



## Sustainability Rubric

A Tool to Help State Education Agencies Assess  
Their Current Efforts to Sustain Reform Strategies  
to Meet Student Achievement Goals

October 2013

This tool was built to support Race to the Top Districts in developing systemic change at the district level. Using these same systemic structures, it has been repurposed to focus on building state capacity to implement and sustain reform efforts. This tool aligns with the SSIP Phase II process in focusing on the categories, elements and variables necessary to strengthen state infrastructure necessary to plan, implement and sustain the SSIP.

The tool serves as a dialogue guide and rubric for SEAs or local early intervention programs in reviewing current practice, identifying areas of strength and weakness, and provides examples or “look-fors” that represent what exemplary implementation might look like.

### Sustainability Rubric Overview

<http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/implementation-support-unit/tech-assist/sustainability-rubric-summary.pdf>

For Race to the Top States to produce transformative, sustainable improvement in student achievement, State education agencies (SEAs) and local educational agencies (LEAs) will have to focus on and commit to improving student outcomes in a manner that lives well beyond any particular program or funding stream. Race to the Top grantees will not see the full impact of any reform within a one-year time period, regardless of how well it is implemented. LEAs must successfully implement reforms at the district and classroom level, and SEAs must play a leading role to support them, providing direction, offering limited, but critical assistance and building capacity, all at a statewide scale. In the course of this change, the role of the SEA will evolve from one focused largely on monitoring and compliance to one that includes leadership toward statewide goals for improved student growth, targeted support to LEAs and performance management of SEA activities.

#### What is Sustainable Reform?

Sustainable reforms are durable, adaptive and persistently focused on goals for improved student growth in the face of changing conditions. The Reform Support Network, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, supports the Race to the Top grantees as they implement reforms in education policy and practice, learn from each other, and build their capacity to sustain these reforms, while sharing these promising practices and lessons learned with other States attempting to implement similarly bold education reform initiatives. A strong strategic plan with a clear theory of action is the foundation of the reform strategy and for sustainability planning. To achieve sustainable systems and/or results, SEAs and LEAs use evidence from implementation for the purpose of continuous improvement within an evolving state context, adapting systems, resources and structures to better achieve student and system outcomes over time.

#### What is the Sustainability Rubric?

The Sustainability Rubric is a tool to help SEAs assess the sustainability of a specific priority reform—a body of work that an SEA is undertaking in order to achieve two or more priority goals for student outcomes. The rubric consists of 20 elements of sustainability. States can use this tool to anchor their work by choosing one or more priority reforms (for example, implementing educator effectiveness systems), assessing their current sustainability and taking action to improve sustainability across one or more of these indicators.