

RACE to the TOP



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Race to the Top

Race to the Top, abbreviated **R2T**, **RttT** or **RTT**, is a \$4.35 billion United States Department of Education competition designed to spur reforms in state and local district K-12 education. It is funded by the ED Recovery Act as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and was announced by President Barack Obama and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan on July 24, 2009. States were awarded points for satisfying certain educational policies, such as performance-based standards (often referred to as an Annual Professional Performance Review) for teachers and principals, complying with nationwide standards, promoting charter schools, and computerization.

Ohio's Race to the Top strategy aligns with the Ohio Department of Education's vision and mission to implement a world-class education system in which all students will graduate with a sense of purpose and be well prepared for college, work and life.

Ohio has 5 goals:

- » Increase high school graduation rates by .5% per year
- » Reduce graduation rate gaps (across subgroups) by 50%
- » More than double the increase in college enrollment by 18 and 19 year olds.
- » Reduce the gap between Ohio and the best performing states in the nation by 50%
- » Reduce performance gaps (across all subgroups and tested areas) by 50%

Norwood City School District RttT Vision Statements

As a result of our Race to the Top strategy:

- Our K - 12 teachers will align our curriculum to the Ohio's New Learning Standards.
- The district will participate in the development of statewide resources and pilot projects.
- Teachers and administrators will use student data to transform our practices, individualize our instruction, and increase learning.
- We will have reduced achievement gaps between Norwood and the best-performing districts in the state.

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To see the progress that Ohio students and educators are making select this link: [Ohio's Quarterly Reports](#)

Norwood City Schools received over \$550,000 to fund improvement initiatives. We have a Race to the Top (RttT) approach that is concentrated on student learning and higher teacher and leader performance. Our efforts will focus in three areas: standards and assessments, using data to improve instruction, and ensuring great teachers and leaders. We will enhance our partnerships with institutes of higher education. Using the Comprehensive Continuous Improvement Plan and our Ohio Improvement Plan and building planning tools to coordinate with our RttT strategy we believe our district will be transformed.

Questions regarding RttT? See our frequently asked questions page or email us:

RttT@norwoodschoools.org

- We will use embedded professional development to promote great teachers and leaders and to enhance their performance.
- We will embrace a new way for teachers and administrators to evaluate their work that is specific and targeted to improved performance throughout the district.
- Our impact will be strong, beginning with our early learners that will lead to increased longitudinal graduation rates.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is Race to the Top over? Wasn't RttT a 4-year grant?

A No Cost Extension amendment was sent to the United States Department of Education to request continued support for the work and commitments of Ohio's Race to the Top state Scope of Work into the 2014-2015 school year was approved on March 27, 2014.

The No Cost Extension means that no new additional funding will be allocated to support the 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 to carry over into the 2014-2015 school year. Districts and community schools that have elected to participate in the No Cost Extension may choose one to three activities that address the sustainability and further development of the district's/community school's existing Race to the Top initiatives.

Through the Year 5 extension, Norwood City School District teaching staff will participate in continued professional development to deepen their understanding and expertise of Ohio's New Learning Standards and the Depth of Knowledge Chart. All curriculum has been aligned to Ohio's New Learning Standards and pacing guides have been revised. To reach deeper understanding of the cognitive rigor required, teachers will review and assess the depth of knowledge of each lesson. Lessons and instructional strategies will be aligned to the appropriate rigor.

Additionally, Norwood City School District teaching staff will continue to participate and prepare for the Next Generation of Assessments and district led assessment to strengthen student achievement. The district has a system of formative and summative assessments in place, however, we have a need to continue to analyze the value of the assessments and their connection to student achievement.

What do we know about the Next Generation of Assessments?

As a governing member with the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), Ohio educators are involved in the planning of the new assessment system. Norwood City Schools participated in the state-wide field test. Effective in the 2014-2015 school year, student assessments will:

- Use online testing to replace the current paper-pencil assessments;
- Use multiple measures, including multiple choice, constructed response and technology-enhanced items, along with performance tasks;
- Take measures of student progress at intervals during the school year, including end of year or end of course assessments;

- Use automated scoring processes that provide real-time results for students and educators;
- Administer an assessment to measure progress toward College and Career Readiness.
- Current 10th graders will take the OGT as a requirement of high school graduation
- Current 9th grade students, will take the Next Generation of Assessments as a requirement of graduation
- Ohio has developed assessments in Science for grades 6 and 8 and in Social Studies in grades 4 and 6 that are similar in format and rigor to the PARCC assessments.

Resources are available on the district [Assessment Links Page](#)

Did we implement Ohio's New Learning Standards?

The district has an implementation plan that calls for the transition of the current standards to the New Learning Standards that mirror's the implementation plan for the Next Generation of Assessments. Currently, all grades have implemented the new learning standards. All teachers are stretching the content to develop the rigor that is necessary to succeed in the future.



What is the Third Grade Guarantee?

Recent legislation strengthened the Third Grade Reading Guarantee to give greater emphasis to reading instruction and intervention in the early grades. Through this initiative, school districts will diagnose reading deficiencies in students at grades kindergarten through three, create individualized reading improvement and monitoring plans and provide intensive reading interventions. The diagnostics will identify students as *on-track* and *not on-track*.

- **On-track** means any student who is reading at grade level based on previous end-of-year standards' expectations by September 30.
- **Not on-track** means any student who is not reading at grade level based on previous end-of-year standards' expectations by September 30.

Beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, all students scoring below 392 on the third grade reading OAA must be retained in third grade for reading; some exemptions apply.

What is the new longitudinal graduation rate?

This new Four-Year Longitudinal Graduation Rate is being required of all states by the U.S. Department of Education. This rate identifies graduates as only students who earn a high school diploma within four years of entering the ninth grade for the first time.

Is the Local Report Card changing?

The new Local Report Card will be based on grades. Report card measures will be grouped into 6 components:

- Achievement
 - Performance Index
 - Performance Indicators
- Progress
 - Overall Value-Added
 - Value-Added for Gifted, Students with disabilities, and the lowest quintile
- Graduation
 - 4 and 5 year cohort rate
- K-3 Literacy Progress
 - Progress toward Third Grade Guarantee
- Gap Closing
 - AYP alternative
 - Annual Measureable Objectives
- Prepared for Success

While many states are struggling to create school accountability systems that are easy to find, meaningful to parents and filled with useful data, Ohio has been praised for the design and understandability of its new A-F report cards.

An independent review by the Education Commission of the States gave Ohio's new report card "nearly perfect scores" for its excellent design and ease of use. Ohio was the only state that was highlighted by all three evaluation groups (parents, researchers and the report's authors).

For more information, visit the [Ohio Local Report Card website](#)

Does Ohio have a new Principal and Teacher Evaluation System?

Ohio's system for evaluating teachers will provide educators with a richer and more detailed view of their performance, with a focus on specific strengths and opportunities for improvement. The system relies on two key evaluation components, each weighted at 50 percent: a rating of teacher performance (based on classroom observations and other factors), and a rating of student academic growth.

The Ohio Principal Evaluation System (OPES) is a standards-based integrated model that is designed to foster the professional growth of principals in knowledge, skills and practice. In OPES, student growth measures (50%) combined with evaluation of principals' proficiency on the standards (50%) determine the level of principal effectiveness. Proficiency on the standards includes professional goal-setting, communication and professionalism, and skills and knowledge.

What is the IIS that has been in the news?

Ohio's schools will have access to a state-of-the-art system that lets teachers analyze student achievement and select the

best learning resources through an instructional improvement system (IIS).

Thinkgate, LLC has been selected to provide an IIS for schools in Ohio and Massachusetts. Both states' education agencies agreed to create powerful online learning platforms as part of their federal Race to the Top grants and teamed up to conduct a competitive procurement. Under the contract, the Thinkgate IIS will be available to all Race to the Top (RttT) districts for the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years.

The IIS will enable teachers to accelerate and personalize the education experience by providing the following features:

- Online access to curriculum and standards
- Curriculum customization
- Easy to use paper, online and clicker test administration options that teachers can use to determine what progress students have made and what help they need
- Data analysis and reporting capabilities
- A portfolio of every students' work

The IIS available for RttT school districts for no cost. Norwood has made the IIS available to teachers for use of the item banks. For more information, visit the [Thinkgate website](#).