

What is New Jersey's Race to the Top 3 Program?

The State's comprehensive educational reform vision is to ensure that all children, regardless of life circumstances, graduate from high school ready for college and career. The Race to the Top Phase 3 (RTTT3) sub grant program will help New Jersey greatly advance its priority initiatives so this vision can be realized. On December 22, 2011, New Jersey received \$37,847,648 from

RTTT3 is designed to support the following initiatives:

- The development of a model curriculum by Fall 2012, aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and with a focus on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) to support the statewide transition to the CCSS;
- The development of an Instructional Improvement System (IIS), an online portal to deliver model curriculum, formative assessments, data reporting, professional development resources, and other curricular resources aligned to the CCSS, to the school-level;
- The transition to new principal and teacher evaluation systems; and
- Support for the State's charter application and renewal review cycles.

What initiative did Cliffside Park School District choose?

CPSD opted to implement the transition to new principal and teacher evaluation systems.

How is Cliffside Park using Race to the Top 3 Funds?

Cliffside Park School District is utilizing Race to the Top 3 (RTTT3) funds to attain the teacher evaluation system goals established by the New Jersey Department of Education. By providing intensive professional development, in all of its schools, the district will address RTTT3 Project Area 4: Implementation of New Teacher and Leader Evaluation Systems.

To attain clear evaluation expectations for all stakeholders, RTTT3 funds will be used to ensure 100% of district evaluators and educators receive thorough training in the McREL Teacher Evaluation model, which is a NJDOE-approved research-based observation framework that includes at least four differentiated levels of performance.

McREL's Teacher Evaluation System standardizes the evaluation process, provides opportunities for coaching and knowledge building, and helps talented teachers and education leaders realize their potential. By helping to identify areas of needed professional development and by improving the communication between teachers and evaluators, the evaluation process becomes a positive force for change.

McREL has also created a corresponding software application in response to district requests for a valid and reliable online version of the process. Professional development for IT, central office staff, and school administrators is required to use the online tool.

Key Ideas:

With this evaluation software, you can:

- Access evaluation forms from desktop, laptop, or notebook devices
- Aggregate data and customize reports by grade, subject, building, or district
- Export data for use in most databases (e.g., Excel, Access)
- Provide timely and effective feedback
- Track teacher performance longitudinally
- See both principal and peer observations in one summary report

Beginning in September 2012, CPSD utilized RTTT3 Funds to contract evaluation model experts to offer on-site training including: 1) Introductory/overview session(s) to engage stakeholders, explain the framework, customize the observation instruments and plan the implementation; 2) Evaluation and framework training, certification and ongoing support for evaluators and coaches; and 3) Training for all teachers on the teaching practice framework, standards of effective practice and how they will be evaluated.

CPSD began the teacher evaluation implementation process by first training the evaluators. The face to face training sessions will ensure fair and consistent application of the model. Training will help evaluators identify and measure characteristics of teacher effectiveness and integrate data for a balanced view of performance. Additionally, the training will enable evaluators to step into the role of instructional leaders focused on improving the dialogue among administrators and staff to attain the common goal of increased student achievement. To date the district:

- Offered in-service training for the evaluators on 9/25, 9/26 and 10/3
- Purchased 250 McREL site licenses for staff
- Provided in-service training session for the entire staff on January 14.
- Ensured evaluators were given examples of lessons by practicing new evaluation system.
- Offered McREL Power Walkthrough training for evaluators on 4/19, 5/1 and 5/2
- Purchased Power Walkthrough licenses for staff
- Assisted staff members with using the McREL system to do practice Pre-Evaluations.