



# Rhode Island Progress Report Spring Year 3



U.S. Department of Education  
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Winter 2013 Progress Report, revision as of April 2013

## **Race to the Top Program Review Process**

As part of the Implementation and Support Unit's (ISU) commitment to supporting States as they implement ambitious reform agendas, the U.S. Department of Education (Department) re-examined its grant monitoring process and developed the *Race to the Top Program Review process*. The Program Review process is designed to not only address the Department's responsibilities for fiscal and programmatic oversight, but is also intended to identify areas in which Race to the Top grantees need assistance and support to meet their goals.

The Program Review process is anchored around ongoing conversations between the Department and grantees and includes multiple components: on-site program reviews, monthly progress updates, the Annual Performance Review (APR), Progress Reports, State-specific summary reports, and stocktake meetings with the Secretary of Education and ISU leadership.

## **Progress Reports**

Drafted by the ISU during winter 2013 and submitted to States in winter 2013, the Progress Report summarizes a State's grant outcomes as of the drafting of this report, including progress in meeting its benchmarks and timelines and characteristics of implementation. The Progress Report for each State is based on information provided through monthly progress updates, the on-site program review, the APR, and other relevant qualitative and quantitative data. The Progress Report is not intended to be a formal public document (i.e., it will not be posted on the Department's website), but instead provides the ISU's feedback to grantees on progress to date since the grant's award date, with a focus on developments and updates since the previous Progress Report, to inform future conversations and highlight both areas of success and areas needing additional attention and support. Since the report is considered correspondence between the Department and Grantees, like almost all similar documents, it is subject to the Freedom of Information Act.

*Please note, the report may not reflect updated information, including amendment requests that have been approved or revised within a few weeks prior to the submission date on the front of the report. The Department considers the Progress Report to be a living document and will strive to incorporate such amendments in future iterations.*

## **Progress Report Sections**

### **Section 1: Summary of Performance and Progress Evaluation**

For each sub-criterion in which the State included projects in its Race to the Top plan, this page summarizes the State and the U.S. Department of Education's rating of performance and progress on goals/objectives. The State's rating is populated based on the most recent progress update, which may be from on-site review materials or from monthly calls. The Department's rating is based on an analysis of the information the Department has to date as of the writing of this report (see *quality of implementation and rationale for Department's performance rating*).

A sub-criterion may be considered not applicable (N/A) for two reasons: first, if the State's plan includes a project that is relevant to the sub-criterion, but is primarily connected to and discussed in a different sub-criterion (e.g., (B)(2) may be reported as 'N/A' because the State's project(s) related to transitioning to high-quality, college- and career-ready standards and assessments is reported in the (B)(3) sub-criterion); or second, if the State does not include projects in this area.

Ratings are based on a four-point scale, which was updated in January 2012, for which ‘green’ represents on-track with high quality; ‘yellow’ indicates that work is generally on-track and of high or good quality; ‘orange’ indicates that work is off-track and/or there are quality concerns—many aspects require significant attention; and ‘red’ indicates that work is substantially off-track and/or has significant quality concerns—urgent and decisive action is required.

## **Section II: Narrative and Assessment of Performance and Progress by Relevant Sub-criterion**

### **Overview**

- **State’s self-described goals for this sub-criterion**

This section is populated based on the list reported in the State’s most recent progress update.

- **Relevant projects**

This section is populated based on the list reported in the State’s most recent progress update and/or based on the project names in the State’s approved Race to the Top Budget.

- **Key accomplishments**

This section summarizes key accomplishments for the sub-criterion that are discussed in greater detail in subsequent sections. This section may include accomplishments articulated by the State in its progress update(s) or other conversations and/or accomplishments recognized by the Department.

- **Key challenges**

This section summarizes key challenges for the sub-criterion that are discussed in greater detail in subsequent sections. This section may include challenges articulated by the State in its progress update(s) or other conversations and/or challenges recognized by the Department.

### **Department’s Analysis of Performance and Progress**

- **State’s progress against scope of work and goals (by project)**

This section includes State-reported data from sources including the APR, progress update(s) and the State’s approved application and Scope of Work, as well as the Department’s notes from monthly calls and additional conversations to summarize the State’s progress against its approved plan for each project in the sub-criterion.

- **Continuous improvement: Methods, tools, processes used to assess progress and quality**

This section primarily utilizes the State’s response to the second question in the progress update protocol – *What methods, tools, and processes is the State using to determine the progress toward the goals and performance measures and the quality of implementation of the activities described for this application sub-criterion?*—to provide context for how the State is considering continuous improvement. In some instances, this section may also include additional methods, tools, and processes the Department is aware of from additional communication with the State.

- **Mid-course corrections or relevant amendments**

This section is dynamic because the relevance of this section varies. This section may include information from amendment approval letters to describe how changes to the State’s plan, approach, or timelines impact implementation to date. Additionally, this section may include proposed amendment requests to indicate potential changes that may come in the future. This section may also include mid-course corrections to implementation that the Department is aware of based on responses provided by the State in Progress Updates or through additional conversations. This report may not include all amendments, but only those that are relevant to the State’s broad approach and/or recent progress.<sup>1</sup>

- **Local Educational Agency (LEA) Feedback**

This section provides a summary of the Department’s conversations with teams from LEAs visited during the Year 2 on-site review. During the on-site review the Department speaks with representatives of at least three participating LEAs to provide additional perspectives of the impact of the State’s Race to the Top reforms on instruction and student outcomes in schools and classrooms and to discuss the State’s management of the quality and progress of local implementation. The Department also meets with some teachers and principals from schools in each LEA being visited to discuss program implementation by the LEA and the effect of these reforms on classrooms and educators. The Department recognizes that these conversations represent a limited sample of the perspectives in the field but believes that teachers and principals provide an important perspective on State and local reform efforts.

The Progress Report may not include LEA feedback for every sub-criterion. LEA feedback is included only where the Department’s conversations with LEAs produced information that may be relevant to consider in better understanding the State’s implementation to date and identifying areas for additional support or attention in the future

- **Quality of implementation and rationale for Department’s performance rating**

This section is the Department’s analysis of the State’s quality of implementation to date. The Department’s analysis for each sub-criterion is grounded in the State’s approved plan for the sub-criterion (i.e., Scope of Work, budget narrative, application, approved amendments) and the information the Department has about the progress and quality of the State’s implementation to date against this plan. The Department anticipates that these ratings will change over time given that the Progress Report will be updated to reflect progress and quality against the relevant milestones and commitments to date. For example, if a State missed a major milestone in March 2012, the State’s rating may be different from the initial Progress Report because the scope the State is being held accountable to is based on the current time period.

In assessing progress and quality, the Department considers a variety of sources including: the State’s APR, including budget expenditure data and narratives provided by the State contained therein; progress updates and accompanying monthly call notes; and additional records and correspondence from ongoing communication between the State and the Department. As appropriate, this section may also reference the rationale provided by the State for its self-assessment.

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<sup>1</sup> For a full description of amendments approved to date, please see: <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/amendments/index.html>.

## **Other**

As applicable, this section includes information that may be relevant to the sub-criterion but does not directly apply to the progress or quality of implementation.

### **Overview of Rhode Island On-Site Review:**

- Rhode Island Department of Education meetings: February 11-13, 2013
- North Kingstown, RI site visit: February 13, 2013
  - One hour meeting with LEA administration; one-hour meeting with principals; one-hour meeting with teachers
- Warwick, RI site visit: February 14, 2013
  - One hour-and-a-half meeting with LEA administration; one half-hour meeting with principals; one half-hour meeting with teachers
- Pawtucket, RI site visit: February 11 and February 14, 2013
  - One hour meeting with Superintendent
  - One hour-and-a-half meeting with LEA administration; one hour meeting with teachers and principals

## RHODE ISLAND RACE TO THE TOP PROGRESS REPORT: WINTER 2013

### SECTION 1: Summary of Rhode Island’s Performance and Progress Evaluation

**Table 1. Summary of State and U.S. Department of Education Performance and Progress Evaluation Ratings**

Criteria		Performance and Progress on Goals/Objectives in Race to the Top Plan <sup>2</sup>						Page
		Year 1 Fall 2011		Year 2 Summer 2012		Year 3 Winter 2013		
		State	ED	State	ED	State	ED	
<b>A. State Success Factors</b>								
(A)(1)	Articulating State’s education reform agenda and LEAs’ participation in it	N/A <sup>3</sup>						
(A)(2)	Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, & sustain proposed plans	Green 2011	Green 2011	Green 2012	Green 2012	Green February 2013	Green February 2013	7
(A)(3)	Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps	N/A						
<b>B. Standards and Assessments</b>								
(B)(1)	Developing and adopting common standards	N/A						
(B)(2)	Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	Yellow 2011	Green 2011	Green 2012	Yellow 2012	Yellow February 2013	Yellow February 2013	12
(B)(3)	Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	Green 2011	Green 2011	Green 2012	Green 2012	Green February 2013	Green February 2013	16
<b>C. Data Systems to Support Instruction</b>								
(C)(1)	Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system	N/A						
(C)(2)	Accessing and using State data	Yellow 2011	Green 2011	Green 2012	Green 2012	Yellow February 2013	Orange February 2013	20
(C)(3)	Using data to improve instruction	Yellow 2011	Green 2011	Green 2012	Green 2012	Green February 2013	Green February 2013	26
<b>D. Great Teachers and Leaders</b>								
(D)(1)	Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	Green 2011	Yellow 2011	Yellow 2012	Yellow 2012	Yellow February 2013	Yellow February 2013	28
(D)(2)	Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	Yellow 2011	Green 2011	Green 2012	Yellow 2012	Green February 2013	Green February 2013	30
(D)(3)	Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	Yellow 2011	Yellow 2011	Green 2012	Yellow 2012	Green February 2013	Green February 2013	37
(D)(4)	Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs	Green 2011	Green 2011	Green 2012	Green 2012	Orange February 2013	Orange February 2013	39
(D)(5)	Providing effective support to teachers and principals	Yellow 2011	Yellow 2011	Yellow 2012	Yellow 2012	Green February 2013	Yellow February 2013	42

<sup>2</sup> Ratings are based on a 4-point scale, as follows (revised in January 2012): Green = on-track with high quality; Yellow = generally on-track and of high or good quality—only a few aspects require additional attention; Orange = off-track and/or there are quality concerns—many aspects require significant attention; Red = substantially off-track and/or has significant quality concerns—urgent and decisive action is required. Please note that ratings prior to January 2012 were based on slightly different definitions of this 4-point scale: Green = good and refinement and systematic implementation is required; Yellow = substantial attention is required and some aspects are good; Orange = substantial attention is required and some aspects need urgent attention; Red = urgent and decisive action is required.

<sup>3</sup> N/A is listed for sub-criteria for which Rhode Island has not created specific projects.

<b>E. Turning Around Lowest-Achieving Schools</b>								
(E)(1)	Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	Yellow 2011	Orange 2012	Yellow 2011	Yellow 2012	Green February 2013	Yellow February 2013	46
(E)(2)	<i>Turning around the lowest- achieving schools</i>	Yellow 2011	Red 2011	Orange 2012	Orange 2012	Green February 2013	Green February 2013	49
<b>Other Priority Areas</b>								
(F)(2)	Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charters and other innovative schools	Yellow 2011	Yellow 2011	Green 2012	Green 2012	Yellow February 2013	Yellow February 2013	52
(P)(2)	Emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics (STEM)	Yellow 2011	Green 2011	Green 2012	Green 2012	Green February 2013	Green February 2013	56
(I)(P)	Early Learning Outcomes	N/A						
<b>Accountability and Oversight</b>								
Fiscal Review	Summary of Monitoring Indicators							58

**(A)(2)**

State Success Factors	Performance and Progress on Goals/Objectives in RTT Plan	
	State	Department
(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans	Green February 2013	Green February 2013

**OVERVIEW**

**Rhode Island’s self-described goals for this sub-criterion**

- Establishing clear expectations for students, educators, and systems
- Providing capacity and resources for implementation
- Ensuring quality assurance and quality control
- Leveraging innovation and partnerships to expedite improvements

**Relevant projects**

- Organizational Oversight and Supports – Technical Tasks
- Performance Management & Progress Monitoring – Technical Tasks
- Communication and Outreach – Technical Tasks
- Budget and Finance – Technical Tasks

**Key accomplishments**

- Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) has continued to operate the EdStat and Collaborative Learning for Outcomes (CLO) processes throughout Year 3 with a targeted focus on implementation at the LEA-level and managing challenges as projects transition from the State to LEAs.

**Key challenges**

- As implementation shifts from the State to LEAs, RIDE balances its technical assistance role with its role of ensuring implementation is happening. In Year 3 in particular, LEAs struggle to “own” the successes and challenges of Race to the Top initiatives.

**DEPARTMENT’S ANALYSIS OF PERFORMANCE AND PROGRESS**

**State’s progress against scope of work and goals (by project)**

- Organizational Oversight and Supports – Technical Tasks
  - The Internal Oversight Committee (IOC), composed of Race to the Top leadership, the performance management executive and project leads, meets on a monthly basis. The IOC reviews the progress and budget of each Race to the Top project, develops recommendations for sustainability, resolves issues identified from EdStat sessions, and reviews communications with the Department. The IOC continues to track Race to the Top expenditures to ensure that spending is on track for completion by the end of the grant period, per the State’s budget and Scope of Work. On a quarterly basis the IOC reviews the State’s Race to the Top Scope of Work and triangulates State-level data with data from the Collaborative Learning for Outcomes (CLO) process. Through this process the IOC identified a group of LEAs at-risk of being off-track in implementation resulting in the development of an LEA-by-LEA Scope of Work review and summer stocktake meetings (see below).

- As in Year 2, The Adaptive Leadership Team (ALT) is composed of senior RIDE leadership that provides agency-wide coordination. While they provide broader accountability across divisions, they also support coordination across Race to the Top projects and their intersection with existing RIDE work. For example, the IOC's recommendations for sustainability were brought to ALT for consideration and prioritization; decisions about amendment proposals for Race to the Top cost savings are determined by ALT.
  - The State has completed procurement for all of its Race to the Top projects, except one for monitoring quality professional development options, slated for completion by the end of Year 3 (see (D)(4) *Improving the Effectiveness of Teacher and Principal Preparation Programs*).
  - RIDE has hired 21 of 22 grant positions. The remaining position is for a CLO coordinator but the State has vendor support to fill this need. As some staff seek non-grant dependent positions, RIDE considers whether the position is required during the grant period to meet goals and objectives, and whether the position is part of the State's in-development sustainability plan.
- Performance Management & Progress Monitoring – Technical Tasks
    - In Year 3, RIDE has maintained and continued to refine the EdStat process. The EdStat sessions now focus around four focus areas that align with RIDE's Strategic Plan and Race to the Top projects: World Class Standards and Assessments; Educator Excellence; Accelerating Schools towards Greatness; and, Using Data to Make Decisions. Each focus area comes to the EdStat panel every four to six weeks. In Year 3, the EdStat session does not cover every Race to the Top project, but rather focuses on projects that are most critical. For example, beginning teacher induction is no longer part of EdStat because RIDE determined it could be performance monitored through other means, such as IOC.
      - The EdStat memo has been refined in Year 3 to reflect what the EdStat panel identified as the most critical components of performance management at the State level. The memo details critical milestones for success, the project team's assessment of implementation at the State Education Agency (SEA) and LEA levels, progress updates, risks and challenges, in addition to LEA-by-LEA implementation and participation data. The Performance Management Executive works closely with each project team prior to the EdStat session to populate the EdStat memo.
      - The new format of the EdStat memo has allowed the EdStat panel to identify cross-cutting issues, such as LEA challenges with teacher-course-student connections (see (C)(2) for detail), which resulted in elevating a few LEAs that were particularly delayed. In addition, thinking through the type of data included in an EdStat memo has caused project teams to work with vendors to produce various usage metrics that measure use of the State-developed technology and data systems.
      - EdStat allows for the panel and project team to triangulate anecdotal data with CLO data and determine what trends are real and require a response and what trends should be watched going forward. State leadership indicated that EdStat has made data-driven decision-making a part of the culture of how the agency does business.
      - The State reports that leadership and program staff have become more adept at using EdStat as a way to manage the gap between management and implementation by identifying common themes and challenges across projects and being clear about the SEA and LEA roles. The State continues to improve upon its ability to identify measures of quality of implementation.

- During summer and early fall 2012 RIDE staff conducted in-person LEA “stocktake” meetings with leadership at each participating LEA to review Year 2 progress and plan for Year 3 work. In advance of each meeting RIDE developed a report that aggregated the LEA’s participation data, implementation progress and spending during Year 2. Using guiding questions, the LEA-RIDE stocktake provided an opportunity for both to be transparent about progress. To that end, RIDE provided each LEA with a Scope of Work appendix wherein each LEA charted the projects it planned to implement in SY 2012-2013 and SY 2013-2014.
  - As of the Department’s visit the State had conducted one set of CLO quarterly meetings with LEAs in Year 3. As in Year 2, nine RIDE facilitators work with groups of four to nine participating LEAs. Each CLO meeting includes a data memo that has been significantly revised from Year 2. The document details LEA progress ratings and includes LEA’s self-reported progress and strategies. The quarterly report also includes an embedded LEA Scope of Work and asks the LEA to rate its progress in that quarter and provide a narrative of work completed according to the Scope of Work. The LEA Scope of Work, CLO quarterly report template and CLO meeting itself are structured around the same four focus areas of EdStat, listed above. The focus of the first CLO quarterly meeting was on sharing best practices and brainstorming ideas for future CLO meetings that would meet LEA needs during SY 2012-2013.
- **Communication and Outreach – Technical Tasks**
    - Rhode Island’s Race to the Top Steering Committee continues to meet on a quarterly basis. In particular, the Steering Committee launched the “I Pledge” campaign in fall 2012 with support from the Commissioner, Governor and union leaders. The campaign called upon Rhode Islanders to encourage appreciation of the State’s teachers and to emphasize the shared responsibility of all Rhode Islanders in improving education by signing an online pledge; the pledge is available at [www.educationpledgeri.org](http://www.educationpledgeri.org). The Steering Committee’s meetings have included an overview of the State’s virtual learning efforts, Year 2 accomplishments, beginning teacher induction and data systems.
    - RIDE’s communication efforts employ a variety of tactics, including the Commissioner’s Facebook and Twitter accounts, the Commissioner’s field memos, quarterly progress reports for various stakeholders, and engagement with the State’s media outlets.
- **Budget and Finance – Technical Tasks**
    - Using Year 1 actual spending figures, the Race to the Top finance team worked closely with project leads and the IOT to update Years 2-4 of the Race to the Top budget. Through an approved budget amendment, dated March 11, 2013, these changes were implemented across all Race to the Top project-level budgets.
    - LEAs had a better sense of budgets available to them and how to spend Race to the Top funds after the summer 2012 stocktake meetings. RIDE’s finance team processed numerous budget amendments throughout fall 2012. The finance team works with the State’s LEAs to review budget amendments in conjunction with RIDE’s program staff to ensure the request is in line with the LEA’s Scope of Work and progress to date. The finance team approves LEA budget amendments in the State’s Accelegrants system.

**Continuous improvement: Methods, tools, processes to assess progress and quality**

- The Race to the Top Coordinator monitors the pace and effectiveness of the IOC and makes adjustments as necessary. As Race to the Top amendments become necessary, the IOC elevates them for ALT to consider.

- The Performance Management Executive continues to maintain the integrity of the EdStat process described above and implemented the refinements during Year 3. As new projects join the EdStat process, she reviews metrics for the memo and assists in gathering and analyzing the data.
- As described in the Year 2 report, the State continues to make use of built-in feedback loops between the various oversight structures within RIDE to ensure they are meeting the needs of the project teams and LEAs.
- The CLO process has been refined and adjusted to incorporate direct references to the State's strategic plan and LEA Race to the Top Scopes of Work. In Year 3 the CLO quarterly meetings have shifted to sharing of best practices and reviewing progress of implementation to date. The State reports that LEAs are moving away from seeking answers from RIDE and towards each other for adaptive solutions.

#### **Mid-course corrections or relevant amendments**

- The State submitted a budget amendment in January 2013 to shift \$500,000 from the State's Data System project-level budget to the contractual line of its State and Local Capacity budget to allow for as-needed training on the instructional management system (IMS) and the educator performance and support system (EPSS) during Years 3 and 4. The Department approved this shift in March 2013. The State will submit an updated budget.
- In the March 2013 letter, the Department acknowledged delays in the following projects: Early Warning System (see (C)(2)); Evaluation System and Certification Data System Redesign (see (C)(2) and (D)(4)); and, the Academy for Transformative Leadership (see (D)(5)). The State will submit an updated Scope of Work.

#### **LEA Feedback**

- LEA leadership the Department visited expressed that the CLO meetings were a useful opportunity to meet and collaborate with other LEAs engaged in the same work. They also appreciate the opportunity to see their progress ratings and how they measured against others in their cohort.
- LEAs uniformly expressed concern about the sustainability of new initiatives and support systems after the grant period. They acknowledged that they were beginning to look at their budgets in a new way but sought additional guidance about what kinds of decisions would have to be made given the integrated approach to date in the State.
- LEA leadership, principals and teachers at the LEAs the Department visited voiced concern about the number of initiatives occurring during SY 2012-2013 and their ability to do so much with quality. They articulated an understanding of how the initiatives connected and regular interaction with RIDE staff, but expressed significant anxiety about the combination of a scarcity of resources for CCSS transition, the weight of student learning objectives in evaluation ratings, expectations about assessment and data use, and the availability of meaningful supports to struggling teachers.

#### **Quality of implementation and rationale for Department's performance rating**

The Department commends the State for continuing its commitment to structures, processes and routines that enable RIDE to consider how its Race to the Top projects are developed, implemented and managed at the LEA and SEA level. The EdStat memo and process, in combination with improvements to the CLO process, have visibly evolved from Year 2 to Year 3 as projects shift from State-level development to LEA-level implementation. In particular, the EdStat process provides a critical opportunity in short cycles for RIDE to depict alignment to outcomes, discuss LEA-level data, and offer high-level accountability for results. Also in Year 3, RIDE shifted the focus of EdStat to the State's four strategic plan focus areas, indicating the State's commitment to sustain this internal performance management structure beyond the grant period. The State's ability to triangulate on a regular basis self-reported implementation data from LEAs with usage data from State systems and project-specific feedback mechanisms lends credibility to RIDE's claims about implementation across its Race to the Top plan. RIDE's wealth of LEA-level data

has made it nimble in responding to LEA- and project-specific challenges and identifying cross-cutting issues that can be remedied by State-level offices or vendors. The Department looks forward to hearing from RIDE how EdStat and CLO will adapt in the remainder of Year 3 and into Year 4 to reflect the quality of implementation at the LEA level, and the impact on educator effectiveness and student performance.

The State's knowledge of LEA implementation plans has also improved its ability to respond to challenges and identify risks in Year 3. The summer 2012 stocktake meetings provided RIDE and LEAs an opportunity to review progress through summer 2012 and plan proactively about the timing of rolling out each Race to the Top initiative in Years 3 and 4 of the grant period. However, the Department encourages the State to communicate and engage proactively with LEAs, educators, and community stakeholders in a way that gets ahead of concerns and sets expectations. This may facilitate the challenges around transitioning ownership of State-developed systems and initiatives to the LEAs and allow the State to focus attention on improvements and targeted communications.

During Year 3 the State increased its spending, but not yet at a pace that is consistent with drawing down all funds within the grant period as planned. After the summer 2012 stocktake meetings it appears that LEAs have better information and plans about how to spend funds and spending will likely accelerate at the close of SY 2012-2013 and through SY 2013-2014. Based on the budget tables shared in the January 2013 budget amendment submission, State spending is being projected accurately and drawn down accordingly. The Department encourages the State to monitor LEA spending and ensure LEA budget amendments are approved in time to allow their planning and expenditure. While LEAs may be on track with implementation, it appears they have not yet fully leveraged Race to the Top funds to do so.

#### **Other**

- Beginning in June 2012 RIDE worked with members of the Reform Support Network to develop a case study on the State's approach to performance management, specifically the EdStat and CLO processes. The Reform Support Network observed a live EdStat session and conducted interviews with the Commissioner, the Race to the Top Coordinator and the Performance Management Executive. These interviews culminated in a publication released in fall 2012 and a webinar presentation for other States in March 2013.

**(B)(2)**

Standards and Assessments	Performance and Progress on Goals/Objectives in RTT Plan	
	State	Department
(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	Yellow February 2013	Yellow February 2013

**OVERVIEW**

**Rhode Island’s self-described goals for this sub-criterion**

- Build a comprehensive assessment system, aligned with Common Core standards
- Develop high-quality set of interim assessments in partnership with the PARCC consortium
- Provide training to LEAs on the use of formative, interim and summative assessment data

**Relevant projects**

- Formative assessment
- Interim assessment

**Key accomplishments**

- RIDE deployed the first three of five formative assessment professional development modules for teachers to use beginning in September 2012. As of January 2013 teachers in 15 LEAs are accessing the modules.
- RIDE deployed the CCSS-aligned fixed form interim assessment in September 2012 for teachers to administer three times throughout SY 2012-2013. For the first testing window in November 2012, 52 schools in 17 LEAs administered 11,160 tests, 90% of which were taken in a computer-based format.

**Key challenges**

- The State underestimated the time and LEA-level capacity to complete the prerequisite steps to access the IMS, through which teachers and principals access the interim assessments and formative assessment modules. LEA difficulties with completing the prerequisite steps delayed their ability to access these assessment tools until well into SY 2012-2013.

**DEPARTMENT’S ANALYSIS OF PERFORMANCE AND PROGRESS**

**State’s progress against scope of work and goals (by project)**

- Formative assessment
  - RIDE collected feedback from the spring 2012 formative assessment modules pilot and made changes to the program’s design during summer 2012 in anticipation of statewide release in September 2012. With the vendor, RIDE determined that the best way to administer the modules was individually online followed by in-person facilitated communities of practice for the activities.
  - During the summer 2012 stocktake cycle (see (A)(2) above) RIDE learned that 33 of the State’s 50 participating LEAs would include the formative assessment modules as part of their professional development and Race to the Top plan for SY 2012-2013. RIDE conducted training for facilitators in August 2012, which was attended by 200 participants from these LEAs.

- The first three of five modules were released to LEAs through the statewide IMS in September 2012. Teachers could not access the modules until their LEA had established teacher-course-student connections in the IMS, which allowed for enrollment in the course. As of January 2013, teachers in 15 LEAs have accessed the modules to some extent.
- Interim assessment
  - From May to June 2012 RIDE's standards and assessments content team reviewed items developed by the vendor by examining standards alignment and depth of knowledge. The first set of items for the fixed form test did not meet the content team's standards for alignment and quality. Since then, RIDE's content team has worked closely with the vendor to develop a high-quality assessment that meets the rigor of the CCSS and asks varying kinds of questions, especially for the test construction tool.
  - RIDE deployed kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12) English language arts (ELA) and math fixed form interim assessments in October 2012 through the IMS and completed the first testing window during November 2012 and the second testing window in February 2013. During summer 2012 RIDE released guidance on systems requirements for interim assessments, including information about teacher-course-student connections and single sign-on requirements. RIDE also conducted training in September 2012 for LEA personnel administering the assessments and provided fixed form scoring and reporting guidance to LEAs. While the assessments were accessible through the IMS in October 2012, LEAs were delayed in actually accessing them because they encountered difficulties completing the prerequisite steps to access the IMS.
    - Use of the IMS requires LEAs to submit daily teacher-course-student data to the State. This continuously updated data allows for accurate scoring and reporting. LEAs also had to establish single sign-on login credentials for all educators using the IMS. The technical and behavioral shift required to complete these steps was challenging for LEAs not accustomed to daily data sharing and regular use of technology. See (C)(2) *Data Systems to Improve Instruction* for more detail.
    - Within a month after administering a given interim assessment, educators receive a score report with individual student scores, an item-level analysis, and the State averages for comparison purposes. Teachers also receive a NECAP rubric and a CCSS-aligned rubric to understand how the constructed responses were scored.
  - For most grades and subjects the fixed form interim assessment used in the first testing window was not administered at a scale that allows for analysis of validity and reliability. RIDE had hoped for 1,000 administrations of each item in each grade and subject to be able to take the assessment to scale in SY 2013-2014. As such, some items will have to be piloted again in fall 2013.
  - At the time of the Department's visit, RIDE has not yet released the interim assessment test construction tool. Originally slated for release in January 2013, RIDE is aiming for a March 2013 release. Concerned about technical difficulties with launching the test construction tool during a fixed form assessment window, RIDE decided not to launch the construction tool until after the second window (complete in February 2013). RIDE's content specialists reviewed ELA, mathematics, science and social studies items throughout fall 2012 and winter 2013. The State reports that it will have a "useful" number of items for the test construction tool launch in March 2013. The reporting functionality, however, cannot be finalized until the items are complete because educators will have flexibility in selecting items for assessment. This part of the process requires the assessment vendor to coordinate with the IMS vendor to ensure the systems are integrated.

### **Continuous improvement: Methods, tools, processes to assess progress and quality**

- Both formative and interim assessments projects have been included in the EdStat system since January 2012.
  - For interim assessments the EdStat memo displays color ratings for progress towards milestones and LEA access, in addition to the number of tests administered by grade and subject, a list of risks and challenges and a comparison of what assessments LEAs indicated they would administer to what they did administer.
  - For the formative assessment modules the EdStat memo displays color ratings for progress towards milestones, user experience and LEA access, in addition to LEA-by-LEA data on systems set-up and number of teachers accessing the modules.
- In the CLO Quarterly Report process, RIDE collects LEA-level data and feedback about the formative assessment modules and interim assessment administration. This data includes status of implementation, a color rating for quality and successes and challenges.
- On a quarterly basis, the IOC reviews Scope of Work tasks for these projects to ensure that all quarterly deliverables have been met and elevates concerns to the ALT as necessary.
- RIDE's Project Management Office (PMO) structure manages the development of the interim assessments and the formative assessment modules. Within the PMO, each vendor contract is assigned a three-member team: a sponsor, someone within RIDE leadership; a business lead, a member of RIDE's data systems team; and, a technical lead who is the same as the business lead or is the vendor. The PMO Director manages work plan, timelines and deliverables to ensure that major milestones are completed and resources are sufficient to complete future tasks. The PMO dashboard is updated biweekly with information on progress and risks and distributed to RIDE stakeholders.

### **Mid-course corrections or relevant amendments**

- RIDE rejected the vendor's first batch of items for the interim assessment test construction tool because they did not meet rigor or quality expectations. As such, the item development and review period during spring and summer 2012 did not produce enough items to launch the interim assessment test construction engine in January 2013, as planned.
- LEAs' difficulty in establishing teacher-course-student connections and providing teachers with single sign-on logins caused many LEAs to scale back their initial implementation plans for formative assessment modules and interim assessment administration. For example, rather than administer the three interim assessments in grades K-12 some decided to administer the assessment in middle school mathematics only. In this way, though the assessments are available statewide, LEAs are electing to conduct their own pilots to determine future use.

### **LEA Feedback**

- LEA feedback from the limited number of LEAs the Department visited indicated that the formative assessment modules add significant value to teaching and learning. The challenge has been finding time for the community of practice component.
- The fixed form interim assessment was being piloted in some grades and subjects in the LEAs the Department visited. Having only completed the first assessment, teachers indicated that administering the assessment helped them think through how to administer a web-based test and what CCSS-aligned assessments may look in the future. Teachers also described the increased difficulty of the items for students and the difference from the NECAP.
- At least one LEA the Department visited indicated that it had to cancel plans to implement fixed form interim assessments because it did not have the teacher-course-student connections established in time.
- Some LEA leadership expressed disappointment in not having access to the test construction tool but appreciated the need for an adequate number of high-quality items.

### **Quality of implementation and rationale for Department's performance rating**

The Department acknowledges the ambitious nature of launching the formative assessment modules and interim assessments through the IMS and commends RIDE for releasing them for LEA use in SY 2012-2013. The integrated release of the projects in this sub-criterion with the IMS, however, proved to be difficult for LEAs. LEAs struggled to meet the technological readiness demands of the IMS to ensure successful teacher and principal access to the system. As a result, it appears that these projects lost some buy-in during SY 2012-2013 as LEAs scaled back their implementation plans to fully leverage the new assessment offerings. The Department encourages the State to provide clear expectations and supports for LEAs struggling to meet the ongoing technology and data requirements that allow for meaningful use of the systems, such as basic access. Overcoming these barriers early may increase use of interim assessments in SY 2013-2014 and more widespread implementation of the formative assessment professional development.

For LEAs that were able to implement, going through the formative assessment modules individually and coming together as a community of practice has increased educator capacity to deepen student questioning and has increased principal capacity for instructional leadership. As LEAs adjust their plans to implement the formative assessment modules it will be important for RIDE to create opportunities for non-implementing LEAs to understand the benefits of this offering.

Though the fixed form interim assessments were made available to LEAs in SY 2012-2013, given the limited use across the State the Department has concerns about the quality of the assessment going forward and impact on LEAs' likelihood of adoption. This year's administration was not widespread enough to make claims about validity and reliability, and it is unclear whether not knowing this about the assessments will impact LEA use in SY 2013-2014. In the interim RIDE has advised LEAs to use the fixed form assessment as a tool to inform instructional changes. In addition, the State may have to identify ways to encourage and support LEAs to return to their initial implementation plans in SY 2013-2014. The Department looks forward to learning more about trends in use after the second and third testing windows, and to what extent the assessments are informing instruction.

While the Department is concerned about the impact of the delayed interim assessment test construction tool on LEA plans to transition to the CCSS, it is commendable that RIDE has maintained a high bar for the quality of assessment items. As time passes Rhode Island LEAs are grappling with the challenges of the instructional transition and crave CCSS-aligned assessment items. The test construction tool was to serve a critical role in the SY 2012-2013 transition effort at the LEA level. At this time teachers and students statewide will not be able to meaningfully engage with the tool until SY 2013-2014.

## (B)(3)

Standards and Assessments	Performance and Progress on Goals/Objectives in RTT Plan	
	State	Department
(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	Green February 2013	Green February 2013

### OVERVIEW

#### **Rhode Island's self-described goals for this sub-criterion**

- Supporting all educators to understand the standards
- Providing intensive support for curriculum alignment and resource development in targeted LEAs
- Building a comprehensive assessment system

#### **Relevant projects**

- Study of Standards – Technical Tasks
- Intensive Curriculum Alignment – Technical Tasks
- Project-Based Learning – Technical Tasks (reported on in the STEM section)

#### **Key accomplishments**

- RIDE surpassed its Study of the Standards training goal by reaching over 5,800 educators and principals throughout the State through summer 2012.
- At the start of SY 2012-2013, the State posted four mathematics and three science model K-12 curricula to the community of resources on the IMS for use statewide. During SY 2012-2013 teacher teams from select LEAs have begun developing additional mathematics, ELA and science model curricula.

#### **Key challenges**

- The work of this sub-criterion is in a stage of transition from the State to the LEAs. Rhode Island LEAs are challenged by the task of converting the State's supports in the form of Study of the Standards sessions and facilitated curriculum alignment into shifts in instruction and assessment. The State is balancing between the State's role in curriculum implementation, State capacity to support LEAs and transitioning ownership to LEAs.

### DEPARTMENT'S ANALYSIS OF PERFORMANCE AND PROGRESS

#### **State's progress against scope of work and goals (by project)**

- Study of Standards – Technical Tasks
  - Through summer 2012 RIDE and the Dana Center trained over 5,800 educators in the Study of the Standards. All Rhode Island LEAs have received this training.
  - RIDE continues to offer Study of the Standards sessions to LEAs on an as-needed basis.
- Intensive Curriculum Alignment – Technical Tasks
  - During SY 2012-2013 the State's curriculum work is in its second of three years. LEA teams representing each grade in ELA and math meet regularly with Dana Center facilitators to create the locally developed curriculum. The SY 2011-2012 work produced four mathematics and three science model curricula. These curricula have been loaded into the IMS and are

- assigned to educators in the LEAs that developed them and are available as a community resource for all other IMS users. The ELA model curricula work is continuing from last year and includes an additional cohort beginning in SY 2012-2013. These facilitated curriculum sessions result in a K-12 scope and sequence document and units of study.
- The State is in the process of adjusting its science curriculum plan in light of the New Generation Science Standards (NGSS) slated for release in March 2013. By the end of SY 2012-2013 the State will have a plan for creating social studies model curricula. Funding for these initiatives remains a concern.
  - LEAs still working with the Dana Center are involved in the vendor's leadership training, which aims to build capacity in teacher-leaders and principals to evaluate standards-aligned lesson plans and conduct classroom walkthroughs. The State reported that some of its LEAs have elected to hold off on the classroom walkthrough component because principals are also conducting observations for evaluation purposes and they want to avoid confusing the two purposes of each kind of observation.
  - Teacher teams working with the Dana Center are involved in professional teaching model trainings to support development of high-quality lessons and to create communities of practice around collaborative lesson planning. These trainings focus on process and do not result in actual lesson plans.
  - RIDE released mini-grants, using State Race to the Top and general funds, to support consortia of LEAs seeking to create a CCSS-aligned ELA curriculum.
  - In June 2012 RIDE awarded 12 professional learning community mini-grants to LEAs; 56 applications were received from LEAs across the state. Nine of the professional learning community grants focus on the LEA's CCSS transition plan, two focus on closing achievement gaps and one focuses on community engagement at the high school level. LEAs will convene their professional learning communities over SY 2012-2013 and SY 2013-2014.
  - During SY 2012-2013 RIDE offered supplemental professional development to small LEA teams on CCSS instructional shifts in ELA and mathematics, including academic vocabulary, text complexity, text dependent questions and writing argument. Approximately 825 educators and principals attended the four types of sessions. RIDE's cohort of four ELA, four mathematics and two leadership curriculum Intermediate Service Providers (curriculum ISPs) created and presented these professional development sessions. RIDE made a designated number of slots available each LEA; additional slots or sessions are also available for purchase. These supplemental sessions are intended to make educators and LEA leadership aware of the new demands of CCSS and to trigger LEA-specific professional development plans for CCSS transition.
  - During SY 2012-2013, RIDE aims for LEAs to frame and own their own transition plans to include CCSS professional development, lesson plan development and instructional materials procurement. RIDE responds to LEA requests to meet to discuss implementation options including sequencing training, procurement and other considerations during the transition and implementation period. RIDE does not have the capacity to be a long-term professional development provider. All LEAs are expected to transition to CCSS in K-12 in SY 2013-2014.

**Continuous improvement: Methods, tools, processes to assess progress and quality**

- The Study of the Standards and curriculum alignment workstreams have been part of EdStat since June 2011 and are covered every four to six weeks. In Year 3, the EdStat session for “World-Class Standards and Assessments” covers milestones for success, assessment of SEA and LEA implementation, progress updates, risks and challenges, in addition to LEA-by-LEA data on CCSS transition progress and participation in RIDE's professional development.

- In the CLO Quarterly Report process, RIDE collects LEA-level data and feedback about LEAs' readiness to implement the CCSS and curriculum. This data includes status of implementation, a color rating for quality and successes and challenges.
- On a quarterly basis, the Internal Oversight Committee reviews the tasks outlined in the Scope of Work and ensures that all quarterly deliverables have been met.
- The Chief of Educator Excellence and Instructional Effectiveness hosts a monthly meeting with LEA assistant superintendents/curriculum directors to understand how implementation is going and identify areas for adjustment or technical assistance. In addition, a Curriculum Resource Specialist at RIDE is in regular contact with curriculum ISPs through monthly meetings and curriculum ISP survey data from Study of the Standards and curriculum alignment sessions.

#### **Mid-course corrections or relevant amendments**

- None for this reporting period.

#### **LEA Feedback**

- Feedback on the transition to CCSS varied among the LEAs the Department visited depending on the extent to which the LEA had a plan in place and to what extent grades and subjects were transitioning during SY 2012-2013.
  - At the time of the Department's visit, some principals and educators in one LEA expressed a desire for greater detail on how the new standards would change instruction, how and when to assess CCSS and what instructional materials would meet the needs of CCSS; they were unclear if these components were coming through the State's Race to the Top plan or through the LEA's plan.
  - In two LEAs the Department visited, LEA leadership had a plan in place for transitioning to ELA and mathematics CCSS that considered the role of LEA-led professional development; RIDE's interim assessments, formative assessment modules, and using data professional development (see (C)(2), below); and, teacher-led development of lesson plans. Principals and educators were able to articulate their district's high-level plan for CCSS transition and their building-level methods for transitioning during SY 2012-2013. They had access to the LEA's CCSS-aligned curriculum as developed with the Dana Center (though not through the IMS because of technical difficulties), or were members of a writing team during this school year. One LEA was in the process of procuring new instructional materials for specific grade bands and subjects, which they believed was critical to successful CCSS transition in SY 2013-2014. This LEA decided to transition to mathematics CCSS in grades K-12 in SY 2012-2013.
- Upon reflection, many educators the Department spoke with indicated that the Study of the Standards sessions were helpful but were too basic for the length of time each session required; most of these educators had attended sessions in SY 2011-2012. These educators would have preferred getting deeper into the standards with others in their grade or subject band during these sessions to understand the differences, rather than focus only on how to read the new standards.
- Some educators who attended RIDE's supplemental professional development found it helpful, but expressed concern for how to implement those instructional shifts without new instructional materials or assessments. Leadership at one LEA indicated a desire for better coordination among the State's many small LEAs to work in consortia to develop the infrastructure to actually implement the new standards because the task is too large for one LEA to take on alone.
- Many educators the Department spoke with were on curriculum writing teams and expressed that the experience was rewarding. As mentioned in the Year 2 report, these educators articulated that colleagues who did not participate in the curriculum writing process lack deep knowledge of the standards. Two LEAs the Department visited expressed concern about how to translate their

knowledge base from the curriculum development process into more rigorous instructional practice and concern about how to obtain the appropriate instructional materials.

- Principals at two LEAs the Department visited expressed uncertainty about the purpose or usefulness of the Dana Center's leadership trainings and that the sessions did not meet their needs. They said there was not an opportunity to provide feedback on those sessions and that they would like to share their thoughts with RIDE.

### **Quality of implementation and rationale for Department's performance rating**

Through SY 2012-2013 RIDE's quality of implementation in this sub-criterion has been strong and the State has transitioned much of the implementation responsibility to the LEAs. The State continues to execute its contract with fidelity having exceeded its goal for Study of the Standards. The curriculum development work is proceeding as planned with relatively small delays with some groups of curriculum writers. Recognizing that many of the concrete deliverables in this sub-criterion have been met, the Department encourages the State to gather targeted information about the CCSS transition to understand the impact of the curriculum development work and LEA technical assistance needs.

The Department commends RIDE for building an environment where LEA leaders, principals and educators share a common commitment and set of expectations related to the CCSS transition. As the liaison between the vendor support and LEAs, and through the CLO process, RIDE has gathered a wealth of data about when LEAs plan to transition to the CCSS, but there remain gaps in implementation plans and support methods that the State may not be able to fill. In SY 2012-2013 the State's CCSS implementation work is shifting to the LEAs as they have CCSS-aligned curricula in hand or in development and are grappling with how to operationalize it within classrooms. However, these documents may not be finalized with sufficient time for LEAs to train educators in time for SY 2013-2014. The LEAs the Department visited uniformly expressed difficulty with ensuring that the transition was happening with fidelity. At least two LEAs articulated a continued struggle with identifying the appropriate instructional materials and finding the time and resources to ensure all educators understand the demands of CCSS. RIDE reports it lacks the capacity to fully support this level of the transition. The State was deliberate in limiting the scope of the vendor contract to processes related to Study of the Standards and curriculum development, however, the Department encourages the State to find high-leverage opportunities to support LEAs beyond these basic first steps. RIDE may expand existing supports and tools for implementation, such as full use of the walkthrough protocol, clarifying links to interim assessments (see (B)(2)), and promoting more widespread use of already-developed units of study. Despite limited capacity, RIDE has implementation and readiness data that would support differentiated supports for LEAs that need them. As mentioned in last year's report, the CCSS represent a significant change in teaching and learning in Rhode Island and requires continued support to ensure readiness leading up to the PARCC assessments.

## (C)(2)

Data Systems to Support Instruction	Performance and Progress on Goals/Objectives in RTT Plan	
	State	Department
(C)(2) Accessing and using State data	Yellow February 2013	Orange February 2013

### OVERVIEW

#### **Rhode Island's self-described goals for this sub-criterion**

- Provide teachers, principals, administrators, and parents with access to easy-to-navigate data dashboards
- Expand the data collection and reporting capacities of the teacher certification database
- Monitor the integrity of State data
- Complete a comprehensive statewide educator performance system to track educator effectiveness
- Develop an early warning indicator tool

#### **Relevant projects**

- Instructional Management System Data Platform – Technical Tasks
- Early Warning System (EWS) – Target – Technical Tasks
- Evaluation System Design and Certification Data System Redesign – Technical Tasks

#### **Key accomplishments**

- RIDE deployed the IMS in September 2012. Dependent systems launched through the IMS in a staggered timeline throughout SY 2012-2013.
- RIDE operationalized the certification and renewal portion of the new system, called eCert!, and migrated all data from the previously used system.

#### **Key challenges**

- As a State agency, RIDE lacks the technical capacity to give the data systems projects the time required for smooth implementation. Issues with the vendor may be exacerbating this.
- RIDE underestimated the time, capacity and guidance LEAs needed to complete the teacher-course-student connection and single sign-on process to access the IMS. LEAs' varying levels of technological readiness resulted in delays in being able to meaningfully access the IMS throughout fall 2012.
- Many LEAs scaled back implementation of key assessment activities (see (B)(2), above) due to the technical problems with the IMS, raising concerns about LEA's willingness to implement in SY 2012-2013 and future years.
- While the Educator Performance and Support System (EPSS) launched in September 2012, it had not been fully tested and presented many technical problems for users throughout the State.
- To accommodate further testing and training, the EWS is delayed by about eight months.

### DEPARTMENT'S ANALYSIS OF PERFORMANCE AND PROGRESS

#### **State's progress against scope of work and goals (by project)**

- Instructional Management System Data Platform – Technical Tasks

- RIDE launched the IMS in September 2012, as planned. During SY 2012-2013 the IMS serves as a single site for student data, CCSS curriculum guides and units of study, fixed form interim assessments, formative assessment modules, and the EXCEED Response to Intervention (RTI) system. The test construction tool for interim assessments will be accessible in March 2013. The EWS will be accessible through the IMS beginning in summer 2013.
  - During summer 2012, LEAs crafted their own implementation plans involving one or more elements of the IMS and communicated this plan to RIDE's IMS program leads. In August 2012, RIDE released "pre-go live" guidance to LEAs outlining the prerequisite steps to providing access to the IMS for all teachers and principals.
    - LEAs had to submit accurate teacher, course and student data to RIDE and establish valid single sign-on logins for the IMS. The teacher-course-student connection data was critical in ensuring teachers were linked with the students they teach (e.g., for administering and scoring fixed form interim assessments) or ensuring teachers could see their appropriate curriculum document (e.g., for fourth grade mathematics as developed by a given writing team). However, LEAs did not have enough time or capacity to complete the process until late fall 2012, thereby limiting use of the IMS.
    - Even after accurate submission of teacher-course-student data, LEAs encountered numerous technical difficulties that hindered use. As a result of the challenges with the initial steps and access, many LEAs decided to scale back the implementation plans made during summer 2012.
  - RIDE monitors LEA use of the IMS by logins into each component. RIDE is working with its vendors to develop additional metrics to measure meaningful use (e.g., completion of formative assessment modules, reporting capabilities for interim assessments, etc.), which will be especially important as more users enter the system and engage with its components. As of January 2013, 47 of the State's 52 participating LEAs had implemented at least one component of the IMS.
  - RIDE established a Help Desk during summer 2012 to assist LEAs with technical issues with the IMS and other data systems, including the EWS and EPSS (see below). The Rhode Island Help Desk structure allows anyone from an individual educator to an LEA to submit problems that the vendor tracks until the issue is resolved. As of January 2013, over 6,700 tickets have been submitted. The Help Desk is managed internally by the Director of RIDE's Office of Data, Analysis and Research (ODAR).
- Early Warning System – Target – Technical Tasks
    - RIDE did not conduct training on the EWS in summer 2012 and the system did not launch in fall 2012, as planned. RIDE applied some lessons learned from the challenging launch of the IMS by re-working the launch of the EWS. Launch of the EWS in March 2013 will allow for the system to be fully developed, will formalize data flows from LEAs and allow for users to be trained on the actual system. The Department acknowledged the delays in this project in a March 2013 amendment letter.
      - RIDE intends to roll out the EWS in March 2013 to a select number of LEAs. With the system finalized, RIDE will conduct training during summer 2013 to ensure that LEAs understand what to do with EWS data (e.g., next steps within RTI, accessing IMS data, etc.) and the regulatory requirements (e.g., required parental notification). Though Rhode Island LEAs are familiar with RTI, they do not currently have a way of tracking interventions or effectiveness. RIDE intends to train users on the actual system to promote use with fidelity.
    - During fall 2012 RIDE continued to finalize the metrics for the EWS screener to identify students at risk of failure or drop-out for LEA and building-level leadership. Though much of

this work was completed during Year 2, RIDE learned that the algorithm was identifying too many students at risk and needed to be run differently to ensure the right set of targeted at risk students were being flagged in the system.

- Evaluation System Design and Certification Data System Redesign – Technical Tasks
  - With the Board of Regents having already passed redesigned certification regulations in November 2011, RIDE continues to redesign the data systems to reflect the changes in regulation. Now called eCert! (formerly RICERT), the system has five components:
    - In January 2013 the certification application and processing component of eCert! became operational.
    - RIDE is working to create functionality for applicant to upload certification application documents to the portal directly.
    - Also in January 2013, the personnel data collection (PDC) opened for LEAs to submit data on staffing.
    - Beginning in SY 2013-2014, the public portal will allow for anyone to search for an educator’s certification status.
    - Beginning in spring 2013, the program completer section of eCert! will enable educator preparation programs to upload data about their program completers. Including this component in eCert! will allow the data to be linked to certification data and effectiveness data from EPSS (see (D)(4) for details).
  - The Educator Performance and Support System (EPSS) launched in September 2012 as the technology base for implementation of the Rhode Island model educator evaluation system and the Innovation model. While RIDE met the ambitious timeline to create and release the system in one year, it did not have time to test the system. As a result, the system experienced many technical issues during the first few months of the school year.
  - RIDE’s Help Desk spent much of fall 2012 trouble-shooting technical concerns with LEAs that encountered issues with EPSS such as supporting browsers, systems requirements, long page loading time, etc. As these issues came in, RIDE worked with the vendor to develop solutions within the system.
  - The EPSS operates separately from the IMS.

**Continuous improvement: Methods, tools, processes to assess progress and quality**

- The data systems projects are managed through a Project Management Office Coordination (PMOC) structure that now focuses primarily on systems integration. The PMOC manages work plans and identifies risks and challenges. In SY 2012-2013, with data systems released for LEA use, RIDE has moved towards an integrated approach where program leads are designated as “super-users” and work closely with each vendor to ensure each system integrates with the IMS and LEA needs are met.
  - RIDE staff is in weekly contact with the IMS vendor to address challenges and problem-solve solutions. The State reports it is particularly challenging to manage the level of systems integration required by Rhode Island’s IMS design and to do so statewide.
- In the CLO Quarterly Report process, RIDE collects LEA-level data and feedback about LEAs’ use of the IMS and EPSS components. During CLO meetings, participants provide further evidence of both LEA and SEA implementation.
- The Race to the Top data system projects described above were added to the EdStat process in January 2012. The IMS projects are reviewed in the “Standards and Assessments” EdStat sessions, while the EPSS and eCert are part of the “Educator Effectiveness” EdStat sessions. The EdStat memos for these data systems tracks milestones and provides ratings on progress and quality of implementation at the State and LEA levels. In addition, the memos detail trends in risks and challenges, updates on progress and LEA-by-LEA data about implementation of the various IMS components.

- In addition, on a quarterly basis, the Race to the Top Internal Oversight Committee reviews the Scope of Work tasks for these projects and ensures that all quarterly deliverables have been met.
- RIDE communicates with Assistant Superintendents and LEA Curriculum Directors on a monthly basis about data systems implementation updates and challenges.

#### **Mid-course corrections or relevant amendments**

- The Department acknowledged in a March 2013 amendment letter that the EWS is delayed by about eight months. Rather than conduct training during summer 2012 without a system to interact with, RIDE decided to delay release to March 2013 and conduct training during summer 2013 for full implementation and data collection in SY 2013-2014. In addition, the metrics and cut scores required additional analysis throughout fall 2012 to address concerns about over-identification of students at risk of dropping out or failing. RIDE made these adjustments to the EWS rollout in recognition of the fact that EWS and RTI implementation is dependent on meaningfully intervening with the students and families that the system identifies.
- The Department acknowledged in a March 2013 amendment letter that within the eCert! system, the development of the database that links program completer data to effectiveness data is delayed by four to six months.
- During the summer 2012 stocktake meetings, RIDE met with LEA leadership to introduce the variety of data systems that would be available to LEAs and emphasize that LEAs had flexibility to select the projects they wanted to implement in SY 2012-2013 and SY 2013-2014. Based on the time lost early in the fall to set up the IMS and later issues fully navigating the system, some LEAs scaled back their implementation plans to pilots or delayed implementation to SY 2013-2014.

#### **LEA Feedback**

- The LEAs the Department visited expressed frustration with the rollout of the data systems in SY 2012-2013. LEAs lacked an understanding of the time and capacity required to enter accurate teacher-course-student data into the IMS prior to educators and principals accessing the system for use in this school year. LEAs cited a growing need for up-to-date computers and servers to support meaningful and more widespread use of interim assessments. One LEA decided not to implement fixed form interim assessments after encountering significant difficulties getting the necessary browser and system updates for its computers. Several teachers completing the formative assessment modules elected to do them on home computers because of connectivity issues on their school computers.
- LEAs with designated leadership for data systems work articulated their approach to getting teachers and principals access to the IMS and collecting common issues to submit to the State's Help Desk as a bundle. They cite SY 2012-2013 as a year to get acquainted with the system and a select number of initiatives, but not to implement it to its fullest capabilities.
- Principals uniformly said that September 2012 was late to release the EPSS since principals had to get acquainted with it and use it very quickly once the school year started. Though EPSS navigation was part of the summer trainings for educator evaluation systems, principals did not do that training in the actual system. From a user perspective, principals expressed that the system was effective in organizing the various components of the evaluation system for each of their teachers. However, principals noted several specific improvements that would facilitate ease of use in the future. Principals made suggestions such as a different format for the landing page with the list of educators, ways to reduce the number of clicks, and inclusion of rubric language in the system or as a pop-up page, among others. The Department encourages RIDE to reach out to LEAs to get more detail on these and other suggestions.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> RIDE indicated in a subsequent monthly call that they have conducted focus groups to solicit this feedback directly from principals and educators.

### **Quality of implementation and rationale for Department's performance rating**

The Department commends RIDE for taking on the ambitious task of integrating and launching numerous data systems for SY 2012-2013. In this sub-criterion in this time period, RIDE's quality of implementation is measured by the State's ability to launch these systems for LEAs, monitor successes and challenges and adjust implementation in response. RIDE learned a great deal about its approach to the rollout and the consequences of a tight timeline, and increased institutional knowledge about LEA capacity and readiness to adopt the IMS and EPSS for their respective purposes. In particular, the State saw the importance of testing systems before they go live to ensure smooth operation once live, particularly with the EPSS. The State also learned that training on data systems, in particular, is more useful and likely to increase buy-in if users are able to interact with the system itself; nothing replaces the experience of working with the actual system. It appears that the State has applied these lessons by adjusting their approach to rollout of the EWS. Finally, the State discovered challenges with both technological and staff capacity to prepare for the launch of these systems.

The Department is concerned that the challenges of fall 2012 may have reduced the buy-in of LEAs adopting the IMS and the useful tools within it, even in SY 2013-2014. As the point of access for the formative assessment modules, fixed form interim assessments, the upcoming test construction tool, scope and sequence documents and a wealth of student data, the IMS could be a powerful tool to guide the transition to CCSS and build confidence in elements of the State's comprehensive assessment systems. During SY 2012-2013 it is clear that many LEAs scaled back their implementation of these critical curriculum and assessment initiatives because of the access barriers and technical glitches.

Though the EPSS encountered many technical problems upon launch, use of the EPSS appears to be in a slightly different status because of how it is integrated with execution of the educator evaluation systems. Many LEAs appear to be using the system during implementation this school year for all or parts of the process, and all LEAs will enter final ratings in the system at the end of the year. However, principals, teachers and LEA leadership that the Department spoke with indicated that the EPSS would benefit from some targeted changes so that it is truly supportive of the evaluation process and meets their needs. The Department encourages RIDE to solicit LEA feedback and act on it timely so as to support LEA implementation in the upcoming year.

Given the rollout of these systems over summer and fall 2012, the Department has concerns about RIDE's capacity to manage the data systems work in the future. The management structure for the data systems projects is dependent on content staff that spends a fraction of their time on the technology systems component. The important work of finalizing the content and ensuring the content was integrated with the IMS platform, however, is quite apart from ensuring LEAs understand and are supported in the technical requirements and scope of the pre-work needed to gain access to and monitor use of the system. The late timing and limited guidance to LEAs regarding what they needed to do to be ready for the State's systems prevented many LEAs from starting the school year ready to implement. At least one LEA did not learn until mid-fall 2012 that they lacked some basic technological infrastructure to be able to access the IMS. The lack of readiness appears to have been exacerbated by the systems' technical problems once they were live. Going forward, the Department encourages RIDE to consider ways to develop internal capacity in data systems management and LEA integration to ensure the long-term success and continued use of these statewide data systems. In addition, the Department encourages RIDE to use its LEA implementation and readiness data to develop targeted supports for LEAs that may need such supports more than others.

As the State and LEAs work through the technical challenges in the coming months, the Department looks forward to learning more about substantive use of these systems and their impact on instruction, assessment and student supports.

**OTHER**

- RIDE's request to the State legislature for a \$20 million technology infrastructure capital bond was approved in June 2012. RIDE is working with LEAs to plan for use of the technology bond.

(C)(3)

Data Systems to Support Instruction	Performance and Progress on Goals/Objectives in RTT Plan	
	State	Department
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction	Green February 2013	Green February 2013

**OVERVIEW**

**Rhode Island’s self-described goals for this sub-criterion**

- Expand the data collection and reporting capacities of the teacher certification database.

**Relevant projects**

- Instructional Management System – Using Data Professional Development – Technical Tasks

**Key accomplishments**

- Through the Using Data professional development offering, RIDE and the vendor have reached 29 teacher and leader teams at 134 schools throughout the State.

**Key challenges**

- The State reported that while the Using Data Professional Development sessions are meeting educators’ needs, teachers, principals and superintendents struggle with finding the time to routinely discuss and evaluate their data as a community.

**DEPARTMENT’S ANALYSIS OF PERFORMANCE AND PROGRESS**

**State’s progress against scope of work and goals (by project)**

- Instructional Management System – Using Data Professional Development – Technical Tasks
  - RIDE and the vendor developed professional development modules that include training, materials, facilitation guides, and resources for LEAs, school leadership teams and individual educators. The year-long, 10-day training series focuses on teaching educators how to collaboratively analyze relevant student data, how to use that data to inform educational decisions and how to make decisions that increase student achievement outcomes.
  - In Year 2, the vendor completed a needs assessment and recommended that training for LEA school leadership teams be differentiated into three tiers, from basic to advanced, based on LEAs’ facility with using data. Additional feedback from focus groups and school-level data stewards suggested that only two levels of proficiency were necessary – basic and advanced.
  - In preparation for the professional development, RIDE identified which schools would receive their training in SY 2012-13, assigned each school data leadership team (SDLT) into one of the two proficiency tiers, and matched each school with a data coach who visits the school three times throughout the year to provide on-site, tailored support. RIDE also provided LEAs with an overview of course content and guidance on what roles might be ideal participants for SDLTs. Prior to launching the first three days of training, RIDE hosted three webinars to communicate the purpose of training.
  - The first three days of training, an intensive session focused on the fundamentals for using data to drive instruction, took place by the end of July 2012 for 29 SDLT cohorts representing 134 schools and 592 individual participants. The fourth day of professional development took place between October and December 2012. The fifth day of training will be held at the

school site, during which data coaches facilitate discussions with school stakeholders focused on data-informed conversations, action planning and knowledge dissemination among other educators in the building. The sixth day of training will incorporate the use and management of SLO and student assessment data. The remaining training days have all been scheduled to take place by summer 2013, with the tenth and final day focused on reflection of lessons learned and sustainability planning.

#### **Continuous improvement: Methods, tools, processes to assess progress and quality**

- RIDE assesses progress and quality of these activities during the “Use of High Quality Data” EdStat meeting. During these meetings, the EdStat panel and project team collectively review and discuss evidence that speaks to the quality of RIDE’s delivery and project impact.
- On a quarterly basis, RIDE’s Internal Oversight team reviews the tasks outline in the Scope of Work for this project and ensures that all deliverables have been met and that spending is on track with the approved budget.
- To ensure that each day of professional development training is meeting LEA needs, RIDE seeks feedback from LEAs through pre-assessments and surveys, as well as regular check-ins with district data liaisons. During quarterly CLO meetings, LEAs report on their engagement in the sessions as well as RIDE’s delivery and technical assistance. Specific feedback on the Using Data Professional Development is relayed back to the project lead who follows up with individual LEAs as needed.
- To help measure the quality of implementation within the LEAs and schools, RIDE created a rubric for coaches to use during the on-site visits. The coaches observe a school’s current state of implementation, use of Cycles of Inquiry and quality of data conversations and rate its progress on a scale from Basic to Independent.

#### **Mid-course corrections or relevant amendments**

- None at this time.

#### **LEA Feedback**

- At one of the LEAs the Department visited, 17 schools participated in the Data Use Professional Development training. A representative from one of these schools noted that the training is very rewarding, particularly the use of Cycles of Inquiry.

#### **Quality of implementation and rationale for Department’s performance rating**

The Department agrees with RIDE that the activities in this SOW are being implemented with a high level of quality. The State’s preparatory work with the vendor in Year 2 helped to ensure that the professional development sessions would be delivered with rigor, but customized to meet schools’ individual needs. RIDE has also remained committed to continuously engaging LEAs and other stakeholders in developing, evaluating and in some cases, revising the sessions’ content and materials. Early feedback from the professional development sessions indicates that the sessions “met stated objectives” and “met professional learning needs” of educators.

RIDE identified its SY 2012-2013 goals as creating a common language about data for educators, families and communities; creating an environment of low-stakes data use; and, ultimately increasing the quality of data in schools throughout the State. The Department looks forward to hearing more about RIDE’s progress towards meeting those goals throughout the remainder of Year 3.

**(D)(1)**

Great Teachers and Leaders	Performance and Progress on Goals/Objectives in RTT Plan	
	State	Department
(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	Yellow February 2013	Yellow February 2013

**OVERVIEW**

**Rhode Island’s self-described goals for this sub-criterion**

- Recruit, incubate, and bring to scale high-quality alternative certification programs for teachers and principals
- Recruit programs to utilize the alternative certification pathway and increase utilization of this pathway, especially to address shortage areas
- Identify and prepare leaders and teachers to serve high-poverty, high-minority students effectively
- Monitor, evaluation, and identify areas of teacher and principal shortage

**Relevant projects**

- Alternative Certification – Technical Tasks – New Teacher Project
- Alternative Certification – Technical Tasks – Teach For America

**Key accomplishments**

- The Rhode Island Teaching Fellows program, operated by The New Teacher Project (TNTP), placed 18 teachers in traditional and charter LEAs, including four urban LEAs, for the SY 2012-2013. Teach for America (TFA) placed 27 corps members in traditional and charter schools.

**Key challenges**

- According to the State, TNTP and TFA continue to experience difficulty placing teachers in Rhode Island due to low turnover in LEAs and the challenging economic environment in the State. In addition, the timing of teacher recruitment and LEA’s limited knowledge of openings impedes successful placement.
- RIDE has indicated that managing these programs at the State and LEA levels is costly and it is not likely that they will be able to sustain both programs after the grant period.

**DEPARTMENT’S ANALYSIS OF PERFORMANCE AND PROGRESS**

**State’s progress against scope of work and goals (by project)**

- RIDE supported the placement of 18 TNTP teachers and 27 TFA teachers in Rhode Island LEAs, falling short of its goal of placing 30 teachers in each cohort. Both providers initially recruited a slightly larger cohort, but ultimately placed fewer candidates as some candidates resigned, deferred placement or did not meet the program’s “highly effective” bar.

**Continuous improvement: Methods, tools, processes to assess progress and quality**

- On a quarterly basis, the Race to the Top Internal Oversight Team reviews the scope of work tasks for these projects and ensures that all quarterly deliverables have been met.
- On a monthly basis, RIDE reviews a status report provided by each alternative route provider to determine progress toward key goals and milestones. Quarterly, each program submits a more

detailed progress update on all aspects of the programs including recruitment efforts, professional development trainings, diversity of candidates and quality of Fellows and Corps members.

- RIDE also engages in face-to-face meetings with alternative route providers and candidates enrolled in the providers' programs to determine whether RIDE's larger goals are being met. This dialogue allows RIDE to monitor the status and quality of implementation.
- RIDE also engages directly with LEAs regarding the quality of the providers and the teacher candidates. Feedback from principals and superintendents suggests that they are thus far satisfied with the quality of teachers placed by TNTP and TFA.

#### **Mid-course corrections or relevant amendments**

- None at this time

#### **LEA Feedback**

- Alternative certification programs were not discussed during the LEA roundtables.

#### **Quality of implementation and rationale for Department's performance rating**

RIDE continues to do its due diligence in promoting and monitoring alternative certification programs by supporting both TFA and TNTP. RIDE supports the providers in their recruitment, selection and placement processes and monitors their ability to place diverse cohorts of high quality teachers in the State's urban and charter schools. Thus far, the State reports that LEAs have indicated a high degree of satisfaction with both TNTP and TFA candidates and the providers have worked to establish strong relationships with the LEAs. In addition, the State reports that these alternative providers offer an important perspective and have been involved in the State's equity plan (see *(D)(3)*) and in the State's upcoming educator preparation effectiveness reports (see *(D)(4)*).

Nevertheless, RIDE and the providers faced challenges in meeting their placement goals in SY 2012-2013. According to the State, the State's economic challenges continue to play a part, as there has been less than anticipated turnover among teachers, and therefore few placements available for alternative route candidates. In addition, TFA and TNTP recruitment timelines and strategies are not always aligned with LEA hiring practices. For instance, in the fall, TFA and TNTP may recruit candidates with a particular certification only to find that in the spring no LEAs have vacancies that need to be filled in that area for the upcoming school year.

The consistent inability of the providers to meet the placement goals since their arrival in the State may affect RIDE's future investment in alternative route programs. During the onsite review, RIDE indicated that the programs are not cost effective and, given the low placement, not able to sustain themselves without supplemental funding. While RIDE does not expect to be able to support both alternative certification programs after the grant period, it intends to sustain one of the programs in the long term.

## (D)(2)

Great Teachers and Leaders	Performance and Progress on Goals/Objectives in RTT Plan	
	State	Department
(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance	Green February 2013	Green February 2013

### OVERVIEW

#### **Rhode Island's self-described goals for this sub-criterion**

- Establish clear approaches to measure student growth
- Design and implement rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation systems for teachers and principals
- Provide professional development to teachers, principals, and district administrators to effectively implement evaluation
- Use educator evaluation data to inform decision-making
- Design model compensation systems

#### **Relevant projects**

- Educator Effectiveness: Evaluation Design and Implementation
- Compensation Reform – Target – Technical Tasks

#### **Key accomplishments**

- During summer and early fall 2012 RIDE conducted 31 four-day long summer academies training over 600 evaluators on the RI model evaluation system. RIDE also conducted four day-long SLO trainings reaching over 200 evaluators for LEAs implementing other evaluation models. During SY 2012-2013 every evaluator using the RI model is required to complete two online modules that support quality implementation, and complete a final assessment.
- In SY 2012-2013 every LEA in the State is engaged in implementation of an educator and building administrator evaluation system. At the end of the school year all LEAs will submit component-level ratings and final effectiveness ratings for every educator; however, this year's ratings will not include growth data.

#### **Key challenges**

- While there is evidence that LEAs are committed to implementation of evaluation systems, RIDE continuously balances feedback from the field with the requirements of the system. For example, LEAs may seek flexibility with the use of effectiveness ratings at the LEA level, or question what constitutes a local decision as opposed to a State decision.
- As the State shifts into implementation in SY 2012-2013, RIDE and LEAs struggle with transitioning ownership of what was a State-developed system to the local level.

### DEPARTMENT'S ANALYSIS OF PERFORMANCE AND PROGRESS

#### **State's progress against scope of work and goals (by project)**

- Educator Effectiveness: Evaluation Design and Implementation
  - After SY 2011-2012, RIDE worked to release the second edition of the RI model for educator evaluation, evaluate trends in final effectiveness ratings, prepare content for the summer training academies and prepare for release of the EPSS (see (C)(2) for detail).

- RIDE released guidebooks for the second edition of the RI model to all principals and educators in June 2012, incorporating feedback from early adopter districts and other LEAs. The second edition reduced the number of SLOs and the number and types of observations, in addition to making changes to the professional practice and foundation rubrics.
  - RIDE worked with LEAs through early fall 2012 to get a full understanding of the extent of their implementation in SY 2011-2012. For example, by Fall 2012 about 91% of LEAs had submitted their final effectiveness ratings. The remaining LEAs did not implement all the components of the formal evaluation or did not share their ratings due to union restrictions. The results of the SY 2011-2012 gradual implementation year indicated rating inflation, as expected, but not as many educators rated “highly effective” as RIDE initially predicted.
- During summer 2012, RIDE conducted 31 summer academies on educator evaluations reaching over 600 personnel that would evaluate educators in SY 2012-2013. Each academy was facilitated by an evaluation ISP who received six three-hour and five full-day trainings on the second edition model and the EPSS. Each summer academy was four days long and covered each aspect of the RI model and of implementation: professional practice, professional foundations, support and development, the EPSS, formative coaching, SLOs, and calculating final effectiveness ratings. Principals, assistant principals, teacher leaders and union leaders attended the summer academies. RIDE collected pre-training and post-training data to determine the effectiveness of the trainings and to get a gauge on comfort level with the system. After the first two academies RIDE adjusted the training, in response to feedback, to include additional time for SLOs. The State’s SLO training centered on building evaluator capacity to evaluate priority of content, rigor of target and quality of evidence. In August 2012, RIDE conducted SLO-only trainings for LEAs using the Innovation model and the Coventry model reaching over 200 educators.
- Throughout SY 2012-2013 RIDE responds to any inquiries related to evaluation systems through a dedicated e-mail inbox and to LEA-specific inquiries, [edeval@ride.ri.gov](mailto:edeval@ride.ri.gov).
- During statewide implementation in SY 2012-2013, RIDE is implementing several strategies to support high-quality implementation in LEAs.
  - RIDE’s cohort of 19 evaluation ISPs is augmented in SY 2012-2013 by several LEA-hired ISPs.<sup>5</sup> RIDE’s common training of evaluation ISPs during summer 2012 ensured a consistent message going into the school year, and monthly meetings ensure a consistent language and response to adaptive challenges during the school year. Evaluation ISPs also provide monthly reports to RIDE that include their perceptions on implementation at the LEA level; RIDE uses these reports to identify trends in challenges and design differentiated supports. In this way, RIDE has focused on creating a cohort of ISPs that are calibrated together to support for statewide implementation.
  - In early fall 2012 RIDE offered two regional SLO workshops that were attended by more than 40 people from across the State, including principals and LEA-level staff. Conducted in teams, the workshop focused on how to evaluate, revise and approve SLOs. RIDE made the workshop available online as a webinar.
  - After completing the summer academy, every evaluator using the RI model is required to complete two online modules as part of continued training. In

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<sup>5</sup> Similar to SY 2011-2012, each evaluation ISP is assigned to two to four LEAs and can assist with a variety of educator evaluation activities, but is not authorized to conduct evaluations. All evaluation ISPs from SY 2011-2012 were retained in SY 2012-2013. In addition, several LEAs elected to hire their own ISPs and these ISPs have joined the State’s cohort. Evaluation supports at LEAs using the Innovation or Coventry evaluation systems are not included in this aspect of RIDE’s work.

addition, evaluators are required to complete Framework for Teaching Proficiency System (FFTPS) training by June 2013, which culminates in a two-part calibration assessment. The FFTPS modules augment the summer training and focus on observation calibration, differentiated feedback and recommendations for improving evaluator ability to assess educator performance. RIDE reports that the series and two-part assessment take 25 hours. As of March 2013 28% had completed both parts of the assessment. The second module will be released in spring 2013.

- In November 2012, RIDE released the Framework for Teaching Effectiveness (FFTES) series to educators through the EPSS. The content of FFTES increases educator understanding of the components of the evaluation system and encourages self-reflection on instruction. RIDE reports that not many teachers have accessed the FFTES modules, however, many principals incorporate the content into the LEA professional development days. RIDE views FFTES as an opportunity to provide accurate information about the evaluation systems directly to educators, but recognizes it cannot mandate the professional development.
  - Beginning in November 2012 and through February 2013, RIDE made half-day trainings available as a refresher in preparation for mid-year conferences.
  - RIDE makes exemplar SLOs available on its website.
- All Rhode Island LEAs have access to the EPSS to conduct educator evaluations. For some LEAs, the system reflects modifications to account for differences in LEAs using the Innovation and Coventry models. While not all LEAs are using EPSS to track each component of the evaluation system, all LEAs must use EPSS to submit educators' component ratings and final effectiveness ratings. By LEA, RIDE tracks the approximate number of teachers being evaluated, the percentage with a verified single sign-on identification, percentage using the professional growth plan, percentage using the SLO form and percentage using EPSS for observations. Based on the evidence submitted it appears LEAs that use EPSS predominantly use it for professional growth plans and use it least for observations.
  - The RI model building administrator evaluation system is in its first year of statewide implementation.<sup>6</sup> RIDE conducted several two-day academies in summer 2012 to train building administrator evaluators. The EPSS is also available as a support tool for implementing building administrator evaluations. As of December 2013, ISPs in RI model LEAs reported that the building administrator evaluation system was being implemented with high quality or moderate-high quality.
  - In SY 2012-2013 RIDE has begun the process of framing the Support Professional Evaluation model to appropriately evaluate the effectiveness of educators who serve in support services roles in schools.
  - The State is in the beginning phases of developing an evaluation system for roles that do not fit well in the current model, including support professionals, special educators and early childhood educators, among others.
    - A special educator working group began meeting in January 2013.
    - A support professionals working group will meet five times during SY 2012-2013 and will work on Student Outcome Objectives (SOO; an SOO is a long-term goal that is focused on increasing students' access to learning, as opposed to increasing student learning). The State plans to gradually implement a support professional evaluation system in SY 2013-2014 and fully implement beginning in SY 2014-2015.

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<sup>6</sup> One LEA, Coventry, does not use the RI model for building administrator evaluations. RIDE has approved the Coventry model as one that meets the Rhode Island Educator Evaluation Standards.

- RIDE continues to work with stakeholder groups to determine modifications to the system to allow for flexibility in evaluating every teacher every year.
- Compensation Reform – Target – Technical Tasks
  - Beginning in June 2012 RIDE worked with its vendor to develop compensation briefing booklets, materials to support LEA engagement and the LEA compensation reform grant application. In November 2012 RIDE selected two LEA grantees to plan and implement an alternative compensation plan in their LEAs.
  - One urban LEA will develop a new principal compensation system to replace the current structure that does not only reward length of service or performance. The new system may take into account additional factors such complexity of assignment in determining compensation. The LEA may pilot the system in SY 2013-2014. This urban LEA will also explore alternative teacher compensation structures, though the likelihood of piloting the findings is less clear at this time because of collective bargaining constraints. The second grantee LEA, a suburban LEA, will develop a teacher leadership pathway that could be a model for other LEAs. This LEA will pilot the pathway in SY 2013-2014.

**Continuous improvement: Methods, tools, processes to assess progress and quality**

- With evaluation systems being implemented in all Rhode Island LEAs in SY 2012-2013, RIDE has identified several data points and sources to monitor the progress and quality of implementation.
  - In fall 2012 RIDE received feedback from evaluators who completed the first FFTPS module. This feedback informed the content of the second module and considerations for additional supports.
  - In January 2013 RIDE released an online survey to all educators using the RI model. Composed of 42 questions, each with multiple parts, the survey asked about educators' experiences with the beginning-of-the-year conference, SLOs (e.g., how developed, benefits of SLO process, professional development needs, etc.), observations, experiences with evaluator, supports (e.g., RIDE's website, EPSS, etc.) and evaluation system outcomes and communications. The survey window closed in February 2013.
  - RIDE has engaged nine LEAs that will share information about implementation in exchange for RIDE's analysis and additional implementation support. RIDE will use the data to inform their auditing and monitoring process for outer implementation years and identify SLO best practices for dissemination to other LEAs.
  - During fall 2012 RIDE conducted a targeted survey of educators in one early adopter district. The survey revealed negative perceptions about the evaluation system generally and SLOs in particular. RIDE also gathered important data about when SLOs were reviewed and approved, how many SLOs needed baseline data revisions, and how many target revisions occurred. This data informed the content and form of additional SLO supports (e.g., focusing on rigor of target, new guidance documents, etc.).
- RIDE's Office of Educator Quality and Certification tracks the progress of the educator evaluation system project through detailed work plans. The team monitors project deadlines and upcoming tasks, and reviews feedback to ensure next steps are responsive to LEA needs.
- The educator evaluation system project has been part of the EdStat process since June 2011. The EdStat memo for this project includes data on the participation of LEAs in trainings, color ratings that depict LEA readiness, and summaries of survey results. The EdStat panel is also presented with risks and challenges as presented by LEAs through the CLO process, the dedicated inbox, and evaluation ISP assessments.
- On a quarterly basis, the Race to the Top Internal Oversight Team reviews Scope of Work tasks for these projects and ensures that all quarterly deliverables have been met.

- RIDE meets with evaluation ISPs on a monthly basis to gather feedback from implementation in the field and identify trends and common challenges. To facilitate communication between ISPs, RIDE created a website through which evaluation ISPs can share best practices and ask questions.
- RIDE engages with its TAC and ACEES when they reach critical milestones in the educator evaluation system work, such as analyzing NECAP and SLO alignment.
- In January 2013, RIDE released a statewide teacher and principal survey to gather data about implementation in SY 2012-2013.

#### **Mid-course corrections or relevant amendments**

- Per the Department's April 2012 conditional amendment approval letter, RIDE has responded with a professional development plan and quarterly updates on their SLO implementation.
  - Submitted on June 30, 2012, the professional development plan listed the State's objectives for professional development in addition to providing the timeline and intent of the State's quarterly activities to support educator evaluation systems implementation.
  - The first quarterly report focused on SLO professional development activities from July to August 2012 and provided evidence of participant feedback. The State also reported on its monitoring efforts, planned SLO supports during the school year and sources of data on SLO implementation (e.g., evaluation ISP perceptions, inquiries, regional SLO workshops, etc.).
  - The second quarterly report focused on SLO professional development activities from October to December 2012, including two training modules for personnel evaluating teachers and the release of online modules for principals and educators. In addition, the State reported on its implementation quality monitoring, including a survey of educators in early adopter LEAs and results from a statewide survey of teachers. In addition, this quarterly report shifted focus to targeted supports for LEAs and specific areas for system improvement, such as guidance for special educators.
  - On February 28, 2013, the State submitted an analysis on alignment between the State's NECAP scores and SLO ratings using SY 2011-2012 data.
- In response to LEA feedback regarding the use of SLOs in this year's final effectiveness rating, RIDE is providing flexibility to some LEAs. LEAs that request flexibility must still submit an educator's SLO attainment rating to the State, which will be part of that educator's first year's rating that will be part of future certification decisions, per the State's new regulations. However, for SY 2012-2013 LEAs have flexibility not to use the SLO rating to make personnel decisions at the LEA level.

#### **LEA Feedback**

- Feedback from the LEAs the Department visited this year was generally consistent with the feedback received during the Year 2 visit, both in praise and constructive criticism.
- The principals the Department met uniformly stated that they struggled to find the time to complete the required number of observations for each teacher and be responsive to their other duties as principal. Their common request of the State was for flexibility around the notion that every teacher be evaluated every year. Principals also noted that the changes in the system from SY 2011-2012 were welcome, but that the system remained paper heavy and that there were more opportunities for reducing redundancies. This would, they believe, allow for more time to focus on the important outcomes of the evaluation process such as instructional coaching after an observation or identifying training that would increase educator effectiveness.
- In one LEA the Department visited principals were using EPSS for every aspect of implementation and had pointed feedback on the system, including the content of the landing page and the number of clicks needed to get to a particular piece of information. This feedback may be particularly helpful for future modifications because of the extent of its use in the LEA.
- Educators at each LEA the Department visited articulated concerns about SLOs in this first year of full implementation. In particular they noted their challenges with identifying the appropriate

assessments and setting targets. Many educators noted their discomfort with SLOs counting for so much even when the system's other parts are taken together, and the corresponding impact on their certification status. In two LEAs, educators described that they understood they needed SLOs for their evaluation but did not receive any professional development or training on how to write it. This prompted several educators to describe a need for more direct educator engagement.

- LEA leadership and some principals and educators noted that the convergence of a new evaluation system with new standards and assessments was difficult for principals and educators to manage. Some educators took it upon themselves to create CCSS-aligned assessments to support their SLO measures, but acknowledged that they were unsure of the assessments' accuracy without knowing what PARCC looks like.
- Both LEA leadership and principals in one early adopter LEA appeared much more at ease with the evaluation system and cited their additional evaluation ISP supports as the chief reason they could approach it with a focus on instruction and coaching. This LEA was particularly concerned about sustainability beyond the grant period. Educators in this LEA agreed that in SY 2012-2013 they were focused more on evaluation as a way to reveal instructional and assessment issues, but they worried about available supports for educators with a "developing" or "ineffective" rating.
- The Department visited one LEA implementing the Innovation model and noted that principals and educators in this LEA appeared to be on track and have comparable concerns to those implementing the RI model.
- Educators in two LEAs the Department visited were involved in the LEA's District Evaluation Committee (DEC). These educators articulated the types of decisions and recommendations the DEC was considering to provide additional clarity to the LEA's educators around things like revising SLO targets, how to handle transient students, and promoting principal feedback. They also described their challenge as ensuring that those decisions reached all educators involved in the evaluation system.
- Many principals the Department met with indicated the FFTPS was not well calibrated and that their scores were usually different than the training suggested.
- While the Department met mostly with educators in the core subject areas, these educators noted that the evaluation system was a poor fit for their colleagues in other subjects like music, art or special education.
- Generally, the LEA and school-level staff the Department met with stated that RIDE's supports, trainings and agency responsiveness were greatly improved from years past but that they sought more nuanced guidance to navigate difficult decisions, which highlighted the tension involved in transitioning the State-developed system to the LEAs.
- The Department notes that though there was significant criticism of the evaluation systems in place and their impact on certification, every LEA leader, principal and educator demonstrated they are grappling with the meaningful parts of it.

### **Quality of implementation and rationale for Department's performance rating**

The Department agrees that the State's performance in this sub-criterion is on-track and has been of high quality. The State clearly built upon its successes in SY 2011-2012 to augment training and supports in advance and during full implementation in SY 2012-2013. RIDE's summer academies supported LEAs' ability to lay a strong foundation for implementation at the start of the school year, and RIDE's during-the-year supports ensure fidelity of implementation during the school year. The Department commends the State for its high-quality trainings and for achieving high rates of participation, which resulted in evaluators across the State's systems speaking the same language about evaluation and encountering the same challenges inherent in implementing the new systems.

While transitioning ownership of the RI model to LEAs has been a challenge, there is evidence that LEAs have the tools and resources to implement the system and are learning to identify ways to build capacity for quality and fidelity of implementation. However, because the system is new and LEAs are unsure of

certain aspects, RIDE's work to locate the common barriers and generate guidance is particularly important. There is evidence that RIDE is continually responding to LEA demands for additional guidance on various aspects of the evaluation systems, such as guidance on SLOs and target rigor, human capital policies for LEAs to consider, and finding authentic connections between evaluation and the standards and assessment transition.

The Department commends RIDE for finding avenues to ensure educators and principals receive consistent messaging, such as the summer academies, the FFTPS and FFTES modules and the Commissioner's videos. However, the Department encourages the State to consider ways to increase direct educator engagement and support.

RIDE has created an evaluation execution model that allows for numerous data points and opportunities for improvement. The Department encourages the State to take advantage of these sources of data to make targeted improvements to the system, to the actual evaluation model and to the EPSS, so that it promotes high quality implementation at the LEA level with fidelity. In addition, these sources of knowledge of implementation may allow for the State to develop parameters for monitoring and auditing in future years, perhaps beginning in SY 2013-2014.

The State's work to develop tailored systems for support staff, special education educators and English learner educators is responsive to the field. Early evidence from these efforts indicate there is a high level of buy-in and that there are structures in place to create a meaningful evaluation system for these professionals, possibly for SY 2013-2014. Going forward the Department looks forward to learning more about how LEAs navigate the end of the year and submit final effectiveness data, and what changes may be considered for SY 2013-2014 implementation.

**(D)(3)**

Great Teachers and Leaders	Performance and Progress on Goals/Objectives in RTT Plan	
	State	Department
(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	Green February 2013	Green February 2013

**OVERVIEW**

**Rhode Island’s self-described goals for this sub-criterion**

- Collect and provide transparent data on educator effectiveness
- Monitor the distribution of teachers and principals across classrooms, schools, and districts through the data management system
- Increase the number and percentage of effective teachers teaching hard-to-staff subjects

**Relevant projects**

- Statewide Educator Recruitment Platform – Target – Technical Tasks

**Key accomplishments**

- RIDE launched an online platform that will manage and streamline the educator recruitment process for all LEAs across the State. RIDE and the vendor developed a marketing plan to increase the number and diversity of job candidates in the State.

**Key challenges**

- None at this time.

**DEPARTMENT’S ANALYSIS OF PERFORMANCE AND PROGRESS**

**State’s progress against scope of work and goals (by project)**

- From May 2012 through January 2013, RIDE implemented a number of strategies to prepare LEAs for the statewide launch of the recruitment platform, including information and training sessions with LEA human resources staff, providing technical assistance to individual LEAs to support system set up, and providing budget support and analysis.
- With the vendor, RIDE implemented a statewide recruitment platform that is being widely used by LEAs in SY 2012-2013. Using the platform, LEAs can post job descriptions, accept and review job applications, and schedule interviews with promising candidates.
- RIDE and the vendor implemented a marketing plan to attract more diverse educators to teach in Rhode Island. The marketing efforts included posting banner ads to the Yahoo website and Yahoo’s jobs web pages, and also targeting ads to geographic areas like upstate New York, Boston, Baltimore and Washington, DC. The vendor also increased Rhode Island’s social media presence with respect to job recruitment.
- RIDE staff reviewed preliminary statewide effectiveness data and conducted analyses to understand trends in equitable distribution of teachers. RIDE reviewed the distribution of effectiveness ratings from SY 2011-2012 with respect to LEAs that serve high minority and/or high poverty student populations as compared to LEAs that are considered low minority and/or low poverty. While the data is preliminary and was gathered during gradual implementation of the educator evaluation system, RIDE found that there was not equitable distribution at the district level across the State.

### **Continuous improvement: Methods, tools, processes to assess progress and quality**

- On a quarterly basis, the Race to the Top Internal Oversight Team reviews Scope of Work tasks for these projects and ensures that all quarterly deliverables have been met.
- RIDE also monitored the statuses of LEAs' implementation efforts using the Collaborative Learning for Outcomes Progress Updates. Based on these reports, RIDE was able to gather information from LEAs on the use of the platform. Because all participating LEAs reported clarity in their understanding of the system and that they were on track, RIDE determined that no additional reporting would be required by LEAs in their quarterly progress update during Year 3.
- Project staff has worked with the vendor to ensure that all deliverables as specified in the contract have been met, that the levels of service to LEAs is high, and that feedback gathered from individual meetings is used to improve implementation.

### **Mid-course corrections or relevant amendments**

- None at this time.

### **LEA Feedback**

- The recruitment portal was not discussed during the LEA roundtables. However, some LEAs spoke to the usefulness of the system in the protocols they submitted to the Department prior to the on-site visit.

### **Quality of implementation and rationale for Department's performance rating**

This project is on-track to meet the deliverables outlined in the approved Scope of Work. The Department commends RIDE for engaging regularly with LEAs to identify their human resources and recruitment needs, choosing a vendor LEAs had positive experiences with in the past, and ultimately launching a system that meets LEAs' and the State's needs. Evidence provided by the State suggests that the vendor's efforts to recruit more applicants from more diverse backgrounds are paying off. The State reported that LEAs are receiving higher than usual number of applications for posted jobs from all over the country including Guam, the Virgin Islands and the Armed Forces. RIDE is confident that increasing the pool of applicants for jobs in Rhode Island will effectively increase the quality of educators in Rhode Island schools.

RIDE is also making progress in considering how data from the recruitment portal as well as educator effectiveness data can inform the State's practices and policies on equitable distribution of teachers. The State encouraged Superintendents to reflect on the distribution of data in their own districts as compared to distribution statewide through a series of reflection questions accompanying their LEA data. Members of the project team plan to follow up with focus group conversations with superintendents about the implications of their schools' effectiveness data. Furthermore, the State is working with TNTP to draft human capital policy guidance on behalf of the State. The Department understands that much of this work relies on the strength of the educator effectiveness data, and looks forward to hearing more about the State's progress in creating these policies and supporting their implementation in LEAs as the educator evaluation system matures.

**(D)(4)**

Great Teachers and Leaders	Performance and Progress on Goals/Objectives in RTT Plan	
	State	Department
(D)(4): Improving the Effectiveness of Teacher and Principal Preparation Programs	Orange February 2013	Orange February 2013

**OVERVIEW**

**Rhode Island’s self-described goals for this sub-criterion**

- Link student achievement and student growth data for teachers and principals to the in-state programs and the Rhode Island program approval process where those teachers and principals were prepared for credentialing
- Publicly report the data for each credentialing program in the State
- Expand preparation and credentialing options and programs that are successful at producing effective teachers and principals

**Relevant projects**

- Educator Preparation Effectiveness and Quality Professional Development Options – Technical Tasks

**Key accomplishments**

- In February 2013, RIDE procured a vendor to support the development of an educator preparation program effectiveness report and to advise in the revision of preparation program approval standards.
- RIDE has built the prerequisite data infrastructure to support forthcoming effectiveness reports, such as establishing teacher-student-course links for all educators from third through eleventh grade (grades 3-11); collecting, for the first time, component and summative effectiveness ratings for most educators statewide in June 2012; and, developing the personnel data collection (PDC) reporting platform, which will allow for the connection between educator certification and effectiveness ratings and program completer data from preparation programs.

**Key challenges**

- The State is delayed in engaging the educator preparation program community in advance of a pilot effectiveness report using SY 2012-2013 ratings. In addition, the State is delayed in revising preparation program approval standards.
- Beginning in spring 2013 the Rhode Island Board of Regents is a merged K-12 and higher education board. This may pose challenges as the State starts the approval standards revision process and brings the new Board up to speed.

**DEPARTMENT’S ANALYSIS OF PERFORMANCE AND PROGRESS**

**State’s progress against scope of work and goals (by project)**

- RIDE issued the first request for Letters of Interest (LOI) in May 2012 to provide technical assistance in the revision of the State’s educator preparation program approval standards, and assistance in the development of an effectiveness report. The State did not receive any responses to the first request and used summer 2012 to conduct targeted outreach before re-releasing the LOI in October 2012. As of the time of the Department’s onsite visit, the State was in the process of finalizing a contract with the vendor, Bellwether Education Partners. The scope of this work includes three phases: Phase I will

involve research to support a framework for RIDE's goals in this work and a detailed work plan; Phase II will involve identification of data sources and quality, stakeholder engagement, development of the actual effectiveness report, and a draft and pilot of the revised program approval standards; Phase III will involve composing and working through a pilot effectiveness report throughout SY 2013-2014 in advance of a formal launch of the educator preparation program report card in September 2014.

- Throughout summer and fall 2012 RIDE completed the following data infrastructure work that will allow for the creation of an educator preparation program report card:
  - In EPSS, the State finalized a database for educator's component-level and summative effectiveness ratings. The State will use effectiveness data from SY 2012-2013's implementation year to inform the "phase 1" report, which will be available for discussion between RIDE and the State's educator preparation programs in fall 2013. (See *(C)(2) Data Systems* for additional detail on EPSS.)
  - In eCert!, the State has the capability of pulling in effectiveness data from EPSS and linking it to teacher-student-course data from the IMS. (See *(C)(2) Data Systems* for additional detail on the State's teacher-student-course data, which must be completed before accessing the IMS.)
  - As of January 2013, the State's educator preparation programs can submit data on their program completers in eCert!. SY 2012-2013 will be the first year that educator preparation programs submit this type of data to the State. (See *(C)(2) Data Systems* for additional detail on eCert! and its capabilities.)
  - Finally, the PDC function within eCert! allows the State to link program completer data with effectiveness data and LEA personnel data information to understand the effectiveness of educators who are hired in-state. (See *(C)(2) Data Systems* for additional detail on the PDC within eCert!.)
- The State reports there are significant data quality concerns for the preliminary report and going forward with future reports. For the preliminary report, to be used internally between RIDE and educator preparation programs in fall 2013, the State will use program completer data that is self-reported from teachers in the induction program and effectiveness ratings from SY 2012-2013. With this data set there are concerns about *n*-size that influence the State's ability to make an effectiveness claim about a particular program. In addition, preparation programs have raised concerns about the validity of effectiveness ratings in these first few years when the system is still new.
- RIDE reports that changes to the State's program approval standards are considered significant to the educator preparation community because some of the metrics for evaluation will be made public (i.e., the effectiveness report) and because the effectiveness report will inform changes to performance standards that determine approval. The State will use the effectiveness report to inform program approval beginning at the end of SY 2014-2015.
- RIDE continues to engage with the Educator Preparation Partnership (EPP) on a quarterly basis. In December 2012, RIDE presented the eCert! system to the EPP and detailed the type of data available now and in the future. RIDE continues to look for purposeful ways to engage the EPP and will accelerate this engagement as program approval standards revisions begin and the preliminary effectiveness report is released in fall 2013.
- Based on the changes in timeline and approach, the State will miss the SY 2012-2013 target for this project since it will not have a publicly accessible data on the achievement and growth of graduates of the State's teacher and principal preparation programs.
- Under the "quality professional development options" component of the work in this sub-criterion, RIDE hopes to identify vendor by August 2013. The vendor will develop the capability within the EPSS for educators to rate professional development, whether offered by the LEA, RIDE or other providers. This will support the second component of the State's work in this area, which focuses on

developing RIDE's ability to monitor high quality professional development. The system would not be available until SY 2013-2014, per the State's Scope of Work.

**Continuous improvement: Methods, tools, processes to assess progress and quality**

- RIDE uses the Internal Oversight team meetings as the primary way to supervise and plan for this work.
- RIDE regularly obtains feedback from involved leaders in higher education preparation programs, leaders of the approved alternative certification provider programs and leaders of LEAs. The Director of Educator Quality makes adjustments to the work depending on this feedback.

**Mid-course corrections or relevant amendments**

- In February 2013 the State submitted an amendment to adjust the timeline, performance measure and approach for the work in this sub-criterion. The Department rejected the State's performance measure amendment request. The Department acknowledged the State's clearer vision for how to proceed with this work now that it has vendor support, as described above, and the delayed timeline in a March 2013 amendment letter. The State's adjusted approach will produce a preliminary effectiveness report in fall 2013, revised preparation program approval standards by December 2013 and the first full effectiveness report by September 2014 using program completer and effectiveness data from SY 2012-2013 and SY 2013-2014.

**Quality of implementation and rationale for Department's performance rating**

The Department's rating of the State's quality of implementation acknowledges the delayed timeline and upcoming missed targets for developing and releasing effectiveness reports, but recognizes the State's articulated trajectory through the end of the grant period. The Department commends the State for establishing the processes and technology infrastructure for the data collection and connections that will produce the effectiveness report; however, many other aspects of this work require significant attention to get it back on track. Now that it has vendor support, the State has the technical capacity to tackle this challenging work. The Department encourages the State to accelerate the pace of the planning needed to engage the educator preparation community so that there is knowledge of the process ahead regarding revised program approval standards and the preliminary report. This may allow the State to establish buy-in for when difficult conversations occur around decision points and when the standards come before the Board for approval. In addition, the Department encourages the State to continue its analysis of the validity and reliability of effectiveness ratings, including obtaining formative feedback from the State's Technical Advisory Committee (see *(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance*), as the integrity of the State's evaluation system will lend credibility to upcoming preparation program effectiveness reports. As this project moves forward, the Department looks forward to learning more about shorter term milestones and the particular challenges involved in this work.

## (D)(5)

Great Teachers and Leaders	Performance and Progress on Goals/Objectives in RTT Plan	
	State	Department
(D)(5): Providing effective support to teachers and principals	Green February 2013	Yellow February 2013

### OVERVIEW

#### **Rhode Island's self-described goals for this sub-criterion**

- Provide effective, data-informed, ongoing and job-embedded professional development
- Provide educators with the tools they need to be effective – and the training to use those tools to greatest effect
- Prioritize supports for school leaders
- Provide high-quality induction for novice teachers

#### **Relevant projects**

- New Teacher Induction – Technical Tasks
- Academy of Transformative Leadership – Technical Tasks

#### **Key accomplishments**

- In SY 2012-2013, the State's induction program matched 27 induction coaches with 412 first year teachers and 41 second year teachers. Both beginning teachers and induction coaches attend instruction- and coaching-specific professional development throughout the school year.
- RIDE selected a vendor to support the work of the Academy of Transformative Leadership (ATL) in May 2012, the New York City Leadership Academy (NYCLA).

#### **Key challenges**

- LEA leadership and principals have indicated to RIDE that there is strong support to sustain the beginning teacher induction program beyond the grant period but it is unclear whether LEAs have the resources to support full-release coaches in future years.
- The State's turnaround principal program is not yet an approved certification route; approval is anticipated in April 2013. Candidates in the turnaround leadership program during SY 2012-2013 are already certified to be building administrators in Rhode Island and therefore do not need the promise of certification at the end of the school year. However, to attract an applicant pool that will help the State meet its goal of eight candidates in SY 2013-2014, having a program with an approved certification route will be important.

### DEPARTMENT'S ANALYSIS OF PERFORMANCE AND PROGRESS

#### **State's progress against scope of work and goals (by project)**

- New Teacher Induction – Technical Tasks
  - Now in its second year of full implementation, the State's new teacher induction program remains on track according to the Scope of Work.
  - Feedback from the SY 2011-2012 end of year survey indicated a high level of satisfaction with the new teacher induction program. Ninety-three percent of beginning teachers and 59% of principals responded; 97% of administrators responded that induction coach's interactions

- support beginning teachers' ability to impact student learning; 93% of beginning teachers attribute some of their effectiveness to the induction coach's support. Beginning teachers and induction coaches both found the following areas of support to most positively impact practice: classroom management, differentiating instruction, developing teaching strategies, analyzing student work and lesson planning. In collaboration with the vendor, RIDE made adjustments to the program for SY 2012-2013 based on the feedback. Rhode Island's approach retains an emphasis on formative assessment and short-cycle feedback.
- SY 2012-2013 brought a higher than expected number of beginning teachers. With 412 new first-year teachers across the State, RIDE responded by bringing on the necessary number of coaches to maintain a 15:1, teacher:coach, ratio and identified a few coaches to act as exemplars. All induction coaches participated in a 2012 summer training. The induction program continues to receive high praise from principals, beginning teachers, and union stakeholders for its focus on formative coaching and job-embedded supports.
  - Throughout SY 2012-2013, RIDE provides opportunities for induction coaches to increase their knowledge and skills to support beginning teachers through bi-weekly forums and quarterly academies. There is evidence that the content of the forums and quarterly academies is intended to respond to trends noted among beginning teachers and increases coach capacity to meet teacher needs. Topics include how to effectively deliver professional development; co-teaching; differentiated instruction; an understanding of the evaluation process; and, knowledge and strategies for supporting teachers with English learner students. Beginning in September 2012, RIDE staff and the induction coaches have been planning and leading the bi-weekly forums as part of the transition from the New Teacher Center to RIDE.
  - Beginning teachers gather for beginning teacher seminars twice a month. Led by RIDE staff and induction coaches, the topics of these seminars track the content of some of the coaches' bi-weekly seminars such as differentiated instruction and co-teaching.
  - RIDE and the vendor use several sources of data to track the quality of implementation and monitor trends. Induction coaches continue to log the time they spend with beginning teachers and the topic of that coaching session into a web-based Collaborative Assessment Log. RIDE collects perception data from coaches at the bi-weekly forums. RIDE will map teachers in the induction program with their effectiveness ratings from SY 2011-2012 and SY 2012-2013 to establish a comparison point. RIDE is also tracking the educator preparation programs from which the new teachers come and tracking trends in effectiveness.
  - With an eye towards sustainability, RIDE has a higher education partner who is considering ways to release professors to act as induction coaches. In addition, the Commissioner, and RIDE's budget and induction program leads meet with LEA leadership to consider ways in which to fund full-release induction coaches within their existing budgets.
- Academy of Transformative Leadership
    - RIDE finalized plans with NYCLA for the ATL in June 2012, consistent with the approved amended timeline.
      - In summer 2012 RIDE and the vendor began the design for the virtual and in-person professional development modules, established a training schedule for school leaders and developed a progress monitoring tool to track deliverables.
      - The Turnaround Leadership Corp program is a central component to the ATL's work. See below for additional detail on this program.
    - An outcome from the tactical and strategic meetings with LEAs that have low-performing schools (see (E)(1) for detail), RIDE and NYCLA have adjusted delivery of the ATL's supports to ensure they are meeting LEA and school needs and are not duplicative of existing services, including those described below in (E)(2). This has resulted in a delayed launch of the professional development modules, both in-person and virtual, which were planned for release in September 2012.

- RIDE recruited four turnaround leaders for the first year of its Turnaround Principal Corp, who began their residency program in August 2012. RIDE recruited 16 applicants for the program; 11 were interviewed; 5 were selected, but one dropped out prior to the start of the school year. The four candidates are already certified in the State as building administrators.
- RIDE worked closely with the vendor to develop a combination of job-embedded coaching, mentorship, professional development and multi-site residency opportunities for the four candidates. Candidates began receiving coaching at their school sites in August 2012 from a vendor-trained coach. Candidates also receive other job-embedded supports provided by technical experts in target areas critical to success in a turnaround environment. RIDE has identified schools that will host candidates for a month in spring 2013 so they have an opportunity to observe the functions of a high-performing school.
- RIDE's Office of Transformation worked with the vendor to put together an Alternative Certification Program Approval Application that was submitted to RIDE's Office of Educator Certification in September 2012. The vendor and Office of Transformation received feedback and submitted a revised application to the Office of Educator Certification in February 2013. RIDE's Office of Educator Certification will conduct an on-site review of the program in March 2013. The visit will include observations of candidate principals and the vendor's training. RIDE anticipates approval by April 2013.
- As of February 2013, RIDE began recruitment for its second year of the Turnaround Principal Corp to be placed at school sites for SY 2013-2014. RIDE hopes to recruit eight candidates to meet its goal of 12 turnaround leaders in two years.
- Going forward, RIDE intends to hold the program at the State level until it can transfer it to a university partner.

#### **Continuous improvement: Methods, tools, processes to assess progress and quality**

- For the new teacher induction program, RIDE meets with induction coaches on a bi-weekly basis to determine additional areas for professional development and gauge quality of implementation. RIDE monitors the Google document regularly to ensure induction coaches are meeting with new teachers for 75-90 minutes per week. RIDE sought feedback from teachers through an end-of-year survey.
- The new teacher induction program was part of the EdStat process where the team analyzes evidence of timeliness and quality of implementation, in addition to addressing challenges and risks. In July 2012, the State reviewed the end of the year survey data on induction program and determined that this project was far enough in implementation that it no longer needed to be monitored in EdStat. .
- The Office of Transformation has identified the metrics that will be used in EdStat to measure quality and progress of the ATL's professional development modules once they are available for school and LEA use.

#### **Mid-course corrections or relevant amendments**

- In January 2013 the State submitted an amendment to shift \$807,000 in Year 2 cost savings to support the Year 4 budget to sustain the new teacher induction program. While there was previously State funding in place for cost-sharing purposes, LEAs would have had to generate funds outside the grant to support the number of coaches anticipated for SY 2013-2014 (12 coaches for 180 teachers). The Department approved this budget shift in March 2013.
- In March 2013 the State submitted an amendment to shift the timeline for delivery of the professional development modules from August 2012 to February 2013. The LEAs for which these modules are targeted requested a modified timeline to allow time for the other initiatives starting in this school year, such as full implementation of educator evaluations, CCSS transition work, and integrating School Achievement and Educator Evaluation Implementation Specialist supports with other NYCLA services (see (E)(2) for detail). Under the proposed timeline, the State would shift launch of the in-person modules to February 2013 and stagger the launch of the virtual modules throughout spring

2013. All modules would be released by May 2013. Initially, access to the modules would be prioritized for Cohort 1, 2 and 3 schools, with next priority to other focus and priority schools, per the State's approved ESEA flexibility request. The Department acknowledged this delay in a March 2013 letter.

### **LEA Feedback**

- LEA leadership that the Department met with had positive feedback regarding the beginning teacher induction program. They appreciated the significant shift away from loose mentoring and "buddy system" programs to structured coaching focused on formative feedback and instructional supports. LEA leaders expressed their concern for the sustainability of the program after Race to the Top but acknowledged they may have to approach their resource distribution differently in future years.
- The Department met with one beginning teacher in the unique position of having been a first year teacher in the past, but in a parochial school. This teacher reflected that the induction program as she has experienced it was different than supports she has had in the past and that the flexibility of the program allowed her to tell her coach what she needed help with in the classroom.
- The Turnaround Leadership Corp was not a central program in any of the LEAs the Department visited this year.

### **Quality of implementation and rationale for Department's performance rating**

The quality of implementation in this sub-criterion has been high as it relates to the new teacher induction program. Results from the SY 2011-2012 end of year survey and the clear LEA-level support for sustaining the program indicate the program's success in Year 3. The State has refined implementation in Year 3 to be more tailored to coaches' and beginning teachers' needs based on the common threads from implementation last year. The cadre of induction coaches spanning two school years and the emergence of leaders within this group indicate the potential for sustainability beyond the grant period.

The Academy of Transformative Leadership has made significant progress in Year 3 after delays in Year 2. With vendor support and increased State-level capacity, RIDE is able to keep the work moving and conduct outreach early on to prepare for SY 2013-2014. The turnaround leadership program appears to be off to a strong start, although with a smaller cohort than desired. The State reports that the vendor's varied methods of support are meeting RIDE's expectations for this type of program. The Department looks forward to learning about the feedback candidates provide after receiving the during-the-year supports. As recruitment begins for the second cohort, RIDE demonstrated thoughtfulness about sustainability by looking for a university partner to assist in implementation during SY 2013-2014, when RIDE still has vendor support. Going forward, the Department is concerned about the program's ability to recruit eight viable candidates for SY 2013-2014. It is unclear whether not yet having an approved alternative certification route will affect recruitment efforts.

The Department acknowledges the delayed launch of the professional development modules, which were slated for completion and release in August 2012. The shifted timeline appears to be responsive to "initiative fatigue" in the State's persistently lowest-achieving schools. The Department encourages the State to work closely with LEAs to ensure these tools provide new value to educators and leaders in schools that are receiving myriad other resources this year and next year. It is unclear whether the content of these modules is significantly different from the Using Data professional development and the summer institute. The Department looks forward to learning more about LEA use of the modules once released.

## (E)(1)

Turning Around Lowest-Achieving Schools	Performance and Progress on Goals/Objectives in RTT Plan	
	State	Department
(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	Green February 2013	Yellow February 2013

### OVERVIEW

#### **Rhode Island's self-described goals for this sub-criterion**

- Clear, articulated method for identification of persistently lowest-achieving schools
- Establish clear roles and responsibilities for LEAs in selection and implementation of approved school reform models
- Develop an effective internal accountability framework that generates and focuses attention on data-based information and allocate resources where they are most needed

#### **Relevant projects**

- Identify persistently lowest achieving schools (PLA)
- Approve, modify or reject school reform plans for PLAs<sup>7</sup>

#### **Key accomplishments**

- In October 2011, RIDE named its second cohort of PLA schools, composed of seven Tier 1 schools and one Tier 2 school. RIDE reviewed, provided feedback and approved these schools' school reform plans in August 2012; five received funding through 1003(g).
- During fall 2012 RIDE developed progress monitoring tools and processes for LEAs with PLA schools and for PLA schools in spring 2013.

#### **Key challenges**

- While the State has taken the time to build relationships with LEAs that contain struggling schools resulting in greater buy-in for future progress monitoring, the State has yet to execute against its progress monitoring plan. This may be more challenging for what the State identifies as Cohort 1 schools because these schools have already been in implementation for one year.

### DEPARTMENT'S ANALYSIS OF PERFORMANCE AND PROGRESS

#### **State's progress against scope of work and goals (by project)**

- Identify persistently lowest achieving (PLA) schools
  - RIDE already identified what it describes as five Cohort 1 schools and eight Cohort 2 schools as of October 2011. Rhode Island's identification of PLA cohorts differs from the Department's identification of PLA cohorts. The Department's School Improvement Grant (SIG) program office considers Rhode Island to have three cohorts (Cohort 1 – one school beginning implementation in SY 2010-2011; Cohort 2 – four schools beginning in SY 2011-2012; Cohort 3 – five schools beginning in SY 2012-2013), while Rhode Island describes its work as involving two cohorts (Cohort 1, which is a combination of the Department's Cohort

<sup>7</sup> School reform plans are the school-level plans required by RIDE for every Tier 1 and 1003(g) funded school. They include a description of each school plan for implementing interventions, structural reorganization, family and community partnerships, and improvement to curriculum, instruction, and assessment. These plans also include school-level performance targets against which districts are held accountable.

1 and 2; and, Cohort 2, which is the Department's Cohort 3). Though described differently, all of these schools are involved in the State's (E)(2) work (intervening in the lowest performing schools).<sup>8</sup>

- With Cohort 3, Rhode Island named three other schools that did not ultimately receive 1003(g) funding, but are receiving the Race to the Top turnaround intervention supports described in (E)(2) in SY 2012-2013.
- Approve, modify or reject school reform plans for PLA schools
  - RIDE has approved all school reform plans for Cohort 2 schools.
  - With LEAs that contain PLA schools, RIDE developed a progress and performance monitoring process to ensure schools are implementing their school reform plans. RIDE developed a school-specific "Monitoring Report and Dashboard" document to share with LEAs and schools. The dashboard includes a narrative profile of the school, outcome measures and leading indicators and progress ratings for the school's implementation tasks.
  - The dashboard will inform a quarterly monitoring meeting that will include a meeting with the Commissioner, RIDE's transformation staff, LEA superintendent and school-level staff. RIDE delayed its first quarterly meeting because of weather to March 2013, which will include two quarters of data.

#### **Continuous improvement: Methods, tools, processes to assess progress and quality**

- RIDE holds bi-weekly tactical meetings with leadership at LEAs that have PLA schools to review progress against the school reform plan and provide technical assistance. The meetings provide LEA leadership with an opportunity to obtain short-cycle feedback from RIDE and builds RIDE-LEA accountability for responding to concerns and implementing reforms.
- RIDE is in the process of transitioning its performance and progress management processes to represent the continuum of intervention activity from the pre-implementation phase through implementation. Rhode Island Cohort 1 and 2 schools have been part of a soon-to-be phased out paper-based system that did not produce the results RIDE sought; incomplete tasks from their pre-implementation plans will fold into the revised system. In an effort to build capacity and trust for better reporting and sharing about implementation, RIDE has structured the school reform plan for Cohort 3 schools differently from Cohorts 1 and 2 to be less prescriptive and focused on qualitative information about what implementation requires, rather than the theory behind the interventions. In this way the quarterly monitoring reports and dashboard will allow State and LEA leaders to track formative indicators of progress and track accountability around next steps. RIDE cites their approved ESEA flexibility waiver as the impetus for purposefully streamlining the monitoring processes to improve reporting to the State.<sup>9</sup>

#### **Mid-course corrections or relevant amendments**

- None at this time.

#### **LEA Feedback**

- The Department visited an LEA with Cohort 3 schools. This LEA explained that the tactical meetings were helpful in creating mutual accountability between the LEA and RIDE for the progress of its high schools, and are effective in creating a sense of urgency and going beyond compliance.

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<sup>8</sup> For purposes of this report the ISU will stay consistent with the Department's identification of cohorts.

<sup>9</sup> Rhode Island's request for ESEA flexibility was approved on May 29, 2012.

**Quality of implementation and rationale for Department's performance rating**

RIDE has made progress in naming PLA cohorts and supporting schools in their planning before and during implementation. It is encouraging that the State has created performance monitoring tools and processes that provide formative feedback, track completion of milestones and articulate next steps. There is evidence that the bi-weekly tactical and strategic meetings over the last year have resulted in a common understanding of roles and responsibilities between the State, LEAs and schools when it comes to turnaround interventions. However, the Department encourages the State not to delay any further the type of rigorous and data-based monitoring processes it described. The quarterly monitoring dashboard and leadership meeting have the potential to meld the technical assistance and accountability for results that RIDE seeks.

## (E)(2)

Turning Around Lowest-Achieving Schools	Performance and Progress on Goals/Objectives in RTT Plan	
	State	Department
(E)(2) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs	Green February 2012	Green Spring 2012

### OVERVIEW

#### **Rhode Island's self-described goals for this sub-criterion**

- Support LEAs in turning around PLA schools
- Enhance the cadre of effective teachers and principals in PLA schools
- Invest in additional human and fiscal resources for PLA schools
- Monitor the reform efforts in PLA schools

#### **Relevant projects**

- School Achievement Specialist – Technical Tasks
- Evaluation Implementation – Technical Tasks
- Turnaround Principal Corp – Technical Tasks
- Summer Leadership Institute – Technical Tasks

#### **Key accomplishments**

- In summer 2012 RIDE provided hiring guidance to LEAs for the School Achievement Specialist (SAS) and Educator Evaluation Implementation Specialist (EEIS) positions to be hired at the LEA level. All schools receiving Race to the Top funds to support these positions completed hiring by September 2012.
- RIDE's Office of Transformation has increased capacity with the addition of two Transformation Specialists. RIDE has not yet filled its Chief Transformation Officer position, which was vacated in summer 2012.

#### **Key challenges**

- The schools receiving the supports described in this sub-criterion are also involved in all of the State's other Race to the Top initiatives. The presence of multiple new ways of doing the work may be a risk in implementation.

### DEPARTMENT'S ANALYSIS OF PERFORMANCE AND PROGRESS

#### **State's progress against scope of work and goals (by project)**

- School Achievement Specialist – Technical Tasks
  - As of September 2012, all schools had hired building-level SAS personnel. RIDE reports that LEAs encountered few problems with the procurement process at the local level and generally had staff in mind for the position.
  - The exact role of the SAS varies by school, and affected schools and LEAs retain ownership of the position, but they generally support implementation of the school reform plan.
  - RIDE gets updates on the progress of SAS personnel in schools through the bi-weekly tactical meetings and through newly developed monitoring reports. The quarterly monitoring tool is completed by LEAs receiving SAS and EEIS (see below) supports. The tool requests evidence of LEA planning, delivery and impact of SAS functions. As of January 2013, LEAs

had submitted one such quarterly report. This reporting tool is separate from the “Monitoring Report and Dashboard” document described in (E)(2) and relates specifically to the evaluation implementation and school achievement specialist positions.

- Evaluation Implementation – Technical Tasks
  - As of September 2012, all schools had hired building-level EEIS personnel. As with SAS hiring, RIDE reports that LEAs encountered few problems with the procurement process at the local level and generally had staff in mind for the position.
  - RIDE will receive updates from affected schools and LEAs through a quarterly monitoring tool developed for schools receiving this support service.
  - The EEIS position differs from an evaluation ISP (see (D)(2)) in that the EEIS attends more to the specific challenges of conducting educator evaluations in a turnaround environment. All schools receiving this particular support are implementing the Innovation model for educator evaluations.
  
- Turnaround Principal Corp – Technical Tasks
  - The Turnaround Principals Corp program is the centerpiece of the Academy of Transformative Leadership. For detail on this project please see sub-criterion (D)(5).
  
- Summer Leadership Institute – Technical Tasks
  - RIDE and the vendor reviewed feedback from the March-May 2012 modified institute, the “spring intensive,” to inform changes for the 2012 summer institute. In particular, RIDE decided to focus the summer 2012 institute on training principals on implementation of their school reform plans.
    - Feedback from the spring intensive indicated that 79% or more of participants found the sessions to be “significantly” useful, efficient, relevant and applicable (“significantly” being the highest rating).
  - The vendor conducted a 2012 summer institute for 30 school-level staff in seven school-based teams from Cohorts 1-3 (see (E)(1)). Two schools did not participate because they had sufficient training and planning resources for SY 2012-2013. One school did not participate because it was still hiring its leadership team during the period of the summer institute.
    - During the 2012 summer institute, teams developed plans for introducing the school reform plan to their building-level staff and educators and managing the change the plan would require.
    - The summer institute is followed by five days of job-embedded supports to the school leadership team that participated in the summer institute.
  - RIDE works closely with the vendor to understand how implementation is going within the schools. For schools receiving these supports, RIDE may learn of challenges at the LEA level and funnel solutions through the vendors’ supports such as mentors, coaches or other staff.
  - The 2013 summer institute has been scheduled and the State has begun planning the curriculum. RIDE will make final adjustments to content and process once participants have an opportunity to provide feedback on the during-the-school-year supports. The 2013 summer institute will be available to new leaders in Cohort 2 and 3 schools implementing school reform plans. Slots will be made available to leaders in other priority and focus schools, per the State’s ESEA flexibility waiver.

**Continuous improvement: Methods, tools, processes to assess progress and quality**

- These projects have been part of the EdStat process since June 2011. The EdStat process has helped address risks and challenges in these projects as they are redesigned and delivered in collaboration with the LEAs.

- RIDE engages in bi-weekly tactical meetings with LEAs that have PLA schools to plan and support implementation (see *(E)(I)* for more detail).

#### **Mid-course corrections or relevant amendments**

- None at this time.

#### **LEA Feedback**

- The Department met with one EEIS who articulated many of the same struggles that evaluation ISPs have in RI model LEAs. This LEA was particularly challenged by balancing the convergence of timelines and stakes with educator evaluations and the CCSS transition. Leadership in this LEA described how the number of new initiatives was overwhelming for educators and causing resistance.
- Principals in one LEA the Department visited have been receiving coaching supports through NYCLA and indicated the supports were useful in helping them manage messaging to building-level staff about the school reform plan.

#### **Quality of implementation and rationale for Department's performance rating**

The Department commends RIDE for setting a new course for these supports for low-performing schools and for maintaining commitments on the amended timeline with trainings that meet school and LEA needs. The timely hiring and integration of the SAS and EEIS positions indicates that moving control of these positions to the LEA level made sense given the State's context. The Department looks forward to hearing more about how schools report these roles are impacting performance and whether the reporting tool is effective.

The 2012 summer institute and subsequent job-embedded supports have been well received by schools and appear to have met school leadership needs, based on survey feedback. RIDE's close relationship with the vendor both builds internal capacity to provide these supports in the future (especially since the State's ESEA flexibility approval), and creates feedback loops for RIDE to understand challenges within turnaround schools and for those schools to have responsive supports. The Department looks forward to learning more about participants' feedback after receiving the job-embedded supports and how RIDE and the vendor will adjust the course for the 2013 summer institute.

## (F)(2)

	Performance and Progress on Goals/Objectives in RTT Plan	
	State	Department
(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charters and other innovative schools	Yellow February 2013	Yellow February 2013

### OVERVIEW

#### **Rhode Island's self-described goals for this sub-criterion**

- Build in-state capacity to expand and support quality charters
- Attract high-performing national charter operators to the State
- Provide online learning opportunities aligned to State standards and State assessments

#### **Relevant projects**

- High Performing Charter Schools – Technical Tasks
- Multiple Pathways Innovations – Technical Tasks

#### **Key accomplishments**

- As of April 2013 RIDE is completing the financial process of making an award to its first \$250,000 charter school development grant to Achievement First which will use the grant to assist in preparations for its opening year in SY 2013-2014.
- Village Green charter school received pre-approval from the Rhode Island Board of Regents in November 2012.
- After a summer 2012 pilot, RIDE launched Virtual Learning Math Modules (VLMM) for statewide availability in early fall 2012.

#### **Key challenges**

- The VLMM project has gotten off to a slow start due to competing priorities at the LEA level in SY 2012-2013. Few teachers have enrolled students in the course and few students have engaged with the modules this year. With the release of NECAP data in February 2013, RIDE hopes to introduce VLMM as a method of remediation in the coming months.
- The recent loss of leadership on RIDE's charter school team has resulted in a redistribution of work within the Office of Transformation. RIDE has brought on new staff in this office and the newly assembled team is working to build relationships with the State's charter community in support of the progress made to date.

### DEPARTMENT'S ANALYSIS OF PERFORMANCE AND PROGRESS

#### **State's progress against scope of work and goals (by project)**

- High Performing Charter Schools – Technical Tasks
  - RIDE conducted monitoring of its first charter school expansion grantee, the Paul Cuffee Charter School, which focused grant activities on expanding into high school grade levels. Based on a three-day monitoring visit in January 2013, RIDE learned that the school was slightly off track in its work as it was described in their application. The State followed up with a desk audit performance review that included a review of the school's recent NECAP scores. RIDE will conduct a formal site visit in late spring 2013 that will include interviews with school leadership.

- RIDE awarded Achievement First its first \$250,000 charter school development grant in February 2013. Achievement First will open two schools with a kindergarten class in fall 2013. The grant will support the school’s infrastructure development and recruitment activities.
  - During summer 2012, RIDE’s charter school office worked closely with interested charter leaders to determine interest in expanding existing charter schools in the State. As a result, the International Charter School applied for a charter school expansion grant in November 2012 to expand their system from a K-5 to K-8 system in fall 2013. RIDE made the award in November 2012 and will conduct their first monitoring visit in late spring 2013.
  - In November 2012 the Board of Regents pre-approved the Village Green charter school to begin operations in fall 2013. Village Green is being established by a known charter school leader in the State who has already opened one high-performing school – Beacon Charter School – and played an instrumental role in developing the Rhode Island Nursing Institute, a high-performing high school where graduates leave with one year of college course credit. Village Green will be the State’s first virtual, blended learning model high school. Village Green is on track to receive the State’s second development grant after it receives final approval as a charter school from the Board of Education.
  - RIDE continues to engage with the Rhode Island League of Charter Schools in creating a charter-friendly environment and to identify areas for State technical assistance.
- Multiple Pathways Innovations – Technical Tasks
    - RIDE conducted a pilot with three of the eight math modules in late spring 2012 with seven LEAs. Educators and students provided feedback to the vendor on the content and flow of the modules, which resulted in changes to the timing of pre- and post-assessments and the tutoring schedule. The vendor also made adjustments to the content of the modules, flexibility of tutoring hours, module assessment procures, educator content review processes and data upload procedures. RIDE acknowledged that they had to work closely with the vendor to ensure a high-quality product was available for SY 2012-2013. Module development was completed in November 2012.
    - The vendor and RIDE conducted training sessions for VLMM in October 2012 and launched all eight modules in December 2012 through the vendor’s learning management system. Additional training is available through the VLMM portal and as webinars.
      - Educators from 31 secondary schools attended the training sessions. Site coordinators at 22 schools have begun to enroll students in VLMM. As of the time of the Department’s visit, no students had begun to engage with the modules.
      - LEAs with completed teacher-course-student data submissions can feed VLMM data into the IMS at any time during the school year. Once students are engaging with the modules, their data will also feed into the Exceed Response to Intervention platform within the IMS.
    - As of February 2013, some teachers had enrolled students in VLMM but had not begun accessing them. RIDE reports that LEAs and schools struggle to find opportunities in the school day or week for students to meaningfully access the modules, especially with the number of other initiatives underway. RIDE also noted that VLMM site coordinators are not always staff who are in a position to make decisions about math instruction, curriculum or schedules. Going forward RIDE intends to promote the availability of the modules in conjunction with the release and analysis of NECAP data, and to hold meetings with LEA curriculum directors and secondary school department math chairs to increase actual implementation.
      - The modules have been designed as an intervention strategy primarily for high school students at-risk of failing or who are in need of mathematics remediation. VLMM is a critical intervention for students in the graduating class of 2014 with a “progress

plan”<sup>10</sup> to meet graduation requirements. The modules may also be used as an enrichment tool for younger high-school students or advanced middle school students.

#### **Continuous improvement: Methods, tools, processes to assess progress and quality**

- The high-performing charter schools project and VLMM project are managed quarterly through the Internal Oversight Committee to ensure deliverables and timelines are being met.
- RIDE’s Office of Transformation monitors the progress and performance of charter school sub-grantees according to the commitments made in the grantee’s application.
- Now in the implementation stage, a team within RIDE in collaboration with the vendor manages the VLMM project. RIDE monitors various usage metrics from the vendor’s learning management system, including enrollment, participation, completion and teacher interactions with tutors.
- The VLMM are managed by a RIDE and LEA advisory team composed of the RIDE project manager and lead, RIDE and LEA mathematics specialists, and an LEA technology educator. The advisory team developed goals and performance measures for each stage of the project which the project manager uses to determine progress toward the goals. The advisory team is consulted when there is a need to adjust procedures or collection measures.
- The VLMM project had been part of the EdStat process in its early development, but is no longer part of the EdStat process.

#### **Mid-course corrections or relevant amendments**

- None at this time.

#### **LEA Feedback**

- The principals and educators that the Department visited were not involved in the projects under this sub-criterion.

#### **Quality of implementation and rationale for Department’s performance rating**

The Department’s rating in this sub-criterion reflects the significant progress made in the State’s charter school work and the challenges in the VLMM project.

The level of engagement and movement related to charter school development has notably increased since spring 2012, largely due to on-the-ground efforts of RIDE’s charter school staff and a willingness to connect with all interested charter leaders. While charter management organizations continue to be viewed with skepticism, the State has demonstrated increased openness to charter schools as evidenced by pre-approval for the Village Green and near doubling of viable charter schools in the pipeline from previous years. Rhode Island’s charter school network leans toward small, grassroots development so it will be interesting to see the progress Achievement First will make in SY 2013-2014. The State is on track to award all four of its charter school expansion and development grants for implementation in SY 2013-2014.

RIDE and the vendor have approached the content development and post-pilot modifications to VLMM with high quality, but RIDE has struggled to ensure LEA conditions for success in implementing this project in SY 2012-2013. The modules remain a key lever in supporting students at risk of not meeting graduation requirements in mathematics, making it particularly disappointing that it is not reaching students to date. The Department encourages the State to engage the LEA-level stakeholders that can enable meaningful use of VLMM to help students meet new rigorous graduation requirements. While the

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<sup>10</sup> Per new State graduation requirements, all students with a score of one on the NECAP mathematics assessment must complete the VLMM as part of their “progress plan.”

use of site-based teams may be effective once implementation begins, it is equally important to engage building- and LEA-level leadership to ensure there is space and time in the mathematics curriculum and instructional delivery for students to complete the modules. The success of the VLMM project may have been challenged, also, by the timeline. The sequence of October 2012 training and a December 2012 release did not provide educators with time to make use of the modules in SY 2012-2013. It is unclear whether many students at all will start or complete the modules this year. The Department looks forward to hearing more about the metrics produced by the learning management system and whether VLMM is having the intended impact.

**(P)(2)**

Competitive Preference Priority	Performance and Progress on Goals/Objectives in RTT Plan	
	State	Department
Emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics (STEM)	Green February 2012	Green Spring 2013

**OVERVIEW**

**Rhode Island’s self-described goals for this sub-criterion**

- Ensure that educators have a strong foundation of training and resources to effectively deliver rigorous STEM education
- Develop mathematics and science units of study
- Ensure the alignment of professional development in professional development programs offered by RI Higher Education institutions
- Support teachers in using technology and data
- Build capacity through educator training and high quality resources

**Relevant Projects**

- Intensive Curriculum Alignment – Technical Tasks
- Project- Based Learning – (Providence Only) Technical Tasks

**Key Accomplishments**

- RIDE was able to overcome earlier contract delays that affected initial implementation of project-based learning by holding joint planning meetings with the vendor, leaders from Providence central office, and school level staff.

**Key Challenges**

- Currently, the PBL program is in a pilot phase in two high schools in Providence. With only one and a half years left in the grant period, RIDE must gain buy in from teachers and administrators in other schools and districts in order to fully scale up the program throughout the LEA and provide lessons to possible use in other parts of the State.

**DEPARTMENT’S ANALYSIS OF PERFORMANCE AND PROGRESS**

**State’s progress against scope of work and goals (by project)**

- Intensive Curriculum Alignment
  - As described in sub-criterion (B)(3) four cohorts of LEAs worked on completing model curricula in mathematics while three LEAs worked on science. By June 2012, RIDE had uploaded to the IMS the mathematics and science model curriculum documents. Moving forward, cohorts of science teachers will create curriculum aligned to NGSS.
- Project- Based Learning – (Providence Only) Technical Tasks
  - RIDE and its vendor hosted two-day summer institute professional development sessions in August 2012. The sessions were attended by over 40 educators from Providence. The Institute provided participants with an understanding of what PBL is and what it is designed to do. Additional training sessions were held in September and November for teachers who intend to use PBL practices in their classrooms.

- Based on interest and capacity, 13 teachers signed on as “early adopters” of the PBL program in Providence Technical and Career Academy and Central High School. Each early adopter has agreed to work towards a specific set of expectations that will advance the adoption of PBL throughout the high school and the LEA. In December 2012, the early adopters attended a conference at Minuteman High School in Lexington, MA to observe a nationally recognized PBL program in action.
- As a baseline measure, RIDE administered a survey to get a sense of teachers’ and students’ attitudes about aspects of the school environment such as teachers’ effectiveness and students’ connectedness to their school community.

**Continuous improvement: Methods, tools, processes to assess progress and quality**

- On a quarterly basis, the Race to the Top Internal Oversight Team reviews Scope of Work tasks for these projects and ensures that all quarterly deliverables have been met.
- RIDE works strategically with Providence to obtain direct feedback from the district leads and the involved school staff. They use data gathered from the training and surveys to determine the progress being made against the agreed upon plan and commitments. Participation in the professional development, completion and implementation of the units are used to monitor progress towards goals.
- RIDE works closely with the vendor to ensure that all deliverables as specified in the contract are being met, that the caliber and quality of the professional development provided meets high standards and the feedback gathered from trainings and surveys is used to make adjustments and improve implementation.

**Mid-course corrections or relevant amendments**

- None at this time.

**LEA Feedback**

- The only LEA participating in PBL, Providence, was not part of the Department’s Year 3 onsite visit.

**Quality of implementation and rationale for Department’s performance rating**

The partnership between Providence and RIDE on this initiative has been instrumental in ensuring that the implementation of PBL got back on track after initial contract delays. It is clear that the RIDE team, the vendor and leadership in Providence have created a clear sense of shared goals and expectations for moving forward.

After its initial implementation with the early adopter teachers, RIDE reported that there is still work to be done in integrating the PBL pedagogy. The Department looks forward to hearing more about how RIDE and the vendor will support Providence teachers in implementing PBL with fidelity and expand the program in SY 2013-14.

**RACE TO THE TOP  
FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT REVIEW**

**Rhode Island**

**Date of Review: April 1-5, 2013**

**U.S. Department of Education Team**

- Monika Bandyopadhyay, ISU
- Renee Faulkner, ISU
- Darcy Pietryka (Westat)

**Rhode Island Department of Education**

- David Abbott, Deputy Commissioner
- Mary-Beth Fafard, Race to the Top Coordinator
- Mark Dunham, Director of Finance
- David Alves, Grants and Finance Officer
- Crystal Martin, Senior Finance Officer

**Participating Local Education Agencies (LEAs)**

1. Warwick Public Schools
2. Pawtucket Public Schools
3. North Kingstown Public Schools

Race to the Top award: \$75,000,000

**Acronyms:**

ARRA – American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009

EDGAR – *Education Department* General Administrative Regulations (codified in 34 Code of Federal Regulations, Parts 74 to 86 and 87 to 99)

GEPA – General Education Provisions Act

ISU – Implementation and Support Unit

LEA – Local Educational Agency

RIDE – Rhode Island Department of Education

### Summary of Monitoring Indicators

Rhode Island				
Critical Element	Requirement	Citation	Results	Page
<b>Allocations to LEAs</b>	The State allocated funds to participating LEAs based on their relative share of funding under Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.	ARRA Section 14003(a)	Met Requirement	
<b>Fiscal Oversight of Race to the Top Funds</b>	The State and sub-recipients used the funds only for allowable activities.	ARRA Sections 14002(b), 14003, 14004, 1604, 1605, and 1606	Met Requirement	
	The State and sub-recipients complied with the principles of cash management (i.e. funds advanced were actually expended).	EDGAR § 80.21	Met Requirement	
	The State and sub-recipients have systems to track and account for Race to the Top funds in place.	EDGAR § 80.20	Met Requirement	
	The State and sub-recipients complied with cross-cutting ARRA requirements (e.g., Section 1512 reporting, Buy American, infrastructure certification).	ARRA Sections 1511, 1512, 1604, 1605, 1606, and 1607	Met Requirement	
	The State and sub-recipients used the funds only during the period of availability (which may include pre-award costs).	ARRA Section 1603 and GEPA 421(b)	Met Requirement	
<b>1511 Certifications (if applicable)</b>	The State certifies that infrastructure investments have received the full review and vetting required by law and accepts responsibility that it is an appropriate use of taxpayer dollars.	ARRA Sections 1511	Met Requirement	
<b>Quarterly ARRA Reporting</b>	The State is ensuring compliance with ARRA Section 1512 quarterly reporting regulations.	ARRA Sections 1512	Met Requirement	
	The State established clear policies and procedures for compliance with applicable reporting requirements.	ARRA Sections 14008 and 1512	Met Requirement	
	The State provided guidance on reporting to LEAs.	ARRA Sections 14008 and 1512	Met Requirement	
	The State provided feedback to LEAs on the data reported.	ARRA Sections 14008 and 1512	Met Requirement	

<b>Rhode Island</b>				
<b>Critical Element</b>	<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Citation</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>Sub-recipient Monitoring</b>	The State has developed a monitoring plan with appropriate policies and procedures to assure compliance with applicable Federal requirements and that the grant performance goals are being achieved throughout the project period.	EDGAR §80.40; Race to the Top grant condition “O”	Met Requirement	
	The State has developed comprehensive monitoring protocols that include programmatic and fiscal monitoring.	EDGAR §80.40; Race to the Top grant condition “O”	Issues Pending	61
	The State has established a reasonable monitoring schedule.	EDGAR §80.40; Race to the Top grant condition “O”	Issues Pending	61
	The State has provided monitoring reports and corrective action follow-up (when available).	EDGAR §80.40; Race to the Top grant condition “O”	Met Requirement	

## Monitoring Report Results

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### **Issues Pending Resolution**

*Critical Element: Sub-recipient monitoring*

**Requirement and Citation:** The State has developed comprehensive monitoring protocols that include programmatic and fiscal monitoring. EDGAR §80.40; Race to the Top grant condition “O.”

**Issue:** The State submitted its Race to the Top sub-recipient monitoring plan in July 2011. In that plan the State indicated it planned to conduct an annual self-assessment survey regarding Race to the Top implementation and supports received. Sub-recipients would have 60 business days to complete it. Within 90 days of receiving the self-assessment, RIDE auditors planned to use this survey information to inform a risk assessment and determine which sub-recipients should be monitored. Within 60 days of an on-site or desk review, the State would submit a draft report to the sub-recipient. Sub-recipients would then have 15 business days to review the draft and provide edits. At the time of the Year 2 on-site review, RIDE described how most LEAs had not yet requested reimbursement of Race to the Top funds and that they were working closely with LEAs during summer 2012 to amend LEA Race to the Top budgets. Under the circumstances, the State did not conduct the self-assessment survey in Year 2 or the subsequent fiscal monitoring activities. The State has not yet initiated the fiscal monitoring process with sub-recipients. The Department acknowledges that the State has developed and implemented a sub-recipient monitoring process for Race to the Top programmatic monitoring.

**Required Action:** Within 90 days of the issuance of the final draft of this report, the State will submit the materials for fiscal monitoring of sub-recipients to include the self-assessment survey and the monitoring protocols for use during the on-site or desk review. Additionally, the State will submit a plan for reporting findings to LEAs after the State conducts the on-site or desk review.

*Critical Element: Sub-recipient monitoring*

**Requirement and Citation:** The State has established a reasonable monitoring schedule. EDGAR §80.40; Race to the Top grant condition “O.”

**Issue:** The State has not conducted the fiscal monitoring aspect of the State’s sub-recipient monitoring plan. In the State’s sub-recipient monitoring plan the State described the process above for selecting sub-recipients for fiscal monitoring and conducting on-site or desk reviews. At the time of the Year 3 on-site review the State indicated that it planned to conduct fiscal monitoring but that it had not yet done so.

**Required Action:** Within 90 days of issuance of the final draft of this report, the State will provide a monitoring schedule of when it will distribute the self-assessment survey, conduct the risk assessment, complete monitoring of high-risk sub-recipients and provide monitoring reports and corrective action follow-up.