



# 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

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Dear Superintendent:

First, I want to thank you for signing the memorandum of understanding for Illinois' Phase I "Race to the Top" application. I also want to thank the teacher union leaders and school board presidents who signed the memorandum. Our state placed fifth in this very competitive grant process, better than many people would have thought and we could not have scored so well or received the national recognition without your commitment to join with us in this endeavor.

Our fifth place finish was impressive, however, it was not good enough. We plan to apply for the maximum amount allowed in Phase II, \$400 million. The deadline for Illinois to submit its application is June 1 and your partnership is once again needed. I ask that you sign the acknowledgement cover sheet only to renew your commitment to the MOU. You must also ensure the President of your school board and the president of the local teachers' union have an opportunity to sign, and please encourage them to do so. While their signatures are not required, they are important for us to have a winning application.

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 we have underway needs this influx of funds to continue. There are several reasons why you should again commit to the MOU:

- 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.

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 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 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 acknowledgement cover sheet as soon as possible, but no later than May 24, by emailing it to [rt3mou@isbe.net](mailto:rt3mou@isbe.net).

Thank you for your continued consideration.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Christopher A. Koch in black ink.

Christopher A. Koch, Ed.D.

State Superintendent of Education

**STATE OF ILLINOIS  
RACE TO THE TOP APPLICATION FOR PHASE 2 FUNDING  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND AGREEMENT BY**

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Type or print school district name above] (the "**Participating LEA**")

On January 19, 2010, the State of Illinois ("**State**") submitted its Race to the Top Application for Initial Funding ("**Initial Application**"). In connection with the Initial Application, the State and the Participating LEA entered into a Memorandum of Understanding ("**MOU**"). The State did not receive funding for the Initial Application and intends to submit a Race to the Top Application for Phase 2 Funding ("**Phase 2 Application**") by June 1, 2010. The State, the Participating LEA, and any other signatories are executing this Acknowledgement in order to confirm their agreement that the MOU will apply to the State's Phase 2 Application.

The signatories to this Acknowledgement agree as follows:

1. To remain bound by the terms of the MOU with respect to the State's Phase 2 Application.<sup>1</sup>
2. To the extent that any signatory to this Acknowledgement did not sign the MOU, such additional signatory indicates agreement to the terms of the MOU and acknowledges that the MOU will apply to the State's Phase 2 Application.
3. To the extent feasible and permitted by the U.S. Department of Education, the State agrees to incorporate the LEA Plan, as defined in Section I of the MOU, into the district improvement planning template and process. The Participating LEA agrees to develop the LEA Plan in cooperation with its Local Teachers' Union.

**LEA Superintendent** <sup>2</sup>  
(or equivalent authorized signatory) - required:

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

**Local Teachers' Union Leader** <sup>3</sup>  
(if applicable):

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name/Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name/Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name/Title

1. For the State's Phase 2 application, the obligations relating to "Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools" in Section IV.A of the Preliminary Scope of Work apply only to Tier I and Tier II Schools that have been identified by ISBE as part of its final 1003(g) School Improvement Grant application.

2. The signature of the LEA Superintendent must also be set forth on the following page of this Acknowledgement to indicate agreement to the Super LEA Reform Commitments set forth in Exhibit II of the MOU.

3. The signature of the Local Teachers' Union Leader set forth above 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 the following page of this Acknowledgement to indicate agreement to the Super LEA Reform Commitments set forth in Exhibit II of the MOU.

**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 for purposes of the State's Phase 2 Application.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Christopher A. Koch, Ed.D. State Superintendent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**EXHIBIT II SIGNATURES  
SUPER LEA REFORM COMMITMENTS**

In order for an eligible Participating LEA to become or remain a "Super LEA", the signatures of the LEA Superintendent and Local Teachers' Union Leader must be set forth below. The Phase 2 Application will dedicate \$20 million of the State's Race to the Top allocation solely to eligible Participating LEAs that become or remain a "Super LEA."

- **For Participating LEAs that agreed to become a Super LEA as part of the Initial Application**, the Super LEA commitments:
  - will apply to Tier I Schools and Tier II Schools, and
  - may, at the election of the LEA, apply to other Illinois Priority Schools for which the Super LEA receives supplemental Race to the Top funding for participation in the Illinois Partnership Zone.
- **For Participating LEAs that did not agree to become a Super LEA as part of the Initial Application, but wish to become a Super LEA for the Phase 2 Application**, the LEA must have at least one Tier I or Tier II School. The Super LEA commitments will apply only to Tier I Schools and 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. Illinois Priority Schools include other significantly underperforming schools that fall within the bottom 5% of student achievement statewide. A list of Tier I Schools, Tier II Schools, and Illinois Priority Schools is available at [www.isbe.net/sfsf](http://www.isbe.net/sfsf).

**LEA Superintendent**  
(or equivalent authorized signatory) - required:

**Local Teachers' Union Leader**  
- required:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name/Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name/Title

The signature of the Local Teachers' Union Leader set forth above indicates that the Local Teacher Union's Leader will use best efforts as part of the LEA Plan to develop a negotiated, mutually-agreed upon implementation plan for the Super LEA commitments identified in Subsection B of Exhibit II 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.

*To review the terms of the MOU, including the "Super LEA" Commitments set forth on Exhibit II of the MOU, please visit <http://www.isbe.net/racetothesup/default.htm>. The MOU is the first document in Appendix Volume I. The "Super LEA" Commitments are on pages 20 – 21 of Appendix Volume I.*