

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
RACE TO THE TOP
DEFINITIONS**

Alternative routes to certification means pathways to certification that are authorized under the State's laws or regulations, that allow the establishment and operation of teacher and administrator preparation programs in the State, and that have the following characteristics (in addition to standard features such as demonstration of subject-matter mastery, and high-quality instruction in pedagogy and in addressing the needs of all students in the classroom including English language learners¹ and student with disabilities): (a) can be provided by various types of qualified providers, including both institutions of higher education and other providers operating independently from institutions of higher education; (b) are selective in accepting candidates; (c) provide supervised, school-based experiences and ongoing support such as effective mentoring and coaching; (d) significantly limit the amount of coursework required or have options to test out of courses; and (e) upon completion, award the same level of certification that traditional preparation programs award upon completion.

College enrollment refers to the enrollment of students who graduate from high school consistent with 34 CFR 200.19(b)(1) and who enroll in an institution of higher education (as defined in section 101 of the Higher Education Act, P.L. 105-244, 20 U.S.C. 1001) within 16 months of graduation.

Common set of K-12 standards means a set of content standards that define what students must know and be able to do and that are substantially identical across all States in a consortium. A State may supplement the common standards with additional standards, provided that the additional standards do not exceed 15 percent of the State's total standards for that content area.

Effective principal means a principal whose students, overall and for each subgroup, achieve acceptable rates (*e.g.*, at least one grade level in an academic year) of student growth (as defined in this notice). States, LEAs, or schools must include multiple measures, provided that principal effectiveness is evaluated, in significant part, by student growth (as defined in this notice). Supplemental measures may include, for example, high school graduation rates and college enrollment rates, as well as evidence of providing supportive teaching and learning conditions, strong instructional leadership, and positive family and community engagement.

Effective teacher means a teacher whose students achieve acceptable rates (*e.g.*, at least one grade level in an academic year) of student growth (as defined in this notice). States, LEAs, or schools must include multiple measures, provided that teacher effectiveness is evaluated, in significant part, by student growth (as defined in this notice). Supplemental

¹The term English language learner, as used in this notice, is synonymous with the term limited English proficient, as defined in section 9101 of the ESEA

measures may include, for example, multiple observation-based assessments of teacher performance.

Formative assessment means assessment questions, tools, and processes that are embedded in instruction and are used by teachers and students to provide timely feedback for purposes of adjusting instruction to improve learning.

Graduation rate means the four-year or extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rate as defined by 34 CFR 200.19(b)(1).

Highly effective principal means a principal whose students, overall and for each subgroup, achieve high rates (*e.g.*, one and one-half grade levels in an academic year) of student growth (as defined in this notice). States, LEAs, or schools must include multiple measures, provided that principal effectiveness is evaluated, in significant part, by student growth (as defined in this notice). Supplemental measures may include, for example, high school graduation rates; college enrollment rates; evidence of providing supportive teaching and learning conditions, strong instructional leadership, and positive family and community engagement; or evidence of attracting, developing, and retaining high numbers of effective teachers.

Highly effective teacher means a teacher whose students achieve high rates (*e.g.*, one and one-half grade levels in an academic year) of student growth (as defined in this notice). States, LEAs, or schools must include multiple measures, provided that teacher effectiveness is evaluated, in significant part, by student growth (as defined in this notice). Supplemental measures may include, for example, multiple observation-based assessments of teacher performance or evidence of leadership roles (which may include mentoring or leading professional learning communities) that increase the effectiveness of other teachers in the school or LEA.

High-minority school is defined by the State in a manner consistent with its Teacher Equity Plan. The State should provide, in its Race to the Top application, the definition used.

High-need LEA means an LEA (a) that serves not fewer than 10,000 children from families with incomes below the poverty line; or (b) for which not less than 20 percent of the children served by the LEA are from families with incomes below the poverty line.

High-need students means students at risk of educational failure or otherwise in need of special assistance and support, such as students who are living in poverty, who attend high-minority schools (as defined in this notice), who are far below grade level, who have left school before receiving a regular high school diploma, who are at risk of not graduating with a diploma on time, who are homeless, who are in foster care, who have been incarcerated, who have disabilities, or who are English language learners.

High-performing charter school means a charter school that has been in operation for at least three consecutive years and has demonstrated overall success, including (a)

substantial progress in improving student achievement (as defined in this notice); and (b) the management and leadership necessary to overcome initial start-up problems and establish a thriving, financially viable charter school.

High-poverty school means, consistent with section 1111(h)(1)(C)(viii) of the ESEA, a school in the highest quartile of schools in the State with respect to poverty level, using a measure of poverty determined by the State.

High-quality assessment means an assessment designed to measure a student's knowledge, understanding of, and ability to apply, critical concepts through the use of a variety of item types and formats (*e.g.*, open-ended responses, performance-based tasks). Such assessments should enable measurement of student achievement (as defined in this notice) and student growth (as defined in this notice); be of high technical quality (*e.g.*, be valid, reliable, fair, and aligned to standards); incorporate technology where appropriate; include the assessment of students with disabilities and English language learners; and to the extent feasible, use universal design principles (as defined in section 3 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, as amended, 29 U.S.C. 3002) in development and administration.

Increased learning time means using a longer school day, week, or year schedule to significantly increase the total number of school hours to include additional time for (a) instruction in core academic subjects, including English; reading or language arts; mathematics; science; foreign languages; civics and government; economics; arts; history; and geography; (b) instruction in other subjects and enrichment activities that contribute to a well-rounded education, including, for example, physical education, service learning, and experiential and work-based learning opportunities that are provided by partnering, as appropriate, with other organizations; and (c) teachers to collaborate, plan, and engage in professional development within and across grades and subjects.²

Innovative, autonomous public schools means open enrollment public schools that, in return for increased accountability for student achievement (as defined in this notice), have the flexibility and authority to define their instructional models and associated curriculum; select and replace staff; implement new structures and formats for the school day or year; and control their budgets.

² Research supports the effectiveness of well-designed programs that expand learning time by a minimum of 300 hours per school year. (See Frazier, Julie A.; Morrison, Frederick J. "The Influence of Extended-year Schooling on Growth of Achievement and Perceived Competence in Early Elementary School." *Child Development*. Vol. 69 (2), April 1998, pp.495-497 and research done by Mass2020.) Extending learning into before- and after-school hours can be difficult to implement effectively, but is permissible under this definition with encouragement to closely integrate and coordinate academic work between in-school and out-of school. (See James-Burdumy, Susanne; Dynarski, Mark; Deke, John. "When Elementary Schools Stay Open Late: Results from The National Evaluation of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program." <http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/publications/redirect_PubsDB.asp?strSite=http://epa.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/29/4/296> *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, Vol. 29 (4), December 2007, Document No. PP07-121.)

Instructional improvement systems means technology-based tools and other strategies that provide teachers, principals, and administrators with meaningful support and actionable data to systemically manage continuous instructional improvement, including such activities as: instructional planning; gathering information (*e.g.*, through formative assessments (as defined in this notice), interim assessments (as defined in this notice), summative assessments, and looking at student work and other student data); analyzing information with the support of rapid-time (as defined in this notice) reporting; using this information to inform decisions on appropriate next instructional steps; and evaluating the effectiveness of the actions taken. Such systems promote collaborative problem-solving and action planning; they may also integrate instructional data with student-level data such as attendance, discipline, grades, credit accumulation, and student survey results to provide early warning indicators of a student's risk of educational failure.

Interim assessment means an assessment that is given at regular and specified intervals throughout the school year, is designed to evaluate students' knowledge and skills relative to a specific set of academic standards, and produces results that can be aggregated (*e.g.*, by course, grade level, school, or LEA) in order to inform teachers and administrators at the student, classroom, school, and LEA levels.

Involved LEAs means LEAs that choose to work with the State to implement those specific portions of the State's plan that necessitate full or nearly-full statewide implementation, such as transitioning to a common set of K-12 standards (as defined in this notice). Involved LEAs do not receive a share of the 50 percent of a State's grant award that it must subgrant to LEAs in accordance with section 14006(c) of the ARRA, but States may provide other funding to involved LEAs under the State's Race to the Top grant in a manner that is consistent with the State's application.

Low-minority school is defined by the State in a manner consistent with its Teacher Equity Plan. The State should provide, in its Race to the Top application, the definition used.

Low-poverty school means, consistent with section 1111(h)(1)(C)(viii) of the ESEA, a school in the lowest quartile of schools in the State with respect to poverty level, using a measure of poverty determined by the State.

Participating LEAs means LEAs that choose to work with the State to implement all or significant portions of the State's Race to the Top plan, as specified in each LEA's agreement with the State. Each participating LEA that receives funding under Title I, Part A will receive a share of the 50 percent of a State's grant award that the State must subgrant to LEAs, based on the LEA's relative share of Title I, Part A allocations in the most recent year, in accordance with section 14006(c) of the ARRA. Any participating LEA that does not receive funding under Title I, Part A (as well as one that does) may receive funding from the State's other 50 percent of the grant award, in accordance with the State's plan.

Persistently lowest-achieving schools means, as determined by the State: (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.

Rapid-time, in reference to reporting and availability of locally-collected school- and LEA-level data, means that data are available quickly enough to inform current lessons, instruction, and related supports.

Student achievement means—

(a) For tested grades and subjects: (1) a student’s score on the State’s assessments under the ESEA; and, as appropriate, (2) other measures of student learning, such as those described in paragraph (b) of this definition, provided they are rigorous and comparable across classrooms.

(b) For non-tested grades and subjects: alternative measures of student learning and performance such as student scores on pre-tests and end-of-course tests; student performance on English language proficiency assessments; and other measures of student achievement that are rigorous and comparable across classrooms.

Student growth means the change in student achievement (as defined in this notice) for an individual student between two or more points in time. A State may also include other measures that are rigorous and comparable across classrooms.

Total revenues available to the State means either (a) projected or actual total State revenues for education and other purposes for the relevant year; or (b) projected or actual total State appropriations for education and other purposes for the relevant year.

America COMPETES Act elements means (as specified in section 6401(e)(2)(D) of that Act): (1) a unique statewide student identifier that does not permit a student to be individually identified by users of the system; (2) student-level enrollment, demographic, and program participation information; (3) student-level information about the points at which students exit, transfer in, transfer out, drop out, or complete P–16 education programs; (4) the capacity to communicate with higher education data systems; (5) a

State data audit system assessing data quality, validity, and reliability; (6) yearly test records of individual students with respect to assessments under section 1111(b) of the ESEA (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)); (7) information on students not tested by grade and subject; (8) a teacher identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students; (9) student-level transcript information, including information on courses completed and grades earned; (10) student-level college readiness test scores; (11) information regarding the extent to which students transition successfully from secondary school to postsecondary education, including whether students enroll in remedial coursework; and (12) other information determined necessary to address alignment and adequate preparation for success in postsecondary education.