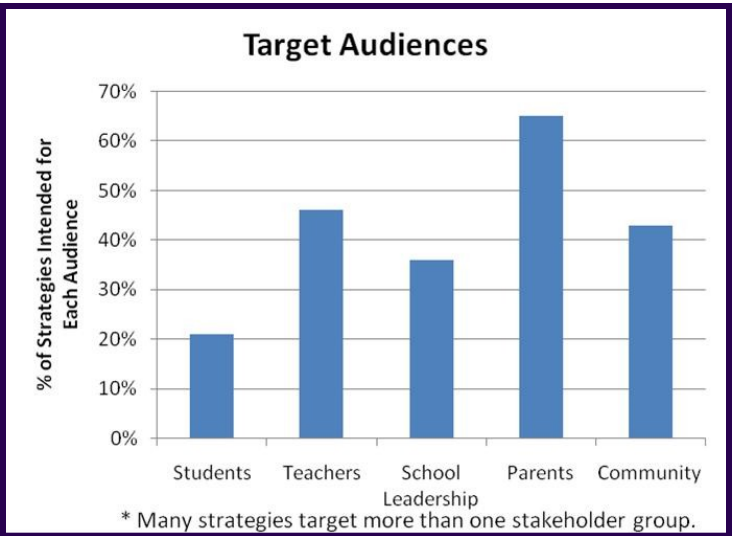
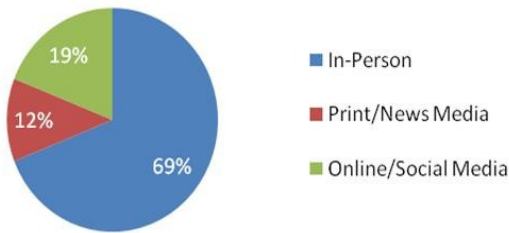


Race to the Top Engagement Strategies

In the fall of 2010, the Rhode Island Department of Education asked Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to describe the strategies they are using to engage their communities in Race to The Top initiatives. Based on the LEA responses, the most frequently targeted audiences for Race to the Top engagement are parents and teachers. With 65 and 46 percent of identified engagement strategies intended for these audiences, LEAs indicated that parents and teachers are important stakeholders. The Rhode Island Department of Education and LEAs are working together to engage all stakeholders to meet district and statewide goals.

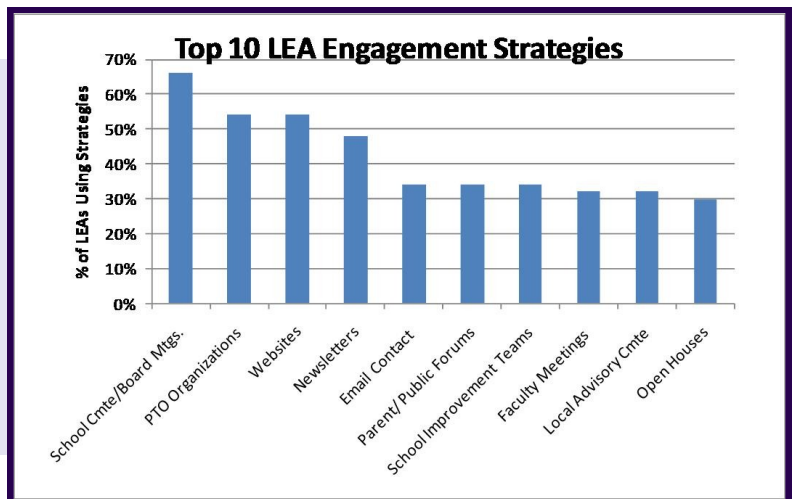


Modes of Engagement



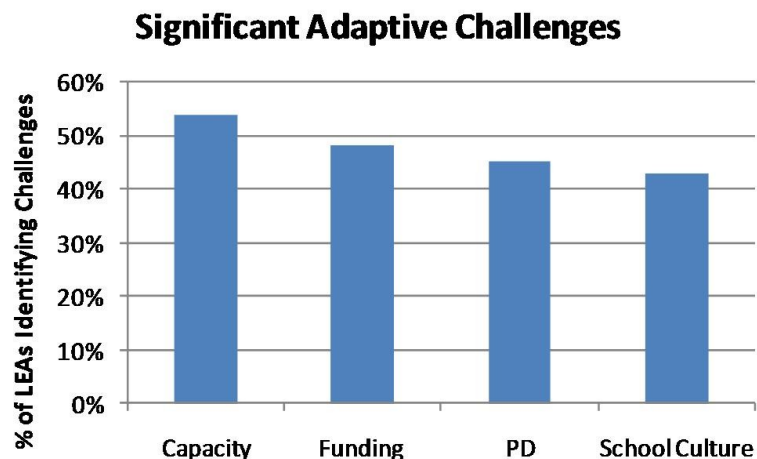
LEAs reported using engagement strategies in 3 categories: (1) in-person, face-to-face engagement; (2) print communication and news media; and (3) online and social media engagement. The chart to the left depicts the percent of engagement strategies using each mode. LEAs report using in-person modes of engagement as a central approach to involving stakeholders in Race to the Top initiatives. Notably, 2 districts reported using blogs as an opportunity to engage stakeholders. An additional 4 districts reported using online survey tools to engage stakeholders.

The engagement strategies that Rhode Island LEAs reported using most are displayed in the graph to the right. LEAs cited public School Committee meetings or Board of Trustees meetings most frequently as a form of engagement. LEAs described these meetings as consistent avenues to provide information to community members, teachers, and parents.



Race to the Top Adaptive Challenges

In the fall of 2010, the Rhode Island Department of Education asked Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to describe the **adaptive challenges** anticipated in implementing the reform initiatives outlined in the state's Race to the Top plan. The top adaptive challenges reported were capacity, funding, professional development (PD), and school culture. The Rhode Island Department of Education and LEAs are working together to support one another and identify strategies to help LEAs overcome the most significant adaptive challenges that LEAs reported.



- **Capacity: Human Capital and Technology Infrastructure**

The most frequently cited adaptive challenges that LEAs identified concerned district personnel capacity, particularly surrounding educator effectiveness initiatives. LEAs reported that competing initiatives were problematic, as they may overextend personnel. In light of the quantity of PD opportunities, LEAs must plan and schedule to ensure minimum disruption to instructional time. In addition, LEAs voiced concern that existing technological infrastructures were not robust enough to support the new data systems that Race to the Top will support; much of the hardware, software, and building infrastructure may need updating in order to support new systems.

- **Funding**

LEAs anticipated difficulty sustaining reform efforts after the life of the Race to the Top grant due to funding constraints. LEAs anticipated questions around how to continue rigorous PD and training opportunities, pay substitute teachers to cover classes while teachers receive PD, and compensate teachers according to new pay scales. Some LEAs were concerned about having funding to purchase new classroom materials and the technology required to support the new curriculum and other systems that Race to the Top will fund.

- **Professional Development**

LEAs expressed concern regarding the timely training of all educators, including data-driven and needs-driven PD. Concerns from LEAs included the number of educators slated to receive direct training and the subsequent consistency of redelivery; LEAs felt that training sub-sets of educators could lead to gaps in messaging around new policies and effective training of remaining educators. An additional concern was aligning trainings with contractual language to ensure all educators receive the necessary coaching and instruction.

- **School Culture**

LEAs were concerned about the cultural shift necessary for successful implementation of Race to the Top systems of support. School culture challenges primarily include teacher buy-in to novel systems, accepting a redefined role of the teacher and school leaders, changes in approaches to work, and a rededicated commitment to curriculum work. LEAs specified the need for a shift to a more positive perception of school leadership. LEAs also discussed the need to engage stakeholders who perceive schools as already "over-assessing" students.