

# RACE TO THE TOP LEA GRANT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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## Overview

Race to the Top (RTT) is a U.S. Department of Education (USDE) competitive grant program originally authorized and funded under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). USDE awarded approximately \$4 billion to 12 States under Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Race to the Top competition. Race to the Top Phase 3 (RTT3) is authorized by ARRA but funded by the FFY 11 Appropriations Act. PDE was awarded \$41,326,339 total and will distribute \$20,663,169 to participating LEAs based on the Title I formula. Please see the general FAQ for more information.

## Deadlines

All LEA funds must be expended by June 30, 2015.

IUs must submit quarterly budget reports, which are due on the last business day of March, June, September, and December.

## Performance Measures

The following performance measures represent the commitments of each RTT participant.

Activity	12/13	13/14	14/15
<b>RACE TO THE TOP PERFORMANCE METRICS</b>			
% of <b>teachers</b> from participating LEAs <b>trained</b> on <b>teacher evaluation</b> rubrics.	50	100	100
% of <b>principals</b> from participating LEAs <b>trained</b> on <b>teacher evaluation</b> rubrics.	50	100	100
% of <b>principals</b> from participating LEAs <b>trained</b> on <b>principal evaluation</b> rubrics.	25	50	75
% of <b>superintendents</b> from participating LEAs <b>trained</b> on <b>principal evaluation</b> rubrics.	25	50	75
% of <b>teachers</b> from participating LEAs <b>evaluated</b> with <b>teacher</b> rubrics.	10	100	100
% of <b>principals</b> from participating LEAs <b>evaluated</b> with <b>principal</b> rubrics.	N/A	10	100
% of participating educators using the professional development modules associated with the new evaluation system within the SAS portal	10	30	50

**Note:** The highlighted changes reflect passage of Act 82 of 2012, or section 1123 of the School Code. RTT LEAs are encouraged to accelerate training to support successful implementation. The percentages above are cumulative, (if you train 50% of teachers in the first year, only 50% remain in the second year).

The eGrants application assures 30% of teachers will use the Danielson professional development modules located on the SAS portal in the 2013-2014 school year and 50% for 2014-2015. How are these modules accessed?

1. Go to: <http://www.pdesas.org/>
2. Click on teacher tools (upper right-hand corner)
3. Log in with user id and password
4. Click on PD Center
5. Click on the Class Registration tab

## Expenditures

What is the timeline for expending funds?

A: Race to the Top funds must be spent by June 30, 2015.

What are eligible expenditures?

A: Eligible expenditures include those costs incurred through implementation of Educator Effectiveness, including:

- Purchased professional services
- Facilities and materials fees
- Travel costs
- Salaries and benefits associated with release time
- Development of additional measures
- Equipment (hardware)
- Licensing (software)

Does eGrants need modified if funds will be expended for a different purpose than originally budgeted?

A: Expenditures must be consistent with allowable expenses outlined in the eGrants application and must be for the purpose of achieving the performance measures. Expenditures can deviate from the original budget, and no revision to the eGrant budget is necessary. Instead, an LEA interested in amending the allocation of funds should send an email to the IU addressing the original intent of the funds, the new intent of funds, a rationale explaining why the amendment is necessary, and how performance measures will still be met. Upon approval, the LEA can then expend the newly allocated funds and submit the invoice to their IU.

What are some examples of eligible expenditures?

#### PURCHASED PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

- Beyond the free IU Turnaround training or online training, if a district wishes to contract with the IU for on-site (at the school/district) facilitated PD, the IU may charge for Purchased Professional Services.
- Some IUs might offer additional PD on evaluation as part of their business model beyond the two days that they offer as part of their service model
- If LEAs are using an alternate instrument, they may purchase training/support which will not be provided free by PDE.

#### FACILITIES & MATERIALS FEES

- For some LEAs/IUs, past practice has recognized that sometimes renting alternate meeting space close to the audience is more efficient than travel to the IU. So while the IU Turnaround Training is free, if schools/districts request an alternate site there may be modest fees.
- For LEAs not using the PDE tool and going with a different trainer, their invoice for training will differentiate purchased professional services from the facilities and materials fees.
- Districts may prefer facilitated training for teachers (as opposed to the asynchronous modules).

#### DEVELOPMENT OF ADDITIONAL MEASURES

- Potential purchased professional services (expertise) outside of the district – or (if using district staff) stipends or release time, travel expenses, etc.
- Potential purchase of an instrument to measure just that portion of the evaluation that is used for additional measures.
- Potential 'development' costs of the instrument if the instrument will be technologically enabled.

#### EQUIPMENT & LICENSING

- Equipment necessary to capture or process data as part of the evaluation (e.g., tablets used for in-class observations).
- Equipment necessary to facilitate the professional development (particularly the asynchronous modules).

- Licenses purchased for supplemental professional development (or PD for an 'alternate instrument').
- Licenses for an application to facilitate the evaluation (e.g., a tablet app that captures the data and applies it to the rubric).

**Table of Eligible Expenditures**

	100 Salaries	200 Benefits	300 Purchased Professional and Technical Services	400 Purchased Property Services	500 Other Purchased Services	600 Supplies 800 Dues & Fees
1000 Instruction	0	0	0	0	0	0
2200 Staff Support Services	0	0	0	0	0	0
2800 Central Support Services	0	0	0	0	0	0
2900 Other Support Services	0	0	0	0	0	0

## Specialists

What are the expectations for specialists?

A. The Race to the Top grant defines specialists as certificated professionals with unique functions and roles, such as reading/math specialists and instructional coaches. Therefore, the RTT grant does not include specialists such as nurses, psychologists, etc., and for RTT grant purposes these individuals will be evaluated using the teacher evaluation rubric. To summarize, while Act 82 recognizes all three types of educators—teachers, principals, and specialists—for RTT purposes, performance measures in the RTT grant only apply to teachers and principals.

## Teachscope

The RTT grant says that evaluators must successfully complete the Teachscope inter-rater reliability training before evaluating teachers. Is that accurate for this year?

A: No. The language is obsolete.

## Intermediate Unit (IU) Administration

### Role of IUs

IUs serve as the fiscal agents to LEAs participating in the Race to the Top Program. Similar to other federally funded programs, LEAs must submit invoices for program-related expenditures to the regional IU for reimbursement. The IU reviews the expenditures to ensure alignment to the scope of work outlined in the LEA's eGrants application and then submits the invoice to PDE for reimbursement. PDE will utilize IUs to support Race to the Top activities for two significant ways:

1. The IUs will act as a contractor providing services to PDE, providing professional development to LEAs in standards and assessments, teacher and principal evaluation tools and processes, and related initiatives.
2. In addition to contracted work, the IUs will distribute funds to LEA on a reimbursement basis for eligible expenditures.

### Process Overview

- IUs receive grant agreements from PDE.
- IUs create agreements with LEAs.
- LEAs submit expenditures to IUs to review alignment to the scope of work outlined in the eGrants application.
- IUs aggregate eligible expenditures and submit reimbursement requests to PDE.
- PDE reviews and initiates payment, which then flow through the IUs to the LEAs.

Note: IUs are taking NO indirect costs from the funds granted to LEAs. PDE contracted directly with IUs to provide administrative services. IUs submit invoices for administrative services as they incur expenses.

### Expenditure Overview

Information like AUNs (9 digits, not 5 or 7) must be accurate as well as the function and object codes.

Descriptions must be detailed enough to answer the following questions:

- Is this expenditure consistent with allowable expenses?
- Is this expenditure for the purpose of achieving the performance objectives?
- Is this expenditure consistent with general administrative requirements?
- IUs are to report the aggregate of LEA expenditures. Since PDE must report how funds are being spent by each LEA, IUs record the function/object of each LEA's expenditures. Specific instructions for completing these forms are included in each IU's reporting package.
- IUs are to utilize function 2510 and object code 330 to report IU Administrative Expenses as these expenses are not considered indirect costs. IUs are NOT to include these 2510-330 expenses on their Schedule of Federal Awards as they are not reportable as such.
- Acceptable descriptions: "Teacher" or "Principal" or "Educator" AND "Effectiveness" or "Evaluation"
  - "Salaries (or benefits, or substitutes) for Teacher/Principal effectiveness training"
  - "Professional development on Teacher/Principal effectiveness"
  - "Supplies or contracted services for Teacher/Principal evaluation software"
- Unacceptable Descriptions
  - "Salaries (or benefits, or substitutes)"
  - "Training or Professional development"
  - "Supplies or Contracted services"
  - "RTT" or "Race to the Top"

In short, RTT funds are used to support training and implementation of the new evaluations, not on general PD. If questions arise whether an expense is allowable or not, err on the side of caution and use other funds to support those marginally-related expenses and use the RTT funds only for those expenses directly related to training and/or implementation of Educator Effectiveness.

### Educator Effectiveness Support

PDE communication on Educator Effectiveness initiatives is via the IU Regional Coordinators assigned to Educator Effectiveness. These communications flow from PDE's Educator Effectiveness Workgroup, to the IU Regional Coordinators, to the IUs within their region, who coordinate activities and communications to the LEAs.

## Summary of Race to the Top initiatives

### (A)(2) Building Capacity

*Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed reform plans*

- Build capacity (hiring RTT team)
- Create and facilitate the Strategic Leadership Council (SLC)
- Coordinate IU training and support

### (B)(3) Common Core

*Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments*

- Strengthen standards and assessments on the SAS portal
- Implement the Math Design Collaborative (MDC)
- Develop and implement an Online Course Catalog (OCC), including *Pennsylvania Learns iTunes U*
- Fidelity Implementation Review and Support Tool (FIRST)

### (C)(2) Data Systems

*Accessing and using state data to support instruction*

- Develop a School Performance Profile (SPP), formerly "report card"
- Govern data in PIMS for TSDL, PVAAS, SPP, and SAS portal
- Early Warning System (EWS) Dashboard through *Opening Doors*
- Data Collection Consolidation (DCC)

### (D)(2) Educator Effectiveness: Evaluation Design

*Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance*

### (D)(5) Educator Effectiveness: Evaluation Training

*Providing effective support to teachers and principals*

- Train principals/supervisors and teachers on Danielson Framework for Teaching
- Train principals/supervisors on Teachscape's Framework for Teaching Proficiency System to ensure inter-rater reliability

### (F)(2) Charters

*Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charters and other innovative schools*

Note: While no specific funds have been allocated for STEM and higher education, grant activities promote STEM and engagement with institutions of higher education through the enhancement of resources on the SAS portal, the Online Course Catalog, the Math Design Collaborative, and educator effectiveness communications.

## Resources:

Award Information: Federal Award Number-B413A120004; Federal Awarding Agency-U.S. Department of Education; CFDA Number/Title-84.413A, Race to the Top-Phase 3; PA Revenue Code-8734, PA Funding Source- 998; Budget/Performance Period: 12/22/2011-12/22/2015.

RTT3 Federal Resources: [USDE RTT3 Website](#), [USDE's FAQs](#), [CFDA](#), [CCR](#), [A-133](#); Report [fraud](#)

RTT3 PA Resources: [PDE Home](#) > [Grants and Subsidies](#) > [American Recovery and Reinvestment Act](#)

- Frequently Asked Questions

Other PDE Resources:

- PA [Budget](#), PDE [eGrants](#), Federal [interest/cash management](#),
- FAI Application: [PDE Home](#) > [Login](#) (top left) > [My PDE](#) (bottom left) > [Applications](#) > FAI