

Outline of Massachusetts' Phase 2 Race to the Top proposal

Draft as of May 11, 2010

Please note that this draft is subject to change based on budgetary requirements and ongoing conversations with stakeholders about these proposed plans.

Section A: State Success Factors

A1: Articulating state's education reform agenda and LEAs' participation in it

Executive summary of proposal. Four overall objectives:

- 1) Attract, develop, and retain an effective, academically capable, diverse, and culturally competent educator workforce
- 2) Provide curricular and instructional resources that support teacher effectiveness and success for all students
- 3) Concentrate great instruction and supports for educators, students, and families in our lowest performing schools and their districts
- 4) Increase our focus on college and career readiness for all students

A2: Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans

- 1) The existing Office of Strategic Planning, Research, and Evaluation will support and monitor grant implementation, reporting directly to the commissioner for this function.
- 2) Each project will have an assigned manager and an associated evaluation design to collect data on both implementation and impact.
- 3) We will support LEA implementation through DSACs and (for the largest districts) the state's Urban District Assistance unit.
- 4) Two advisory groups:
 - a) State Implementation Advisory Group: MASS, MASC, MTA, AFT, MSSAA, MESPA, PTA, MCPSA, MAVVA, EOE, DHE, EEC
 - b) External Advisory Group: state, national, and international leaders (including MBAE); a mix of practitioners, researchers, and policymakers
- 5) Budget: \$250 million. We will coordinate, reallocate, or repurpose other state and federal dollars to support our proposal as well.

A3: Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps

- 1) Significant progress in grade 10 mathematics and ELA. Similar patterns on CPI.
- 2) First in the nation on NAEP; strong performance on TIMSS
- 3) Graduation rates up for all, faster for LEP, special ed, African American students
- 4) Work still to be done: science and reading performance holding steady; large achievement gaps on NAEP; low performance among ELLs, our largest growing subgroup; still 7,000 dropouts each cohort
- 5) We have succeeded through high standards, accountability, and support; recent state policy reforms aligned with RTTT priority areas; new accountability system and regulations

Section B: Standards and Assessments

B1: Developing and adopting common standards

- 1) Continue to play an active role in the development process
- 2) Present the Common Core Standards to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education in May 2010; vote to put out for public comment
- 3) Bring back to BESE for a vote to adopt at a special meeting in July.

B2: Developing and implementing high quality common assessments

- 1) Sign an MOU to participate in the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career with at least 25 other states
- 2) MA will continue to play a leadership role in the consortium and development of assessments that will be designed to:
 - a) Measure and document students' college and career readiness at the end of high school and progress toward this target throughout their education. Students meeting this target will be eligible for credit-bearing courses in public 2- and 4-year colleges
 - b) Meet internationally rigorous benchmarks
 - c) Support valid assessment of student longitudinal growth
 - d) Serve as a signal for effective instructional practices
- 3) Facilitate the transition to the new assessment system while continuing to administer MCAS.

B3: Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high quality assessments

- 1) Develop and implement a unified system of standards-based curriculum, instruction and assessment resources through the development of the Pre K-12 Massachusetts Teaching and Learning System, which will include:
 - a) Annual forums and conferences to orient educators to the changes in standards, assessments and instructional tools
 - b) New Common Core standards in ELA and mathematics; revised standards in English language proficiency, science and technology/engineering, history/social science aligned to Common Core
 - c) The standards will be organized into coherent curriculum maps and instructional units for elementary and middle school; syllabi for high school
 - d) WGBH Massachusetts Teachers' Domain will provide a customized digital library of instructional resources
 - e) Online bank of high quality test questions to support formative assessment
 - f) Online interim assessment system
 - g) Online bank of extended performance tasks
 - h) PARCC-developed common assessments in ELA and math
 - i) MCAS tests in STE, History and Social Science, and the MA English Language Proficiency Assessment
- 2) Align policies and programs to support college and career readiness.
 - a) Make MassCore the default curriculum for the Commonwealth's public schools
 - b) Collaborate with DHE to establish one set of college readiness / entrance requirements based on MassCore
 - c) Enhance efficiency of Competency Tracking System

- d) Working with community partners, ESE will implement and scale up proven programs:
 - i) 6 STEM Early College High Schools
 - ii) Innovation Schools
- e) Strengthen the AP pipeline by offering pre-AP teacher training and curriculum development in math, science and English language arts.
- 3) Delivery of professional development to support the transition to new standards and assessments
 - a) Change state policies on individual PD plans and career ladders (see section D)
 - b) Ensure all educators are qualified to offer standards-based tiered instruction to meet the needs of all students
 - c) Strengthen PD delivery system through the use of DSACs, Professional Development Institutes, and the state's annual Curriculum Summit.

Section C: Data Systems to Support Instruction

C1: Fully implementing a state longitudinal data system

- 1) Massachusetts has implemented an Education Data Warehouse (EDW) that addresses all of the 12 essential elements stipulated by the America COMPETES Act.

C2: Accessing and using state data

- 1) Improve the Education Data Warehouse to support the needs of 80,000 anticipated users
 - a) Transition the Education Data Warehouse to a "data mart" architecture to more efficiently differentiate data access based on user needs.
 - b) Enhance the Education Data Warehouse's utility to the field through expanded user access, data sources, and reports.
 - c) Expand the Schools Interoperability Framework (SIF) to automate state data collection requirements and increase the timeliness of data in the Education Data Warehouse.
- 2) Improve the usability of ESE's public website
 - a) Redesign the ESE public website to automate ESE data updates, provide for more intuitive navigation, and respond accurately and flexibly to visitor-generated searches.
- 3) Add enhanced data audits to our existing data validation protocols
- 4) Develop a protocol for conducting data audits, pilot it in five LEAs, and then begin conducting 12 audits per year starting in Year 3 of the grant.

C3: Using data to improve instruction

- 1) Invest in the data systems and technology necessary to support the Pre K-12 Massachusetts Teaching and Learning System
 - a) Develop and implement an online Digital Library for use by all Massachusetts LEAs, schools, and educators featuring electronic access to ESE's curriculum frameworks, including both Common Core standards and any additional Massachusetts standards.
 - b) Develop a test builder engine that enables educators to assemble, score, and access results from formative and interim assessments, including locally developed items, and returns results within 24 to 72 hours of scoring.
- 2) Strengthen and expand educator training and supports for data use
 - a) Create 10 additional courses in data use and analysis, in addition to the six ESE already offers, with both classroom and online versions. Topics will include the new statewide

- b) Upgrade ESE's online course delivery infrastructure and related tools and release all 16 courses online.
- c) Expand capacity in regional District and School Assistance Centers (DSACs) to launch, train, and directly support district and school data teams (see section D5).
- 3) Make state longitudinal data available to researchers through the EDW
 - a) Build researcher access to aggregate data.
 - b) Improve existing processes and protocols for allowing researcher access.

Section D: Great Teachers and Leaders

D1: Provide high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals

- 1) Provide detail on existing routes to licensure and the state's common standards for alternative and higher ed. prep program.
- 2) Illustrate how our prospective database integration will increase ability to identify and target shortage areas
- 3) Link to other initiatives across Section D

D2: Improve teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance

- 1) Establish statewide task force to develop principles for measuring effectiveness and revise statewide evaluation regulations and principles of effective teaching and administration for BESE action in early spring 2011.
 - a) Composition and operations
 - i) To be established immediately upon the state's receiving a Race to the Top grant
 - ii) Will meet frequently (at least twice a month)
 - iii) Will include representatives from all MassPartners organizations (the state associations of superintendents, school committees, teachers, elementary and secondary school principals, and parents)
 - iv) Will include representatives from statewide counseling and special subject organizations, e.g., guidance, reading, arts, vocational/technical schools
 - b) Roles
 - i) Create communication mechanisms to gather feedback from the field regarding the proposed framework for teacher and principal evaluation
 - ii) Make recommendations regarding revised regulations, Principles for Effective Teaching and Administration, and other elements needed for a coherent framework for teacher and principal evaluation
 - iii) Make recommendations for effective state and local implementation of the framework
 - c) The Task Force will produce a state evaluation framework that:
 - i) Ensures that teachers and principals are provided with honest, fair, and improvement-oriented feedback annually. Create 2-year cycles of improvement via formative and summative evaluations.
 - ii) Differentiates performance with three or more rating categories.
 - iii) Takes into account student growth as a significant factor in evaluations. Measures of growth will include trends in the MCAS growth model where they apply, along with

- iv) Differentiates by career stage. Novice and experienced teachers will follow the same basic framework, but the relative weights on various factors will differ to better target the support needed by beginning teachers.
 - v) Incorporates other measures of effectiveness as significant factors. Some potential measures might include:
 - a. *For teachers:* Supervisor ratings using research-based observational tools and rubrics; evidence of content knowledge, professional skills, cultural competency, professional growth; teacher self-assessments; peer observations; additional student, classroom, team, and school measures including indicators of school culture, climate, and conditions.
 - b. *For principals:* Supervisor ratings; professional skills such as strategic planning, instructional leadership, evaluation and supervision, cultural competence, human resources and development, management, external development, and micro political leadership; professional growth; principal self-assessments; peer observations; additional student, classroom, team, and school measures including indicators of school culture, climate, and conditions.
 - vi) Ensures flexibility at the district level to consider additional measures of effectiveness within the revised statewide framework, e.g., peer review; student, parent, and community feedback
- 2) Develop statewide evaluation tools and supports for districts, e.g.,
- a) training on how the new evaluation framework works and on effective supervision and evaluation (see section D5)
 - b) access to and training on effective use of data (see sections C3 and D5)
 - c) a Test Builder engine to create local assessments that could be used to measure student growth (see section C2)
 - d) a model that demonstrates how to measure student growth through student portfolios
- 3) Provide districts with implementation support to:
- a) Build their capacity to effectively supervise and evaluate administrators and teachers and to hold administrators accountable for conducting fair, high quality evaluations (see section D5)
 - b) Develop measures of student performance across all subjects and grades
 - c) Implement a comprehensive evaluation plan consistent with the revised statewide regulations and principles of effective teaching and administration
 - d) Provide training and support to principals, other administrators, and teachers on the new framework (see section D5)
 - e) Provide support needed for less effective educators through targeted support, coaching, professional development aligned with areas in need of improvement, and peer assistance
 - f) Link comprehensive evaluation to key personnel decisions, e.g.,
 - i) professional teaching status
 - ii) career advancement, through teacher leadership career ladder (see below)

- iii) compensation for additional roles and responsibilities and for teaching in hard to staff schools
 - iv) dismissal: As described in the Working Group for Educator Excellence stakeholder framework on supervision and evaluation, teachers and principals identified as ineffective will have a performance improvement plan put in place and supports provided to improve. If the performance improvement plan goals are not met after one year of support, the teacher or principal would be dismissed.
- 4) Demonstrate the effectiveness of strategic human resource development systems through the Working Group on Educator Excellence pilot districts; disseminate tools and lessons learned to all participating districts
 - 5) Develop a performance- and portfolio-based licensure system grounded in measures of effectiveness for initial licensure, professional licensure, and re-licensure
 - 6) Create a career ladder through licensure and endorsements that supports new roles, responsibilities, and advancement to teacher leadership roles.

D3: Ensure equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals

- 1) Develop and publish a comprehensive public report on trends and key issues in educator supply and demand and the distribution and retention of effective educators.
 - a) This report will allow us to prioritize state activities and investments.
 - b) Disseminate results through Readiness Centers, with a focus on identifying areas of greatest need for each region. Readiness Centers will support and complement statewide efforts to expand the supply of effective educators through recruitment and preparation initiatives.
- 2) Attract more highly effective teachers and principals in high minority, high poverty schools:
 - a) Marketing campaign for teachers, building on the newly launched aMAzingteachers.org
 - b) Loan forgiveness for new teachers and principals
 - c) Incentives for master teachers and principals
 - i) Teachers: incentives for recruitment, retention, and taking on new roles and responsibilities
 - ii) Principals: salary incentive packages (Note: already doing this in the 10 Commissioner's Districts)
- 3) Retain more highly effective teachers and principals in high minority, high poverty schools
 - a) Improve school working conditions
 - i) Conduct the MassTeLLS survey every other year.
 - ii) Districts or schools will develop plans and measures of progress based on evidence from the Mass TeLLS survey or other school climate indicators, including district reviews
 - b) Support new teachers working with high need populations through online induction and mentoring
 - c) See section E2 for plans to strengthen human resource management systems in these districts.
- 4) Attract and retain effective teachers in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas
 - a) Partner with UTeach to establish a new STEM educator preparation program
 - b) Build online courses that will allow teachers to earn special education and English language learner licensure endorsements online

- 5) Hold statewide summit addressing the recruitment and retention of a diverse and culturally competent educator workforce. Produce and disseminate specific actionable recommendations to guide district efforts.
- 6) See the competitive grant programs described in D4.2, which will expand the pool of teachers in high need fields.

D4: Improve the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs

- 1) Refine and enhance program approval requirements and accountability systems.
 - a) Refine effectiveness indicators
 - b) Modify regulations, including reporting and program approval requirements
 - c) Provide technical assistance on new program and reporting requirements
 - d) Update ELAR to capture new approval evidence
 - e) Post annual statewide report cards on educator preparation programs
- 2) Scale up effective programs through teacher and principal preparation competitive grant programs, which will target specific exemplary program components (such as recruitment of diverse candidates; increased IHE/LEA partnerships in urban areas; or innovative approaches to teaching candidates how to use data to alter instructional practices); study and disseminate the findings from successful programs across the state.
- 3) Use performance-oriented program approval regulations and review cycle to monitor preparation quality and effectiveness, and improve or close weak programs.

D5: Provide effective support for teachers and principals

- 1) Ensure that every school can effectively implement instruction that allows every student—especially low achieving ones—to achieve at high levels
 - a) Review and revise regulations for the development of teacher and administrator Individual Professional Development Plans
 - b) Reward educators who demonstrate proficiency with additional opportunities to participate in leadership networks
 - c) Develop and implement standards for effective professional development
- 2) Provide professional development to ensure that all teachers can provide tiered instruction to meet the individual and personal needs of all students
 - a) Use data to inform instruction
 - b) Professional development on differentiated instruction will ensure teachers can take the information gained through data analysis and make decisions that are in the best interests of student learning needs
 - c) Teachers will be able to implement Sheltered English Instruction
 - d) All middle and high school teachers will be required to participate in PD in Adolescent Literacy: Reading and Writing Across the Curriculum to ensure they can fully implement the Common Core Standards in reading, writing, speaking and listening.
- 3) High quality professional development will be provided through several delivery systems:
 - a) Readiness Centers and DSACs
 - b) Online courses
 - c) Professional development institutes
 - d) Content specific courses
 - e) Statewide Curriculum Summit
 - f) Statewide networks

Section E: Turning Around the Lowest Achieving Schools

E1: Statutory authority for the state to intervene

- 1) Defines underperforming and chronically underperforming schools; chronically underperforming districts; and conditions under which districts must create turnaround plans
- 2) Critical powers under turnaround plans
 - a) Reallocation of the budget, revision of district policies and practices, alteration of collective bargaining agreements (permitted either after expedited bargaining with a resolution process that considers students' needs at Level 4 schools and Level 5 districts, or unilaterally at Level 5 schools), and the requirement that all staff reapply for their positions.
 - b) Teachers with professional teacher status (tenure) may be dismissed under a "good cause" rather than "just cause" standard.

E2: Turning around the lowest achieving schools

- 1) Identify the persistently lowest-achieving schools in the state.
 - a) First identified persistently lowest achieving 4% of schools, then identified those that are least improving ("Level 4"). In fall 2010 will identify persistently lowest achieving 20% as Level 3.
 - b) Identified 20 elementary, 8 middle, 3 K-8 and 4 high schools located in 9 urban districts and educating 17,000 students. 1 in 5 students in these districts have an identified disability, often an emotional or behavioral disability; 1 in 4 is an English language learner.
 - c) As early as 2012, ESE will designate Level 4 schools that fail to achieve ambitious annual benchmarks after two or more years as Level 5 schools.
- 2) Develop a specialized corps of turnaround teacher and leader teams
 - a) Great principals and teachers are critical to achieving rapid improvement in low-performing schools. Existing district capacity to fulfill this need is insufficient.
 - b) We have already begun to build capacity: e.g., aMAzingteachers.org, Boston Teacher Residency; Teach Plus; CCE; executive search.
 - c) ESE will work with districts, providers, and experts to identify and develop a corps of turnaround teachers and leaders to fill vacancies in Level 4/5 schools, building a model with five elements: 1) recruitment and selection, 2) preparation, 3) placement, 4) support, and 5) retention.
 - i) Turnaround leaders: robust executive search to identify and recruit leaders; up to six months of training, planning, and mentoring before placement; and involvement of the principal in staff selection and planning with a team of turnaround teachers.
 - ii) Turnaround teachers: Both experienced teachers with proven success in the classroom as well as the enhanced pipeline of new teachers. Experienced teachers will receive, at a minimum, incentives (e.g., loan forgiveness, career ladder opportunities, compensation) to work in Level 4/5 schools, up to six months of intense training and support, ongoing mentoring and interaction with a cohort, and opportunities for close collaboration with turnaround leaders.
 - iii) For all: Intensive professional development for tiered instruction and behavioral supports to meet likely challenges, including remediating students performing significantly below grade-level, working with English language learners and students

- d) By 2014, ESE and districts will have developed sufficient numbers of teachers and leaders to fill most of the leadership and core teaching positions in the Level 4/5 schools.
- 3) Build the capacity of proven partners to support struggling schools
 - a) Struggling schools currently do not have the experience or capacity to implement the new strategies for instructional reform and expanded learning opportunities that the transformation, turnaround, and restart models require.
 - b) ESE will identify, vet, scale up and network partners with a track record of providing services that improve student achievement.
 - i) In the first two years, focus on three interconnected conditions: social-emotional supports that ensure students enter the classroom ready to learn, an expanded school day and/or year, and effective use of data to support tailored instruction;
 - ii) In later years, additional investments in partners for other of the 10 conditions for school effectiveness
 - iii) Network strong partners so that each becomes familiar with the approaches, assumptions and areas of expertise of the others and can adjust their work together to support a more coherent overall approach to school turnaround.
 - c) This one-time investment will also result in a lasting process, building capacity within the Department and the field to assess potential vendors and partners for quality.
- 4) Build district capacity to intervene in struggling schools
 - a) All four school intervention models depend on changes to district systems of support.
 - b) ESE will use RTTT funds to help districts engage the right partners to work with both the district office and Level 4 schools in the following priority areas:
 - i) Effective governance and leadership
 - (1) District-wide strategic goal setting
 - (2) Implementation of Mass TeLLS working conditions survey
 - (3) Partnerships with state associations to support district improvement
 - ii) Human resource management and development systems
 - (1) Facilitate effective use of tools and networks to help districts improve personnel administration; management and development; labor relations; organizational development; and professional standards
 - iii) Enhanced family and community engagement and support
 - (1) The Governor's Cabinet on Child and Youth Development has committed to systematically addressing barriers to school achievement in the neighborhoods served by the 35 Level 4 schools, building on early success of cross-agency ICRS and including:
 - (a) Coordinating social/community services provided by government and nonprofits into a coherent whole.
 - (b) Training for center- and home-based PreK providers in wraparound zone neighborhoods with low-performing elementary schools
 - (c) Improved dropout prevention and recovery
 - (2) Pilots of the expanded Early Warning Indicator System (EWIS) in six districts
 - (3) Identify and fund proven partners to help districts develop and implement strategies within high need middle and high schools, including a dropout-focused Innovation School

- 5) Develop, attract, and manage lead partners and turnaround operators to execute the restart model at Level 4 and 5 schools
 - a) Within just a few years, districts and potentially the state will begin to use the “restart” model in some Level 4 schools. We need to act quickly to ensure a robust system exists to contract, manage, and evaluate lead partners and operators.
 - b) Create a nonprofit school-improvement intermediary organization whose mission will be to accelerate and ensure the quality of school turnaround work in Massachusetts by building, identifying, and managing high quality turnaround providers.

Section F: General

F1: Making education funding a priority

- 1) State support for K–12 education has continued even in the face of the downturn
- 2) Progressive distribution of student aid through Ch70 foundation budget formula; districts with the highest share of low-income students get the most aid

F2: Ensuring successful conditions for high performing charter schools and other innovative schools

- 1) Laws related to charter school caps
 - a) Explanation of Commonwealth vs. Horace Mann charters
 - b) Overall requirements regarding number and types of charter schools
 - c) Special requirements related to new “smart cap” law
- 2) Charter school accountability
 - a) Single authorizer: state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
 - b) Accountable for faithfulness to charter, academic success, organizational viability.
 - c) Student recruitment and retention plans required under new law.
 - d) Table showing charter prospectuses submitted, final charter applications made, charter applications approved/denied, and charter schools closed, 2004–05 through 2008–09 (update through 2009–2010 if possible).
- 3) Charter school funding & facilities
 - a) Tuition is paid by the sending district, with some reimbursement from the state. Tuition rates vary depending on per-pupil spending of sending districts.
 - b) Same facility requirements for charter and traditional schools. Legislation offers incentives to districts to offer unused school buildings to charter schools.
- 4) Other innovative schools
 - a) Both state and local districts enable the operation of innovative, autonomous schools other than charter schools.

F3: Demonstrating other significant reform conditions

- 1) Additional time: Expanded Learning Time (only state in the nation) and After-School and Out-of-School Time
- 2) Supports for students to receive Competency Determinations: MCAS remediation supports, Connecting Activities, WPI School of Excellence
- 3) Full-day kindergarten grants
- 4) Literacy programs