

What are Race To The Top funds?

In July of 2009, President Barack Obama and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan announced \$4.35 billion in competitive funds known as the Race To The Top Fund geared towards reforming America's public schools and increasing student learning. Through Race to the Top, states must advance reforms around four specific areas:

- Adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy;
- Building data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction;
- Recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most;
- Turning around our lowest-achieving schools.

Awards in Race to the Top will go to states that are leading the way with ambitious yet achievable plans for implementing coherent, compelling, and comprehensive education reform. Race to the Top winners will help trail-blaze effective reforms and provide examples for States and local school districts throughout the country to follow as they too are hard at work on reforms that can transform our schools for decades to come.

What was the process?

In the summer of 2009, Delaware engaged more than 100 educators, education experts and parents, as well as leaders of teachers' unions, non profits, corporations and civic groups to create the State's strategic plan for Delaware. The strategic plan provided the foundation for the application. The application was endorsed unanimously by every school district and charter school, local school board, teachers' union and the business community, was then submitted to the US Department of Education (USDOE) in January of 2010. In mid-March, Governor Jack Markell; Secretary of Education Dr. Lillian Lowery; Diane Donahue, President of the Delaware State Education Association; Marvin "Skip" Schoenhals, former WSFS Financial Corporation CEO and Vision 2015 Chairman; and Merv Daugherty, Superintendent of the Red Clay School District testified to the US DOE regarding Delaware's application. Just two weeks, later, the USDOE announced that Delaware was one of only two states to receive Phase 1 funding for Race To The Top. Of the forty states and the District of Columbia, Delaware's application and testimony received the highest scores of any state.

What are Delaware's Race To The Top goals?

The goal of Delaware's reform is to become the best state public education system in the country. Beyond this, Delaware's goals include: more than half of Delaware's students will be proficient or advanced on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP); the achievement gap will decrease by 50% no later than the 2014-2015 school year; all students will meet state standards; graduation rates will rise; and more students will enter and be successful in college. Race to the Top funding will also be used to strengthen standards and assessment and quality educators; enhance robust data systems for measuring student performance; improving low performing schools. Delaware will also provide fellowships for highly effective educators and retention bonuses for highly effective teachers in certain high needs schools.

Why was Delaware selected as having the best application?

Delaware was selected as having the best application among 40 states and the District of Columbia. Based on feedback received, one of the reasons Delaware's application stood out above all others was because of the unanimous statewide collaboration of many including teachers, parents, superintendents, school boards, charter schools and the business community. Only one other state, Tennessee, received Phase 1 RTTT funding.

How much did Delaware receive?

Delaware will receive just over \$119 million to implement the RTTT plan. Fifty percent of those funds will be distributed to the participating LEAs (local education agencies meaning school districts and charter schools). All 37 LEAs in Delaware signed on to participate.

When can we expect to receive the funds?

The funds, will begin being dispersed during the summer of 2010 to the LEAs once their "Scope Of Work" plans are approved by the USDOE.

How will Delaware distribute the funds?

Consistent with the Federal guidance, Delaware will distribute the LEA 50% of the grant award by allocating each LEA a percentage of the award that equals the percentage of total Title I funding distributed for Delaware in FY09. This includes both the 'normal' Title I grant and the ARRA Title I grant.

When does the money have to be spent?

All Race to the Top funds should be spent or encumbered by September 30, 2014.

Explain what "effective" and "highly effective" teachers mean

This is based on the statewide Delaware Performance Appraisal System (DPAS II) Revised. A "highly effective" teacher means a teacher has earned a "satisfactory" rating in four of five appraisal components on his or her annual evaluation and that the teacher's students, on average, achieve high rates of student growth, demonstrating more than one grade level of improvement in an academic year.

An "effective" teacher mean a teacher has received a "satisfactory" rating in three of five appraisal components on his or her annual evaluation, including the student improvement component, and that the teacher does not meet the requirements for a "highly effective" rating.

Explain teacher/leader bonuses

Highly-effective teachers and leaders in select high-poverty or high-minority schools will be eligible for substantial retention bonuses, beginning in the 2011-2012 school year. The State will determine the size of the bonuses, likely around \$10,000 for highly-effective principals, \$10,000 for highly effective teachers in critical subject areas, ad \$8,500 for highly effective teachers in non-critical subject areas.

What is the Academic Achievement Award Program?

The Academic Achievement Award Program will provide performance-based bonuses to five schools annually. The program uses ARRA funds to provide \$150,000 to each of five schools who have closed the achievement gap significantly and/or exceeded their adequate yearly progress for two or more consecutive years. At least four of these schools must be in the highest quartile of schools with students from low-income families. The current program is expected to expire in 2011, and will be continued for two years with RTTT funding.

What is the Delaware Fellows Program?

This program will begin in the fall of 2011 and will provide an option of additional responsibilities and compensation for highly effective teachers and leaders. This program will provide initial and ongoing professional development and \$5,000 transfer bonuses to highly effective teachers and leaders willing to work in select high-poverty or high-minority schools.

What is the Teach For America Program?

Teach for America candidates are required to complete an intensive, classroom-based institute in order to begin teaching and must obtain certification through the Alternative Routes To Certification program at Wilmington University. Upon completion of the program, teachers receive the same certification as teachers that pursue a traditional teacher certification route.

What is The New Teacher Project?

The New Teacher Project (TNTP) is a national non-profit designed to close the achievement gap by ensuring that poor and minority students have access to outstanding teachers. TNTP provides a spectrum of services including highly selective teacher recruitment programs; helping LEAs and schools to hire the best possible teachers; developing new and better ways to prepare, develop and certify teachers for high needs schools; and identifying the policies and practices that keep LEAs from hiring effective teachers. If TNTP offers services in Delaware, it is expected to bring 40-50 teachers and ten leaders to the State per year, all of whom will work in high-needs schools.

What is the New York City Leadership Academy?

The New York City Leadership Academy (NYCLA) is an independent non-profit organization that recruits, develops and supports effective school leaders, with a focus on preparing principals to lead in high needs schools. If the NYCLA offers services in Delaware, it will recruit, develop and support ten school leaders in the State's high-needs schools each year.

What is the STEM Teacher Residency Program?

One way Delaware will increase the number of teachers in hard-to-staff subjects and specialties is by implementing a Science, Technology, Engineering, Math (STEM) residency in the 2010-11 school year, in partnership with the University of Delaware. The program will recruit individuals with strong content knowledge and/or professional experience, who will be recruited

with the assistance of local corporate sponsors. Residents will be placed in cohorts of two or more in select schools, to encourage the development of a collaborative learning environment.

During the first year, residents will be paid an \$11,000 stipend and placed in a classroom with a mentor teacher who will receive a \$3,000 stipend. Residents will take University of Delaware courses leading to a teaching credential and master's degree. In the second year, residents will be placed in their own classrooms in high-needs schools, with continued strong mentoring for two years.

What are Partnership Zone schools?

One approach to turning around persistently-lowest achieving schools is to place these schools in a “partnership zone” to help promote rapid improvement in school performance. Schools in the “partnership zone” must select one of four intervention models: closure, restart, turnaround or transformation. The Local Education Agency (LEA) must enter a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) with DOE outlining the details of the plan to improve performance. If DOE does not agree with the proposal, it can refuse the MOU. If an MOU is not agreed to within 120 days, the LEA's options are then limited to closure, reopening the school as a charter or contracting with a private management organization to operate the school.

Regulations require the LEA and the local bargaining unit to secure an agreement that provides sufficient operational and staffing flexibility for the model to be implemented successfully. If the LEA and the collective bargaining unit cannot reach agreement with respect to necessary changes to the collective bargaining agreement within 75 days, the LEA and the collective bargaining unit must submit their last offer to the Secretary of Education, who will have the final authority to select one of those options for implementation. If the Secretary finds neither one of the options is satisfactory, she may send the parties back for negotiations for an additional 30 days. If agreement is still not reached, the LEA will be forced to enter an MOU selecting a different model. If no MOU is entered within 120 days from the date of notification that that the school was selected for the Partnership Zone, the LEA's options are limited to choosing between closure, reopening the school as a charter or contracting with a private management organization to operate the school.

What are the four school intervention models?

- Turnaround Schools: In this intervention model, the principal and at least 50% of the staff must be replaced.
- Transformation: In this model, the principal is replaced and steps must be taken to increase teacher and school leader effectiveness, institute comprehensive instructional reforms, increase learning time and create community-oriented schools.
- Restart: Convert a school to a charter school.
- Closure: Close a school and send students to higher-achieving schools.

Explain what data coaches are

Data coaches are experts in both pedagogy and data analysis who will facilitate professional learning meetings with small cohorts of teachers several times a month to review each teacher's

student data and assist the teacher with developing lesson plans to address areas in need of improvement. These meetings will help both teachers and leaders build skills in using data to inform instruction.

Explain the purpose of development coaches

Delaware will recruit, train and deploy a corps of development coaches to support principals, superintendents and charter directors in the transition to a more rigorous, transparent evaluation process, reduce the administrative burden to evaluators and improve the accuracy and calibration of DPAS II assessments.

DOE will contract with a third party to provide 15 development coaches to support LEAs, roughly one coach per every forty administrators now trained in evaluation, from January 2011 through January 2013. These coaches will spend approximately one day per month with groups of two evaluators, or one-half day per month in one-on-one coaching.

All LEAs will be required to host state development coaches for two years. After two years, the LEAs may choose to use some of their RTTT allocation to continue funding development coaches.

Explain the role of Teacher Leaders

LEA's must create at least one Teacher Leader position per high-need school beginning in the Fall of 2012. Teacher leaders are educators who use their expertise to improve student learning by working outside the classroom in formal and informal ways to augment the professional skills of colleagues, to strengthen the culture of the school, and to improve the quality of instruction. Teacher leaders must be provided with additional responsibilities in their schools and received higher compensation (as determined by the LEA) while continuing their work in the classroom. Only highly-effective teachers may be selected for this position, and Teacher Leaders will need to maintain their highly-effective ratings for at least two of every three years to retain their positions.

Explain the State Longitudinal Data Grant

In December, 2009, Delaware submitted a State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) grant which called for the creation of a system called Delaware Automated System for Education Reporting. This system included modules such as Enterprise Identity Management, customized Dashboards based on user roles, ad-hoc reporting tools, and some additional sub-projects like a client ID Management system, enhanced data exchange between agencies, and electronic transcript exchange system.

However, following the department's SLDS grant submission, the Race To The Top grant was announced which revolves around four assurances. The second assurance is building data systems that track growth in student learning and improving classroom instruction. For this assurance, Delaware utilized our SLDS grant submission along with hiring data coaches for the schools.

According to the USDOE, states may “not receive funding from both SLDS and RTTT for the same activities”. Therefore, Delaware will fund the SLDS activities through RTTT. This has not only benefited DOE who is tasked with completions of these activities, but it also benefits our school districts who will share in the additional funds that Delaware gets through RTTT grant.

Success Plan Questions

How do the Goals and Objectives align to the Race to the Top SOWs?

The 12 Scope of Work (SOW) Areas are aligned to the 8 Race to the Top Objectives aligned with the 4 Race to the Top Goals. To view the alignment, go to:

<http://www.doe.k12.de.us/dess/espes.shtml#Success>

What is the tie between objective and SOW? Please explain the vocabulary.

There are 12 SOW Areas aligned with the 8 Race to the Top Objectives. To view the alignment, go to

<http://www.doe.k12.de.us/dess/espes.shtml#Success>

Do some objectives have multiple SOWs?

Some objectives have multiple SOWs. To view the alignment, go to:

<http://www.doe.k12.de.us/dess/espes.shtml#Success>

Do we load all 12 SOW areas or just the 3 to 4 priorities?

The LEA should enter all strategies related to all 12 SOW Areas.

Can we add additional goals?

No. All LEA plans should have the same 4 Race to the Top Goals.

Can we add additional objectives?

No. All LEA plans should have the same 8 Race to the Top Objectives. An LEA may have as many strategies under these 8 Objectives as needed to complete a comprehensive plan.

Why are we doing a separate Race to the Top plan now?

The Race to the Top plan encompasses specific work related to the Race to the Top grant. The Success Plan is the LEA's comprehensive plan that may encompass work beyond the Race to the Top (e.g., to meet specific federal or state program requirements). Each LEA specific Race to the Top SOWs will be submitted to the US ED as part of the grant requirements. This is a one-time document. The LEA will continue the Race to the Top SOWs through the LEA Success Plan.

Are the LEAs to select the DSTP common measures or use the Race to the Top measures identified on the Race to the Top chart?

Race to the Top measures will become part of the overall Success Plan common measures.

Will DDOE load Race to the Top common measures in the Success Plan, connected to specific Race to the Top objectives?

We are expecting to pre-populate as many Race to the Top common measures as possible. Specifics have not been worked out at this point, but we will do our best to make this happen.

How should we enter SOWs into the system consistently?

The LEA will enter strategies aligned with the specific SOW Areas. The SOW Areas are noted for each Objective in the system.

Where will school climate issues fit under the four Race to the Top Goals?

An LEA may add school climate strategies under any Race to the Top Goals that makes sense to the LEA. The needs related to these strategies will most likely dictate the logical alignment.

As a district under improvement, does SOW Area #12 replace the required improvement goal?

Yes. A LEA under improvement will enter their improvement strategies under Race to the Top Goal 4, Objective 8 (SOW Area #12).

Do the LEA activities for each SOW get placed under the appropriate objective as strategies?

Yes. The Race to the Top template uses the word “activities” for each SOW. These activities will be entered in the Success Plan as strategies. The strategies will be entered to align with each SOW, embedded within each objective. You may want to group “activities” under a broader strategy language.

Is the Success Plan still due in July?

The Success Plans are due the same time as the Consolidated Grant Application. The LEA has a choice of two submission dates, July 16 and August 13. If there are specific program requirements that need to be addressed Success Plan, then those must be complete for program approval.

When you select the import Race to the Top goals and objectives, does it load 4 goals and 8 objectives or 12 SOWs?

The system will load the 4 Race to the Top Goals and the 8 Race to the Top Objectives. The SOWs are stated with the objectives.

Where does the LEA enter the narrative from the Race to the Top document?

Information abstracted from the narrative concerning LEA needs should appear as part of the needs section in the Success Plan. In addition, the narrative can appear in part or whole as the abstract for the Race to the Top on-line grant.

Are there 2 documents for our District Success Plans to make a whole plan?

The LEA Success Plan should be all encompassing, including all the Race to the Top information. There should be one plan.

Do we really need any of the old goals and objectives from previous Success Plans if everything has to align to Race to the Top?

The only goals and objectives in an LEA plan should be the 4 Race to the Top Goals and the 8 Race to the Top Objectives. Work that needs to be carried over from previous plans should appear in the 2010-11 Success Plan as strategies aligned with the Race to the Top Goals and Objectives.

When will we have a budget for Race to the Top?

There will be an on-line Race to the Top grant. LEAs will be notified when it opens.

Do our plans still have to be aligned with the three Domains of Continuous Improvement?

Success Plans should still address the three Domains of Continuous Improvement. The Leadership for Learning, Teaching and Learning, and the Connections to Learning language may not be explicit but the strategies to address all three Domains should still be reflected under the 4 Race to the Top Goals and 8 Race to the Top Objectives.

Should School Success Plans be crafted around the Race to the Top Goals and Objectives?

Schools are expected to have the same 4 Race to the Top Goals. They may have the same objectives or additional objectives as needed to meet the individual needs of the school.

Do schools have to have the same eight Race to the Top Objectives?

Schools do not need to adopt the Race to the Top Objectives, although many may be applicable to the schools needs. Schools may write individual objectives that meet the school's needs. However, all objectives and strategies must align with the 4 Race to the Top Goals.

How does each school personalize their School Success Plan with the work already done?

Schools should reassess current efforts with their needs. Efforts that need to continue should appear as objectives or strategies under the 4 Race to the Top Goals. In addition, schools may add new objectives and strategies to address current needs assessment.

Consolidated Grant Questions

Is the Race to the Top budget submitted as part of the Consolidated Grant?

The budget for Race to the Top will be separate from the Consolidated Application because it is a temporary and separate grant award. There will be one single Success Plan that links to all LEA grant applications.

Has the timeline for submission of the Consolidated Grant Application changed?

No. LEAs have a choice of two submission dates, July 16 and August 13.

Does federal legislation say that if states are going to have a Consolidated Grant Application, everything must be included in one document?

Since Race to the Top is a temporary grant program it cannot be part of the Consolidated Application. The Consolidated Application is for ongoing formula grants. Race to the Top is a one-time application.

Our plan ends in 2011 and we have already started our grant, what should we do?

If you have a current Success Plan that ends in 2010-11 and you have already started your LEA Consolidated Grant, go to the main Success Plan screen and press the “Rollover” link that is to the right of your current plan. This will create a new one-year Success Plan for 2010-11 that is copy of your previous plan. If you want to extend your new plan to 2 or more years, you may do

so after rollover on the “Time Span” screen. You will need to contact either Ted Jarrell or John Hulse at 857-3320 to have your LEA Grant connected to your new plan.