

**Race to the Top Steering Committee Meeting
February 13, 2012, 4:30-6:30 p.m.**

Team Report-Out from January Washington, DC Meeting:

Pat Hines, RIASP:

- **Communication:** Among districts in the state, from RIDE to districts, and from all of us out to the broader community
- **Collaboration:** All of us there, at the same table, talking about what is best in RI. We are going to continue to talk about how the different groups could work better together.
- **Capacity:** Most are feeling that it's on the shoulders of the principals. While it's important for the superintendents and RIDE, and those groups are driving the vision, it's the principals that are shouldering the burden. They are 100% behind these systems, but are concerned about their capacity.
 - o We have formed a sub-committee with Colleen Jermain, Larry Purtill, Steve Smith, and me to brainstorm and talk about how we can increase the capacity of principals to implement educator evaluation more effectively.

Neil Steinberg, RI Foundation: Rhode Island had one of the most inclusive delegations, among all of the states that were involved. We were all unified in our desire to keep moving this work forward. Rhode Island seemed to be doing well and even leading other states.

Commissioner Gist : Even though our group was very inclusive, we wish we could have included even more stakeholders.

Mary-Beth Fafard, RIDE: It was a wonderful opportunity for all of us to share practices and see how we were doing, collectively. We were able to talk as colleagues about how we could work together.

Stephen Hourahan, Office of the Governor: It was great to be with the various representatives of stakeholders in our state. The inclusion of the principals association was a bonus. Feeling like we were leaders among leaders – on top of NY, Massachusetts – was exciting. Looking at all the players at the table, we were all working together and were connected in a very positive way. Highlights in my report back to the Governor included that we are 'kicking butt' around the country.

Comments/Questions on Commissioner Gist's Progress Update Presentation:

When will the Virtual Learning Math Modules (VLMM) be rolled out to students?

- Will be rolled out in the fall of 2012

Are math modules in development specifically for help with the NECAP test, or day-to-day lesson learning?

- Depends on how the school uses it, could be available for both
- Way to help students who find themselves in high school without the skills they need

- Not just preparation for a test – skills that students need to leave high school with in order to be successful

Do we expect that high school NECAP scores will spike as a result of the high school graduation requirements kicking in, and how do we maintain higher scores over time?

- MA found that when the MCAS became part of their graduation requirements, when students who initially did not achieve the necessary score had the chance to take the test again, the achievement spiked significantly
- The percentage of students who leave problems blank is high right now
- We need to stay steady with our expectations
- Districts should not wait to provide extra supports for students. If districts don't already have online learning, they are trying to get it.

For the VLMM, who is developing it, and are they developing it from other existing curricula or is it being built specifically for Rhode Island?

- Combination of those two things
- On Saturday, there was a virtual learning conference – over 300 people from schools across the state attended, and it was a great success

Educator evaluation would be much more streamlined if the data system was up and running. People have a huge appetite for a system that will support this effort.

Budget Presentation Questions

Of 18 million, 22 million dispersed – what will happen with the rest?

- That is money in process or already awarded or committed
- Balance are contracts and others that will be billed for

No variance between approved and revised budget – how come?

- Amounts have to match; have approved and revised budgets on state side of 37.5M

RTTT Early Learning Challenge Presentation Questions:

Parental involvement should be part of this program's requirements.

- Key component is parent engagement
- Connection between teacher and parent is missing in too many places – have to be effectively reaching out to parents in order to receive high-quality ratings

Why is chronic absenteeism is a problem in kindergarten?

- Families need to realize that there is a continuum of development from early years through grade 12, and the early years are critical
- Chronic absenteeism is a national issue, tracking at KidsCount

1) Will there be legislation regarding a full-day kindergarten requirement? 2) Will districts' pre-k programs become part of the star rating system?

- Public schools have not been in Bright Stars, but through this grant program all early education program, including those at districts, will be in Bright Stars
- Legislation that has been championed for full-day kindergarten and it is gaining momentum now – We are hopeful it might be through an incentive or support for start-up
- If you track indicators over time, 18% of districts had full-day K in 1985, whereas now 65% of districts do
 - There are 19 districts who have universal access to all-day K
 - Of the 17 district that don't, most have at least one full-day class available

Does this grant affect certification issues or credentialing for early childhood educators?

- Supports professional growth and development but not much to do with certification

It is important that we maximize opportunities for RTTT and RTTT-ELC funding to work together.

KidsCount deserves a lot of credit for developing the Bright Stars program; it was a lynchpin in winning this grant.

Are you tracking absenteeism at the pre-k level? We need to figure out why students are not in regular attendance in pre-k.

- There is a truancy issue with young children

Is it a communication problem? Do people know the difference between daycare and pre-k?

- There is not a broad appreciation for the importance of pre-k. Often times when children start school, there isn't an understanding of the importance of being there. Home visits can help.
- It's not just about expecting parents to do something different, it's about how we as educators reach out and engage with them