



Milestones: Race to the Top

Winter 2012

The RTTT program staff will periodically provide updates and highlights from projects and programs that may be of interest. If you have any questions, please contact rttt@doe.mass.edu.

Save the Date! RTTT Spring Marathon Event: May 1st

Planning is underway for the 2012 statewide RTTT conference and celebration to be held Tuesday, May 1, in Sturbridge. We encourage small teams from all RTTT districts, including superintendents, school leadership, teachers, school committee members, and union representatives, to gather and share best practices, hear from state leaders about the implementation of major RTTT programs, and strategize about sustaining projects when RTTT funding expires. When this newsletter went to press, final details, agendas, and speakers had not yet been finalized. We will notify districts by email as our plans are firmed up.

Educator Evaluation

On June 28, 2011, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education voted to adopt new regulations for educator evaluation in the Commonwealth, one of the requirements of our winning RTTT proposal. After months of internal work and extensive input from educators, teachers' unions, and others in the field, the first phase of educator evaluation was rolled out in September 2011 in 34 underperforming (Level 4) schools, as well as in 11 districts that volunteered to be early adopters of the new system. Four special education collaboratives are also participating. On January 10, 2012, ESE released the Massachusetts Model System for Educator Evaluation, including performance rubrics, draft contract language, and implementation information for districts. On that day, we also held a statewide webinar, with over 600 individuals representing more than 200 districts participating. The webinar was designed to walk participants through the process, explain how districts can adopt or adapt the Model System, and answer as many questions as possible. All of these activities, as well as a series of regional Getting Started work sessions, are intended to help RTTT districts prepare for implementation of the new evaluation regulations next school year.

More information about the regulations, workshops, and FAQs can be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/>.

New Suite of Electronic Tools Under Development

ESE is launching a new comprehensive Massachusetts teaching and learning system that will provide educators with online tools and resources to promote student achievement. This system will support educators and foster teaching and learning at every level—classroom, school, and district—by providing on-demand access to digital resources, curriculum planning tools, model curriculum units, embedded and formative assessments, and targeted data on student progress. The system will provide users with access to near-real-time student, teacher, and course data, which will give educators new actionable information and tools to serve their current students and to grow as professionals. The system will offer educators access to compelling print and multimedia resources aligned with current Massachusetts curriculum frameworks, which can be used to improve practice and programs that serve students. This suite of tools will be phased in over time, with the first components available to some users in the 2012–2013 school year. If you have questions, please contact InfoSystems@doe.mass.edu.



TELL Mass (formerly Mass TeLLS) Coming Soon!

A new, statewide educator survey, funded through RTTT and supported by several statewide stakeholders groups, including professional associations and teachers' unions, will be released in mid-March. Similar to the survey conducted in 2008, this confidential survey will be available to all school-based licensed educators in the state, collecting their input about teaching and learning conditions in their schools. All public schools and districts (not just RTTT grantees) are invited and encouraged to participate in the TELL (Teaching, Empowering, Leading, & Learning) Mass survey, which will be posted online from March 12 through April 16. More information about the survey and its intended audience, purpose, and process can be found at www.TELLMass.org.

RTTT Performance Measures

To help us keep abreast of the multiple RTTT projects being implemented in more than 250 districts, RTTT has developed a Goals and Performance Measures Workbook. With this new tool, districts will be able to measure progress throughout the duration of a project, rather than waiting until the end of the funding or program cycle to determine if the intended outcomes have been achieved. A series of technical assistance webinars were held in mid-January, and RTTT staff are available to assist if you need help. By assessing progress and identifying problems mid-stream, we hope to encourage districts to review the quality of their implementation and, if necessary, make corrections or changes. Information about the new measures, including FAQs, has been posted to the RTTT website at www.doe.mass.edu/rttt. Upcoming performance measures reports will be due in June/July 2012 and December 2012.

Grants/Funding Update

Since August, more than 60 ESE staff members were involved in reviewing district responses to the Years 2–4 RTTT RFP. Over 2,200 project proposals were reviewed, and ESE staff have worked with districts to make necessary changes. ESE divided the process into two review rounds. Sixty-five districts responded to the round 1 deadline on July 29, and 168 responded in round 2 on September 30. Round 2 reviews were completed at the end of January, and all awarded funds will be released by mid-February. ESE intends that this will be the last major review of RTTT proposals. Districts will be able to move forward with their Year 2–4 plans and make amendments to their grant as needed.

2011 Status of the Massachusetts Educator Workforce Report

The report marks the first time that ESE has aggregated, in one document, information about the current status of all licensed educators across the Commonwealth. The focus of most analyses is on teachers, but the report also includes data on principals, superintendents, and the overall educator workforce, where appropriate. Among other things, this report can help districts to identify hard-to-staff areas and to see how well teacher preparation programs are doing in training educators for current needs. The data in this report come primarily from two sources: data reported by districts to the state through the Education Personnel Information Management System (EPIMS) and data reported by preparation programs or districts to the state through the Educator Licensure and Recruitment system (ELAR). <http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/reports/1211edworkforce.pdf>.

Thank you to the educators working on the many RTTT projects each day. Remember that this is a marathon, not a sprint. If you have any questions, please contact rttt@doe.mass.edu.