

THE STATE OF FLORIDA

Moderator: Holly Edenfield
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2:30 p.m. ET

Operator: Good afternoon. My name is (Melissa) and I will be your conference operator today. At this time, I would like to welcome everyone to the Race of the Top Project Update Webinar.

All lines have been placed on mute to prevent any background noise. After the speakers' remarks, there will be a question and answer session. If you would like to ask a question during this time, simply press star, then the number one on your telephone keypad. If you would like to withdraw your question, press the pound key. Thank you.

I will now like to turn the call over to Miss Holly Edenfield. You may begin your conference.

Holly Edenfield: Good afternoon, everyone, and thank you for joining us for this very important and timely update on the Race to the Top State Level Projects.

We know you've been very hard at work on your district projects and we appreciate you taking the time to learn about the status of our state level projects and how they interact with what you're doing at the district level.

A couple of housekeeping notes. Today's Webinar will be on three sections of the grant and tomorrow is the Webinar on the remaining two sections.

So today, we'll cover Section C, Data Systems; Section E, Turning Around the Lowest Achieving Schools; and Section F, which includes Charter School Projects.

The Webinar will be recorded and posted online. So if you can't stay for the whole time or if you can't join tomorrow or if you want to share it with other staff that couldn't make it, please do so. I'll send out a note of when it is up and live.

The questions that you ask us at the end of the presentation will be included in an SAQ document that we will start and that will also be posted online. So it'll include questions from today's presentation, tomorrow's presentation and also any other questions that you send our way via email over the course of the grant that other districts would benefit from the answer to.

We will include these in this SAQ document. So after we go through the slides today, the operator will open the line for your questions and we ask that you not use the chat feature on the WebEx, but instead to cue up by phone for questions.

With that, I will turn it over to Chancellor Pam Stewart.

Pam Stewart: Thank you, Holly, and I'll add my welcome to Holly's welcome. I know that you're giving up time in your day with everything else that you have to do and having sat in your shoes as recently as two months ago as the Race to the Top manager in the district, I know precisely what the work is that's involved that you do every single day.

If you'll look at the slide that you're seeing now on your computer, this is Florida's theory of action and it is as stated there as strategic and sustained investment in human capital that will improve student achievements.

So with that in mind, teachers and leaders are expected to be well selected, prepared, supported, respected and lastly, but certainly not least, would be that they will be held accountable and you all know that which happens all the time in your district as well as it will be addressed again tomorrow on the Race to the Top call.

Here on this slide you see Florida's student achievement goals and these are the goals for our state scope of work, but certainly the work done in districts

play into this directly and the first one that you see there is to double the percentage of incoming high school freshmen who will graduate from high school, go onto college and within two years earn at least a year's worth of college credit.

The second goal is to reduce the achievement gap by one half by the year 2015 to increase the percentage of students scoring at or above proficiency on NAT by 2015 and this would – the expectation here would be at least to reach the performance levels of the highest performing states or go beyond that performance.

The next slide that you see here, the large mustard color of the pie, is 50 percent allocations that go directly to the district. So that's what you worked on, your scope of work in your district. The other 50 percent is broken down there as you see in all of the statewide projects, but all of these statewide projects directly impact the districts and you all benefit by the work that's done at the state level.

And I think this is – you'll be hearing about those projects throughout the Webinar later in this call. On this slide, you see the Race to the Top implementation committees. There are eight statewide committees and they are listed here.

They all deal with all of the projects within Race to the Top and we have educators as well as – as well as other stakeholders that participate on each of those committees.

And now, I will turn the call over to Todd Clark.

Todd Clark: Thank you and good afternoon. My name is Todd Clark. I am the Race to the Top director for assessments with the Florida Department of Education, specifically the Division of Accountability Research and Measurement.

And the slides that I'm going to talk about refer to assurance area C which in the Department's Race to the Top application to the U.S. Department of Education was related to data systems and support.

Florida really is in a pretty good position because Florida has a pretty strong statewide longitudinal data system and we really have been leading the country in terms of the data that we collect on students and teachers.

But we wanted to take advantage of the Race to the Top application to do even better. And one of the things that I'll share, we were fortunate in that Race to the Top came along at a time when Florida had already received some other statewide longitudinal data system grants.

So we're combining a total of three grants, two statewide longitudinal data system grants together with the Race to the Top to try and make our data systems more readily available to the districts and to educators in the districts.

So you can see the five goals, the five outcomes that are listed on this slide, mainly – and again, this does tie in with what Florida's doing with the statewide longitudinal data system to centralize data, to deliver just in time information to the districts for decision making, to create a centralized portal. We'll talk about that a little bit more. To equip all participating districts with a local instructional improvement system and I have minimum standards for those and to establish a research agenda.

So these are the performance measures that we created for assurance area C. This has been amended. We did move some things back so that they would be in years three and four of the grants. So in academic year 2012-'13 and 2013-'14.

And these are estimates. We're certainly hopeful that we'll get even more centralized portal visits, but we wanted to get some benchmarks available to the U.S. Department of Education as we move on with this.

You can also see that the percentage of districts that are participating in single sign-on is listed there and we are planning to have 100 percent by the end of the grant period which is June 30, 2014.

In this slide, you can see kind of, again, a summary of the Race to the Top parts of the application for Florida's statewide longitudinal data system. The

portal is going to be a Website where we have access for six applications initially that the department has identified.

These are programs that are widely used around the state and we are in the process of developing a conceptual design so that if a teacher logs on or a district person logs on, any user logs on with one set of sign-on credentials, they'll have access to all six of these applications without having to sign-on using separate log-in credentials.

The dashboard and reports, we are going to begin collecting information about what we want those to look like in year three. So that one's down the road a little bit. We have already published the minimum standards for the local instructional improvement system. So those are available online.

In working with Marion County, we have established a local systems exchange. We have awarded about \$5 million in grants to small and rural districts to help them get – be able to meet the minimum requirements for their local instruction improvement systems and we've published a research agenda.

This slide shows the six applications that I had mentioned that will be initially integrated into the portal. So I think most of you are probably familiar with these: Facts.org, CPALMs, you can read the list there.

We have a conceptual design in place. We've gotten input from several districts that have been involved with a single sign-on implementation committee and we are in the process now of thinking about how – what vehicle we're going to use for procurement for setting up those – the single sign-on.

And as you can see on the second bullet there, the portal where these six applications will be available will go live prior to the end of the year. We're looking at probably fall. So the beginning of the academic year next year when the portal will go live.

As I said earlier with the dashboards and reports, this still is very much in the developmental phase. This year will begin working with the districts to figure

out what kind of predefined reports and customizable reports makes sense for us to have available as part of this tool.

So we're going to start development in summer 2013 and have these dashboards and reports available at the end of the grant period.

The minimum standards, this is where the Website has provided there. You can click on that. It's got a pretty extensive list of minimum standards for districts to meet for their local instructional improvement system.

So this has also been enacted into state law. You can see the reference there for law. And basically, the statute says that we – the districts have to have a system that meets these minimum requirements by June 30, 2014 and we are collecting surveys in the fall. We just did one in September of this year. We'll do another one in September 2012 and a final one in September of 2013 to be able to show the U.S. Department of Education that we're making progress towards meeting the goal of having all of the Race to the Top districts with an improvement system – local instructional improvement system that meets the minimum standards.

So we are collecting that data as we go along to be able to show progress towards that goal.

Again, in collaboration with Marion County, we have established an online exchange. It went live this past summer. The idea behind this is to have a collaborative tool where districts can exchange information about their local instructional improvement systems, the vendors there working with the – any problems that they're having, any ways that they're meeting the minimum requirements.

And so, you know, really more than anything I'd like to take this opportunity to encourage you to let your MIS people know about this exchange, you know?

We have it there. The Florida Department of Education monitors it regularly. So it's a great way to share ideas between districts and to see what other districts are doing.

So again, I think it's a tool that would be very useful especially as you start to get into the details for implementing the LIS programs in your – in your districts. So I would encourage you to use that.

If you – if you are not sure who's on it or you want to get more information, feel free to email me. I can give you the link and we can have – we have up to five users per school district.

The grants, there's probably not too much for me to say about this. We had 50 districts that met the eligibility requirements and basically we finished the review to make sure that all of the budgets met the scope requirements for this award.

And as award letters are out, we will be monitoring the districts as they – as they fulfill their requirements to do what they said they would do in these awards and part of that monitoring will be as part of the surveys that we're doing in the fall.

And the last slide for me, the research agenda, we – basically, the department has encouraged universities and colleges and researchers to be able to use our statewide longitudinal data system for many years.

What's different about this with Race to the Top funds is we've actually tried to provide an actual research agenda. So we go input from districts, we got input from institutes of higher education, we got input from people who were at the department and we published a research agenda which is online at the link that's given in the slide.

And we've got that one that's basically valid through June 30th of 2012 and in the spring of 2012 we'll be looking at that to make sure that it's updated. So we'll be updating that research agenda annually.

And just to be clear, this doesn't mean that if somebody has a research project that they're interested in that's not on this agenda they can still submit that and we would encourage them to do that.

But we did this as a way to try and prioritize so that for researchers who are out there and are interested in doing research, we give priority to ones that match the questions that are on our research agenda.

Holly Edenfield: Thank you, (Todd). Now, we're move into Section E which is Turning Around the Lowest Achieving Schools and here, you see our list of projects under this assurance area.

We will go through each one individually. And so to begin that, I'll turn it over to (Bo Elsie).

(Bo Elsie): Good morning. We do have a teacher recruitment project funded through a grant for Miami-Dade and Duvall and the purpose of this is for Miami-Dade – Miami-Dade and Duvall to contract with an outside entity to recruit teachers, train teachers and place teachers in their schools.

Both districts have decided to contract with Teach for America to accomplish this and they are in both of these LEAs are in the process of negotiating that contract with TFA.

But the goal here, and again, just for these two school districts, as they have the highest number of persistently low schools in the state, it is just for those two districts.

It is a \$9 million project and the plan is for these teachers to – these recruited teachers to be recruited starting probably in January-February, selected and then go into professional development in the summer of 2012 to be placed in the beginning of the '12-'13 school year.

So that's that project. The next project is recruitment and training for turnaround principals and assistant principals.

This is a project where we have selected eligible districts. We are in the final stages of contract negotiation and this contract will be awarded on or around December 14th.

So the (inaudible) attendance in these eligible school districts will be receiving a letter explaining more about this process that it is basically to provide professional development and it is going to be 90 – we do have that number – 90 assistant principals for – aspiring assistant principals or aspiring principals.

We are contracting with Southern Regional Education Boards and the eligible districts are Alachua, Broward, Duvall, Miami-Dade, Osceola, Orange and Pinellas.

It does include a strand for charter school leaders. So there will be 20 charter school aspiring A.P.s, aspiring principals to be trained through this process as well.

We are planning a statewide kickoff meeting for this probably in Orlando in January – mid to late January to give all of these eligible LEAs much more information about this project and it's goals, et cetera.

And then the next ITN is building capacity in rural districts. And again, we are – we have – we have had our intent to a board meeting, but that will be posted for three days before we can say anything about who the selected vendor is.

But this is Florida DOE partnering with an outside organization to provide 10 rural LEAs with leadership training.

And this training, it doesn't say it here, but it's specifically for the superintendents, school board members, senior district staff and principals in each of these 10 small rural districts.

The eligible districts are Bradford, Columbia, Franklin, Gadsden, Levy, Flagler, Hendry, Jefferson, Washington and Madison and we do anticipate that this professional development for these entities will begin in early 2012.

Here again, the superintendents of the 10 eligible districts will want this contract as awarded will be receiving much more information about the selection process of the candidates in the school district.

Holly Edenfield: Thank you both. Next, (Fred Hyde) will talk about work in our regional offices.

(Fred Hyde): Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. This slide covers the expansion of the current differentiated accountability regional offices as it relates to the addition of new staff or expansion of existing staff under Race to the top.

The outcomes are listed there for a point of reference. If you recall, Race to the Top was provided funding for 40 reading coordinators positions to be slotted or staged around the state.

And the ways those decisions are made, replacing any of these staff are based on the sheer volume of schools that each region is dealing with under the DEA model and matrix.

STEM coordinators resulted in addition of 20 additional positions, CTE experts, there's one per region, and data caption and coaches, there are nine positions. And again, as a reminder, those regions that have a consortium pace (inaudible) consortium did receive two data coaches to support the regional teams and to support the expansion and training of how to use data to – or disaggregation of data and how to use data to inform instructional decision making especially at the state gets ready to roll out single sign-on in a portal system here in the new future.

Multimedia professional development materials on using data, we have currently just – we have just recently hired the multimedia developer. The data caption and data coaches have been in position for some time in each region and have worked to verify the initial data surveys that were done and are used – are being used presently in order to support the 71 original PLAs, or Persistently Lowest Achieving Schools, in their initiatives.

The multimedia professional development materials will begin in earnest here in January with the expectation that two training modules will be available before June of 2012. Excuse me.

We – again, the multimedia developer is on-board. It has extensive background and experience in developing these online and face-to-face materials. And so things will be again in earnest in January.

Differentiates accountability summer activities, as you know, we hosted the first D.A. summer academy last year under Race to the Top. This year, we are looking to expand participation significantly.

There were some additional funds left over from year one that we have rolled into year two to allow us to invite and encourage additional staff. Additionally, we have some expectation that there may be newly identified D.A. schools moving forward now that the high school grades will be coming out here in December.

Shortly, there is – there is an understanding or a possibility of new schools being identified. This provides us with a more accurate timeline to notify districts and notify new schools of the potential for their participation.

Again, we do pay stipends for teachers to participate in addition to which this summer there will be a heavy emphasis again on the four areas of quality instruction, implementation and segway to common core problem-solving in response to intervention, segway into MTSS and S.M.

In addition, there will be significant coaching on just that, the coaching cycle, STEM, CTE and literacy across the content there is in conjunction with (Theresa Sweet's) Bureau, BCI and that of just Read Florida with (Stew Greenberg).

Notifications for the D.A. summer academy will go out. The RFAs currently are being discussed with the – with the – with the potential holder and notification will go out to schools and to districts at the end of January, early February.

Holly Edenfield: Thank you, (Fred). I'll cover the next two slides. So if you have a persistently lowest achieving high school, you have been awarded a grant. I think they were about \$300,000 each and that is to enhance your existing career academy or start a new career academy that focuses on STEM.

So all of that – all of those grants have been awarded and that's in 23 districts. And I know you're hard at work at implementing those enhancements or in – or those new career academies.

You'll see what our outcome was that was in our application and then you'll also see on this slide what we have in amendment – appending amendment into USDOE for.

We wanted to change it to make it more representative of the accomplishments of students in these career academies. And so instead of just basing it on the overall school grade and graduation and drop-out rates, we want to change the measures to decreasing the drop-out rate, increasing performance on statewide assessments, increasing the number of industry certifications earned and participation and performance on college readiness exam measures.

So, like I said, that amendment is pending with USDOE and we will let those affected districts know if and when that is approved.

The next project in this section is on our community compass and this was a competitive initiative for community based organizations and their proposals had to engage families, business organizations and the community at large to increase school attendance, increase parent involvement and increase family literacy.

We are in negotiations with several vendors for pilot programs and the award announcements should be out within the next couple of weeks. Then we will begin a second competitive procurement for one vendor, one statewide model with similar components that can be replicated statewide. So more to come on that project. OK.

This next slide just outlines what our application said about outcomes for persistently lowest achieving schools. (Fred), do you have anything to add to these?

(Fred Hyde): I do. I do. Just some quick data on first year and what we found. For example, in the selection of a program model, 54 of the original 71 POA schools identified transformation as their model – their turnaround model, 17 schools are identified as turnarounds.

Some of these schools have changed due to closure and school consolidation that's occurred across the state. Those SIG funds are being reviewed on the – our quarterly report and again, federal programs in conjunction with DSI or is looking at what to – how to best utilize those funds that are reverting back to the state.

Under expansion of voluntary VPK, we do have that in all school settings. Extended learning time, I wanted to touch on that slightly. We are expecting a new technical assistance paper to come out from USCD in January or February.

My – it's my understanding that has been vetted; however, they're finalizing some things internally before the release and they did expect to release sometime between Thanksgiving and the December winter holiday.

However, I think our expectation at this point is to receive sometime in January. For a quick summary of the current extended day opportunities, 70 – excuse me – seven schools out of the 71 were identified as having a designated day extension – excuse me – extended learning opportunity, 32 schools actually extended the actual school day. And, again, the time that they extended the current day varied.

Forty-one schools used before and after school tutorial, 19 schools used the summer program, 32 schools focused on Saturday tutorial intervention, 6 schools used some other variation and 41 sites in district schools used multiple means to address these issues.

Results from the extended day showed that 7 schools improved one letter grade, 7 schools improved two or more letter grades, 12 schools their grade remain unchanged and in one school setting the actual grade declined and there are 45 schools obviously that have a – have yet to be identified or included in that data disaggregation because they're high schools and their

final letter grade is pending. There is one school that retained an “I” grade at this time.

So that summarizes most of the other activities.

Holly Edenfield: The next slide just – so that you see what we’re being held accountable for from our application are the performance measures – is the performance measure for E2. That’s grant coding for Section E.

So 71 schools were identified as persistently lowest achieving. They are implementing their turnaround models now and we hope that the turnaround models are successful so that they won’t have to choose the different model in the out years of the grant. So that’s why there are zeros there for the rest of it. OK.

Now, I’ll turn it over to (Gene Miller) who will talk about the two charter school – two plus charter school projects and our grants.

(Gene Miller): Thank you, Holly. Good afternoon. Just very quickly on our first slide, the charter school expansion partnership, we did contract with the Charter School Growth Fund.

The purpose of this project was to have this organization come in and provide an incentive to charter schools and/or charter operators to actually come into Florida and open new charter schools in the persistently lowest achieving areas.

The Charter School Growth Fund is currently working with three schools. They have approved one – I’m sorry. They’ve approved one and are working with three additional schools that the intention is these schools will be open and operating for – during the 2013-’14 – I’m sorry – ’12-’13 school year.

So we have four that they’re working with currently and they will continue to work over the next three years to recruit, again, additional schools and charter operators who may be interested in opening schools in Florida.

On the second slide, this project – this particular project has three components to it. The first is the turnaround principle training which you heard (Bo) speak of earlier that we do have a charter component to that.

They are working with the new contractor, SREB, and our office will be starting to work on the eligibility criteria for which principals will be eligible for this program.

The charter principals are not limited to the districts that (Bo) spoke of earlier. So that will be our piece in this project currently is to establish that criteria. We will be training 20 charter school principals.

The second piece is in the ITM process or procurement process right now. It is to establish a partnership with an organization to assist charter schools with the implementation of the teacher and principal evaluation systems so that at ITM we expect to becoming out within the next three or four weeks get that posted and as soon as we can contract with a provider, they will provide a plan and we'll be contacting districts and charter schools to be working on that piece.

The third piece is currently today, as a matter of fact. Charter schools and charter school district contacts received an email. We are doing a GAP analysis. Again, this is somewhat related to the teacher, principal and evaluation systems, but also other requirements according to Senate Bill 736.

The GAP analysis will tell us what charter schools need in order to implement those requirements, in terms of technology, professional development. The GAP analysis will happen first and will be completed by the end of February.

Based on that analysis, then our office and the department will develop a plan and, again, go through a procurement process to solicit contractors that will be able to go out and address the needs that are identified in this GAP analysis.

Holly Edenfield: Thank you, (Gene). That concludes the information that we had to present today. So now, it's your turn to ask a question and a reminder again about tomorrow's Webinar where we'll cover standards and assessments and great teachers and leaders.

So if you have a question on what we presented today, operator, please open lines.

Operator: At this time, I would like to remind everyone in order to ask a question, please press star one on your telephone keypad. That is star one to ask a question. We'll pause for just a moment to compile the Q&A roster. Again, to ask a question, please press star one. There's no audio questions at this time.

Holly Edenfield: OK. Well, thank you, everyone, again for your time this afternoon. We hope it was helpful. And as questions do arise, I think you all know how to get ahold of me.

Here is our Website and on this page there's a list of the contacts by assurance area as well as my contact information. We are always here to answer your questions and provide technical assistance that you need to make us all successful.

So I hope you can tune in tomorrow for part two. Thanks and have a great day.

Operator: Thank you for joining today's conference call. You may now disconnect your line.

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