THE REGENTS EDUCATION REFORM PLAN AND NEW YORK STATE'S RACE TO THE TOP (RTTT) APPLICATION

At the center of the Regents' plan is their belief that students should graduate from high school ready for postsecondary education and employment. Our Race to the Top (RTTT) application reflects the Board's commitment to pursue strategies that will transform this belief into reality for all our students. The initiatives in the application work together to create a comprehensive systemic approach to improve teaching and learning. This system consists of well-designed learning standards and aligned curricula that are measured by meaningful, performance-based assessments. The core instruction (standards, curricula and assessments) is delivered by well-prepared teachers and school leaders who have received relevant professional development based on student growth data. The analysis of these data then informs improvements in instruction that will result in the academic progress of students.

While the RTTT grant competition supports many of these elements, the Regents' reform agenda supports them all. Race to the Top then, is one of many avenues that New York State is pursuing that will allow us to carry out the Regents' agenda. It is, in other words, a means to our mutually desired ends. RTTT was designed to reward states that are creating conditions for education innovation and reform and are achieving significant improvement in student outcomes. New York is on the right path.

> ### *The Race to the Top*
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> *An unprecedented competitive federal grant program, the largest ever offered by the U.S. Department of Education. New York is one of only eleven states to win the competition and along with Florida received the largest award ($700 million). 50% of the funds will be sent directly to school districts and charter schools that have chosen to participate in the state's education reform plans described in our application. The remaining 50% of the state's award will be used to implement state-level initiatives to benefit **all districts**.*

To qualify for RTTT funding, states were required to advance reforms around four specific areas commonly referred to as the *Four Assurances*:

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

Ninety-one percent of New York's public school districts submitted a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) confirming their support for, and their intent to participate fully in, New York's RTTT plan. Choosing to participate in the State's plan represents a commitment by districts and public charter schools to join the Regents in pursuing an ambitious education reform plan embodied in State law and Commissioner's regulations, including the newly enacted Teacher and Principal Evaluation Law. The breadth of support for the State plan was an important factor in helping New York win the RTTT grant award.

New York's RTTT application incorporates reforms enabled by legislation passed May 28, 2010 and signed into law by the Governor. The legislation (1) establishes a new teacher and principal evaluation system that makes student achievement a substantial component of how educators are assessed and supported, (2) raises New York's charter school cap from 200 to 460 and enhances charter school accountability and transparency, (3) enables school districts to enter into contracts with educational partnership organizations for the management of their persistently lowest-achieving schools, and (4) appropriates $20.4 million in capital funds to the State Education Department to implement its longitudinal data system.

MAJOR COMPONENTS OF THE NEW YORK STATE RACE TO THE TOP PHASE 2 APPLICATION

ASSURANCE AREA	Standards and Assessment
PLAN SUMMARY	▸ Adopt Common Core State Standards in English language arts and math with 15% State supplement; revise science and social studies standards; create/revise standards in arts, technology, and economics; establish statewide curriculum models. ▸ Align high school graduation requirements with college and career success. ▸ Redesign the NYS Assessment Program, in alignment with the Common Core Standards, to incorporate formative and interim assessments, increase rigor, make the assessments more performance-based, and expand into 21st century competencies (e.g., technology, economics and the arts). ▸ Promote virtual learning; launch a virtual high school.
PARTICIPATING LEA COMMITMENTS	● Adopt enhanced learning standards as required by the State. ● Implement new, high-quality assessments as required by the State.

ASSURANCE AREA	Data Systems to Support Instruction
PLAN SUMMARY	▸ Complete New York's P-20 longitudinal education data system; build a Data Portal through which educators can access information on student achievement, school climate, and best practices, enabling them to analyze student needs, identify problems, determine interventions, differentiate instruction, and evaluate results. ▸ Create an early warning system to identify and intervene to help students at risk of falling behind and dropping out.
PARTICIPATING LEA COMMITMENTS	● Use data to improve instruction, which will entail collecting data as required by the State, providing professional development to staff in how to use the data to improve instruction, and making the data available to researchers, consistent with federal and state privacy rules and regulations.

ASSURANCE AREA	Great Teachers and Leaders
PLAN SUMMARY	▸ Redesign teacher and school leader preparation programs through clinically-rich instruction, performance-based assessments and alternative pathways. Prepare teachers to meet the instructional needs of students in the performance gap in high-need schools. ▸ Implement a comprehensive teacher and principal evaluation system, pursuant to State law, based on multiple measures of effectiveness—including student achievement measures, which would comprise 40% of teacher and principal evaluations and ratings. ▸ Create incentives for highly effective teachers in the STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and math), teachers of English language learners, and teachers of students with disabilities, to take assignments in our high-need schools.
PARTICIPATING LEA COMMITMENTS	● Conduct annual evaluations using the new statewide evaluation system, then use the results of these evaluations to inform promotion, retention, tenure determination, termination and supplemental compensation (consistent with the new State law on teacher and principal evaluation). ● Use the results of the new annual evaluation system and student performance data to tailor high-quality professional development and other effective supports to teachers and principals (consistent with the new State law on teacher and principal evaluation).

ASSURANCE AREA	Turning Around Struggling Schools
PLAN SUMMARY	▸ Identify the State's lowest performing schools; focus resources – including federal School Improvement Grants (1003g funds) – where they are needed most and will provide the greatest benefit; and assist districts in successfully developing and implementing effective closure, turnaround, restart, or transformation efforts. ▸ Target resources to support new school models, including schools and programs for overage and under-credited students, STEM schools, arts-focused schools, etc.
PARTICIPATING LEA COMMITMENTS	● For those participating districts that have school(s) identified by the State Education Department as persistently lowest-achieving, adopt one of four school turnaround models: turnaround, restart, transformation, or closure.