

FOR RELEASE

Friday, June 7, 2013

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**U.S. EDUCATION DEPARTMENT RELEASES REPORT HIGHLIGHTING
COLORADO'S WORK TO STRENGTHEN EDUCATION UNDER RACE TO
THE TOP**

Today, the U.S. Department of Education released a report detailing Colorado's work to advance comprehensive education reform during its first year under Race to the Top. This announcement comes as the Department publishes state-specific reports that detail the progress of Colorado and six additional states—Arizona, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, New Jersey and Pennsylvania—as they undertake efforts to improve education for all their students.

These seven states received a total of \$200 million in 2012 during the third round of Race to the Top, which has been one of the Obama Administration's key initiatives to support states' efforts to strengthen teaching and learning, ultimately ensuring that all students are able to receive a quality education that prepares them for success in college and in their careers.

“Colorado is off to a solid start after the first year of Race to the Top,” U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan said. “The state has worked through challenges and has continued to move forward with its vision for education reform that will better support teachers and improve student growth. We will continue to support Colorado in the years ahead and look forward to seeing further progress and collaboration to ensure all students are prepared for success in college and careers.”

The seven reports provide summaries of each state's accomplishments and challenges in its first year of work (through December 2012), and they look ahead to key milestones for the state's second year. Each state's progress was measured against its own Race to the Top Phase 3 plan. While states have continued their efforts since then, the reports provide transparent, detailed snapshots of states' work to pursue reforms built around Race to the Top's four assurance areas: implementing college- and career-ready standards and assessments, building robust data systems to improve instruction, supporting great teachers and school leaders, and turning around persistently low-performing schools.

Grantees tailored their Race to the Top plans to fit their unique state needs, including a meaningful investment in advancing science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education. In the first year of their grant, these states pursued a number of reform efforts. In Colorado, that included:

- Establishing Content Collaboratives, comprised of experts in 10 content areas, to assist the state in the development and dissemination of high-quality resources

that can be accessed by educators to support the implementation of the new Common Core State Standards (CCSS) aligned to Colorado Academic Standards

- Developing an assessment review tool used to vet more than 800 classroom-level assessments to inform instruction aligned with the new standards and for use, as appropriate, with educator evaluations.

To provide further support for states as they continue this work, the Department's Implementation and Support Unit (ISU) has partnered with states to track progress and provide feedback as they implement large-scale reform. Where states encountered delays and challenges, the ISU worked with them on adjustments to help move the work forward, while holding states accountable to their commitments. ISU officials, who drafted the reports released today, will continue to provide annual updates about states' progress under Race to the Top.

The Race to the Top program, which made its first awards in 2010, has provided 24 states and the District of Columbia (D.C.) with about \$5 billion through three phases of the flagship competition and two rounds of the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge. Last year, the Department launched the first Race to the Top-District program, which will fund 16 applicants—representing 55 school districts across 11 states and D.C.—with close to \$400 million to support locally developed plans that will prepare every student to succeed in college and their careers.

The Obama Administration is continuing investments in PreK-12 education reform through Race to the Top. Earlier this year, the Department announced that much of the nearly \$550 million for 2013 will be used to launch another Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge, as well as a second Race to the Top-District competition. The Administration has requested \$1 billion for 2014 to launch a new Race to the Top-College Affordability and Completion competition aimed at catalyzing state higher education reform efforts.

To view the state-specific reports released today, and for more information about the Race to the Top program, visit <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/index.html>.

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