

Summary of Level 4 Schools Network (L4N) Activities March 2010 – October 2011

An Act Relative to the Achievement Gap was signed into law in January 2010 establishing a clear process for the Department to identify and intervene in the Commonwealth's 35 lowest performing (Level 4) schools. This new state law was enacted shortly before USDOE released final regulations for the distribution of School Turnaround Grant funding.

The Level 4 Schools Network (L4N) was convened by the Department to offer assistance to the nine districts and facilitate knowledge-sharing among them. The following is a brief summary of the L4N Network activities:

February 24, 2010 – Meeting with Superintendents to Introduce Process

Participants: Superintendents and key district staff from all nine districts; ESE staff

Content of the Meeting:

- Overview of the Level 4 Schools Context and Process: state law requirements; federal grant requirements; analysis of why “turnaround” has low success rate
- Focus on District Systems of Support: district leadership of the turnaround work with schools; collecting and analyzing data; importance of teacher selection and support
- Managing the Message: networking activity to develop a positive and clear public message once the schools are officially announced; inform ESE assistance activities

March 2, 2010 – Webinar Announcing Level 4 Schools Process

Participants: Superintendents, local union presidents, and school committee chairs from all nine districts; ESE staff

Content of the Webinar:

- Announcement of the Level 4 Schools: the names of the schools were released to each district team prior to the call; the formal announcement to the press of the names would not be until March 4
- Overview of the Level 4 Schools Context and Process

March 24, 2010 – Workshop with District Teams on Using Data to Inform School Redesign Strategies

Participants: Superintendents and their key district staff and local union presidents from all nine districts; ESE staff; Community Training and Assistance Center (CTAC) staff

Content of the Workshop:

- Presentation on Data-Based Root Cause Analysis: demonstration of triangulating performance, perception, and observational data to draw conclusions about appropriate intervention strategies
- Activity Using Sample Data from a School

April 7, 2010 – Conference Call on Leadership Analysis and Data Collection

Participants: Superintendents and their key district staff and local union presidents; ESE staff

Content of the Call:

- School Leadership Decisions: options and expectations for recruiting and selecting new leadership in Level 4 schools; suggestions for analyzing existing leadership teams
- Baseline Data Collection: options and expectations for how to collect performance, perception, and observational data from which to set goals

April 9, 2010 – Meeting with Superintendents

Monthly meeting with Superintendents of Level 4 Schools to clarify processes and timeline and share ideas

April 15, 2010 – Workshop with District Teams on Local Stakeholder Groups and Quick Wins

Participants: Superintendents and their key district staff and local union presidents; ESE staff

Content of the Workshop:

- Local Stakeholder Groups (state requirement): launching and organizing local stakeholder groups; balancing the expectations of local stakeholder groups and school-level redesign teams; learning from Boston’s early launch of the local stakeholder groups
- Quick Wins: sharing research about the role of “quick wins” in successful turnaround; workshop to identify criteria to apply when deciding which quick wins to pursue in order to ensure strategic alignment with the long-term redesign plan

April 28, 2010 – Conference Call on Early Implementation Grants

Participants: Superintendents and their key district staff and local union presidents; ESE staff

Content of the Call:

- Technical Assistance: clarity around technical requirements of early implementation grants
- LEA Capacity: emphasized grant submissions as early evidence of district capacity

May 7, 2010 – Meeting with Superintendents

Monthly meeting with Superintendents of Level 4 Schools to clarify processes and timelines and share ideas

May 12, 2010 – Conference Call on Local Stakeholder Groups and Process Timelines

Participants: Superintendents and their key district staff and local union presidents; ESE staff

Content of the Call: Discussion of ESE guidance on School-Level Redesign Teams, Local Stakeholder Groups, and Process Timelines

May 18, 2010 – Meeting to Discuss Proposed School Turnaround Grant Rubric

Participants: Superintendents and their key district staff and local union presidents from all eligible districts; ESE staff

Content of the Call: Discussion of draft scoring rubric

May 21, 2010 – Conference Call on Alternative Programs for English-Language Learners

Participants: Superintendents and their key district staff and local union presidents; ESE staff

Content of the Call: Discussion of ESE guidance on Alternative Programs for ELLs

May 23, 2010 – Meeting to Discuss Draft Measurable Annual Goals (state requirement)

Participants: Superintendents and their key district staff and local union presidents; ESE staff

Content of the Call: Discussion of draft ESE guidance for measurable annual goals

June 3, 2010 – Conference Call on Strategic Design for First Year Redesign Plans

Participants: Superintendents and their key district staff and local union presidents; ESE staff

Content of the Call: Discussion of ESE guidance for *Selecting Outstanding Teachers for Level 4 Schools, More Time for Teacher Leader Collaboration, Tiered Instruction: Grounding Document and Self-Assessment Instrument, and Addressing Students’ Social, Emotional and Health Needs.*

June 24, 2010 – Meeting to Discuss the Collective Bargaining Implications in Level 4 Schools

Participants: Superintendents and their key district staff and local union presidents; ESE staff; state union leadership

Content of the meeting: Discussion of options and considerations for how to meet the federal School Turnaround Grant requirements through the turnaround plan collective bargaining negotiating process. ESE provided guidance on how parties might meet the rigorous federal standard while allowing for locally-developed solutions to be generated.

June 29, 2010 – Conference Call to Discuss Finalized Measurable Annual Goals

Participants: Superintendents and their key district staff and local union presidents; ESE staff

Content of the Call: Discussion of draft ESE guidance for measurable annual goals

July 22, 2010 – Conference Call on Turnaround Plans and Bridge Grant Funding

Participants: Superintendents and their key district staff and local union presidents; ESE staff

Content of the Call: Discussion of Turnaround Plan submission requirements, collective bargaining logistics, and timing/process for bridge grant fund allocations. Also included guidance on *Projects to Improve Workforce Development Services* and *Family and Community Engagement Standards and Rubrics* as well as current research on turnaround.

August 26, 2010 – Conference Call on Turnaround Plan (Bargaining and Interview)

Participants: Superintendents and their key district staff and local union presidents; ESE staff

Content of the Call: Discussion of Turnaround Plan collective bargaining logistics and upcoming Turnaround Plan interview process with each district.

October 6, 2010 – Conference Call to Discuss Measurable Annual Goals

Participants: Superintendents and their key district staff and local union presidents; ESE staff

Content of the Call: Discussion of recently released FAQ regarding aligning the measurable annual goals requirement with meaningful leading/lagging indicators for district monitoring of progress

October 15, 2010 – Workshop on Options for Increased Learning Time

Participants: Superintendents and their key district staff, school leaders from all Tier 1 schools, and local union presidents; ESE staff; Mass2020

Content of the Meeting: Full-day workshop to explore options for meeting the federal requirement for increased learning time in transformative and financially-sustainable ways. The workshop presented a variety of different approaches and considerations as no one model works every time nor fits every school. The workshop provided detailed examples, case studies, and enduring lessons in the areas of how to better use a school's current schedule to yield more learning time; staffing, scheduling, and budgeting solutions to increase learning time; new uses of technology to add effective learning time; and ways in which schools have added time to the day and year to tier instruction for all students.

November 17, 2010 – Workshop on Implementation Benchmarks

Participants: Superintendents and their key district staff and local union presidents; ESE staff

Content of the Meeting: In an effort to contribute to district-level capacity to support L4 schools, the half-day Benchmark Workshop was designed for district leaders to learn more about how to craft useful benchmarks that will support the implementation of school turnaround efforts. During the Workshop, district staff worked with ESE liaisons and colleagues to obtain a deeper understanding of how to develop useful and time-sensitive implementation benchmarks and develop action steps for working with level 4 schools.

July 15th, August 15th, and August 17th, 2011– Regional Workshops on Educator Evaluation in Level 4 Schools

Participants: Superintendents and their key district staff and local union presidents; school leadership teams, ESE staff

Content of the Workshops: Four full-day workshops to introduce district and school teams to the new educator evaluation regulations and provide early guidance on how to implement the model in their Level 4 schools for the 2011-12 school year in a manner that is consistent with regulations, accelerated the turnaround efforts underway, and lays the foundation for smart district –wide implementation for the 2011-12 school year.

September 28, 2011 – Conference Call on Implementing the new Educator Evaluation System

Participants: Superintendents and their key district staff and local union presidents; school leadership teams, ESE staff

Content of the Meeting: Announce ESE plans to provide support for Level 4 school implementation of the educator evaluation regulations and facilitate sharing of best practices among districts during early implementation. Presented *Implementation Guide* to assist with implementation of the system in Level 4 schools.