Appendix B: Grant Ideas

The narratives below represent some but not all possible projects that could qualify for a RTTT Mini Grant. LEAs are strongly encouraged to adapt any idea for their particular circumstances and capacity. Please see Appendix A for further description of components of the ISS currently in development.

For further information and clarification, please contact Kate Schulz at 401-222-8489 or kate.schulz@ride.ri.gov.

Systems Training

Instructional Improvement System Overview Training

- Flipped Model: Educators view online module training on the Instructional Improvement Systems features and functions, giving them a basic understanding of the functionality. Educators then attend a full or half day session of professional development with a RIDE facilitator. Participants can learn in-depth use of reporting, resources or data tools using scenarios and inquiry protocols.
- Introductory Model: Educators attend a two-hour, in person session on the basics of the Instructional improvement system. Attendees will leave the session with an understanding of the system through limited scenarios. No data based inquiry will be possible in this session due to time limitations
- Online Model: Educators view a one-hour module on the Instructional Improvement System to learn basic functionality. This could be combined with other session training, such as data-use

Using Data Effectively

Connecting Data Sources

Teams of educators will meet with a coach to analyze data sources of data that are: 1) most important to school improvement; and 2) leading indicators of student achievement. Educators will be able to identify significant gaps highlighted by these data sources and develop action plans to address them.

- 1 Day Off-Site Kick Off Workshop topics:
    - Exploring data from the Instructional Support System
    - Exploring data from the Educator Performance and Support System
    - Dimensions of Data/Intersection Analysis
    - Connecting Formative Data Practices to Summative Data Sources
    - Aggregated and Dis-aggregated Data: Significance and Limitations
- 4+ Full Day On-Site Visits

Getting Results with Action Research

Teams of educators will work with a coach to implement the Sustainability Plans and Action Research Projects developed during the Data Use Professional Development Series. Each school will

ensure the Action Research Project is fully implemented and that the supports are in place to continue data-informed instruction. Action Research Project must include using one or more of the Rhode Island data systems (ISS, EPSS, Growth Model and/or RI Interim Assessments).

- 1 Day Off-Site Kick Off Workshop topics:
    - Review/Update Sustainability Plans and Action Research Projects
    - Discover high-Stakes Data Patterns
    - Assess Current State of Data-Informed Instruction
    - Establish timeline and Action Research Goals for the Year
- 4+ Full-Day On-Site Visits

Using Multiple Data Sources to Understand Student Performance

To ensure that SLOs hold high expectations for students consistent with other measures, school and district leaders may review multiple data sources and identify any discrepancies in student performance data. Teams of school and district leaders can compare student performance using the Instructional Support System, Growth Model Visualization tool (if applicable) other local assessments and Student Learning Objective (SLO) results from the past two years. The team may review student results from all three sources and identify where there are discrepant findings in the data (e.g. students reach their SLO growth targets but are below proficiency and show little growth on other measures). Based on these data, teams may do root cause analysis of why findings are discrepant.

Data Use for Leadership Teams

District leadership teams work with a coach to evaluate questions and gaps that present the greatest challenges to improved student outcomes. Special focus will be placed on analyzing EPSS data and its impact on teaching and learning.

- 1 Day Off-Site Kick-Off Workshop topics:
    - Assessment of current data practices
    - Defining leadership roles for improvement
    - Leveraging EPSS data for school improvement
    - Goal setting for leadership teams
- 4+ Full-Day On-Site Visits

Connecting Data Sources – Early Childhood Professionals

Teams of early childhood educators, coaches, and leaders will meet with their data analysis coach to examine their data. Special focus is placed on early literacy, qualitative data, and the unique circumstances of early childhood professionals. Limited enrollment

Kick-off Workshop Topics

- Assessment of current available data addressing all domains of RI Early Learning Development Standards (ELDS)
- Examination of links between assessment and developmentally appropriate instruction
- Action planning teams

Improving Curriculum and Assessment

Vertical Articulation - CCSS, DOK and Rigor

Vertical teams (PreK-12) work with a coach to examine curricula to find gaps and to develop action plans to increase rigor and address Depth of Knowledge in assessments. Educators will create plans to strengthen the connection to the CCSS and bolster the district's Comprehensive Assessment System. Examination of vertical articulation must include using one or more of the Rhode Island data systems (ISS, EPSS, Growth Model and/or RI Interim Assessments).

- 1 Day Off-Site Kick Off Workshop topics:
    - Assess current state of vertical articulation in the district
    - Examine CCSS shifts
    - Conduct Data Inventory
    - Evaluate District Assessment System
    - Evaluate Rigor and DOK in Curriculum
    - Create Action Plan and Articulate Goals for the Year
- 4+ Full-Day On-Site Visits

SLO Calibration

Using EPSS, teams can pull approved SLOs from the past two years and conduct an SLO audit. Using a protocol, teams can identify whether administrator approval of SLOs is calibrated and whether student assessment evidence sources are aligned to the objectives. Based on the results of the audit, administrator teams may use funds to address administrator learning needs related to student growth, assessments, and SLOs. For example:

- After the SLO audit suggests that administrators hold varying expectations for SLO quality, administrator teachers engage in additional calibration sessions.
- The SLO audit indicates administrator teams hold lower expectations for teachers of physical education, band, music, and art. Further conversations indicate that administrators are less sure of how to assess these subjects, so the team engages in professional learning around performance assessments in these subjects.
- After the SLO audits indicate inconsistent expectations for students with disabilities, the district provides professional learning sessions on measuring student growth for students with disabilities.

Using Interim Science Tasks to Build Classroom Assessments

Using the NGSS-Aligned Science Tasks from the Interim Assessment System, teams of educators at the building or grade-level collaborate to review, administer, and analyze the results of the tasks in terms of both formative and summative evaluation of student learning. The science assessment tasks contain multiple components to support inferences about students' learning as described in a given performance expectation. Teams of educators would engage in discussion of how the task results support the engagement of students in the use of NGSS practices to apply understanding of science and engineering core ideas and crosscutting-concepts. Over the course of the school year these science tasks would serve as a model for educators to build similar assessments to evaluate student learning of science concepts and skills using the NGSS performance expectations.

Building a Scope and Sequence for Science

As districts work towards the implementation of NGSS the organization of the grade-by-grade and grade-banded NGSS standards into a cohesive scope and sequence that best prepares students is critical. Working with a facilitator who is deeply knowledgeable in the Framework for K-12 Science Education and the NGSS teams of educators will collaborate to align their science curriculum using resources found in the Teacher Resource Library. Districts will convene teams of middle level and high school level educators to build a scope and sequence utilizing the NGSS Model Curricula put forward in the Building a Strong Foundation Race to the Top initiative as well as the NGSS Appendix K. Over the course of the grant the facilitator will lead district teams in the work of creating a cohesive, NGSS-aligned, scope and sequence which will serve a foundation for their science curriculum.

Supporting Educator Evaluation

Professional Development Tied to Evaluation Observation Data

School and district leaders may use Professional Practice Component Score and Professional Responsibilities Component Score reports in EPSS to determine if there are any trends in teacher performance across larger numbers of staff, within certain grade levels, or within content areas. A review of these data can help the team identify areas where teachers may benefit from additional support. This team may also review student data from the Instructional Support System, Growth Model Visualization tool and other sources to identify student learning needs and effective instructional strategies that would support those needs. The district then may use funds to provide focused and differentiated opportunities for staff. For example:

After noticing in the data that science teachers have scored lowest on Component 3b for the past two years, the district provides professional learning and follow-up coaching sessions on questioning.

Using EPSS trend data, school and district administrators identify teachers who have consistently shown exemplary practice in one or more components of professional practice. The team then provides opportunities for educators, particularly those who are in need of improvement, to observe those exemplary teachers and engage in a debrief discussion with the instructional coach.

Through a review of data and the conversations that came from it, the district identifies that some administrators are unsure of how to provide feedback on how teachers incorporate and address students with special needs into the classroom. As a result of the review, the district schedules times where the special education director and the school principal can co-observe teachers and debrief the observation.

Reviewing Feedback to Ensure Consistency

To ensure that teachers are receiving high-quality written feedback as part of their evaluations, school and district leadership can use the Professional Practice Feedback Reports in EPSS to audit professional practice feedback. After pulling these data, leadership teams can audit feedback to ensure that it is prioritized, specific, actionable, and delivered appropriately. Based on the results of the audit, the districts may provide focused and differentiated professional learning or coaching for staff. For example:

- After identifying a lack of specific examples cited in the feedback, observers engage in calibration exercises aimed at ensuring administrators capture sufficient evidence and incorporate that evidence into concise, actionable feedback.
- After noticing a lack of actionable feedback related to performance in Component 3c, the district provides observers professional learning on research-based student engagement and differentiation strategies.
- After identifying a discrepancy between the quality of feedback provided to teachers and that provided to administrators, a district provides a series of professional learning and calibration sessions to administrators. These sessions are focused on the roles and responsibilities of support professionals and how to gather evidence and provide feedback on support professionals' practice.

Professional Learning Communities for Administrators

Central office staff along with building principals may form cohorts to analyze school wide data using EPSS, the Growth Model Visualization Tool, and the Instructional Support System. Based on findings from an analysis of data, administrators may outline next steps for addressing gaps and trends in the data in a professional learning community. Sample administrator PLC activities might include conducting co-observations, planning evaluation trainings, planning professional learning opportunities for teachers, reviewing SLOs in administrator teams, developing plans to ensure that SLOs contain authentic, already-used assessments, and developing improvement plans.

Using Data to Identify Implementation Plans

Using EPSS Trend Explorer, district and school administrators may use Trend Explorer to audit the completion of SLO approvals, observations, and final ratings. Although this audit may be used to determine compliance in deadlines, the primary goal is to identify trends and identify how implementation may be improved to better support teachers next year. For example, if the data shows that principals completed several observations in a short period of time, the administrator team may engage in some planning or professional learning to find solutions that would assist principals in spending more time in classrooms and providing timely feedback.

Expanding Data Use to Support Professionals

A group of support professionals with varied roles explore the Instructional Support System to identify data available. The group will brainstorm ways other support professionals can use the data to meet the needs of students and determine service delivery goals. Professional learning opportunities are provided to other support professionals as a result of this study. This work supports students but can also support the development of strong Student Outcome Objectives (SOOs).

Closing the Achievement Gap

Digging into Student Performance Results and Trends

District or school teams may analyze student performance data in ISS disaggregated by disability, ELL status, and educational disadvantage status. Although caution should be used when examining and interpreting such data, especially when a small number of students are in the sample, such analysis can help generate conversations and questions for further investigation. With support from a data

manager, school and district teams may be able to conduct additional analyses, such as looking at the disability code or placement of students with disabilities who score a 1 on NECAP in Excel. Another analysis might include looking at student performance trends and the RTI strategies used with students to identify potential high-leverage strategies. Initial ISS analyses should be supplemented by analysis of interim assessment results whenever possible to see if findings are consistent across multiple sources of data. Based on findings of the analysis, the team may then discuss, identify, and begin to implement potential strategies for addressing performance gaps.

Early Warning System and Graduation Readiness

The data systems make it easier for educators to follow students closely to ensure that all students are making academic progress each year. Educators may want to use the Early Warning System and other data systems to identify a cohort of students to follow closely to ensure that they have the supports needed for them to attend school regularly, engage productively with peers and teachers, and demonstrate that they are learning what is most critical to their courses. This project may focus on the cohort of students who will be part of the graduating class of 2020 so that the school and district can learn how students' progress should be monitored in order to ensure that achievement gaps are not widening and that the focus is on teaching and learning rather than remediation at the end of high school.

Building Capacity

School Improvement Planning

School teams work with a coach to evaluate high-stakes school data and establish priorities for the School Improvement Plan. The coach and the School Improvement Team will pull data from the Instructional Support System to identify the leading indicators of increasing student achievement.

- 1 Day Off-Site Kick Off Workshop topics:
    - Review of previous year's School Improvement Plan – evaluate strengths/weaknesses
    - Explore and prioritize data from the Instructional Support System
    - Explore qualitative data sources: staff, student, and/or parent surveys
    - Establish goals and priorities for school
    - Compare school goals with district goals and priorities
- 2 Full Day On-Site Visits
    - Work on drafting and editing School Improvement Plan

Data Coach Training

This capacity-building opportunity allows districts to develop their own data coaches. Amplify will train participating educators, over five days, to lead the work of Data Use in the future, using the Taking Action with Data Framework and best practice in coaching and facilitation.

- 3 Day Workshop topics:
    - Taking Action with Data Framework – advanced topics
    - "What makes an Effective Coach?"

        - Effective facilitation for adults
        - Establishing Professional Learning Communities
        - Enhancing Professional Learning Communities
        - Facilitating lasting instructional change
- 2 Full-Day June Workshops (reminder: all grant work must be completed by June 30, 2015)
        - To be developed in partnership between the district and the Amplify Project Manager, depending on district need