**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

**What is Race to the Top (RTTT)?**

4.3 billion dollar US Department of Education competitive grant to provide flexible funding to incent and support serious, coherent, and comprehensive reform. The keys to success will be good ideas and plans, conditions conducive to reform, demonstrated political will, and the capacity to execute. The state proposals must have a comprehensive, integrated emphasis on:

* Standards, assessment, accountability
* Quality educators
* Comprehensive data systems
* Low performing schools and struggling students

**What are the intended outcomes of RTTT?**

* Encourage and reward States that are creating the conditions for education innovation and reform and fund the implementation of ambitious plans in the four education reform areas
* Assist states in achieving significant improvement in student outcomes:
  + making substantial gains in student achievement
  + closing achievement gaps
  + improving high school graduation rates
  + ensuring that students are prepared for success in college and careers.

**Why is Race to the Top an important opportunity for West Virginia?**

* RTTT priorities align with the ongoing work of districts and schools across the state to prepare students with 21st century skills
* RTTT provides flexible funding to pilot innovation and to scale up existing successes
* RTTT highlights the areas of reform that will shape future federal education policy, including other funding opportunities and the Reauthorization of ESEA and IDEA.

**What are the timelines?** *(\*pending confirmation)*

* July 2009 – DRAFT Notice of Proposal released by ED
* August 2009 – Comment Deadline
* October 2009 – Superintendents’ Overview
* November 2009 – Final Request for Proposals (RFP) released \*
* December 2009 – Regional meetings
* January 2009 – LEAs submit MOU to participate
* February 2009 – Submission Deadline\*

**How many states will receive funding?**

* The number of grantees, as well as the funding ranges for each state, will be made available after the final RFP is released

**How will county school districts receive funding?**

States that receive a Race to the Top grant must use at least 50 percent of their award to provide subgrants to *participating* local educational agencies (LEAs), based upon LEAs’ relative shares of funding under Part A of Title I. However, the funds’ usage is not tied to Title I programs or programmatic restrictions etc. To be eligible to participate in a State's Race to the Top proposal, a district must explicitly agree to implement the plans in the State's proposal by signing a formal agreement, such as Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

* LEAs that choose to participate will receive their share of the funding structured around two types of expenditures:
  + prescriptive funds to address implementation of key aspects of the state’s RTTT proposal
  + flexible funds to allow LEAs options in implementation based on individual county needs
* LEAs that choose not to participate will forfeit their percentage of the LEA allocation and those funds will be distributed among participating LEAs.

**Will Innovation Zone legislation allow WV to qualify for RTTT?**

* According to the *DRAFT* RTTT Notice, there are 19 measures by which applications will be judged. Increasing the supply of high-quality charter schools was proposed as #13 of the 19. Many governors, state chiefs, educators and researchers submitted comments requesting the US Department of Education to revise this criterion because of its overly prescriptive focus on one model of education reform. After the final Request for Proposals (RFP) is released (sometime in late November/early December) we will know if this criterion was expanded to allow for Innovation Zones.
* However, it is important to note that the charter school criteria is not listed as an eligibility requirement nor is it an application requirement. If it remains in the RFP, it will have a point value assigned to it in the final notice. Every state, based on prior and current efforts, will submit evidence as indicators of their progress and future plans in the 19 areas. West Virginia will submit its approved Innovation Zone legislation and state board policy as evidence of its efforts to support flexible, innovative approaches to improving student achievement.

**How will county superintendents receive more details regarding the RTTT proposal plans?**

* Each county Superintendent will be asked to nominate an *RTTT liaison*. Periodic updates, including email, webinars, and requests for feedback will be communicated via this liaison.
* In addition, WVDE will conduct three regional meetings targeting broader range of stakeholders to provide a more detailed synopsis of the proposal.
* Finally, a specific LEA plan and accompanying MOU, outlining participating LEA roles, responsibilities, and agreed-upon plans will be presented to counties for consideration and support.

**Race To The Top County Liaison**

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| County | RTTT Liaison Name and Email |
|  | Name: |
| Email: |