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**EDUCATION DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES 16 WINNERS OF RACE TO THE TOP-DISTRICT COMPETITION**

The U.S. Department of Education announced today that 16 applicants – representing 55 school districts across 11 states and D.C. – have won the 2012 Race to the Top-District competition. These districts will share nearly \$400 million to support locally developed plans to personalize and deepen student learning, directly improve student achievement and educator effectiveness, close achievement gaps, and prepare every student to succeed in college and their careers.

“Districts have been hungry to drive reform at the local level, and now these winners can empower their school leaders to pursue innovative ideas where they have the greatest impact: in the classroom,” said U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. “The Race to the Top-District grantees have shown tremendous leadership through developing plans that will transform the learning environment and enable students to receive a personalized, world-class education.”

The 2012 Race to the Top-District grantees will receive four-year awards that range from \$10 million to \$40 million, depending on the number of students served through the plan. The winning applicants were the top scorers among the 372 applications the Department received in November, which were evaluated and scored by independent peer reviewers. Grantees represent a diverse set of districts, including applicants from both states that received a Race to the Top state grant as well as those that have not received Race to the Top state funding. Among the winners is a rural-area consortium representing 24 rural districts, which comprise 44 percent of the total number of districts that will benefit from the 2012 competition.

The Race to the Top-District competition builds on the success of the Race to the Top state grant program by supporting classroom-level reform efforts that encourage transformative change within schools. Applicants from all districts were invited to demonstrate how they can personalize education for all students and provide school leaders and teachers with tools that help them best meet their students’ needs. In developing their plans, districts collaborated with educators, parents, and both public and private organizational leaders to ensure their vision was supported by key community stakeholders.

“Since the day he took office, President Obama has been laser-focused on the goal of ensuring that every child has access to a quality education,” said Director of the White House Domestic Policy Council, Cecilia Muñoz. “Race to the Top exemplifies this commitment and marks an

historic moment in American education, raising the bar and improving outcomes for schools across the United States.”

Race to the Top, which launched in 2009, has inspired dramatic education reform nationwide, leading 45 states and the District of Columbia to pursue higher college- and career-ready standards, data-driven decision making, greater support for teachers and leaders, and turnaround interventions in low-performing schools. These 16 grantees will build on those principles at the classroom level to support localized plans that will directly improve student achievement and educator effectiveness.

“Race to the Top sparked as much reform in some states that didn’t receive funds as in those that did – a trend we want to see continued with the Race to the Top-District competition, where the number of strong district applicants was greater than the funding we had available,” Duncan said. “We want districts to keep moving on these blueprints for reform to transform the learning environment and ultimately prepare every student for college and their career.”

Race to the Top-District plans are tailored to meet the needs of local communities and feature a variety of strategies, including: using technology to personalize learning for each student; giving students opportunities to learn beyond the traditional school day and environment; supporting students’ transitions throughout their education, including from high school to college and careers; expanding partnerships with community organizations to provide students with targeted social services like crisis intervention, individual counseling and life enrichment opportunities; and providing professional development and coursework options to deepen learning in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields.

For more information about the Race to the Top-District program, including a list of winners, requested award amounts and additional materials, visit the Department’s website: <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-district/index.html>. The grantees are also listed below:

\*indicates consortium

**Carson City School District**, Nevada

**Charleston County School District**, South Carolina

**Galt Joint Union School District**, California

\***Green River Regional Educational Cooperative**, Kentucky, *consortium leader* (consortium members: Adair County Schools, Campbellsville Independent Schools, Carroll County Schools, Caverna Independent Schools, Cloverport Independent Schools, Daviess County Schools, Green County Schools, Hart County Schools, Henry County Schools, Logan County Schools, Metcalfe County Schools, Monroe County Schools, Ohio Valley Educational Cooperative, Owen County Schools, Owensboro Independent Schools, Russell County Schools, Shelby County Schools, Simpson County Schools, Spencer County Schools, Taylor County Schools, Trimble County Schools, Union County Schools, West Point Independent Schools)

**Guilford County Schools**, North Carolina

\***Harmony Science Academy (Harmony Public Schools)**, Texas, *consortium leader* (consortium members: Harmony School of Excellence, Harmony School of Science-Houston,

Harmony Science Academy-Austin, Harmony Science Academy-Brownsville, Harmony Science Academy-El Paso, Harmony Science Academy-Fort Worth, Harmony Science Academy-Lubbock, Harmony Science Academy-San Antonio, Harmony Science Academy-Waco)

**IDEA Public Schools**, Texas

**Iredell-Statesville Schools**, North Carolina

**KIPP DC**, Washington, D.C.

**Lindsay Unified School District**, California

**Metropolitan School District of Warren Township**, Indiana

**Middletown City School District**, New York

**New Haven Unified School District**, California

**\*Puget Sound Educational Service District**, Washington, *consortium leader* (consortium members: Auburn School District, Federal Way Public Schools, Highline Public Schools, Kent School District, Renton School District, Seattle Public Schools, Tukwila School District)

**School Board of Miami-Dade County**, Florida

**St. Vrain Valley Schools**, Colorado

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