

Transforming Education in Rhode Island



The Race to the Top Opportunity

Race to the Top Implementation Update

Year Two, Quarter Three: March 1, 2012 – May 31, 2012

Key Accomplishments in Implementing our Plan

Administration and Progress Monitoring

- U.S. Department of Education Race to the Top On-Site Review: In April, representatives from the U.S. Department of Education (ED) Race to the Top team visited Rhode Island to conduct an on-site review of our Race to the Top progress to date. The team from ED interviewed Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) staff members who work on all Race to the Top projects, and they also visited three local education agencies (LEAs): Providence, Lincoln, and Jamestown. The purpose of the visit was to engage in a dialogue around Rhode Island's implementation successes and challenges. The on-site review supplements the written reporting that Rhode Island submits to ED each month, allows ED to ask questions to better understand our work, and gives all of us a chance to reflect on what we're learning as we implement Race to the Top. This process culminated with RIDE Race to the Top leadership traveling to Washington, DC, at the end of May to participate in a "stocktaking" meeting with Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. ED will provide the state with a report on Rhode Island's Race to the Top progress.
- SEA and LEA Performance Management: RIDE met for the third time with groups of LEAs to review their progress toward Race to the Top implementation. Over 20 LEAs shared effective practices for implementation with their peer groups, and the effective strategies were compiled and shared with all LEAs. Feedback from those sessions was positive and many participants expressed that the practices shared by other LEAs would help them in their own implementation.

Year-Two Projects

- Standards and Assessments: By the end of this quarter, over 4,300 educators have attended Study of the Standards training sessions to familiarize themselves with the Common Core State Standards. In parallel, RIDE continues to provide support to LEAs in the adoption of the Common Core State Standards and with the development of our new

state assessments, the PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers). In March, RIDE hosted David Coleman, one of the lead authors of the Common Core State Standards. More than 300 teachers, school leaders, and other friends of education came out to discuss the new standards and how we can prepare for transition to the Common Core and to the PARCC assessments. In April, the PARCC State Technology Readiness Team met and piloted the technology readiness tool, which will provide LEAs with a better understanding of the technical implications of administering the PARCC assessment.

- Curriculum Development: Throughout the second year of Race to the Top, 11 LEAs are engaged in intensive curriculum work (9 in mathematics and 2 in English language arts).

- Data Systems: Throughout this quarter, RIDE has worked to finalize the building and development phases for the major data systems being built under Race to the Top. RIDE communicated through the Commissioner's weekly field memos, webinars, and in-person meetings with the field about the upcoming training opportunities for these systems.
 - The *Instructional Management System (IMS)* development is underway. RIDE has scheduled training for all three IMS components, and the first two cohorts LEAs attended Primary IMS training to better understand the IMS capabilities. RIDE has hosted eight follow-up webinars for the participants.
 - RIDE informed the field about the capabilities of the *Educator Performance and Support System (EPSS)* through regional meetings, focus groups, and webinars. RIDE has scheduled summer training opportunities for evaluators who will use the system.
 - The *RI Certification System* business requirements have been finalized.
 - Content for the *Formative Assessment Professional Development Modules* has been finalized, and filming is complete in three of six pilot schools. The modules will be accessible online through the IMS.
 - The *Interim Assessment* test specifications are complete for the fixed-form assessments in both ELA and Math and including key content standards to assess in grades 3-11, number of items, types of items, and points allocated to each of the standards. RIDE has also begun drafting the business requirements surrounding the test construction tool.
 - In order to inform the training content for *Data-Use Professional Development* series, LEAs completed a needs-assessment survey about data use at the district level, and schools completed two needs-assessment surveys about data use at the school level, as well as collaborative engagement. Additionally, RIDE conducted focus groups to validate the survey findings and to better inform LEA data professional development needs for the upcoming school year.

- Educator Evaluation: RIDE released information about refinements to the Rhode Island Model for Educator Evaluation, which were based on feedback from educators in our early adopter districts, state-wide survey feedback, and recommendations from RIDE's advisory committee composed of educators and subject matter experts. In April, we hosted four regional forums to discuss the model refinements. Summer training sessions have been scheduled for both building administrator and educator evaluators. The three-day intensive sessions will focus on enhancing evaluator skills in conducting observations, setting student learning objectives, increasing calibration and comfort with evaluations, and delivering developmental feedback to educators.

- **Beginning Teacher Induction:** Induction coaches continue to meet with and observe the beginning teachers in their caseloads on a regular basis, providing each beginning teacher with, on average, 90 minutes of coaching per week. Induction Coaches attended a third training academy, focused on increasing their understanding of data-driven and instructionally-focused coaching. In addition, RIDE staff members have been shadowing induction coaches in the field as part of the monitoring process and host bi-weekly forums to support Induction Coaches and beginning teachers. RIDE also administered a mid-year survey to beginning teachers and building administrators. The survey indicated that over 90% of respondents agreed that the Induction Coach increased beginning teacher effectiveness and improved the ability of beginning teachers to meet the needs of students in their classrooms.

- **Transformation:** In March, ED approved Rhode Island’s amendment request to adjust the timelines, budget, and activities necessary to implement the Academy of Transformative Leadership. The Academy initiatives (Turnaround Leaders Program, Summer Intensive Institute, and professional development modules to improve the quality of school leadership) are moving forward at an accelerated pace in accordance with the revised plans, and in March RIDE released a Request for Proposals for the Academy work. In April, leadership teams from Providence, Pawtucket, and Central Falls attended the first of two intensive institutes focused on leadership development in a turnaround environment.

- **Virtual Learning Math Modules:** RIDE finalized the Virtual Learning Math Modules content and has completed the high-level design of the modules. RIDE implemented a pilot in May and will scale up implementation to additional sites in summer 2012.

☐ Communications and Engagement

- In January, Rhode Island sent a team of thirteen state representatives, LEA representatives, and other stakeholders to Washington, DC, for a convening of Race to the Top-winning states. The Rhode Island team had the opportunity to discuss implementation and how to work together in more collaborative ways going forward. This experience has resulted in a renewed commitment to working together to achieve the state’s goals for students and educators. The team met in March and will meet again in June to discuss ways to support to educator evaluation, as well as to develop a communications campaign for the fall, which will emphasize the shared responsibility all Rhode Islanders have for transforming education in our state. The Race to the Top Steering Committee held its quarterly meeting May 7, 2012, where the committee members received a presentation on the virtual learning efforts underway in Rhode Island, including the virtual learning math modules, and engaged in a discussion with Rhode Island educators who are implementing and planning virtual initiatives.