**RACE TO THE TOP DISTRICT Synopsis**

* RTTTD will reward those local LEAs or consortia of LEAs that have the leadership and vision to implement the strategies, structures, and systems needed to implement personalized, student-focused approaches to learning and teaching that will produce excellence and ensure equity for all students.
* A successful applicant will provide teachers the information, tools, and supports that enable them to meet the needs of each student and substantially accelerate and deepen each student’s learning.
* These LEAs will have the policies, systems, infrastructure, capacity, and culture to enable teachers, teacher teams, and school leaders to continuously focus on improving individual student achievement and closing achievement gaps.
* These LEAs will also make equity and access a priority and aim to prepare each student to master the content and skills required for college- and career-readiness, provide each student the opportunity to pursue a rigorous course of study, and accelerate and deepen students’ learning through attention to their individual needs.
* LEAs will create opportunities for students to identify and pursue areas of personal academic interest--all while ensuring that each student masters critical areas identified in college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready high school graduation requirements.
* For the fiscal year (FY) 2012 Race to the Top-District competition, the Department will only consider applications that meet Absolute Priority 1 and one of Absolute Priorities 2 through 5.
* The Department anticipates awarding about 15-25 Race to the Top - District grants in FY 2012.
* A district the size of Henderson would be eligible for $10-20 million over four years. Funds must be spent by September 30, 2018.
* 40 percent of participating students across all participating schools must be students from low-income families, based on eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch subsidies
* An applicant must demonstrate its commitment to the core educational assurance areas:
* The LEA, at a minimum, will implement no later than the 2014-15 school year, a teacher evaluation system (as defined in the notice), a principal evaluation system (as defined in the notice), and a superintendent evaluation (as defined in the notice);
* • The LEA is committed to preparing all students for college or career, as demonstrated by being located in a State that has adopted college- and career-ready standards, or measuring all student progress and performance against college- and career-ready graduation requirements ;
* • The LEA has a robust data system that has, at a minimum, an individual teacher identifier with a teacher-student match and the capability to provide timely data back to educators and their supervisors on student growth;
* • The LEA has the capability to receive or match student-level preschool-through-12th grade and higher education data; and
* • Any disclosure of or access to personally identifiable information in students’ education records complies with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
* Districts must demonstrate a commitment to Race to the Top’s [*four core reform areas*](http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/index.html)*:*

1. [Adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy](http://www2.ed.gov/news/speeches/2009/06/06142009.html);
2. [Building data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction](http://www2.ed.gov/news/speeches/2009/06/06082009.html);
3. [Recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most;](http://www2.ed.gov/news/speeches/2009/07/07022009.html) and
4. [Turning around our lowest-achieving schools](http://www2.ed.gov/news/speeches/2009/06/06222009.html).

* An applicant may include in its proposed project all or a portion of its schools, specific grades, or subject-area bands (e.g., lowest-performing schools, secondary schools, schools connected by a feeder pattern, middle school math, or preschool through third grade).
* There are five absolute priorities in the Race to the Top - District competition. Each applicant *must* address Absolute Priority 1, Personalized Learning Environments. To meet this priority, an applicant must coherently and comprehensively address how it will build on the core educational assurance areas (as defined in the notice) to create learning environments that are designed to significantly improve learning and teaching through the personalization of strategies, tools, and supports for students and educators that are aligned with college- and career-ready standards (as defined in the notice) or college- and career-ready graduation requirements (as defined in the notice); accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning by meeting the academic needs of each student; increase the effectiveness of educators; expand student access to the most effective educators; decrease achievement gaps across student groups; and increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers.
* An applicant must address Absolute Priority 1 across its responses to the selection criteria and does not write to Absolute Priority 1 separately.
* In addition, each applicant must also indicate in its application one priority from Absolute Priorities 2-5:

• *Absolute Priority 2*, Non-Rural LEAs in Race to the Top States.

* The FY 2012 Race to the Top - District competition includes one competitive preference priority -- Results, Resource Alignment, and Integrated Services. This priority emphasizes the applicant’s integration of public or private resources in a partnership designed to augment the schools’ resources by providing additional student and family supports to schools that address the social, emotional, or behavioral needs of the participating students, giving highest priority to students in participating schools with high-need students. To meet this priority, an applicant’s proposal can provide student and family supports that focus on a subset of these needs. An applicant may receive up to 10 additional points if it successfully addresses the priority
* With these exceptions, applicants have considerable flexibility in designing their plans and, therefore, have considerable discretion in determining how grant funds will be used, consistent with their approved plan, if they win.
* Section 14003 of the ARRA prohibits Race to the Top funds from being used for:
* Payment of maintenance costs;
* Stadiums or other facilities primarily used for athletic contests or exhibitions or other events for which admission is charged to the general public;
* Purchase or upgrade of vehicles;
* Improvement of stand-alone facilities whose purpose is not the education of children, including central office administration or operations or logistical support facilities; or
* School modernization, renovation, or repair that is inconsistent with State law;
* Section 14011 of the ARRA prohibits Race to the Top funds from being used to provide financial assistance to students to attend private elementary or secondary schools, unless the funds are used to provide special education and related services to children with disabilities as authorized by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); and
* Section 1604 of the ARRA prohibits Race to the Top funds from being used for any casino or other gambling establishment, aquarium, zoo, golf course, or swimming pool.
* The Race to the Top - District program grant does not include “supplement, not supplant” requirements.
* Within 100 days of award, each grantee must submit to the Department–-

(i) A scope of work that is consistent with its grant application and includes specific goals, activities, deliverables, timelines, budgets, key personnel, and annual targets for key performance measures; and

(ii) An individual school implementation plan for participating schools (as defined in this notice).

* Applications are due October 30, 2012. The peer review will take place after the application deadline and the Department will make awards by December 31, 2012.
* Districts must have a high quality plan for sustainability of the project goals including a 3 year post-grant budget.
* A minimum of 70% of the district’s teachers must approve the proposal.