

Race to the Top Steering Committee Quarterly Meeting

Tuesday, August 30, 2011, 4:30-6:30 p.m.

The Rhode Island Foundation

Meeting Notes

I. Welcome & Objectives

- a. Welcome, *Colleen Jermain & Neil Steinberg, Co-Chairs*
- b. Objectives of Today's Meeting, *Commissioner Gist*
 - i. Understand the progress made in year one of Race to the Top.
 - ii. Be aware of what is ahead for year two of Race to the Top.
 - iii. Gain a deeper understanding of the purpose and features of the standards and curriculum projects happening now under Race to the Top.

II. Communications Update

Neil Steinberg, Co-Chair

III. Year-One Progress Update

- a. Update, *Commissioner Gist*
 - i. [\[See Year One Progress Update\]](#)
- b. Q&A, *Steering Committee Members*
 - Can you elaborate on the distribution of grant monies to the districts?
 - The Race to the Top grant was designed as a “unified application”. Each district is sharing the up-front design and development investment, needed for the creation of RTTT support systems such as the enhancement of state-wide data systems and the educator evaluation system. This unified strategy will maximize the grant for every student in RI.
 - RIDE is following the state procurement process for RTTT related professional development costs. LEAs are reimbursed for monies spent to supplement RTTT training (e.g. providing substitute teachers).
 - We should continue to communicate to stakeholders and constituents the value of this approach, and commitment towards carrying out the grant as it was written in the application.
 - The Year One Progress Update projects that by September 30, 2011 we will have spent \$3.4 million, are we on target with spending?
 - We are on target to spend the \$75 million over the four years of the grant.
 - The state was given access to funds in April 2011; the timing of that access caused a delay in awarding contracts to key vendors. We anticipate that these contracts will be awarded early in Year 2.
 - Are there concerns that local education agencies (LEAs) will not have enough money to fund these projects?
 - \$4.2 million from the state portion of the funds were used to supplement the LEA allocations to ensure that all LEAs could fully participate without having to go into their own district budgets. All [LEA budgets](#) can be found on our website.
 - Does the New Teacher Induction program include support for substitute teachers?

- This program was designed for new, first year teachers to receive one on one coaching around critical professional development areas.
 - The induction coaches selected for this work were identified by districts and released for a two-year period, after which they will return to their district. This model allows for future sustainability and expansion of these learnings towards other educators, including substitute teachers or teaching assistants.
 - Some LEAs are working creatively with funding to also be able to provide support to second year teachers and substitute teachers. The revisions to the Certification Regulations that are being brought to the Board of Regents include guidance for LEAs to ensure that they are supporting substitute teachers appropriately.
- To what extent is the New Teacher Induction program informing and informed by the teacher training programs in the state?
 - We are working with our higher education partners to build bridges between what is happening in teacher induction and in teacher preparation programs. The New Teacher Induction program is built upon the expectation that even with the best teacher preparation training, first year teachers will still need support during their first year on the job.
- Are there alternative means to accommodate people who have not gone through a teaching program, but want to go into teaching (for example, experts in the field of physics wishing to teach at the high school level)?
 - The Certification Regulations that are being brought to the Board of Regents have a component called “Expert Resident.” It is designed to ensure that we do not impose artificial barriers to keep professionals who have a lot to offer students out of the classroom.
- Is there a structure that provides excellent teachers with incentive to advance their practice as well as to stay in the field of education?
 - We know from studies done in high-performing countries around the world that they provide more professional support and more opportunities for career advancement than we do in the U.S.
 - In the new proposed Certification Regulations, there is opportunity for educators to move through a “career ladder” through the type of certificate they can acquire (beginning professional, professional, master professional). This will allow districts to strategically select teachers for leadership opportunities, as well as recognize them for those contributions.
 - A small part of the RTTT grant allows for two districts to propose and pilot alternative compensation structures based on teacher performance.
 - We are working with the RI Foundation to celebrate and recognize the excellent work our teachers are doing. This year we will have a Teacher of the Year from every district.

IV. A Closer Look: Standards and Curriculum Projects

- a. Presentation, *Mary Ann Snider, RIDE*
 - i. [See Common Core State Standards presentation to Steering Committee]
- b. Panel Discussion
 - i. Robert O’Brien, Superintendent | Smithfield, RI

- Discussed curriculum alignment work with elementary grades in reading and at the high school level in math
 - Discussed the importance of the inclusion of teachers in the curriculum alignment work to the Common Core State Standards and the positive response from teachers in Smithfield.
- ii. **Melinda Smith, Curriculum Director | Lincoln, RI**
- Discussed the collaboration in Cumberland, Lincoln and Woonsocket on the development of new curriculum aligned to the current state standards, which will shift to the Common Core State Standards after this school year.
 - Highlighted the importance of responsiveness and listening to what is happening for teachers in classrooms teaching the standards.
- iii. **Ryan Mullen, Math Teacher | Warwick, RI**
- Discussed curriculum alignment to standards work in Warwick through professional learning communities and the connection to the educator evaluation system.
 - Discussed the professional learning community work in Warwick:
 - Created an online database of resources for use in the district this year;
 - Designed predictive modeling tool that indicates the State Standard that new students may struggle with based on past performance and proficiency;
 - Wrote common assessments for high school level;
 - Implemented a standards-based proficiency report
- c. **Q&A, *Steering Committee Members***
- Is the work that the panel members discussed funded under RTTT?
 - LEAs receive reimbursement for the Study of the Standards sessions and curriculum development. RIDE is developing Powerpoints and protocols to support teachers after they participate in the Study of the Standards.
 - The transition to the Common Core State Standards was part of the state Strategic Plan prior to receiving the RTTT grant. RTTT funding allows us to provide more intensive training to about 5,000 teachers across the state and assist in developing aligned curriculum.
 - Do the new Common Core State Standards allow teachers to teach different methods to arrive at an answer, particularly in math?
 - The Common Core State Standards provide clear expectations on what learning must occur. Curriculum aligned to the standards that will be developed allows flexibility on the part of the teacher to distribute the information in their own style.
 - Some teachers are dependent on text to teach, how do we ensure that this does not happen?
 - The issue of the book being the class has always been a concern, but we are focusing on making sure instruction is based on the standards. The Dana Center is working with our teachers on instructional strategies, the ability to take a standard and teach it multiple ways so that students are able to use the strategy that works best for them. Teachers will also be able to access model curriculum

through the online Instructional Management System that is being developed with RTTT funds.

- The Common Core State Standards are more explicit and easier to understand than previous sets of standards have been.
 - Of note, Warwick is the first district in the country to align curriculum to the Common Core State Standards.
- Are the state and national tests aligned to the new standards?
 - Yes, when we transition to the Common Core State Standards, we will begin administering the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC), which is aligned to the Common Core State Standards. The NECAP, our current state test, is aligned to the current standards.
 - The PARCC will allow us to compare communities in RI to similar communities in other states. This will give us a much better sense of how we are doing nationally than we have ever had before.
 - NAEP, also known as 'The Nation's Report Card' is a national test that is administered to states on a sampling basis only. With further adoption of the PARCC this test may no longer be needed, but that is not known at this time.
 - What are some lessons learned for other districts as they complete the Study of the Standards and curriculum work?
 - It cannot be overstated how important it is to work directly with the teachers. You start with and include the people who are closest to the learners.

V. Wrap-Up