Get Ready, Get Set, 

Go, Go, Go to the next series of RTT Regional Meeting in February.

Central Region: February 18, 2015, Normal, Illinois, at Heartland Community College.
Northern Region: February 26, 2015, Malta, Illinois, at Kishwaukee Community College.

Ok, so those are the dates, what’s the agenda? Glad you asked. But first some background facts.

1. Did you know that one of ISBE’s primary goals through RTT is to support participating districts in order to build the systems and processes needed to accelerate and sustain improved student outcomes and building capacity to extend these initiatives statewide?
2. Did you know that over half of the districts that responded to a survey at the October All State Meeting indicated they are in favor of having sustainability planning as a future content topic?
3. Did you know that sustainability planning is not just about finding replacement funding?
4. Did you know that best practice concerning sustainability planning is to start at least one year before a grant program terminates?
5. Did you know that continuous improvement in district and school improvement plans go hand-in-hand with sustainability planning?
Given those facts . . .

Introducing the Building State Capacity and Productivity Center, which is supported by Edvance Research of San Antonio, Texas, and the U.S. Department of Education. The Center focuses their work on helping state education agencies and non-profit organization as they adapt to reduced fiscal resources and increased demands for greater productivity. So too are Local Education Agencies (LEA’s) challenged to improve student performance with diminishing financial resources and sustainability planning is a key to manage how it’s done. At our February meetings, Shawn Petty, Edvance Research’s Training and Development Manager will provide the training on sustainability planning. Our goal is to provide you with the skill set to develop a sustainability plan to keep those RTT initiatives going that have helped your students become college and career ready.

This will not be a one-shot training event. Rather it will be our training focus for a major portion of the remaining grant period. The training regimen includes webinars, presentations at regional meetings, interactive activities, and face-to-face meetings with RTT facilitators who are trained in the sustainability planning process.

One of the best features of this training is its adaptability and transferability. The steps involved in sustainability training are readily adaptable to any school or district initiative that is seeded with federal, state, or local money and then goes away after a defined period of time. But why lose the aspects of an initiative that have a beneficial impact for your students, teachers, or community? Sustainability planning helps to keep good things going. Plan now to attend.

All State RTT Presenter Power Point Presentations Now Posted on ISBE/ RTT website

That’s right. Go to www.isbe.net and find the tab Illinois Schools. Scroll down to Race to the Top and click on it. The RTT site will come up and you will see the list of presentations in the What’s New window.

Evaluation Results from the December Meetings

We must be doing something right as the evaluating ratings from our December meetings are very high. Participants gave ratings from ninety (90%) percent to ninety-seven (97%) to indicate that they strongly agreed or agreed with 5 out of the 6 evaluative statements. Also, for these five statements the ratings of “strongly agree” topped “agree” by ratios of 3 to 1, to 7 to 1. Certainly a rousing endorsement as to the outstanding presentations made that day about PARCC, the Common Core and evidence tables.
Participant Comments from our December Meeting

“Good information and format.”
“Knowledgeable presenters.”
“Useful resources.”
“Meaningful insights to pull in other content teachers.”
“Explicit relationship between CCSS and PARCC.”

“New tools and information.”
“A good, ‘how to’ meeting.”

Featuring . . .

Check out the RTT webpage on ISBE.net. Featured are two of our districts, Bensenville Elementary District 6 and Freeport School District 146. Bensenville has designed and implemented a Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program. Freeport initiated a Personalized Mastery Program as a strategy to improve student achievement and close the achievement gap. Both districts are leading the way in their respective initiatives. Check out both links.

RTT Induction Mentoring Networks Update

Individualized and differentiated technical assistance is available for RTT districts across the state to support the development of district Induction and mentoring programs for new teachers. Qualified and experienced consultants will work with districts on an individual basis as requested. This structure will be the focus of the work of the CEC Partnership Technical Assistance and Networking Team, under the guidance of ISBE, for the next several months. Consultants are available to assist districts in a variety of ways, so please contact Amy Treadwell from the New Teacher Center if your team is interested in this type of free service, courtesy of ISBE funding.

For more information call Amy Treadwell, Program Director New Teacher Center, 773-759-3690, atreadwell@newteachercenter.org

Also, an exciting opportunity is being offered by the CEC Partnership Group, including NTC and the Illinois New Teacher Collaborative (INTC) on February 24-25, 2015 in Springfield. At this year’s tenth annual INTC Conference, held in Springfield, a TA/networking session will be held the entire morning of February 25 for any RTT districts in attendance. The purpose of this session is to provide information on the Illinois Induction and Mentoring Program Standards and discuss how to use these nine state standards to self-assess and set goals for programs. District teams will have learn new information, have time to work as a team, as well as to network and collaborate across districts. Extremely beneficial and user-friendly resources available, often unknown to many, will be shared. These resources are invaluable to help programs as they work to meet the RTT Induction and Mentoring expectation and develop effective research-based IM programs that support new teachers and their mentors.
The INTC Conference has numerous breakout sessions with nearly every aspect of Induction and Mentoring discussed. The feedback for this conference is always very positive and teams feel the time spent at this conference is very useful. We encourage RTT districts to consider sending a team of program leaders and teachers to this day and a half conference and plan to attend the February 25 session for RTT districts only. Registration is open and space is limited. See http://intc.education.illinois.edu/events/conf2015/ for more information and to register. The cost for this conference is minimal and the RTT money recently budgeted for districts to use for IM work will easily cover any costs.

Don't miss these great opportunities to take advantage of individualized technical assistance available now and professional growth and program development at the INTC Conference in February!

Questions regarding the INTC Conference can be directed to Jodi Bouris, RTT Network Coordinator at jbouris@illinois.edu or 309-264-5729.

Professional Development Opportunities
To stay current with RTT related professional development opportunities go to www.isbe.net, and find the Illinois Schools tab. Scroll down to Race to the Top and click on it. The RTT site will come up and you will see the list of presentations and other relevant information in the What’s New window.

Don’t Miss our End of Year All RTT Districts State Conference on
June 16, 2015
Reserve the date now

This newsletter is brought to you by . . . Julie Evans, Supervisor, Center for Performance and Director of the Illinois Race to the Top Initiative
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