Transforming Education in Rhode Island

The Race to the Top Opportunity

Race to the Top Steering Committee Quarterly Meeting

Thursday, May 30, 2013, 4:30-6:30 p.m.
The Rhode Island Foundation

NOTES

I.   Welcome and Updates   4:30 – 5:00

   a. I Pledge Campaign
       http://www.educationpledgeri.org
       Neil provided an overview of the campaign, including the origin, purpose, and
       outcomes. A total of 9,500 pledges were received.

   b. Year 3 Quarterly Progress Report (full report available at www.ride.ri.gov)
       A review of the progress made to date, including highlights such as RI being
       recognized by US Dept. of Education for progress made, SEA and LEA
       performance monitoring, and being only one of three states called out for high
       performance.

II.   Data Use Professional Development   5:00 – 6:15

   a. Presentation of the Program —Lindsay Wepman
       A high-level overview was provided; the idea is to shift school culture to a more
       transparent culture, allowing for collaborative and non-judgmental discussions
       about what the data means, and what to do about it.

   b. Panel Discussion— Exeter-West Greenwich
       i. Jim Erinakes, Superintendent: This became a part of the school culture in a
           short period of time; it must be embedded in the daily practices.
           Leadership roles have expanded and will make this work sustainable.
           They are using the data for not just instruction, but connecting it to
           behavioral data, and Educator Evaluations, etc. It has supported the
           administrators work and helped them to make decisions around staffing.
       ii. Melissa Marino (Principal, Wawaloam and Lineham Schools): When beginning
           the Data Use PD program, the key to their success was prioritizing the

agenda and connecting the initiatives. The district needed to solidify their Response to Intervention process, and this helped them accomplish that. A Professional Growth Goal was drafted that mapped out a plan for success.

iii.   Deborah Blake (Reading Specialist/Supervisor): Data is deepening teacher's understanding, and they are welcoming the opportunity to learn more about the work. Each piece is looked at individually, by teacher, and being used to make strategic decisions. "Data is not the end result, but the beginning of a conversation." It has allowed teachers to develop a plan about how to differentiate their instruction in the classroom. A challenge is closing the learning gaps, and dealing with competing initiatives.

iv.   Melissa Cohen (Teacher): Data is being used to identify students who need interventions, determine what types of interventions to use, and if those interventions are working – using the cycle of inquiry.

v.   Sean Geraghty (Data Coach, Amplify): There are three noticeable predictors of success in schools; (1) Initiative Integration, (2) Broadening of the definition of data to include both quantitative and qualitative data, (3) Transparency and making it a part of the culture. He noted that the conversation started with talking about data, and ended talking about culture. The number one challenge he sees is sustainability.

c.   Questions from the Committee

Q: **Has the culture of innovation emerged because of the use of data? And are teachers allowed to innovate with their data?**

A: The teachers are beginning to own their data, and want to use it to make changes. There is 'written curriculum' that must be taught, and this requires you to be creative. Without using data on a regular basis, the teachers would not know what areas the students are struggling in, and what needs to change. They also provide data to parents, including information about the child's strengths and weaknesses, and 'prescriptions' for improvements (i.e., worksheets and activities).

Q: **What are you doing to tap into non-instructional data?**

A: At the beginning of the series, they conduct a 'data inventory'. They go beyond academic data and identify gaps.

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Q: **With a large number of teachers to train, it is difficult to make it meaningful. Whole group instruction is disconnected, and small settings result in different messages being delivered. Do you have any suggestions?**
A: Teachers are all in different places. When delivering the same message to all, some are far beyond the message, and others may not be ready. The key is strong leadership and common messages. They identified areas of need can be generated from the educator evaluations (using EPSS). Members of the leadership team took a role around a specific activity, and teachers were allowed to choose what area they want to participate in (based on their evaluation ratings). In a large system, you need to extend the understanding beyond the four individuals on the data team.

III.   Wrap-Up   6:15 – 6:30

a. Schedule of Future Meetings
    Next meeting is August 19, 2013

b. Potential Topics for Future Meetings
    The committee was asked to submit ideas about what they would like to see and/or hear, and thoughts on understanding their role.