

Race to the Top News and Views

RttT.education.ohio.gov

A Bi-weekly Bulletin of RttT

Ohio | Department
of Education

Volume 2, Number 4, November 10, 2011



RttT Staff

Erik Bower,
Budget/Accountability Manager
(614) 728-0745
Erik.Bower@ode.state.oh.us

Adrienne Carr,
Professional Development Manager
(614) 995-5162
Adrienne.Carr@ode.state.oh.us

Scott Hoshor,
Federal Liaison
(614) 728-9618
Scott.Hoshor@ode.state.oh.us

Joan Nichols,
Communications/Outreach Manager
(614) 644-6327
Joan.Nichols@ode.state.oh.us

Maggie Niedzwiecki,
Director, RttT
(614) 420-0288
Maggie.Niedzwiecki@ode.state.oh.us

Sandy Stewart,
Administrative Assistant III
(614) 387-2216
Sandy.Stewart@ode.state.oh.us

RttT Regional Coordinators

Clairie Huff-Franklin,
RttT Urban Coordinator
(614) 420-0296
Clairie.Huff-Franklin@ode.state.oh.us

Laura Keller,
RttT Northwest Coordinator
(614) 420-0298
Laura.Keller@ode.state.oh.us

Jeff Royalty,
RttT Southwest Coordinator
(614) 420-0003
Jeff.Royalty@ode.state.oh.us

Scott Spears,
RttT Central Ohio Coordinator
(614) 420-0297
Scott.Spears@ode.state.oh.us

Ivan Wilson,
RttT Southeast Coordinator
(614) 420-0299
Ivan.Wilson@ode.state.oh.us

Celebrating Ohio's RttT Year-One

On November 1st, educators and administrators from across the state had an opportunity to review their progress at a convention in Columbus called "Ohio's RttT Strategy: One Down...Three to Grow". The conference program and proceedings are available on the RttT website: RttT.education.ohio.gov.

Nearly 1,300 local and state education leaders implementing Ohio's RttT plan spent the day talking about the challenges, successes, and lessons learned in year-one of the RttT grant as they prepare to kick-off year-two. Over one hundred breakout sessions and general sessions were conducted by RttT practitioners and ODE personnel.

In addition, a panel of education leaders from across the nation (**Matt Gandal**, USDOE, Director of Technical Assistance and Support, Implementation and Support Unit, **Dr. Lillian Lowery**, Delaware Department of Education, Secretary of Education, **Michael Sawyers**, Ohio Department of Education, Deputy Superintendent and **Dr. Cathy Whitehouse**, The Intergenerational School, Founder, Principal and Chief-Educator) exchanged their views on current and expected education issues as they shared best practices and lessons learned associated with Race to the Top. **Mark Real**, President and CEO of KidsOhio served as the panel's moderator. Their presence at the convention greatly contributed to the success of an event that engaged attendees in vital conversations about the transformation and reform work that Ohio's RttT Transformation Teams are doing.

A great way to celebrate RttT's first year!

—Ohio's Race to the Top Team



Pictured left to right: Mark Real, Michael Sawyers, Dr. Lillian Lowery, Dr. Cathy Whitehouse and Matt Gandal.

Ohio RTT Year 2 Kick-Off Event

Special Guest Speaker Rebecca Zazove Education Program Specialist

Implementation and Support Unit | U.S. Department of Education

Thank you everyone, not only for the invitation to join you today, but more importantly for the work you've done over the past year, and for the work that lies ahead.

Out of 46 states that applied to the Race to the Top Program, Ohio emerged among the mere 12 with the strongest plans to improve schools and foster support for parents, teachers, and school leaders in ways that will boost student learning.

There's a reason for that – it's because of your commitment, your drive, and your courage to give Ohio children a stronger foundation for success in high school, college and career.

These are extraordinarily challenging times across the country. State and local budgets are strained and yet, it's never been more important to invest in education.

The truth is that the 21st century is a global knowledge economy where children in Ohio will eventually compete for jobs with children not just from Michigan, but from India or China.

The stakes for receiving a high quality education have never been higher.

This is also a really inspiring time to be in education. We are all part of a larger movement happening across the country.

Education is at the forefront of conversations – not only among policy thinkers and leaders in Washington - but on every level of government, across the business community, among economists and so on.

And it's no surprise. Race to the Top alone has generated more education reform in the last two years than our country has seen in the last decade.

Aside from the 46 states and DC that have developed statewide reform plans:

- 44 states and DC are in the process of raising their academic standards;
- 16 states have changed laws increasing their assistance to low performing schools; and

- 22 states have enacted laws to improve teacher quality.

Race to the Top is both an extraordinary challenge and unprecedented opportunity to make the kind of investments that are necessary to provide children with a world-class education.

You know better than anyone how tough this work is. What you're doing – raising standards, building more robust data systems, supporting teachers and principals in improving their practices and turning around persistently low-performing schools – is no easy task.

Over the last year you've laid extensive groundwork to:

- Prepare teachers to transition to the new and improved academic standards by creating webinars, online modules, and hundreds of curricula supports;
- Build more effective ways to collaborate and share effective lesson plans and classroom practices through the State Instructional Improvement System;
- Run an Innovate Model grant competition that 121 districts participated in; and
- Provide additional teacher preparation and professional development support through TeachOhio, the Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellows, and your Resident Educator Programs.

Not to mention the countless hours of meetings, research, contract reviews, reports and outreach to your nearly 500 participating districts through Ohio's regional support structure.

Throughout the process I have had the pleasure of being Ohio's program officer for Race to the Top, as part of the Department's Implementation and Support Unit.

Our goal in the Implementation and Support Unit is to have a point of contact who:

continued on p. 3

- Understands their state context and challenges;
- Focuses on helping states meet their performance goals;
- Provides timely and substantive feedback;
- Highlights state successes; and
- Works with the other program offices within the U.S. Department of Education to address issues across programs that impact state reform efforts.

Through the Implementation and Support Unit, Race to the Top states will have access to on-going communities of practice to access national expertise and collaboratively problem-solve.

Moreover, we will support all states through national meetings, development of exemplary materials and tools, and coordination with Department-funded technical assistance centers.

As issues are identified and resolved, approaches developed for one state can, as appropriate, become standard operating practice and available for all states.

As your program officer, I have engaged with Ohio in a Race to the Top program review process throughout the past year.

The State has participated in ongoing conversations,

provided monthly progress updates on specific work streams, and hosted me and several of my colleagues for an on-site program review this past June.

Throughout this process, Ohio has considered not only its progress on meeting timelines and managing its budgets but also assessed its quality of the implementation of its Race to the Top plan and its progress towards meeting specific performance measures and goals.

You've made tremendous progress in the last year and I hope you're all very proud of the work you've accomplished because it's just the beginning.

In this next year, you've laid out goals to:

- Lead a possible multi-state procurement opportunity for an Instructional Improvement System vendor;
- Pilot the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System in 136 districts; and
- Select a Race to the Top Assessment consortium in which to become a Governing state and take a more active role in assessment development.

As we move into the second year of Race to the Top, and take on this next set of challenges, keep in mind that your work has not only be an extraordinary

example to the country – it's a source of inspiration. You and the other Race to the Top grantees are showing the rest of the country what's possible in education reform.

And the Department is your partner in this. We're here to support you in building a bigger, better, brighter future for kids across Ohio.

Whenever the challenge seems to great or the task too small, remember that the time and effort we put into to improving our education system today, is an investment in creating greater opportunities for more children, for years to come.

Thank you again, for inviting me to join you today.



RttT Workshops, Webinars and Trainings

Year 2 Webinar Series – Presented by Battelle for Kids and Ohio RttT

November 16, 2011—*Matrix of Achievement and Progress (MAAP): What is this tool? Where do I access it? How can I use it for school improvement?*

A new interactive tool has been introduced for all Ohio educators to quickly help you determine the relative strengths that exist across the district by schools, grades and subjects where Ohio value-added information is available. This tool allows users to: view progress and achievement data in the same report; interact with reports—toggle to district-, building-, grade- or subject-level views; rollover data points to get additional information; and display multiple years of data to depict change over time. Learn how this user-friendly tool can help you to communicate and share valuable information with your staff, colleagues, and even your community.

January 18, 2012—*Getting Ready for Teacher-level VA Reports: What every administrator needs to know*

An additional 30% of reading and math teachers in grades 4-8 are expected to receive value-added reports in September, 2012. This webinar is designed to help administrators become better informed about what the process for creating reports entails and what you and your staff should understand about teacher-level value-added reporting.

April 18, 2012—*The Genie is out of the Bottle: Important considerations and suggestions for building leaders about how best to leverage teacher-level value-added reports*

Teacher-level value-added reporting introduces a new dimension to our understanding of teacher quality. These reports provide valuable information that, if handled well, can be used strategically to advance your school improvement efforts. Of equal importance is that the delivery of such reports is sure to have an impact on various aspects of your school's culture. Join this webinar to increase your awareness about wise uses for these reports.

Don't Forget: Year 1 Value-Added Webinars Available Online

The four (4) value-added webinars that were offered in June 2011 by Battelle for Kids are available online. Webinar topics include:

- **Webinar 1: Value-Added: Then, Now and in the Future**
- **Webinar 2: Link Before You Leap**
- **Webinar 3: Building Capacity Using Value-Added in School Improvement**
- **Webinar 4: Implications of Teacher-Level Value-Added Data**

These webinars can be accessed through this link: http://portal.battelleforkids.org/Ohio/Projects/Ohio_Race_to_the_Top/ohio_Race_to_the_Top_webinars.html?sflang=en

Announcements

RttT Conference Proceedings and Materials Available

A copy of the RttT Conference proceedings, PowerPoints, as well as handouts and papers are available at www.RttT.education.ohio.gov.

RttT Posters or Banners Available

If your RttT LEA is interested in having a poster or banner with the RttT logo that could be used at upcoming meetings, please contact your RttT Regional Coordinator to request a poster or banner.

Application Area B Reporting

As you transition to the new standards and assessments, one of your Application Area B commitments includes providing opportunities for teachers and administrators to participate in professional development on the new academic standards. Over this next year and in the subsequent years, please track and document the professional development for which your teachers and administrators have been involved, and the number of teachers and administrators who have participate in district and state-led professional development on the standards and assessments. This information should be included in the annual report you submit every year.

A Sample of Ohio's Transformation Efforts

Southwest Ohio

Tecumseh Local Schools

Teachers Conduct Action Research to Improve Student Learning



A group of Tecumseh Middle School teachers are now in their second year of classroom action research aimed at increasing student learning in reading and writing through the use of frequent formative assessments. Members of the group represent each of the middle school grade levels and special education: Mrs. Jana Flory, 6th Grade; Mrs. Deb Hicks, 7th Grade; Ms. Christie Strait, 8th Grade; and Ms. Lauren McFarland, Intervention Specialist. The action research project is part of a partnership with Wittenberg University titled "Teachers As Collaborative Learners and Leaders" and is facilitated by Dr. Roberta Linder. The goal of the program is to connect teachers in public schools with university faculty in sustainable professional learning communities. The belief is that teachers who design action research that is relevant to their particular classroom situations, conduct that research collaboratively and work with university faculty to become familiar with current research in the field and



best pedagogical practices will show significant improvements in student learning. Teachers who are learners themselves positively impact student achievement.

Teachers in the formative assessment PLC are focusing this year on collecting quantifiable data, as well as their observations of student performance, in order to determine the impact that their various formative assessment strategies have on teaching and learning. At the beginning of the year teachers collected baseline information on their students. Each student completed an interest inventory, a reading comprehension survey and an attitudinal survey. Students also took their first STAR reading assessment in the Accelerated Reader program to give teachers a beginning reading level and comprehension score. In addition, each student submitted a piece of writing in response to the prompt "Write about an object that is important to you. Describe it and tell why

it is important."

Teachers are in the process of establishing common scoring anchor papers for this pre-assessment based on the rubric they are using to score student writing this year. Each of these above



instruments will be readministered at the end of the year to measure student growth.

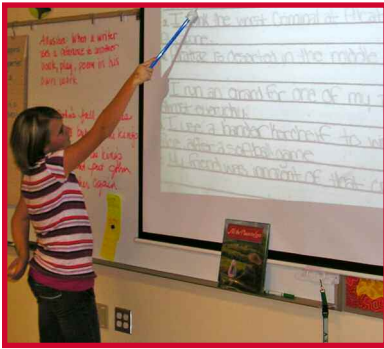
Last year, as teachers were developing their common formative assessments, they met every other week to share ideas and to debrief on the strategies they had tried in their classrooms. This year they are meeting about once a month. Meeting less frequently allows for more in-depth implementation of practices with their students and provides better data for analysis. We often think of an assessment as having to be a test. When effective, frequent formative assessment is implemented in a classroom it becomes a seamless part of instruction. Two strategies that teachers are using in the area of Reading are "Chapter Keepers" and "Thinkmarks." As students read a novel, they use the "Chapter Keeper" to help them understand and remember key points from each chapter of the book. After reading a chapter, students write: a one-sentence summary of the chapter, one or two questions or observations about the behavior or thinking of the characters, a memorable quote, a memorable description, a new word they encountered and a headline that encapsulates the chapter.

Similarly, students use "Thinkmarks" each day with their sustained silent reading. The Thinkmark resembles a bookmark with a small space for students to write one important or memorable idea from their reading each day. Teachers help students focus on writing meaningful statements by asking them to use a technique called "Say Something" as they write their Thinkmark. "Say Something" encourages students to: ask a question, make a prediction, or make a connection.



Teachers have adopted the "6 + 1 Trait" writing program as their model for teaching writing. Each of the teachers participated in a one-day training on 6 + 1 Trait writing in the

continued on p. 6



Spring of 2011. Over the summer teachers worked to map out their year in writing and selected picture books, novels and other literature to use as mentor texts. Carefully selected mentor texts help students to see how authors make use of

good writing. Through our Race to the Top grant the LEA has purchased mentor texts to help teach each of the six traits: ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency and conventions. Along with the work of professional authors, students share their own work with one another on a regular basis. Technology helps students to do this sharing and also provides a good method for teacher modeling of good writing.

Students use a rubric to focus on the criteria that will ensure that their writing is top quality. After completing their first draft and receiving the scored rubric back from their teachers, students complete a second draft to correct any problems they had the first time. Students collaborate in small groups to help one another improve their writing. Teachers report that use of the rubric helps students improve significantly from the first to the second written piece. Individual conferences between the student and the teacher also help boost this improvement.



Teachers are encouraged by the progress they have seen with students already this year. Students are becoming writers. Their composition books have become a part of their daily classroom routine. One of the teachers had a student ask, when given an assignment, if she could brainstorm some ideas in her journal. Another teacher had students ask if they could return to an assignment they had worked on to make it suitable for publication in the classroom. When teachers begin to see results like this with their students it is an indication of the quality of professional learning that is taking place among the members of their team. "Learning for all" really does mean **all** – adults as well as students.



RttT Southwest Regional Coordinator
Jeff Royalty

Southeast Ohio

Logan-Hocking School District

The Logan-Hocking School District is located in the beautiful Hocking Hills, home to a number of state parks that attract numerous tourists and visitors throughout the year. The LEA's student population is approximately 4,100 students (five Pre-K through, four elementary schools, one 5-8 middle school, and one 9-12 high school). The LEA's low income percentage is over 55% eligible for free and reduced meals.

The LEA has a history of steady growth in school improvement. For the past two years, the LEA has been excellent, and was effective for several years prior to that. Six of the LEA's seven buildings were designated as Schools of Promise, including all five elementary schools; Central, Chieftain, Green, Hocking Hills, and Union Furnace Elementaries, as well as Logan High School.

The buildings with the number of years they have each been Schools of Promise are as follows:

Central Elementary for 5 years

Chieftain Elementary for 3 years

Green Elementary for 5 years

Hocking Hills Elementary for 3 years

Union Furnace Elementary for 5 years

Logan High School for 2 years

The LEA credits its success to a high performing staff, which works collaboratively to improve student achievement. The LEA's Primary Literacy Program (PLP) yields excellent results with elementary language arts. The middle school and high school have implemented Read180 to assist students needing reading intervention. The use of Teacher Based Teams, Building Level Teams, and the LEA Leadership/ Transformation Team have worked well in developing a solid approach to school and district improvement.



RttT Southeast Regional Coordinator
Ivan Wilson

continued on p. 7

Northwest Ohio

Sidney City Schools

A Framework for Collaborative Implementation

Sidney City Schools has been actively implementing the Race to the Top Goals from day one. After reviewing the goals and strategies of RttT, the Transformation Team quickly decided to involve as many staff members as possible. A dynamic framework for collaboration was established and staff voluntarily agreed to take part in the work. Over 82 staff members have been assigned to teams and meet on a regular basis. Each member of the Transformation Team facilitates a specific team and then reports to the quarterly Transformation Team meetings for review.

The Standards and Assessment Team consists of a teacher in grades K-3, 4-5, 6-8 and 9-12 for each content area - math, language arts, science and social studies (16 members total). They regularly attend ODE and regional informational meetings for updates on the new standards and assessments and then communicate the information to the staff through trainings, newsletters, and department discussions. The team worked closely with the kindergarten teachers and curriculum director to transition into the new standards for the 2011-12 school year.

The Data Team consists of twelve members from all areas in Sidney City Schools. They completed the OIP Decision Framework last year and set specific goals related to improving instruction and climate. Their responsibilities consist of reviewing district data, assisting building leadership share data with the staff, and progress monitor our action steps in improving instruction throughout the year. In addition, they make recommendations to our instructional team for staff professional development.

The Sidney Instructional Team is divided into four areas based on district needs: Differentiated Instructional Team, Formative Assessment Team, Interventions and Climate Team. Their main goal is to review the building needs analysis and offer support, resources, and Professional Development (PD). This ensures high quality PD based on needs at a local level. These teams have been attending national, state, and regional trainings to ensure they are prepared to meet the needs of our staff.

The schools' technology team is designed to investigate our existing IIS, apply for the state pilot, and assist with instructional technology to enhance our instruction, such as classroom IPADS and student response systems.

The Pilot Team investigates grant and pilot opportunities and makes recommendations to the district administration and the transformation team. Sidney City Schools recently

applied for a *Gear Up* grant with Edison State Community College to promote career and college readiness.

The Evaluation Team is researching comprehensive models for certified staff/administrator evaluations and attending state and regional trainings. They are examining walk-through protocols and current district practices.

Not a week goes by that one or two teams aren't actively meeting or offering trainings in the assurance areas. The collaborative framework has kept the momentum of RttT strong within the district.



RttT
Northwest
Regional
Coordinator
**Laura
Keller**

Northeast Ohio

Making a difference in the Northeast

Amherst's has created a way to communicate with all stakeholders through a newsletter that is sent out 6 times a year. The newsletter share's their RttT initiatives and the work that the administration and teachers are doing to align their goals to improve student achievement and progress. Please visit their website as their newsletter is consider one of our exemplars in the state.

Good News! Cloverleaf has been one of our first schools in the Northeast to initiate an invitation for our specialist to visit at the building level. They are proud of the work they have been able to continue through the RttT grant and want us to witness how the work gets filtered down to the building and then into action!

Strong leadership in Willoughby-Eastlake from all levels is helping to build their capacity for understanding teacher evaluation, by doing a book study together. The transformation team is reading the book *Teacher Evaluation to Enhance Professional Practice*. Each meeting, they are assigned a section of the book to read and are given a study guide to reflect on what they are reading. The team realizes that they will need to understand the new requirements for evaluation and feel that it is important to have a knowledge base on how best to go about deciding what path they should take, when developing the components for their evaluation tool.



RttT Director
**Maggie
Niedzwiecki**

continued on p. 8

Urban Ohio

Cincinnati's RttT Efforts Attract University Funding

Cincinnati Public Schools' RttT efforts are attracting more support. During the summer, Cincinnati won one of the RttT Innovation Grant awards for their STEM initiative.

The University of Cincinnati's College of Engineering and Applied Science (CEAS) is supporting the CPS efforts by leading an interdisciplinary effort on and off the university campus, which includes Cincinnati Public Schools, because Cincinnati's RttT STEM efforts demonstrate a dedication to enacting STEM.

The Cincinnati Engineering Enhanced Mathematics and Science Program (CEEMS), is the university's effort to reach beyond UC's colleges to inspire and educate high school teachers and students from across the region. Completing the UC team for CEEMS are the university's College of Education, Criminal Justice and Human Services (CECH) and the McMicken College of Arts and Sciences.

The National Science Foundation (NSF) has awarded CEEMS \$9.2 million for five years.

Via CEEMS, UC is the higher education Core Partner working with 14 Core Partner school districts: Cincinnati Public Schools, Oak Hills Local School District, Princeton City Schools, Norwood City Schools, Winton Woods City School District, and the Clermont County STEM Consortium of nine school districts. CEEMS will reach a total of 1,925 teachers who impact 38,500 students from 7th-12th grades over the five years of the grant.

CEEMS is a program designed to meet the growing need for engineering-educated teachers. Its goal is to equip teachers with the skills needed to provide students with opportunities to reach and surpass recently revised Ohio State Science Standards in addition to equipping students with a set of universal skills.

CEEMS provides further education to both pre-service teachers and in-service teachers. The five goals of the engineering-based program are:

- Improve 7-12 student science and mathematics achievement to prepare for and increase interest in the college study of engineering or other STEM careers.
- Develop mathematics and science teacher knowledge of engineering and the engineering design and challenge-based instruction process through explicit training and classroom implementation support.

- Recruit engineering undergraduates as science or mathematics teachers through involvement in teaching experiences with younger college students in the schools and through a defined licensure program.
- Recruit career changers to science or mathematics teaching through defined licensure programs.
- Build a collaborative sustainable education licensure STEM degree-granting infrastructure positively impacting the entire region.

This support to Cincinnati Public Schools' RttT STEM efforts helps to extend the funding that Cincinnati received from the ODE RttT Innovations grant, and helps them to sustain the initiatives put forth in the districts' Innovation grant plans and Scope of Work. For more information, contact Dr. Anant R. Kukreti, Principal Investigator, CEEMS MSP, Director for Engineering Outreach and Professor, School of Energy, Environmental, Biological and Medical Engineering at anant.kukreti@uc.edu.



RttT Urban
Regional
Coordinator
**Claire
Huff-
Franklin**

Central Ohio

Liberty Union-Thurston Schools developed a teacher evaluation system which is in alignment with current state and federal criteria, and which teachers understand. At the RttT Conference on November 1st, presenters shared the rationale behind the evaluation system and student growth measure, the process for developing it, and what is being done to pilot it in the district. A PowerPoint of their presentation can be found at rttT.education.ohio.gov.



RttT Central
Regional
Coordinator
**Scott
Spears**

