Transforming Education in Rhode Island
The Race to the Top Opportunity
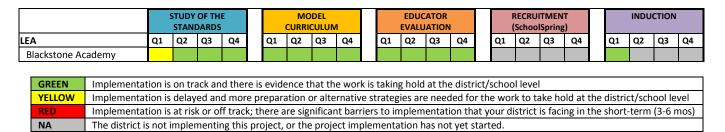
Blackstone Academy Race to the Top Implementation Update: Years 1 and 2
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The Annual Stocktaking provides both the state and the Local Education Agency with an opportunity to review LEA accomplishments and challenges over the course of the Race to the 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 Blackstone Academy. During year 2, Blackstone Academy has fully participated in the following projects: Study of the Standards, Model Curriculum and Intensive Curriculum Alignment, and Educator Evaluation. While participating in Induction, Blackstone Academy had no new teachers.

In addition, Blackstone Academy has begun planning for the year 3 implementation of 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
Blackstone Academy	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	NA	NA	NA	NA	Green	NA	NA	NA

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, Blackstone Academy met the bar for participation in all four quarterly CLO meetings. All quarterly progress reports were submitted on-time and Blackstone Academy's Head of School consistently attended the quarterly meetings, which helped build rapport within the CLO group. Additionally, the participant was deeply knowledgeable about Blackstone Academy's RTT implementation activities and contributed fully in the peer-to-peer discussion.

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, Blackstone Academy 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 Blackstone Academy, 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 Blackstone Academy's quarterly progress reports, the district met their RTT goals (i.e., 4 educators trained on the Study of the Standards) and utilized their RTT funds to send two teams of educators to professional development sessions on the new ELA and Math Common Core State Standards (CCSS). While Blackstone Academy is not participating in the model curriculum development with the Dana Center, they have made significant progress against implementing a guaranteed and viable curriculum aligned to the new common core state standards.

During summer 2011, Blackstone Academy began an internal study of the new standards using protocol-based techniques. The teachers attending the RIDE-led professional development sessions reported that they felt more prepared for the upcoming curriculum alignment work as a result of the school's efforts. Throughout the 2011-2012 school year, teachers examined their existing curriculum using a school-developed template and indicated at the unit level which standards were being addressed. Additionally, within department meetings, teachers began reviewing samples of model curriculum posted by RIDE and examining their curriculum against the aligned models. As of June 2012, 75% of the teachers had completed that work and the school was well poised to examine gaps in their current curriculum.

In their quarterly progress report, Blackstone Academy noted that they have encountered the following challenges:
- Initial scheduling conflicts/challenges with the RIDE-led Study of the Standards
- Some teachers were delayed in submitting their curriculum alignment analysis which, in turn, may delay the gap analysis

We want to commend Blackstone Academy on school-wide collaboration 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. In the upcoming year, we hope that you will consider sharing the curriculum materials, or your school-wide student learning objective approach with your fellow CLO colleagues, or with all districts through the Instructional Improvement System (IMS). Additionally, we would encourage Blackstone Academy to consider attending supplemental professional development offered by RIDE geared towards increasing readiness to transition through focusing on text complexity, developing text-dependent questions, and deepening understanding of the mathematics standards. We look forward to hearing about your progress, 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, Blackstone Academy is on-track against the System of Support 2 year 1 and 2 commitments and tasks for Race to the Top. Thus far, Blackstone Academy has reported that they will not implement the Formative Assessment online professional development modules, Interim Assessments, or 'Data Use' professional development during Year 3 of the grant. Blackstone Academy has registered for training on the Instructional Management System (IMS) RtI (Exceed) platforms, but has not indicated the level of implementation they plan to take on in the 2012-2013 school year.

In the upcoming CLO sessions, we hope that you can gain insight about the successes and challenges that other districts encountered while implementing these systems, as well as their progress around building teacher engagement in the various tools and resources.

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 *IMS Training Plan* and develop a multiyear training and implementation plan to provide all educators with access and training on the system			X
Based on *IMS Training Plan* guidance, register and attend training for Administrative Users (i.e. users who will maintain and configure both the Primary IMS and RtI 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*

* As per the description on page 1, this task is 'N/A' for Year 2 (2011-2012 school year) because the district is not implementing this project until the 2013-2014 school year.

'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. As per the description on page 1, this task is 'N/A' for Year 2 (2011-2012 school year) because the district is not implementing this project until the 2013-2014 school year.

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*

* As per the description on page 1, this task is 'N/A' for Year 2 (2011-2012 school year) because the district is not implementing this project until the 2013-2014 school year.

System of Support 3: Educator Effectiveness

As of July 2012, Blackstone Academy 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
Identify District Evaluation Committee members, responsible for monitoring the implementation of the system and providing recommendations to LEA leadership teams.	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
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
Create a plan for the appropriate use of funds to support implementation of educator evaluation system.	X		X
Complete required RI Model components of educators 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, Blackstone Academy implemented all components of the educator evaluation process during the 2011-2012 school year, and used their board review process for building administrator reviews. All teacher evaluation summative ratings have been received by RIDE. Additionally, Blackstone Academy provided RIDE with a list of their District Evaluation Committee (DEC) members.

Blackstone Academy's Head of School attended all RIDE-provided evaluator training during the 2011-2012 school year. After attending two RIDE-led evaluation training modules, the Head of the School conducted a demonstration for all teachers so that they would have a greater understanding of the evaluation process and the various components. Additionally, as the sole evaluator for all teachers, she developed an organizational system that allowed her to track the mandatory versus optional components for each evaluation and the status of the various pieces of evidence.

All Blackstone Academy personnel responsible for evaluating teachers have attended Academy training during summer 2012. RIDE wants to remind the LEA that, in addition to the Academy, evaluators must also participate in two half-days of additional professional development taking place over the 2012-2013 school year and online observation practice.

In their quarterly progress report, Blackstone Academy noted that they have encountered the following challenges:
- Greater teacher guidance for the evidence that will meet certain rubric criteria, and how to provide that evidence
- The district evaluation committee is small and may have difficulty being objective when critiquing implementation

In the upcoming CLO sessions, RIDE looks forward to hearing about how Blackstone Academy adjusted their implementation for the upcoming year, and how the Educator Performance Support System (EPSS) streamlined the process. Additionally, we think that Blackstone Academy's approach to managing the various evaluation components would be a beneficial practice to share with the other members of the CLO group.

System of Support 4: Human Capital Development

As of July 2012, Blackstone Academy 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

Blackstone Academy did not participate in the SchoolSpring recruitment platform project. In the quarterly progress update reports, Blackstone Academy noted that they did not have any new teachers during the 2011-2012 school year and, therefore, did not participate in the RIDE Beginning Teacher Induction program. RIDE looks forward to supporting Blackstone Academy should there be any beginning teachers during the 2012-2013 school year.

Summary of Fiscal Spending To-Date (As of July 18, 2012)

The table below contains an overview of Blackstone Academy's fiscal spending through July 18, 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 Crystal Martin, at 222-8482 or at crystal.martin@ride.ri.gov.

	Total Years 1-2 Allocation	Reimbursed through 6/30/12	Years 1-2 Funds Remaining	Total Years 1-4 Remaining
STANDARDS & CURRICULUM	$2,600.00 (includes $2,000 for MC)	$0.00	$2,600.00	$22,600.00
INSTRUCTIONAL IMPROVEMENT SYSTEMS	$873.00	$0.00	$873.00	$4,700.00
EDUCATOR EFFECTIVENESS	$3,200.00	$0.00	$3,200.00	$4,000.00
HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT	$9,000.00	$0.00	$9,000.00	$27,000.00
SCHOOL TRANSFORMATION AND INNOVATION	NA	NA	NA	NA
NON-COMMITTED	NA	NA	NA	NA
TOTAL	**$15,673.00**	**$0.00**	**$15,673.00**	**$58,300.00**