



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234

TO: Strategic Planning Work Group
FROM: David M. Steiner
SUBJECT: Update: Race to the Top Implementation
DATE: October 14, 2010

SUMMARY

Issue for Discussion

The proposed time line for implementing New York's Race to the Top Plan.

Proposed Handling

This item will come before the Regents Strategic Planning Work Group for discussion at the October 2010 meeting.

Procedural History

In June, the Commissioner provided the Board with an overview of the State's Round 2 Race to the Top (RTTT) application. In September, the Board was presented with an analysis of our winning proposal, including specific reviewer comments and our ranking as second only to Massachusetts. This month, the Commissioner will summarize our progress with early implementation. The Strategic Planning Work Group will have a more in-depth discussion of the Department's four-year plans and time lines.

Background Information

On August 24th, the U.S. Department of Education announced that New York State was among the award winners in Round 2 of the federal competitive grant program, Race to the Top (RTTT). Since this time, staff have been working hard to complete early implementation activities, while recruiting temporary staff and developing longer-term work plans.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Regents affirm its support for the early implementation actions taken and the proposed implementation plans as outlined in the attached time lines.

Attachments

PROGRESS SINCE LAST MONTH

LEA Final Scopes of Work

Strong statewide support among school districts and public charter schools – as demonstrated by the submission of Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and Preliminary Scopes of Work signed by superintendents, board chairs and teacher union leaders – was an important factor in New York’s having a winning RTTT application. Almost 86 percent of the state’s local educational agencies (LEAs) committed to be participants in implementing the reforms described in our application.

Now with the award in hand, the State must submit Final Scopes of Work for all participating LEAs to the U.S. Department of Education by no later than November 22nd. Much of our early implementation efforts have focused on developing these templates and associated guidance materials, which were posted on the NYSED website on October 5th. I, Senior Deputy Commissioner King and several P-12 Senior Managers are now conducting regional visits and videoconferences to provide technical assistance to LEAs and answer questions as they work to complete the Final Scopes of Work. We also maintain an active dedicated e-mailbox for field questions (RTTT@mail.nysed.gov) and an up-to-date web page (<http://usny.nysed.gov/rttt/>).

This is a challenging set of tasks. First, our objective in designing the templates and guidance materials was to provide sufficient structure to ensure that all monies would be used to advance the Regents ambitious education reform agenda, while providing LEAs with some flexibility in making expenditure decisions consistent with local student needs. We also worked to build in sufficient accountability in the use of funds, while recognizing that more than half of the LEAs would be receiving less than \$50,000 over the four-year period. Second, the key infrastructure for delivering much of the needed professional development associated with implementation of the new standards, assessment and curriculum models are the Network Teams. In most – but not all – cases, the Network Teams will be managed regionally through the BOCES or operated by the Big 5 city school districts. It is not possible for the Department to establish a single methodology for constructing these Teams or a single formula to calculate the costs of the Teams. There is simply too much diversity in regional workforces, cost of living, and the like. This has added complexity to completing the Final Scopes of Work, but has also generated a number of conversations regarding greater collaboration and shared investment in educational reform regionally that could prove helpful in the long term.

Planning

Our application submitted in June created a comprehensive and exciting framework for statewide educational reform, but it also left a number of implementation and operational details to be fleshed out later. Now is that later time. Senior Managers have developed high-level timelines for the work in each of the four assurance areas, which are attached here. The timelines do not include every task that will be necessary to accomplish our reform goals; rather they reflect major milestones. The timelines clearly indicate that it will be a complex undertaking to provide overall leadership to the

RTTT program and ensure that all the moving pieces work in concert. The Department now must take these timelines and our final budget – recently negotiated with the U.S. Department of Education – and create a Final Scope of Work for the entire state plan. This state Scope of Work is also due to the federal government by November 22nd.

SED Restructuring/RTTT Staffing

Prior to the State's initial RTTT application in January, the Board and I committed to a restructuring of the Department that would better position its human and fiscal resources to focus on Regents priorities. The restructuring plan was then incorporated into our RTTT application as evidence of the Board's commitment to invest in large-scale educational reform. The new reporting relationships became operational July 1st. This month's appointment of the Deputy Commissioner for the new Office of Adult Education and Workforce Development solidifies our organizational structure.

The Race to the Top budget calls for the hiring of 25 temporary professional staff and 4 support staff distributed across the Offices of P-12 Education and Higher Education. Six of the professional positions will be hired to staff the RTTT Performance Management Office. The mission of this office is:

- Oversee the implementation of all RTTT initiatives;
- Develop and monitor the implementation of performance metrics;
- Coordinate all Requests for Proposals (RFPs); and
- Ensure that all RTTT services are aligned and effective

The additional professional staff will be hired to support RTTT efforts in the Office of P-12 Education (District Services; Innovative School Models; and Curriculum, Standards and Instruction) as well as in the Office of Higher Education. All the positions have been approved by both the NYS Department of Civil Service and the Division of the Budget. Job vacancies were initially posted a month ago and we continue to recruit for most of these positions.

Collaborations

Since winning a Round 2 RTTT award, the Department's leadership team has had a number of opportunities to meet with the other state winners, nonprofit organizations and foundations to share our challenges and explore possibilities for collaboration. I am confident that many of these conversations will bear fruit in the very near future. Also, the U.S. Department of Education is building a technical assistance network to support all twelve RTTT winning states that is being launched this month.

Conclusion

Much has been accomplished this past month, but there is much more left to do in order to have a solid foundation for the work to be done in the coming four years.