

ILLINOIS RACE TO THE TOP (RTTT) APPLICATION FACT SHEET – SUBMITTED JANUARY 19, 2010

General Information on RTTT and Illinois Application

- Currently, two phases of RTTT:
 - 1st phase applications due Jan. 19. Finalists invited for interview in DC in Spring; winners named afterwards
 - 2nd phase applications due in June 2010 for fall decisions
 - President Obama suggested today, Jan. 19, there may be a 3rd round of RTTT (proposed \$1.3 billion total)
- Illinois' final budget request in Phase 1 application was for \$510 million over four years of the grant period.
- 364 districts signed on to Illinois RTTT plan, representing 74.1% of Illinois students; 115 local union leaders signed on.
- 12 districts and their teachers' unions agreed to waive the collective bargaining restrictions necessary to tackle even bolder set of reforms together (see Exhibit II of Participating LEA MOU in application).

Illinois' Competitiveness in Phase 1

- Illinois has taken great strides in education reform. The State is expected to be competitive in Phase 1 of RTTT. Awards are likely to be granted to only a few of the 40 states that are applying.
- Specific progress over the last year exhibited by passing four key education reform laws in RTTT priority areas, including two laws in the last two weeks: (1) revamping teacher and principal evaluation systems statewide, (2) establishing a state longitudinal education data system, (3) increasing cap on charter schools, and (4) expanding opportunities for high-quality teacher and principal preparation programs run by non-profit organizations like Teach for America.

Details on Illinois' RTTT Phase 1 Application

Rigorous Evaluations for All Teachers and Principals

- Illinois is one of only a handful of states that make at least half of teacher and principal evaluations dependent on student performance. State will provide support to districts to implement this locally.
- Illinois will pursue a better system for assessing students. The state will develop a menu of formative and interim assessments—tests that are shorter, more frequent, and more helpful to educators. Districts can use them to know how teachers are doing and how to help them get better.

Turning Around Illinois' Lowest-Performing Schools

- Illinois' lowest-performing schools are spread throughout 71 districts statewide; more than 80% of them are high schools. Illinois will engage in high school turnaround at an unprecedented scale.
- The state pre-approved national and local organizations to partner with local districts to turnaround these schools before 2014, putting Illinois in a stronger position than other states to rapidly improve these schools.
- Union and management in 12 districts agreed to give principals in these low-performing schools extra autonomy to carry out school turnaround activities, such as making teacher hiring and transfer decisions.

Cooperation and Collaboration

- New and perhaps an unlikely group of stakeholders – including the Illinois Education Association, Illinois Federation of Teachers, Illinois Statewide School Management Alliance, Large Urban Districts Association, Advance Illinois, Illinois Business Roundtable, along with Governor Quinn and the Illinois State Board of Education – has cooperated and collaborated to develop this RTTT application.
- While unions in other states have rejected their state's RTTT application, the IEA and IFT have both issued letters of support for the Illinois application and were critical partners in its development.
- Letters of support were received from the Large Urban Districts Association, Illinois Business RoundTable, Advance Illinois, Consortium on Chicago School Research, and the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce, among others.