

Transforming Education in Rhode Island



The Race to the Top Opportunity

Race to the Top Steering Committee Quarterly Meeting: Celebrating Year Three

Monday, August 19, 2013, 4:30-6:30 p.m.
The Rhode Island Foundation

NOTES

- I. Opening Remarks and Reflections 4:30 – 5:00
 - Neil Steinberg, RTT Steering Committee Co-Chair
Neil welcomed and thanked everyone for their ongoing support of RTT.
 - Board of Education Chair, Eva-Marie Mancuso
The Chair was introduced to the Steering Committee. She affirmed that Governor Chaffee and the Board are committed to making a difference for students, and is excited about the cross between the public and private sector.
 - Commissioner Gist
The Commissioner thanked Neil and Colleen for their support, activism, and leadership. Rhode Island is one of the only states to get both RTT grants, and we have continued to work as a team. In the US Department of Education's review of all RTT states, Rhode Island was one of only three states recognized for the way we were leading the grant. She acknowledged the work that has been accomplished, and that there is still work to do, in addition to a focus on making the systems we have built sustainable for the future.
 - Colleen Jermain, RTT Steering Committee Co-Chair
Colleen thanked everyone in the room, and noted that none of this would be possible without them; a brief overview of the agenda was provided.

- II. Present Year Three Progress Report 5:00 – 5:30
 - a. Highlights from the Report/Questions and Comments ([see report](#)).
The Commissioner pointed out to that the table of contents highlights the primary categories of work and more information is available on the RIDE website. She provided additional insights on the accomplishments achieved:
 - Educator Excellence: Educator Evaluation is not about the summative rating that occurs at the end of the process. Those in the room who are implementing the evaluation process know that. We have created the tools and data systems that support the evaluation process and together with our districts we have moved

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into full implementation of this work; continuing to learn and refine as we move ahead in Year 4.

- **Common Core State Standards:** Nearly 6,000 educators have been trained on the Common Core State Standards and our districts continue to engage educators in instructional practices that meet the standards of the Common Core.
 - **Interim Assessments:** Many districts have used the interim assessment tools at different grade levels and continue to provide feedback on its value.
 - **Formative Assessments:** It was noted that the word assessment does not always refer to a test; in this instance the Formative Assessments are professional development modules which illustrate the practices educators can use in their classrooms. Formative Assessment practices are a way to make sure we know how our students are doing, and there are a variety of ways to do that.
 - **Data Use Professional Development:** This initiative which provides 10 days of professional development is tremendously popular - taking place all over the state and is well received. Steering Committee members were able to benefit from the panel presentation in May 2013 on the impact of this initiative in Exeter-West Greenwich schools.
 - **Transformation/Intervention Schools:** The work is challenging for us; it is important to analyze what we have learned and how we can refine our strategies with our districts. Many states have had similar challenges.
 - **Virtual Learning:** RI has invested in virtual learning supports for students in mathematics and we are eager to see the results of these supports for our students.
 - **High performing charters:** RI has invested in two existing high performing charter schools, and supported the launch of two new charter schools.
 - **Performance Management:** We have been recognized for our work in this area both at the state level and with our process for districts. Our process called Collaborative Learning for Outcomes has enabled us to engage with our districts on gaining a deeper understanding of what is effective and how we can improve our implementation. We are looking to continue this process after the grant ends.
 - **Budget:** There was an opportunity for a one-year no-cost extension if states felt as though they needed more time to spend down funds; we determined that we have a solid plan in place to conclude in year four, and would not be pursuing the extension. We have spent over \$40 million, with a little over \$30 million left, which is planned, encumbered, and scheduled to be used.
- b. **Discuss Sustainability as theme for upcoming year**
The conversation has shifted from sustaining the work to looking towards the future.

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- Teacher induction has been invaluable, and aids in getting careers off to the right start. Every teacher has had a wonderful experience. There is a committee coming together on induction sustainability.
- One committee member noted that there is a natural let down when the cash is gone. What are some of the things we need to be cautious of when the funding goes away?
- Commissioner indicated that our focus is sustaining what we have started, and there are adjustments that will have to be made. We need to make sure the momentum we have with this work is carried on, and used as a launching pad for what is next. This will be used to frame the next strategic plan (2015-2020).
- The Co-Chair pointed out that there needs to be a focus on leadership's role in handling and managing change. There is no way to sustain this unless you change mindset of the leadership to 'this is how we are going to move forward'.
- The Board Chair spoke about the vision of the future, in regards to merging Pre-K, Elementary and Secondary, and Higher Education. We can no longer sustain the silos and we can't complete. The collaboration that is happening now is the way that the future needs to go. Leadership and the way we package things will get the business and community leaders excited to talk about education. It is so important to economic development. We have a Governor and Legislature that supports us, and a fully engaged Commissioner. We have the framework to move forward, and this is a forecast to how we are moving forward. The message is that this is the foundation of the transformation – we are at the beginning not at the end.
- Several members noted that hopefully some real culture shift have occurred in our structures and practices, such as Beginning Teacher Induction, and these are becoming what we should be doing. The level of support that is needed to sustain that program differs, and in terms of broader sustainability- it is the theme of the year.
- One member noted that we need to be explicit about our investment strategies and not in the framework of expenditures. We are not walking away from the need to invest in these types of resources. Another member noted that a new story that needs to be written, and messaged as the future instead of sustainability.
- Several members pointed out that school committees are extremely important in these conversations. The decisions they have make requires a deeper

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understanding to the work, and they are invaluable to maintaining and sustaining it.

- We are planning to re-establish our 'Moving Forward' regional meetings where every district will bring school committee members, union presidents, and key leadership together and sustainability and thinking about the future strategic plan will be the primary focus.

c. Year Four Schedule and Topics

A review of the scheduled meeting dates and topics took place (see [Year 4 schedule](#) posted on RIDE website). Members were asked to share ideas as we enter year four.

III. Celebration: Cut cake and take photos

5:30 – 6:30