Frequently Asked Questions

from formative assessment facilitator orientation

Implementation of Online Course

- **Can facilitators get access to Mod 1 early?**

  Module 1 cannot be accessed until the IMS is live in districts and your district has enrolled you in the Formative Assessment course. However, you could log on and complete the Introduction and Module 1 and *then* ask the other members of the Community of Practice to log on and complete it.

- **Will there be any documentation of participation that can count toward district PD hours?**

  RIDE is not issuing PD hours for the course but the IMS will document that you have completed the modules. This could be used as evidence for PD credit within the district. Completing the course in full should take between 25-35 hours.

- **How is it expected that school leaders will ensure that teachers are using formative assessments?**

  Completing the online course will ensure that school leaders have the same knowledge base and vocabulary as the classroom educators taking the course. This will help them know what practices to expect and to look for when they visit classrooms. Module 5, *Developing and Sustaining Formative Assessment Practice*, includes a sample walk-through protocol as well as guidance for building leaders for how to support the use of formative assessment in their schools.

- **How will schools use evidence of formative assessments?**

  The evidence collected through formative assessments will be used primarily by teachers in their classrooms to inform day to day instruction. However, grade level or departments could compare formative data to inform their discussions about student progress, the efficacy of instructional activities, etc.

- **What is the timeline for this year and the plan for building roll out?**

Districts have flexibility with how they chose to implement this initiative. Some are beginning with all schools this year, some are beginning with *some* schools, grades, or content areas this year, and others are waiting until SY2013-14. The Introduction to the course and Module 1 will be available through the IMS in September 2012 and modules will be added as they become available.

A recommended timeline for schools launching this year would be to have participants complete Module 1 in September, have their Module 1 Community of Practice meeting in October, and then continue the online course with Module 2 in November (and so on throughout the year). This would enable participants to complete the course by June. However, if it takes longer to get participants ready to access the course, they can move more quickly through the later modules to make up time, complete them during the summer 2013, or complete them when the SY2013-14 begins.

- **Is there compensation available for facilitators?**

  Compensation for facilitators is a LEA decision. There is some RTTT funding available to compensate facilitators and/or teachers for their work on this initiative. LEAs have some flexibility in how those funds are allocated.

Facilitation

- **Will the training include problem identification as well as problem resolving strategies?**

  The facilitator orientation included an activity on problem-solving scenarios. The notes from these activities will be posted on the facilitator wiki shortly. The facilitator's guides include Frequently Asked Questions and suggested responses for each module.

- **How many facilitators will be needed per school? Who will identify teachers to be trained as facilitators? Who will train them?**

  The answer to this depends on how many teachers are taking the course. If a team of four teachers is taking the course, one facilitator should be enough. If the entire faculty is taking the course, more facilitators might be necessary to limit the size of the Community of Practice (CoP).

  District or building administrators will select teacher leaders to serve as facilitators. The orientation sessions offered to facilitators in August included some basic facilitation training. Additional support is available through the facilitator's guides for each module, available on the formative assessment page of the RIDE website:
  http://www.ride.ri.gov/Assessment/Formative.aspx

- **Where are the supports for facilitators that are not covered by the guides?**

  Additional supports for facilitators will be available on the formative assessment page of the RIDE website (http://www.ride.ri.gov/Assessment/Formative.aspx) as well as through the Facilitator Wiki. If you would like access to the Facilitator Wiki, please email Karen Torres at karen@tcplearning.com.

Community of Practice

- **Can the appendices be given to participants at end of CoP meeting for future resource?**

  Yes. The facilitator's guides are intended to assist you as the facilitator, but you are welcome to share them with CoP members as you see fit.

- **Can agendas be given to participants ahead of CoP meeting?**

  Yes.

- **How will our CoP gain information about effective formative assessment strategies? When will this be done?**

  All of the content on formative assessment will be delivered through the online course. Module 3, *Eliciting and Using Evidence of Learning*, includes lessons on strategies for eliciting evidence of learning through formative assessment. Module 3 will be available in the fall of 2012.

- **How is a CoP different than other Professional Learning Communities?**

  A community of practice can be defined simply and broadly as a group of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and who interact regularly to learn how to do it better (Wenger, 2006). Many schools and districts in Rhode Island use Professional Learning Communities in a specific, structured way that may differ from the model we are offering. Therefore, we used a different name in order to avoid confusion.

Assessment

- **What is an assessment map?**

  An assessment map is a document that outlines all of the common assessment activities within a district (or a school). They typically include information on the type of assessment, the content/standards assessed, the purpose of the assessment/use of the data, frequency of administration, etc. They can be used to determine where the district (school) may be over-assessing or under-assessing. An example can be found on the Comprehensive Assessment System page on the RIDE website: http://www.ride.ri.gov/assessment/CAS.aspx

- **What type of information will the Interim Assessments provide? Will they provide similar information to Response-to-Intervention (RTI) or other diagnostic assessments?**

  The fixed form assessments will be administered three times per year and will provide information pertaining to students' understanding of grade-level (or content area) material from the Common Core State Standards. Over the course of the year educators will be able to monitor student progress in understanding this new and challenging material. Although initial score reports will be basic in the first year, more comprehensive reports will be provided in future years. Reports will include item analysis opportunities, the item text, the student response, and individual student reports, as well as summary class reports.

  The Interim Assessments are not designed as diagnostic assessments. They are also not intended to monitor the learning rate and level of performance of struggling learners, which the RTI assessments provide. Instead, the Interim Assessments will provide a broad indication of what CCSS material students may be struggling with and need further instruction around.

- **Is using formative assessment a PBGR requirement?**

  No.

- **When will RIDE be providing sample interim assessment related to Progress Monitoring? When will they be available at all grade levels?**

  The first fixed-form interim assessments will be available in Math and ELA for grades 3-11 in November. At this time we do not have plans to extend the scope beyond these content areas and grade levels. However, a test construction tool and item bank will be available for math and ELA in January 2013 and for science and social studies in the summer of 2013.