



Illinois State Board of Education

100 North First Street • Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001
www.isbe.net

Jesse H. Ruiz
Chairman

Christopher A. Koch, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Education

Dear Superintendent:

Illinois will be submitting a new application to the U.S. Department of Education for Phase II of the “Race to the Top” by the June 1 deadline. Our fifth place finish in Phase I beat the expectations of many, however, it was not good enough.

Reviewers noted that one of the shortcomings of our application was a lack of participation from our districts; only 42% returned a memorandum of understanding to partner with us. I am writing to you today to seek your partnership in our Phase II application.

If we are successful our schools stand to receive \$400 million. Many Illinois districts need this funding to improve student outcomes and close the achievement gap but participation by as many districts as possible is needed to bring these funds to Illinois. We surveyed districts, conducted a focus group and have been listening to why districts chose to sign and why they did not. We have made changes to the application based on this feedback. These changes include:

- 1) Additional funding for districts to assist with the implementation of STEM programs of study in high schools and additional professional development for math and science instruction, including Advanced Placement courses.
- 2) In an effort to reduce paperwork, we are allowing the already developed district improvement plan to be the basis of the scope of work plan to be submitted for “Race to the Top”.
- 3) Only Tier I and Tier II schools, as identified in ISBE's School Improvement Grant application, will have to use the four reform models introduced by the U.S. Department of Education which may require the replacement of a principal.

We understand the current fiscal crisis in the state has eroded your confidence in the state’s ability to pay bills but the work that is underway needs this influx of funds to continue. There are several reasons why you should partner with us and sign the memorandum of understanding:

- Illinois has already set a course for strategic reforms that align with the four areas of “Race to the Top.” If Illinois earns a “Race to the Top” grant, it could bring \$400 million for the state and its schools to help implement reforms more quickly.
- Teachers and administrators will be pursuing many of these reforms regardless of what happens with the “Race to the Top”.
- It will allow Illinois to more rapidly develop a statewide shared technology infrastructure providing teachers and administrators with real-time access to data and reducing duplicative reporting. This infrastructure will also allow districts to reduce Information Technology costs through a shared “cloud computing” platform.
- Teachers and principals will receive high quality induction and mentoring, including intensive training in the use of data to improve student growth.

- Districts will benefit from new statewide supports to bring relevance and practical application to more rigorous standards – steps that will help our students successfully compete on a global stage.
- The development of a Longitudinal Data System will reduce and simplify district reporting to the State and allow districts to follow students through their entire educational career, from preschool through college graduation.

We appreciate your further consideration and ask that you return a completed memorandum of understanding to show your interest.

We will be holding a series of webinars to answer questions and I encourage you to participate in these with your union leadership so that questions may be answered. The first of these is scheduled for Tuesday, April 27 at 11 a.m.

We ask that you return the memorandum of understanding as soon as possible, but no later than May 24, by emailing it to rt3mou@isbe.net.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christopher Koch". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "C".

Christopher A. Koch, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Education

THE STATE OF ILLINOIS RACE TO THE TOP APPLICATION
PARTICIPATING LEA MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

This Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") is entered into by and between the State of Illinois ("State") and _____ ("Participating LEA"). The purpose of this agreement is to establish a framework of collaboration, as well as articulate specific roles and responsibilities in support of the State in its implementation of an approved Race to the Top grant project.

The signatures of the LEA Superintendent and the President of the Local School Board set forth below indicate agreement to terms of this MOU, including Exhibits; provided, however, the signature of the LEA Superintendent must be set forth on Exhibit II to indicate agreement to the Super LEA Reform Commitments and for Exhibit II to be incorporated into this MOU.

LEA Superintendent
(or equivalent authorized signatory) -
required:

President of Local School Board
(or equivalent, if applicable):

Signature/Date

Signature/Date

Print Name/Title

Print Name/Title

The signature of the Local Teachers' Union Leader set forth below indicates support for the LEA's decision to be a Participating LEA; provided that such signature and the Local Teachers' Union Leader's indication of support does not constitute an agreement by the Local Union to reopen or otherwise modify any existing collective bargaining agreement or waive its rights and protections under the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Act; and provided further that the signature of the Local Teachers' Union Leader must also be set forth on Exhibit II for it to be incorporated into this MOU.

Local Teachers' Union Leader (if applicable):

Signature/Date

Print Name/Title

Authorized State Official - required:

By its signature below, the State indicates agreement to the terms of this MOU and hereby accepts the LEA as a Participating LEA.

Christopher A. Koch, Ed.D, State Superintendent

Date

I. Scope of Work and Nature of LEA Requirements and Commitments

A. Mandatory Requirements. Exhibit I, Preliminary Scope of Work, indicates which portions of the programs and initiatives outlined in the State's Race to the Top Application for Phase 2 Funding, due to the U.S. Department of Education on or before June 1, 2010 (the "Final State Application"), the Participating LEA is agreeing to implement.

B. Super LEA Reform Commitments. Exhibit II (Super LEA Reform Commitments), identifies commitments the LEA Superintendent and Local Teacher Union's Leader must make in order to receive the benefits identified on Exhibit II. **The Super LEA Reform Commitments are relevant only to Participating LEAs with one or more "Tier I" or "Tier II" schools, as identified by ISBE as part of its final 1003(g) School Improvement Grant application.**

C. LEA Plan. If the State's application is funded, the Participating LEA will prepare a Final Scope of Work in a timely fashion but no later than 90 days after a grant is awarded ("LEA Plan"). The LEA Plan must describe the LEA's specific goals, activities, timelines, budgets, key personnel, and annual targets for key performance measures in a manner that is consistent with the Preliminary Scope of Work (Exhibit I) and with the Final State Application. To the extent feasible and permitted by the U.S. Department of Education, the State agrees to incorporate the LEA Plan into the district improvement planning template and process. The Participating LEA agrees to develop the LEA Plan in cooperation with its Local Teachers' Union.

D. Subject to All Applicable Laws. The State and LEA commitments set forth in this MOU (including exhibits), the Final State Application, and the LEA Plan are subject to all applicable requirements and regulations of federal and State law, including without limitation the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Act, 115 ILCS 5/1 *et seq.*, laws and regulations applicable to the Race to the Top Program, and the applicable provisions of EDGAR (34 CFR Parts 75, 77, 79, 80, 82, 84, 85, 86, 97, 98 and 99).

II. Project Administration

A. Participating LEA Responsibilities. In assisting the State in implementing the tasks and activities described in the State's Race to the Top application, the Participating LEA subgrantee will:

1. Implement the LEA Plan;
2. Actively participate in all relevant convenings, communities of practice, or other practice-sharing events that are organized or sponsored by the State or by the U.S. Department of Education ("ED");
3. Post to any website specified by the State or ED, in a timely manner, all non-proprietary products and lessons learned developed using funds associated with the Race to the Top grant;
4. Participate, as requested, in any evaluations of this grant conducted by the State or ED;
5. Be responsive to State or ED requests for information including on the status of the project, project implementation, outcomes, and any problems anticipated or encountered;

6. Participate in meetings, webinars, and telephone conferences with the State to discuss (a) progress of the project, (b) potential dissemination of resulting non-proprietary products and lessons learned, (c) plans for subsequent years of the Race to the Top grant period, and (d) other matters related to the Race to the Top grant and associated plans.

B. State Responsibilities. In assisting Participating LEAs in implementing their tasks and activities described in the State's Race to the Top application, the State grantee will:

1. Provide the State supports identified in the Final State Application;
2. Work collaboratively with, and support the Participating LEA in carrying out the LEA Plan;
3. Timely distribute the LEA's portion of Race to the Top grant funds during the course of the project period and in accordance with the LEA Plan;
4. Provide feedback on the LEA's status updates, annual reports, any interim reports, and project plans and products; and
5. Identify sources of technical assistance for the LEA Plan.

C. Joint Responsibilities.

1. The State and the Participating LEA will each appoint a key contact person for the Race to the Top grant.
2. These key contacts from the State and the Participating LEA will maintain frequent communication to facilitate cooperation under this MOU.
3. State and Participating LEA grant personnel will work together to determine appropriate timelines for project updates and status reports throughout the whole grant period.
4. State and Participating LEA grant personnel will negotiate in good faith to continue to achieve the overall goals of the State's Race to the Top grant, even when the Final State Application requires modifications that affect the Participating LEA, or when the LEA Plan requires modifications.

D. State Recourse for LEA Non-Performance. If the State determines that the LEA is not meeting its goals, timelines, budget, or annual targets or is not fulfilling other applicable requirements, the State grantee will take appropriate enforcement action, which could include a collaborative process between the State and the LEA, or any of the enforcement measures that are detailed in 34 CFR section 80.43 including putting the LEA on reimbursement payment status, temporarily withholding funds, or disallowing costs. The State will terminate this MOU and the LEA's status as a Participating LEA, with no further remedy, if the LEA does not submit to the State an LEA Plan meeting the requirements of Section I.C by the date that is 90 days after a grant is awarded to the State.

III. Assurances

The Participating LEA hereby certifies and represents that:

1. It has all requisite power and authority to execute this MOU;

2. It is familiar with the initiatives and reforms described in this MOU and its exhibits, and is supportive of and committed to working on the initiatives set forth in this MOU;
3. It agrees to be a Participating LEA and will implement those portions of the Final State Application indicated in Exhibit I attached to this MOU, if the State application is funded;
4. It will comply with all of the terms of the Race to the Top Program and the State's subgrant; and
5. The baseline information set forth on Exhibit III is accurate and complete.

IV. Modifications

This MOU may be amended only by written agreement signed by each of the parties involved, and in consultation with ED.

V. Duration/Termination

This Memorandum of Understanding shall be effective, beginning with the date of the last signature hereon and, if a grant is received, ending upon: (a) the State's termination of this MOU pursuant to Section II.D; (b) the expiration of the grant project period; or (c) upon mutual agreement of the parties (if occurs earlier than grant termination or expiration). If the State's application is not funded, this MOU shall be null and void.

EXHIBIT I PRELIMINARY SCOPE OF WORK

The LEA agrees to all of the requirements described in this Preliminary Scope of Work. Commitments applicable exclusively to grades K-8 or high schools are not deemed applicable to LEAs that do not include such grade levels. However, commitments that require integrated and aligned activities between middle and high schools are deemed applicable to all LEAs.

I. STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENTS [RTTT Application Section (B)(3)]

A. Supporting the Transition to Enhanced Standards and High-Quality Assessments

1. Standards-Aligned Instructional Systems.

Illinois will adopt revised Learning Standards in English Language Arts and Math as part of its participation in the Common Core State Standards Initiative. Illinois will also be joining one or more consortia of states participating in the Common Core State Standards Initiative to jointly develop and implement common, high-quality assessments aligned with the Common Core K-12 standards.

To develop Standards-aligned instructional systems, the LEA will undertake a process during the 2010-11 and 11-12 school years that includes all of the following:

- (a) Aligning curriculum to the revised Illinois Learning Standards.
- (b) Implementing Assessments for Learning in at least grades K – 10 aligned to the learning benchmarks in English/language arts and math. As revised Learning Standards are adopted by the State in science, Assessments for Learning should be implemented in science as well. "Assessments for Learning" may include:
 - Universal screening/benchmark assessment data collected periodically (e.g., fall, winter, and spring intervals) indicating whether most students are meeting benchmarks in a particular academic area, measuring student learning during the previous period of instruction that can help determine student progress toward year-end objectives and identifying areas requiring greater focus;
 - Formative assessments that are more diagnostic in nature and provide teachers with information on how to teach specific curricular areas to address student learning needs;
 - Native Language Assessment measuring student learning for English language learners; and

- Other assessments that yield descriptive data that can be used to improve instruction throughout the school year.

The State will collaborate with Participating LEAs to integrate Assessments for Learning into a statewide, comprehensive assessment system measuring student progress in a manner aligned to the revised Learning Standards.

- (c) Ensuring the district's Response to Intervention (RtI) plan provides for targeted interventions and differentiated supports, aligned to the revised Learning Standards, for students that are not on pace to meet college- and career-ready expectations.

2. Developing and Scaling Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM)-Related Programs of Study.

The Illinois Programs of Study model provides students with rigorous course sequences that integrate and apply academic and technical content, as well as valuable information and experiences to help them make better choices regarding their education and future career goals.¹ Generally, Programs of Study begin in the 9th grade and continue through post-secondary education including community colleges and universities.

Through the STEM Learning Exchanges and other related supports, the State will assist LEAs with the development of curricular resources, assessment tools, professional development systems, and IT infrastructure necessary to implement Programs of Study in the following critical STEM application areas:

- Agriculture and Natural Resources: development, production, processing, distribution, of agricultural commodities and resources including food, fiber, wood products, natural resources, horticulture, and other plant and animal products/resources;
- Energy: developing, planning and managing the production of energy including renewable energy and clean coal technology and its distribution through smart grid technologies;
- Manufacturing: product and process development and managing and performing the processing of materials into intermediate or final products and related support activities;
- Information Technology: designing, developing managing, supporting and integrating hardware and software system;
- Architecture and Construction: designing, planning, managing, building, and maintaining the built environment including the use of green technologies;
- Transportation, Distribution and Logistics: planning, management and movement of people, materials and goods across all transportation modes as well as maintaining and improving transportation technologies;

¹ A description of Programs of Study and the STEM Learning Exchanges is included in the State of Illinois Race to the Top Application for Initial Funding, pp. 51 – 61, available at: <http://www.isbe.net/racetothetop/default.htm>. The State's Race to the Top Application for Phase 2 Funding will include a consistent description of Programs of Study and the STEM Learning Exchanges.

- Research and Development: scientific research and professional and technical services including laboratory and testing services, and research and development services; and
- Health Sciences: planning, managing and providing therapeutic, diagnostic, health informatics, and support services as well as biomedical research and development.
- Financial Services: securities and investments, business finance, accounting, insurance, and banking services.

For LEAs serving grades 9 through 12

The LEA will establish a broad range of Programs of Study as a structural approach to high school reform based on the Illinois design principles. Subject to and following the establishment of statewide STEM Learning Exchanges, the LEA must establish two or more Programs of Study promoting critical STEM application areas supported by the STEM Learning Exchanges.

When establishing Programs of Study, the LEA will:

1. Develop Program of Study course sequences in a broad range of academic and career areas;
2. Strengthen academic integration within all Programs of Study to promote stronger linkages between academic disciplines as well as technical content;
3. Support professional development for academic and CTE instructors to implement these Programs of Study and provide opportunities for instructors to gain additional professional certifications;
4. Support real-world connections with adult mentors outside of the school building through strategies such as work-based learning opportunities, problem-based learning projects, and mentoring programs;
5. Implement education and career guidance systems, in coordination with feeder middle schools, to provide students with the opportunity to develop career and education plans; and
6. Form collaborative partnerships with postsecondary education to increase dual credit opportunities and develop structured programs to improve the transition to postsecondary education.

For LEAs serving grades 6 through 8

The LEA will:

1. Establish systems for educators to align curriculum with high schools into which the middle schools feed to support Programs of Study implementation; and
2. Implement education and career guidance systems to provide students with the opportunity to develop career and education plans starting in

middle school that align to a Programs of Study model at the high school level.

II. DATA SYSTEMS TO SUPPORT INSTRUCTION

A. Fully Implementing a Statewide Longitudinal Data System [RTTT Application Section (C)(1)]

The LEA will fully cooperate with ISBE on data collections necessary for the State's longitudinal education data system, including efforts by ISBE to ensure data quality.

B. Accessing and Using State Data [RTTT Application Section (C)(2)]

Illinois Collaborative for Education Policy Research.

To further guide the use of longitudinal data to support State policymaking and continuous improvement, the State will support the establishment of the Illinois Collaborative for Education Policy Research (ICEPR) as an independent organization with a governance structure linking it closely to State agencies, participating universities, and other educational stakeholders in Illinois.

The ICEPR will:

- Help identify and define the key policy issues in the State;
- Communicate research priorities and recruit researchers to develop specific projects addressing these priorities;
- Facilitate the data-sharing agreements and administrative aspects of these research projects;
- Communicate research findings and develop recommendations for policy and practice;
- Assist practitioners in developing their own research capacity for more detailed data collection and analysis; and
- Seek and secure external funding for additional projects aligned with State priorities.

The LEA will cooperate with the Illinois Collaborative for Education Policy Research (ICEPR) to build local capacity to support policy research and development activities and share data in a manner consistent with all State and federal privacy protection laws.

C. Using Data to Improve Instruction [RTTT Application Section (C)(3)]

A State-District Partnership for a Learning and Performance Management System.

With funding support through the Race to the Top program, Illinois will expand upon the State system vision set forth in the P-20 Longitudinal Education Data System Act to develop a centrally hosted education information exchange that provides powerful web-based interface tools to support a broad array of instructional and education support functions (referred to as the "Learning and Performance Management System", or

"System").² The System will enable the State to host an integrated set of data elements necessary for use by the State and any district wishing to participate, integrate that data with other information held outside of the System, deliver web-based software applications that can be accessed at no-cost or reduced cost to the end user, and allow customization at the user level. The System will provide longitudinal data to a broad range of stakeholders to inform instruction and improve student learning, and ensure these stakeholders have timely access to needed information while protecting student and educator privacy. With the development and implementation of the System, Illinois can move from the current landscape of fragmented data across a multitude of "siloes" district and State systems, to a common platform providing actionable data for every Illinois educator.

The State and participating districts will develop a governance structure for the System that clearly defines a partnership approach to data use and management. Professional development, training, and support will be provided to Participating LEAs as needed. Pilot implementation of the Learning and Performance Management System would occur during the 2012 – 2013 school year, with piloting focused on Participating LEAs. Full implementation of the System would commence during the 2013 – 2014 school year.

1. Subject to the State's timely development of a Learning and Performance Management System as described in this MOU and in the Final State Application, by no later than the start of the 2012-13 school year the LEA must either (a) directly rely on the Learning and Performance Management System as its primary platform for offering an instructional improvement system serving all teachers and principals, or (b) implement a locally developed instructional improvement system or systems serving all teachers and principals.

2. If the LEA is not directly relying on the Learning and Performance Management System as its primary platform for offering an instructional improvement system serving all teachers and principals, the LEA must integrate local systems with the Learning and Performance Management System to ensure teacher and principal access to key System features.

III. GREAT TEACHERS AND LEADERS

A. Improving Teacher and Principal Effectiveness Based on Performance [RTTT Application Section (D)(2)]

The State will work with Participating LEAs on the development of redesigned local performance evaluation systems for principals and teachers. These new evaluation systems must be implemented by the beginning of the 2012 – 2013 school year and will be based on the following core principles and assumptions:

² A description of the Learning and Performance Management System is included in the State of Illinois Race to the Top Application for Initial Funding, pp. 76-83, available at: <http://www.isbe.net/racetothetop/default.htm>. The State's Race to the Top Application for Phase 2 Funding will include a consistent description of the Learning and Performance Management System.

- Summative and formative evaluations for teachers and principals should be based on measures of both professional practice and student growth.
 - Effective evaluation includes clear expectations for both professional practice and student growth, clear feedback on performance, and a clear plan for building on strengths and addressing short-comings.
 - Teacher practice can be measured by well-trained observers using observation-based frameworks that define and describe the elements of effective teaching practice; principal practice can also be measured by well-trained observers using observation-based frameworks that describe the elements of effective school leadership practice, school climate surveys and other tools.
 - Individual student growth can be measured over time with multiple measures that include standardized formative and summative tests, curriculum- and course-based assessments and individual student work.

Key components of principal and teacher evaluation systems include the following:

1. **At least 50% of teacher and principal performance evaluations will be based on student growth.**
 - Measures of student growth for both teachers and principals will be developed locally, within parameters set by the State to ensure validity and reliability. The process to establish these parameters will include extensive collaboration with school district management, teachers unions, other stakeholders, other states, and technical experts.
 - Teacher practice will be measured based on Danielson's "Framework for Teaching" or another comparable framework approved in advance by the State. Principal practice will be measured using a framework(s) to be identified by the State.
 - At least until a new State student assessment system aligned with the revised Learning Standards has been implemented, State assessments cannot be used as the **only** measure of student growth in teacher performance evaluations.
 - All teacher and principal evaluations must include a minimum of at least two student growth measures.
2. **All district evaluation systems for both tenured teachers and principals will include the rating categories of Excellent, Proficient, Needs Improvement, and Unsatisfactory.**
 - Participating LEAs do not have to use these specific rating categories for the final summative rating for non-tenured teachers, but must undertake an evaluation of non-tenured teachers using the State framework with four performance levels and must report data to the State based on the four performance levels.

3. **All principals and non-tenured teachers must be evaluated annually. Each tenured teacher must receive a summative evaluation at least once in the course of every 2 school years.** However:
 - For any tenured teacher rated as either "needs improvement" or "unsatisfactory," the teacher must be evaluated at least once in the school year following the receipt of such rating.
 - For all other tenured teachers in Participating LEAs, at minimum a non-summative assessment of student growth must be completed in any year during which a summative evaluation is not performed.
4. **The Participating LEA will use the results of local performance evaluation systems to inform decision-making in the areas of professional development, tenure, and possible dismissal of less effective teachers and principals.**

If the State receives a Race to the Top grant, the State will commit to developing all of these system components prior to September 30, 2011. The components of the State support system will include the following:

- Both a teacher and principal model evaluation template. The model template will incorporate the requirements established by the State, but allow customization by districts in a manner that does not conflict with such requirements.
- An evaluator pre-qualification program based on the model teacher evaluation template.
- An evaluator training program based on the model teacher evaluation template. The training program will provide multiple training options that account for the prior training and experience of the evaluator.
- A superintendent training program based on the model principal evaluation template.
- One or more instruments to provide feedback to principals on the instructional environment within a school, such as school climate surveys, "360 evaluations" providing a comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness of school leader behaviors, and parent surveys.
- A State Board-provided or approved technical assistance system that supports districts with the development and implementation of teacher and principal evaluation systems. This system will include assistance to ensure that measures of student growth are rigorous and comparable across classrooms and schools.
- Web-based systems and tools and video-based observation processes supporting implementation of the model templates and the evaluator pre-qualification and training programs. Many of these systems and tools can be hosted on the Learning and Performance Management System upon its development.
- A process for measuring and reporting correlations between local principal and teacher evaluations and (i) student growth in tested grades and subjects, and (ii) retention rates of teachers.

Subject to the development of State support systems, Participating LEAs will implement local evaluation systems meeting the requirements set forth herein by no later than the start of the 2012-13 school year. If the State does not develop all of these components by that date, the obligation of Participating LEAs to implement redesigned performance evaluation systems will be postponed for as long as it takes the State to implement these systems.

**B. Ensuring Equitable Distribution of Effective Teachers and Principals
[RTTT Application Section (D)(3)]**

Addressing District Barriers and Providing Transparent Data on Within-District Disparities.

If the LEA has one or more high-poverty schools and/or high minority schools, as designated by ISBE consistent with federal requirements, the LEA must perform a comprehensive review of institutional policies and constraints that may prevent such schools from attracting top talent, and develop strategies to address these constraints over the course of the grant period. Commencing with the 2011-2012 school year, the review must consider human capital performance metrics reported by ISBE, which will include disparities in school-level average teacher salaries, teacher academic capital, and other useful performance metrics developed in consultation with stakeholders.

**C. Improving the Effectiveness of Teacher and Principal Preparation Programs
[RTTT Application Section (D)(4)]**

The Final State Application will include a high quality plan to:

(i) Link student achievement and student growth data to students' teachers and principals, and link this information to the in-State programs where those teachers and principals were prepared for credentialing, and to publicly report the data for each credentialing program in the State.

(ii) Expand preparation credentialing options and programs that are successful at producing effective teachers and principals.

The LEA will cooperate with ISBE and IBHE to establish placement sites for pre-service teachers and principals from programs that are successful at producing effective teachers and leaders.

D. Providing Effective Support to Teachers and Principals [RTTT Application Section (D)(5)]

1. Scaling Up Support for All Beginning Teachers and Principals.

Subject to the availability of funding for programs, the LEA will:

- Establish induction and mentoring programs for all new teachers for at least two years in duration, with the programs meeting standards set forth in the School Code and administrative rule; and
- Participate in the State's technical assistance and accountability infrastructure to improve the quality of all new teacher induction and mentoring programs.

2. Intensive Educator Support for Critical P-20 Transition Points.

(a) Early Learning to K-3 *(not applicable to high school districts)*

The State will provide targeted funding and assistance for implementation of a developmentally-appropriate kindergarten readiness assessment to identify students' skills and achievements at the beginning of kindergarten. Following the State's development and piloting of a statewide kindergarten readiness assessment program and subject to the availability of funding for the assessment and the professional development, the LEA will:

- Implement a kindergarten readiness assessment; and
- Integrate and align professional development across early learning and grades K-3.

(b) Middle to High School

Since the 2007 - 08 school year, the State has funded the cost for school districts to implement the EXPLORE test in 8th or 9th grade and the PLAN test in 10th grade. Collectively, EXPLORE, PLAN and ACT constitute the Educational Planning and Assessment System ("EPAS"). Commencing in the 2010-11 school year, the State will require that Participating LEAs administer EXPLORE during 8th grade to better address the transition from middle to high school. The State will also establish a consistent testing window for administration of the EXPLORE and PLAN by Participating LEAs so that the data can be used in a consistent way to measure student and subgroup growth during the middle to high school transition.

Subject to the continuation of State funding for EXPLORE and PLAN, the LEA will:

- Clearly communicate and create a common understanding among educators, parents, and students that a student's scores on 8th grade and high school assessments (including EPAS system assessments) are a predictor of the student's readiness for non-remedial coursework.
- Establish systems for educators to discuss patterns and instructional needs identified through the data, and establish a process for early identification of students who may need remedial assistance before transitioning to college. These systems must include communication and coordination between high schools and feeder elementary/middle schools regarding aligned school improvements activities and targeted interventions to address areas of deficiencies.

- Create intensive instructional programs, primarily in math and reading, and student support services during high school years that increase the numbers of students prepared for non-remedial coursework.

(c) **High School to Postsecondary** (*not applicable to elementary districts*)

In response to the high cost of remediation and its impact on students and families, the State of Illinois adopted the College and Career Readiness Act, Public Act 95-0694, which created a 3-year pilot project with the goal of increasing college readiness and decreasing the need for remedial classes through:

- 1) The alignment of high school and college curriculums;
- 2) Measuring college readiness through aligning ACT scores to specific community college courses;
- 3) Increasing the number of student enrolled in a college-prep curriculum;
- 4) Providing resources and academic support to students in their senior year of high school through remedial and advanced coursework and other interventions; and
- 5) Development of an evaluation process that measures the effectiveness of readiness intervention strategies.

Consistent with the objectives of the College and Career Readiness Act, the LEA will work with the primary community college(s) into which its high school or high schools feed to:

- Facilitate communication and collaboration between them, align curriculum goals and academic expectations;
- Establish a process for early identification of students who may need remedial assistance before transitioning to college using assessments administered to students in high schools, particularly in math; and
- Create programs that seek to address the needs of these students before high school graduation.

IV. TURNING AROUND THE LOWEST-ACHIEVING SCHOOLS

Note: This Section of the MOU is only applicable to Participating LEAs with one or more Tier I or Tier II Schools. Tier I and Tier II Schools have been identified by ISBE as part of its final 1003(g) School Improvement Grant application. A list of Tier I Schools and Tier II Schools is available at www.isbe.net/sfsf.

A. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools [RTTT Application Section (E)(2)]

Subject to the availability of funding through Race to the Top, the Section 1003(g) School Improvement Grant program, or targeted State funding, the LEA must participate in the Illinois Partnership Zone initiative or must separately undertake one of the four school intervention models identified by the U.S. Department of Education—turnaround model, restart model, school closure, or transformation model—in all Tier I and Tier II Schools within the LEA.³ The interventions must be implemented during the first three years of the Race to the Top grant period (i.e., the 10 – 11, 11 – 12, or 12 – 13 school years), with no less than a proportionate cohort of schools initiating interventions in each year. If the LEA can demonstrate that a prior intervention substantially aligned to one of the four school intervention models is demonstrating significant student achievement gains, as determined by ISBE, the LEA may receive funding to continue with that intervention.

B. School District Reorganization to Improve Student Outcomes [RTTT Application Section (E)(1)]

If an LEA is identified by ISBE as a candidate for reorganization using metrics that include, but are not limited to, low student achievement outcomes, the LEA will agree to undertake a reorganization study funded by the State.

³ A description of the Illinois Partnership Zone is included in the State of Illinois Race to the Top Application for Initial Funding, pp. 144 – 148, available at: <http://www.isbe.net/racetothetop/default.htm>. The State's Race to the Top Application for Phase 2 Funding will include a consistent description of the Illinois Partnership Zone. A description of the four school intervention models is included in the State of Illinois Race to the Top Application for Initial Funding, Appendix Volume I, pp. 27 – 30, available at the same link.

EXHIBIT II

SUPER LEA REFORM COMMITMENTS

Note: This Section of the MOU is only applicable to Participating LEAs with one or more Tier I or Tier II Schools. Tier I and Tier II Schools have been identified by ISBE as part of its final 1003(g) School Improvement Grant application. A list of Tier I Schools and Tier II Schools is available at www.isbe.net/sfsf.

A. DIRECT SUPPORT AND PRIORITY FUNDING

The State is establishing additional funding and funding priority committed to accelerating reform in Participating LEAs with one or more Tier I or Tier II Schools. These are LEAs in which dramatic acceleration of reforms will have the greatest impact on helping the State close the achievement gap. If the LEA Superintendent and the Local Teachers' Union Leader agree to all of the commitments described in Subsection (B) below, the State will:

1. Provide or fund the provision of technical assistance and support to the LEA for implementation of the reforms and systems described in this Exhibit II;
2. Establish funding at a level of at least 10% out of the 50% State Race to the Top allocation (*i.e.*, \$20 million) that will be dedicated solely to LEAs that agree to make the commitments set forth in this Exhibit II;
3. Prioritize participation in the Illinois Partnership Zone Program for LEAs that make all of these commitments; and
4. Pursue significant foundation funding that will be directed to LEAs that make all of these commitments. The final Race to the Top application may also include new programs for LEAs that make all of the priority funding commitments.

B. COMMITMENTS

To receive these additional funds and funding priority, for each Participating LEA, the LEA Superintendent and the Local Teachers' Union Leader must commit to use their best efforts to develop implementation plans for all of the following and include such plans in the LEA Plan described in Section I.C of the MOU. The State Board of Education reserves the right to determine the sufficiency of the LEA Plan for purposes of additional funding or priority funding. In the event any of these commitments are not sufficiently included in such Plan, the Participating LEA will no longer be eligible for such additional funding and funding priority.

1. Acceleration of Performance Evaluation Re-Design in Tier I and Tier II Schools

- The Participating LEA will implement in Tier I and Tier II Schools new local performance evaluation systems that meet the requirement set forth in Exhibit I, Section III of this MOU by no later than the start of the 2011-2012 school year, with full District-wide scale-out of such evaluation systems no later than the following year.

- In its LEA Plan, the Participating LEA must set out in detail the plan and timeline for implementation of new performance evaluation systems.
- If the Participating LEA and the Local Teachers' Union are unable to reach an agreement regarding new performance evaluation systems at the time the LEA submits its LEA Plan, then the LEA will not be eligible for additional funding or funding priority under this Exhibit II.

2. Autonomy for Site-based Leadership of Tier I and Tier II Schools

[This item does not apply to school districts governed by Article 34 of the School Code, 105 ILCS 5/1-1 *et seq.*, due to their existing statutory autonomies.]

- To provide autonomy for the principals of Tier I and Tier II Schools to select and assign teachers to the school in order to establish an effective teaching staff as quickly as possible. Options for establishing an effective teaching staff include intensive professional development, filling of existing vacancies at the discretion of site-based leadership, relocation of staff through voluntary transfers, and involuntary transfers. As part of interventions in these schools, the LEA must use locally adopted competencies to measure the effectiveness of staff who can work within the new environment to meet the needs of students, screen all existing staff, and provide the principal with autonomy to determine which applicants will be accepted. If the LEA and the Local Teachers' Union cannot reach agreement on the foregoing issues by the time the LEA submits its LEA Plan, then the Participating LEA will not be eligible for additional funding or funding priority under this Exhibit II.
- In its LEA Plan, the LEA will specifically describe how such autonomy will be provided and include an agreed-upon negotiated waiver or other agreement providing flexibility from any inconsistent provisions in its collective bargaining agreement.

3. Illinois Partnership Zone Participation

- Participate in the Illinois Partnership Zone for one or more of the LEA's Tier I and Tier II Schools.
- In its LEA Plan, the LEA will specifically identify the schools to be included in the Illinois Partnership Zone and include an agreed-upon negotiated waiver or other agreement providing flexibility from any provisions in its collective bargaining agreement restricting the implementation of activities expected for participation in the Partnership Zone. If the LEA and the Local Teachers' Union cannot reach agreement on such a waiver or other agreement by the time the LEA submits its LEA Plan, the LEA will not be eligible for additional funding or funding priority under this Exhibit II.

[signatures on following page]

SIGNATURES

LEA Superintendent (or equivalent authorized signatory) - required:

Signature/Date

Print Name/Title

Local Teachers' Union Leader – required:

The signature of the Local Teachers' Union Leader set forth below indicates that the Local Teacher Union's Leader will use best efforts to develop a negotiated, mutually-agreed upon implementation plan in the areas identified in Subsection B above as part of the LEA Plan described in Section I.C of the MOU. The signature of the Local Teachers' Union Leader does not constitute an agreement by the Local Union to: (i) reopen or otherwise modify any existing collective bargaining agreement unless and until a subsequent negotiated waiver or other agreement has been mutually agreed upon by the LEA and Local Union; or (ii) limit or waive its rights and protections under the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Act and other applicable law.

Signature/Date

Print Name/Title

EXHIBIT III BASELINE INFORMATION

1. Does the Participating LEA's teacher evaluation plan incorporate student growth as a component?

Yes

No

If yes, please describe:

2. Does the Participating LEA's principal evaluation plan incorporate student growth as a component?

Yes

No

If yes, please describe:

3. Please describe any efforts taken during the last 5 years to turn around Illinois Priority Schools (persistently lowest-achieving schools) that substantially conform to one of the four school intervention models identified by the U.S. Department of Education: turnaround model, restart model, school closure, or transformation model. Please provide information including (a) the approach used, and (b) results and lessons learned to date.

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