

Special Meeting
Tuesday, April 27, 2010 7:30 PM Eastern

Bloomfield Board of Education 1133 Blue Hills
Avenue Board Room
1133 Blue Hills Avenue
Bloomfield, CT 06002

1. Establishment of a Quorum and Call to Order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. New Business
 - 3.A. High School Principal Leadership Profile
 - 3.B. Approval of Plans and Specifications for Carmen Arace Roof Project #011-0075
 - 3.C. Approval of Race to the Top Memorandum of Understanding
 - 3.D. Discussion and Possible Action on Fiscal 2009-2010 Expenditures
4. Adjournment



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



April 16, 2010

Dear Colleague,

As you are aware, Connecticut is applying for Phase II of the Race to the Top (RTTT) grant – a competitive \$4.35 billion education reform program enacted as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). By applying in Phase I of the competition we obtained very helpful feedback from the U.S. Department of Education reviewers to inform and improve our application for Phase II.

This memorandum serves to provide you with an update regarding the major modifications that will be included in our Phase II application and important timelines and updates for the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) elements and process.

The overarching changes within our Phase II application will be to:

- Expand the number of participating Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to reach every community in CT **by providing incentive funds and services to every LEA**;
- Increase the depth of our application by limiting the number of “elective offerings”;
- Establish new partnerships, particularly from the business community, to secure financial sustainability of reforms;
- Engage higher education more extensively;
- Develop new supporting legislation; and
- Develop a new roadmap for education reform in CT—one that integrates the past with the present and with the new realities and assurances required in the **Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)**, which are *clearly aligned with RTTT reforms*.

In order to be a strong competitor for the RTTT grant in Phase II, Connecticut is asking **all** Superintendents, Board of Education Chairs, and Local Union Presidents, that elect to implement all or significantly all of the State’s RTTT plan, to once again formally sign a MOU outlining the LEAs commitment to implement the State’s plan.

Our intent is to distribute the MOU to LEAs the week of April 26, 2010, along with a synopsis of what will be required of LEAs for Phase II of the RTTT. In order for Connecticut to submit an application to the U.S. Department of Education on June 1, 2010, **LEAs must submit signed MOUs to the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) no later than May 19, 2010.**

In order to provide guidance and answer any questions LEAs may have about the Phase II Application and the MOU content, the CSDE will be **conducting a series of conference calls from the period of May 1, 2010 through May 19, 2010.** Please know that more firm dates will be forwarded to you shortly.

A *preliminary* summary of the elements, by reform area, that will be included in our Phase II Application and MOU are referenced below. This summary represents the core elements essential to the RTTT grant.

Standards and Assessments

- Support the transition to and implementation of national common standards and high-quality assessments.

Data Systems to Support Instruction

- Participation in the expansion of the state longitudinal data system (SLDS) to include student schedule and staff modules.
- Providing data to the Connecticut Education Data and Research (CEDaR) to support the state and federal evaluation of the RTTT initiatives and on-going development of the State's integrated PK – 16 SLDS.
- Integration of the CMT vertical scale results as a component of local accountability to measure student growth.
- Participation in professional development on the use of data and use data to improve instruction.
- Make available appropriate data for research and program evaluation.
- Use of the Grade 3-8 Benchmark Assessment System (CBAS) or an approved locally developed benchmark system to monitor student progress.

Great Teachers and Leaders

- Implementation of a new, comprehensive system for supporting, supervising and evaluating teachers and principals, to be developed by CSDE in collaboration with external partners and LEAs, based on:
 - *The Common Core of Teaching*
 - *Connecticut's Guidelines for Teacher Evaluation and Professional Development*
 - *The Common Core of Leading*
 - Multiple measures of assessment (including student growth)
 - Current best practices in Connecticut
 - Statewide report indicators required by RTTT
- Utilization of the new evaluation system developed to conduct annual evaluations that will inform professional development and decisions around compensation, promotion, retention, tenure and removal.
- Implementation of Secondary School Reform: Part I of the Connecticut Eight-Year Plan.
- Collaboration with CSDE to ensure equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals via Advanced Placement course expansion and incentives for hiring, recruiting, and retaining highly effective teachers and principals in shortage areas and disadvantaged communities (*LEAs may have to apply for these incentive funds from CSDE*).
- Participation in initiatives that foster equity, diversity, and inclusion.

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- Participation in the Connecticut Accountability for Learning Initiative (CALI) to use data to improve instruction.
- Family engagement and parent leadership training activities.
- Participation in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) innovation initiatives.
- Piloting the Board Examination Project (LEAs have the opportunity to elect to implement this project).

Turning Around the Lowest Achieving Schools

(Districts Identified: Bridgeport, Hartford, New Britain, New Haven, and Windham)

- Implementation of requirements of Section 1003 (g) of the ESEA Title I School Improvement Grants within the context of the CALI Framework.

If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Jessica Andrews, CSDE's ARRA Coordinator, at 860-713-6582 or via email at jessica.andrews@ct.gov.

We also invite you to provide any feedback on the preliminary MOU elements and application, via email at RTTT@ct.gov. Your involvement and support is integral to submitting a winning Phase II Application in June, as the winners of Phase I obtained **over 90 percent support** from their LEAs, including signatures of all three stakeholders: Superintendents, Board of Education Chairs, and Local Union Presidents.

Your support is greatly appreciated and we look forward to working together on this very important initiative.

Sincerely yours,



Mark K. McQuillan
Commissioner of Education