



American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Race To The Top (RTTT)

OVERVIEW

- Race to the Top is a competitive grant process through the U.S. Department of Education for qualifying states. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act allocated \$4.3 billion for this grant.
 - Arkansas qualifies since we do not have a state law against linking teacher and principal effectiveness with student data.
 - Tennessee and Delaware were awarded grants in RTTT Phase I leaving \$3.4 billion for Phase II.
- Arkansas applied for \$171.3 million in RTTT Phase II to implement the state's reform plans.
- A minimum of 50% of these funds must go to participating local education agencies (247 {out of 258} school districts and open-enrollment public charter schools) to implement the state plan.
- In order to receive funding the superintendent or director, along with the board president, must sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signifying that they will fully participate in the state RTTT plan. Local Teacher Association leaders were also strongly encouraged to sign the MOU (104 out of 191 signed).

ARKANSAS'S PLAN IS DESIGNED TO ACCELERATE COHERENT REFORMS (A & F) ACROSS FOUR PILLARS (B-E)

A. State Success and Building State Capacity

- LEA support and state leadership
- Office of Innovation
- RTTT Project Management Office and Fiscal Management Team (accountability, technical assistance, evaluation, training)
- History of success

B. Standards and Assessment

- Consideration to adopt the National Common Core Standards by August 2010
- Participation in a common summative assessment consortium
- Transition and instructional alignment to the National Common Core Standards
- Development and implementation of state-developed assessment system (formative assessments, interim assessments, and course curriculum)
- Expansion of STEM programs (AAIMS and EAST)
- Inclusion of Smart Core Incentive funding

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction

- Development and implementation of a Unified Resource Portal
- Expansion of our data collection work on preschool children
- Building a statewide Instructional Improvement System

D. Great Teachers and Leaders

- Full implementation of new teacher evaluation system (based on Charlotte Danielson's work)
- Development and implementation of a new principal evaluation system
- Expansion of the instructional facilitators program
- Expansion of Teach for America
- Increasing equitable distribution of effective ELL and special education teachers
- Study and pilot of a differentiated compensation program (10 LEAs)
- Development of a report card for the state's Colleges of Education programs
- Participation in a six-state consortium to help Arkansas develop recruiting and retention strategies targeted at the next-generation of teachers and leaders.
- Implementation of a Teaching and Learning Conditions Study with professional development follow up.
- Extensive, intensive and embedded professional development to support all proposed initiatives will be provided (throughout the plan) – the development of an Instructional Improvement System is key

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools (High Priority)

- Aggressively intervene in low performing schools (19 persistently low performing schools must implement one of the federally defined intervention models – turnaround, closure, restart or transformation) in order to participate in RTTT.
- Building state capacity to support and provide effective intervention strategies for the state's highest priority schools.
- Ensuring that all high priority middle and high schools have access to a Career Coach provided by the Arkansas Department of Career Education
- Ensuring that all high priority elementary schools hire a licensed math teacher for all 3rd grade classrooms

F. General Conditions Area

- Explanation of Arkansas's education funding history and position
- Explanation of our charter school law and history

G. Invitational Area

- Early Childhood – Explanation on the state's success with preschool programs.
- SLDS Expansion – Explanation of the state's Early Warning System development.
- P-20 Coordination – Explanation of the state's education task forces and their focus on graduation rates, closing the achievement gap, overall student achievement and quality student transitions from one level of education to the next.
- School Level Conditions for Reform, Innovation and Learning – Explanation of the state's Scholastic Audit process.

TIMELINE

- May 4: Final preliminary MOU completed and sent to superintendents and directors
- May 14 (or before): Draft proposal presented to stakeholders
- May 19: Last day to submit a signed MOU to ADE
- May 29: Phase II application mailed to the USDOE
- August: Phase II awards announced