educator certification pathways.

Work continued in Year 4 to design, develop, and implement new New York certification exams for teacher and school leader candidates aligned to the skills needed to support college- and career-ready instruction in today's classrooms. After field tests and engagement with IHE faculty and other experts to gather input and make refinements, many of the State's enhanced certification exams became operational in Year 4. The Educating All Students Exam and Academic Literacy Skills Test, designed to measure incoming teachers' writing and reading analysis skills and readiness to address the learning needs of

diverse populations, became requirements for new teacher candidates as of May 2014 with approximately 11,000 prospective educators taking each exam as of September 2014. The State also progressed with phased development and roll-out of content specialty tests, including beginning operation of ELA, mathematics, and several other subject area tests while posting content frameworks and field tests for additional exams. The new performance-based School Building Leader exam also launched and approximately 1,300 school leader candidates completed the exam as of fall 2014.

Throughout Year 4 the State also continued technical refinement and communications efforts to prepare for the transition from the Assessment of Teaching Skills – Written exam to the portfolio structured performance-based edTPA exam. In fall 2013, the State engaged teachers, leaders, and IHE faculty to provide recommendations to the Commissioner prior to his establishment of minimum and mastery New York State edTPA cut scores. During Year 4, the State also released videos with teacher preparation

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candidates and faculty who participated in the field test describing their edTPA experiences and held quarterly stakeholder calls to support IHE students and faculty to prepare for the expectations reflected in the new test. In May 2014, the Regents adopted a regulation that provided flexibility for 2014 graduates who did not pass the edTPA to retake and pass the edTPA or, alternatively, take and pass the Assessment of Teaching Skills – Written to receive initial certification.<sup>25</sup> The State added an activity to its Race to the Top plan to offer certification exam financial assistance to eligible candidates, though use of the supports was limited in Year 4 while communication and coordination to implement the opportunity were refined.

As part of the Higher Education Faculty Development project, NYSED also collaborated with SUNY, CUNY, and the Commission of Independent Colleges and Universities to provide outreach to IHEs about the redesigned certification requirements, as well as broader reforms, such as the new educator evaluation systems and college- and career-ready standards that pre-service candidates will need to be prepared to implement when they enter classrooms. In Year 4, IHE partners continued to host regional and campus-based conferences and expanded communication and resources available to pre-service program faculty through newsletters and online resources.

To further support effective educator preparation, New York continued Clinically Rich Graduate and Undergraduate Teacher Preparation Pilot programs at 13 IHEs in SY 2013-2014. Alternative certification programs at each institution continued to recruit candidates who participated in programs that connect theory to practice through a research-based curriculum and focusing on skills and practices that have been shown to make a difference in the classroom. Ongoing mentoring and 10-month classroom residencies for pre-service candidates also continued in 57 high-need schools across the State (*i.e.*, those identified based on high-poverty, high-minority student populations and/or shortages of certified teachers in subjects such as special education, English learners, and/or STEM fields). During Year 4, the State also hosted panel discussions and webinars and developed videos of preparation programs to spotlight them and raise awareness of how these programs are meeting the needs of the field through integrated pedagogy and field experiences. As of fall 2014, nearly 400 candidates completed preparation programs across all involved campuses, making it likely that the State will exceed its goal of 400 candidates completing programs by the end of Year 5. Furthermore, based on completers from Years 3 and 4, the State reported a placement rate of approximately 85 percent into the high-need schools targeted by the program. Program graduates are expected to teach in high-need schools in New York for a minimum of four years following graduation.

## Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance

SY 2013-2014 was the second year of full implementation of APPR, the State's educator evaluation system, for all LEAs except New York City that completed its first year of full implementation. APPRs are developed locally based on a State framework that specifies 20 percent of the APPR be based on student growth on State tests or other comparable measures, 20 percent be based on locally selected growth measures or achievement measures, and 60 percent be based on other measures, including multiple classroom observations.<sup>26</sup> In Year 4, the State established weekly routines to collaborate with New York City on its implementation and continued to develop and update resources and guidance documents available on EngageNY.org to support LEAs and BOCES in ongoing refinement to their local APPR implementation. NYSED ran a dedicated email box receiving up to 100 weekly messages to gather input and questions and developed guidance documents and webinars to provide support to the field regarding implementation and to monitor LEAs' progress toward meeting APPR-related deadlines.

During Year 4, the State worked to support LEAs to select, build local understanding, and continuously refine the multiple measures that contribute to APPRs. In addition to templates and example Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) from SY 2012-2013 implementation, the State updated and added to a library of SLO resources on EngageNY.org. The State posted a second series of 15 webinars to guide LEAs through multiple options for setting goals and to walk teachers and principals through the process of analyzing and reflecting on their results. During SY 2013-2014, the State also continued collaboration with its vendor to update business rules, programming specifications, and layouts for SY 2013-2014 growth reports as well as to assess the viability of growth models for educators who teach content areas other than grades 4-8 ELA and mathematics.

To support use of evidence-based observations of practice, the State also continued ongoing review of request for qualifications for rubrics, surveys, and assessments for use in LEAs local APPR plans. As of fall 2014, NYSED had approved 29 teacher and principal rubrics and six additional "rubric variances" (*i.e.*, adaptations of existing rubrics) for use by LEAs and BOCES in APPR plans. A total of 13 surveys—10 surveys of PK-12 students, families, or teachers for use in principal evaluations and three surveys of students or families for use in teacher evaluations—were also approved for LEAs' use.

Based on information collected from "Review Room," the online tool used for local submission of APPR plans, New York began developing

<sup>25</sup> New York State law specified that any LEA without a State-approved Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) plan by May 29, 2013, would have an evaluation plan determined by the Commissioner after a two-day arbitration proceeding. New York City's APPR plan was announced on June 1, 2013, to go into effect during SY 2013-2014. In SY 2014-2015, the 20 percent measure based on student growth on State tests or other comparable measures will increase to 25 percent for educators with a value-added score and, for such educators, the locally selected growth or achievement measure will be reduced to 15 percent. See <http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2013Meetings/June2013/613p12hea1.pdf> for more information.

<sup>26</sup> This regulation provides this option to candidates through June 30, 2015.



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a database to compile and characterize information on local APPR plans throughout the State. The State's analysis of patterns in APPR revisions early in Year 4 highlighted the desire among LEAs and BOCES to decrease the number of assessments in their APPR plans. The State created a specific page on EngageNY.org to provide technical assistance around regulatory amendments related to reducing local testing for APPR and provided additional opportunities for LEAs to examine and adjust their approaches to ensure testing is the minimum necessary for effective decision making at the classroom, school, and LEA level (see "Building capacity to ensure assessments support teaching and student learning"). The State expects to continue to utilize this database in the future to identify needs and trends and target professional development and share information across LEAs to help them make connections with one another based on the strategies and components in their APPR plans.

The State posted SY 2012-2013 implementation data on Data.NYSED.gov that provided aggregated results for each subcomponent in the State's model (*i.e.*, State growth or other comparable measures, locally-selected measures of student achievement, other measures of educator effectiveness) as well as the overall composite score. To support interpretation of results, NYSED developed animated videos, field memos, and frequently asked questions for LEAs. The State began to analyze patterns in initial outcomes of APPR implementation, including the level of differentiation in ratings and the relationship between overall ratings and educators' student growth ratings, to understand local implementation and to identify challenges to address in the field. The State also considered SY 2012-2013 implementation data to differentiate a monitoring cycle the State began implementing in Year 4 most extensively with Strengthening Teacher and Leader Effectiveness grantees (see "Ensuring equitable access to effective teachers and principals").

In order to be eligible for an increase in State aid in SY 2014-2015, all LEAs were required to fully implement their approved APPR plans for SY 2013-2014. In order to demonstrate that each LEA or BOCES fully implemented their APPR plan in SY 2013-2014, NYSED required LEAs to submit an additional certification form. The State reported that it received this form from all LEAs and BOCES.

The State was unable to report data in the SY 2013-2014 APR against its targets related to the distribution of effectiveness ratings, including the distribution of those ratings in high-poverty, high-minority and low-poverty-, low-minority schools, for LEAs that implemented qualifying evaluation systems as the data was still being reviewed by LEAs for accuracy as of fall 2014.

Based on preliminary statewide results, the State reported the following rating distribution for teachers in SY 2013-2014: 95.6 were rated Highly Effective (41.9 percent) or Effective (53.7 percent); 3.7 were rated Developing; and approximately 1 percent were rated Ineffective. The State found greater differentiation in New York City's preliminary distributions of teacher ratings; reporting that less than 10 percent of teachers in New York City were rated as Highly

Effective, 82.5 percent were rated Effective, 7 percent were rated Developing, and 1.2 were rated Ineffective. The preliminary statewide data for principals show 93.5 percent were rated Highly Effective (27.9 percent) or Effective (65.6 percent); 5.3 percent were rated Developing; and 1.3 percent were rated Ineffective.<sup>27</sup>

Throughout SY 2013-2014, NYSED staff participated in RSN workgroups to continuously improve the design and implementation of its educator evaluation system. In Year 4, as a member of the RSN's SLO Workgroup, NYSED and several New York LEAs collaborated with other teams of State and LEA staff to develop strategies for implementing and sustaining high-quality SLOs.<sup>28</sup> In July 2014, NYSED staff participated in an RSN seminar, "Refining Evaluation Systems to Improve Teacher Practice," focused on identifying strategies to improve rater accuracy, including analyzing data, training and recertifying observers, and supporting delivery of meaningful post-observation feedback.

## Ensuring equitable access to effective teachers and principals

During SY 2013-2014 the State made progress implementing the Strengthening Teacher and Leader Effectiveness program – a competitive grant opportunity that supports LEAs to use their new educator evaluation systems to develop, implement, or enhance a comprehensive systems approach to recruitment, development, retention, and equitable distribution of effective teachers and school leaders. The initial round of 47 Strengthening Teacher and Leader Effectiveness grantees completed their second and final year of implementation funded by Race to the Top during Year 4, while a second round of 39 grantees announced in fall 2013 and a third round of 50 recipients announced in early 2014 began to carry out their plans building on lessons learned from the first round.

Throughout the school year, NYSED coordinated outreach and oversight related to Strengthening Teacher and Leader Effectiveness and APPR implementation. The State conducted site visits for the first round of Strengthening Teacher and Leader Effectiveness grantees and also held status update calls and used interim and final reports to track implementation progress and provide technical assistance. The State also engaged LEAs and consortia LEA grantees to problem solve and share their best practices for building educator career continuums. In addition to interactive webinars, the State hosted a two-day convening in summer 2014 for Strengthening Teacher and Leader Effectiveness teams, including sessions on systems change, peer observation, community partnerships, and professional learning communities.

To increase awareness and exposure about the work underway in LEAs participating in Strengthening Teacher and Leader Effectiveness, the State posted a map locating grantees across the State as well as

<sup>27</sup> See <http://bit.ly/1yVoLvq>.

<sup>28</sup> New York's Student Learning Objective (SLO) development work is featured in several publications, including *A Toolkit for Implementing High-quality Student Learning Objectives 2.0* available at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/implementation-support-unit/tech-assist/toolkit-implementing-learning-objectives-2-0.pdf>.



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abstracts of project plans and news articles describing local approaches on EngageNY.org. To further support local development of strong career ladders in coordination with APPR implementation, the State compiled resource toolkits and developed videos spotlighting Strengthening Teacher and Leader Effectiveness grantees' strategies, including collaborative planning, family engagement, coaching, and data-driven "focus walks" to inform professional development.<sup>29</sup>

## Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs

In addition to projects working to align the expectations and experiences of pre-service coursework, in-service, and ultimately certification with the instructional roles of teachers and leaders in today's classrooms, New York also continued to make progress in Year 4 to hold teacher and principal preparation programs accountable for the results of program graduates.

Coordination with IHE stakeholders continued in Year 4 to develop a template for a teacher and school building leader preparation program profile. After delays in Year 3 to promote data quality, during Year 4 the State made progress ensuring the consistent application of business rules for data across internal NYSED data systems. The State also worked to ensure profiles were produced at a level of granularity needed to support various audiences' uses such as IHE program improvement and LEA human capital decisions. Based on focus groups and webinars with SUNY, CUNY, and the Commission of Independent Colleges and Universities faculty, the initial reports released to institutions for review in September 2014 included demographics, certification exam performance, placement, and employment rates for teacher and school building leader graduates. The State plans to provide IHEs with time to review their data profiles prior to publicly releasing data.

## Providing effective support to teachers and principals

In SY 2013-2014, three LEAs awarded grants to create or scale up innovative, research-based approaches to support teachers working in high-poverty, low-performing schools in shortage teaching areas, completed their third year of implementation. In doing so, these LEA grantees continued to provide support to new teachers through professional development and build peer learning networks for educators, and expanded from approximately 76 educators receiving support through strategically recruited and trained mentors in SY 2012-2013 to more than 100 educators in SY 2013-2014.

Improving from gaps identified in Year 3, programs also took steps to increase the consistency of support provided through programs at each LEA. Mentors received training to build their capacity as teacher leaders in areas including their roles as mentors as well as CCLS instructional strategies, technology integration, differentiating instruction for English learners, and parental involvement. As grantees considered how to incorporate routines developed through the grant in the future, the State also worked to gather best practices in teacher induction support from this program that could be applied to other LEAs' practices.

To ensure adequate support for implementation of the new teacher and principal evaluation system, the State required its participating LEAs to plan to use at least one quarter of their local Race to the Top allocations to provide training to build educators' capacity in this area. In Year 4, the State provided support for educators on the integrated transitions in the Regents' reform agenda by holding five Network Team Institutes between November 2013 and August 2014 and providing a growing set of online resources. Building on the modules, road maps, and approved plans posted on EngageNY.org to guide LEAs in APPR planning and submission, NYSED added tools in Year 4 to support LEAs in interpreting initial results and considering refinements to their plans based on implementation to date.

Based on revisions to State regulations and feedback from the field, the State held webinars and posted videos, exemplars, and toolkits to build awareness around the expectations, purpose, and local options for assessments and SLOs in APPR. For example, given the partnership of multiple stakeholders in making decisions around the assessments used in local plans, the State posted a webinar to facilitate collaboration in selecting or refining assessments used in local plans. The State also issued LEAs' individualized memos that further detail opportunities for LEAs to refine or reduce assessments used in their APPR plans, subject to collective bargaining decisions (see "Building capacity to ensure assessments support teaching and student learning").

Many LEAs also delivered training locally or received support from BOCES. Per State regulation, LEAs are required to outline their process (*i.e.*, duration, nature of training) for teacher and principal training, certification, and recertification and for ensuring inter-rater reliability on a regular basis as part of their APPR plan.<sup>30</sup> The State began integrating review of these processes as part of its oversight and support to Strengthening Teacher and Leader Effectiveness grantees during SY 2013-2014 and expects to incorporate deeper review into its APPR monitoring cycle during SY 2014-2015.

<sup>29</sup> New York is featured in Promising Practices for States in Supporting Teacher Compensation Reform available at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/implementation-support-unit/tech-assist/states-supporting-teacher-compensation-reform.pdf>. For additional information and resources related to the Strengthening Teacher and Leader Effectiveness grant program see <http://usny.nysed.gov/rttp/rfp/gt-16/fundable-applicants.html> and <https://www.engageny.org/resource/improving-practice>.

<sup>30</sup> Subpart 30-2.9 of the Rules of the Board of Regents.

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## Building capacity to ensure assessments support teaching and student learning<sup>31</sup>

During Year 4, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) worked to respond to feedback from educators and other stakeholders in the field about the quantity of assessments being delivered to students.

To help ensure that testing is at the “minimum level necessary to inform effective decision-making,” in February 2014, the Regents established an “expedited change process.” The process enabled LEAs to receive a response from NYSED within 10 business days of requesting changes to eliminate unnecessary assessments that are currently used for purposes of the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR). As of fall 2014, approximately 60 LEAs had requested changes related to their APPR plans related to a reduction in assessments.

In spring 2014 NYSED released a new competitive grant opportunity – Teaching is the Core – to support individual or consortia of LEAs to work to eliminate locally adopted tests that do not contribute to teaching and learning and identify and improve high-quality assessments already in use that can be included as a component of multiple measures of student learning and school and educator effectiveness.

A total of 31 grantees who received awards in August 2014 will collaborate with local stakeholders during the next year to review existing local assessments and practices and develop an action plan to modify, eliminate, or replace assessments based on the conclusions of its local review. Teaching is the Core grantees will publicly post their plans and provide training to increase parents’ assessment delivery and educators’ capacity to recognize and develop high-quality assessments.

As part of its commitment to ongoing support and refinement of APPR implementation, NYSED also sent every LEA and Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) a Testing Transparency Report in summer 2014. The reports identify locally-selected tests currently included in APPR plans and provide recommendations for how LEAs and BOCES could refine or reduce assessments used in their APPR plans, subject to collective bargaining decisions. For example, the State identified instances when locally-selected tests, such as pre-tests in student learning objectives, could be eliminated or replaced with more performance-based assessments, such as essays or projects, consistent with each LEA’s instructional vision.

## Successes and challenges

During Year 4, New York continued to work to promote greater alignment between teacher and principal preparation programs in the State and the reform efforts taking place in PK-12. The State made substantial progress beginning operation of new performance-based exams for teachers and principals. As it continues to refine operational tests and develop additional content specialty tests, the State will engage and support IHEs, including through a tuition assistance program for eligible candidates.

Through the Higher Education Faculty Development Program, the State has held more than 4,500 meetings at 100 IHE campuses across the State to provide support to pre-service programs on CCLS, data-driven instruction, APPR, and new certification exams. Post-event surveys of participants reflected positive experiences among participants; however, participation across institutions and faculty curricular areas varied. After the initial implementation of certification exams in SY 2013-2014, the State supported IHEs to begin analyzing and using results to inform program improvements. For example, based on performance on the Academic Literacy Skills Test, several programs instituted partnerships with local high schools to support writing skills of new educator candidates.

The Clinically Rich Preparation Programs have promising initial data on rigorous recruitment of diverse candidates, participation across universities in the State, and persistence of candidates to program completion and placement into New York schools. While most programs plan to extend implementation during Year 5, many universities that received pilot grants also made progress in Year 4 to secure funding and commitments with partners to maintain their programs beyond SY 2014-2015. NYSED will continue to collect data on graduates through placement data and through its higher education data profiles.<sup>32</sup>

As the State continued with its second year of APPR implementation in most LEAs and the first year of implementation in New York City, it worked to collect feedback and data from the field to refine aspects of its model. The State began analysis of initial implementation data and plans to continue monitoring and providing tools, for example, on observer calibration to support APPR implementation in SY 2014-2015.

Expanded and updated resources, including videos, handbooks, and webinars, were also released to support educators and LEAs in interpreting State-provided growth results and refining local growth measures. To address feedback from the field, the State issued additional guidance and opportunities for LEAs to build capacity to ensure local assessments support teaching and learning. The State also worked to communicate expectations and examples of successful and innovative local approaches through EngagedNY.org Voices and video spotlights.

<sup>31</sup> See <http://www.nysed.gov/press/TeachingIsCoreGrants>, <https://www.engageny.org/content/teaching-core-assessment-literacy-series>, <https://www.engageny.org/resource/teaching-is-the-core>, and <https://www.engageny.org/regents-regulatory-changes-subpart-30-2-expedited-materials-change-form> for more information.

<sup>32</sup> For more information, see *PROGRESS* blog post, *New York State training aspiring teachers in the classroom*, available at <http://www.ed.gov/edblogs/progress/2014/12/new-york-state-training-aspiring-teachers-in-the-classroom>.

# Great Teachers and Leaders

During Year 4, a total of 181 LEAs representing approximately 25 percent of the total LEAs in the State participated as individual or consortia Strengthening Teacher and Leader Effectiveness grantees. While grantees implemented approaches to integrating new educator evaluation systems with development and implementation of comprehensive talent management systems that support effective teaching and learning, the State provided opportunities for sharing of best practices within and beyond the Strengthening Teacher and Leader Effectiveness cohorts through convenings, webinars, and videos and other resources posted on EngageNY.org. In order to provide adequate time for LEAs to implement talent management system approaches and for the State to support and learn from implementation, the State is extending implementation of Strengthening Teacher and Leader Effectiveness grants through SY 2014-2015.

Based on implementation through SY 2013-2014, the State determined that its initial plan of delivering support to school leaders was not sufficiently meeting the needs of LEAs. In addition to making refinements to the Network Team Institute structure to tailor agendas for the roles of school leaders and identifying partners including the New York State Council of State Superintendents to deliver training, the State determined that providing opportunities for peer-to-peer sharing would benefit the field. The State announced an additional round of Strengthening Teacher and Leader Effectiveness, known as Strengthening Teacher and Leader Effectiveness–Dissemination in August 2014 to enable previous Strengthening Teacher and Leader Effectiveness recipients to share their strategies for supporting principal and teacher leader career pathways with additional LEAs or BOCES. Twenty-one grantees, including LEA and BOCES-led consortia were announced as winners in October 2014, and will continue implementation in SY 2014-2015.

## 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.<sup>33</sup>

### Supporting low-performing schools

In Year 4, New York continued to provide support to LEAs to build their capacity and boost student achievement at low-performing schools through competitive funding and implementation of a robust school review process known as DTSDE. NYSED's Office of School Innovation oversees the State's supports to low-achieving schools, school innovation, and houses the Regents' charter school authorizing and oversight responsibilities for all public charter schools in the State. NYSED's Office of School Innovation manages the School Turnaround Office, which provides performance management and oversight to LEA recipients of grants to support high-performing and low-performing schools. The School Turnaround Office also

<sup>33</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.

coordinates with NYSED's Office of Accountability around the State's approach to low-performing schools and districts identified as Priority and Focus based on the State's approved Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) flexibility request, including overseeing School Improvement Grants and aspects of the State's Race to the Top plan working to restructure and reframe schools and support district-level planning.

After approving applications in Year 3 to provide adequate time for planning, the State supported more than 50 schools in 12 LEAs to initiate implementation of a reform model in SY 2013-2014. Based on lessons learned from previous School Improvement Grant competitions, the School Turnaround Office instituted a performance management approach for School Improvement Grant recipients in Year 4 to better support LEAs and schools in planning and implementation, including using data to drive decision-making. The State also worked to incorporate these routines and other technical assistance, such as online communities and toolkits into its oversight of the six LEAs that received School Innovation Fund grants in Years 2 and 3 to partner with external organizations to implement innovative school redesigns to improve student outcomes. In addition to building local capacity to manage and improve performance in low-performing schools through School Improvement Grants and School Innovation Fund, the School Turnaround Office continued collaboration with the NYSED Office of Accountability and LEAs to conduct site visits and provide training to improve the DTSDE process in Year 4.



# Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

New York continued implementation and refinement of the DTSDE rubric and review process to provide a cohesive and coordinated approach to identifying needs and delivering supports to low-achieving schools. The DTSDE process is grounded in six tenets that are aligned to proven practices and conditions of effective schools: (1) District Leadership and Capacity, (2) School Leadership Practices and Decisions, (3) Curriculum Development and Support, (4) Teacher Practices and Decisions, (5) Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health, and (6) Family and Community Engagement. Reviewing schools against these tenets allows NYSED staff and members of LEA and school communities to assess school and district effectiveness and to use results to identify and target the most impactful support to schools identified as low performing.

In Year 4, the State incorporated lessons from initial implementation to refine tools used to gather evidence during visits by integrated intervention teams, including the rubric for classroom observations and facilitators guide. Integrated intervention teams included NYSED staff, an outside educational expert selected by the LEA and approved by NYSED, an LEA representative(s) and, in some cases, experts in English learners and/or students with disabilities. This year the State worked to more strategically incorporate principals during visits and the overall DTSDE process, including providing ongoing technical assistance to promote alignment between the DTSDE rubric and the process for developing school comprehensive educational plans and district comprehensive improvement plans. Also informed by surveys conducted in Year 3, the State extended its integrated intervention team visits to last up to four days to provide informal, immediate feedback during the final day of the visit. In SY 2013-2014, NYSED conducted a total of 188 integrated intervention team visits and LEA teams led an additional 547 reviews using the DTSDE tool for Priority and Focus schools not visited by the State. The New York City Department of Education also used its Quality Review Process to visit 272 Priority and Focus schools.<sup>34</sup>

In SY 2013-2014, the State also expanded professional development to support LEAs to build capacity to implement improvements based on integrated intervention team visit recommendations and to conduct visits locally. Integrated intervention teams in Year 3 found schools had the most room for improvement in how instructional practices are linked to lesson plans and student goals, how teachers are using data to inform their instruction, and how schools are sharing student data with families. To provide strategies for improving instruction, including utilizing professional development kits and curriculum modules on EngageNY.org, the State offered Network Team Institutes specifically for low-performing schools in Year 4. The State also held quarterly DTSDE Institutes that integrated training of the DTSDE process with other aspects of the State's reform plan such as APPR implementation and development of career ladders,

and introduced professional learning communities and a certification program for local reviewers in Year 4. Face-to-face and online meetings of professional learning communities in SY 2013-2014 engaged 45 educators across nine LEAs to dive deeply into the DTSDE tool and operationalize its use in daily school and district practices. Fifteen educators also completed the DTSDE certification program in SY 2013-2014, allowing additional local staff to serve as lead evaluators for DTSDE reviews. The School Turnaround Office fostered sharing among LEAs through these professional development sessions as well as online tools and communities. An example of how the School Turnaround Office fostered sharing among LEAs includes its offerings to School Innovation Fund grantees, specifically video conference calls and online community discussion boards for LEA- and school-level leaders and community partners to discuss planning for sustainability, evaluating partner effectiveness, teaching English learners, and providing social and health services for students.

Several LEAs also continued to receive support to address their low-performing schools through implementation of the Systemic Supports for District and School Turnaround program. The program targeted LEAs with the highest concentration of the State's Priority schools to recruit, screen, and select external partner organizations to work collaboratively to address specifically identified local needs. Sixteen LEAs awarded Systemic Supports for District and School Turnaround grants continued implementation of their unique plans in SY 2013-2014, including receiving embedded coaching and mentoring support for school leaders and school staff.

The School Turnaround Office also continued its role of disseminating best practices by supporting the approximately 20 schools participating in the Commissioner's Schools Dissemination and Replication grants in SY 2013-2014. The program identified promising practices in schools that are high-achieving or rapidly closing achievement gaps and provided time and resources for other sites to adapt implementation of the practices to close achievement gaps in their settings. Participating schools continued collaboration in Year 4 around strategies to improve implementation of CCLS and data-driven instruction. For example, one school focused on the practice of tracking student progress frequently and adjusting targets and interventions more regularly to meet student needs based on collaboration with another school that has seen success implementing that practice.

To strategically analyze work underway during the Race to the Top grant period and how progress and lessons learned should inform future work, representatives from New York participated in the RSN's School Turnaround Performance Management Workgroup. During Year 4, New York focused on implementing a performance management process, developing a data collection system and metrics to monitor progress, and implementing a knowledge management process to track and continuously improve implementation of its performance management approach. At a July 2014 seminar with Workgroup peer States, New York shared lessons learned from implementation of its performance management approach used primarily with School Improvement Grant and School Innovation Fund grantees during SY 2013-2014.

<sup>34</sup> According to the State, the New York City Department of Education fully participated in the integrated intervention team visits, and the Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness (DTSDE) rubric was used in the same way as it was used in other NYSED visits to Focus Districts. New York State provided the New York City Department of Education permission to use its Quality Review Process in lieu of doing a district-led DTSDE review or School Review with District Oversight, for those schools not visited by an integrated intervention team.



# Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

## Successes and challenges

Through implementation of the DTSDE process and competitive grants in SY 2013-2014, New York continued to provide accountability as well as differentiated supports to build local capacity to improve conditions in low-performing schools and ultimately improve student achievement. Of the 224 Priority schools identified in 2012, approximately 10 percent are no longer Priority schools due to performance progress and an additional 10 percent have been removed as a result of school closure.

Building from efforts to develop and pilot DTSDE in Year 2 and to promote understanding of the process during initial implementation in Year 3, during SY 2013-2014 the State worked to make continuous improvements to better meet the needs of educators based on lessons learned and feedback from educators involved in the process. The State implemented processes in Year 4 to provide informal feedback through an extended visit, but delayed delivery of final reports impacted the ability of the DTSDE process to drive immediate improvement in LEAs. Further informed by DTSDE implementation in SY 2013-2014, the State identified speed and specificity of feedback following reviews as an area in need of further refinement. At the beginning of SY 2014-2015, the State implemented protocols to expedite the delivery reports following visits. Additionally, NYSED began piloting a process to provide personalized recommendations for each DTSDE tenet at the end of the site visit to ensure schools have actionable next steps after a site visit. The State also continued to work to ensure quality and timeliness in locally-conducted reviews. In addition to continuing DTSDE certification and professional learning communities, the State plans to hold regional meetings in Year 5 to promote shared understanding of the role of school leaders in the DTSDE process to continue to build local capacity to sustain efforts to improve low-performing schools.

Based on lessons learned from the School Innovation Fund and School Improvement Grant competitions, the State refined its grant applications to include more detailed explanations of partner support, performance measures, and alignment of LEA- and school-level plans and resources. In January 2014, the State announced the fifth School Improvement Grant competition, and extended the School Innovation Fund to provide an additional opportunity to support LEAs to improve student outcomes in schools identified as in need based on the State's accountability system that were not already receiving support. The State expects to continue to monitor implementation for several School Innovation Fund, Systemic Supports for District and School Turnaround, and Commissioners and Dissemination grant recipients extending implementation in Year 5 while also providing technical assistance and sharing lessons learned and tools developed from their approaches.

In addition to administering data-driven performance management routines with School Improvement Grant and School Innovation Fund grantees and surveys to DTSDE participants to gather ongoing information on progress and quality of implementation, the State continued to work with an external vendor during SY 2013-2014 to evaluate New York State's accountability system and related interventions. In fall 2013, the vendor provided the State with formative feedback based on analysis of surveys of and interviews with LEA personnel in Years 2 and 3 that informed process refinements in Year 4. Additional LEA personnel interviews, observations of DTSDE implementation, and student achievement results will be collected to inform a final report expected in Year 5.

# Charter Schools

As a result of decisions by the three major charter authorizers in the State – the Regents, NYSED, and SUNY’s Board of Trustees – a total of 248 charter schools operated in New York State in SY 2013-2014 serving more than 91,000 students statewide, an increase of nearly 14,000 students from SY 2012-2013. During Year 4 the State also continued to focus on promoting transparency and emphasizing student performance through implementation of new uniform charter school application and annual reporting processes as well as outcomes-based renewal practices put in place earlier in the grant period.

The Regents applied its new Charter School Performance Framework, which considers student performance as a primary factor. In February 2014, the Regents made renewal decisions for four Regents-authorized charter schools.<sup>35</sup> After conducting site visits and considering evidence applied to the Framework, the Regents granted one school a two-year renewal and the other three schools each a three-year renewal. The State also closed three charter schools based on underperformance. The NYSED Charter School Office also released a handbook in spring 2014 aligned to the expectations of the Framework to support its public charter schools to implement processes to gather feedback and analyze data related to academic, fiscal, and operational performance to improve prior to formal renewal determinations.

The State also made progress toward ensuring students have equitable access to the expanding number of charter schools in the State. As prescribed by the State’s 2010 Charter School Law, the State worked with charter schools to develop enrollment and retention targets for students with disabilities, English learners, and students who are eligible applicants for the free and reduced price lunch program. During Year 4, the State began including a review of progress toward these targets as part of site visits. Schools authorized or renewed prior to the establishment of these targets will be expected to meet them by the end of their charter terms and the State expects to include progress as part of school profiles shared with the Regents. In May 2014, the State also passed legislation providing charter schools with greater ability to co-locate facilities with public schools.<sup>36</sup>

Through New York’s Charter School Program grant, during SY 2013-2014 the State began working with 11 charter schools in New York City, Yonkers, and Albany school districts to support dissemination of charter school best practices to other schools in their districts. Collaboration across schools in Year 4 included sharing strategies for tutoring and academic intervention systems, school leadership structures, co-teaching and team-teaching structures, teacher development and coaching, data-informed instruction, and school culture and disciplinary procedures.

The State also made progress in Year 4 toward expanding high-quality charters for future years. Utilizing the common charter school application put in place in Year 3 for all public charter schools in the State, five new schools authorized by the Regents opened successfully at the beginning of SY 2014-2015 and three additional schools continued planning in preparation to open in SY 2015-2016. From 29 applications received during the 2014 RFP cycle, the Regents issued approval for six new charter schools.

## Successes and challenges

New York has made progress expanding the number of charter school options operating in the State from 140 in SY 2009-2010 to 248 in SY 2013-2014 with student enrollment in charter schools increasing from 50,000 to more than 91,000 students during that time. The State also designed and began implementing processes to maintain rigor in establishing new charter schools and holding schools accountable for student achievement and equity of access to underrepresented student populations. For example, the Regents continued implementation of the Charter School Performance Framework, providing formative feedback to schools after annual site visits and began to apply the Framework to guide renewal decisions. To expand charter school options particularly in the Buffalo School District, the State opened an additional round in the 2014 RFP cycle for potential providers for this region in the State.

Continuing processes established in Year 3 to promote transparency in charter school performance, all charter schools in the State used a common annual reporting process in August 2014. Based on SY 2013-2014 results on the State assessment, the State found that charter high school proficiency rates, on average, were as strong as or better than the overall district where the charter was located and the State average. However, growth outcomes were varied, and many charter high schools in New York City showed neither increases nor decreases in ELA or mathematics performance when compared to the prior year’s results.

Collaboration across charter authorizers in the State and NYSED program offices as well as engagement with communities and other nonprofits continued to be an important aspect of the State’s strategy for promoting growth and accountability for performance in charter schools in the State. In Year 4, the State worked to spread promising practices between charter schools and other public schools in several districts through the Charter School Grant program, which is expected to continue implementation in SY 2014-2015 followed by an evaluation of practices put in place by participating schools in SY 2015-2016.

<sup>35</sup> The NYSED Performance Framework for Regents-authorized charter schools is available at <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/psc>. See <http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2014/February2014/214p12a4.pdf>.

<sup>36</sup> See <https://www.rtt-apr.us/state/new-york/2013-2014/efch> for more information.

# 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

During Year 4, New York continued several projects focused on increasing opportunities for students to have access to high-quality STEM instruction.

The 17 LEA and BOCES-led consortia awarded Virtual Advanced Placement grants in Year 3 completed their first full year of implementation in SY 2013-2014. Additionally, in summer 2014, the State announced awards to three additional BOCES in the Virtual Advanced Placement round two competition. Grantee projects involve adapting existing or creating new online courses to increase the number and diversity of students able to participate in Advanced Placement programs and earn credit. According to data the State compiled from quarterly grantee reports, more than 8,000 students across 175 LEAs participated in Virtual Advanced Placement courses in Year 4. Additionally, nearly 300 teachers engaged in the program by teaching or developing courses received ongoing professional development to improve their STEM content knowledge and instructional practices. As of fall 2014, more than 60 online or blended Virtual Advanced Placement courses were in development of the 100 projected courses. The State intends to make courses developed by grantees accessible to other LEAs and BOCES in the State. As of the end of Year 4, several grantees had posted course components, but a central location to support dissemination across the State was still in development.

In addition to enhancing the infrastructure across the State for online Advanced Placement course delivery, the State also continued offering a STEM professional development training program to secondary educators in high-poverty and low-performing schools to build their capacity to deliver STEM Advanced Placement courses in their schools. Recruiting and maintaining educators' participation continued to pose challenges and informed the State's decision to offer both face-to-face workshops and online training to improve educators' content and pedagogical skills in SY 2013-2014. As of the end of Year 4, approximately 900 educators had participated in some portion of the 70-hour training program, with 180 educators completing or exceeding course training requirements. While the State has not met its target for more than 800 participants completing the full program, survey feedback from participants has been positive.

New York also offered new certification options as part of its approach to increasing the number of high-quality STEM educators in the

State. The STEM pathway requires candidates to hold a graduate degree in their subject or a related field, while the Transitional G certificate allows individuals to teach mathematics or science without the ordinarily required two years of pedagogical coursework. After two years of successful experience, Transitional G certificate holders become eligible for full certification. In SY 2013-2014, the State issued two Transitional G certificates and 14 STEM pathway certificates.

## Successes and challenges

The State continued to implement multiple approaches to build BOCES, LEAs, and educators' capacity to deliver STEM instruction. Through virtual courses and ongoing professional development programs, the State worked to expand opportunities for students, particularly those in high-need schools that do not traditionally have access to Advanced Placement courses. As a result of Virtual Advanced Placement grants and the STEM professional development training program, nearly 400 current educators received professional development to boost their skills in this high-need subject area. The State also worked to address the shortage of high-quality STEM teachers in the State through new certification pathways and as part of pre-service training programs (see *Great Teachers and Leaders*).

In addition to program oversight completed by NYSED, the State partnered with SUNY to conduct monitoring and evaluation of Virtual Advanced Placement grantees. Based on site visits, focus groups, and surveys with program participants, SUNY began collecting formative data on implementation in Year 4. For example, the State found that programs that included "pre-Virtual Advanced Placement" courses at the middle school level provided students with foundational skills that better positioned them for success in Virtual Advanced Placement courses. Additionally, initial feedback emphasized the need for ongoing, embedded training for teachers that includes STEM content as well as pedagogical skills related to delivering instruction in an online environment. The State's partnership with SUNY has been extended through Year 5 to continue collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data from Virtual Advanced Placement programs to assess impact and inform continuation and replication of strategies.

Given the diversity of technical design approaches implemented by Virtual Advanced Placement grantees, the State was also challenged to launch a State repository of content developed through the Virtual Advanced Placement programs and plans to continue to work to meet this goal in Year 5.

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

According to the State, feedback from participants in STEM Advanced Placement professional development has been positive. However, challenges retaining participants due to multiple demands on their time continued to impact the State's ability to serve as many educators through the entire 70-hour program as initially targeted. The State

is extending delivery of online training and analysis of participant outcomes through Year 5 to provide additional opportunities for educators to access training modules and for the State to learn from this approach to inform future training.

## Progress Updates on Invitational Priorities

### Innovations for improving early learning outcomes

New York's plan included several efforts to build capacity at the program, district, and community levels to support quality outcomes in early childhood education. Building on efforts in Years 1 to 3, the Office of Early Learning continued to make progress implementing activities in this plan in Year 4.

In partnership with the New York State Early Childhood Advisory Council, the Office of Early Learning continued implementing the QUALITYstarsNY rating and improvement system in approximately 330 early childhood programs that feed into the State's lowest-achieving schools in SY 2013-2014. Programs received ratings and quality improvement plans in fall 2013 based on evaluations of documentation that programs submitted as evidence of meeting QUALITYstarsNY program standards and on the results of classroom observations conducted by independent evaluators using Environment Rating Scales. During SY 2013-2014, the State deployed 13 quality improvement specialists and partnered with CUNY to provide participating early childhood programs with targeted professional development and resources based on needs identified in their quality improvement plans. In spring 2014, the State also finished conducting Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) observations in programs rated with four or five out of five possible stars to provide greater feedback on the quality of adult-child interaction and the implementation of curricula. The State expects to re-rate programs

by spring 2015 and establish policies for making ratings publicly available. In SY 2013-2014, the State expanded the resources available to parents, caregivers, and communities to identify quality programs and collaborate with providers to ensure high-quality care. For example, the State posted additional resources on a parent portal on the QUALITYstarsNY website as well as through brochures available in English and Spanish.<sup>37</sup>

The Early Learning Initiatives also includes the development and dissemination of guidance and tools to support implementation of the Regents reform agenda among early childhood programs. After sharing initial versions with the field in Year 3, in March 2014, the State released a self-assessment tool to guide LEAs to evaluate the effectiveness of their pre-kindergarten to kindergarten transitions. In partnership with Head Start, the State held a number of regional forums to introduce LEAs to the tool, which includes a series of questions to self-assess the quality of staff training, data systems, parent engagement, and shared professional development to support transitions from pre-kindergarten to kindergarten and then develop an action plan to improve these processes.<sup>38</sup> The State also continued to share versions and seek input from LEAs and other experts to finalize guidance for developmentally appropriate formal and informal measurements of student progress from pre-kindergarten through grade two, originally planned for release during Year 3. In March 2014, the Regents directed LEAs to use this guidance to determine assessments (that are not traditional standardized assessments) for use in their APPR plans for these grade levels.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>37</sup> See <http://qualitystarsny.org/families-home.php> for more information.

<sup>38</sup> Available at: [http://www.p12.nysed.gov/earlylearning/documents/FinalDistrictPKKTransitionSelfAssessmentmar19FINAL\\_1.pdf](http://www.p12.nysed.gov/earlylearning/documents/FinalDistrictPKKTransitionSelfAssessmentmar19FINAL_1.pdf).

<sup>39</sup> See <https://www.engageny.org/resource/early-elementary-assessments>.



## 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.

During Year 5, New York plans to continue to support local capacity building through differentiated training opportunities and additional tools. As it continues implementation of data-driven instruction, as well as CCLS and APPR, the State plans to gather lessons from educators and other stakeholders to refine existing resources and share best practices. The State will continue Network Team Institutes and increase opportunities for collaboration with BOCES, LEAs, and other partners to share local implementation approaches. During SY 2014-2015 the State will also work to develop a sustainable strategy for ongoing engagement and collaboration with local partners beyond the Race to the Top grant period. The State will also continue analysis of spending patterns in a sample of LEAs to provide guidance to maximize the potential impact of local funding decisions on improving student achievement.

The State plans to continue implementation of new college- and career-ready standards and assessments in SY 2014-2015. Through continuing collaboration with external vendors and educators identified to serve as Common Core Fellows, the State intends to improve curriculum modules and add resources designed to support students with disabilities, English learners, and remediation needs by the beginning of SY 2015-2016. The State also plans to release a social studies toolkit based on the New York State Social Studies Framework adopted by the Regents in spring 2014 and develop a strategic plan on how best to meet the goals of the CCLS in arts and science classrooms following decisions by Regents for those subjects. The State plans to continue implementation of its new State assessments in SY 2014-2015, including expanding to add a new Geometry Regents exam aligned to CCLS, and decide whether it will administer PARCC or the existing New York State assessments in SY 2015-2016. The State will also continue to support Teaching is the Core grantees to complete reviews of local assessments, develop action plans to modify, eliminate, or replace assessments, and provide professional development to increase assessment literacy.

As part of its no-cost extension for the EngageNY Portal, the State plans to launch dashboards for LEAs based on selections made earlier in the grant period and expand community and collaboration opportunities on EngageNY.org. The State will also continue to work with BOCES and the State's 12 Regional Information Centers to build local capacity to integrate EngageNY Portal tools and services with locally sourced data and other applications currently in use by LEAs to better support data-driven decision-making. The State intends to post "Where are they now?" reports with information on high school graduate enrollment into two- and four-year IHEs; expand the FERPA-compliant educator, student, and IHE data available on its public data site in order to hold the programs accountable for their graduates' performance; and work to expand linkages with non-education systems in its P-20 data system. Coordination with IHEs

to promote data quality prior to public release of program-specific data, including information on candidate performance on the new certification exams, will also continue.

In Year 5, the State will monitor and provide guidance and technical assistance to LEAs implementing educator evaluation systems. Engagement with the field will continue and expand to include a Strengthening Teacher and Leader Effectiveness Advisory Board and New York State Teacher Fellows program. The State will also extend implementation of several competitive grant opportunities related to *Great Teachers and Leaders* and turning around the lowest-performing schools that were delayed earlier in the grant period. This additional time will support LEAs and BOCES as they implement innovative approaches to build capacity and better enable the State to assess the impact of the projects. Through Network Team Institute sessions, extending and adding an additional round of the Strengthening Teacher and Leader Effectiveness program, and continuous improvement of DTSDE implementation, the State plans to continue to focus on the role of principals to build local capacity to implement reforms.

Through no-cost extensions in several projects supporting low-performing schools, the State plans to continue to deliver supports and gather data on the impact of its efforts. The State also plans to improve the quality and efficiency of DTSDE implementation, including refining its protocols to ensure schools are provided with timely, individualized, and actionable feedback following reviews. Several competitive grants supporting approaches to improve low-performing schools will also continue in Year 5, including a third round of the School Innovation Fund that will support 17 schools across four of the Big Five school districts. The State will also continue to collect and share best practices across schools and LEAs and to analyze the impact of approaches, including through an external evaluation.

In Year 5, New York will continue implementation of certifications exams for new leaders and teacher candidates that better reflect the performance skills and content knowledge needed to be effective in today's classrooms. The State plans to continue to maintain its collaboration with SUNY, CUNY, and the Commission of Independent Colleges and Universities in Year 5 to provide additional support across IHE campuses and identify best practices of IHEs as they work to prepare new educators to implement the Regents reform agenda. In addition to continuing to refine exams that became operational in Year 4, the State will continue to develop and field test additional exams. The introduction of additional operational content specialty tests is planned through 2016 with candidates expected to take and pass enhanced content specialty tests as soon as they are released. Pilots of Clinically Rich Teacher Preparation Pilot programs will also continue and are expected to produce more than



## Looking Ahead

the initially planned 400 candidates. IHEs will also prepare to sustain the structures that have been established to provide deeper pre-service placements and pipelines for high-need areas.

During Year 5, programs participating in QUALITYstarsNY are expected to receive their first active, public rating and NYSED expects

to release final guidance to support the evaluation of early childhood student progress for grades PK-2. Twenty Virtual Advanced Placement grantees will continue development of online Advanced Placement courses and the State will analyze program approaches and outcomes and work to make content developed available more broadly across the State.

## Budget

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

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

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

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**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

# Glossary

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.

**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.

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**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 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.

# Glossary

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."