



Race to the Top News & Views Newsletter

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U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan visits Northwest Ohio Principals and Teachers

View original article at: www.ed.gov/blog/2014/08/my-top-advisers-principals-and-teachers

I had three conversations last week that served as valuable reminders of the impact of visionary, skilled principals. In one conversation, a group of award-winning teachers emphasized repeatedly the important role that great principals play in recruiting and retaining the best teachers in challenging school environments. One teacher, Laura Strait, shared that she moved from Massachusetts to California just to work for an outstanding principal.

I have never seen a high-performing school without a great principal. Principals are key to education change efforts, and I can't overstate the importance of courageous leadership.

As we work together to prepare our students for success, it's vital for me to regularly tap into the collective wisdom of our schools' instructional leaders. In two other conversations I had with educators last week, I met with principals in Toledo, Ohio, last Tuesday and in the District of Columbia on Friday. I wanted to hear from them about what's working, what isn't, and what the U.S. Department of Education can do to better support them. In both cases, I asked for a candid conversation, and I got it.

At D.C. Public Schools, I spoke with a group of 200 principals and central office leaders to thank them for their commitment to their students and schools and listen to their thoughts as they head back to school. I shared Laura Strait's story – she's a winner of TNTP's prestigious Fishman Prize – and challenged them to be *that* principal, one who is so strong that a teacher would follow them across the country to teach in their school. That's the kind of leadership we need everywhere.

At Toledo Public Schools' Woodward High School, I met with nine principals of northwestern Ohio schools – from urban, rural and small town environments – to hear about the impact that all the changes happening now in K-12 education are having on their students, teachers and families. I was pleased to hear that Ohio's Race to the Top grant has funded meaningful professional development that has helped to bring teachers at many schools out of their classroom silos to more effectively collaborate with their colleagues to meet the unique needs of each child. Race to the Top funding has also made some dramatic innovation possible: For example, it's helping to transform the middle and high school in rural Van Wert, Ohio, into a New Tech school that utilizes cutting-edge resources to enable kids to fully develop the critical thinking skills that today's employers need and tomorrow's jobs will demand.

However, I also heard loud and clear from Ohio principals that the quick pace of change is causing angst for them and their staffs. From the transition to college- and career-ready standards and assessments to new teacher evaluations, there's been an unprecedented amount of change within a short span of time. All of the principals made it very clear that they're seeing strong progress in their schools, and don't want to stop the momentum. As Woodward Principal Jack Renz said, "If you're not moving forward, you're falling behind."



These are not easy times in education. What I hear from you, our principals and teachers, influences what we do at ED. As we start the school year, it's important for districts, states and the staff at ED to hear your voices.

Can we build on positive momentum to help each student reach his or her full potential? If the answer lies with educators like those that I met last week –courageous principals and the passionate teachers who want to work with them – then I have no doubt in my mind that we can.

-Arne Duncan is U.S. Secretary of Education.

Welcome to Back!

Ohio's Race to the Top has been extended into a Year 5 No Cost Extension of the original Race to the Top (RttT) grant. A No Cost Extension means **no new additional funding** will be allocated to support an additional year of the grant, but both the state and participating districts and community schools will be permitted to **use any unspent Year 4 funds** in the 2014-2015 school year.

Race to the Top support will continue for all No Cost Extension participating districts and community schools, along with many projects that directly impact student achievement in 2014-15. This work will continue to support our efforts to meet both state and federal Department of Education goals.

Below is a short list of some of the programs that have been approved for continuation as part of the No Cost Extension:

Leadership and Communication: Race to the Top school districts and community schools in Ohio will continue to receive the support of six regional coordinators and 16 regional specialists in meeting commitments and goals described in their approved Race to the Top Year 5 Scope of Work. Participation will continue to connect districts and community schools to resources, support collaborative learning and shared decision-making and building teacher-level teams that serve to support the work of Race to the Top.

Formative Instructional Practices: RttT specialists will work with districts and community schools to increase formative instructional practices, use of online learning modules and develop practices proven to increase student achievement and growth. Districts and community schools will also have continued use of the Battelle for Kids Tools including the unit organizer for unit development, vocabulary guides, progression guides. Specialist will assist districts and community schools in diving deeper into the standards through the shifts, depth of knowledge, deconstruction and strategy implementation.

Ohio's Instructional Improvement System: Race to the Top regional specialists will provide training for teachers on the use of the system, assist in how to design and administer assessments and provide technical support.

Advanced Placement: RttT will continue the support of the Advanced Placement program increasing



access to AP opportunities for all students, creating action plans to build or expand AP programs and offering mini-grant awards to participating schools.

Beginning Principal Mentorship Program: RttT support will continue for the Beginning Principal Mentorship program for newly appointed assistant principals. RttT will continue to assist in professional development, understanding of Ohio's New Learning Standards, performance expectations and improving collaborative efforts.

Evaluation Implementation: Assistance in reviewing, reflecting, and adjusting processes for implementation of Ohio's Teacher and Principal Evaluation and reporting information through the electronic system will continue, along with support in creating valid and meaningful student learning objectives and student growth measures.

Please contact your regional specialist or coordinator if you have any additional questions. Visit <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/School-Improvement/Race-to-the-Top/Team/Regional-Coordinators> for contact information.

We look forward to serving all our participating districts and community schools for another year.

Details on the No Cost Extension and Frequently Asked Questions are available at www.rtttnews.files.wordpress.com/2014/04/faq_rtttnce_rev040214.pdf.

Ohio Department of Education Resources for School Year 2014-15

Principal's Toolkit

Take advantage of a variety of educational tools and resources for principals to use this school year. These handy tools will help you communicate with families and teachers about changes in Ohio education. Includes: New Graduation Requirements, 3rd Grade Reading Guarantee, Ohio's State Tests, and more!

Learn more: education.ohio.gov/Administrators/Principal-s-Toolkit

Teacher Evaluations

Changes to Ohio Teacher Evaluation System

House Bill 362 passed the Ohio legislature on June 3 bringing changes to the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System for the 2014-2015 school year and beyond.

The first change will allow less frequent evaluation of teachers receiving skilled and accomplished ratings beginning next year, while still providing them with feedback on their work.

The second change will allow districts a choice between a new alternative teacher evaluation structure and the current (original) structure. The alternative structure includes an additional measure to student growth and observation in a teacher's evaluation as 15 percent of the evaluation.



Visit <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Teaching/News/Changes-to-Ohio-Teacher-Evaluation-System-for-2014> for more information.

Frequently asked questions on student growth measures:

<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Teaching/Educator-Evaluation-System/Ohio-s-Teacher-Evaluation-System/Student-Growth-Measures/Student-Growth-Measures-FAQs>.

Ohio's Graduation Requirements

Ohio House Bill 487 established new requirements for earning a high school diploma in Ohio.

Here is how to find the information you need:

- The new graduation requirements that take effect with the **class of 2018**. These are students who are entering ninth grade for the first time in the 2014-2015 school year.
- Students in the **classes of 2014 - 2017** and those who are repeating ninth grade this school year will continue to operate under Ohio's current graduation requirements.
- **Latest updates** on additional graduation decisions as they occur and which decisions are left.

Ohio's Graduation Requirements 2014-2017

<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/What-s-Happening-with-Ohio-s-Graduation-Requiremen/Graduation-Requirements-2014-2017>

Latest Updates on Graduation Requirements

<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/What-s-Happening-with-Ohio-s-Graduation-Requiremen/Lastest-Updates-on-Graduation-Requirements>

Graduation Requirements 2018-Beyond

<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/What-s-Happening-with-Ohio-s-Graduation-Requiremen/Graduation-Requirements-2018-Beyond>

If you have any questions on the new graduation requirements, please email gradrequirements@education.ohio.gov.

Schedule Change from Days to Hours

Beginning in the 2014-2015 school year, traditional school districts, joint vocational school districts and chartered nonpublic schools must comply with minimum hours of instruction instead of a minimum number of school days each year.

- No schedule can be in effect that does not comply with all parts of the new minimum hours law (ORC 3313.48).

Fact sheet: education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Finance-and-Funding/Finance-Related-Data/Guidance-on-Schedule-Change-from-Days-to-Hours/Days-to-Hours.pdf.aspx



Frequently Asked Questions: education.ohio.gov/Topics/Finance-and-Funding/Finance-Related-Data/Guidance-on-Schedule-Change-from-Days-to-Hours/FAQs-Required-Days-to-Required-Hours

Ohio School Report Cards

The 2013-2014 report cards will be released in mid-September. Using A-F letter grades, Ohio School Report Cards detail how well schools and districts are performing in several important areas. District report cards released in fall 2014 will have 10 letter grades. School report cards can have up to 10 letter grades. Later in the school year, the Ohio School Report Cards also will provide financial data that measure spending and performance for 2013-2014. This includes how much is spent, and how much is directed to classroom instruction. The data also report how your school and district spending compares to others.

For more information or to view district and school report cards: reportcard.education.ohio.gov

Fact sheet: education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Media/Press-Kits/Ohio-School-Report-Cards.pdf.aspx

Ohio's New Kindergarten Readiness Assessment

Beginning with the 2014-15 school year, a new kindergarten readiness assessment will replace the KRA-L. The new assessment includes ways for teachers to measure a child's school readiness. [Ohio's Early Learning and Development Standards](#) (birth to kindergarten entry) are the basis for the new assessment. It has six components: social skills (including social and emotional development, and approaches toward learning), mathematics, science, social studies, language and literacy, and physical well-being and motor development.

Learn more: education.ohio.gov/Topics/Early-Learning/Guidance-About-Kindergarten/Ohios-New-Kindergarten-Readiness-Assessment

Upcoming Events

Rural Education Forum

October 27-28, 2014

The Rural Education National Forum is a unique opportunity to advance conversations around rural education and prosperity through collaborative action.

The Forum is designed to:

- Contribute to the growing momentum from the 2013 Forum, and encourage participation in the emerging voice for rural education;
- Build opportunities for collaboration/networking to leverage rural strengths to improve rural prosperity;
- Learn from powerful national examples of successful rural innovation; and
- Focus on ways to connect learning, living, and livelihood for the revitalization of rural communities.

[Download](#) registration brochure for more details.



Visit <http://www.battelleforkids.org/events/rural-education-forum> for more information.