

THE FIRST 100 DAYS

LESSONS LEARNED FROM RACE TO THE TOP ROUND ONE WINNERS

AUGUST 2010

Executive Summary: The First Hundred Days

The federal Race to the Top (RTTT) competition has brought sweeping changes to the nation's education policy landscape, with 34 states changing their laws or regulations to become more competitive for the grant. In March 2010, Delaware and Tennessee became the first winners of the competition, and the U.S. Department of Education is expected to select up to 12 additional states for funding in August 2010. While the application process itself has been extremely competitive, it is only the beginning of a long road of reform, as Delaware and Tennessee have seen first-hand.

As soon as a state wins Race to the Top, it must quickly decide how it will prioritize implementing the grant's many projects. While there's no "best" way, Delaware and Tennessee's experiences suggest there are at least four areas that states are likely to focus on within the first one hundred days of winning Race to the Top. Each of these areas is outlined below, and memos describing the experiences and lessons learned from Delaware and Tennessee around the first three areas are available at www.tnscore.org/rttt.

Developing Short- and Long-Term Project Management Capacity: One of the most critical tasks to successfully implementing Race to the Top is building the necessary project management capacity. In the short-term, both Delaware and Tennessee built this capacity by reassigning existing staff to oversee the grant and bringing in outside consultants to provide short-term project management support. Both states are now beginning to build long-term capacity by developing an oversight structure to monitor the grant, recruiting and hiring new staff, reexamining the structure of their state education agencies

(SEAs), and bringing in state and national partners to provide long-term technical assistance on specific RTTT projects.

Communicating and Engaging Key Stakeholders: As part of the application process, states were required to obtain letters of support from key stakeholders. However, both Delaware and Tennessee found that building a deeper level of support and communications was critical to early Race to the Top implementation. To that end, both states have either launched or are working to launch communication campaigns targeting key stakeholders including superintendents, principals, teachers, political leaders, parents, and the general public.

Supporting LEAs in Writing Scopes of Work: Within 90 days of being awarded RTTT, states must submit scopes of work to the U.S. Department of Education outlining specifically how local education agencies (LEAs) will spend their portion of RTTT funds over the next four years. Neither Delaware nor Tennessee outlined detailed plans for this scope of work process in their RTTT application. However, both states found the process to be incredibly intensive, requiring the development of a scope of work template and rubric, communicating those rubrics and templates to districts, providing technical assistance to districts as they drafted their scopes of work, and establishing a process for reviewing and approving scopes of work.

Launching One to Two Other High-Priority Projects: While the above activities could easily fill the first hundred days, both Delaware and Tennessee also launched one to two other high-priority projects. Specifically, both Delaware and Tennessee

immediately began revising their teacher and principal evaluations to include student growth measures, and Tennessee launched a series of professional development activities focused on how to use the state's value-added data to improve instruction. While every state may choose different projects, it seems likely most states will begin working on a small number of additional high-priority projects within the first hundred days.

To see Race to the Top documents from Delaware and Tennessee (including scope of work templates and RTTT-related RFIs and RFPs), please visit www.tnscore.org/rttt.

About SCORE

- **Founded in 2008 by former U.S. Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist**
- **In 2009, SCORE brought stakeholders from across Tennessee together to develop a common vision for improving education in the state**
- **In 2010, SCORE has been deeply involved in Tennessee's Race to the Top implementation efforts**
- **SCORE is now focused on gathering lessons learned during Race to the Top implementation to assist with implementation efforts in Tennessee and around the country**

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Scopes of Work: Lessons from Delaware and Tennessee

On March 29, 2010, Delaware and Tennessee were selected as the only two states to receive funding in Round 1 of the U.S. Department of Education's Race to the Top (RTTT) competition. According to federal guidelines, fifty percent of Race to the Top funds had to be distributed to local education agencies (LEAs) that had signed on to their state's RTTT reform plan, and those participating LEAs had to submit plans for how they would spend their portion of RTTT within 90 days of states winning RTTT. In Tennessee, this meant there were 90 days to help 136 school districts and 4 special schools decide how to spend \$250 million. In Delaware, this meant there were 90 days to help 19 districts and 18 charter schools craft plans for spending \$59 million. While neither state would claim to have had a perfect process, Delaware and Tennessee's scope of work experiences offer some key lessons for future Race to the Top winners.

Common Challenges

Delaware and Tennessee faced at least three common challenges as they attempted to assist districts with developing scopes of work (the technical name for districts' plans to spend local Race to the Top funds over the four years of the grant).

First, both states faced communication challenges. Although both Delaware and Tennessee had received wide support from stakeholders in their Race to the Top applications, there was relatively little knowledge among superintendents in both states about the details of their respective state's RTTT application and how districts would be allowed to spend their share of RTTT funds. This communications effort was complicated by the fact that while districts were trying to write their scopes of work, both states were trying to decide the specific types of local expenditures they would approve (e.g.,

whether to approve technology expenditures) and the exact implementation schedule for state-funded RTTT services to districts (which many districts wanted to understand so that they didn't spend local funds on services the state would provide).

Second, districts had varying levels of capacity to develop plans for implementing the specific reforms called for by RTTT. For example, many districts had limited expertise or experience proactively recruiting and retaining high-quality teachers and leaders as well as turning around low-performing schools in the ways required by RTTT. Additionally, the

In both states, there was relatively little knowledge among superintendents about the details of their respective state's RTTT application and how districts would be allowed to spend their share of RTTT funds.

drafting of a detailed four-year scope of work within the limited 90-day timeframe demanded a significant time commitment from district and school leaders at the same time spring testing and other end-of-the-year activities were occurring.

Third, states faced the difficult challenge of trying to determine when a district's scope of work was high-quality. Neither Delaware nor Tennessee had proposed a formal rubric for judging scopes of work in their Race to the Top applications, and this left both states trying to develop a reliable approval process at the same time they were trying to assist districts in writing their scopes of work.

While both Delaware and Tennessee faced all three of these challenges, these challenges were especially daunting in Tennessee, where the state had to oversee the approval

of approximately four times more scopes of work than in Delaware. The following sections examine how both Delaware and Tennessee approached these challenges.

Delaware *Communications*

During the second week of May, the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) held regional one-day workshops in each of the state's three counties to introduce districts and charter schools to the scope of work process. At each meeting, state leaders shared information about the state's RTTT plan, presented scope of work guidelines, and shared the state's scope of work template (see details below). In addition, each of these meetings devoted time to working one-on-one with each district and school in attendance to clarify a vision for and begin drafting their individual scope of work plan.

Several documents were distributed to districts and schools at these workshops. The most comprehensive document was the 15-page scope of work template. This template began by outlining the nine characteristics on which a plan would be assessed including whether it was (1) comprehensive (2) integrated (3) collaborative (4) prioritized (5) sequenced (6) evidence-based (7) best-practice oriented (8) outcome-focused and (9) ambitious but achievable. After describing each of these characteristics in detail, the template provided room for districts to write a 2-4 page summary of the vision, priorities, goals, capacity, success factors, and risks for the district's scope of work. After this summary, the template asked districts to outline their specific reform plans in each of 12 priority areas, with a deep focus on 4-6 areas (chosen by districts) and a lighter focus on the other 6-8 areas.

The twelve priorities areas were: (1) Supporting the development of new standards,

aligning curriculum to standards, and conducting assessments (2) Building a culture of college- and career- readiness in schools by removing obstacles to, and actively supporting, student engagement and achievement (3) Implementing and supporting improvement of the state longitudinal data system (4) Ensuring implementation of instructional improvement systems (IIS) and integrating state data coaches into instructional improvement systems (5) Conducting evaluations, integrating state development coaches, and using state educator evaluations as a primary factor in teacher and principal development, promotion, advancement, retention, and removal (6) Establishing new educator career paths linked to evaluation (7) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals (8) Implementing strategies to engage families and communities effectively in supporting the academic success of students (9) Ensuring that teachers and principals are effectively prepared (10) Adopting a state-identified model or another coherent approach to professional development (as approved by the State) and prioritizing the highest-impact professional development (11) Accelerating the development of instructional leaders and (12) Following the process for turning around schools selected for the Partnership Zone in accordance with state regulations and providing support to low-achieving schools.

For each priority area, the template listed what, if any, plans the state had for using the state's share of Race to the Top funding to provide support around that priority, a series of national partners and contacts that districts could reach out to if they wanted technical assistance on that priority, and several answers to questions the state anticipated districts might ask about each priority. For each of the 12 priorities, districts had to discuss their planned activities, timeline, personnel, performance measures, and budget. Districts had to write two pages for each of their top 4-6 priorities and one page for each of their other 6-8 priorities.

Technical Assistance

In addition to the regional workshops discussed above, the DDOE provided additional technical assistance to districts regarding scopes of work. Specifically, Secretary Lillian Lowery served as the primary contact for the 19 districts, frequently talking with superintendents about their scopes of work. Similarly, Deputy Secretary of Education Dan Cruce served as the primary

support for the 18 charter schools writing scopes of work. In addition to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary, DDOE sent senior staff to visit various districts and provide one-on-one technical assistance as needed.

Approval Process

The state oversaw three rounds of scope of work submissions. After each of the first two rounds, the state reviewed each scope of work and returned plans with individual comments. These comments, on average, provided approximately two pages of feedback per round per scope of work. In addition, the state also provided in-person feedback from DDOE staff members. The scopes of work submitted in the third round were turned into the U.S. Department of Education without further review by the state.

Based on the tight timeline that was given for developing scopes of work, the state decided to use Year 1 of the grant as a "change management" year in which LEAs would focus on refining their scopes of work and building support among local stakeholders for those plans. Therefore, while LEAs' Year 1 funding has been approved, LEAs will have to revise and resubmit their scopes of work for years 2-4 to the state for additional review in January 2011.

Tennessee Communications

The Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) introduced district leaders to the scope of work process by hosting three regional meetings across the state on April 21-23, 2010. Held in each of the state's grand divisions (East, Middle, and West Tennessee), these meetings were used to explain the main components of the state's RTTT application and outline broad guidelines and instructions for submitting scopes of work. For example, TDOE officials emphasized that RTTT funds could not be used to supplant current expenditures and had to be aligned with one of the four assurances in the state's RTTT application. Within these broad guidelines, TDOE emphasized it would try to give districts maximum flexibility.

The state provided LEAs with several documents over the course of the scope of work process. The first document, which was provided at the regional meetings, was a scope of work template. This template was a Microsoft Excel document that required a brief description, relevant project personnel, performance metric, and dollar amount for each

budgeted line item. A few weeks later, the state provided superintendents with a list of services the state would provide districts with the state's portion of Race to the Top funds. Throughout the scope of work process, the state maintained an updated list of answers to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on its website.

Technical Assistance

TDOE's regional field service centers (FSCs), which each support between 9 and 22 districts, were assigned the task of supporting districts in writing their scopes of work. Realizing there was often only one employee at each FSC who had the relevant expertise to assist districts, TDOE asked the Tennessee State Collaborative on Reforming Education (SCORE), a statewide nonprofit education organization, to hire eight local consultants to work with the state's field service centers to support districts in writing their scopes of work. These consultants, who were selected based on their leadership in their respective region, included four current or former superintendents, three higher education officials, and one local foundation director. In total, these consultants and their FSC director

At the state's request, SCORE hired eight local consultants to work with the state's field service centers to support districts in writing their scopes of work.

partners held 12 regional workshops, 55 one-on-one meetings, and 165 telephone conversations with superintendents to discuss scopes of work. Additionally, these consultants and the FSC directors reviewed drafts of districts' scopes of work an average of two times before initial submission to the state.

To coordinate this support network, SCORE facilitated a twice weekly call with senior TDOE staff (often including the Commissioner of Education), the FSC directors, and the RTTT consultants. On these calls, TDOE reported the latest news regarding its plans around RTTT implementation and answered questions the consultants and FSC directors relayed from the field. These calls were widely said by all involved to be one of the most critical components of the support network. Answers to the questions raised on these calls (as well as answers to other questions submitted directly to TDOE) were included in the aforementioned FAQ document posted on TDOE's website and communicated

directly back to LEAs by the RTTT consultants and the FSC directors.

Approval Process

Local scopes of work were due to TDOE on May 21, 2010, at which time an appointed committee reviewed each district's plan. Serving on the state's Scope of Work Review Committee were five senior TDOE officials, two representatives from the Governor's Office, and two representatives from SCORE. The FSC director and RTTT consultant from each region jointly presented the activities from each school district's scope of work in their region and answered questions from the Review Committee. The Review Committee did not use a formal rubric to assess the quality of scopes of work, but rather judged plans according to the guidelines laid out in TDOE's FAQ document.

On June 3, 2010, the review team provided LEAs two types of formal feedback on their scopes of work. First, all superintendents received a memo outlining issues that were common challenges across all the scopes of work, including the need for more detailed performance metrics, information about the state's latest plans for using its share of RTTT funds, and guidelines about key questions that needed to be answered for specific types of local activities (e.g., pacing guides, mentoring programs) to be approved. Second, each district received specific comments on their individual scope of work. These individual comments had been written down by the secretary of the Review Committee during the review process and tended to average 4-8 key points per district.

After this feedback was returned to districts, FSC directors and RTTT consultants again met with districts to review comments and revise scope of work plans. Revised scopes of work were submitted to TDOE on Monday, June 14, 2010. During the week that followed, the Review Committee again carefully read through each scope of work. In addition, the Commissioner individually read and reviewed each scope of work before making final approvals. All final scopes of work were submitted to the U.S. Department of Education on June 28, 2010.

Tennessee is planning to have districts periodically resubmit their scopes of work to the state for renewal. The next review will occur in December 2010 (after the state releases test scores for the 2009-10 academic year) and will

be followed by annual scope of work reviews in June 2011, June 2012, and June 2013. Continued RTTT funding will depend on whether districts are meeting the performance targets outlined in their scopes of work. Only those activities that meet or exceed the performance targets established in a district's scope of work plan will be funded in future years of the grant.

For a detailed analysis of the activities included in Tennessee's scopes of work, visit www.tnscore.org and download "An Analysis of Tennessee Districts' Plans for Using Local Race to the Top Funds."

Lessons Learned

A cursory review of Race to the Top Round 2 finalists' applications suggested that very few states spent more than a paragraph discussing how they will execute the scope of work process. To this end, it may be helpful to summarize a few key lessons from the scope of work experiences in Delaware and Tennessee.

Develop a communications plan for keeping both key state officials and district leaders informed.

At the state level, it's critical that key state officials are kept up-to-date on the scope of work process so that they can provide districts the most accurate information. A weekly or twice weekly conference call is one way to accomplish this goal. In addition, states need clear plans for communicating with districts. At a minimum, these plans should include statewide or regional meetings with district leaders, a scope of work template (see below), a list of services the state will provide districts (see below), and a plan for receiving and publishing the answers to districts' questions about the scope of work process.

Develop a detailed template and rubric for measuring the quality of scopes of work.

In Delaware, the state used a detailed template that made the state's expectations of districts clear and served as a quasi-rubric in the scope of work review process. Potential Round 2 winners should consider developing a similarly detailed template as well as an associated rubric that can be used in the scope of work review process. As part of this rubric, states need to decide if there are certain types of expenditures they will require (e.g., you must spend at least 10% of local RTTT funds on training teachers on the state's new teacher evaluation model) or never allow (e.g., purchasing laptop carts).

Clearly outline the services the state will provide to districts with its share of Race to the Top funds. In both Delaware and Tennessee, districts wanted to know what services the state would be providing with its share of Race to the Top funds and specifically when each of these services would be provided. In Tennessee, it took the state several weeks to produce this list, resulting in some confusion at the district level about what services the state would be providing and how districts could best use their local Race to the Top funds to leverage those services. Developing a timeline of state services as soon as possible will assist districts in writing scopes of work that build on, rather than duplicate, the services provided by the state.

Develop a plan for providing technical assistance to districts as they develop their scopes of work.

As discussed above, many districts do not have the expertise or experience to develop detailed plans around the four assurances required by Race to the Top in a tight 90-day window. While a detailed template will help districts in this process, nothing can substitute for in-person technical assistance. In Delaware, this assistance was provided by the Delaware Department of Education, with the Secretary and Deputy Secretary playing critical roles. In Tennessee, this was a combined effort of the Tennessee Department of Education and eight additional consultants that were hired specifically for six weeks to help districts develop their scopes of work. While consultants can be helpful, it is imperative that they be well trained and fully tied into the state's internal communications so that they are providing accurate information to districts.

Decide if the state will review scopes of work again in future years.

Both Delaware and Tennessee decided they needed to have additional scope of work reviews in future years after districts had begun the implementation process. Specifically, Delaware said it would review districts' scopes of work again in January 2011, and Tennessee said it would review districts' scopes of work again in December 2010, June 2011, June 2012, and June 2013. Being clear about these additional scope of work reviews will help both states and districts understand that scopes of work are living documents that will go through several iterations as states and districts refine their Race to the Top strategies.

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Project Management: Lessons from Delaware and Tennessee

As Sir Michael Barber, founder of the U.S. Education Delivery Institute, has said, winning the federal Race to the Top (RTTT) competition is at best only 10% of transforming a state's education system – the remaining 90% is “implementation, implementation, implementation.” To this end, building the right team to implement RTTT is critical to the long-term success of the grant. Although each state will have specific circumstances that influence how it structures its implementation team, the experiences of Delaware and Tennessee offer several potential lessons for Round 2 winners.

As will be discussed below, the way Delaware and Tennessee built their teams in the early phases of RTTT implementation differs significantly from the way they are building their long-term capacity. Specifically, in the early phases of RTTT, both Delaware and Tennessee relied primarily on reassigning existing staff to focus on RTTT implementation and bringing in outside consultants to provide short-term project management support. However, over time, both states have begun building long-term capacity by developing an oversight structure, recruiting and hiring new staff, fundamentally reexamining the structure of their state education agencies (SEAs), and bringing in state and national experts to assist with specific RTTT projects.

Short-Term

As Delaware and Tennessee experienced firsthand, the first phases of RTTT implementation are intense. Not only do states have to finalize their budgets with the U.S. Department of Education, but they also have to assist local education agencies (LEAs) in writing scopes of work and begin implementing state-funded RTTT projects as outlined in their applications. Both Delaware and Tennessee dealt with these immediate implementation challenges by reassigning existing staff to focus on RTTT

implementation and by bringing in short-term outside consulting support.

In Delaware, Secretary Lillian Lowery made several key staff reassignments within the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) to allow existing staff to focus large amounts of time on RTTT implementation. Specifically, the Secretary assigned Deputy Secretary Dan Cruce to oversee RTTT implementation, with Amelia Hodges (Associate Secretary for College and Workforce Readiness) and Wayne Barton (Director of Teacher and Administrator Quality) being

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assigned to oversee the process of revising the state's teacher and administrator evaluation systems to include student achievement (one of the main commitments the state made in its RTTT application). With assistance from private and philanthropic funders, Delaware hired the management consulting firm McKinsey & Company to help accelerate DDOE's implementation efforts. McKinsey, who also assisted Delaware with its RTTT application, helped the state design and develop documents to support the scope of work process and drafted job descriptions for the long-term staff the DDOE was planning to hire.

Like Delaware, Tennessee also built immediate implementation capacity by reassigning key staff in both the Governor's office and Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) to focus on RTTT implementation. Specifically, the Governor's Office of State Policy and Planning (GOSPP), who played a key role in crafting the

state's RTTT application, made RTTT implementation the top priority of its three staff members. At the same time, TDOE reassigned several key staff to focus on RTTT implementation, including reassigning its communications director to oversee all RTTT implementation efforts and five high-performing staff members to lead specific components of RTTT (one staff member was assigned to each of the four RTTT assurances and the fifth staff member was assigned to STEM). The GOSPP and TDOE teams setup a twice weekly conference call and a weekly in-person meeting to coordinate their implementation efforts.

In addition, Tennessee brought in several outside consultants to assist with short-term RTTT implementation. At the request of the Governor's office, the Tennessee State Collaborative on Reforming Education (SCORE), a statewide education non-profit, hired Education First Consulting, who had helped write the state's RTTT application, to conduct a two-day RTTT strategic planning retreat. At the request of Commissioner Tim Webb, SCORE also hired J.B. Buxton, former Deputy Superintendent of the North Carolina Department of Instruction, for four weeks to assist TDOE with reconfiguring its staffing structure to focus on RTTT implementation. After these initial engagements, the state hired both Education First Consulting and Buxton on three month contracts, with Education First focusing on overall RTTT project management and Buxton focusing on realigning resources within TDOE to support RTTT implementation.

In this way, both Delaware and Tennessee increased their immediate capacity by reassigning existing staff to focus on RTTT implementation and by leveraging external consultants to provide short-term project management support. Over time, however, both states have begun focusing on building the long-term capacity they will need to sustain RTTT reforms.

Long-Term Oversight

One of the key ways both Delaware and Tennessee have built their long-term implementation capacity is by setting up oversight mechanisms to monitor long-term RTTT implementation. Specifically, both Delaware and Tennessee have created performance management functions within their state education agencies. In addition, Tennessee has created an external oversight mechanism composed of key stakeholders.

In Delaware, long-term RTTT oversight is being led by a new Project Management Office (PMO) housed within the DDOE. Within the PMO, a Performance Management Team is being created to track performance data, alert the Secretary when performance is off track, and lead problem solving sessions with key DDOE personnel to identify ways to get performance back on track when necessary. The state is also working with the U.S. Education Delivery Institute, a national education non-profit founded by Sir Michael Barber, to assist the Performance Management Team in developing its oversight and monitoring processes.

In Tennessee, the state has established two primary internal performance management functions. First, TDOE reestablished a

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Project Management Oversight Committee (PMOC), which had previously existed within TDOE to manage complex projects. The PMOC is responsible for launching and monitoring the deliverables of each individual RTTT project as well as ensuring connections are made across projects. The PMOC includes members from the Governor's Office, TDOE, and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, which is responsible for overseeing approximately \$20 million of RTTT projects. In addition to the PMOC, Tennessee has established an Education Delivery Unit (EDU) within TDOE to monitor the long-term progress of RTTT implementation, specifically the extent to which RTTT is

achieving the state's student achievement goals. Like Delaware's Performance Management Team, EDU staff will work with the U.S. Education Delivery Institute to develop systems for monitoring performance data and working with the Commissioner of Education to intervene when performance is off track.

In addition to these performance management functions within TDOE, Tennessee has established an external oversight mechanism, the First to the Top Advisory Council. The Advisory Council is composed of 14 key education leaders from across the state including four elected or appointed officials, six foundation or business representatives, and four educators. The Governor-appointed Council meets every six to ten weeks and is tasked with monitoring RTTT implementation. Since the state will be undergoing a gubernatorial transition in November 2010, the hope is that the Council will serve as a mechanism for ensuring RTTT implementation is continued smoothly across gubernatorial administrations.

State Capacity

In addition to establishing oversight mechanisms, both Delaware and Tennessee have begun adding staff to create long-term implementation capacity within the state. As of early August 2010, both states had filled approximately half of the positions they were hoping to fill, with Delaware having filled most of their senior level positions and Tennessee having filled most of their mid-level positions. While both states were aiming to hire a mix of both in-state and out-of-state candidates, Tennessee has primarily hired in-state candidates to date while Delaware has hired a mix of in-state and out-of-state candidates. In addition to hiring new personnel, both states were working to restructure their SEAs, with the restructuring in Tennessee being much more significant than the restructuring in Delaware.

In Delaware, all of the state's new hires will work within DDOE's new PMO. The PMO is composed of three units: (1) the Teacher and Leader Effectiveness Unit (TLEU), which will lead the state's teacher and leader effectiveness initiatives (2) the School Turnaround Unit (STU), which will lead the state's efforts to turnaround low-performing schools and (3) the previously mentioned Performance Management Unit, which will focus on monitoring RTTT implementation. DDOE has had a very aggressive national recruiting effort to identify leaders of the PMU, TLEU, and STU. To date, Delaware

has hired Jim Palmer, a former Bank of America executive, to lead the PMU; Pete Schulman, the former leader of Miami-Dade County Public

Both Delaware and Tennessee are partnering with a select group of state and national partners to provide technical assistance in areas where the state lacks either capacity or expertise.

Schools' teacher effectiveness efforts, to lead the TLEU; and Noreen LaSorsa, a former high school principal in Delaware's Christina School District, to run the STU. Prior to Delaware's RTTT application, Secretary Lowery reorganized DDOE to streamline the agency's workflow and focus on the SEA's top priorities. This restructuring was well aligned with Delaware's RTTT plan and, when combined with the formation of the PMO, provides a strong organizational structure for RTTT implementation.

Tennessee is also hiring new staff to build the state's long-term implementation capacity. However, unlike in Delaware, Tennessee is hiring staff in several different state agencies, not just the state education agency. For example, the Governor's office has hired a former policy analyst at Vanderbilt's National Center for Performance Incentives to run the state's teacher evaluation efforts; the Tennessee Higher Education Commission has hired a former analyst from the non-profit SCORE to lead the design of the state's new teacher preparation program report card; and TDOE has hired Cory Curl, the Governor's former education policy advisor, to run the Education Delivery Unit. Unlike in Delaware, where there have been a mix of in-state and out-of-state hires, Tennessee's new hires have primarily been from in-state, although the state hopes to eventually have a balance of in-state and out-of-state hires.

While Tennessee has had success hiring for mid-level positions, two critical RTTT staff positions remained unfilled, specifically the First to the Top Executive Director and the Superintendent of the Achievement School District (the new state-run school district that will focus on turning around low-performing schools). Although there are many reasons these top-level positions remain unfilled, the primary reason is that the state will be undergoing a gubernatorial transition in November 2010, making it challenging to recruit and hire these senior leaders.

Unlike DDOE, TDOE is seeking to undergo a substantial restructuring effort to better align its structure with RTTT and to better serve LEAs across the state, especially through TDOE's regional field service centers. Although these restructuring efforts are still underway, TDOE's top leadership has shown a clear commitment to executing these changes before the current administration leaves office later this year.

External Partners

In addition to building internal capacity, both Delaware and Tennessee are partnering with a select group of state and national partners to provide technical assistance in areas where the state lacks either capacity or expertise.

Delaware has chosen to rely on a combination of both local and national experts to provide expertise around communications and teacher evaluation. On communications, DDOE is partnering with the Delaware-based Rodel Foundation and the Delaware Public Policy Institute to develop a communications campaign around RTTT that will target Delawareans not directly connected to education on a daily basis. On teacher evaluation, Delaware has asked Dr. Laura Goe and the National Center on Comprehensive Teaching Quality to assist with the state's work around developing student growth measures in traditionally non-tested subjects. Additionally, the state is partnering with the Hope Street Group, a national non-profit, to develop an online forum for educators to provide feedback on these new student growth measures.

Tennessee is also working to leverage state and national partners in areas where the state lacks expertise and capacity. For example, SCORE has been assisting the state with communications and teacher and principal evaluation efforts. On communications, SCORE has organized the First to the Top Coalition, composed of 30 statewide business and education

organizations, to assist with the state's Race to the Top communications effort. In late July, this Coalition launched the "Expect More, Achieve More" campaign to help inform parents about the states new standards and the lower test scores that may result. The campaign included a series of statewide press conferences with Governor Bredesen and SCORE Chairman and former U.S. Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, a website, public service announcements, and various collateral materials.

Additionally, SCORE has been assisting the state with research and stakeholder engagement efforts for the Teacher Evaluation Advisory Committee, which is tasked with developing a new statewide teacher and principal evaluation system that incorporates measures of student achievement. SCORE will also be loaning one of its staff members to TDOE for eight months to help organize the field test of the state's new evaluation system. In addition to working with SCORE, Tennessee is also partnering with the Hope Street Group to collect online feedback from educators about the evaluation system, especially educators' input around potential ways to measure student growth.

Lessons Learned

Although each state's experience will be different, Delaware and Tennessee offer several lessons for Round 2 winners about how to build capacity for implementing RTTT.

In the short-term, states can build capacity by reassigning existing staff and leveraging local and national consultants. States must begin implementing their RTTT application from Day 1. For this to occur, states will need to build immediate capacity. Delaware and Tennessee built this capacity by reassigning existing staff to focus on RTTT implementation and by hiring outside consultants to provide general project management support.

In the long-term, states need to setup an oversight mechanism for ensuring RTTT is implemented successfully. It is imperative that states set up a mechanism for monitoring performance data and intervening when implementation and performance results are off track. At a minimum, this monitoring mechanism should exist within the SEA. In many states, especially those undergoing a political transition, it may prove beneficial to develop an external oversight mechanism that can broaden the sense of ownership around RTTT.

In the long-term, states have to build their own internal capacity by hiring new talent and, in some cases, restructuring the SEA. Ultimately, states have to build internal capacity to implement RTTT. In most cases, this will require recruiting new talent, both from inside and outside the state. In some cases, building internal capacity may also require restructuring the SEA to better align with RTTT priorities and to better provide support services to LEAs.

In the long-run, there will still be some areas in which the state needs to rely on state and national partners. While building internal capacity is critical to successful RTTT implementation, there are some areas in which state education agencies will not have the necessary expertise or capacity. In these areas, states should engage high-quality state and national partners.

A state's precise implementation structure will depend on its political context. In a time when over two-thirds of states have gubernatorial elections, it's impossible to think about implementation without considering the political context. In states where transitions are possible, the state must focus on developing a broad coalition to support RTTT and potentially hiring staff in critical (but perhaps less senior) project management roles.

THE FIRST 100 DAYS

LESSONS LEARNED FROM RACE TO THE TOP ROUND ONE WINNERS

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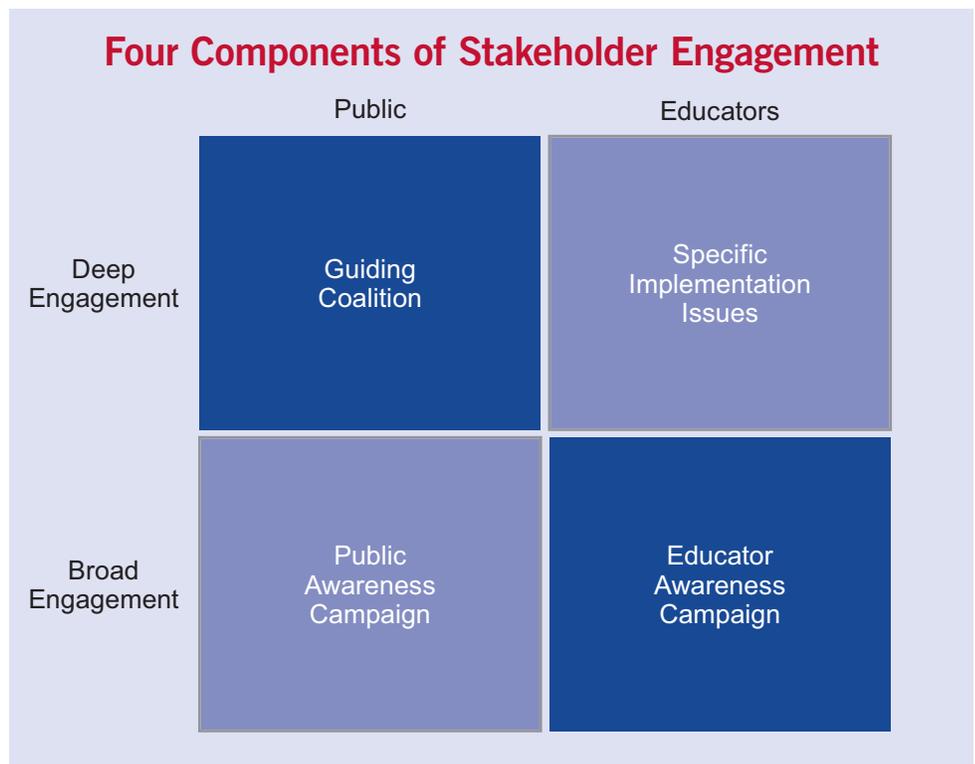
Stakeholder Engagement: Lessons from Tennessee

Race to the Top (RTTT) has created what some have called a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to transform education in America. Many observers have been encouraged by the more than 34 states that changed their laws or regulations to make their RTTT applications more competitive. While these changes are clearly a positive step, the reality is that changing laws and regulations is much easier than changing day-to-day operations in districts, schools, and classrooms. For change to occur at this level, all key stakeholders – from students to teachers to parents to business and community leaders – must learn to think differently about their role in the education system. This will require states to engage stakeholders in a deep and meaningful way – far beyond what traditionally happens.

This memo discusses a framework for stakeholder engagement that has been used to guide the Race to the Top stakeholder engagement efforts in Tennessee, especially the efforts led by the State Collaborative on Reforming Education (SCORE), a statewide education nonprofit. Although this framework is likely generalizable to other states, the specific manifestations of stakeholder engagement will almost certainly differ across states based on local circumstances.

The Framework

In Tennessee, SCORE has thought about its stakeholder engagement efforts using a framework that considers both the target audiences and the depth of each audience's engagement. Although there are an infinite number of potential audiences, this framework combines all the audiences into two groups: (1) educators, including school board members, superintendents, principals, and teachers and (2) the public, including community leaders, business executives, parents and voters. This framework imagines each audience's



level of engagement as being at one of two levels, labeled “deep” and “broad.” Deep engagement involves intensely engaging a relatively small number of individuals in the details of a specific component of work, with the individuals often playing a critical role in defining or executing that specific component of work. Broad engagement focuses on engaging a large number of individuals at a very high-level in various components of work, often after many of the decisions relating to those components of work have been finalized. When combined, these audiences and engagement levels produce a two-by-two matrix outlining four components of stakeholder engagement (see above figure).

The first component of stakeholder engagement is building a guiding coalition. In Tennessee, the coalition includes three key

groups: (1) political leaders (2) educators and (3) business and community leaders. Political leaders are at the table because they are responsible for ensuring an adequate policy and funding structure is in place. Educators are at the table because they will ultimately be responsible for implementing the reform strategy. Community leaders, such as business executives, foundation directors, and non-profit leaders, are also at the table, as they can play a key role in providing additional resources and sustaining momentum for the reform effort.

Together, the guiding coalition is responsible for seeing the reform effort through, even as leadership changes and implementation challenges emerge. For the guiding coalition to remain strong in the face of these challenges, all members of the coalition must be deeply invested in the reform strategy. For this to

occur, the guiding coalition must play a key role in both the development of and the key implementation decisions around the reform strategy. Without deep buy-in, it is unlikely the coalition will be able to hold together through the challenges that will almost certainly emerge.

In Tennessee, SCORE has been the state's principle guiding coalition. Launched in 2009, SCORE is led by a 30-member Steering Committee composed of all the key education stakeholders in the state. In 2009, the Steering Committee held eight statewide meetings in Nashville where it heard from national education reform leaders. The SCORE staff also conducted 86 town hall meetings and hundreds of one-on-one interviews across the state to provide feedback to the Steering Committee. In October 2009, the Steering Committee released a final report entitled "A Roadmap to Success: A Plan to Make Tennessee Schools #1 in the Southeast Within Five Years." This report deeply informed the state's Race to the Top application. The SCORE Steering Committee continues to meet on a quarterly basis to identify ways to work together to further the common agenda laid out in SCORE's final report and the state's Race to the Top application.

While other states might not have the benefit of a SCORE-like organization already in existence, they can still easily develop a guiding coalition. For example, states could easily form a Race to the Top Advisory Council that could meet on a frequent basis to provide counsel on key Race to the Top implementation decisions. However, for an Advisory Council to be an effective guiding coalition, those in charge of Race to the Top implementation must be open to listening to, learning from, and modifying their actions based on the advice of this Advisory Council.

The second component of stakeholder engagement is a deep educator engagement effort focused on specific implementation issues. There are at least three key reasons a deep educator engagement is necessary. First, there are many reforms that cannot be implemented successfully without incorporating the knowledge of educators. For example, it is almost impossible to imagine creating meaningful growth measures in traditionally non-tested subjects and grades without receiving significant input from classroom teachers who teach these subjects and grades. Second, there are a series of implementation issues that cannot be executed well without deep educator understanding of the issue. The best example is Race to the Top scopes of work, where local



This is the cover of the parent brochure from Tennessee's "Expect More, Achieve More" campaign, which focused on informing parents about what the state's new standards mean for students.

superintendents must deeply understand the vision and four assurances of Race to the Top in order to craft scopes of work aligned with that vision. Third, it is important that educators feel that their voice was heard in the development of

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certain reforms so that they can feel bought into those reforms as they begin to be implemented. For example, teachers are highly unlikely to feel comfortable with a teacher evaluation system if there was minimal teacher input.

In Tennessee, targeted educator engagement efforts have largely centered on the scope of work process and the Teacher Evaluation Advisory Committee (TEAC), which is tasked with developing new teacher and principal evaluation systems for the state. On scopes of work, the Tennessee Department of Education asked SCORE to hire eight experienced educators to partner with the director of each of TDOE's regional field service centers (FSCs) to provide on-the-ground support to

superintendents as they wrote scopes of work. Specifically, the consultants and these FSC directors hosted 12 regional meetings, held 55 one-on-one meetings, and had 165 phone calls with superintendents in a four week period. In addition, SCORE facilitated twice weekly conference calls with senior TDOE staff, the FSC directors, and the RTTT consultants so that the senior TDOE staff could answer questions that were arising in the field. As a result of these conference calls and on-the-ground supports, superintendents were able to better understand the state's vision for RTTT and, as a result, write scopes of work better aligned to this vision (for more details on the scope of work process, see memo entitled "Race to the Top Scopes of Work: Lessons from Delaware and Tennessee").

In terms of the TEAC, the state hosted a day-long educator outreach summit that brought together 182 educators from 93 school districts to gather input on the new teacher evaluation system. The state also plans to hold three additional regional educator summits and create an online educator forum focused on developing growth measures in traditionally non-tested subjects and grades. As Tennessee begins to tackle other specific implementation issues, it will likely have to develop specific educator

engagement strategies for each of these additional issues.

The third component of stakeholder engagement is a statewide public awareness campaign. Tennessee's public awareness campaign is led by the First to the Top coalition, which is coordinated by SCORE and composed of over 30 statewide business and education organizations. As its first project, the coalition launched the "Expect More, Achieve More" campaign to educate the public about the state's higher academic standards and the lower test scores that will likely result in the short-term from those standards. The coalition chose to focus on standards because it was an issue that was tangible to both parents and the broader public, as many students who were rated proficient last year will be rated below basic this year, and schools that were in good standing last year will now be on the state's target list. The coalition also intentionally chose a slogan that was positive ("Expect More, Achieve More") to emphasize that Race to the Top is primarily about raising expectations, not punishing schools, teachers, or students.

Given today's fragmented media environment, the "Expect More, Achieve More" campaign is utilizing a wide range of communication tools to reach the broadest possible audience. For example, the campaign was launched with a series of press conferences featuring Governor Phil Bredesen (D), former U.S. Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R), and Commissioner of Education Tim Webb in the state's three largest media markets. In addition, the campaign has developed a website, social media presence, and collateral materials that tell parents in three easy steps what they can do if their child's test scores have dropped. In the coming months, the campaign will also run television and radio public service announcements, coordinate the submission of op-eds and letters to the editor across the state, and provide sample letters that superintendents can send home to parents explaining the state's new academic standards.

The fourth component of Tennessee's stakeholder engagement strategy is a statewide outreach campaign to educators. Although it is still being developed, Tennessee will soon target the "Expect More, Achieve More" campaign to educators, emphasizing that while the state might be expecting more from educators, it is only so that our teachers and students can

achieve more. Just as with the public awareness campaign, the educator awareness campaign will intentionally have a positive message.

Educators are much easier to target than the broader public, as we know precisely where they work – in our schools. Therefore, Tennessee's educator communications strategy will focus on reaching out to educators at their schools, specifically in their faculty meetings and on their professional development days. Specifically, Tennessee is currently planning to record a video with the Governor and Commissioner Webb on key aspects of Race to the Top that can be used in district and school-level professional development activities. Specifically, the video will focus on explaining the four Race to the Top assurances, providing teachers background on the resources available through the "Expect More, Achieve More" standards-awareness campaign, updating educators on the TEAC (since evaluation is one of the topics teachers are most interested in), and informing teachers about some of the new resources available to them as a result of Race to the Top (e.g., new online professional development offerings). Over time, this educator engagement campaign will likely incorporate a regular e-newsletter to all teachers as well as more detailed materials to guide district and school professional development activities outlining what RTTT means for teachers in their daily work.

Lessons Learned

Through the above activities, Tennessee has learned several interesting lessons about stakeholder engagement that might be helpful to other states as they begin implementing RTTT:

Communicate, communicate, communicate!

Race to the Top is about transforming the culture of education in America. This requires changing the way millions of people think about their role in the education system. It is imperative that the vision of Race to the Top and what it means for specific stakeholders be communicated over and over.

Find the right leaders to build the guiding coalition. Respected leaders who command credibility with a broad group of stakeholders are critical to building the strongest and broadest

guiding coalition. While a strong sitting Governor with several years remaining in his or her term may be able to be the sole coalition builder, the coalition will likely be the strongest if the coalition has either a non-partisan or bipartisan group of leaders.

Be genuine in your deep educator and stakeholder engagement efforts.

If you want to develop deep buy-in, you have to be willing to listen, learn, and even change your thinking based on the advice you receive from others. If you know exactly where you want to go and are not willing to compromise, you are unlikely to develop deep buy-in and support.

Hire a full-time expert to run your broad public and educator awareness campaigns.

Across the country, very few state education agencies (SEAs) have the capacity to run large-scale educator or public awareness campaigns. While a SEA's instinct might be to contract this communications work out to a public relations firm, Tennessee's experience suggests public relations firms are often extremely expensive and rarely have expertise around education communication. For this reason, at least in Tennessee, we have found it best to hire a full-time communications expert with political experience who has an interest in and willingness to learn about education.

Focus both your broad public and educator awareness campaigns on "what it means to me."

Far too many education awareness campaigns focus on detailed policy topics that the public, and even many educators, cannot relate to. It's essential that all messaging for broad public and educator awareness campaigns focus on "what Race to the Top means to me" and provide tangible actions that the target audience can take to further the vision of Race to the Top.

Engage the teachers union deeply.

Although the openness of teacher unions to Race to the Top differs substantially across the country, states should do their best to work as closely with teacher unions as possible. Teacher unions have enormous influence on how teachers perceive reform efforts, so if successful reform requires changing how educators think, teacher unions almost certainly have to be part of the answer.