

Transforming Education in Rhode Island



The Race to the Top Opportunity

Cranston Race to the Top Implementation Update: Years 1 and 2

The Annual Stocktaking provides both the state and the Local Education Agency (LEA) with an opportunity to review LEA accomplishments and challenges over the course of the Race to the Top (RTT) grant implementation period (i.e., from September 2010 to date). In this summary, RIDE has included relevant LEA-reported data as well as other evidence sources (e.g. training participation) for the purposes of reviewing programmatic successes. This report also identifies areas (if any) in which LEAs are struggling with their ability to meet the Race to the Top commitments and may need assistance and support to meet their goals. We have also included suggestions, based on the LEA's accomplishments and upcoming implementation activities, where we believe other districts would benefit from hearing their implementation strategies.

Stocktaking Overview

The table below shows the self-reported status against the year 2 Race to the Top projects for Cranston. During year 2, Cranston has fully participated in the following projects: Study of the Standards, Model Curriculum and Intensive Curriculum Alignment, Educator Evaluation, Recruitment Platform, and New Teacher Induction.

In addition, Cranston has begun planning for the implementation of the following Year 3 projects: Formative Assessment Professional Development, 'Data Use' Professional Development, and the Instructional Management System (IMS).

LEA	STUDY OF THE STANDARDS				MODEL CURRICULUM				EDUCATOR EVALUATION				RECRUITMENT (SchoolSpring)				INDUCTION			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Cranston																				

GREEN	Implementation is on track and there is evidence that the work is taking hold at the district/school level
YELLOW	Implementation is delayed and more preparation or alternative strategies are needed for the work to take hold at the district/school level
RED	Implementation is at risk or off track; there are significant barriers to implementation that your district is facing in the short-term (3-6 mos)
NA	The district is not implementing this project, or the project implementation has not yet started.

Summary of Performance Management Participation

As you know, participation in the Collaborative Learning for Outcomes (CLO) process and the submission of the corresponding quarterly progress report is our method for monitoring LEA progress against implementing RTT. More importantly, though, we believe that the quality of RTT implementation is best supported through peer-to-peer sharing, and that the CLO meetings provide LEAs with an opportunity to learn from one another and to gain insights on how to address specific challenges of capacity and practice.

During the 2011-2012 year, Cranston met the bar for participation in all four quarterly CLO meetings. All quarterly progress reports were submitted on-time and Cranston sent consistent participants to the quarterly meetings, which helped build rapport within the CLO group. Additionally, the participants reflected appropriate levels of LEA leadership, were knowledgeable about Cranston's RTT implementation activities and contributed fully in the peer-to-peer discussion.

In addition to Cranston's participation in the CLO process, and in individual RTT projects, we also want to note that Cranston East High School was one of the schools who piloted the Virtual Learning Math Modules during spring 2012. In the upcoming fall, RIDE will provide additional training opportunities and support for districts should they decide to implement these modules.

In the upcoming year, we are looking forward to having more meaningful conversations around the implementation accomplishments and challenges faced by each district. With that in mind, we would encourage you to continue sharing the tools and strategies you are using in your district and have made suggestions in this report around areas that we would appreciate hearing about in greater detail.

System of Support 1: Standards and Curriculum

As of July 2012, Cranston is on-track against the System of Support 1 year 1 and year 2 commitments and tasks for Race to the Top, reflected in the tables below. Based on the quarterly progress reports submitted by Cranston, we have assessed the district as 'on track', 'delayed' or 'off track/at risk' on each task utilizing the criteria described on page 1 of this report.

Study of the Standards	Year 1: SY10-11	Year 2: SY11-12	
Identify educators to participate in the Study of the Standards	X*	X	X
Specify names and invite participants	X	X	X
Coordinate schedule with RIDE for all participants	X	X	X
Complete planned educator training	X	X	X

*Please note: the 'X' in the above table represents the anticipated completion timeline set by RIDE, not when the district completed the task.

Intensive Curriculum Alignment and Model Curriculum Development	Year 1: SY10-11	Year 2: SY11-12	
Develop and communicate a multi-year Transition Plan for the Common Core State Standards implementation, including clear expectations for school level transition benchmarks and a plan for developing a curriculum aligned to the CCSS in grades K-12	X	X	X
Identify opportunities for educators to work collaboratively to deepen understanding of CCSS (e.g. Common Planning Time, grade level team, department meetings, faculty meetings)		X	X
Conduct analyses of each core curricula to ensure that each is aligned to standards, guaranteed and viable	X		
Identify which, if any, curriculum development is needed as well as the method by which curriculum will be developed (i.e. Model Curriculum with the Charles A. Dana Center, through an LEA cohort, or individually)	X	X	
Create implementation plan, including the identification of aligned resources, to support roll out of new curricula		X	X
Develop curriculum aligned to the Common Core State Standards, including participation in Dana Center curriculum writing and leadership sessions (if applicable)		X	X

As noted in Cranston's quarterly progress reports, the district sent over 500 educators to the Study of the Standards training sessions which met their RTT goals (i.e. 85% of core educators in the district). Additionally, the district distributed copies of the Common Core State Standards guidebooks to all schools at the start of the school year.

To encourage teacher engagement in the transition to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), Cranston trained the majority of their educators in the new CCSS in ELA and Math. The district chose to supplement their RIDE training sessions with additional sessions funded and organized by the district by hiring a RIDE-trained consultant. The district also started looking for new math materials which are aligned to the common core. Additionally, the district has attended supplemental professional development geared towards increasing readiness to transition through focusing on text complexity, developing text-dependent questions, and deepening understanding of the mathematics standards.

Cranston has made significant progress against implementing a guaranteed and viable curriculum in mathematics and science aligned to the new Common Core State Standards and science standards. During the 2011-2012 school year, Cranston worked with the Dana Center to finalize a K-12 science and math model curriculum. Leadership teams involving teacher leaders as well as all administrators met monthly in order to review the curriculum writing work and to discuss strategies for implementing and monitoring the curriculum. Cranston also created a district plan for developing an aligned ELA curriculum, as well as embedding the new CCSS into other content areas (e.g. social studies), during the upcoming 2012-2013 school year.

In their quarterly progress reports, Cranston noted that they have encountered the following challenges around this work:

- Parents have raised concerns about instructional loss and safety concerns related to teacher absence from classrooms
- Due to conflicting training and lack of substitute teacher availability, Study of the Standards sessions had to be rescheduled
- There are many competing and ongoing initiatives and Study of the Standards was not driving their reform
- Embedding the CCSS in content areas that are not writing curriculum with the Dana Center (e.g. social studies, ELL, etc.)
- Several initiatives competing for limited funding
- There is a need for widespread professional development in content and pedagogy
- Communicating the CCSS implementation to other content area teachers, support staff, and parents

We want to commend Cranston on their collaboration (both in-district and cross-district) around resources and strategies that will deepen educator understanding of the new Common Core State Standards and accelerate the implementation of the new standards at the classroom level.

We hope that you will take the opportunity to share the curriculum materials you are developing with your fellow CLO colleagues during upcoming meetings, or with all districts through the Instructional Improvement System (IMS). We look forward to hearing about your progress working collaboratively with the other districts, and on new in-district initiatives, as well as the successes and challenges you encountered along the way, as you (and all districts) begin planning for next steps following the Common Core State Standards alignment.

System of Support 2: Instructional Improvement Systems

As of July 2012, Cranston is on-track against the System of Supports 2 year 1 and 2 commitments and tasks for Race to the Top. In addition to these commitments and tasks, RIDE greatly appreciates the willingness of teachers and administrators at Hope Highlands Elementary School to pilot formative assessment practices in RIDE's development of the formative assessment professional development modules.

Thus far, Cranston has reported that they intend to partially implement the Formative Assessment online professional development modules and has registered facilitators to attend RIDE facilitator orientation sessions. Additionally, the district has confirmed that they plan to engage school data leadership teams in 'Data Use' professional development starting in August 2012 and running through the remaining school year, and has confirmed logistics with RIDE for the initial sessions. Finally, Cranston has attended Instructional Management System (IMS) Administrator training and Rtl (Exceed) platforms.

In the upcoming weeks, RIDE will be providing refresher trainings on all components of the IMS. We encourage all districts that plan to implement the IMS during the upcoming school year to consider sending applicable staff members to those sessions. RIDE would like to remind the district that several crucial steps must be taken before the district can implement any of the RTT data systems (including the IMS). Additionally, some functionality in the Instructional Management System is dependent upon the timely submission of Teacher-Course-Student data. For questions or concerns, contact the RIDE contact for the applicable system or helpdesk@RIDE.ri.gov

We look forward to hearing about the successes and challenges that Cranston has encountered while implementing these systems during the CLO meetings next year, as well as the district's progress around building teacher engagement in the various IMS tools and resources. Additionally, for those participating in the 'Data Use' professional development, we would be interested in hearing some of the strategies that Cranston has learned around deepening collaboration around data and using data to change instructional outcomes.

Formative Assessment Online Professional Development Modules	Year 1: SY10-11	Year 2: SY11-12	
Create multiyear plan for implementation of formative assessment PD modules, including the process and timelines by which all educators will participate in the formative assessment training modules			X
Identify facilitators who will support the implementation of formative assessment practices in daily instruction			X

Instructional Management System (IMS)	Year 1: SY10-11	Year 2: SY11-12	
Designate an LEA data steward to support decision making around data collections and systems implementation and to provide input and feedback on data initiatives through designated representatives	Identify LEA Data Steward	X	X
Maintain data quality standards of local student information systems and upload local assessment data and program information as required by RIDE in a timely manner	X	X	X
Review the RIDE <i>IMS Training Plan</i> and develop a multiyear training and implementation plan to provide all educators with access and training on the system			X
Based on <i>IMS Training Plan</i> guidance, register and attend training for Administrative Users (i.e. users who will maintain and configure both the Primary IMS and Rtl Module) and LEA Trainers (i.e. staff to be trained as trainers)			X
Following RIDE training, LEA Administrative Users and LEA Trainers configure the IMS for educator use and to provide end users with access and training needed to utilize the IMS for daily activities			X

'Data Use' Professional Development	Year 1: SY10-11	Year 2: SY11-12	
Complete a needs assessment survey indicating the use of and collaboration around data within schools and across the LEA			X
Based on RIDE implementation plan, determine the timing (i.e. Year 1, Year 2, or staggered across Year 1 and Year 2) of LEA participation in 'Data Use' Professional Development and provide RIDE with the schools that will participate in Year 1 and/or Year 2 training cohorts			X
In coordination with RIDE, select 'Data Use' training dates for each cohort of schools, as applicable			Year 1
Identify and provide RIDE with the leadership team members from each school who will participate in the Year 1 and/or Year 2 training cohorts, as applicable			Year 1

* Please note that, for this project, 'year 1' refers to cohort 1 taking place during the 2012-2013 school year, and 'year 2' refers to cohort 2 taking place during the 2013-2014 school year.

Based on information provided to RIDE, we are unclear on Cranston's timeline for implementing the Interim Assessments modules but anticipate that this will occur during school year 2013-2014.

Interim Assessments	Year 1: SY10-11	Year 2: SY11-12	
Identify method by which all educators will have access to interim assessments			X
Develop timeline for training of all educators in the use of interim assessments utilizing train-the-trainer model			X
Develop protocols or expectations regarding the use of interim assessment to inform instruction including timelines for administration and process for scoring and reporting results			X

System of Support 3: Educator Effectiveness

As of July 2012, Cranston is on-track against the System of Support 3 year 1 and 2 commitments and tasks for Race to the Top.

Educator Evaluation	Year 1: SY10-11		Year 2: SY11-12	
Participate in educator evaluation model design, development and refinement feedback opportunities	X	X	X	X
Identify District Evaluation Committee members, responsible for monitoring the implementation of the system and providing recommendations to LEA leadership teams	X	X	X	X
Participate in field testing to support RI Model development	X			
Identify individuals who will serve as primary and, if applicable, secondary/complementary evaluators	X		X	
Send all required evaluators to RIDE-provided evaluator training on model; Send evaluators and system administrators to training on the Educator Performance Support System (EPSS) data system	X	X	X	X
Examine LEA Policies and Contracts for Challenges; where applicable, consider memorandums of understanding or contract renewal language which will support district implementation of evaluations	X	X	X	X
Create a plan for the appropriate use of funds to support implementation of educator evaluation system	X		X	
Complete required components of RIDE approved model for educator and building administrator evaluations		X	X	
Submit evaluation data and documentation (e.g. component and summative level ratings, verified rosters); provide other requested information to support RIDE research and system improvement				X

Based on their quarterly progress reports, Cranston has implemented all components of the RIDE approved Innovation Model for evaluating Teachers, and the Rhode Island Model for building administrator evaluations. The district has submitted the final summative evaluation ratings for teachers to RIDE; however, RIDE would like to remind Cranston that the district is required to submit the summative ratings for administrator evaluations.

Cranston created a District Evaluation Committee (DEC) which met biweekly during the 2011-2012 school year in order to support implementation of the educator evaluation process. The district created a timeline for the development and approval of all Professional Practice Goals and Student Learning Objectives (SLOs). To ensure that all parties involved had a shared level of understanding, Cranston provided educators with an overview of the evaluation process, as well as training on goal setting, evidence collection and the rubrics. The I3 coordinator also developed a Wiki Space to communicate and clarify elements of the evaluation process with district staff. While the time investment remained a challenge, Cranston principals reported that the evaluation process led them to have richer conversations with their teachers around teaching and learning and the use of quantitative versus qualitative evidence.

During the 2011-2012 school year, Cranston attended all I3 teacher evaluation training as well as the RIDE Student Learning Objective (SLO) and building administrator evaluation training. Currently, participants from the district are registered for applicable summer evaluation training. We want to remind the district that all personnel responsible for evaluating building administrators must attend Academy training during summer 2012, as well as two half-days of additional professional development taking place over the 2012-2013 school year and online observation practice; personnel responsible for evaluating both teachers and building administrators (e.g., a principal who evaluates teachers and an assistant principal) are only required to attend the *Academy for Personnel Evaluating Teachers*.

In their quarterly progress report, Cranston noted that they have encountered the following challenges around this work:

- Finding the capacity to devote adequate time and resources to teacher evaluation
- Evaluations have surfaced the need for PD in areas such as 21st century skills, questioning techniques, and cognitive engagement
- Administrators feel that the “every teacher, every year” model is overwhelming and difficult to do well
- Other parts of principals’ roles are suffering due to the amount of time spent on evaluating
- Principals are less visible in the school and feel that other aspects of their role are suffering due to time spent on evaluations

RIDE has appreciated Cranston’s collaboration and thought partnership around the development and refinement of educator evaluation processes. Through their participation on advisory committees, RIDE has received valuable feedback on model refinement and the cyclical evaluation process. We hope that this additional level of participation has been as beneficial to the district as it has been to RIDE. In the upcoming school year, we hope that Cranston continues to share the strategies and resources they are using to support their evaluation process.

System of Support 4: Human Capital Development

As of July 2012, Cranston is on-track against the System of Support 4 year 1 and 2 commitments and tasks for Race to the Top.

Recruitment (SchoolSpring)	Year 1: SY10-11	Year 2: SY11-12	
Provide RIDE with feedback on the desired functionality of a state-wide recruitment platform	X		
Attend orientation sessions with selected vendor and train relevant personnel as needed	X	X	
Post open positions using the state-wide Recruitment Platform (SchoolSpring)		X	X

Beginning Teacher Induction	Year 1: SY10-11	Year 2: SY11-12	
Provide RIDE with feedback around the proposed design of the Induction Coach program	X		
If applicable, recommend potential Induction Coaches to RIDE	X		X
Review and revise hiring policies, timelines and processes in order to support appropriate and timely projections for anticipated hires requiring induction coach services	X		X
Provide RIDE with list of beginning teachers who will receive Induction Coach support in a timely manner in order to ensure that all beginning teachers have coaching	X		X
Participate in RIDE-provided information opportunities in order to learn about induction coach program	X	X	X

In preparation for the 2012-2013 school year, Cranston continued their utilization of the SchoolSpring recruitment platform to recruit for open positions. This tool became an effective strategy to recruit highly effective school staff. In addition, the district also has procedures and protocols in place for personnel record keeping and review, as well as strategies to train and retain effective educators once hired.

During the 2011-2012 school year, Cranston had 15 beginning teachers which were supported by RIDE induction coaches. In the district's quarterly report, Cranston noted that most beginning teachers reported that they had collaborative conversations between their principal as well as the induction coach. Principals also met regularly with the induction coaches for the purposes of gathering feedback. Beginning teachers also noted that they continued to receive assistance from veteran teachers in the building, which supplemented the support received from the RIDE induction coach.

In their quarterly progress report, Cranston noted that they have encountered the following challenges around this work:

- SchoolSpring applicants are often inaccessible due to geographic limitations
- Assuring the Induction coaches are aligning their strategies with district initiatives
- Some of the coaches are not in the same content area or specialization as new teacher
- Administrators are pressed for time and sometimes feel meetings with coaches are not good use of their time

In the upcoming CLO sessions, RIDE looks forward to engaging in a deeper conversation around the revisions that Cranston and other LEAs have made to their hiring policies, timelines and processes in order to support broader human capital initiatives including recruitment of highly qualified and diverse candidates and providing data-driven induction support to beginning teachers.

Summary of Fiscal Spending To-Date (As of August 15, 2012)

The table below contains an overview of Cranston’s fiscal spending through August 15, 2012 as well as the total funds available for reimbursement from years 1 and 2 and for the remaining grant period.

As we approach Year 3 of our Race to the Top implementation, RIDE will be revising all LEA allocations in AcceleGrants as necessary to align with the updated State Scope of Work and the revised budget that was approved by the U.S. Department of Education in April. Our Race to the Top revised budget allowed us to redistribute unspent funds and savings realized after the first year-and-a-half of the program. Savings were primarily due to less spent on personnel, lower costs for contracts than anticipated, and revisions to some program designs. These revisions affected LEA budgets as well as the state budget. Savings in contracts were passed along to LEAs.

Please note that, in the table below, the Total Years 1-4 remaining does not reflect the amended funding. As a result of the budget amendment, LEAs will likely see the funds increase or shift to SEA set asides. We will be sending out instructions to all LEA business managers on the shifts in LEA direct allocations and set-asides and on how to amend Race to the Top budgets for the remaining funding available. If you have any questions on the revised allocations, please contact David Alves at 222-4271 (david.alves@ride.ri.gov), or Crystal Martin at 222-8482 (crystal.martin@ride.ri.gov).

	Total Years 1-2 Allocation	Reimbursed through 8/15/12	Years 1-2 Funds Remaining	Total Years 1-4 Remaining
STANDARDS & CURRICULUM	\$130,028.00	\$99,989.98	\$30,038.02	\$30,038.02
INSTRUCTIONAL IMPROVEMENT SYSTEMS*	\$91,131.05	\$0.00	\$91,131.05	\$161,640.00
EDUCATOR EFFECTIVENESS	\$326,345.84	\$149,078.00	\$177,267.84	\$195,447.00
HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT	\$108,000.00	\$0.00	\$108,000.00	\$324,000.00
SCHOOL TRANSFORMATION AND INNOVATION	NA	NA	NA	NA
NON-COMMITTED	\$109,511.00	\$0.00	\$109,511.00	\$109,511.00
TOTAL	\$765,015.89	\$249,067.98	\$515,947.91	\$820,636.02

* RIDE has allocated an additional \$16,099.00 in funds to Cranston for the support of the Teacher-Course-Student data collection.

The contents of this report were developed under a Race to the Top grant from the U.S. Department of Education. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.