

**Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District
Board of Education Meeting
MINUTES**

January 4, 2010

A special meeting of the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District Board of Education was held on Monday, January 4, 2010, at the District Offices: 1651 16th Street, Santa Monica, CA. The Board of Education called the meeting to order at 6:09 p.m. in the Board Room.

I CALL TO ORDER

A. Roll Call – Board of Education

Barry Snell	Ben Allen – <i>arrived at 6:21pm</i>
Kelly Pye	Maria Leon-Vazquez – <i>arrived at 6:20pm</i>
Jose Escarce	Ralph Mechur
Oscar de la Torre	

B. Pledge of Allegiance
Led by Dr. Escarce

II PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public Comments is the time when members of the audience may address the Board of Education on items not scheduled on the meeting's agenda. All speakers are limited to three (3) minutes. When there is a large number of speakers, the Board may reduce the allotted time to two (2) minutes per speaker. The Brown Act (Government Code) states that Board members may not engage in discussion of issues raised during "III. Public Comments," except to ask clarifying questions, make a brief announcement, make a brief report on his or her own activities, or to refer the matter to staff. This Public Comment section is limited to twenty (20) minutes.

III. CONSENT CALENDAR (5)

Consent agenda items are considered routine, as agreed by the President, Vice President and Superintendent, requiring no discussion, and are normally all approved at one time by the Board of Education. However, members of the Board of Education, staff, or the public may request an item be removed from the consent agenda for clarification and/or discussion. Consideration will occur during Section XI (Major Items).

Curriculum and Instruction

A.01 Early Head Start Collaboration with Venice Family Clinic..... 1

IV MAJOR ITEMS (45)

A.02 "Race to the Top" (RTTT) Memorandum of Understanding (45).....2-12

V ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Mr. de la Torre, seconded by Mr. Allen, and voted 7/0 to adjourn the meeting at 6:57 p.m. The next regular meeting will be held on **Thursday, January 14, 2010**, at **5:30 p.m.** in the Board Room at the District Office: 1651 16th Street, Santa Monica, CA.

Approved: January 14, 2010

Barry A. Snell
President

[Signature]
Superintendent

CONSENT ITEMS

TO: BOARD OF EDUCATION

ACTION/CONSENT

01/14/10

FROM: TIM CUNEO / MICHAEL D. MATTHEWS / JUDY ABDO

RE: EARLY HEAD START COLLABORATION WITH VENICE FAMILY CLINIC

RECOMMENDATION NO. A.

It is recommended that the Board of Education approve the contract and budget for fiscal year 2010-2011 with Venice Family Clinic (VFC) for the purpose of providing Early Head Start services to eligible families (ages 0–3 years) effective January 2010 through September 2010. This agreement is to be executed between VFC and the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District, wherein VFC agrees to pay Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District Child Development Fund an amount not to exceed \$64,000 for the Early Head Start program.

COMMENT: Early Head Start is a federal grant program with a long history of providing comprehensive child development and support services to young children and families with incomes at or below the poverty level. The contract operates from January 2010 to September 30, 2010, and will provide services for eight Early Head Start children in a full day setting.

BUDGET 2010 - 2011	
Personnel	\$ 43,550
Fringe Benefits	15,197
Travel	0
Equipment	0
Supplies	1,710
Contractual	0
Construction	0
Other	3,543
TOTAL	\$ 64,000

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Ms. Adbo explained that the \$64,000 covered January 2010 through September 30, 2010, and that the MOU could be renewed after that.

MOTION MADE BY: Mr. Mechur
SECONDED BY: Dr. Escarce
STUDENT ADVISORY VOTE: N/A
AYES: All (5) (Mr. Allen and Ms. Leon-Vazquez were absent)
NOES: None (0)

MAJOR ITEMS

TO: BOARD OF EDUCATION

ACTION/MAJOR
01/04/10

FROM: TIM CUNEO / CHIUNG-SALLY CHOU

RE: RACE TO THE TOP (RTTP) MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

RECOMMENDATION NO. A.02

It is recommended that the Board of Education approve the district's submission and a Memorandum of Understanding in support of the state's effort to secure Race to the Top (RTTP) funding from the US Department of Education. By agreeing to the conditions set forth by the federal and state governments, the district will receive additional resources to support its students and teachers.

COMMENT: Race to the Top offers the district to build on our progress to date and invest in the continuous improvement of our students' academic performance. The board must approve and district must submit an MOU no later than January 8, 2010. In support of the state's effort, the following areas are addressed in the MOU:

1. **Standards and Assessments:** Under RTTP, both state standards and assessments will be changing. The state is proposing a five-year timeline in which to adopt the common core standards, review curriculum frameworks, adopt new instructional materials and review state assessments. It is the goal of the state to adopt the national common core standards by August 2, 2010, but to do so in such a manner as to not lower the rigor of our current standards. The state also intends to develop and adopt a new accountability model that will be based on individual year-to-year student achievement gains.
2. **Data Systems:** The state's plan and application will include language to establish/maintain an articulated data system. The district must commit to using the data system and to the use of formative assessments to determine pupil progress. The state also plans to implement a growth model to determine achievement; this will eventually replace the Adequately Yearly Progress system if approved by the federal government.
3. **Teachers and Leaders:** The district will be required to commit to annual evaluations of both teachers and principals. It will be left to the district to determine and develop that evaluation system. One issue to keep in mind for the evaluation system is that it will need to include student performance assessment data. For the purposes of this MOU, the district must commit to exploring these changes with our bargaining unit – SMMCTA.
4. **Turning around the lowest performing schools:** The district will be required to implement one of the four models specified in Race to the Top for their persistently lowest achieving schools. These include:
 - **Turnaround model:** A turnaround model is one in which an LEA must replace the principal and up to 50 percent of the staff and grant the new principal sufficient operational flexibility (including staffing, calendars/time, and budgeting) to implement fully a comprehensive approach in order to substantially improve student achievement outcomes and increase high school graduation rates.
 - **Restart model:** A restart model is one in which an LEA converts a school or closes and reopens a school under a charter school operator, a charter management organization, or an education management organization that has been selected through a rigorous review process.
 - **School closure:** School closure occurs when an LEA closes a school and enrolls the students who attended that school in other schools in the LEA that are higher achieving.
 - **Transformation model:** A transformation model is one in which an LEA implements each of the following strategies:
 - Replace the principal who led the school prior to commencement of the transformation model;
 - Use rigorous, transparent and equitable evaluation systems for teachers and principals that include the use of student achievement data;

- Identify and reward school leaders, teachers and other staff who have increased student achievement and high-school graduation rates and identify and remove those who, after ample opportunities have been provided for them to improve their professional practice, have not done so;
- Provide staff with ongoing, high-quality, job-embedded professional development that is aligned with the school's comprehensive instructional program and designed with school staff; and
- Implement such strategies as financial incentives, increased opportunities for promotion and career growth, and more flexible work conditions that are designed to recruit, place, and retain staff with the skills necessary to meet the needs of the students in a transformation school.

Attached is the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to be reviewed and approved by the Board of Education.

In addition, the FAQs section of the State Department of Education's website (<http://www.caracetothetop.org>) is attached to assist the board members in their understanding of the Race to the Top Initiative during their deliberations.

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Public Comments:

- *Harry Keiley, SMMCTA President, reminded the board that many of the required changes are subject to negotiations, including teacher evaluations.*

In response to Mr. Mechur's questions, Dr. Chou explained that, if approved to receive funds, the district would write its own state-approved LEA plan. She added that the funds would be distributed in apportionments, allowing the district to back out of participation at any time, but the district would then not receive the next round of apportionments. Districts can expect to hear back from the federal government in April regarding the state's application. Once the state application is approved, the selected districts have ninety days to write or update their LEA plans, which would then go into effect in fall 2010.

Dr. Chou clarified for Mr. de la Torre that it is not yet clear how much districts might receive. Allotments depend on how many states and districts participate. Knowing the signed MOU is due January 8, Mr. de la Torre asked if Mr. Keiley would be able to join in signing tonight. Mr. Keiley said he would meet with SMMCTA's executive board to discuss this before the deadline. Mr. de la Torre wondered if a letter from the district assuring continued collaboration with the union would help secure his signature. Mr. Keiley said tonight's discussion has made him confident of the district's interest in collaboration, and he would convey that with the executive board.

Mr. Mechur wondered if receiving these funds would end up costing the district more to support programs that meet the MOU requirements. Dr. Chou answered that SMMUSD already has many of the requirements in place.

Ms. Leon-Vazquez asked how the union would communicate with its members. Mr. Keiley responded that survey would be sent out regarding the requirements. Dr. Escarce cautioned against a teacher survey that asked biased questions. Mr. de la Torre reminded the board that the purpose of programs such as these is to focus on student achievement and a part of the district's strategic plan. He added that student achievement should be linked to more than just standardized test scores

MOTION MADE BY: Mr. de la Torre
 SECONDED BY: Ms. Leon-Vazquez
 STUDENT ADVISORY VOTE: N/A
 AYES: All (7)
 NOES: None (0)

**California's Race to the Top
Participating Local Educational Agency (LEA)
Memorandum of Understanding**

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is entered into by and between the **State of California** and **Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District** ("Participating LEA"). The purpose of this agreement is to establish a framework of collaboration, as well as articulate specific roles and responsibilities in support of the State in its implementation of an approved Race to the Top grant project.

I. SCOPE OF WORK

Exhibit I, the Preliminary Scope of Work, indicates the Participating LEA is agreeing to implement all of the State's proposed reform plans ("State Plan" listed in Exhibit I) should the State's application be approved by the U.S. Department of Education (ED).

II. PROJECT ADMINISTRATION

A. PARTICIPATING LEA RESPONSIBILITIES

In assisting the State in implementing the tasks and activities described in the State's Race to the Top application, the Participating LEA subgrantee:

1. As a condition for participating in and receiving an allocation of funds under the State's Race to the Top program, must enter into an agreement with the State that will describe more specifically the mutual responsibilities of the State and LEA for planning and implementing the State's plan. The agreement will include the final scope of work and must be produced in collaboration with the State after participation in statewide conversations with participating LEAs. The agreement must be provided to the State within 90 days of the Race to the Top award to the State and must be approved by the State.

The agreement will include a detailed work plan describing specific goals, activities timelines, budgets, key personnel, and annual targets for key performance measures. The work plan must be consistent with the LEA's preliminary scope of work in this Memorandum of Understanding, with the approved State plan, and with further guidance that the State may provide. The State will approve the LEA for funding based on the scope and quality of the work plan and the LEA's capacity to implement the plan and address at the local level significant elements of the State's approved plan in a meaningful and high quality way. The agreement between the State and the LEA will also detail the State's responsibilities for providing or coordinating technical assistance, professional development, and other support for the LEA in carrying out these functions, and how the State and LEA activities will be sequenced.

2. Will implement the LEA Plan as identified in this MOU, including Exhibits I (See Attachment 2.) and II (the agreement to be reached consistent with Section II-A-1) of this agreement;
3. Will, over the course of the project, work in good faith with the State and other participating LEAs to identify needs for modifications to the project and to make appropriate modifications in order to achieve the core goals of the project;

4. Will actively participate in all relevant convenings, communities of practice, or other practice-sharing events that are organized or sponsored by the State or by the U.S. Department of Education ("ED");
5. Will post to any Web site specified by the State or ED, in a timely manner, all non-proprietary products and lessons learned that were developed using funds under the Race to the Top grant;
6. Will participate, as requested, in any evaluations of this grant conducted by the State or ED;
7. Will be responsive to State or ED requests for information including on the status of the project, project implementation, outcomes, and any problems anticipated or encountered;
8. Will participate in meetings and telephone conferences with the State to discuss (a) progress of the project, (b) potential dissemination of resulting non-proprietary products and lessons learned, (c) plans for subsequent years of the Race to the Top grant period, and (d) other matters related to the Race to the Top grant and associated plans.

B. STATE RESPONSIBILITIES

In assisting Participating LEAs in implementing their tasks and activities described in the State's Race to the Top application, the State grantee will:

1. Work collaboratively with, and support the Participating LEA in carrying out the LEA Plan as identified in Exhibit I and in the agreement to be developed under Section II-A-1 above;
2. Timely distribute the LEA's portion of Race to the Top grant funds during the course of the project period and in accordance with the LEA's approved work plan described in Section II-A-1 above;
3. Provide feedback on the LEA's status updates, annual reports, any interim reports, and project plans and products; and
4. Provide or coordinate technical assistance, professional development, and support consistent with Section II-A-1 above.

C. JOINT RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The State and the Participating LEA will collaborate in good faith to ensure alignment and coordination of State and local planning and implementation activities in order to effectively and efficiently achieve the core goals of the State's plan, consistent with their respective roles under State law and policy.
2. The State and the Participating LEA will each appoint a key contact person for the Race to the Top grant.
3. These key contacts from the State and the Participating LEA will maintain frequent communication to facilitate cooperation under this MOU.
4. State and Participating LEA grant personnel will work together to determine appropriate timelines for project updates and status reports throughout the whole grant period.

5. State and Participating LEA grant personnel will negotiate in good faith to continue to achieve the overall goals of the State's Race to the Top grant, even when the State Plan requires modifications that affect the Participating LEA, or when the LEA Plan requires modifications.

D. STATE RECOURSE FOR LEA NON-PERFORMANCE

If the State determines that the LEA is not meeting its goals, timelines, budget, or annual targets or is not fulfilling other applicable requirements, the State grantee will take appropriate enforcement action, which could include a collaborative process between the State and the LEA, or any of the enforcement measures that are detailed in 34 CFR section 80.43 including, for example, putting the LEA on reimbursement payment status, temporarily withholding funds, or disallowing costs.

III. ASSURANCES

The Participating LEA hereby certifies and represents that it:

1. Has all requisite power and authority to execute this MOU;
2. Is familiar with the State's Race to the Top grant application and is supportive of and will work to implement the entire State plan, as defined by the State, and consistent with Exhibit I;
3. Will provide a Final Scope of Work and detailed work plans consistent with Section II-A-1 above if the State's application is funded; will do so in a timely fashion but no later than 90 days after a grant is awarded; and will enter into an agreement with the State consistent with Section II-A-1 above; and
4. Will comply with all of the terms of the Grant, the State's subgrant, and all applicable Federal and State laws and regulations, including laws and regulations applicable to the Program, and the applicable provisions of EDGAR (34 CFR Parts 75, 77, 79, 80, 82, 84, 85, 86, 97, 98 and 99).

IV. MODIFICATIONS

This Memorandum of Understanding may be amended only by written agreement signed by each of the parties involved, and in consultation with ED.

V. DURATION/TERMINATION

This Memorandum of Understanding shall be effective, beginning with the date of the last signature hereon and, if a grant is received, ending upon the expiration of the grant project period, upon termination for non-compliance, or upon mutual agreement of the parties, whichever occurs first.

Nothing in this Memorandum of Understanding shall be construed to alter or otherwise affect the rights, remedies, and procedures afforded school or school district employees under Federal, State, or local laws (including applicable regulations or court orders) or under the terms of collective bargaining agreements, memoranda of understanding, or other agreements between such employers and their employees. By way of the signatures below, the LEA and local collective bargaining representative agree to confer in good faith over matters within the scope of the MOU and agree further that those portions of the MOU subject to collective bargaining shall be implemented only upon the agreement of the LEA and the local collective bargaining representative.

VI. SIGNATURES

LEA Superintendent (or equivalent authorized signatory) - required:

Signature/Date

Print Name/Title

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

Signature/Date

Print Name/Title

Local Teachers Union Leader (if applicable):

Signature/Date

Print Name/Title

Authorized State Official (required)

By its signature below, the State hereby accepts the LEA as a Participating LEA.

Signature/Date

CALIFORNIA RACE TO THE TOP **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

Questions about LEA Participation in Race to the Top

Who can participate in Race to the Top?

All LEAs—including districts, charter schools, and county offices of education—in the State are eligible for Race to the Top funding. While states may define what LEAs need to do to participate in Race to the Top, states do not have the discretion to select participating LEAs or limit LEA participation by using certain demographic or geographic characteristics or setting up a competition to determine which LEAs may participate.

Are districts that do not receive Title I funds eligible to participate in Race to the Top?

Yes. We encourage all LEAs to consider participation, as we hope that participating LEAs will work in conjunction with the State to implement a new vision under Race to the Top. Any LEA that would like to participate in Race to the Top and can produce a signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that agrees to the State's plan can participate in Race to the Top. LEAs that are eligible but do not receive Title I funds can receive funding from the 50 percent of the funding that is left to the state's discretion.

I work for a charter management organization. Each of our four high schools is an LEA in its own right. If we were to participate in Race to the Top, it would likely be as one entity, a consortium, i.e., of LEAs. Should we fill out a survey for each school/LEA, or as a single organization?

Every LEA must sign a Memorandum of Understanding in order to participate. A consortium of LEAs may also come together and sign a joint MOU to signal your partnership, as long as it contains the individual signature from all participating LEA's.

What do I need to do if my LEA is interested in participating?

Participating LEAs must enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the State that indicates that the LEA agrees to the State's plan for Race to the Top. These MOUs must be signed by the LEA superintendent (or an equivalent authorized signatory) and preferably also be signed by the president of the local governing board and the local teachers' union leader, or the equivalent entities for charter schools. The State application has a greater chance of winning if MOUs are signed by all parties. The expectation is that participating LEAs will work in partnership with the State's plan because the reform elements are designed to work together to create a comprehensive approach to improving teaching and learning.

Is there anything else we should be doing at this point to indicate our interest in participating in the state RTTT application?

If you feel you are ready to participate, please send your intent to apply by December 31st via email to info@caracetohtop.org. By January 8th, please submit the signed MOU in PDF format via email info@caracetohtop.org or via fax to 916-319-0100 along with the scope of work and budget.

Can LEAs excuse themselves from participating after the state receives the grant?

Generally, we would expect LEAs that signed an MOU with the State to participate in Race to the Top and to implement the State's entire plan, as the various components are designed to work together to create a comprehensive approach to improving teaching and learning. However, there may be circumstances under which an LEA would not be able to participate in Race to the Top after California learns whether they have won the award. The MOU that will be released soon will explain the process for LEAs to excuse themselves after the award is issued.

Can smaller districts, charter schools, or county offices of education join together in a consortium?

Collaboration amongst various LEAs is perfectly acceptable as long as the superintendent (or the equivalent authority) from all LEAs involved sign the MOU. In addition, as the State will be awarded more points on the application if the president of the local governing board and the local teachers' union leader sign as well, we would encourage signatures from those parties (or the equivalent authority) on the MOU from each LEA as well.

If my LEA enters into a consortia and later needs to drop out, how does that affect the consortia?

If an LEA who signed on to a consortia determines that they cannot participate in Race to the Top before the funding is dispersed, they will simply be taken off the list of participating LEAs. For LEAs who exit Race to the Top after the funding is dispersed, the State will need to determine at a later time how to reallocate the resources accordingly.

Are you encouraging districts to apply separately or to apply with county offices of education for these funds?

We are encouraging LEAs to do whatever makes sense for them, to ensure that their participation in Race to the Top is as beneficial as possible. If a consortium would work for your LEA, please make sure that the MOU is signed by all appropriate parties.

Questions about Race to the Top Funding

What is the total projection of how much money California can hope to win?

California will compete for a share of the \$4.35 billion Race to the Top; the U.S. Department of Education estimated that the range California could receive is between \$350-\$700 million.

How much could a participating LEA expect to receive if California wins Race to the Top?

While we understand one of the main questions that LEAs may ask asks about the estimated amount of an LEA's Race to the Top award, it is very difficult for us to provide an accurate assessment of the amounts for any individual LEA. We do know that if California wins this grant, the State could receive between \$350 and \$700 million. In addition, we know that at least 50 percent of this money must be distributed to participating LEAs based on the Title I formula. However, because we do not know the total size of the final grant, nor the number of LEAs and schools joining the effort, we cannot estimate an amount for participating LEAs.

Is this one- time funding?

Race to the Top funding is one-time funding, however it is dispersed over a four-year period and so LEAs will not receive this money in one installment.

Are Program Improvement districts qualified to join this process?

Yes, all LEAs are eligible to participate. Additionally, if an LEA agrees to participate in Race to the Top and has one or more schools that are defined by the State to be in the lowest 5 percent of persistently lowest-achieving schools, the LEA will have access to Race to the Top funds in addition to School Improvement Grant funds. Therefore, signing onto Race to the Top may provide an LEA two sources of funding if the State's Race to the Top application is successful.

Questions about the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

When will the State's Memorandum of Understanding be released?

The Memorandum of Understanding was released on December 14th. LEAs need to submit signed MOUs along with a preliminary scope of work and budget by January 8th.

What does an LEA need to submit in order to participate?

By December 31st, LEAs need to submit an "Intent to apply" to info@caracetothetop.org. Then by January 8th, LEAs must submit signed MOUs, in PDF format emailed to info@caracetothetop.org or via fax to 916-319-0100, with a completed checklist noting the areas in which they agree to participate as well as a preliminary scope of work indicating what they will do in relation to these areas. If/when California wins Race to the Top, LEAs will have 90 days to submit a final scope of work and budget detailing their plans.

In looking at the MOU there is a line for a union representative and it then has in parenthesis "where applicable". Under what circumstances does a district need a union sign off? When is it not required?

"Where applicable" was included for those LEAs that do not have a union at all. While a signature from a union representative is not required to submit an MOU on behalf of your LEA, the state's application is strengthened by these signatures.

What happens if an LEA signs the MOU but then realizes or decides that it cannot implement the measures? Is there an exit strategy?

The MOU states that the agreement may be terminated upon mutual agreement of the parties. Therefore, if an LEA decides they are unable to participate after signing the MOU, they will be allowed to exit the agreement with the State. If an LEA leaves before the funding is released, they will simply be removed from the list of participating LEAs. If an LEA leaves after the funding is released, an LEA would not receive additional funding for Race to Top; however, the LEA would not be required to return the Race to the Top funds it had already received provided that the LEA has acted in good faith and has completed work for which the funding was provided.

Can we apply without the local teachers' union leader's signature?

An LEA can technically apply without the union's signature, although both for the success of the work to be done at the local level, as well as the success of California's Race to the Top application, having the union leader's signature is important.

What if an LEA doesn't sign up by January 8th? Can they join later?

There is no provision in the federal application that precludes LEAs from joining after the application has been submitted. However, the more LEAs we have as part of the application, the stronger our State application will be. In addition, we are submitting an application based on a budget estimate created from those LEAs that indicated they are ready to participate now. Therefore, late entrants would require a reallocation of money from the earlier entrants, so we strongly encourage you to submit MOUs by our deadline of January 8, 2010.

Questions about the Section on Great Teacher/Leaders**For some of the MOU aspects surrounding teachers (e.g., evaluation, termination, etc.), will legislation be needed to address those areas?**

These issues will continue to be bargained locally. Entering into the MOU means you commit to engaging in a process to discuss those issues locally.

Are annual teacher/principal evaluations required?

Race to the Top requires that LEAs do conduct annual evaluations of teachers and principals that use multiple measures, including student achievement as a significant factor in the evaluation. However, these evaluations do not necessarily need to be identical each year. For example, the evaluations could be formative in nature in one year and summative in the next year. The exact conditions of the evaluation agreements will continue to be locally bargained. By signing on to Race to the Top, an LEA is committing to conferring in good faith with the their union on this topic.

Questions about the Section on Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

Are there criteria for identifying the lowest 5 percent of low-performing schools?

Given a complex federal definition that allows for interpretation by the State in certain factors, the state is currently working on a list of the lowest-achieving schools in the State and will provide that list as soon as it is completed.

The Race to the Top application defines persistently lowest-achieving schools as (i) Any Title I school in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring that (a) Is among the lowest-achieving five percent of Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring or the lowest-achieving five Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring in the State, whichever number of schools is greater; or (b) Is a high school that has had a graduation rate as defined in 34 CFR 200.19(b) that is less than 60 percent over a number of years; and (ii) Any secondary school that is eligible for, but does not receive, Title I funds that (a) Is among the lowest-achieving five percent of secondary schools or the lowest-achieving five secondary schools in the State that are eligible for, but do not receive, Title I funds, whichever number of schools is greater; or (b) Is a high school that has had a graduation rate as defined in 34 CFR 200.19(b) that is less than 60 percent over a number of years. To identify the lowest-achieving schools, a State must take into account both (i) The academic achievement of the “all students” group in a school in terms of proficiency on the State’s assessments under section 1111(b)(3) of the ESEA in reading/language arts and mathematics combined; and (ii) The school’s lack of progress on those assessments over a number of years in the “all students” group.

If the state is mandated to intervene in the bottom 5 percent of low-performing schools, what happens if an LEA that has these schools does not participate in Race to the Top?

The LEA would still be responsible for implementing one of the four federally-prescribed intervention strategies as part of our federal School Improvement Grant (SIG), but would not be responsible for the other areas of Race to the Top.

Are county offices of education (COEs) expected to adopt one of the four intervention models?

If COEs operate schools which are defined as part of the persistently lowest-achieving schools, then they must implement one of the intervention models required by the U.S. Department of Education. Please note that the persistently lowest-achieving schools have not yet been identified and we are seeking additional clarification from ED about whether alternative schools (currently included in ASAM) are intended to be included in the calculation.

Are Alternative Education and Special Education Programs run by the county offices of education included in the schools that must implement one of the four intervention models?

Persistently lowest-achieving schools have not yet been identified and we are seeking additional clarification from the U.S. Department of Education about whether alternative schools (currently included in ASAM) are intended to be included in the calculation.

How do we identify the lowest 5 percent of the persistently lowest-achieving schools? Is there a list? Will there be a list in the near future?

The State must identify these schools, not the LEAs. We will soon be releasing a list of what we believe these schools are. However, pending legislation could change the schools on that list. We will provide updates as this work proceeds.

We recently learned that we are entering Year 1 of Program Improvement. We are trying to sort through revisions to our LEA Plan. Will the Race to the Top elements be part of our LEA Plan?

We strongly encourage you to integrate Race to the Top into your LEA plan, if you plan to participate in Race to the Top. We do not view Race to the Top as different from your LEA's single plan; we want to see Race to the Top as part of the systemic plan for improving student outcomes.

Questions about the Section on Standards and Assessment

Are we going to revise California's standards?

The standards that California currently has are generally recognized as world class high standards. The State of California, along with 47 other states, has agreed to participate in the consortia of states looking at a common core of standards. The legislature is currently considering having California adopt the common core with some additional standards to ensure California retains its rigor. If the Legislature calls for their adoption, we will pursue adoption and implementation over a reasonable timeframe.

Signatories:

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell
President of State Board of Education, Ted Mitchell

Additional Work Group Members (in alphabetical order by last name):

Andrea Ball, Deputy Superintendent at California Department of Education (CDE)

Rae Belisle, Member of State Board of Education

Theresa Garcia, Executive Director of the State Board of Education

Jeannie Oropeza, Program Budget Manager, California Department of Finance

Kathy Radtkey Gaither, Undersecretary of Education

Rick Miller, Deputy Superintendent at CDE

Gavin Payne, Chief Deputy Superintendent at CDE

Debbie Rury, Deputy Executive Director of the State Board of Education

Glen Thomas, Secretary of Education

State legislators have also been holding hearings around the state, gathering input from stakeholders as they craft legislation key to improving the State's chances for winning Race to the Top.