

**Race to the Top – District
Guidance and Frequently Asked Questions**

*Addendum 1
September 5, 2012*

B-3a. Do the grant amounts listed in the budget range chart represent the award amount for each of the four years, or does it represent the total four-year award?

The grant amounts listed in the budget range chart represent the total four-year award. These may be found in the award range column of the budget range chart in Program Requirement 1.

C-1a. May a consortium include fewer than 10 LEAs?

Yes, so long as the consortium serves a minimum of 2,000 participating students (as defined in the notice) and meets all eligibility requirements in the notice, it is eligible to apply.

C-1b. May an intermediate service unit, educational service agency, or charter management organization apply for an award?

For purposes of the Race to the Top – District competition, an intermediate service unit, educational service agency, or charter management organization would be eligible to apply for an award under the Race to the Top – District competition only if it meets the definition of “LEA” in the notice. Under that definition, an eligible entity must be recognized under applicable State law as an LEA and meet the definition of LEA in Section 9101(26) of the ESEA.

C-1c. Could a non-LEA partnering organization such as a non-profit business partner or a charter management organization apply as a consortium applicant on behalf of a number of LEAs?

As stated in the notice, one way that a consortium of LEAs may apply for a grant is by establishing a separate, eligible legal entity to apply for a grant on its own behalf. A separate legal entity established to apply for this grant must meet all of the requirements for group applicants described in the notice, and must comprise only LEAs. Typically pre-existing legal entities such as a charter management organization or a non-profit business partner will not qualify as LEAs nor will they qualify as separate, eligible legal entities. Whether a consortium qualifies as a separate, eligible entity will depend on facts specific to that consortium. The Department will not advise individual prospective applicants on whether they qualify as LEAs or separate, eligible entities.

The Department notes that a consortium of LEAs may also apply for a grant by designating one LEA member of the consortium to apply for the grant on behalf of the consortium. If a charter management organization is recognized under applicable State law as an LEA and meets the definition of LEA in Section 9101(26), it may be designated as an LEA lead in a consortia application. These consortia applicants must also meet the requirements for consortia applicants described in the notice.

C-1d. May a school within one LEA be a participating school (as defined in the notice) in an application from another LEA or consortium of LEAs?

No. A school may participate only in an application that includes its LEA.

C-1e. How does an applicant determine the number of participating students and may an applicant increase over time the number of its participating students?

At the time of the application, an applicant must provide an actual or approximate count of the number of participating students who would receive services under the project. If an applicant does not have a specific list of participating schools at the time of the application, the applicant must make an assurance that it meets the eligibility requirement. An applicant will have 100 days from the date of the grant award to provide the list of participating schools as described in Program Requirements (7)(ii). An applicant may plan in its proposal to increase the number of participating students over the course of the grant (*e.g.*, by adding participating schools or students); however, an applicant must propose in its application to serve at least 2,000 participating students at the time of award (unless the applicant is a consortium of ten or more LEAs and at least 75 percent of the students served by each LEA are participating students, as defined in the notice). However, an applicant must base its requested award amount on the number of participating students it proposes to serve at the time of application or within the first 100 days of the grant award (*i.e.*, budget request must be within the award range for the number of participating students at the time of application).

If, for example, an applicant proposes to serve 5,100 students in year 1 with a plan to increase the number of participating students each year of the grant, that applicant's budget request may provide for an increase each year to support the additional students, but may not exceed a total of \$20 million for the four-year grant period.

Please note that, the budget ranges do not include optional budget supplements.

C-1f. How does an applicant calculate the percentage of participating students (as defined in the notice) from low-income families in order to determine whether it meets the eligibility requirement (1)(c)?

An applicant determines the percentage of students from low-income families by dividing the number of participating students (as defined in the notice) who are from low-income families by the total number of participating students across all participating schools (as defined in the notice). Therefore, it is possible for an individual participating school to have less than 40 percent participating students who are low-income, as long as overall, across all participating schools, 40 percent of participating students are low-income.

In the case of a consortium, the applicant should calculate the percentage of participating students from low-income families in the same way.

For instance, in the example below, the consortium includes two LEAs. The applicant should take the total number of participating students who are from low-income families in participating schools within those two LEAs, divide by the total number of participating students within these two LEAs, and multiply by 100. This is the percentage of participating students across all participating schools in the example consortium below.

$$(1,150 \text{ (in column E)} / 2,200 \text{ (in column B)}) * 100 = 52.27\%$$

In the consortium depicted in the example below, 52.27% of participating students are from low-income families and, thus it would meet the 40 percent threshold included in eligibility requirement (1)(c).

Example Table for (A)(2)(c)

			School Demographics								
			Raw Data Actual numbers or estimates (Please note where estimates are used)						Percentages		
			A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
LEA (Column relevant for consortium applicants)	Participating School	Grades/Subjects included in Race to the Top – District Plan	# of Participating Educators	# of Participating Students	# of Participating high-need students	# of Participating low-income students	Total # of low-income students in LEA or Consortium	Total # of Students in the School	% of Participating Students in the School (B/F)*100	% of Participating students from low-income families (D/B)*100	% of Total LEA or consortium low-income population (D/E)*100
School District A	Elementary 1	K-5 Math	25	700	575	500	1,150	700	700/700 = 100%	500/700 = 71.4%	500/1,150 = 43.48%
School District A	Middle School 2	6-8 Math	5	500	400	300	1,150	900	500/900 = 55.56%	300/500 = 60%	300/1,150 = 26.09%
School District B	Middle School 3	7-8 Math	10	1,000	600	350	1,150	1,500	1000/1,500 = 66.7%	350/1,000 = 35%	350/1,150 = 30.43%
TOTAL			45	2,200	1,575	1,150	1,150	3,100	2200/3,100 = 70.97%	1150/2,200 = 52.27%	100%

C-13a. Does the superintendent evaluation (as defined in the notice) requirement apply to charter school LEAs that do not have a superintendent? (See eligibility requirement (1)(d)(i)(C))

Yes. The charter school LEA should have a system for evaluating the performance of its lead administrator, and such an evaluation would serve as the superintendent evaluation for that LEA.

C-13b. Must an LEA have implemented teacher, principal, and superintendent evaluation systems (as defined in the notice) at the time of the application? (See eligibility requirement (1)(d)(i))

At the time of the application, the applicant must assure that teacher, principal, and superintendent evaluation systems (as defined in the notice) will be implemented no later than the 2014-2015 school year. The evaluation systems need not be in place at the time of submission of the application.

C-13c. Must the teacher, principal, and superintendent evaluation systems (as defined in the notice) be implemented district-wide or just in participating schools? (See eligibility requirement (1)(d)(i))

These evaluation systems (as defined in the notice) must be implemented in all schools in the district no later than the 2014-2015 school year. However, LEAs where charter schools have additional flexibility (as determined by the chartering authorizer or under State law), the charter schools may elect to implement separate evaluation systems, so long as they meet the definitions in the notice.

C-13d. Must a consortium of LEAs use the same teacher and principal evaluation system (as defined in the notice) across all LEAs in the consortium? (See eligibility requirements (1)(d)(i)(A) and (1)(d)(i)(B))

No. All LEAs in a consortium do not have to use the same teacher and principal evaluation system (as defined in the notice) but every LEA must implement a teacher and principal evaluation system (as defined in the notice). Each LEA in a consortium must assure that it will implement teacher, principal, and superintendent evaluation systems (as defined in the notice) by the 2014-2015 school year.

C-13e. May an LEA use its State’s teacher and principal evaluation systems (as defined in the notice) or must it create new systems? (See eligibility requirements (1)(d)(i)(A) and (1)(d)(i)(B))

An LEA may use its State’s evaluation systems, as long the systems include all the elements of teacher and principal evaluation systems defined in the notice.

C-17. What does it mean for an LEA to have the capability to receive or match student-level preschool through 12th grade and higher education data? (See eligibility requirement (1)(d)(iv))

An LEA should have a way of collecting and using data on its students from preschool through higher education (*e.g.*, having the ability to track where a recent high school graduate attends college). An LEA need not have a sophisticated data system, but should have a way to access this type of information, either by matching P-12 and higher education data, or by receiving that information from others (*e.g.*, from the State or an outside provider).

C-18. In eligibility requirement (1)(e), what does it mean for the signature of the local teachers’ union or association president to be “applicable”?

If an LEA employs teachers who are represented by a teachers’ union/association (in a bargaining or non-bargaining State), then the signature of the local teachers’ union/association leader is applicable. If signatures are not applicable, then the absence of these signatures will not affect the application. LEAs may provide an explanation as to why the signature of the local teachers’ union or association president is not applicable.

C-19. Must an LEA have persistently low-achieving schools or low-performing schools in order to be eligible to apply?

No. Having persistently lowest-achieving schools or low-performing schools is not an eligibility requirement. It is a selection criterion. Selection criterion (B)(1)(b) asks an applicant to demonstrate a clear track record of success in achieving ambitious and significant reforms in its persistently lowest-achieving schools or its low-performing schools. As stated in question F-1, while each selection criterion has a point value, meeting a selection criterion is not a requirement of the competition. If an applicant only partially addresses a selection criterion, or does not address a selection criterion, it will receive partial points, or it will not receive points for the criterion, but it will still be eligible to compete.

D-6a. May an applicant choose to partner with multiple organizations under the competitive preference priority?

Yes.

D-10. May partnerships with public or private organizations be existing partnerships, or must there be new partnerships specifically developed in response to the Race to the Top – District competition?

Partnerships with public or private organizations may be existing partnerships.

E-18a. What data tables should applicants complete for applicant-proposed performance measures?

For applicant-proposed performance measures, applicants should complete data tables that provide both baseline data and annual targets. The table entitled “Performance Measure (All-Applicants – c),” on page 55 of the application, provides an example of a table that could be used for an applicant-proposed performance measure. This table is only one example. Applicants should tailor the data tables to provide the most relevant and complete information for applicant-proposed measures. Peer reviewers will be looking for performance measures and annual targets that are ambitious yet achievable, and are meaningful for the applicant’s proposal and for assessing implementation progress, successes, and challenges.

E-18b. What data should an LEA use for baseline data if it will not have final 2011-2012 results prior to the application deadline?

If an LEA does not have 2011-2012 baseline data available prior to the application deadline, it may use preliminary 2011-2012 data or final 2010-2011 data. When final 2011-2012 data become available, an LEA that receives a grant will provide these updated data.

E-18c. If an application is targeting a specific grade band, does it need to have performance measures in (E)(3) for all grades?

No. The application must include performance measures only for the participating students and schools in the plan. Therefore, if an application targets a specific grade band, only the performance measures for that specific grade band must be included. (See also question E-4.)

F-2a. What agency or individual at the State level should provide comments on the application?

The Department has not identified a specific agency or office within the State that must comment on a Race to the Top – District application. An LEA should consult its State to determine the appropriate agency or office within the State (such as the Governor’s office, State educational agency, or Attorney General’s office) that will comment on Race to the Top – District applications.

F-2b. If a State does not participate in Intergovernmental Review, must an applicant provide the State with the opportunity to comment on its Race to the Top – District application?

Yes. This application requirement is separate from intergovernmental review.

H-1a. Must a grantee employ an external evaluator to assess the effectiveness of its project?

No. However, a grantee must cooperate in any national evaluation of the program conducted by the Department per Program Requirement 2.

H-4. Does an applicant have to complete its assessment of disproportionate discipline and expulsion rates prior to submitting its application?

No. The assessment is a program requirement, in other words a requirement with which an applicant must comply with if it receives an award. If an applicant receives a grant under Race to the Top – District, over the grant period it will conduct an assessment of disproportionate discipline and expulsion rates and develop a plan to address root causes and reduce disproportionate discipline and expulsions.