



## Frequently Asked Questions – Scopes of Work Amendments

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**The LEA Scope of Work amendment window is November 1-30, 2010. Below are several “Frequently Asked Questions” to help during the process.**

**Do I have to fill in trajectories to all targets?**

No, only for those indicators/targets that will be impacted by your First to the Top activities.

**When and how will I receive suggested targets for my district? Can I revise them?**

The Field Service Center director in your region will send you the suggested targets by November 1st. Yes, you can revise them.

**Where do I show which leading indicators we are using?**

In the Scopes of Work template, the column "performance measurement target".

**Can I add different lagging indicators?**

Yes, other indicators may be appropriate given your activities (e.g., science proficiency, ACT scores, etc.)

**May I add indirect costs?**

Yes, you may allocate indirect costs according to your agreed upon rate with USED.

**If I have activities focused on performance pay for teachers and principals, how do these activities need to align with the Teacher Incentive Fund?**

TN-TIF would be a strategy to help accomplish your First to the Top goal of developing a performance-based pay system. During the planning year, the TIF schools in your district will decide in designing their new compensation system how to incorporate/expand any current performance pay activities. The TIF districts/schools will receive technical assistance from the Department of Education during this planning period to answer specific questions.

**Is the format for Scopes of Work changed?**

No. We are using the same format because we understand the hours LEAs spent completing the initial document. One additional worksheet will be completed to show how each system plans to meet the First to the Top state goals. Additionally, the financial worksheets will need to be submitted with the revised scope.

**How will changes be indicated?**

Any amendments, whether in activities or monies spent, will need to be in red; deleted items should be indicated in green.

**Will I be required to submit a narrative?**

No, a narrative is optional at this time, but include if it provides clarity in implementation.



### **May I continue with my plan if my original scope of work contained alternative compensation?**

Yes, though you may want to ask if that is the most meaningful way to effect a change in student achievement.

### **May we use money for formative assessments for grades 3-8?**

No; the state will be providing this service. Training begins in December at yet to be determined regional sites. The LEAs can begin Phase 1 use late December - January. Phase 2 begins next school year. Phase 1 is access to item banks for point of instruction questions and the LEAs can create interim assessments if they want to build them. One of the planned two Benchmark assessments will be available mid March from the same item bank. Phase 2 will have two Benchmark assessments using some TCAP items from the summative item bank. These will be developed through the Office of Assessment and will have psychometric properties using IRT. The department will assist Pearson with design considerations. Tests will be constructed to administer one at 50% and one at about 80% of instruction. Also, we will begin training teachers to write items as PD to build the interim bank.

We will use the same platform (Limelight on-line) for the non-tested subjects and grades. Again, the teachers will get PD on item writing to include performance based items.

### **How can I get support and assistance on writing strong performance measure targets?**

Technical assistance will be provided by the Field Service Centers and consultants provided by TN SCORE.

### **What is a lagging indicator?**

This is a measurement that comes at the end of the year or after a lengthy period of time; a summative result. Example: grad rate

### **What is a leading indicator?**

This is a measurement that is taken at shorter intervals to let you know the path of your lagging indicator; a formative result. Example: Number of absences by grading period. Other possibilities: Benchmark assessment results, Grade in previous grade period, teacher attendance/sub rate, teacher hiring date, assignment of effective/ineffective teachers, kindergarten readiness results, student attendance for past week, month, grading period

### **What is a performance measure target?**

This is a target that is set from a given baseline of the most current data with an expected amount of growth. Example: Current 6th grade math has 25% students in the basic level. By spring 2011 we expect to reduce those 6th graders in the basic category to 20% basic.

### **What is formative instructional practice?**

FIP is a process, formal and informal, that teachers and students use to know where they are now, where they need to go to close the learning gap. This is the definition we will use as a state in our interactions with Battelle for Kids and their work with us.

### **What is the process for amending any of our scopes of work plans?**

After this amendment period, any system that receives data that show a revision is in line to better achieve performance measures or state goals can call their Field Service Director and describe the nature of the change. A decision will be made whether a change should be made before the next submission period. Each year, there will be a revision period built around data delivery times. It is suggested that systems work their plan until one of these periods is announced. We are not announcing a firm date for next year's revision as it is dependent on the timeliness of data to school personnel.



### **May we list a vendor's name in our activities?**

Yes, this was discouraged in the first submission, but now vendor applications have been screened and lists of approved vendors are published on the First to the Top website. Renewal Schools (Corrective Action and Restructuring I) are required to select one of the whole school reform models for implementation for the school year 2010-11 and to use vendors from the state approved list.

### **Do we have to express performance targets in percentage of proficient students?**

No, you may use an increase in achievement growth as well as TVAAS.

### **Are there penalties for not meeting our performance targets?**

Ambitious goals may not be met and there will be no penalty. An implementation dip is often expected with new strategies addressing new standards; however, if a system seriously falls short or does so repeatedly, there will be discussion with technical assistance personnel as to how these trends can be reversed. Race to the Top is not intended to be punitive.

### **Will there be an opportunity to add to the list of leading indicators?**

Certainly; if you have another data source that will give you informative power, by all means share it! The previous list is not exhaustive or exclusive.

### **How often are leading indicators measured?**

This is the choice of the system. If this is student tardies or attendance, it might be as often as weekly, so that students are called promptly when absent and not allowed to fall behind for attendance issues. If you have a formative assessment benchmarking tool you administer monthly or every six weeks, that interval could be used. The trick is to catch negative data early and decide what to do about it.

### **How will scopes of work be monitored?**

Financials on the First to the Top scopes of work will be monitored by the state fiscal consultants on the federal monitoring reporting schedule. Quarterly jobs created and vendor usage data will be sent by districts for the 1512 report. Programmatic monitoring will not be called such. Technical assistance visits will occur as requested and as identified on the same federal monitoring schedule. Before such visits occur, they will be scheduled through the director of schools and a list of questions for discussion will be provided.

### **Who should be part of the team when revising scopes of work?**

Those who helped in the initial creation of the scope should be included, as well as someone with expertise in data interpretation. The director should select and invite participants. Use your resources: include CTE with STEM projects.

### **Will there be a First to the Top conference to showcase best practices?**

SCORE is planning a FTTT best practices conference and next year's LEAD conference will support a strand of best practices. We hope good ideas are also spread through all levels of study councils, AIMS, TOSS, and professional learning communities.