



# Illinois State Board of Education

Gery J. Chico, Chairman  
Dr. Christopher Koch, State Superintendent

Julie Evans, Supervisor Center for Performance and the Illinois Race to the Top Initiative.

## Illinois Race to the Top Newsletter

Summer/Fall 2014

### All State Race to the Top Meeting Schedule for October 24, 2014

<b>When:</b>	<b>Friday, October 24, 2014</b>
<b>Where:</b>	Northfield Inn and Suites 3820 Northfield Drive, Springfield, Illinois
<b>Time:</b>	Registration and Continental Breakfast 7:30 – 8:30 A.M. Meeting 8:30 A.M. – 3:00 P.M. with lunch provided
<b>Cost of Meeting:</b>	Free

#### About the Change of Date

Yes, as indicated above the new date for this meeting is October 24<sup>th</sup>. Why the change? Because our state leaders, like our Deputy Superintendent Suzie Morrison wanted to be a part of this meeting so that she too could offer her sincere thanks and appreciation to each RttT district for their work and dedication toward achieving RttT goals and enhancing the educational experiences of the students. Accordingly, the first date that was set for this All State RttT meeting didn't work for Suzie, but October 24<sup>th</sup> did. So we are delighted to have her with us on that day and add to our celebration of and appreciation for the work you do.

#### The October 24<sup>th</sup> Meeting

In order to recognize and honor the challenging work of the 32 Illinois Race to the Top Districts, the Illinois State Board of Education wishes to invite all RttT districts to come together for a celebration, informative and collaborative day to kick off the 2014-2015 school year. The meeting will feature a panel discussion moderated by Deputy Superintendent Suzie Morrison and feature several districts that are implementing exemplary RttT initiatives and representative of the good work done by all districts. These districts will also provide more detail as to their process of planning, developing, implementing, evaluating and sustaining their programs during the afternoon breakout sessions. The day will end with a celebratory event for all districts as a BIG THANK YOU FOR THE WORK YOU DO.

**Register now for this exciting learning and networking meeting by clicking on this link:**

<http://www.roeschoolworks.k12.il.us/registerEmail.htm>

**Remember: the registration deadline is October 10<sup>th</sup>.**

**Hotel Accommodations for October 23, 2014:**

If you wish to stay overnight on October 23, a block of rooms is being held at the Northfield Inn. Upon making a reservation, state you are with the ISBE Race to the Top. The state rate is \$70 for a single, \$79 for a double plus tax. Rooms that are not reserved by October 2 will be released to the public. Phone: 217-523-7900

**Mark Your Calendar for Future Meeting Dates for 2014-2015:**

**Regional Meeting 2 Dates and Locations:**

- December 4 North Region – Kishwaukee College, Malta
- December 10 Central Region – Heartland College, Normal
- December 11 South Region – Kaskaskia College, Centralia

**Regional Meeting 3 Dates and Locations:**

- February 19 South Region – Kaskaskia College, Centralia
- February 26 North Region – Kishwaukee College, Malta
- TBD end of November – Central Region – Heartland College, Normal (possibly held February 17 or 18)

All RttT District Meeting 4: June 16, 2015 - Springfield

**Bensenville RttT Initiative: Peer Evaluation**

Bensenville Elementary School District 2, which includes the town of Bensenville and parts of Wood Dale and Addison is an ethnically and economically diverse school district. Like other school districts it has had to deal with the changing demographic characteristics of its communities while responding to new state and federal accountability requirements that are associated with participation in Illinois's Race to the Top initiative. Bensenville teachers, administrators, and staff have enthusiastically embraced the district's Peer Assistance and Review Program (PAR), which includes a Peer Evaluation Initiative. The guiding principles for the peer evaluation initiative are as follows:

- A sound evaluation system reflects a set of core convictions about effective instruction and learning.
- Appropriate and timely feedback between the teacher and evaluator drives ongoing teacher development.

- Teachers contribute to student learning in numerous ways that can be observed and measured.
- A teacher's primary professional responsibility is to ensure that students learn and progress.
- Children can complete academically rigorous work regardless of socioeconomic status and language barriers.

These principles have been used to create a PAR program with a peer evaluation component that gives teachers multiple opportunities for feedback on their instruction over the course of the year. Driving this program are two full-time consulting teachers who agreed to leave the classroom for two years to take on this role. They bring not only the latest educator techniques from national training workshops but also their own experiences as highly effective and respected teachers in the district. With such devoted staff, peer evaluation in Bensenville is *not* a one-time event. Rather, it is an ongoing process that occurs in a supportive relationship between teachers and consulting teachers in Bensenville District 2

*Excerpted from ISBE, Peer Evaluation in Bensenville. May 2014 document*

### **Interesting Survey Results**

A thank you to all districts that responded to the survey, in fact our response rate was nearly 80% of RttT districts responding. The purpose of the survey was to take the pulse of districts concerning several questions. The questions and survey responses were:

Question 1: Which RttT initiatives are you likely to allocate resources to sustain them after the RttT Grant ends in December, 2015?

Answer (in rank order): (1) common core and cohesive curriculum, (2) local assessment systems, and (3) PERA.

Question 2: Does your RttT team have the knowledge to develop and implement a sustainability plan?

Answer: Over 90% of the districts said YES

Question 3: Would your district team like sustainability planning to be a content topic for a future RttT regional meeting?

Answer: This was close. Although nearly all districts indicated their team had the knowledge to develop and implement a sustainability plan, 54% indicated that they would like sustainability planning to be a future topic at a regional meeting.

Question 4: Given the limited number of meetings we have during the year, what is your district's number one request for a content topic based on the RttT Expectations?

Answer: No clear cut topic request was identified. The survey results were spread all over all of the RttT initiatives. The highest number of responses for several topics was 4 and then there was a spread of 3s, 2s, 1s, and zeros.

Question 5: Would you be in favor of utilizing a RttT coach to work with your team one on one?

Answer: It was close yet the yeas outnumbered the nays by 58% to 42%, respectively.

The RttT Core Team is reviewing these results for the purpose of planning our regional meetings for this school year and to develop procedures for RttT coaching.

### **Sustainability Planning**

As the end of the RttT grant looms 15 months away, best practices suggest that planning begins at least one year ahead of a grant termination date for obvious reasons. Sustaining with the implicit imperative of continual refinement and improvement requires due consideration to identify how an initiative will be sustained what it requires in terms of time, materials, resources, and money to keep the initiative alive and meeting intended outcomes. A source for learning about how some districts have approached sustainability planning is the School Improvement Grant (SIG) 1003(g) FY15 Fall Grantee Convening Conference, held on October 29<sup>th</sup> at the Sheraton Hotel in Lisle, Illinois. The title of the conference is Transformational Leadership an Evolving Practice. A breakout session will highlight successful sustainability practices. Registration information has not yet been provided and may be located on ISBE's SIG website soon.

### **Illinois Induction and Mentoring Regional Network Opportunity Available for *Race to the Top* Districts**

**Through a grant provided by the State Board of Education, The New Teacher Center (NTC) and the Consortium for Educational Change (CEC)** invite all induction program coordinators and leaders in RttT districts to the *Illinois Induction and Mentoring Network*. The Network is designed to provide individual technical assistance to program leaders and connect districts as leaders work toward program improvement to meet the RttT Mentoring and Induction Expectation.

The Illinois Induction and Mentoring Network is designed to support and further develop the structures and components of an effective induction program. The focus is to support school districts in creating strong communities of practice for mentors and beginning teachers.

#### **Induction Leaders will...**

- Extend knowledge of Illinois Induction Standards for inquiry and planning
- Build the components of Illinois Program Standards into program level goals
- Collaborate with colleagues to support sustainable and focused induction programs

Details:

4 Regional Meetings - central, south and two in the north

Tentative dates throughout the state - November, December, January, March (online), and April.

Technical assistance and networking opportunities be led by qualified facilitators, all well-versed in induction and mentoring practices and program standards

This project is being implemented with collaborative partners: Illinois New Teacher Collaborative (INTC), American Institute for Research (AIR), Iroquois-Kankakee Regional Office of Education (I-KAN ROE) and consulting universities, Governors' State University, Northern Illinois University and National Lewis University.

Watch for more information on this exciting opportunity very soon!